



Friends World Committee
for Consultation
EUROPE & MIDDLE EAST SECTION

Europe & Middle East Section

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To everyone attending Conference of European Churches General Assembly, 14-20 June 2023

12 June 2023

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. I will join you as Clerk of the FWCC EMES representing our Section of Quakers in Europe.

Friends in our Section are organised in 12 Yearly Meetings, monthly meetings, many worship groups, international members and other individuals, spread across over 30 countries and speaking over 15 languages. FWCC 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. A fundamental part of our strategy includes ecumenical collaboration, especially through our membership in the CEC and the Church and Peace Network.

We pray fervently for peace, a peace that upholds and respects every person. Russia's invasion of Ukraine adds to the ongoing occupation of Palestine to threaten the security and well-being of Friends across our Section. We particularly uphold Friends and friends-of-Friends in Ukraine, including those who have escaped and who are still suffering. We uphold Friends in Russia who endure life under a difficult regime. We uphold those who have taken principled stands of conscience against war as Conscientious Objectors. We uphold all of those across our Section who have taken strangers into their homes and who have offered other kinds of support to refugees. If you would like to directly support the Central European Gatherings Funding for Ukraine Group, you can find that information at our website here: <https://fwccemes.org/news/quaker-support-for-ukraine>

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)

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Conflict is no stranger to Europe and the Middle East. 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 Annual Meeting 4-7 May, 2023 at Woodbrooke and online, we explored the theme ***“Responding with hope to God’s call to cherish creation – and one another. ‘For surely I know the plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Jeremiah 29:11 (NRSV)’”*** This theme, which develops from a two-year consideration of next year’s Quaker World Plenary Meeting theme, reminds us of the context of the words of Jeremiah when the Jewish people were in exile. His message was a deeply controversial one in his time, counselling acceptance and a long view on justice in the face of dominant power. In our own time of crisis, are we open to a call that prioritises the nurture of that which sustains us? A speaker at our Annual Meeting suggested that “All creation, including us humans, goes into the ark before the rainbow. Sustainability is the watchword. Our dependency on the earth that sustains us, is central to the continuation of our existence.”

We see the 2023 CEC General Assembly theme of “Under God’s blessing – shaping the future” including its exploration of “over-consumption of resources is threatening the existence of the planet, when the gap between rich and poor is increasing and excessive national feelings are weakening the attention given to those who need help in other parts of the world” as directly related to this intention and we look forward to contributing to this conversation with other faith communities.

In friendship,



Ethel Livermore

Clerk

FWCC-EMES

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