

14th August 2022

To Friends Everywhere,



We send loving greetings from Ireland Yearly Meeting, held in sunshine from 11<sup>th</sup> – 14<sup>th</sup> August 2022, at the green and leafy campus of Stranmillis University College, Belfast. The theme of this year's Yearly Meeting was 'Hope, Renewal, Healing', supported by the Bible verse '*Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind.*' (Romans 12:2)

This was our first Yearly Meeting to take place in Belfast, and also our first 'hybrid' meeting. With the help of a skilled volunteer technical team we were able to welcome visitors and speakers both in person and from around the world. It was a joy to gather again after the cancellation of Yearly Meeting in 2020, and the online only event in 2021. The hybrid nature of the event was really enriching, and enabled us to welcome more visitors from distant locations than usual. Barbara Luetke joined us from Missouri on Thursday evening in the Ministry and Oversight session to talk about her novel 'The Kendal Sparrow', based on the life of Elizabeth Fletcher, a young 17<sup>th</sup> century Quaker. On Friday we welcomed Esther Mombo from Kenya, who told us about the inspirational peacemaking work of the United Friends Women's prayer groups. Friends joining via Zoom from places including Mexico City, New England and Dublin were able to ask questions and take a full part in the proceedings.

Two Friends who continued this global theme were Tim Gee, new Director of FWCC, and Jacqueline Stillwell, Director of the Right Sharing of World Resources. They both challenged us with questions. How can we reach out to Friends across the world and connect in our spiritual lives? How do we decide what is enough for our needs? Can we share more generously with those for whom relatively small amounts of money can have a huge impact? We are called to make a more radical expression of our faith and surrender ourselves to the ordering of the Spirit.

The Public Lecture this year was given by Lynn Finnegan, a Young Irish Friend, on the subject *Embodying the Quaker Testimonies in Service of a Living Planet*. Lynn challenged us with a series of 'beautiful questions' about what it means to be members of a spiritual community when the living planet is under threat. If we can surrender ourselves to the way of Love, we are nearer to bringing the whole of our sustainability journey under the ordering of the Spirit.

Nozizwe Madlala–Routledge, Director of QUNO in Geneva, spoke about her journey as a lifetime campaigner for peace and justice. This included time spent in prison in South Africa during the apartheid era. We heard about the current QUNO programmes in Peace and Disarmament, the Human Impacts of Climate Change and Human Rights and Refugees, along with the newer concerns of Sustainable and Just Economic Systems and Retrospective Justice.

Space was deliberately left in the programme to consider what love and our Peace Testimony requires of us in these turbulent times. The death and destruction in Ukraine following the invasion by Russia has made us long for hope, renewal and healing more than ever. We were asked what does the Peace Testimony mean to modern Quakers? The peace testimony today, is seen in what we do, severally and together, with our lives. 'We pray for the involvement of the Spirit with us, that we may work for a more just world.' (London Yearly Meeting 1993).

Signed on behalf of Ireland Yearly Meeting

Denise C. Gabuzda, Clerk

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William D. A. Haire

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Pleasaunce Perry, Asst. Clerk

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Pauline Goggin

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