

*Press Release October 2013*

## **Quakers and Remembrance Sunday**

Oxford Quakers welcome the information in the Programme of Service this year about our silent witness in St Giles on Remembrance Sunday. Bob Wilkes, the City Rector, has encouraged this inclusion and made it possible for our presence to be better understood. People of all faiths and none are welcome to join our silent prayers.

The purpose of Remembrance Sunday is to mourn the dead and injured in all wars. Quakers express our sympathy and support for all at the Service of Remembrance. We stand separately, though respectfully and lovingly, from the main Service because our Peace Testimony calls for a *commitment to make the building of peace a priority and to make opposition to war absolute.* (*Quaker Faith & Practice* 24.10)

Since the 17<sup>th</sup> century, Quakers have testified against all war and fighting with outward weapons. We work to create the conditions for peace and justice locally, nationally and internationally, through focused, long-term work. Quaker refusal to fight in wars, and public witness, for instance, against the arms trade, are part of this work.

Quakers also mourn for those who have lost their lives, and support those who have been bereaved. We may disagree with the views and actions of politicians or soldiers who opt for a military solution, but we still respect and cherish the individual person.

We have often experienced misunderstanding, disapproval and even imprisonment for our beliefs. Speaking truth to power does not make us popular. We call for a commitment to making the building of peace a priority, and to making opposition to war, absolute. Our peace testimony is a tough demand: it asks that we should not automatically accept the categories, definitions and priorities of the world.

For more information about the Quaker witness on Remembrance Sunday please contact Sarah Lasenby, tel: 01865 725991, who is available to speak to the media.

*Oxford Quaker Meeting, 43 St Giles, Oxford OX1 3LW.*