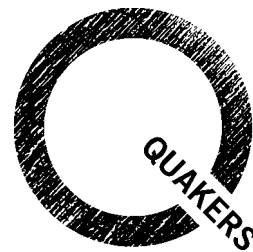


Epistle of Junior Yearly Meeting

held at Frontier Centre, Northamptonshire.

9-12 April, 2022



To all Friends everywhere,

Between the 9th and 12th of April 2022, 53 participants and 11 adult volunteers gathered at the Frontier Centre in Northamptonshire, for 4 days of inward and outward reflection on the theme “Compassionate listening and spiritual engagement: How can we strengthen our faith community to make space for action?”. This year's JYM felt incredibly special, as after two years of COVID-19 preventing an in-person event, many of us felt spiritually and socially untethered.

During JYM, it became clear that Quakerism is a faith grounded in conscientious action and positive change. However, a significant undercurrent of our discussion was the question of how best to take action, and the effects of rushing into what we believe is right, without taking the time to listen. We explored this further in our theme sessions and workshops led by the Arrangements Committee, Helen Minnis, Teresa Parker, Ellis Brooks, Hannah Larn, James McCarthy, Paul Parker, and Olivia Hanks. These sessions were engaging, insightful and, at times, challenging for participants, but allowed us to deeply engage with the theme.

Throughout the weekend we were kindly joined by several guests, all of whom took part in discussions, sessions and social time, bringing with them their own unique views and testimonies. This included Caroline Haymans, Martin Wall and Suze Lidbury. We give thanks to Michael Preston for photographing the event, and to the ecumenical guests for their presence at JYM which allowed us to strengthen our relationships with other churches.

Many participants commented that the most important element of JYM was the warm and supportive community that we created. Participants, most of whom had never been to JYM before, were able to form new relationships, connect, and deepen existing friendships. This was enabled by the regular meetings of base groups, social events like the Eggstravaganza, and the provision of a social space for free time. From the 1000 piece jigsaw, to ‘wide games’, to sharing meals, participants were able to truly get to know one another, as friends and as Quakers. We were also able to utilise the outdoor facilities provided by the venue in activities such as archery, kayaking, and climbing, which allowed us to enjoy the fresh air and the sunny weather.

Our days began and ended with periods of worship in which we reflected on the day's events and discussions, achieving a sense of calm, and communal

spirituality. We held space for one another in worship sharing, contemplated visual and spoken prompts, and heard moving ministry and readings. A highlight was the bonfire on the final night, which provided a touching goodbye filled with ministry from a deeply thankful and loving community.

It's been a busy, fun, and often enlightening event which has allowed us to cover a range of themes and ideas, all of which were powerfully channelled into the minute, which addressed the question: "As Quakers, how can we transform thought into action?". We have all left this event with a stronger sense of who we are and what we stand for, and critically, when to act and when to listen. We truly hope that the rest of Britain Yearly Meeting will listen to the suggestions voiced in our thoughtfully produced minute with open hearts and minds.

As Quakers, we should listen to each other's testimonies with empathy and the aim to understand, remembering that the truth is often hard to hear. We feel that no more time should be wasted and we must act upon the issues that we are merely talking about. To quote our minute, "one way this can be done is by streamlining the Quaker business process, and strengthening our faith community, acknowledging that through unity and love we can best seek clarity." While we recognise that change is an ongoing process, we want to emphasise that it is a process that must continue.

Signed in and on behalf of Junior Yearly Meeting 2022,

Imi Hills, Clerk

Kit King, Clerk Support