



Friends World Committee
for Consultation
EUROPE & MIDDLE EAST SECTION

Europe & Middle East Section
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To everyone attending Britain Yearly Meeting, 26-30 July 2024

7 July 2024

Dear Friends,

We send loving greetings from the Friends World Committee for Consultation Europe and Middle East Section (FWCC EMES) as you meet. We hold you all in the Light as you are in God's presence as you spend time together. Annie Janssen, a member of our Executive Committee, will join you as representative from our Section.

You are a part of our FWCC Section and with us and through us you are connected to thousands of Quakers across Europe and the Middle East. Friends in our Section are organised in 13 Yearly Meetings, one Monthly Meeting, many worship groups, international members and other individuals, spread across over 30 countries and speaking over 15 languages. Friends from 23 countries joined us for our last Annual Meeting!

EMES envisages a thriving, vibrant, inclusive, all-age, spiritual community of Friends in Europe and the Middle East, woven together in transformative faith and love, working and connecting with others, listening to the Spirit, actively living out our Quaker testimonies of truth and integrity, equality and community, simplicity, peace, and care for the earth.

We pray fervently for peace, a peace that upholds and respects every person. Israel's war in Gaza along with the ongoing occupation of the West Bank adds to Russia's invasion of Ukraine as a threat to the security and well-being of Friends across our Section. We have witnessed active bombardment, terrorization of civilians and a complete disregard for human rights on two war fronts in our Section as much of the world watches and our own governments fan the flames. Friends in many places around Europe and the Middle East continue to live in difficult circumstances. We uphold them all. We recognize that war is not the only conflict we face. The deepening climate emergency, growing inequality, and threats to civil discourse challenge us as Friends to remain hopeful and respond to that still, small voice that inspires us to nurture ourselves and everything around us. We seek a sustainability and regeneration of spirit that removes the occasion for war.

At our online Annual Meeting 26-28 April, we explored the theme "**Living the spirit of ubuntu**"

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

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A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another: just as I have loved you, you also are to love one another. By this all people will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another. John 13: 34-35 (ESV)” This theme, which develops from a two-year consideration of the World Plenary Meeting 2024 theme, was explored for the first time with interpretation into both Russian and German. Hezron Matsitsa, Justice & Peace Secretary for the FWCC, shared about the roots of *ubuntu* across many African cultures and invited us to consider how we can bring its root elements of empathy, compassion, interconnectedness, coexistence, and shared resources into our body of Friends and into our daily lives. He invited us to consider the following queries:

- What struggles do you encounter that hinder the expression of love for one another? Do you consider some people as difficult to love?
- How does the understanding of Ubuntu challenge you to do something different?
- How can the Quaker Community contribute to the restoration of Ubuntu?

You can find the [Annual Meeting epistle here](#) and we look forward to receiving your epistle to share at the end of your gathering!

We wish you an inspired and hopeful meeting.

In friendship,



Ethel Livermore

Clerk

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