



IRELAND YEARLY MEETING RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS

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To Friends in Britain Yearly Meeting

Dear Friends across the Irish Sea,

We send you our loving greetings as Britain Yearly Meeting approaches – to be held in person for the first time in three years, as well as online. We will be holding our own Yearly Meeting in a similar format during 11–14 August 2022 in Belfast.

The past two years have brought both challenges and opportunities, and have quite possibly changed and broadened the way we worship for the long term. Although the Covid-19 pandemic is not yet fully over, it seems to be on its way out, at least in these isles, enabling us to begin meeting in person again. At the same time, it's important that our Meetings for Worship and for Business continue to be accessible to those who are only able to attend online. In Ireland, Friends who live far from the nearest Quaker Meeting or Worship Group have been able to attend Meeting for Worship regularly, in some cases for the first time in decades, and we cannot turn our backs on these Friends. We are called to support each other as we work out how best to do this spiritually, logistically and technically.

Another challenge is reconnecting with those in our communities who have not felt able to join us in Worship online, but also do not feel ready to return to Worship in person. Those looking after the spiritual and pastoral health of our Meetings have important work to do as the pandemic begins to recede into the past.

We now share a new common grief due to the ongoing war in Ukraine. It is hard to imagine that such a brutal war is taking place so close to these islands, and each of us is challenged to provide practical and spiritual support for our suffering brothers and sisters in ways that enable us to stay true to our Peace Testimony. We strive to uphold decision makers on both sides of the conflict, and to remember that God's spirit is present in all. We must believe that the Ocean of Light will ultimately triumph over the Ocean of Darkness, leading to a peaceful and sustainable future.

Our experience with online worship has shown that the Spirit can draw us together even when we are in different physical locations. Our thoughts and prayers envelop you in a very real sense as you hold your Yearly Meeting.

In loving Friendship,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Denise C. Gabuzda'.

Denise Gabuzda
Clerk, Ireland Yearly Meeting