



Web site <https://bathquakers.org>  
See also <https://bathquakers.org/bath-friends-admin/> (needs password)

Bath Quakers shared an all-age Meeting for Worship this month, on the theme of equality.



We had two readings on the theme of equality (see eg below). Then anyone who wanted took part in a craft activity, making sheets of a tapestry representing themes of equality (see illustration above). Finally we had silence in the format of our normal Meeting for Worship, except that there was so much Ministry it was almost constant and the Meeting overran by 15 minutes.

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### [On Social Justice \(Quaker faith and practice 23.14\)](#)

*Our gracious Creator cares and provides for all his creatures. His tender mercies are over all his works; and so far as his love influences our minds, so far we become interested in his workmanship and feel a desire to take hold of every opportunity to lessen the distresses of the afflicted and increase the happiness of the creation. Here we have a prospect of one common interest from which our own is inseparable, that to turn all the treasures we possess into the channel of universal love becomes the business of our lives...*

*Oppression in the extreme appears terrible: but oppression in more refined appearances remains to be oppression; and where the smallest degree of it is cherished it grows stronger and more extensive. To labour for a perfect redemption from this spirit of oppression is the great business of the whole family of Christ Jesus in this world.*

**John Woolman, 1763**

### **Long Sutton Friends celebrate 300 years**

Long Sutton Quakers celebrated the 300th anniversary of their Friends Meeting House on Saturday 8 July with a programme of events including plays, films, exhibitions and guest speakers.



*Bath Quakers send very best wishes and congratulations to Long Sutton Friends on their tercentenary. We're barely half as old!*

## Spiritual direction: it's about watering the roots

*Katie Evans reflects on spiritual direction and spiritual friendship.*

I've just finished a two-year [course on spiritual direction](#) with Sarum College, an ecumenical centre in Salisbury. I'd like to share three things I've learnt:

1. My images\* of God shape my intention in spiritual direction conversations
2. I'm still me (and that's fine)
3. I'm watering roots, not tugging branches

These are all very personal and subjective, I'll try to explain what they mean to me.

I experience a sense of spaciousness in which I am gently held. The nature of that spaciousness is tender, loving. I believe this is there for everyone. If I call this 'God' I would say that God is a God who listens as well as speaks, and that listening in itself is communicative – not passive. So my hope in a spiritual direction conversation is that my conversation partner and I listen ourselves into awareness of that loving spaciousness.



### *Watering my roots.*

When I signed up for the course I was worried about two things: I don't find it easy to make conversation and get to know people. In particular, I rarely talk about my faith and when I do I tend to blush furiously, wave my hands a lot, get tongue tied, or defensively make a joke of it. Put together, this sounds like a recipe for disaster in a spiritual director! Two years on I'm still me, still an introvert and tongue tied about spirituality. But surprisingly I've found this isn't necessarily a barrier to having spiritual direction conversations. This feels liberating.

I would love for spiritual direction, in the sense of making space and listening to conversation partners speak about what is meaningful to them, to be part of my life. I'm tentatively exploring what form this will take for me. There are two 'textbook' models: the first is of a spiritual direction relationship in which a

director listens to a directee and the two probably don't know each other outside of those conversations.

The second model is of spiritual friendship - this is more familiar to Quakers. Two friends meet in a mutual relationship to listen to and support each other in their spiritual life. I find I'm drawing on elements of both models. There is real value in the traditional 'one-way' spiritual direction model because it clearly sends the message to the directee that there is space for them. This can be particularly important for people who are usually helpers and carers and might not otherwise take space for themselves. But I want to run a mile from the stereotype of a clinically distant director coolly diagnosing a directee's spiritual state and prescribing advice!

This is just a stereotype: generally spiritual directors avoid this hierarchical dynamic. But I'm not sure I have it in me to start a healthy spiritual direction relationship from scratch with someone I've never met before. So that puts me closer to the spiritual friendship model, where two friends agree that prayerful listening and conversation about their spiritual lives will be part of their friendship. Is it possible to maintain this sort of relational equality but with one person primarily the 'talker' and one person the 'listener'? I hope so.

My sense is that whatever part spiritual direction/friendship conversations have to play in my life, it will come as gift – not something I can timetable. For now, my part is to water roots, not anxiously tug at leaves and branches. For me that means trying to practice hospitable presence: being with people in a way that doesn't shy away defensively or grasp manipulatively, a way that creates a little space in which we might get a glimpse of that underlying loving spaciousness.

*Katie Evans, July 2017*

\* Perhaps I shouldn't call these 'my' images! The concept of spaciousness comes from Martin Laird's book *Into the Silent Land*, and the conviction that God is a God who listens comes from Rachel Muers' book *Keeping God's Silence*.

## Events coming up at Ammerdown

**18-20 August:** *Inner Path Outer Journey* led by Ian and Gail Adams, will draw on wisdom and experience from contemplative Christianity, on the gift of the landscape, and on insights around human possibility and becoming.

**4-8 Sept:** *Tikkun Olam – 'Mending the World.'* Sr Maureena Fritz will examine this with diverse forms of interpretation of Scripture, which will focus attention not only on the sacred text but also on the world around us and on divine reality.

**8 Sept:** *Guided Quiet Day* an opportunity to take time out from our busy lives to pray, reflect and meditate with the help of **Libby Dobson and Sarah Chabowska**.

**18-21 Sept** *Sacred Circle Dancing – Breath of Life* led by Judy Harvey  
Enjoyable and therapeutic, the circle allows each and every one, whatever their age or physical ability, to feel safe to relax and discover the joy of dancing.

**24-28 Sept** *Finding Fulfilment* with Gill and Antonio Benet and Jacqueline Evans  
An opportunity to see the complementary nature of the relationship between mind, body and spirit in the evolution of consciousness.

More information or to book a place: <http://ammerdown.org> or 01761 433709.

## **The UN nuclear weapons ban treaty: how significant is it?**

*On 7th July, the United Nations adopted a Treaty banning nuclear weapons. Judith Eversley reflects on a milestone on the long road to disarmament.*

Quakers in Britain have campaigned against nuclear weapons for more than 60 years. As early as 1955, Meeting for Sufferings minuted: "To rely on the possession of nuclear weapons as a deterrent is faithless; to use them is a sin."

My own parents were among the earliest anti-nuclear campaigners. I can remember being on one of the short 'feeder' marches as a child in Birmingham in the late 1950s: those with longer legs carried on marching to Aldermaston and then London.

There have been test ban treaties and non-proliferation treaties but they work rather gradually (if at all), and many countries have become impatient with the slow progress of these international agreements. They fear that the humanitarian consequences of any use of nuclear weapons would be so catastrophic that nothing but a total ban will do.

So it is huge step forward that now the United Nations has adopted a treaty to rid the world of nuclear weapons. At the vote in New York. 124 out of the UN's 192 member countries voted: 122 in favour, one against (Netherlands) and one country abstained (Singapore).



*Bath Stop War's 2016 peace tree outside Bath Abbey commemorating the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki*

Quakers in Britain have been observers at the UN in New York through these negotiations. They are delighted with the news – but the job is not over. The next step is for at least 50 countries to ratify the Treaty, though that should not be difficult given the overwhelming support from non-nuclear states. Making a practical reality of the ban will be tough, largely because nine countries that currently have such weapons stayed away from the talks – they did not contribute to them, did not vote and they will oppose it. The UK is one of those nine.

So the work continues, and local peace campaigners are planning events to inform and update you. Every year in August, Bath Stop War commemorates the 1945 annihilation of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. This year the special event outside Bath Abbey will be on **Saturday 5th August** from 11:30 a.m. to 12:30 pm. Please come along and add your message to the peace tree.

**And at 7:30 pm on Thursday 26th October**, in the lower room of our Meeting House, Bath & District United Nations Association is organising a public meeting about the Treaty. Paul Ingram, an expert on security and disarmament, is coming to speak on **Multilateral nuclear disarmament in the era of the nuclear ban treaty**.

## Diary dates

*Location is Friends Meeting House unless shown otherwise*

### Diary dates 2017:

Sat 29 July – Sat 5 August **BYM 2017** University of Warwick

Mon 28 Aug (Bank holiday) 1400-1700 Celebration in music and food of the legacy to Bath of the refugee H.I.M Heile Selassie at **Kelston village fete**, Kelston (entry £3)

Sat 2nd Sept 1000-1600 **Quiet day** at the Old Barn, Kelston Roundhill

Sun 10 September **Business Meeting** Diana Jeater Clerk, Lin Patterson Co-Clerk

Sun 1 October 1300 **Area Meeting** Bath

Sun 5 November **Business Meeting** Lin Patterson Clerk, Ali Packer Co-Clerk

Sun 3 December 1300 **Area Meeting** Frome

### Area Meetings 4th June: Devizes; 1st Oct: Bath; 3rd Dec: Frome - 1300

Friends are encouraged to attend Meeting for Worship at the host venue, if possible. It is good for everyone in AM to experience worshipping together, getting to "know each other in the things that are eternal". It also builds an understanding of difference, which Bath meeting is exploring as a concern.

### Further ahead:

BYM 2018: 4-7 May 2018, London.

BYM 2019: 24-27 May 2019, London.

## Worship

Sunday	11:00-12:00	FMH York St
Tuesday	19:00-19:30	FMH York St
Wednesday	10:30-11:00	FMH York St

## Regular Events

Every Sunday	11:00-12:00	Children's Meeting	FMH York St
1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday of Feb, Apr, May, July, Sept, & Nov	13:00	Meeting for Worship for Business (Preparative Meeting)	FMH York St
1 <sup>st</sup> Sunday	10:00-10:30	Friends Fellowship of Healing	FMH
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sun even months	13:00	Favourite Passages from the Bible and Quaker Faith & Practice	FMH York St
2 <sup>nd</sup> Sun odd months	13:00	Poetry Group	FMH York St
4 <sup>th</sup> Sunday	13:00	Shared lunch	FMH York St

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*Remember: every day is a web site deadline. Please submit photos also.*

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