

A brief guide to Quaker chaplaincy



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Contents

Introduction	1
What is chaplaincy?	3
What is <i>Quaker</i> chaplaincy today?	5
What do Quaker chaplains do?	9
Chaplaincy times and seasons	25
Chaplaincy essentials	27
Becoming a Quaker chaplain	33
Conclusion	35
How can you find out more?	37



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Introduction

This guide is for Quaker area and local meetings and any Friends considering becoming a chaplain. It provides an introduction to chaplaincy in a wide variety of settings and considers some themes and experiences common to Quaker chaplaincy.

The guidance presented is illustrated by chaplains' own stories. It begins by looking at the role, what might be expected of a Quaker chaplain and the area and/or local meeting; it contains advice on the skills, knowledge and experience that a chaplain might draw on; it also includes a list of informative and creative resources for further inspiration.

The guide links to a more detailed online handbook that supports the work of Quaker chaplains in all forms and aspects. This can be found at www.quaker.org.uk/chaplaincy.

Thanks go to the Quaker Life Network Chaplaincy Cluster and the many chaplains who have contributed to the content and production of the guide.

In one sense Quaker chaplains are a very visible presence and witness in hospitals, prisons, educational establishments and even on the streets as they reach out to those of other faiths and none in ways that many Friends do not. Yet in another sense Friends are often little aware of the work they do. I hope that this guide is read widely in meetings so that our chaplains feel well supported.

Martin Pennock, Clerk of Quaker Life Central Committee

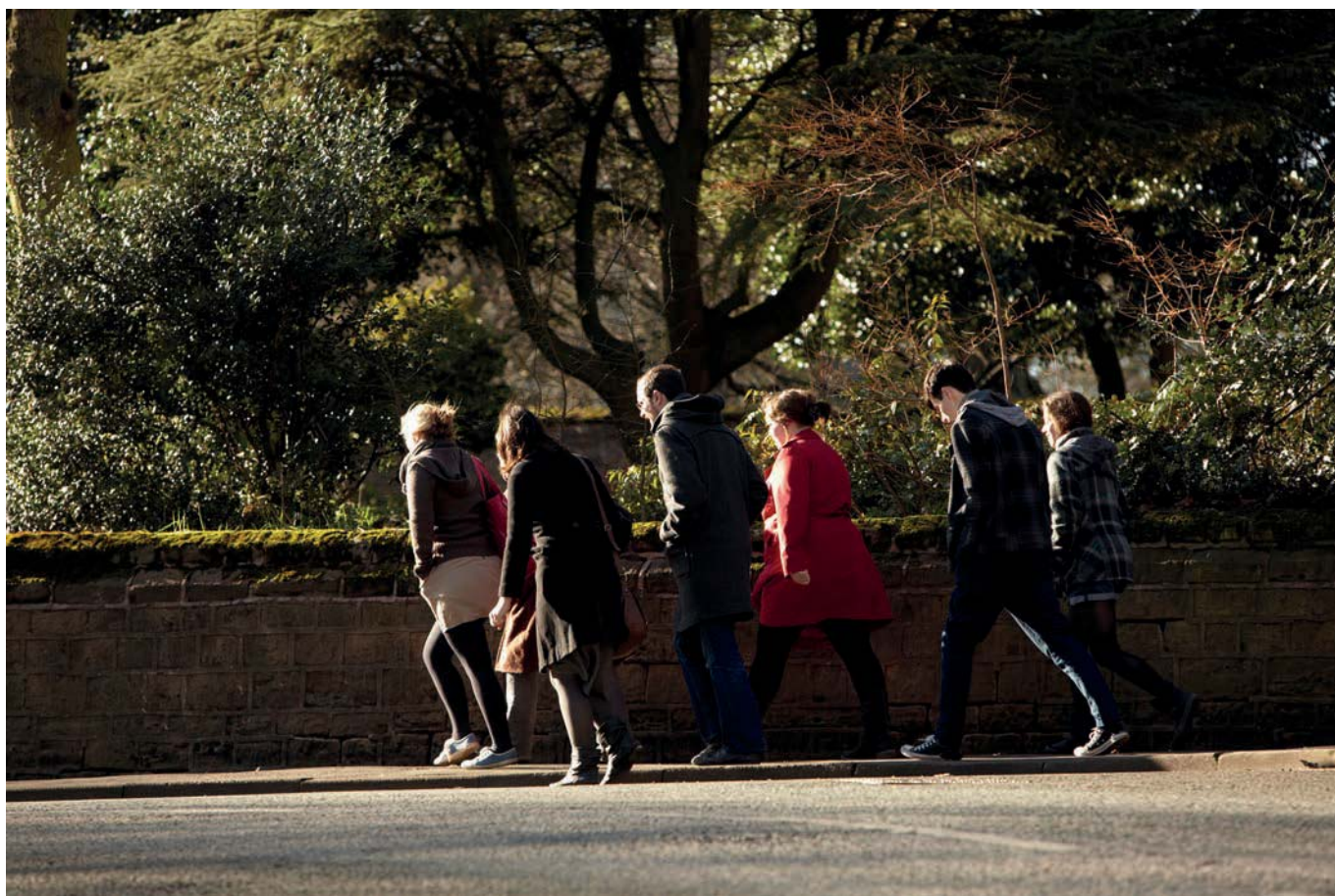


Photo: © Mike Pinches 2012

What is chaplaincy?

Traditionally, a chaplain is a minister, such as a priest, pastor, rabbi, imam or lay representative of a religious tradition, attached to a secular institution such as the armed forces, prison, university or hospital. Though originally the word 'chaplain' referred to representatives of the Christian faith, it is now also applied to people of other religions or philosophical traditions and can include pagan and humanist chaplains. In recent times, many lay people have received professional training in chaplaincy and are now appointed as chaplains to work alongside, or instead of, official members of the clergy. The concept of 'generic' and/or 'multifaith' chaplaincy has seen increasing support, particularly within healthcare, prisons and educational settings.

The Religious Society of Friends has its roots in Christianity and the teachings of Jesus. Early Friends understood themselves to be a 'priesthood of all believers' and dispensed with the use of clerical and other titles. It is unlikely they would have used the word 'chaplain'. At the same time Friends supported each other in living their faith at a time when hundreds of them were imprisoned for their beliefs.

Quakers' engagement in chaplaincy stems from the inspiration of individual Friends like William Tuke who was driven by the plight of the mentally ill, and whose meeting supported the building of The Retreat in York, today a specialist mental healthcare provider and still a Quaker institution.

Only a few years after Tuke was developing new methods of social care in York, Elizabeth Fry (1780–1845) was expressing a growing concern about the prison conditions of women and children in Newgate Gaol. She helped to provide education for the children and employment for the women awaiting deportation, and also agitated for prison reform, lobbying MPs in 1818 leading to the Gaol Act of 1823.

In the early days of the Quaker movement many Friends were imprisoned for their radical beliefs. Some Friends were imprisoned in the twentieth century too, as conscientious objectors to military service. Perhaps because of this, there remains a continuing concern for prisoners and the conditions in prisons.

A prison chaplain is "a priest or minister of a recognised religious denomination appointed by the Home Office to a specific institution under the provisions of the Prison Act 1952 to perform duties of a religious nature inside that particular institution" (*Quaker faith & practice* 13.46). Quaker prison chaplains are included in this definition.

Quaker faith & practice (Qf&p) 13.47 lists the four tasks of prison chaplaincy as: to visit Quakers; to assist the work of chaplaincy; to be a Quaker presence in prison; and to be a channel between the prison service and area meeting.



William Tuke.

Image © Religious Society of Friends in Britain.

What is chaplaincy?

Universities, originally institutions of the established church, were not open to Friends until the late nineteenth century. When Quaker students began attending universities and colleges, some meetings appointed a 'Quaker Visitor' to offer them support, encouragement and a link to the local meeting (Qf&p 13.55). The development of ecumenical chaplaincies led to a concern for outreach and the presence of Quaker chaplains for all members of the institution of all faiths and none (Qf&p 13.56).

More recently a growing number of Quakers have become workplace chaplains and street pastors. Industrial or workplace chaplaincy has always been ecumenical and provides pastoral and spiritual care in the workplace regardless of faith or gender to employees in a wide variety of settings. Street pastors join Christian and non-Christian adults in voluntary patrols of the busy streets of towns and cities at night, helping and caring for people in practical ways. Though not a form of ministry that is traditionally associated with chaplaincy, there are many comparable aspects and it is important that this service is represented here.



Elizabeth Fry at Newgate prison
© Religious Society of Friends in Britain

What is *Quaker* chaplaincy today?

Quaker chaplains can be found in a variety of settings including prisons, secure units, universities, colleges and hospitals, hospices, on the streets in the evening outside pubs, in sports clubs and workplaces.

There is a difference between the role of a Quaker chaplain and that of a Quaker Visitor seeking to support Quakers within an organisation. Quaker chaplains may do the latter too, but primarily they offer a formal, 'official' space for people of all faiths and none to explore the spiritual in a trustworthy relationship.

Although Quaker chaplains appear in a wide variety of settings and work under a variety of different arrangements, they have many things in common. Following the Quaker way they are known to:

- * be open to new light from wherever it may come
- * respect each person and respond to them with love
- * seek a direct experience of God within themselves and in their relationships
- * build spiritual connections and community not through professing identical beliefs but from sharing and working together
- * encourage the communal gathered stillness of meeting for worship
- * respond to spiritual need in the moment without recourse to creed or cant
- * go to places overlooked by others and never give up on people
- * listen to and support people to help them find their own strength
- * promote social justice, support peacemakers and care for the environment
- * speak plainly to people in power.



Photo: Children and Young People's Team 2013

What is *Quaker* chaplaincy today?

Robin Fishwick, chaplain to Leeds universities, made these observations following a Quaker chaplains' weekend at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre:

We were Quakers involved in higher and further education, prison and secure unit chaplaincy, hospital and hospice chaplaincy and others. We had presentations from Frank Boulton, a Friend working with Street Pastors in Southampton and Peter Green, Quaker Chaplain to the London 2012 Olympics.

This was the first time Quaker chaplains from such a variety of roles have come together. Despite this variety, common themes emerged from the course of the weekend.



Photo: © Mike Pinches 2012

Being a Quaker chaplain, in whatever context, has unique difficulties and presents unique possibilities. We hope for the development of a national forum to share ideas and build up resources we can all use.

The traditional model of chaplaincy – where the Catholic chaplain is there for the Catholics, the Jewish chaplain for the Jews and the Anglican for the Anglicans and anyone who doesn't say what religion they are – is becoming increasingly outdated. It was never, really, the best model for Quaker chaplains.

Quaker chaplains now usually work in ecumenical or multifaith teams. We will often be working alongside colleagues who are in paid posts and have several years of training for ministry – hence some of the weekend being aimed at developing confidence and recognising what skills we already have. Working in an ecumenical context may take us out of our comfort zones – for example, into programmed worship – and we may, at times, have to deal with colleagues with a less inclusive view of the chaplaincy's ministry; but equally we might find treasures in other traditions of which we were previously wary.

Quaker chaplains can sometimes feel like square pegs and are advised to identify areas of activity where they can contribute to the team's ministry rather than run the risk of seeming to be the awkward one. Yet chaplaincy teams are often glad to have a Quaker amongst them. In addition to whatever personal skills the Quaker chaplain can bring, the Friend concerned may be skilled in promoting team cooperation, able to offer spiritual support regardless of theology and provide a spiritual space based at a meeting for worship happy to accommodate the diversity of the people we serve.

Good Quakers make good chaplains. The relationship between Quaker chaplains and the wider Quaker community is crucial. We are your representatives and should honestly represent the diversity of contemporary Quakers. We work best when our work is held and supported by our local and area meetings.

First published in The Friend, 2 August 2013

What is *Quaker* chaplaincy today?

Lisa Whistlecroft, former Quaker chaplain at Lancaster University, speaks powerfully here of the role of chaplains in offering a transforming approach to spirituality and human relationships:

So for Quakers, living according to our faith is less about what we believe and more about how what we believe leads us to behave. And here, our testimonies come back into focus. If there is something of God in all people then we believe all people must be equal, that we must be as truthful in our dealings with people as we want to be in our relationship with God, that killing people is attempting to kill a part of God, that no-one is beyond help or salvation, and that it's our duty to do what we can to make this world nearer to what the early gospels call the Kingdom of Heaven. And, incidentally, we're remarkably un-obsessed about what might happen to us after we die.

[...]

From the start, the Chaplaincy Centre was available for purposes other than worship, and it mixed worshipping space with social space. Quakers have always met for worship in the Quiet Room – a room in the unconsecrated lobe of the building. This is in conformity with the way we practise our religion – on the one hand we can worship anywhere and do not need consecrated space – on the other, everything that we do is an act of worship, an act of sacrament. When Quakers rejected priests and communion they did not dispense with the priesthood or the sacraments – they dispensed with the laity and with the secular.

From an address given as part of the celebration of the 40th anniversary of the Chaplaincy Centre at Lancaster University, 2009



Photo: © Mike Pinches 2011

In this section:

* Introduction	9
* The workplace chaplain	10
* The hospital chaplain	11
* The chaplaincy role at The Retreat, York	14
* The prison chaplain	16
* Street chaplaincy	20
* The university chaplain	23

What do Quaker chaplains do?

As well as providing chaplaincy services to individuals, the chaplain is there to support the organisation and play a part in making it the best or most human organisation it can be. This includes contributing to the general feel of the place but also raising issues as they appear. This is sometimes cited as a reason why chaplains should not be employees. It may be more difficult to fulfil the 'prophetic' role if your livelihood is at stake.

In brief, Quaker chaplains:

- * offer practical and spiritual care for individuals of all faiths or none for the organisation they serve (whether paid or as a volunteer);
- * minister to the most vulnerable, including those without the support of friends and family;
- * help establish a visible presence for the life, work and witness of Quakers in a wide range of communities;
- * act as a channel between the organisation they serve and their area meeting.

Here, chaplains share their stories and insights, and reflect on their chaplaincy year.



Photo: © Mike Pinches 2012

The workplace chaplain

“Our action, our being in the world, springs from our spiritual experience.”

Bernie Thomas of Hardshaw & Mann Area Meeting is Quaker chaplain to Mission in the Economy (MitE), a chaplaincy organisation based in the north west of England providing chaplains to workplace, retail or industrial situations. Provision of chaplaincy support may be at the request of a particular workplace, or at the suggestion of MitE. Here, Bernie explains how he became involved in chaplaincy and shares some of his lessons:

I became interested in MitE when I was convener at Liverpool Meeting House premises committee and spent two years attending their meetings and exploring the possibility of becoming a chaplain. I shadowed some of the other chaplains, at the airport and in several shopping centres, which allowed me to view chaplaincy from both a generic and specifically Quaker viewpoint.

Eventually, I was given a position at Liverpool's Local Solutions, which is a big social enterprise, bringing together a huge variety of socially beneficial activities, ranging from a homeless hostel, a domestic abuse unit, through helping youngsters back into work, home care for the elderly and water sports for everybody.

I have been a Quaker chaplain at Local Solutions for over two years now and in that time I have learned quite a lot about the organisation, as a group of people and as a force for change. I would venture to say that I've also learned about me as a chaplain and as a person.

As a chaplain, I learned a few things quite quickly:

- * Don't try to be something you are not.
- * Don't try to make others into something they are not.
- * Your role as a chaplain, almost always, is to listen, support and encourage.
- * Be consistent.

I think that to be a chaplain of any use at all, I have to love the people I care for and, at least in some respects, admire them, be they in a shopping centre, a prison, a hospital... or part of an absolutely brilliant social enterprise like mine!

Chaplaincy is, or can be, outreach of the best kind, the silent kind, the listening kind. But it is also something else. It is very personal inreach, in that it brings you not just closer to those you are 'chaplaining', but also, perhaps most importantly, nearer to your God.



Photo: Artinliverpool.com. MitE 2014

What do Quaker chaplains do?

Roderick Keefe of Cotteridge Meeting has recently been appointed a Quaker chaplain to West Midlands Police and is probably the first Quaker Police Chaplain in the country:

We have a very good mix of representatives and faith advisors, 40 in total, covering all of the major faiths.

So what do we do? We attend interfaith meetings, visit other places of worship, have chaplains' meetings, attend police briefings, and we can go out with police officers and PCSOs (Police Community Support Officers) in the course of their duties meeting the public, and, more importantly, drink a lot of tea and coffee and talk to people.

I am based at Solihull and have two responsibilities. The first is to provide pastoral care to anybody who needs it – police officers, police staff and their families – when affected by crisis or illness or injury. The second is to help build links between the police and the local community by attending community meetings, forums and police station open days. In addition to visits to other faiths' places of worship, I have become part of the Community Justice Group, and hopefully with my connections with the police can help in creating more useful links.

I am looking forward to the next year as my role begins to expand into what could be a very challenging but enjoyable role.

The hospital chaplain

““ “We're not here because you are dying.”

Joannie Harrison of Cambridgeshire Area Meeting was teaching four days a week with young people excluded from school when she volunteered at a local mental health unit for the remaining day. She was supposed to be there for a month until a new salaried chaplain was appointed, but in fact the process took over a year. She loved building relationships with both patients and staff, and 'flagging up' chaplaincy. Here she explains what happened next and offers encouragement to all who are thinking of taking chaplaincy on:

The significance of spirituality in a holistic approach to recovery was already widely accepted in the mental health setting. I continued to work there when two other chaplains were appointed, and I shared my experiences with them. Working as part of a team gave me confidence; I hadn't realised how much I had learnt.

When the post of chaplain at the City Hospital was advertised, I had already decided that I would like to move out of teaching and into chaplaincy should a suitable post become available. I was greatly encouraged and supported by my chaplaincy colleagues, but knew that most of my experience and training had been in the mental health setting. (I also knew that historically the post had always been given to ordained ministers – Anglican or Methodist.)

continued...

I was appointed paid chaplain at the City Hospital in January 2012, having been interviewed alongside Anglicans and Methodists. I have to stress that my appointment was as a chaplain to all faiths and none, not as a Quaker chaplain, though in my letter of application and during my interview I was clear and direct about my faith perspective. I was the first Quaker that the hospital had appointed to be a chaplain, and was the only person not to be wearing a clerical collar at that time. Two years later we have moved from being a purely Anglican-Methodist team to being multi-denominational and multifaith. As Quakers we are in a unique position to open up chaplaincy and ensure its availability to everyone, all faiths and none.

In the two years I have been a chaplain, I have encountered only a handful of people who have insisted on seeing an ordained minister from their own tradition. One patient I was called to, who was a retired Anglican vicar, actually said, "Of course, Joannie, you are in the perfect position as a Quaker to be a chaplain, you are able to connect with us all..."

In my experience, people ask for a chaplain when they are struggling... when they have been given bad news... when they, or their loved one, is close to death... or when they simply can't cope any more with whatever burden they are carrying. Sometimes they simply want you to be alongside them, to listen whilst they try to absorb and make sense of their position. Sometimes they want to vent their anger and frustration. More than anything they want to be heard.

As Quakers we speak of knowing each other in those things which are eternal, and there have been many times when I've felt this sense of connectedness in the hospital. When someone is facing death, or the brutal reality of life, they speak their truth. There is no act put on, no protective persona put forward, and they want the same authenticity in return.

When this is allowed, something happens, things change – I'm not saying that the blind see, or the lame walk... but a shift takes place. It's like a gathered meeting for worship. No ritual is needed or special reading, but two people meeting on a level. As John Woolman writes in *Qf&p* 26.61: "Where the heart stands in perfect sincerity ... in whomsoever this takes root and grows, of what nation soever, they become brethren".

This connectedness, this sense of being accompanied in some way on their journey, is what makes the difference to patients. It's what they are looking for in a chaplain.

As Quakers we can think outside the box, which puts us in a very strong position for connecting with people. Outreach happens without any planning or forethought... everyday conversations with staff on wards, visitors in corridors, and patients at their bedside, talks to newcomers to the Healthcare Trust in the lecture theatre, meeting bereaved parents, planning and conducting baby funerals, all manner of literature pertaining to chaplaincy, all bring Quakerism to the fore. I've lost count of the number of times I've been told, "I've never met a Quaker before" and, of course, misconceptions can be addressed: "Are Quakers allowed to wear pink? I thought you had to wear grey..."

Offering support to staff is an inevitable part of my role. The pressure of working in an NHS hospital, with 600+ beds, working as part of multidisciplinary teams, serving a large geographical area and multifaith population, trying to meet set targets under the scrutiny of managers, the public and the media, can take its toll. Staff can talk and offload in a confidential setting. We have also begun a lunchtime 'reflection and prayer' session, Again the Quaker influence has filtered through; a short reflection is offered followed by silence during which staff can offer verbal prayer if they feel moved to do so. Staff see it as "time out", "an oasis", "time to connect".

What do Quaker chaplains do?

I would encourage anyone seriously drawn to this ministry to take up the challenge. The rewards are beyond measure.

Chaplains are expected not to preach, proselytise or put forward their own denominational bias. Peter Wilson of Bournemouth Coastal Area Meeting is a volunteer Quaker chaplain working in an NHS Hospital Trust and describes a typical day here:

Religion is not specifically mentioned unless initiated by the patients either by word or by non-verbal cues. Our main role is to show that we care, that we are able to give time, and that we are there to listen reflectively to their stories. The interaction is always focused on a patient-led agenda, wherever the patient is coming from.

Let me describe some aspects of a typical day. I'm given a minimum of two wards to cover plus a small list of specific referrals, of which some will have been seen previously. Lately I have been visiting the two stroke units, acute and rehab. On entering the ward, I first make myself known to the staff sister or ward receptionist and request permission to talk to patients, at the same time finding out who is in particular need of a chaplaincy visit. I try to focus on patients who may not get visitors. One such clue is to see whether the patient has get-well cards or not.

Having introduced myself to the patient and checked how they're feeling today, I let them set the agenda in terms of what they want to talk about. This usually happens spontaneously, though occasional prompts can also help. Patients will often tell you things they wouldn't mention to the medical staff or their own relatives. Their stories range from harrowing to inspiring.

As a Quaker lay chaplain, I'm working on two levels: the cerebral level while listening to their story, but also very much at the spiritual level. At this unspoken, unobserved level, I am attempting to let that of God within me reach out to that of God in the patient, with the belief that healing can be given on this plane of being. I ask to be used as a channel for His healing... The only observable signs may be relaxation, a sense of calm, and a deeper feeling of being cared for. In extreme cases, we hope that we can help the patient to have 'a better death'.

Being a part of a strong ecumenical team (nearly all denominations represented) continues to be an uplifting experience in which we all support each other. We are all bonded together as team players with a common purpose. We treat all patients as individuals, respecting their privacy and dignity. We are all-inclusive, non-judgemental, recognising that our diversity is strength. I have felt very privileged and fulfilled to be a part of this wonderful example of 'best practice'.

The chaplaincy role at The Retreat, York

““People are respected for who they are, wherever they may be on their spiritual journey.”

Here, Bronwen Gray, who works at the only Quaker specialist mental healthcare facility in the country, talks about how she came to be its chaplain and what her role involves. She has taken a course of academic study in Healthcare Chaplaincy at Leeds Metropolitan University, which has given her knowledge of the wider chaplaincy world, opportunities to meet others working in the field and time to reflect on specific areas of her work. She is supported by regular supervision from a local Quaker, who is a professional counsellor/therapist, and says the support of someone who understands the challenges of working in the mental health field and is also a Quaker with a shared spiritual perspective has been invaluable.



The Friends' Retreat, near York.

The retreat. © Religious Society of Friends in Britain

My post was advertised in *The Friend* and I was appointed as part-time Quaker chaplain in 2010 (the post was in fact called Resident Quaker at that time). The Retreat is a Quaker-run psychiatric hospital in York, opened in 1796. The post of chaplain was only open to Quaker applicants. Why did I apply? Well, this seemed like a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to work in a Quaker organisation in an area of work about which I am passionate!

As we rarely have Quaker patients I function as a generic chaplain, supporting patients of all faiths or none. We have a team of voluntary representatives from other churches and faiths whom we can call upon when needed, some of whom visit regularly. In most hospitals mainstream Christian ministers are paid chaplains and Quakers are chaplaincy volunteers: the complete opposite happens at The Retreat.

So what does the Quaker chaplain at The Retreat do?

The role involves a range of duties as follows:

- * Providing one-to-one spiritual support to patients. This can involve supporting people dealing with a bereavement; engaging with people around questions concerning faith, guilt, forgiveness and other issues; supporting people to mark poignant anniversaries, for example by creating some kind of therapeutic ritual; simply 'being there' and being a listening ear; walking and talking with people around our beautiful grounds.
- * Providing shared worship opportunities. These include a weekly half-hour Quaker meeting for worship (mostly attended by local Friends, but patients and staff do sometimes come along too), and a fortnightly hymn-singing session. The latter is led by local Anglicans and Methodists, who sometimes bring Holy Communion.
- * Running shared worship at Christmas and Easter, involving local clergy as appropriate. Our Christmas service is a home-grown community event that involves staff and patients doing readings and playing instruments. It is a gathering of patients, families and staff coming together in a simple but moving act of worship. We usually include a Quaker reading amongst readings from other traditions.
- * Supporting or helping to support families, if required, when our older patients die. If there is no family I am responsible for making the arrangements. This ranges from registering deaths to organising funerals, arranging headstones and supporting staff along the way.

The Retreat has enabled me to develop a much wider approach to chaplaincy than might normally be associated with hospitals. So I have been able to develop community art projects, establish a regular yoga class, develop a lawn labyrinth, involve patients in planting trees, and more recently a vegetable-growing project. I also edit the hospital magazine and this is a beautiful opportunity to share and encourage people's creativity, for example through photography and poetry. I hope this year to offer our first in-house retreat as a way of nurturing and supporting staff. We may open this to local Quakers as well.

It goes without saying that it is a privilege to work as a Quaker chaplain in a Quaker hospital. The organisation is keen to promote and support spirituality and takes a broad view of what this can entail. People are respected for who they are, wherever they may be on their spiritual journey.



Photo: © Mike Pinches 2011

The prison chaplain

“It is essential to be open to the leadings of the Spirit.”

Most prison chaplains work in fairly hostile environments with people who have done often terrible things. Being a prison chaplain can be a lonely experience and there are frustrations and disappointments. Jamie Wrench, clerk of the Crime, Community and Justice Sub-Committee of Quaker Peace & Social Witness, reflects here on the annual Quaker prison chaplains' conference held at Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre:

Annual conferences are good for discovering how things are going around the country, and we had the chance to share such information and also to share why these people take on this job. In my group the response was typically modest: “you fall into it”; “two prisoners wanted visiting by a Quaker and I said I’d do it”; “I was nominated” (!); “I went in to discover how it works”. But for all of them it was clear this was an immensely rewarding task. “Prison is a horrible, horrible place,” said one “you’re faced with people who are mentally ill, ruined by drugs and alcohol, right in the pits – and they are so grateful that someone outside is coming in to see them”.

It’s impossible to work this closely within the system without becoming all too aware of its frailties: the lack of suitable training opportunities, the sudden departures of inmates for no apparent reason, the effect upon families (in the words of one Friend, “I was struck by the way the families served the sentence too”). Unsurprisingly, one meets a degree of weariness at the relentless optimism of the current political correctness, with its emphasis on ‘protecting the public’, ‘delivering’ punishment, ‘managing’ offenders and ‘assessment of risk’.

This extract is from an article in The Friend, 15 November 2013

What do Quaker chaplains do?

There are a wide range of prisons. Male adult prisoners are categorised from A to D, with A describing the most dangerous and D those most trusted not to try and escape. Female adult prisoners are also classified into four categories, ranging from 'restricted' to 'open'.

“Without Quaker friends and volunteers the job would be lonely.”

Yvonne Dixon is Quaker chaplain to Grendon Prison, which operates as a therapeutic community in which men serving long terms of imprisonment for serious crimes choose to spend a few years of their sentence engaging in group therapy and being challenged to look deeply at problematic behaviour patterns and entrenched beliefs that have contributed to their offences. They risk being exposed and vulnerable as they share powerful emotions and are robustly challenged by both therapists and other inmates. Whilst part of a chaplaincy team, Yvonne stresses the important support of other Quakers:

I became interested in Grendon even before I was a Quaker, because the head of my daughter's primary school encouraged parents to learn about the prison on our doorstep, where he led poetry workshops. I was very impressed and intrigued by the place when I visited it during one of the prison's regular open days.

When I began attending Quaker meetings in 2001, I learnt about the group that meets weekly in Grendon and so started to attend here too with the 'Freddie Lakers', as we've been dubbed in rhyming slang. I was appointed Quaker chaplain in November 2006.

Each Wednesday afternoon I visit the prison wings and in the evening I bring in a group of Quaker volunteers to worship with inmates in the prison chapel. Many times I have heard both volunteers and inmates say how much they look forward to the meeting and how moving and uplifting it is, even though we sometimes hear some desperately sad stories in ministry and in private conversations.

continued...



Sculpture (detail) by El Anatsui (Ghana) 2010

What do Quaker chaplains do?

What I most often hear the men say they value is the quiet, a chance to get away from the noise on the wings and the 'inner noise' after a particularly heavy therapy session. Sometimes our half-hour period of worship is entirely silent and sometimes inmates or volunteers may speak. Afterwards there is a chance for conversation and I make sure there is a supply of Quaker books and magazines for those who want to enquire further or who need something to read if they find the prospect of silence too unfamiliar or unsettling.

I remember one inmate who would not join our circle at first, but chose to sit in a corner watching us, saying he did not like to close his eyes or have his back to anyone. He gradually joined the circle and surprised us a few times by venturing to offer spoken ministry.

A chaplain's duty is to staff as well, and I have appreciated the occasions when an officer has joined us for worship. Recently a Sikh officer came and asked us about Quakers and our place within the Christian tradition.

I have had to think hard about my own beliefs and values, which have been subjected to tests as diverse as the question "Do you believe in Noah's Ark, miss?" to a philosophical conversation with a Hindu prisoner about causation and responsibility, which left my mind reeling.

It is hard sometimes to feel part of the chaplaincy team, whom I may not see for several weeks at a time. Without Quaker volunteers and friends the job would be lonely, and I am very grateful for their support and the social occasions we arrange a couple of times a year.

Prison is a difficult environment at the best of times, and particular challenges at the moment are staff shortages, which mean that arrangements for the meeting for worship have to be changed at short notice, and more restrictive security measures, which are making it harder to bring new volunteers into the prison.

It would be very easy to descend into a spiral of negativity over such things, but I believe it is crucial not to succumb to it personally, nor to feed into it when talking with prisoners. I take an interest in reform to the criminal justice system through my membership of various organisations, but I see my chaplaincy work as different from this. For me, it's essential to be rooted in my own daily practices of stillness, prayer and meditation, and open to the leadings of the Spirit manifested through the support of Quaker friends and in many other ways in order to be able to follow George Fox in his wonderful advice to "walk cheerfully".

This extract is from www.quakersintheworld.org

Pippa Ling has recently been appointed as a Quaker prison chaplain following a long period of induction:

I have been accompanying Terry Taylor on his visits to HMP Whatton for over two years, and took over from him just before Christmas 2013 (Terry was Quaker Prison Chaplain for more than ten years at HMP Whatton). I now go in once a month to facilitate a meeting for worship, half an hour of checking in with each other, half an hour of silence following a short reading, then half an hour of discussion. I also attend chaplaincy meetings and 'faith events', to which I am invited. I have facilitated a meeting between an inmate and a Quaker chaplain from his old prison.

What do Quaker chaplains do?

Kay Bohm was nominated by her area meeting over 15 years ago and has been chaplain at HMP Risley ever since:

I retired from my full-time teaching job two years ago and am now employed by the prison as one of the 'sessional' chaplains, working one day a week within the multifaith team. I also cover any emergency absences or holidays.

I arrive at the prison at 8am and, along with two colleagues, assess and distribute the workload for the day, which includes: visiting all prisoners on an ACCT document (active care plan, for prisoners with a history of self-harm), attending ACCT reviews, interviewing all new 'receptions' and visiting the Segregation Unit. Then there are a variety of other issues that may occur, dealing with deaths or illnesses of relatives, sorting problems with visits and sometimes arranging candle lighting or an appropriate service for prisoners unable to attend funerals of relatives. It's a full day's work and I usually leave around 5pm.

Tony Tucker (who is officially Quaker Prison Chaplain at HMP Manchester) and I hold regular Quaker meetings on a Sunday at HMP Risley, at the moment every two weeks.

Chaplaincy work in prison is something you can only partially prepare for, says Emma Roberts, Quaker Chaplain at HMP Leeds:

The main challenge for me, in a big local prison with a transient population who you may only see once over a few months, is the need to simply be there, respond to the inmates' questions, share in their sorrows and try to offer some comfort as I can. This is best understood as a role that demands your whole person.

Chaplains are often welcomed as being different from the officers who can be trusted with the whole range of human experiences and emotions – this is a daunting task that draws on emotional and physical resources as well as spiritual. However, it is enormously satisfying to know that each visit, each conversation, is so valued by the men here and that they are so truly grateful for our time and care. Of great surprise to them is that these meetings are almost always the most profound and meaningful parts of my spiritual practice. It is they who teach me so much about life and the Spirit, it really is the most blessed service to carry out on behalf of Quakers.

Quaker prison chaplains are now supported by a Quaker Life committee that nominates a faith adviser to the National Offender Management Service, the body responsible for the way prisoners are treated. A 'faith endorsement' from the committee is required before any nomination from an area meeting for a prison chaplain will be accepted by the prison concerned.

Street chaplaincy

“It’s about showing people that God is present at all times and in every situation.”

Street Pastors is an interdenominational network of Christian charities operating across the UK and worldwide, in which individual churches join together to take their values onto the streets. Street pastors are Christian adults with a concern for their community, who undergo 12 days of training in order to voluntarily patrol the streets of towns and cities at night, helping and caring for people in practical ways.

Street pastors work closely with councils and police in their local areas, but maintain an operational independence. They seek to maintain confidentiality as far as they legally can, and do not have any powers of enforcement or arrest.

A number of Quakers are street pastors or street angels; they include Philip Jones (Leicester Area Meeting) and Rosemary Emmett (Bournemouth Coastal Area Meeting), who share their experience here of providing practical and pastoral care on the street:



Photo: Philip Jones 2014

I have been a pastor since the start of the Market Harborough Street Pastor Initiative. I am Chair of the Management Board and the only Quaker.

Street Pastors have patrolled the streets of Market Harborough since 2009. Currently we have 18 trained pastors – the oldest is over 80, some others are at or nearing retirement age, and the others are in full-time employment. We are split slightly in favour of women over men, about 60/40.

We do not stand in squares preaching or walk the streets handing out tracts. With 14 modules of training we are called to be practical exemplars for God’s love on the streets.

For a flavour of the kind of things we do, here is what happened when I was out last Saturday, a very busy night with many passing general conversations including:

- * a long conversation with one man concerning faith and its relationship with science and reason;
- * a long time spent caring for and organising the safe return home of a woman abandoned by her boyfriend and left without phone, money or her shoes.

We also:

- * counselled a young man on his relationship with his partner who was physically abusive towards him, signposting him to other support;
- * handed out seven pairs of flip-flops and collected 27 glass bottles;
- * gave out three bottles of water;
- * swept up broken glass in two areas of the High Street.

What do Quaker chaplains do?

Two further situations that were of special interest occurred:

One of these was a situation concerning a (local) teenager [...] who had been killed in an accident whilst on holiday the week before, and we were alerted, by another agency, to the fact that there might well be some of his friends in town that night. This indeed proved to be the case [and] I was engaged in talking to some of them and giving them a listening ear for as long as they needed.

The other was meeting with a young woman [...] coming to terms with the suicide of her brother some ten days previously. We were able to come alongside her and give her some comfort.

We are supported by a prayer team and they are every bit as important as the pastors who go on patrol.

It's not a question of taking the church onto the streets; it's about showing people that God is present at all times and in every situation. You engage with people where they are and at their time and need. And as this week has shown, that could be at any time and it could be any need.

Bournemouth Meeting House is situated in the adjoining neighbourhood of Boscombe, parts of which are now listed among the 10% most deprived areas in England. This is due to the influx of alcohol- and drug-dependent adults from all over the country who are attracted by the availability of accommodation. The resulting lifestyles cause many social problems that are being addressed by the local council and organisations like Boscombe Churches Together, which set up a Street Angels team. When they asked for volunteers, Rosemary Emmett felt compelled to help:*

The Boscombe Angels team is part of a national network of nightlife street workers, an outreach of the Christian Nightlife Initiative organisation. Our local work consists of helping nightclub revellers and homeless street dwellers. Angels are mostly from spiritual communities, though others often join us. In our group there are Catholics, Baptists and Anglican members. I am the only Quaker and there are two friends with no spiritual affiliation.

We work on Friday nights when the highly popular nightclub, the O₂, has its big gigs. The club takes 1,800 people, mostly aged between 18 and 45 years.

After prayer in the local Regeneration Scheme office at 8.30pm we go out in groups of four or five. We work in mixed-sex groups, chatting to those in queues waiting to be frisked by club security staff before entering the nightclub. We listen to people telling stories about their lives. Sometimes they will tell us they are not going to drink much (not surprising with drinks costing £7 a glass!). If they need help when they emerge later on we hope they remember us in our high-visibility yellow jackets.

continued...

* From the ward profile for Boscombe West, published by Bournemouth Borough Council in 2011 (see www.bournemouth.gov.uk/CouncilDemocracy/Wards/2011wardprofiles/Boscombe-West-2011.pdf).

Street Angels' small team groups move together all the time. If one of us needs to return to the office for whatever reason then all of us walk back and we phone the other groups to let them know our movements.

We wear heavy-duty gloves to pick up glass bottles and cans and dispose of them in street bins; this prevents 'glass fights' and is known to have generally reduced this form of violent behaviour. At the end of the night, between the hours of 1am and 5am, Angels are nearby to help those with worries, e.g. a lost mobile, handbag, purse, wallet, shoes, socks or medications; we check with club security. Sometimes they are so drunk they are unable to walk; Angels call a taxi and ask the driver to take them home; if he won't we call the police for help. Sometimes they've lost the friend they arrived with and don't have their mobile number; we investigate.

If some aggravation occurs between people, we listen and talk to them to break the hostility, offering them a lollipop from the bundle we carry in our pockets – sucking one reduces the heat of any argument! We also carry a supply of flip-flop beach sandals for those who have lost shoes. In the case of major assaults we call the police immediately.

When we have helped a drunk person into a taxi we put a Street Angels card into their coat pocket so that they find it when they wake up in the morning. We also carry cards for the Samaritans, Rape Centre, Night Shelters and other community support centres.

The (mainly male) homeless people we meet may not always be able to gain access to night shelters or have difficulty in giving up their drug and alcohol use whilst on the premises, often a requirement of entry. Last winter these hungry, cold and often ill individuals were bedding down in shop doorways close to where others would be spending their earnings the following week in the nightclub.

We listened and chatted to individuals, distributed weatherproof sleeping bags and brought coffees to those too settled to get up and walk to the nearest 24-hour cafe – someone might take their doorway. Some had saved up for or been given a small tent, which they carried with them day and night for fear of it being taken.

In such circumstances a shot of something in the arm or swallowed can induce temporary relief. We note when someone is pushing a substance and mention it to the local police, with whom we have friendly relationships.

Statistics show that the presence of Street Angels in communities in Britain has brought about a great reduction in violent crime, sexual assault and anti-social behaviour.

Street Angels come in both sexes and all sizes and ages. Ours are late-teens to mid-eighties. The minimum commitment is one evening per month and a desire to help keep the neighbourhood peaceful. Training sessions are given by professionals and the police, both on how to respond to others as well as protect oneself.

One night recently a man going home from a night out with friends came up to us and said: "Oh you wonderful Street Angels, keep up the good work! You don't know it but it was because of you I turned my life around a year ago."

It's uplifting to hear such encouraging words.

Taken from QAADRANT No. 74 Winter 2013/14

The university chaplain

“It comes as a constant surprise to me that people know so little about us.”

There are particular challenges and opportunities that grow from working in a fluid, changing, multicultural, intellectual community like a university. Most students and staff demonstrate willingness to having their assumptions challenged by speaking with people of other faiths and experiences, and expanding their understanding of the diversity of religious and spiritual practice.

Some university chaplaincies are supported by pastoral assistants who offer generic advice and may not have a faith label. They may be the first point of call for specialist help.

In 2007 Mary Munro-Hill, a part-time tutor in the Department of Modern Languages, saw that the chaplaincy lists displayed throughout the University of Hull showed “Quaker chaplaincy – vacant”. As a Quaker of long standing she thought she could offer this ministry and mentioned to Friends how sorry she was to see that no Quaker chaplain at the university had been appointed. Eventually she received a letter from her area meeting and accepted the nomination.

Her second triennium – the three-year period that area meetings usually make appointments for – came to an end in January 2014, and she recorded these notes on her time as a chaplain at the University of Hull:



Photo: Paul Jeorrett 2013

In our university the Anglican is the “lead chaplain”. In 2007 this person held a full-time appointment, funded by the Diocese of York. When she left, another full-time chaplain was appointed and stayed for a year. When a re-appointment was considered by the diocese, it was decided to make it a half-time post. A busy parish priest was appointed as chaplain, funded by the Church. A similar thing happened to our Roman Catholic chaplain: although he continues at the university he has also been given a large parish to serve. Both churches are trying to make savings and can no longer afford full-time university chaplains.

The rest of our Christian ecumenical team are unpaid volunteers. In addition to the Anglican, Roman Catholic and Quaker chaplains already mentioned, there are ministers from the Baptist, Methodist and United Reformed Churches.

The Jewish chaplain, a layman, is invited to join us occasionally, especially at the Founder’s Day service, when he reads from the Hebrew Bible. He is invited, too, to attend the annual Welcome Service, as is the Imam.

We are currently considering setting up a multifaith chaplaincy and are attending official discussions with the university concerning the various options.

As chaplain, I have organised a meeting for worship every second and fourth Tuesday in the month during term time for the past six years.



Photo: © Mike Pinches 2011

It has been both enjoyable and rewarding to work in an ecumenical team. We hold fortnightly meetings, at most of which I have managed to be present. (Some of us attend rather better than others!) We share the planning of our university services, seeing that each denomination receives its fair share of participation.

The advantages of having a Quaker chaplain are mainly to inform colleagues and students of the Religious Society of Friends, to be available to anyone who needs help, spiritual or practical (and in this capacity the ecumenical chaplains work together), and to give special prominence to the Quaker way. As Quaker Chaplain I have always played an active part in every ecumenical service at the university, reading lessons or leading prayers, and also in the annual Christmas carol service at Holy Trinity Church, Hull, where I delivered the sermon last year. That was an opportunity for me to include something about Quakers, and several people stayed behind to speak to me after the service, showing genuine interest. It comes as a constant surprise to me that people know so little about us, despite our many attempts as a Society to inform them!

During Freshers' Week the chaplaincy team has a stall, and I distribute Quaker leaflets and copies of *Advices & queries*. I am present at the Welcome Service every year, where I say a few words about Quakers and, again, distribute Quaker literature. The copies of *Advices & queries* disappear in minutes on these occasions. I consider all this activity a wonderful opportunity for outreach. Incidentally, the names, denominations, telephone numbers and email addresses of the chaplains are always printed in the order of service.

All in all, I feel that my work as chaplain at the University of Hull has been a worthwhile endeavour, as I have succeeded in spreading the Quaker word! In so saying, I must acknowledge the generosity of the university in allowing the chaplains to play such a privileged role.

Chaplaincy times and seasons



Photo: © Mike Pinches 2011

Each sector served by chaplaincy will have a different annual pattern or cycle. Depending on where chaplains are working, there are different things to look out for. Robin Fishwick considers landmarks in the university year.

Quaker mistrust of “times and seasons” can be one more example of how the Quaker university chaplain can be drawn out of their comfort zone, but that same mistrust can give us a bit of flexibility that is often required when matching the outside year to the peculiarities of the academic year. An example of both was my being asked to lead the university carol service last year – quite a bit out of my Quaker comfort zone for other reasons as well as the “times and seasons” issue, but at least I was able to enter the proceedings with gusto without sharing my Anglican colleague’s misgivings about celebrating Christmas in early Advent. The early December date was the most appropriate for the students as the next week they would be partying, and after that, back home.

Other landmarks in the outside year may have to be shifted for our purposes. Anything Easter-related would have to be done in Lent. Several universities now have their own Christian Aid Week, as the national week again occurs during student holidays – Christian Aid are quite happy with us doing this, and resources are easily available. A slightly different issue is Quaker Week – my own feeling is that for our purposes it sits too close to Freshers’ Weeks and can easily be lost or subsumed. We may need to institute a National Student Quaker Week at a better time in the year.

Dates we can use are Interfaith Week, Remembrance Day, Holocaust Day, Fair Trade Fortnight, Climate Week and Workers’ Memorial Day (28 April – popular with staff unions). Otherwise we are matching the ebb and flow of the university year: Freshers’ Week, the quieter times when most students are on holiday, exams, graduations and end-of-year celebrations. One of my chaplaincy colleagues defined our role as “to find out what God is doing, and join in”. We are there to be with our students and staff – and that involves sharing their time.

Chaplaincy times and seasons

There are religious celebrations and events that are enjoyed by people of no faith as secular holidays. When working in a multifaith chaplaincy the festivals of Eid, Ramadan, Yom Kippur, Diwali, Hanukah, etc. – in addition to events of the Christian calendar – may also be celebrated. Chaplains should respect them all and will quite probably be asked to help organise and manage such celebrations. The Shap calendar of religious festivals (see page 39) is an essential resource.

Bronwen Gray reminds us that high days and holidays may not always present an opportunity for joy and laughter and can present a problem:

For some people, festivals such as Christmas can be a difficult time. Chaplains need to be sensitive to people's personal response to festivals and support them accordingly. For example, a prisoner away from home may find Christmas difficult, or a patient in a psychiatric hospital may have difficult childhood associations with festival periods.

Anniversaries can also be difficult for some people, for example the anniversary of a bereavement or a date when something traumatic took place. Chaplains may be able to support the person to mark those anniversaries in an appropriate way. This may help them to get through the day itself, to let go of some of the negative associations, and to create some positive associations and a coping strategy for future years.

Workplace chaplain Bernie Thomas offers an insight into the calendars of particular workplaces:

If you are a chaplain to a shopping centre, or perhaps a single department store, peak times such as Christmas and sales periods are very important – stress runs very high at such times and a chaplain can, if nothing else, lend a sympathetic ear and an encouraging word. Similarly, in trade lulls, stores struggle, sometimes even close, and staff fear for their jobs.

In the charity sector, winter can often be a stressful time: debt crises from fuel bills, health issues for the elderly and for those on the streets. Domestic abuse, sadly, experiences a sharp rise around the Christmas period.

Large manufacturing plants, such as a car plant or shipyard, will have their own definite cycles, such as leading up to a new car registration number, a new model or a ship launch. It is important that chaplains are there at such times to offer support – but of course without getting in the way! It is not the best time to take that two-week break you were planning.

And then there are the successes, and the chaplain must be there to celebrate and praise those who helped bringing them about, including God of course, in whatever form he/she manifests. Sometimes, especially in the social sector, staff often just crack on. Quite rarely do they tell each other what a great job they are doing. A chaplain can and should, however. It is truly amazing what a difference it makes to all of us when someone says "That's brilliant!", "How on earth did you manage that?" or "I am really proud to be a chaplain here."

One word of caution on the subject of working to a calendar. Never get complacent, thinking "I've got the hang of this". You haven't. Every year new changes and challenges present themselves; that is what keeps us doing it.

Chaplaincy essentials

Everyone, in whatever setting they work or whichever kind of chaplaincy they serve, brings their own insight, knowledge and gifts. They also usually have skill gaps that need recognition, advice, training and support. Those with experience of chaplaincy have identified these areas:

A firm understanding of the Quaker way

Chaplains need to be able to respond with confidence to questions about why they are Quakers and, through listening, communicate their experience as Quakers in language that others can relate to.

Joannie Harrison, the Quaker chaplain at Peterborough Hospital, explains she is a Quaker who feels at home using religious language, which she finds helpful in her role:

Courses run by Tim Peat Ashworth at Woodbrooke have been immensely helpful in enabling me to speak with a Quaker voice whilst using traditional Christian language. Once a month I lead Sunday worship in the chapel. The Bishop has licensed me so that I can offer Holy Communion to patients and as a chaplain I am happy to do this – I am there to enable people to access their own spirituality, not mine, and indeed my affirmation of other religious understandings says much about Quaker values. My address is always from a Quaker perspective – I can do no other – and they have been well received, with comments such as “I’ve never thought of it like that”, “I love your services – you talk with us, not at us”, and *Advices & queries* is immensely popular.

Contact with and the support of area meetings

The relationships between chaplains, the organisation they serve and area meetings are particular to different kinds of chaplaincy. They vary across Britain Yearly Meeting and in some cases the process of appointment may be complex. It is important that Quaker chaplains are encouraged and supported by their area meetings and where appropriate nominated by their meetings. Area meetings are expected to be the touchstone, the place where interested Friends and organisations will go for information and advice about chaplaincy:

It may be that an area meeting (AM) is asked by a local meeting or approached by a particular organisation to provide a Quaker chaplain. You might then hear about it at a meeting for business or read about it in a newsletter and think, “Yes, here’s my chance.” Or, as in the cases described above where the calling comes from within and a particular chaplaincy role comes to mind, you might approach your AM or local meeting to ask for its nomination and support. (Bernie Thomas)

Alastair Thomas, clerk of Lancashire Central & North Area Meeting, recalls an AM fellowship/workshop day on prison chaplaincy held a couple of years ago:

It revealed some 20–25 Friends involved/concerned with work for ex-offenders or other aspects of the criminal justice system broadly. It heard from the Church of England north west regional coordinating chaplain, whose message was that prison chaplaincy should be seen as quite a long-term commitment (i.e. longer than the usual Quaker pattern of a triennium) best started by prison visiting or in some other way getting to know what is entailed on a 'taster' basis before a formal Quaker appointment is made... Prison chaplaincy teams are becoming more diverse in composition and several now include Muslims.

This highlights the nominating/appointing process. If our nomination/appointment system can find someone to appoint... this has to be in collaboration with the receiving institution, which may (or may not) recognise the appointment and welcome (or not) the appointee, so close coordination is essential.

Clear terms of reference

Once discerned, for some the road to chaplaincy may be simple and direct; for others it can be a long and more complicated journey requiring processes that take time and new learning about organisational matters. In both cases clear terms of reference between chaplains and the organisation they serve, including responsibilities on either side, need to be developed prior to commencement and reviewed at intervals during the period of work:

Whether or not the chaplain is paid or whether a volunteer, there is always a written agreement. Some of us are employees; others work under contract or as a volunteer. Regardless of whether paid or voluntary, the chaplain always reports, in reasonable detail, the work he or she carries out and is answerable for it. (Bernie Thomas)

An openness to various scriptures, traditions, faiths and a sensitivity to other cultures

Working in any faith tradition in a multifaith, intercultural society means being sensitive to a diversity of religious belief and spiritual influences:

There were Buddhists, Eastern Orthodox, Sikhs, Muslims, Catholics, 'non-religious', Baha'i, assorted Christian groups and Quakers. Interestingly, but perhaps not surprisingly, there was agreement among all the faith groups that the main focus should be getting close to God, and living your life rooted in that relationship, out of which one's purpose will naturally flow (while recognising often the difficulty of actually doing this).

Perhaps the most significant difference that came up was between those for whom 'success' is ultimately about salvation and the afterlife (Muslims and Catholics) and those of us for whom such matters are largely imponderable and thus the focus is more on striving for the kingdom of God here on Earth.

One of the values of such events could be seen when it became apparent from a question raised by a young Muslim woman that she thought that predestination was a core Christian doctrine, and Christians present were able to address that.

Phil Chandler, Quaker Chaplain at Lancaster University, reporting on a Faithshare evening.

Understanding Quaker worship – at the heart of action and outreach

Worship, our direct and transforming connection with the Divine, lies at the heart of what it is to be a Quaker, and is the root, source and strength of our engagement with and action in the world. Enabling others to understand our Quaker worship is a vital part of chaplaincy, as is seeking opportunities to share this experience with others. In some chaplaincy settings there may be obvious opportunities to do this; in other settings these opportunities can be much rarer and more difficult to achieve. Part of being a chaplain is the willingness and ability to talk about Quaker worship, both in terms of our personal experience of it and in terms of the broader Quaker understanding:

Obviously it is crucial to understand about Quaker worship, if for no other reason than you frequently get asked about it in the course of your chaplaincy. Though equally obviously, one should always be careful not to push it as the only form of worship available from you.

One is often asked to pray. My response is always positive, though I make it clear that my preference is for the prayers to come from the asker, rather than me.

Quaker action is what we should, as chaplains, be doing. Perhaps not always in a proactive way, since we are usually there to support, not lead. However, our responses to people and situations should, primarily, be Quaker.

We are often serving those of a different faith or none at all. Our actions, our empathy, our listening and responses: this is our outreach. (Bernie Thomas)

Pastoral support

You are expected to support, encourage and respond positively to people who are in difficulty and may be feeling isolated, confused, lost, lonely or grieving. Give a listening ear and time to share their problem. A chaplain is not a counsellor or a therapist. Should the person you are supporting need access to these services, they should be introduced to the organisation's designated counsellors.



Photo: © Mike Pinches 2012

Confidentiality

One of the disciplines of being a chaplain is about letting people confide. Occasionally some terrible things may be recounted, which would be expected to remain between the chaplain and the confidant. It is essential to stay within the boundaries of your chaplaincy role.

All chaplaincy conversations are confidential within the limits of safeguarding children and vulnerable adults. One of the skills/challenges of chaplaincy is hearing the pain/issues from all sides of a given situation and learning how to deal with it, perhaps offering different ways to frame events but always retaining confidentiality. (Barbara Hayes)

Seek out the organisation's policies relating to confidentiality, professional boundaries and so on. They will advise on what action to take if someone discloses information that suggests that either they or someone else is at risk. (Bronwen Gray)

Safeguarding people from harm

Children, young people and adults alike should live a life free from abuse. However, this is not always the case. Where claims of abuse are heard, every organisation must follow legislation, regulation and good practice. Every organisation should have a policy and procedures in place for everyone to observe – including chaplains. Should a safeguarding situation emerge in your ministry as a chaplain, then you should follow the procedures set by the organisation for which you work. These matters should ordinarily remain within the organisation's safeguarding framework and confidential to those directly involved and the safeguarding coordinators. If you feel that those procedures mean that a child (anyone under the age of 18 years) remains at risk of harm, then you may need to talk to your area meeting's safeguarding coordinator and report the matter through them, or report it to the police. If you need to take any action, it is good practice to make notes at the time and then write them up later, keeping the original notes for later reference.

If you do have reason to report a safeguarding matter, you will need to keep that confidential and share it only in general terms with any support group or supervisor you may have.

For more information about safeguarding please contact the Britain Yearly Meeting Safeguarding Coordinator, Michael Booth, at safe@quaker.org.uk.

A support group

Chaplaincy in some settings can be spiritually challenging and emotionally demanding. Chaplains may need to request a formal supervision arrangement to ensure that they can properly process their personal response to the work and maintain their commitment and enthusiasm. This may take the form of an hourly meeting once a month with someone experienced in a supervisory capacity. There may already be a chaplain support group within the organisation or chaplaincy. If so, use it to the full and seek to help others in the group. You may wish to request a support group within your Quaker meeting – even if it is just for you.

Training and development

Everyone needs support in different ways. Contact Quaker Life to find out more about the particular aspect of chaplaincy you might wish to know more about.

Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre manages the 'Equipping for Ministry' programme, which is recommended by chaplains who have completed it. The programme provides a grounding in Quaker theology, history, practice and diversity that is beneficial to chaplains of all kinds. It also offers the perfect opportunity for spiritual development. Currently there is a specific prison chaplaincy thread, and a general chaplaincy thread is being explored. More information can be found at www.woodbrooke.org.uk/pages/equipping.html.

A range of conferences and other courses are available throughout the year from organisations supporting chaplaincy in different sectors. You can find more about these from these websites:

- * Cardiff Centre for Chaplaincy Studies
<https://stmichaels.ac.uk/chaplaincy-studies>
- * Chaplains in Higher Education Liaison Group (CHELG)
www.chelg.org.uk

- * College of Health Care Chaplains (CHCC)
www.healthcarechaplains.org
- * Free Churches Group, Healthcare Chaplaincy
www.freechurches.org.uk/group/group.aspx?id=229826
- * Hospital Chaplaincies Council
www.nhs-chaplaincy-spiritualcare.org.uk
- * UK Board of Healthcare Chaplaincy (UKBHC)
www.ukbhc.org.uk
- * Free Churches Group, Prison Chaplaincy
www.freechurches.org.uk
Use homepage search
- * Ministry of Justice (2013) information
www.justice.gov.uk/jobs
- * Report on Mission in the Economy (MitE)
www.missionintheeconomy.com/real_christmas.pdf
- * Chaplaincy to People at Work
www.workplacechaplaincy.org.uk

Support for Quaker chaplains from Woodbrooke Quaker Study Centre exists in the form of:

- * A Quaker chaplains' weekend (every other year)
- * Woodbrooke prison chaplain courses (over two years)
- * Woodbrooke 'Equipping for Ministry' (over two years).

Find out more at www.woodbrooke.org.uk.

The Quaker Life Network chaplaincy cluster generates and moderates information about chaplaincy at www.quaker.org.uk/chaplaincy and manages a blog offering practical advice and notices for Quaker chaplains.

Quaker Life produces information packs, leaflets and resources that can be used by chaplains. These can be found at www.quaker.org.uk.

There is also the training that the organisation within which you plan to serve as a chaplain will provide. There are plenty of specialist chaplaincy courses in the different sectors that will be suggested to you. However, you may well find that much of the actual chaplaincy training takes the form of shadowing and then partnering practising chaplains, though not necessarily Quaker chaplains. This, of course, is vital – but you should not lose sight of the fact that eventually you will, you must, form your own chaplaincy style, since at the end of the day you have to be comfortable and honest in your work. All chaplaincies are different, one size does not fit all, and each of us brings our unique contribution. (Bernie Thomas)

Becoming a Quaker chaplain

Friends become chaplains for a number of reasons, quite often called to serve their community in a specific way following a leading or through being nominated by their area meeting. Some are familiar with and keen to engage in a new kind of relationship with the organisation they wish to serve. Others are invited to take on the role by an organisation or chaplaincy, generally as part of an ecumenical or interfaith team. Few are paid, and where they are they ensure that their independence and integrity are not compromised.

Testing, sharing, exploring

When reflecting on the prospect of chaplaincy, at any stage, consideration of the following questions may prove to be of value:

- * Is this a leading of love and truth? Have I tested it inwardly?
- * How can I test it further? Have I shared my leading with others?
- * Have I explored the examples of others as demonstrated in Quaker literature and/or scriptures?

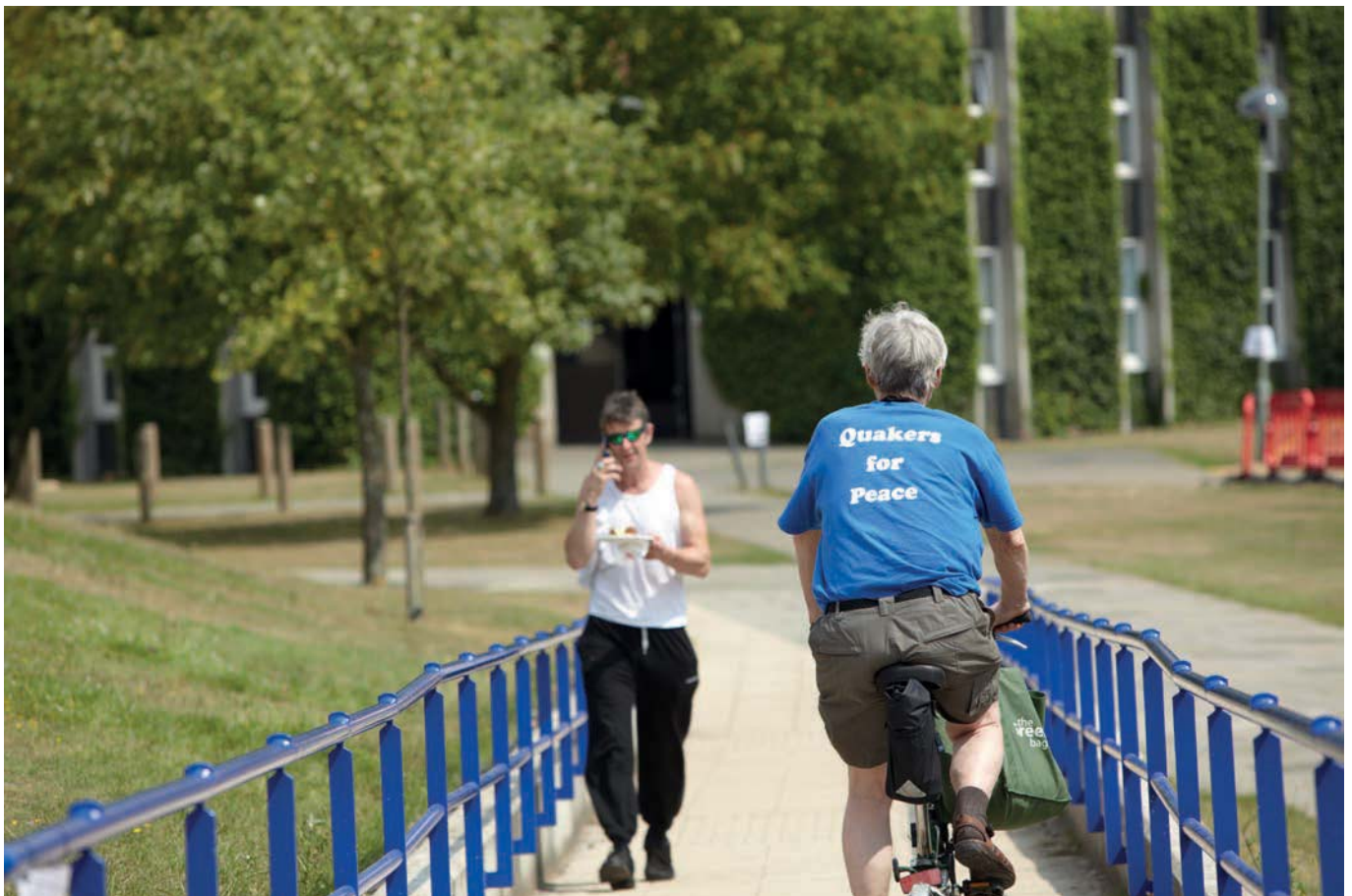


Photo: © Mike Pinches 2011



In addition to their faith community and individuals requesting support, chaplains are mindful of their relationship with the organisation they serve. Before embarking on chaplaincy it would be well to spend some time in active research and reflection, testing your suitability and, where possible, shadowing and learning from chaplains in service.

Some Quaker chaplains may be nominated by their area meeting for a set period, usually three years, whether as a volunteer or to be contracted for paid service to the institution concerned. Others may secure direct employment as paid chaplains to a hospital, for example, and find themselves coordinating work involving chaplains of other faiths. Ideally, all Quaker chaplains are upheld by their area meetings and are regularly invited to report on their work.

For me the most important test is the question: "Am I sure that it is God who is really leading me?" (Bernie Thomas)

Conclusion

Over the past years, there has been an increasingly wide variety of Quaker chaplaincy, not only in terms of institutional settings but in terms of the involvements and opportunities that chaplains experience.

Whilst we have touched on many of these, the real purpose of this brief guide is to identify some of the themes, skills and experiences common to most, if not all, Quaker chaplaincy. A deeply rooted personal Quaker faith; the ability to create and sustain positive relationships with those of other faiths and those of none; a willingness to be open to a variety of scripture, tradition, belief and language; an understanding of the boundaries, both personal and professional, of this work; the support and upholding of local Quakers when this role is emotionally and physically draining and demanding: all these are needed in order to nourish and sustain our ministry as Quaker chaplains.

Chaplaincy is a vital form of Quaker ministry. At Quaker Life we are committed to supporting the work of Quaker chaplains in their many settings through the chaplaincy cluster of the Quaker Life Network. The cluster helps chaplains to share their insights and experiences, develop networks and create resources. Whilst these experiences are all different, there is much to be learned from our common experiences. We share these experiences through developing an online resource that can evolve and grow.

We hope this guide will act as a valuable resource for understanding and encouragement, both for chaplains and for the Quaker communities who support them.

How can you find out more?

This section contains a selection of books and a few internet links about chaplains – Quaker and non-Quaker – working in different sectors as well as some resources that might inspire or support chaplaincy work. A more extensive selection can be found at www.quaker.org.uk/chaplaincy. Please contact outreach@quaker.org.uk with details of any publication or resource you would like to see added to the list.

Chaplaincy in education

- * Boyce, Geoff (2011). *An improbable feast, the surprising dynamic of hospitality at the heart of multifaith chaplaincy*. lulu.com.
- * Briggs, Patricia (2008). *Welcome to chaplaincy, a training programme for multi-faith chaplaincy in the further education sector*. Coventry, Learning Skills Council. www.churchofengland.org/media/1123534/welcome%20to%20chaplaincy%20training%20manual.pdf
- * Clyne, Jerry (2008). *Faiths in higher education chaplaincy*. London, Church of England Board of Education. www.churchofengland.org/media/57442/Faith%20in%20Higher%20Education%20Chaplaincy.pdf
- * Guest, Matthew et al. (2013). *Christianity and the university experience, understanding student faith*. London: Bloomsbury.
- * Learning Skills Council (2007). *Multi-faith chaplaincy: a guide for colleges on developing multi-faith student support*. Coventry: Learning Skills Council. <http://readingroom.lsc.gov.uk/lsc/national/nat-multi-faith-chaplaincy.pdf>
- * McGrail, Peter and John Sullivan (2008). *Dancing on the edge, chaplaincy, church and higher education*. Chelmsford: Matthew James Publishing.
- * Tregale, Diane (2011). *Fresh experiences of school chaplaincy*. Cambridge: Grove Books.
- * Whistlecroft, Lisa (2009). *Peaceful coexistence: Personal reflections of a Quaker chaplain*. www.academia.edu/1660614/Peaceful_Coexistence_Personal_Reflections_of_a_Quaker_Chaplain
- * Chaplains in Higher Education Liaison Group (CHELG): www.chelg.org.uk

Chaplaincy in hospital

- * Cobb, Mark R. (2005). *The hospital chaplains' handbook: A guide for good practice*. Norwich: Canterbury Press.
- * VandeCreek, Larry (2002). *Parish nurses, health care chaplains, and community clergy: navigating the maze of professional relationships*. New York: Haworth Press.
- * Jaramillo, Katherine (2010). 'Bringing the Quaker into hospital chaplaincy' in *Friends Journal* 1 June 2010, www.friendsjournal.org/2010051

- * Merchant, R. and A. Wilson (2010). 'Mental health chaplaincy in the NHS: current challenges and future practice' in *Mental Health Religion and Culture* 13 (6), pp. 595–604.
- * Nolan, Steve (2011) *Spiritual care at the end of life: The chaplain as a 'hopeful presence'*. London: Jessica Kingsley.
- * Swift, Christopher (2009). *Hospital chaplaincy in the twenty-first century*. Farnham: Ashgate.
- * College of Health Care Chaplains (CHCC): www.healthcarechaplains.org
- * Free Churches Group, Healthcare Chaplaincy: www.freechurches.org.uk/group/group.aspx?id=229826
- * Hospital Chaplaincies Council: www.nhs-chaplaincy-spiritualcare.org.uk
- * UK Board of Healthcare Chaplaincy (UKBHC): www.ukbhc.org.uk

Chaplaincy in prison

- * The Quakers in Britain web resource for Quakers: www.quaker.org.uk/qpc
- * *Experiencing Quakers*. A compilation of stories from the *Learning from experience* project. www.quaker.org.uk/sites/default/files/2013-Experiencing-Quakers-November.pdf
- * Brown, Mary (2014). *Confessions of a prison chaplain*. London: Waterside Press.
- * Malone, K. (2006). *Prison chaplaincy guidelines for Zen Buddhism: A sourcebook for prison chaplains, administrators, and security personnel*. Sedgwick, Maine: Engaged Zen Foundation.
- * Noblett, William (2009). *Inside faith: Praying for people in prison*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd.
- * Pierce, Dennis W. (2006). *Prison ministry: Hope behind the wall*. London: Routledge.
- * Thomas, Joel R. (2012). *Conviction, conversion and the chaplain: An investigative study of the possible roles of prison chaplains in shaping prisoners' identities*. CreateSpace.com.
- * Free Churches Group, Prison Chaplaincy: www.freechurches.org.uk/Groups/230152/Free_Churches/Activities/Prison_Chaplaincy/Prison_Chaplaincy.aspx
- * Ministry of Justice (2013). *Chaplaincy*: www.justice.gov.uk/about/hmps
- * Chaplaincy after prison – mentoring support to make a fresh start. www.communitychaplaincy.org.uk

Chaplaincy in the workplace

- * Savage, C. (2011). 'Administering extra care to employees' in *Occupational Health*, 63 (12).
- * Torry, Malcolm (2010). *Bridgebuilders: Workplace chaplaincy – a history*. Norwich: Canterbury Press.
- * Wood, Stuart (2011). *Keeping faith in the team: The football chaplain's story*. London: Darton, Longman & Todd.
- * http://missionintheeconomy.com/real_christmas.pdf
- * Chaplaincy to People at Work: www.workplacechaplaincy.org.uk
- * Sports chaplaincy UK: www.sportschaplaincy.org.uk
- * Theatre chaplaincy UK: <http://theatrechaplaincyuk.com>

General interest

- * Fisher, Danny (2013). *Benefit beings! The Buddhist guide to professional chaplaincy*. Off the Cushion Books. ISBN 978-0615796499
- * Denny, John Andrew (ed.) (2011). *Through corridors of light: Poems of consolation in time of illness*. Oxford: Lion Books.
- * Ford, David F. (2011). 'Theology and chaplaincy in a multi-faith context, a manifesto' presented at the 'Chaplaincy in a multi-faith context' conference.
- * Giles, C.A. and W.B. Miller (2012). *The arts of contemplative care: pioneering voices in Buddhist chaplaincy and pastoral care*. Somerville, Massachusetts: Wisdom Publications.
- * Jones, Griff Rhys (ed.) (1996). *The nation's favourite poems*. London: BBC Books.
- * Paget, Naomi K. and Janet R. McCormack (2006). *Work of the chaplain (work of the Church)*. Valley Forge, Pennsylvania: Judson Press.
- * Snively, Sheri (2010). *Heaven in the midst of hell: A Quaker chaplain's view of the war in Iraq*. Jamul, California: Raven Oaks Press.
- * Threlfall-Holmes, Miranda (2011). *Being a chaplain*. London: SPCK.
- * Toole, Mary (2006). *Handbook for chaplains: Comfort my people*. Mahwah, New Jersey: Paulist Press.
- * Religious Literacy Leadership in HE Project: <http://religiousliteracyhe.org>
- * Shap Calendar of Religious Festivals: www.shapworkingparty.org.uk/calendar.html
- * Theos is a Christian think tank working in the areas of religion, politics and society: www.theosthinktank.co.uk

What do Quaker chaplains say?

“For me, it’s essential to be rooted in my own daily practices of stillness, prayer and meditation, and open to the leadings of the Spirit manifested through the support of Quaker friends and in many other ways in order to be able to follow George Fox in his wonderful advice to ‘walk cheerfully’.”

“It’s not a question of taking the church onto the streets; it’s about showing people that God is present at all times and in every situation. You engage with people where they are and at their time and need.”

“We are often serving those of a different faith or none at all. Our actions, our empathy, our listening and responses: this is our outreach.”

“As Quakers we speak of knowing each other in those things which are eternal, and there have been many times when I’ve felt this sense of connectedness in the hospital. When someone is facing death, or the brutal reality of life, they speak their truth. There is no act put on, no protective persona put forward, and they want the same authenticity in return. When this is allowed, something happens, things change – I’m not saying that the blind see, or the lame walk... but a shift takes place.”

“Chaplaincy is, or can be, outreach of the best kind, the silent kind, the listening kind. But it is also something else. It is very personal in-reach, in that it brings you not just closer to those you are ‘chaplaining’, but also, perhaps most importantly, nearer to your God.”

“I would encourage anyone seriously drawn to this ministry to take up the challenge. The rewards are beyond measure.”

For more information about Quaker chaplains and resources for meetings please contact:

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Marleen Schepers (Prison Chaplaincy), marleens@quaker.org.uk, 020 7663 1143



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