



Annual Report 2022



Friends World Committee
for Consultation
EUROPE & MIDDLE EAST SECTION

fwccemes.org

FWCC-Europe & Middle East Section

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For up to date information about EMES please
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For dates of Yearly Meetings and other events please
see the calendar page: fwccemes.org/calendar

Note: The formal annual report and accounts, prepared in
accordance with UK charity requirements, are available as
a separate document on request from the EMES office.



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What is FWCC?

The Friends World Committee for Consultation was established at the Second World Conference of Friends held at Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, in 1937. The concept of a world organisation to express the sense of world fellowship of Friends arose as an important part of the evolution of the Religious Society of Friends in the first two decades of the twentieth century.

This tentative development gained impetus from the 1920 Friends World Conference in London and the Young Friends Gathering at Jordans, England, held in the same year. No other organisation exists which links together Yearly Meetings around the world.

Authority within the Religious Society of Friends lies at the Yearly Meeting and Monthly Meeting/church level, leaving these groups potentially in isolation. Hence the vision arose of an organisation to keep Friends connected and in touch with each other across the diverse spectrum of the Society. FWCC was established to be a channel of communication among Friends, helping us to explore and nurture our identity as Quakers so that we can discover and be faithful to our true place in the world as a people of God. The current mission statement is:

Answering God's call to universal love, FWCC brings Friends of varying traditions and cultural experiences together in worship, communications, and consultation, to express our common heritage and our Quaker message to the world.

Representatives appointed by affiliated Yearly Meetings and groups gather in plenary sessions every few years. Between plenary sessions, the Central Executive Committee, which is broadly representative, meets annually to continue FWCC's decision-making processes and to guide staff. The World Office in London is the centre of worldwide communications for Friends and supports the work of the Sections. It also represents Friends within non-Quaker international organisations such as the United Nations.

In 2016 a World Plenary Meeting (formerly the Triennial/International Representatives Meeting) was held in Pisac, near Cusco, Peru, from 19-27 January. The theme was **Living the Transformation: Creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of God's children** (Romans 8:19).

These plenary meetings will be less frequent in future for sustainability reasons. The next will take place in 2024 in Southern Africa. The theme will be **Living the spirit of Ubuntu: Responding with hope to God's call to cherish creation – and one another: For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope** (Jeremiah 29:11, New King James Version). You can read more about the work of the FWCC World Office at our website here: fwcc.world

FWCC-Europe & Middle East Section

The Europe & Middle East Section (EMES) of the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) was established in 1938 and is the collective body for Quaker meetings in Europe and the Middle East. All the members, yearly meetings and groups affiliated to EMES are members of FWCC. We publish a newsletter, *Among Friends*, three times a year and send out regular news emails to subscribers.

A small Executive Committee, assisted by the Executive Secretary and the Communication & Programme Officer, ensures communication within the Section and with other Quaker bodies and individual Friends. Each year EMES organises an Annual Meeting and Peace & Service Network Annual Gathering and regular online events for Representatives & Roleholders, the Peace & Service Network, the EMES Youthgroup for 14-18 year old Young Friends and for International Members. EMES is a member of Church and Peace and in 2016 was accepted by the Conference of European Churches as an Organisation in Partnership

EMES has a 10-year strategy which *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 and the environment.*

You can read more about EMES including our 10 year strategy on our website: fwccemes.org/emes

EMES consists of 12 Yearly Meetings, 1 Monthly Meeting, a number of worship groups and some isolated Quakers. There are approximately 25,000 Quakers reported in the affiliated meetings in the Section (this figure includes members, attenders and children, and is based on the information provided by meetings in early 2023). Evangelical Friends Church International, which are a part of the Section but maintain their own congregations, are active in Croatia, Hungary, Ireland, Romania, Serbia but do not have the numbers of people involved in their churches for this report.

European & Middle East Young Friends (EMEYF) are a well-established autonomous organisation operating within the Section: emeyf.org

EMES Activity in 2022

2022 has been a time of joy and a time of sadness for EMES and for Quakers in Europe and the Middle East. The joy has been brought by the opportunities to meet in person after two years of online only meetings. Sadness is with us because of the war in our region between two countries with Friends living in them. The war in Ukraine has had a big impact on the work of EMES this year. We also continue to hold Friends in the Middle East in the Light.

The EMES executive committee has moved to a rolling 3-year workplan which will run from Annual Meeting to Annual Meeting, updated to account for activities affected by the Covid pandemic and additional work, such as our monthly online gatherings.

The EMES executive committee were delighted to be able to meet in person in March for the first time since March 2020. Some members of the committee had never met in person despite working together for some time.

We have continued to support Friends visiting each other for online worship around the Section and further afield, but have been pleased to see in person visits by Friends, and our staff and executive committee have been able to visit a number of yearly meetings and other Quaker gatherings around the Section this year.

We regularly add new stories to the news page of our website:



fwccemes.org/news



Photo: Kate McNally

War in Ukraine

The war in Ukraine has had a big impact on the work of EMES in 2022. The executive committee had a meeting planned over the first weekend in March and so were able to dedicate time to considering the EMES response to the war then. We joined Friends in Kyiv for their meeting for worship and also agreed to fund their Zoom account for a year so they could continue to hold meetings for worship with Friends around the world.

Since the war began EMES has held a weekly meeting for worship to pray for peace in Ukraine. This is held every Tuesday for 30 minutes at 13.30 UK time: fwccemes.org/calendar/ukraine-worship

As soon as the war began the EMES office was inundated with requests from Friends who wanted to give money to support Ukrainians. EMES trustees were clear that they did not want these funds to go through our bank accounts so working with two partner organisations (the British Friends of QCEA and the Central European Gathering) we were able to set up a fundraising appeal in both Pounds Sterling and Euros so that Friends could donate. We were already in touch with Friends in a number of the countries surrounding Ukraine who were doing work to support Ukrainian refugees, so by coordinating this fundraising initiative we are pleased to see examples of the kinds of work they have been doing are:

- In Poland we have funded cognitive behavioural therapy in Warsaw and the purchasing of clothing, medicines, toys & games, school materials in Bialystok in eastern Poland.
- In Estonia Friends have been providing refugees with Covid tests, temporary accommodation and food.
- A Friend from Georgia delivered medicine, including much needed insulin for diabetic people, to Ukraine.
- Read more about this here: fwccemes.org/news/quaker-support-for-ukraine

Throughout the year we have continued to stay in touch with the Quakers in Ukraine, many have now fled to surrounding countries or further afield. We have also stayed in contact with Quakers in Russia for whom the war has been very difficult.

Executive Committee

The Executive Committee (EC) acts as the EMES trustees and met six times during 2022. They had two meetings in person over weekends in Paris in March and near Lisbon in September. These weekend meetings allow for more in-depth decision making while the other meetings were held during evenings.

The EC is responsible for the work of EMES and monitors progress made on the workplan and priorities agreed at each Annual Meeting. They also approve grants to the Spiritual Growth Fund and Digital Equality Fund.

Penny Heymans finished her service as EMES treasurer at the end of 2021 and Peter Spreij took on this role in January

2022. There have been no other changes to the committee membership this year.

EC members in 2022:

- Will Haire** Ireland YM
- Paul Holdsworth** Belgium & Luxembourg YM
- Melanie Huropp** EMEYF & German YM
- Annie Janssen** German YM
- Ethel Livermore** Britain YM (Clerk)
- Peter Spreij** Netherlands YM (Treasurer)

Minutes of EC meetings are made available to EMES Representatives and are available from the EMES office on request.

Nominations Committee

The EMES Nominations Committee consists of up to 6 Friends, appointed for 3 years in the first instance. It receives requests for nominees from the EMES Executive Committee and/or Annual Meeting (AM) in session, normally for members of the Executive Committee and for the roles of EMES Clerk, Treasurer, and Assistant Treasurer. Nominations Committee finds nominees by a process of Quaker discernment.

Since the last Annual Meeting, Nominations Committee has met 6 times – 4 of these have been online and 2 face to face – one in Amsterdam from 25-28 September 2022 and a pre-meeting in Woodbrooke prior to the 2023 Annual Meeting. This year we have looked for two members of the Executive Committee, an assistant treasurer and identified possible future elders.

We have also worked on a draft role description for Nominations Committee and the Naming Group for Nominations Committee, both of which will come before Annual Meeting 2023 for approval. After Annual Meeting 2023, we are hoping to undertake the writing of a short description about nominations and the Quaker practice of nominations which we would then like to have translated into various languages, for use by Friends across EMES.

Nominations Committee members in 2022:

- Simon Best** Britain YM & Woodbrooke
- Mikheil Elizbarashvili** Georgia Worship Group
- Vidar Salvigsen** Sweden YM (Co-convenor)
- Liz Scurfield** Britain YM (Co-convenor)
- Siobhan Walshe** Ireland YM

Elders

At the EMES annual meeting in May 2022, we were appointed to be the standing Elders of EMES. As we live far apart, we have only met online a number of times, gradually establishing our ways of working, and discussing pastoral care, and worship as part of the world plenary meeting.

We are open for Friends across the EMES section to contact any of us via email elders@fwccemes.org or at EMES or PSN meetings in person, or online whenever there is a need.

Elders in 2022 (May onwards):

Annika Hallsing Sweden YM

Jasmine Piercy

Britain YM & Central European Gathering

George Thurley Britain YM

Staff

Michael Eccles

Executive Secretary: Britain YM

Jez Smith

Assistant Secretary (until May):
Switzerland YM

Evan Welkin

Communication & Programme Officer
(from July): North Pacific YM (USA) &
Quakers in Italy

Finance

Now that most of the Covid restrictions on travel and face to face meetings have been lifted the Annual Meeting, Peace and Service Network meetings and Executive Committee meetings could once more be held in person. We also organised a Travelling in the Ministry event and a youth event, both of which involved travel and subsistence costs.

Several Yearly Meetings and Friends' Groups applied for and received rather substantial grants from the Spiritual Growth Fund.

Whereas we were underspent in 2020 and 2021 the accounts for 2023 show a deficit as foreseen in the budget. In 2021 half of the JRCT grant was reserved for 2022 and some of the JRCT 2022 payments were delayed until 2023.

The accounts for 2021 were presented by the outgoing treasurer and the budget for 2022 was presented by the incoming treasurer.

Representatives

All Yearly Meetings, Monthly Meetings and meetings in the Section appoint representatives to FWCC-EMES. Details of this are outlined in the EMES constitution. Representatives usually serve for three years and can be reappointed once. All representatives are invited to attend the EMES Annual Meeting and monthly online Representatives & Roleholders Gatherings.

Annual Meeting

Our Annual Meeting took place in May, with 40 Friends gathered in Paris and a further 30 Friends joining online, considering the theme: *From Crisis to Connection: working creatively to heal our fractured world.*

It was our first ever blended meeting and was a great success. We had a number of Zoom hosts around Europe supporting us from afar which seemed to work well. Almost all activities were blended, including early morning stretches, one home group, workshops and business sessions.

We appointed ongoing elders for EMES for the first time and agreed a sustainability policy for EMES to consider the impacts of travel, gatherings and publications on the climate and natural resources.

You can read the epistle from the EMES 2022 Annual Meeting here:

fwccemes.org/news/emes-annual-meeting-2022-epistle

Plans are underway for our next AM which will be held at Woodbrooke in May 2023 and also be a blended meeting.

Partnerships and communication

We continue to maintain close relationships with other Quaker organisations in Europe and the Middle East, in particular our member yearly meetings and worship groups, but also Woodbrooke, the Quaker Council for European Affairs, the Quaker United Nations Office in Geneva and Europe & Middle East Young Friends.

The Quaker in Europe course, founded over a decade ago by EMES has been revamped and ran in French for the second time this year.

We continue to run online worship with Woodbrooke throughout the week. For some Friends their online worship group is now their primary meeting. Towards the end of 2022 we also introduced a

new meeting; a monthly epilogue for parents. There is more information here: woodbrooke.org.uk/worship

We send regular news emails to approximately 260 Friends 2-4 times each month (you can sign up here: fwccemes.org/newsletter) and maintain an active and growing presence on social media (Facebook, Instagram and Twitter), alongside using our website to keep Friends up to date.

We also continue to produce and send out our journal *Among Friends* three times a year. In the autumn we carried out a survey of readers of *Among Friends* and in 2023 will be considering whether we continue to produce a paper version of the journal or go fully online.

Peace & Service Network

The PSN continued to hold monthly online gatherings throughout the year covering a wide range of topics including the war in Ukraine, the intersection of climate and social justice and a talk by the mother of a Palestinian Ramallah Friends School student held for months in prison and house arrest. 62 representatives and individuals active in peace and service activities joined us over the course of the year, with an average of 15 people or so at any given meeting.

The annual gathering (previously “Consultation”) was held in October with 40 participants in Germany and online. After several months of preparation by a review group, those gathered agreed to change the name and structure of the consultation to a network to more accurately reflect its activities. The Consultation had served for several decades as an annual opportunity for Friends from Quaker organisations

to come together. However, during the pandemic there was a growing interest in meeting on a monthly basis, with a broader representation and an increased sharing of activities. In addition to expanding the scope and reach of the network, it also became clear that this aspect of EMES work needed to be incorporated more closely into the EMES workplan. Building on this new opportunity, the network is now supported by a small coordinating group, instead of clerks, to bring it more closely in line with other work in EMES.

Emerging network themes from the October gathering and meetings include the consideration of support for self-care or pastoral care in our work, continued exploration of the connection between themes of ecological and human rights, and peacebuilding while addressing the continuing armed conflicts in our Section and around the world.



fwccemes.org/emes/peace-and-service-consultation



Photo: Kate McNally

Spiritual Growth Fund

Our **Spiritual Growth Fund** continues to support meetings and their work. In 2022 we gave eight grants (up from two in 2021). It is a positive sign that we have given so many grants in 2022 and reflects the fact that Friends have been able to meet in person and look beyond their local communities.

The grants this year were to support a range of activities including translation projects, support for the work of Stop Fuelling War, the bicentenary celebrations of Friends in Congenies, France and support for a day of nonviolence in Nantes, France.



fwccemes.org/emes/emes-spiritual-growth-fund

Supporting Meetings and Friends

In July we held a gathering in Brussels bringing together Friends from around the Section to consider pastoral care and travelling in the ministry and how EMES can continue our longtime work of supporting isolated Friends and smaller meetings and groups.

This work has fundamentally changed because of Covid and the increased possibility of online communication and intervisitation. We plan to continue supporting Friends and meetings with in person visits but will focus much of our attention on online support in 2023.

We continue to hold monthly online gatherings and meetings for worship for EMES representatives and roleholders. This is an opportunity for Friends to get to know each other better, and to engage better with the work of EMES. We heard from Friends in Paris at our AM that they felt that they already knew each other having met at these online

gatherings during the years and this meant they could take conversations to a deeper level more quickly.

We were planning to hold a long-planned Russian speaking gathering in late February which would have brought together Friends from several countries around our Section and further afield. However it became clear to us that the gathering would not be appropriate and instead we brought Friends together online to worship and pray for peace in Ukraine; something that we have continued to do on a weekly basis since the start of the war.

This year we began a review of worship groups around EMES and our Executive Secretary has been contacting Friends' groups and also individuals around the Section to better understand how we can best support them through our Quaker structures. This work will continue into 2023.

Digital Equality Fund

Our **Digital Equality Fund**, set up in 2020, has continued to help Friends get online, either by supporting them in buying a device, or internet connection or by offering training. During 2022 we gave two grants from this fund.

It is clear that the need for this fund is lessening, partly as most Friends who

want to be online already are, and many others are now only meeting in person.

We plan to keep the fund open to applications for the foreseeable future and are currently fundraising in order to support Friends in other parts of the world with their digital accessibility, in conjunction with the FWCC World Office.



fwccemes.org/emes/emes-digital-equality-fund

EMES Youthgroup

The youthgroup started in December 2020 during Covid and we were not sure whether young people would still come when they weren't in lockdown and able to do other things with their time.

However, the group has continued to meet online monthly, and finally was able to have an in person gathering in September 2022 in Strasbourg – you can read a report by a Young Friend who attended here...



fwccemes.org/news/EMES-youthgroup-meeting-report-September-2022



■ EMES Youthgroup in Strasbourg



In Strasbourg we met alongside the Border Meeting, which provided a programme for any parents who travelled with their young people to our event, and we explored the theme of encounters. 11 Young Friends attended, coming from Britain, Estonia, France, Georgia, Germany and Ireland.

The youthgroup continues to be run bilingually in German and English.

The youthgroup is organised by a small coordinating group of seven Friends and now includes four young people. We have covered a wide range of topics at these gatherings in 2022 including; a theoretical exercise about setting up a Quaker school in Kenya, a session on early Quakerism and hearing about a German Friend's work in Palestine, as well as sessions facilitated by the small co-ordinating group.



fwccemes.org/youthgroup

FWCC Central Executive Committee

The Clerk and Executive Secretary of EMES serve as members of the FWCC Central Executive Committee (CEC) along with their counterparts from the other FWCC Sections and the FWCC World Office.

The CEC met four times in 2022, including for a week-long meeting in Nairobi, Kenya – their first in person meeting since 2019. The other meetings were online.

Key issues considered by the CEC included; the planning of the World Plenary Meeting in August 2024 near Johannesburg, South Africa, overseeing a global fundraising campaign raising funds for FWCC work around the world and in particular to create an accessibility fund for the World Plenary Meeting in 2024 and long term planning of the work of the FWCC World Office. The CEC celebrated World Quaker Day with local Friends in Nairobi.



fwcc.world/about-us/people/governing-committee

International membership

The Executive Secretary serves on the FWCC World Office International Membership Applications Committee that oversees and supports international members of the Religious Society of Friends around the world. These are people who want to become members but live in an area where there is not a Yearly Meeting or other Quaker body they can formally join.

There are approximately 60 international members in our Section. Some of these Friends are part of existing worship groups or other Quaker meetings while others are more isolated. EMES tries to stay in touch with these Friends and to ensure that they are aware of our activities and invited to our events.

We ran two online gatherings for 'international members' living in EMES

– Friends who are members of the Religious Society of Friends but live in an area where there isn't a formal Quaker body they can apply to for membership, so their membership is held through the FWCC world office.

There are approximately 60 international members in EMES (with a total of around 110 in the world) and we are always seeking better ways of supporting them. We intend to increase the number of gatherings to three each year to respond to this growing need.

During 2022, we welcomed one new international member in the Czech Republic and one in Italy. We also upheld an international member from Prague Recognised Meeting who spent time in prison in Britain for his climate emergency activism.



fwcc.world/areas-of-work/international-membership

Reports from Yearly Meetings, Monthly Meetings and Groups

All Poland Gathering

Last year as All Poland Gathering we met in person for the first time since 2018. We were able to identify people to lead key roles and identify activities for the coming year. We are looking forward to the next Central European Gathering Annual Meeting in Gdansk in May and the next AGP in autumn 2023.

Belgium and Luxembourg Yearly Meeting

Last year we reported the emergence of a distinct Online worship group composed not only of F/friends from BLYM but also some from further away (France, UK...), as well as those who for practical or health reasons cannot easily come to Quaker House, Brussels on a Sunday morning. This group enjoys enriching and profound ministry as well as being a strong personal support network. While some F/friends do not feel able to worship in this way, it has become the preferred way for others to live out their faith. Faced with this reality, BLYM agreed that it was time to recognise the Online group as a fourth Worship Group in our Yearly Meeting.

We have seen the emergence of strong and different identities in the four groups: Luxembourg Friends quietly continue to worship on a regular basis in F/friends' homes, with no particular need for strong links to the other groups in the Yearly Meeting; Gent is becoming a powerful force in the Belgian peace movement, working with other local and national groups on issues of peace and conscientious objection; the online group is a link between our Yearly Meeting and other Quaker groups in Europe and further afield; and the Brussels group regularly welcomes visitors seeking a new direction in their lives, or finding their way to our group in the hope of reconnecting with an earlier experience. As a Yearly Meeting, we are also seeking to examine the roots of our Faith through regular discussion and discernment in person and online.

At the start of the year we maintained a practice of holding blended Meetings for Worship, but eventually agreed not to pursue this as we were not in unity on the benefits of such Meetings, many F/friends finding the presence of technical equipment a distraction to Worship.

Post-pandemic, we saw a decline in F/friends willing or able to take on nominated roles. This, coupled with the strong identity seen in the different Worship Groups, led us to agree to a radical change within our Yearly Meeting: we agreed to simplify our structures, maintaining only a few nominated YM roles (Clerk, Elders, Finance group). A contact person from each Worship Group acts as a conduit for information. Each group discerns individually how this role is enacted in practice and we are still seeking the way forward, holding faith that the way will become clear when the time is right. Meeting for YM Business now takes place every quarter and is held as a blended Meeting, a practice that has inherent challenges but is accepted as a necessity.

In terms of face-to-face interaction, we were delighted to be able to organise once again our Residential Yearly Meeting at which we saw old and new F/friends, some for the first time in several years. We enjoyed rich contributions from our two speakers, Jennifer Kavanagh and Edwina Peart, on the theme of 'Community, Compassion, Unity' and closed the weekend on a positive note hoping 'to walk forward together into the post Covid-19 world discovering new ways to communicate and build community with compassion for all'.

As we begin the year 2023, we are all hoping that we may find renewed strength and Faith in a world that seems to be fraught with conflict and strife. We look inside our hearts and pray that we may be led to new ways of outwardly expressing this Faith.

Britain Yearly Meeting

In 2022, local meetings in Britain have returned to meeting in person though many continue to have blended meetings or offer opportunities to worship online. Local Development Workers have now been appointed for most areas of the Yearly Meeting and they are providing support as meetings continue to grapple with the changes caused by the pandemic.

Britain Yearly Meeting met in May in person and online. It was a steep learning curve but overall it worked well and we hope to do the same in 2023, building on our learning.

We continue to work on the development of a new Book of Discipline. This is a mammoth task and the committee working on this hope to have a fair draft to present to Yearly Meeting in 2027. First drafts of two topics are already available to listen to or read:



Yearly Meeting
of the Religious
Society of Friends
(Quakers) in Britain



quaker.org.uk/rqfp

Work on the simplification of our governance structures and procedures is ongoing and this will be a focus of our Yearly Meeting in 2023.

We also continue to reflect on structural racism in our society and in society as a whole. In the annual Swarthmore Lecture 'Perceiving the temperature of the water', Helen Minnis gave us plenty to think about in this respect. You can listen to it here...



woodbrooke.org.uk/resource-library/swarthmore-lecture-2022-perceiving-the-temperature-of-the-water-by-helen-minnis

Yearly Meeting committed to examining the role of British Quakers in the slave trade and in colonialism and asked local meetings to consider this and to look at how they could begin the work of repair.

'We have heard that love and justice also require us to consider deeply how the Society of Friends in Britain might make financial and other reparation for our part in the wrongs of the transatlantic slave trade.' (from minute 27, BYM 2022)

You can read the substantive minutes of BYM 2022 here...



quaker.org.uk/documents/yearly-meeting-minutes-2022-substantive-final

We have also considered the use of the term 'overseer' and local meetings have been asked to avoid its use given its connotations of oppressive behaviour. Many local meetings have already taken this step and a variety of terms such as pastoral care team, pastoral Friend and befriender are now being used.

The climate crisis also continues to be a concern. We were pleased that work of Quaker Peace & Social Witness on loss and damage bore fruit at COP27 and a loss and damage fund for countries suffering from the effects of the climate crisis was agreed. You can find out more about the work of BYM here: quaker.org.uk

Finally, we look forward to welcoming EMES Friends to the UK for the EMES annual meeting in 2023.

Brummana Monthly Meeting

Brummana Friends Monthly Meeting is losing members due to the collapse of the economy in Lebanon. Several of the members have left Lebanon with their families, though they still are in touch with the Meeting and attend meetings for worship when they visit the country. Young Friends have left Lebanon in search for jobs, either in the Gulf region or in Europe and the USA.

Our principal focus remains Brummana High School. We meet there on Sundays, and we continue to run the Tennis Club and hold local tournaments in Summer. A few members of the Brummana Meeting sit on the school board and help with fund-raising campaigns.

The Brummana Meeting is also a member of the Evangelical Churches Supreme Council of Lebanon and Syria.

The idea of having a website has been tossed around, and probably we will launch a website next year. The Brummana Meeting is unfortunately shrinking however it has a rich history and a legacy that needs to be preserved.

The Israeli occupation of the West Bank has severed the connection between the Brummana Meeting and the Ramallah Meeting. We hope to re-establish this one day when peace prevails. We are always happy to welcome Quakers from abroad whenever they visit Lebanon.

Central European Gathering

Prepared by Kasia Kaczmarkiewicz, CEG Co-Clerk and EMES representative.

The Covid-19 pandemic brought both new challenges and opportunities. In 2022, we continued our online worship meetings that began two years ago, and since the start of the war in Ukraine, we have met weekly on Sundays, at 10:30 a.m. CET (and on the first Sunday of the month at 6 p.m. CET). Friends from Austria, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Poland, Portugal, Slovenia, the UK and Ukraine regularly attend.

After the great Covid-19 theme, the main topic in 2022 was war. Friends' opinions varied, from reflections expressing concern and hope, to the need and call for more radical responses. Some countries in our region, especially those neighbouring Ukraine, experienced the

effects of war, such as the presence of thousands of refugees in need of aid and shelter. The Funding for Ukraine Group (FUG), a committee offering financial assistance to organisations working with refugees, is grateful for funds donated by Quakers in Europe and around the world. FUG grew out of CEG and is run by Friends in the region.

In June, we had our annual blended meeting in Prague and planned two interim meetings: a blended gathering from Brno took place in November and an online one in February 2023 as part of our preparation for our next annual gathering, with the theme: Diversity as Our Strength, to be held May 25-28, 2023, in Gdansk, Poland.

At the 2022 annual meeting in Prague, we discussed the Quaker development of the Central European Gathering, and realised that we all highly value the CEG and see it as our Quaker home, even those of us who belong to other national gatherings.

We talked about the CEG archiving project, which is in progress, and which gives us a chance to look back. We also took time to look to the future and to consider the status of CEG, the possible change of which is very much supported by EMES.

Denmark Yearly Meeting

We are only a few Quakers in Denmark, but during 2022 we've managed to revive our meeting activities after Covid-19.

It is on a smaller scale than before in Copenhagen (once a month), but in exchange we now have regular meetings in Aarhus (every second month), and we publish our newsletter every month

now instead of every third month (as we did before the Covid-19). We have also established a Facebook group in 2022.

Both Danish and International visitors are always welcome, and we often receive guests (and even guest groups) at our meetings. Some of the Danish Quakers are active in local peace groups and in the climate movement.

Europe and Middle East Young Friends

2022 was a year where we celebrated togetherness and rebuilding our in-person community. We reflected on the ways our lives had been changed by the pandemic, and the way that our community can provide support and comfort in times of uncertainty.

The joy of coming together in the Quäker Haus, Bad Pyrmont, for our Summer Gathering is a memory that we will cherish. The picturesque small town, surrounded by hills in the middle of Germany, was perfect for a historical hike, we visited its beautiful spa gardens with a tea house and kneipp (barefoot) path, held meetings for worship for business and joined the Bad Pyrmont worship meeting...

Summer Gathering was also the last gathering where our outgoing co-clerk, Leyna Kreutner, served in this role, but also the first time that Marcie and Leyna clerked together in person! During one of our workshops, we thought about all of the diverse roles in EMEYF and expressed our gratitude for everyone who brings their own unique contribution to our community.

Our clerks also benefited from an in-person handover held at Marcie's house in Northumberland, Northern England. We thought about what clerking means to us and our spiritual needs, as well as practical arrangements for sharing knowledge of the role and important documents.

Marcie and Lisette clerked together at the Annual Meeting in Quaker House Brussels. We welcomed new members of CC and Trustees and despite train chaos across Europe, most Young Friends managed to get to and back from AM to reconnect with old and get to know new EMEYFers.

We look forward to being together again at our Spring Gathering in Congénies, France, which will be held between 8th and 16th April 2023.

EMEYF is a part of EMES and a loose community of Young Friends across Europe and the Middle East, which doesn't have 'official' membership. Just as in most groups or meetings, many do not actively participate on a regular basis and the EMEYFers who attend the

gatherings – aside from our roleholders and Communications Committee – are continuously changing. Besides our Annual Meeting in autumn and Spring Gathering (usually around Easter) there are weekly online meetings which are attended by a varying number of Young Friends and sometimes guests.

At Annual Meeting we usually have around 10 and at Spring Gathering around 20 attenders. Since the All-Age-gathering in 2016 we have several members of our community who have children and four children attended our Annual Meeting last November.

For more information, as well as who our current role holders and representatives are, see our website: emeyf.org

Finland Yearly Meeting

Finnish Friends' Spring and Autumn gatherings took place in Tampere. The Spring theme was *What Supports Friends at Difficult Times*, and in the Autumn we considered the theme Kaamos and Death, which was life giving and inspirational. Speaking out about death is helpful, as may be planning one's own funeral. And in our midst there was live music, affirming that the musical element of FYM, which has been sleeping for many years, now appears to be alive and well.

Northern Friends were able to meet for a day of Fellowship in May. This was the first time all seven of us were able to be present at the same time and for that we were joyful. We hope

for more opportunities for our group to gather in 2023. FYM on-line MfW twice a month continues to provide spiritual communion and community for those of us who do not have a regular worship group to go to.

Tampere Friends experienced the year 2022 to be relatively free from Covid-19 restrictions; as a precaution we didn't have any meetings in January, but otherwise the difference with the two previous years was huge. In 2022, we arranged 27 silent meetings for worship, and we had 4-12 participants/ MfF.

During the autumn season, we arranged a special invitational meeting for worship for the local Herattajayhdistys (an active

Lutheran religious group). We were able to enjoy the company of 20 people. Silent meetings for worship in Tampere seem to be experiencing a time of transition and renewal. We have noticed that the frequency of vocal ministry is higher, whether in the form of personal witness or readings from Quaker texts.

At the end of the year we received a gift from two friends who started playing music as an introduction to the silence. We have also celebrated the fact there

has been a need and space created for a Children's Program in Tampere.

Helsinki Friends' silent worship meetings are now held in a new place (Kinaporinkatu 2 E 39, 00500 Helsinki, near the "sörnäinen" underground station). Our silent worship meetings take place every Sunday between 12 and 13. After that we discuss concerns arising from the Meeting for Worship. We have had 2-10 participants every Sunday, including visitors from abroad.

German Yearly Meeting

In October 2022, German Yearly Meeting could finally meet again in presence in Bonn. After many years of discernment, we made the decision to begin work on renovating our Quaker House in Bad Pyrmont.

In the process, we want to preserve the historical character of the house while also filling it with new life. We are grateful to have already reached the minimum funding goal. But more donations are needed, so we will go on with our fundraising. There's a blog in German about plans and the progress made

which can be found on our website.

We are also planning to create a network and a forum for peacework. The idea is to thereby support the important work many Friends are already engaged in and to enable better coordination. The German Yearly Meeting is happy to hear about and support the work of a new Quaker initiative for peace, ecology and justice – Earthcare Witness. Furthermore we have appointed two persons responsible for our protection policy and we've started to plan our 100th anniversary in 2025.

Quakers en France

A year after the lifting of most restrictions on gatherings, all the Quaker groups in France find themselves still with smaller meetings but online worship and communal work has taken on a new vitality – especially to bring together many friends ‘isolated’ in the countryside. The new group of Nouvelle Aquitaine, for instance, flourishes exclusively by Zoom. Other groups such as Toulouse and Languedoc are ageing and find it hard to attract younger sympathisers; Nantes and Paris maintain a good mix of ages.

The Paris Group has passed a full year with no permanent abode but the slow process of discernment to purchase a building for the new Maison Quaker Paris, in conjunction with all area meetings in France, should bring a new address, new commitments and expanded possibilities during 2023.

The Centre Congénies has celebrated its 200th anniversary with remembrance of the pacifist and direct spiritual leadings of those groups in the South of France recognised fraternally by English Quakers in the 18th century. The centre hosted a very happy week in the summer for

Quaker families with children which should become an annual event. A tranquil meeting house and garden offering various activities throughout the year, the Centre Quaker invites Quakers everywhere to come to its courses and stay in its Chambres d’Hôtes.

The annual Assembly in 2022 was held in Sète on the south coast where greeting the dawn on the beach front became for a few days a new Quaker practice. We shall invent a different routine in Angers this year set in parkland by the Lac du Maine.

The Society lost late in the year one of its elders who has greatly contributed to the Quaker presence in France – historian, author and translator Jeanne-Henriette Louis.

The Group de Communications have published new leaflets ‘Qui sont les Quakers’ and ‘Les 6 ‘épiciés’ knowing the need to show our leadings and witness in society. This fragmented and needy world needs us more than ever to expand from the comfort of small groups of friends and to witness our understanding of peace and our spiritual interconnectedness.

Georgia Worship Group

The 20th year of the 21st century began quite hard for all mankind. First there was Covid-19, which lasted two years and claimed the lives of several million people, then the pandemic did not have time to end, when Russia started a war against Ukraine.

This war has already been going on for more than 10 months and there is no end in sight yet. In times like these, it's hard to keep the faith. Many people are beginning to think, where is God? Why does the "Creator of the universe" not stop these deaths, murders and evil that is happening in Ukraine and in other countries where there are military conflicts? What can we do in such a time? We can pray for peace, hold in the light the people who suffer and, if we can, provide some assistance to those who suffer. Any of these actions will bring small but positive change to the world.

The year 2022 was difficult for Georgia and for the Georgian friends as well. There were serious fears that the next country which will be invaded by the Russian army – is Georgia. More than 20.000 Ukrainian refugees running away from war fled to Georgia after the 24th February 2022. Thousands and thousands of Russians started coming to Georgia, running away from political repressions and later from partial mobilisation in their country. Their numbers were huge. More than 100.000

of Russians remained in the country, with a population of only 3.500.000. Their presence increased the prices for everything in the country, starting from the real estate and going on to food and petrol. That situation financially affected every member of Georgian friends. Though good news also happened in 2022. One person applied for the membership in Quakers and probably his family will also join our Group in the future.

With the financial assistance of EMES, the Clerk of Georgian Friends delivered insulin to a clinic in Kiev and medical aid to the clinic in city of Irpen soon after the city was released from Occupation. With the help of the Spiritual Growth Fund, books and pamphlets on Quakerism were published and distributed.

Some visits also took place in 2022. A Georgian Young friend visited the EMEYF gathering in Bad Pyrmont. Georgian Friends representatives attended the Border meeting in Strasbourg. The Clerk of Georgian Friends attended the EMES Annual Meeting gathering in Paris, the Peace and Service consultation and the German Friends Yearly Meeting.

Georgian Friends Worship group's members would like to express their gratitude to Friends in Ireland and in Cambridge for their contribution toward the rent of the apartment in Tbilisi, for Meetings for worship.

**The year 2022 was very difficult for the whole planet.
Let us not lose hope, and believe that in 2023 Peace
will come to Earth.**

Hungary, Evangelical Friends Church

Prepared with love by Tony & Ági Tolna, Hungary

Communities include:

1. EFC Tolna – Church House / EFC Hungary Mission Center
2. EFC Budapest – Community Center
3. EFC Pécs – Community Center
4. EFC Kölked – Church House / EFC Gipsy Mission Center
5. EFC Ozora – Community Center
6. Komló – House Group
7. Majs – House Group
8. Dunaszentbenedek – House Group
9. Serbia – Backi Monostor – House Group
10. Croatia – Vardaroc – House Group

In our communities, the local pastors keep church meetings every week but once a month we usually visit our churches and house groups from Tolna Mission Centre (me or my co-workers). We try to actively minister to unbelievers. Every month last Sunday we have Children and Youth Church Meetings in EFC Budapest.

We invite many unbelievers especially to these meetings. In the past year we have been invited several times by the manager of the local Community Centre to organise various children's activities and to participate in the community day. We are thankful to God because this

year we can tell the good news to even more people and also thankful because all our churches and house groups were able to reopen after the Covid-19 pandemic.

We believe it is important to care for children and youth because they are the keys to our future. One of our visions is that we would like to have local worship groups, leaderships, pastors in every church. To achieve this, Me and my wife Agnes lead Bible studies and Religious Education Lessons at local Primary Schools. We have 10 classes. Last summer, we held Children's Days again in Budapest, Tolna and Ozora. At





Christmas, we held our usual Christmas Church Meetings again in every church and we gave 200 Christmas Packs, some Christian books and 500 Calendars for children and families in need.

We went to Ukraine in summer and autumn. We went with a car and a trailer full of non-perishable food and medicines. These things seemed such a small thing in this war and humanitarian

disaster, but I remember the words of Jesus: "Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." (Matthew 25:40) So, we will continue to go and help as soon as possible in the future.

Finally, this year we continued the renovation of the church houses in Tolna and also Kölked and we would like to renovate our Charity House.



■ Last year we had six new baptised members in the Church.

Thank you for your prayers and for your partnership in the Mission.
We are grateful to God for You and your Friendship!

Ireland Yearly Meeting

During the past year, we have been moving out from the shadow of the Covid-19 pandemic and engaging in a range of in-person and blended activities, from Meeting for Worship to discussions groups to various special events.

In the early part of 2022, Irish Friends hosted about 50 panels from the *Loving Earth Project* – a collection of textile panels made by Friends and Quaker Meetings celebrating things that we love that are threatened by growing environmental breakdown. The exhibit was displayed at the South Belfast Meeting House and two other venues in Northern Ireland, after which it was sent to Cork, where it was displayed in the Cork Meeting House. You can see some of the panels on page 48.

Another event held at the Cork Meeting

House in April 2022 was “From Disappointment to Hope: Actions and Responses to Climate Breakdown”, organised by EcoQuakers Ireland. This gathering included presentations by three speakers and much rich discussion. It is hoped that a similar gathering will be held near Dublin in 2023.

In August, we were delighted to hold Ireland Yearly Meeting in person for the first time since 2019. IYM 2022 was held in Belfast, and included an online option for those who did not feel able to attend in person. We plan to hold IYM 2023 in such a “blended” format as well, as we feel this greatly enriched the event, with online participation from Friends on several different continents.

In October, South Belfast Meeting was one of the European and Middle East Section hosts for World Quaker Day.



Netherlands Yearly Meeting

Prepared by Kees Nieuwerth.

As in the past two years, the pandemic continued to make life of our Yearly Meeting rather difficult in 2022. Although gradually meetings for worship were being held physically again, some were still held digitally. The Monthly Meeting at the Hague even decided to make some meetings for worship hybrid meetings permanently. Digital meetings to 'nurture the spirit' of and amongst Friends were also continued.

In view of the pandemic, our Yearly Meeting was held in two parts. Business meetings were held digitally on Friday evening the tenth, while the thematic session was a physical meeting on Saturday the eleventh of June. Our theme was 'Inclusive Security'. Having noticed similar initiatives of Quakers elsewhere – in the United States where it is called Shared Security and in the United Kingdom where it is called Rethinking Security – some Dutch Friends a few years ago called together different peace movements in the Netherlands to similarly develop a project called 'Inclusive Security'. Members of the Working Group on Inclusive Security, Jan Schaake and Kees Nieuwerth, introduced the project. Fundamentally we cannot be secure as long as others do not feel secure – this is true for our relations with Russia (as recently demonstrated by this terrible war in the heart of Europe) – but also our relations with e.g. China and Africa.

Only if and when all nations are feeling safe and secure can we speak of true peace and security. But right now we face a situation in which the global annual expenditure on armaments today is already twice as much as during the so-called Cold War and amounts to 2000 billion dollars! An unimaginable figure of a two with twelve zeros! If this were invested in implementing the SDG 's instead we could do wonders in e.g. combating poverty! So we need to develop a new long-term perspective, a new security architecture, based on a civil, rather than a military policy. The Council of Churches in the NL decided to lend its support to this project and Netherlands YM did too during this session. Meanwhile, this is growing into a truly European movement: there are similar projects in the UK, Germany, France, Austria and Poland now.

Like last year, in autumn, we had an additional session at the Quaker Centre at Amsterdam. This was – appropriately – held on World Quaker Day, the second of October. This time the focus was on the life of our Yearly Meeting itself.

Friends examined during worship sharing sessions such concepts as discernment, worship, testimonies, traditions, concerns and the way these may be translated into the life and activities of our (shrinking) Yearly Meeting these days. We discovered (anew) that we 'can punch above our weight' in letting our lives speak – both individually and collectively – and that it is the quality rather than the quantity of Friends is vital. Or as one Friend put it: 'It is where it becomes difficult that I want to be a Quaker!'

Norway Yearly Meeting

Prepared by Hanne Hognestad Clerk, Norway Yearly Meeting.

2022 has been a year with the experience of “back to normal”. During the winter, more and more of the society opened again and meetings across the country are all now meeting physically again. The difference between now and before the pandemic, is that we have experienced online meetings and the advantage that has for all those living far away from a meeting house.

I wrote last year how going online has been a success in a country like ours, and this is still the case. For many years Norway has only had three monthly meetings, plus two groups meeting regularly for worship, we now also have a meeting that meets regularly online, sometimes together with Oslo Monthly Meeting and sometimes just the people online.

This year we again had our Yearly Meeting together with Friends from Sweden, Finland and Denmark. Meeting together was such a good experience and we enjoyed hearing from our Friends Verene Nicolas and Alistair McIntosh on the theme “Seeking a Quaker Spirituality for our times”, being challenged

to consider how we might use each day in a blessed way, asking whether I see what it is I am called to do. We are living in uncertain times and what we do and how we live our lives are so important. We were reminded that meeting for clearness is a cornerstone of Quaker practice. At Yearly Meeting, we got the opportunity to experience this in small groups, where a chair for silence was included in the circle. We affirmed that “deepening the question may be more important than answering the question.”

In October we again had the opportunity to meet in the mountains for a weekend. Most of the weekend was spent going for walks, talking and having Meetings for Worship together.

We have, like last year, also participated in several interfaith religious services, and Friends have been participating in several demonstrations. We are, like many Friends around the world, concerned about the war in Ukraine, and pray that the next year will bring peace both to Ukraine and other parts of the world.

Quakers in Portugal

This year was and still is a serious problem with Covid-19. So we still meet by Zoom and have had only a few in-person events. One notable exception was we hosted the EMES Executive Committee for a Meeting at one of our member’s homes. Several of us Portugal Quakers had dinner with the Committee in Cascais.

We still meet on Wednesdays and Sundays. We have several attenders from other countries who attend by Zoom. Our big question for 2023 is after Covid-19 fades into history will we continue to meet by Zoom or a hybrid? Due to the numbers of regular attenders from other countries, we would probably always have a Zoom component.

Prague Meeting Prepared by Liz Coling, Clerk

Our activities this year were wholly centred in, or organised from, Prague and all Meetings for Worship were hybrid.

We currently have six members of the Religious Society of Friends living in the Czech Republic, with Roman Branberger dividing his time between Portugal and Prague. Thanks to our Elder, Gerry Turner, Meetings were held weekly, although we decided at our December Meeting for Business to reduce this to twice-monthly. Meeting numbers were low throughout the year even after the end of Covid 19 restrictions, with, as in 2021, children rarely attending. We had several discussions about the state of our group and agreed that the loss of children, as they grow up, is almost inevitable. We considered the relations between us, our priorities (Is worship and silence enough? Would we attract more attendees if we had a regular and interesting after worship programme? Is face-to-face worship more rewarding than hybrid Meetings?) Hybrid worship is certainly unwelcome to some members and we will reduce the number of these meetings next year.

Whereas 2020 and 2021 were dominated by Covid-19, Russia's invasion of Ukraine in February this year had a huge impact on the Prague Meeting. Some of us already knew Ukrainians living and working in the Czech Republic, and following the invasion as well as two Friends hosting refugees, we gave our Meeting rooms for a student and a mother and daughter who had escaped from the war. They will stay there indefinitely, and we have decided therefore to search for a new permanent space for our regular worship. This is stressful, but may also signal a new start for us.

Some of us attended the online Central European Gathering (CEG) Meetings for Worship, which, since the start of the war in Ukraine, have taken place weekly. Prague members are also very active in the CEG Funding for Ukraine Group, which raises and distributes money to not-for-profit organisations in the region, working with Ukrainian refugees.

Prague Friends organised the 2022 CEG annual meeting, a well-attended and very busy session, where we especially considered the future of our Gathering. Three Czech Friends were asked to take on roles in QCEA.

Irena Marusicova's PhD involving the development of Quaker-friendly materials for children (started in 2018 and partially funded by our Meeting), is progressing well and should be finished in 2024. In terms of faith in action, many of us held our Friend, Arne Springorum, in the Light as he demonstrated in Britain against the use of fossil fuels. He was also supported there by fellow Quakers, who met with him and sometimes hosted him.

Once again, it's not been an easy year for Czech Quakers, but, once again, we ended on a harmonious note, singing carols under Prague's historic Charles Bridge.

Friends in Italy

Quakers in Italy live spread across the peninsula, with around 20 people who either participate regularly in worship or who join our annual gathering. Bologna Recognised Meeting and Florence Worship Group alternate Sunday worship in person and online throughout the year, with a once a year national gathering in person once a year.

In 2022, Friends and friends of Friends in Italy gathered at Borgo Basino in Cursecoli, Emilia-Romagna, Italy from 9-11 September. This Annual Gathering of Friends in Italy brought 15 Quakers, seekers and friends of Quakers and five children to the farm where we have met the last several years to share fellowship, find inspiration and discern business of Quakers across the peninsula. As usual, we welcomed old Friends who have regularly worshipped with us for many years as well as inviting new friends joining us for the first time. We conducted our activities in a mix of Italian and English. Children painted collaboratively, took a walk to the forest hut, made stick bread over the fire, and played together barefoot throughout the weekend.

We were joined by Ethel Livermore, Clerk of FWCC EMES. Our first gathered session on Saturday morning centred on Ethel's presentation of the work of EMES and particularly the structures and business processes of various groups and gatherings in the Section. Ethel's session was followed by our business meeting, in which we discerned a new time of gathering the first weekend of November each year at Borgo Basino as a dedicated meeting period for our annual gathering.

We also considered our representatives to EMES and how to receive funds granted by that body through their Spiritual Growth fund. We included a consideration of the character of hybrid meetings and the pattern of our meetings, recognizing the possibilities and challenges presented by this format.

After lunch and free time where new members of our group toured the farm, Marisa Johnson, former EMES General Secretary and current member of the International Membership committee, shared about the historical evolution of the peace



testimony and her current relationship to it through a videoconference link. Her words provoked a lively discussion about peace, peacemaking, and how we live our values.

We, as Friends in Italy, are grateful that the Italian Constitution repudiates war as a means of resolving international conflicts. We affirm our belief that both this law and our testimony of peace call us to support peaceful resolution of all wars and work toward a Just Peace, particularly a truce in Ukraine and the Middle East.

After dinner, we enjoyed a fire together and an epilogue session to close the evening.

On Sunday morning, we gathered for a final worship and reading of letters of greeting. We send warm greetings to Friends who were not able to join us, hold those who have asked for our thoughts in the Light, and look forward to coming together again next year, 3-5 November, 2023, at Borgo Basino.



Quakers in Spain Prepared by Carmen Alcalde, Representative

Our Spanish Quaker Group keeps meeting every Sunday on Zoom since the pandemic lock down in March 2020. No matter that Covid-19 is under control now, we keep these meetings because it is the best way to coincide as Friends and attendees are scattered all along our country with not enough seekers to form a group in each city where there are people interested in Quakerism.

However, we felt the need to meet face to face as most of us hadn't met before. We only knew each other through the screen computer and organised a gathering on the second weekend of October.

Pilar Olea, one of our attendees, very kindly offered her country house in El Escorial, about 30 kms from Madrid, a very beautiful place where we spent a wonderful weekend: the emotion of being able to embrace each other, speak about us, laugh and prepare meals together, discuss Quaker themes and worship together. Fantastic! In fact,

It has been the highlight of 2022 as well as celebrating World Quaker Day, having Meeting for Worship with Sutton Coldfield Quaker Meeting, on Zoom, as a result of their own initiative which resulted in a beautiful experience.

Ramallah Friends Meeting (Quakers)

Prepared by Saleem F. Zaru, Clerk, Ramallah Friends Meeting

A world that has changed since the pandemic, 2022 was no different than 2021, a year full of ongoing challenges and barriers; yet we managed to move on with our lives, and we learned life lessons that proved to be an important part of our physical and spiritual journey. Fortunately, God is the helper of those who are defenceless and is faithful and considerate towards all his children.



Our annual report this year is presented in a different way from previous years, shorter and more direct. We are sharing an overview of what has happened throughout the months, despite the remaining COVID-related restrictions in our city.

Review of Year 2022 at Ramallah Friends Meeting:

- Participants of the International Study Course from the Swedish Theological Institute in Jerusalem (STI) visited Ramallah Friends Meeting in March 2022
- Worship & Fellowship with Kelly Kellum (FUM Director) at Ramallah Friends Meeting Center May, 2022.
- Group from the UK led by Rev. Valerie Martin (member of Cornwall Area Quaker Meeting Truro) & Dr. Liz Burrows. It was a good time of sharing memories and breaking bread together with Jean Zaru and other Friends from the community.
- Visit of Max & Jane Carter from the Living Letters.
- Sunday Worship with Dr. Graham Leonard, A former teacher at the Ramallah Friends School, and served as a Pastor at the Ramallah Friends Meeting Quaker for over two years in the 1950s.
- The start of the Youth Empowerment Project, funded by the Friends of Ramallah Friends Meeting Quakers (FRFMQ) implemented by the United Palestinian Appeal (UPA). This will be an ongoing project that will take two years to complete.

Soon after that, our former presiding clerk, Jean Zaru, had a stroke in May 2022 and went to the United States for intensive therapy and treatment. We understand that her recovery is slow and we all wish her good health.

As the path of life evolves rapidly, we will continue our commitment of serving the community, inspiring hope and positivity.

Sweden Yearly Meeting

Annual meeting was held as a Nordic Yearly Meeting Gathering Thursday 30th June – Sunday 3 July 2022 on the theme Seeking a Quaker Spirituality for Our Times, with speakers Alistair McIntosh and Verene Nichols, and with more than 80 participants from Sweden, Norway, Finland and Denmark, as well as international guests. The photo is from the children and youth group making art bags to be sold for Quaker Service.

Even this year has been impacted by the pandemic restrictions and of some activities going back to meeting physically and others online, as well as some experiments with using technology for hybrid meetings. We hold Meetings for Worship both face to face and online, and also arrange seminars, lectures, retreats, poetry events and other activities in both formats.

We aim to be a lively meeting. Sweden YM continues to welcome newcomers to an online introduction group as well as a group for those wanting to dig deeper. Despite a slight growth in membership, we do experience difficulties finding Friends to take on roles and we are concerned that those with a great commitment are tired. Also, we find that there are pressing needs such as the environmental and political situation in which we would like to be even more engaged. An important process this year has been the translation of the book Being a Quaker – a guide for newcomers (by Geoffrey Durham) into Swedish, to be printed within short, and an overview of our financial situation and our operations with a special view of the buildings we own and rent.



Switzerland Yearly Meeting

We are 75 Friends and almost 100 friends of Friends and enquirers included on our mailing list. The average age remains high (around 70). There are three regional groups (Bern, Basel and Zürich) and Geneva Monthly Meeting within Switzerland Yearly Meeting. Organising the SYM Annual Meeting has been rotated between the German-speaking groups and Geneva Monthly Meeting but for 2023 the organising is handled by Friends from across Switzerland.

The 2022 annual gathering of Switzerland Yearly Meeting was held 3-6 June in Herzberg. It was attended by approximately 30 Friends, including representatives of several other yearly meetings. We were treated to a presentation by Nozizwe & Jeremy Madlala-Routledge on their peace work in South Africa before moving to Geneva last year. Nozizwe is the new director of the Quaker UN Office in Geneva.

Another significant gathering was our retreat, held in February at Montmirail near Neuchâtel on the theme "Meeting for Worship for Business". The three facilitators spent one year planning the event which was well thought out and provided the participants with many new insights and an appreciation for the process. The event was held in person. Unfortunately, one of the facilitators was sick but was able to support us online.

Geneva Monthly Meeting has been hosting spiritual deepening sessions that have even attracted the participation of Friends from the USA, who used to

attend the Geneva Meeting. Both the summer picnic and the annual Christmas gathering took place for the first time in person following the pandemic. Finally, we were able to use the new Christmas Carole books and sing the Twelve Days of Christmas- a Geneva Meeting Tradition. We had visitors from the Bern Meeting join us for Christmas, which was a special treat. There were also a few open houses. Sadly, we did not have children attending either of these events. In Geneva, Meetings for Worship continue to be hybrid.

It has been challenging to attract members to return to Meeting following the Covid-19 pandemic. There has been recent success in bringing more Friends together for the Quarterly meetings. After Meeting for Worship there has been a simple potluck meal, followed by the Meeting for Worship for Business, and then a workshop or presentation. Finally, the Spiritual Deepening group has hosted a discussion based on selected readings. This structure has increased the attendance dramatically.

Six Friends are meeting regularly in person in Berne. Three Friends are meeting on the 1st Sunday every month in the Basel region. Visitors are welcome. The Zurich group resumed physical meetings since January 2022 on 2nd and 4th Sunday every month, while online worship meetings via Skype take place on all other Sundays. Enthusiasm of Friends seems to be somewhat reduced compared with pre-Covid levels. An article on Quakers was written by four Friends and published in

the Feminist-theological magazine FAMA. The Zürich Group has also been invited to participate in a Peace project called “Rethinking Security” and organised by “Schweizerischer Friedensrat” (Swiss Peace Council). Several F/friends have decided to become part of the group which starts its work in 2023.

There are three business meetings a year, the principal one taking place during the Yearly Meeting, which is attended by about 30-40 members and representatives of other Yearly Meetings and Quaker organisations. The two other Business meetings are held in the spring and autumn and are attended by about 10-15 members.

The spring meeting focuses on planning

the Yearly Meeting and acceptance of the accounts from the year before. The autumn meeting deals mainly with the budget and nominations for the next year. Following the pandemic, these meetings are all being held using a hybrid format, allowing Friends from across Switzerland to attend.

Two publications continue to be produced several times a year, *Entre Amis* and *News and Views of Geneva Friends*, which contain much information about the activities of Swiss Friends. Similar to the multiple languages used at SYM Annual Meeting, these publications contain articles in German, French and English, reflecting the multilingualism that is both a strength and a challenge for the Quaker community in Switzerland.

Tallinn Friends Group Prepared by Roland Rand, Clerk

2022 has been an active and challenging year for the Tallinn Friends. At the beginning of the year in Tallinn, we volunteered at the Tallinn Refugee Centre where we served as a base on night shifts, arranged accommodation, catering and organised the funding of aid projects. Close cooperation started in the spring with a school in Ukraine where we ran a fundraising campaign to buy books and educational materials in Estonian. In August, Dale Andrew visited Tallinn and gave a charity concert, the proceeds of which we donated to the Church of Ukraine.

In April we visited the Friends of Finland in Tampere. After a warm welcome, we learned a lot from the experiences of the Friends and shared our thoughts on peace and harmony. We shared Merle’s poetry book “Unity” and Rafael’s art cards “Emphatic Nature”. We hope to see them in Tallinn soon again.

In May, we attended the EMES annual meeting in Paris and in September the Border Meeting in Strasbourg, where our children, Raimond and Laura, participated in the EMES youth group for the first time.

A number of friends visited us in the summer. Natasha from the Moscow Friends House and FWCC General Secretary Tim Gee, with whom we visited the Council of Churches, the Parliament of the Republic of Estonia, met the leaders of the Tallinn Refugee Centre and learned about the life of war refugees on the ship Estrella. Together with Tallinn friends we visited Klein Castle and had a quiet meeting in Nõmme park.

This year was also a sad year for us, as Rafael Rolan Rand, a young talented artist, passed away. He was an active peace and worked in alternative services with people with disabilities. His art will be exhibited at various exhibitions and charity events.

A few new friends have joined us. It was especially nice to meet Nigel Kelly, who is from the UK but lives in Suure -Jaani, central Estonia with his Estonian wife Siiri. They are very active in their community and especially known as ambassadors of Quakerism.



Warsaw Worship Group

Prepared by Kasia Kaczmarkiewicz, Clerk

In 2022, as in 2021, we met less frequently and not always on a regular basis, which had a clear impact on the number of people attending worship – from two to eight.

Although there are only a few of us, we try to maintain the Quaker decision-making process, to take care of the roles needed to make the group function more easily and properly, and to ensure that seekers and those interested in Quakerism get the information they need. We have maintained a Facebook page for three years: [facebook.com/KwakrzyWarszawa](https://www.facebook.com/KwakrzyWarszawa). We are building up our small Quaker library, with more and more items in Polish in addition to English-language publications.

In August we hosted Friends from FWCC and QUNO. Tim Gee, Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge and Jeremy Routledge told us about their work and experiences. We prepared a presentation for them about Polish-Ukrainian relations (in a historical perspective, which could clarify their specificities and potential challenges in the near future). Our guests were interested in what we do in supporting people from Ukraine, as well as about our points of view, often slightly different from the Western view of the current situation in our region. We broadcasted these talks via Zoom, for interested Friends from outside Warsaw and even from outside Europe.

World Quaker Day was spent by some of us – connecting via the internet – in unity with a Poplar Ridge Friends Meeting, New York State, so that we could feel the bond with the worldwide Quaker family.

After a pandemic time of uncertainty, separation, dispersal of the group due to illnesses and the passing of our Friends, at the end of 2022 and the beginning of 2023 the Warsaw worship group seems to have gained a peaceful breather. Since the end of 2022 we have a new regular meeting place. And the frequency – once a week, every Sunday at 10.30am CET. We are keeping the meetings blended, as the covid time and the online solution for the pandemic has brought us new participants from places from outside Warsaw and Poland.

Reports from Across the Section

Church and Peace

What a blessing that after over two years of pandemic Church and Peace members and friends were finally able to meet again personally and strengthen the Europe-wide peace church network. Our four conferences focused on **exchange** on the rich fund of **experience** in dealing with the challenges of our age and **nonviolent alternatives**. The firm trust in **God's Spirit**, that enables **change in ourselves and the world**, sustains and strengthens us.

Conferences

The encounter “Rethinking security in Europe” on **11 June 2022 in Paris and Strasbourg** focused particularly on the courage needed to practise nonviolence; our French-speaking members agreed to keep working on this concept.



church-and-peace.org/en/2022/06/rethinking-security-in-europe-conference-and-church-and-peace-french-speaking-regional-group-meeting

At the day conference “**The work of our hands? Reconciliation in turbulent times**” in **Birmingham, UK on 2 July 2022** members and friends underlined that **peace is a ‘doing word’** and inspires us to take action for reconciliation and justice. As a founder of the organisation “Regional Address for Nonviolent Actions” in Croatia and



“Believers for Peace” in the Balkan region, Ana shared the ongoing commitment and need for reconciliation after the wars, ethnic and religious divides and displacement of the late 90s still impact on the societies. She encouraged participants to explore their own sources of hope and share those perspectives with others.



church-and-peace.org/en/2022/07/bi-day-2022-reconciliation-continues-to-be-churches-task

In view of the devastating effects of the Ukraine war, Church and Peace, at its annual conference from 20 to 23 October 2022 in Croatia, called for doing everything to reach a rapid ceasefire and enable diplomatic negotiations to begin. The conference with the theme “**Division. War. Nonviolence.**” was an opportunity to learn from the peacemakers in the region of Western Balkans. Over 100 participants from 17 countries shared how exacerbated conflicts and divisions related to the climate crisis, refugee situation, pandemics, the widening gap between poverty and wealth, and the consequences of the Russian war of aggression on Ukraine are shaping realities across Europe. The gathering was a space for self reflection and exchange of ideas for dealing with these crises. Plenaries, workshops, networking time, as well as prayer and liturgy encourage participants to stay intrigued by and hopeful for the transformational power of nonviolence.



church-and-peace.org/en/2022/10/conference-in-croatia-first-take-the-plank-out-of-your-own-eye

The German-speaking regional conference reflected on “**Prejudices, enemy stereotypes and racism a challenges for peace work**” from 25 to 27 November in Karlsruhe. Participants were encouraged to be self-critical and picked up practical ideas for their own work for peace.



church-and-peace.org/2022/04/deutschsprachige-regionaltagung-2022

World Council of Churches

The 11th Assembly of the World Council of Churches from 31 August to 8 September 2022 in Karlsruhe, Germany, was an impressive ecumenical gathering with diverse participation and contributions from Church and Peace members, including Migration & European Borders; Resource Scarcity and Green Economy; Peace theology and politics of nonviolence in times of war: utopia or necessity?; Rethinking Security in Europe and Africa; Conscientious Objection. Reports of Board and staff members’ participation are available online at...



church-and-peace.org/en/2022/12/church-and-peace-at-the-wcc-assembly

Kees Nieuwerth (NYM), Church and Peace Board member, offers the following on this gathering specifically for Friends...



fwccemes.org/news/report-on-the-11th-assembly-of-the-world-council-of-churches

Dutch Quaker Helpfund (QHF) Prepared by Corien van Dorp, Clerk

During the lockdowns and Covid we were restricted in action. In the last quarter of 2021 I was asked to join QHF. In January 2022, I happened to be alone. In the second half of 2022 we were with a complete team of three persons again and took over the books from the former team.

QHF aims to financially support concerns of Friends, personal, national as well as international and based on Quaker values. This year we supported Stop Fueling War as they lost funding and had to dismiss their paid staff.

Friends House Moscow

In 2022, we focused our work as usual on two main issues – external social projects and Quaker outreach work among Russian-speaking people.

Our projects included Alternatives to Violence Project in Ukraine and Russia, Kids are Kids (Centre for Refugee and Migrant Children in Moscow), English Club (learning English for special children at Big Change organisation in Moscow), Meditation of Friends (meditative sessions in our office). We also supported Alternativshchik, a website for those who seek information about the alternative civil service in Russia.

Our outreach work was based mainly on the translation of Quaker literature and other materials into Russian. Three issues of paper books were published. About 50 articles were translated and published at Quakers.ru website and in Russian language Wikipedia.

We felt that especially now with the invasion in the Ukraine the voice of SFW is important. We did support the light project of the World Council of Churches in Karlsruhe. And we had extra attention for the Friends House Moscow.

For many years, among others, we keep on supporting Trauma Healing (like THARS Burundi); non violence training in Palestine and Israel; asylum seekers and refugees; Rural Service Programme of Kenyan Quakers; People's Craft Training Centre in India.

Social media are important instruments for outreach activity. The Russian language Quaker Facebook group is still a busy place for online communication for those who are interested in Quakerism. Vkontakte.ru is the second main social media platform we use. Our channel in Telegram becomes more popular as this messaging service is not banned in Russia yet.



Photo: Kate McNally

Northern Friends Peace Board (NFPB)

Northern Friends Peace Board (NFPB)'s activities during 2022 saw both continuity and change, in the context of many separate and linked challenges.

The learning and inspiration from our peace testimony has helped sustain us throughout the period. Our members represent Area Meetings across the North of Britain and met four times during the year. As with many of our activities, these meetings were a mix of online and hybrid/blended events. Covid concerns, industrial disputes and a deteriorating rail service, meant that we were not able to be face-to-face as much as we wanted, but the use of online meeting technology – mostly Zoom – enabled us to continue to meet (as well saving some time and money).

Climate concerns and the war in Ukraine were ever-present throughout most of the year. Before the war escalated in the way that it has, NFPB worked with QCEA in hosting an online conference on militarism and climate change, attended by Friends from Britain and beyond. These linked concerns were also a focus for our work within the Global Campaign on Military Spending, of which we are an active partner. And they feature in the work of Rethinking Security, of which we are a member organisation. We were pleased to run a five-week Woodbrooke course with Rethinking Security, and to work throughout the year in supporting its outreach initiatives in relation to its ground-breaking Alternative Security Review project.

We were able to provide support to Quakers and Meetings in a number of ways, from our regular mailings and updates, to talks and workshops, both

online and in-person, and to work in support of local Quaker peace initiatives. More widely, participation with the EMES Peace and Service Consultation – now Network – has been important for mutual support and learning during such a challenging time. We have provided information and links on our website in relation to the war in Ukraine and were involved with the QPSW work in facilitating discussions around issues arising. As the year ended, we were preparing further opportunities for Friends to continue to meet online to reflect, share information and to explore priorities for action.

Also during the last months of the year we moved office. Whilst much of the Coordinator's work has been done from home in recent years, we have substantial files and resources and aim to have an office that is accessible to visitors. We are very grateful that Bolton Quaker Meeting, in the North West of England, has been able to make a room available at their Meeting House for us to use in this way. Whilst the process of moving was demanding, we hope the new office base will be of real benefit in how we take our work forward. Thank you Friends, near and far, for your support, interest, inspiration and friendship.



Photo: Kate McNally



Located in the Quaker house in Brussels, Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) works to bring a vision based on Quaker commitment to peace, justice and equality to Europe and its institutions.

2022 was a hectic year for Europe, from climate extremes to increasing militarisation. QCEA worked to respond to the current events by attending and hosting conferences, cooperating with partners and providing alternatives to hostile policies. In January, QCEA together with Quaker Peace and Social Witness, and Northern Friends Peace Board gathered over 80 Friends from Europe and elsewhere to reflect on the outcomes of COP26 in relation to peace and militarism. The next month in cooperation with QUNO Geneva, the organisation hosted a virtual round-table event at the Second International Conference on Environmental Peacebuilding. In the post-COP26 context, the session was dedicated to examining the human rights implications of securitised responses to climate change. Throughout the year, QCEA organised joint events with the Young Professionals in Foreign Policy on Europe's military drift and environmental crimes in Ukraine, which attracted diverse audiences, ranging from young professionals to experts in their fields. With other Quaker organisations, QCEA signed and issued a joint statement on peace testimony and Ukraine. After two years of hiatus due to the pandemic, the organisation held a Study Tour "Europe at a Crossroads" which attracted 24 participants from all over the world. It provided a unique opportunity to learn more about the EU, its policy-making mechanisms as well as how civil society can make a difference.

2022 was also a year of internal reflection and rebuilding for QCEA. A cumulation of events has revealed some flaws and ambiguities in its governance practices, which are being resolved in a constructive and proactive way. Following the departure of the Director in October 2021, the QCEA General Assembly adopted a report on the lessons to be learned and a framework moving forward. In May, QCEA recruited a new Communications Officer followed by the appointment of a new Director of QCEA, Tracey Martin, who joined the organisation in November. Since then, the team together with the Executive Committee has been working on a new strategy which will reflect current Quaker concerns and address various complex crises faced by Europe. QCEA hopes to be able to share this with our supporters and partners and start implementing in April 2023. A new publication from QCEA "Storytelling from the Frontlines" will be launched in the next months, which will make evident connections between climate injustice and militarism, while also bringing attention to the work that communities continue to do to build more sustainable, just and climate-resilient societies, even when all odds are against them.

We'd like to thank Quakers in EMES for their support over the past year.



■ QCEA Study Tour *Europe at a Crossroads*

Quaker Service Norway

Quaker Service Norway (QSN) is an independent organisation with its own board, consisting of seven members, who all work voluntarily. QSN has no employees. QSN is closely connected to Kvekersamfunnet (The Religious Society of Friends, Norway) and often holds its annual meeting at the same time and place as the annual meeting of the Quakers in Norway.

QSN works for and with people living in conflict areas. Together with grassroot organisations we try to build peace and strengthen dignity and equality. QSN supports projects in DR Congo, Burundi and Rwanda, and in Gaza. In 2023, QSN will celebrate its 60th anniversary.

After QSN lost its main funder in 2021,

it had to reduce its support to projects. However with the support of many Quaker organisations and private donors it has been possible to continue supporting its main project: Palestinian Early Childhood Education Programme (PECEP) who provide preschool education for 5 year-olds in 12 refugee camps in Gaza.

We continue to support organisations in Burundi, Rwanda and DR Congo who run Alternative to Violence programmes for adults and youth, trauma healing and mediation, peace committees and youth clubs. Although the amounts of money are small, we are impressed by the amount of work these organisations do, and their message to us is that they gain strength from the support and contact they have with QSN.



Quaker Service Sweden

Prepared by Sue Glover Frykman, on behalf of the QSS board.

As an independent organisation, Quaker Service Sweden (QSS) continues to be closely connected to the Religious Society of Friends in Sweden. Due to the death of a long-standing member of the QSS board in September 2022, we continue for the meantime with 4 board members. We are all volunteers and give freely of our own time. Like many other small Quaker organisations, it is difficult to recruit people to serve, and we find ourselves struggling with that at present. In 2022 we produced three newsletters for members and donors with updates of the various projects we support.

As a member of the Swedish Mission Council (SMC), an umbrella organisation through which Swedish development aid is distributed, we obtain Sida funding for the integrated development projects (IDPs) undertaken by our partner organisation, Sabalamby Unnayan Samity (SUS), in Bangladesh. We are also obliged to take part in some of SMC's courses, workshops, seminars and Desk Officer days, as well as its annual meeting. Some of these events are held online and some on site at SMC's offices in Stockholm. We also take part in network meetings with our two partner support organisations for SUS in Sweden.

In addition to Bangladesh, QSS supports projects in Burundi, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe, Georgia, Palestine (Ramallah), St. Petersburg and at Friends House Moscow. We also channel donations to the Central European Gathering for their projects to help Ukrainian refugees, and to Quaker Service Norway for its preschool projects in Gaza. Information about the various projects we support can be found here...



kvakare.se/in-english/quaker-service-sweden

We keep in regular touch with our partners through Zoom and email. We visited the project in Bangladesh early in 2022, which was very useful preparation for the external evaluation of the IDP project. In October we were represented at the EMES Peace and Service Consultation (PSC) in Bad Pyrmont, Germany and on Zoom (it was a hybrid meeting). Members of the QSS board also take part in the monthly Zoom PS Network meetings to learn about other Quaker peace and service organisations' work in the Section and collaborate with or support as appropriate.

In 2022 we supported a new pilot project for the development of a Peace Library in Burundi – a project initiated by a former student of the School of Peace, the development of which was supported by QSS some years ago in cooperation with Burundian Quakers. The library has been a great success and is now seeking ways to expand. We also supported a



project in Georgia run by Mikael (Misha) Elizbarashvili, from the Quaker Worship Group there, to determine the main needs and difficulties of Ukrainian refugees living in Georgia. Having identified their main problems, the idea is to work with NGO leaders and Ukrainian refugees to develop possible solutions to improve the lives of Ukrainian refugees in Georgia.

In short, 2022 was a busy, rewarding and at times challenging year. We look forward to 2023, new challenges and new developments.

Quaker International Educational Trust (QuIET)

Brummana High School (BHS) was established in 1873 by a Quaker, Theophilus Waldmeier, a German-Swiss Missionary. For the last 150 years, Quakers have supported the school through epidemics, famine, wars, invasion, political instability and in recent times, a pandemic, the massive Beirut port explosion, a huge influx of Syrian refugees, the collapse of the Lebanese Lira, and a wave of emigration. Through it all, BHS has survived as a leading and dynamic educational force in the country. It is the only Quaker school in Lebanon and one of only two in the Middle East.

BHS continues to thrive and flourish educationally. 1,250 students aged 3 to 18 benefit from the holistic education the school provides with its emphasis on individuality, respect for others, tolerance of all faiths and peaceful resolution of conflict. The result is that the school consists, unusually in Lebanon, of children from all faiths and socio-economic backgrounds.

Post pandemic the school is back to face to face education and academic programmes have been revived and strengthened. All sporting and cultural activities have been restarted. A big success is the Model United Nations

Programme through which the students carry out research and debate representing countries around the world on fundamental issues such as clean air, clean water, global warming, support of the poor and the destitute, freedom and justice, and how these can be achieved by peaceful means.

For all Lebanon's difficulties, education and BHS remain its hope for the future. There is no shortage of students but many of the children require financial support to continue their studies. Due to this increasing demand for financial aid the Board of Governors and the Trustees of the Quaker International Educational Trust (QuIET) decided to create an endowment fund to provide bursary assistance to students in need of financial support.

BHS is governed by a Board of Governors in Lebanon and QuIET is responsible for the land, buildings and the school's Quaker ethos. QuIET has Trustees from the UK, Ireland, USA and Lebanon. Within the school grounds, is the Quaker Meeting House, and the small Brummana Meeting uses the school's premises. The recently established group, Friends of Brummana High School, helps to provide BHS with financial support and to inform Friends about the school.



QUNO

Quaker United Nations Office

QUNO Geneva

QUNO Geneva's Human Impacts of Climate Change (HICC) programme staff participated in COP2 held in Egypt in November 2022.

HICC attended as an expert panellist to speak to governments on holistic and integrated approaches to climate action.

As devastating war in Ukraine dominated conversations worldwide for most of last year, the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) in Geneva continued with greater vigour to search for sustainable solutions to war and violent conflict.

QUNO Geneva looked deep into what it could have done better to prevent this war. It listened to the small voice in the storm, calling it to action.

QUNO Geneva's recently appointed director, Nozizwe Madlala-Routledge, joined Yearly Meetings in Britain, Switzerland and Ireland where Friends considered urgent issues needing collective effort. Madlala-Routledge says Irish Quakers in Belfast reflected on the "concern for peace in Europe and elsewhere in the world".

"We concluded that the Quaker Peace Testimony remains our beacon in times before, during and after a war. To achieve peace we must prepare for peace and not war," she says.

Madlala-Routledge also joined Tim Gee, General Secretary of FWCC in Poland, in August during his visit to Quakers in countries bordering Ukraine and Russia.

"This visit had been inspired by discussions at the meeting of Heads of Quaker Agencies (HAM) after the war in Ukraine broke out. It was in consultation with FWCC EMES which is well positioned with members in the conflict region. Quakers value the practice of intervisitation and joining in worship with Friends from everywhere, especially during

times of strife," says Madlala-Routledge.

"We wanted to understand how it was to live in the increasingly militarised border countries. We were encouraged to find a small but spirited community of Friends wrestling with how to respond in a situation of active war. Together we sang, 'This little light of mine, I'm gonna make it shine'."

At home, QUNO Geneva bid farewell to its office manager Tamara Wiher and welcomed Sophie Naeye in her position. Yazeed Kamaldien joined the office as its communications coordinator after Jez Smith's short-term contract as communications and fundraising officer ended. Kamaldien having served as a journalist for several years, including reporting on the War Resisters International Triennial held in Africa for the very first time in 2014.

QUNO Geneva also hosted an AFSC delegation, including Kennedy Akolo, Sandra Veloso and Khaled Elkouz to share about their work in Africa, Asia and the Middle East.

QUNO Geneva's various programmes had a range of activities throughout last year.

For the Geneva Peace Week 2022, held in November, QUNO Geneva's Peace and Disarmament led talks on 'Rights, Inequalities and Peace: navigating tensions, finding opportunities'. Its representative, Florence Foster, moderated a high-level panel on November 3, which gathered key experts and human rights practitioners to highlight the relationship between human rights and sustainable peace.

QUNO Geneva's Human Rights and Refugees programme, led by Laurel Townhead, draws on QUNO's 75-year history of working with, through and for international law and systems that honour the inherent dignity of every human.



In response to continued dehumanisation, human rights of migrants was top of its agenda in 2022, seeking to use the first International Migration Review Forum — the UN's flagship multilateral event on migration — as a stepping stone towards migration justice. The Forum was an opportunity to set the tone and shape an ambitious global agenda for the next four years to use the Global Compact for Migration to reduce the human cost of migration governance which treats people more as a risk than at risk.

Globally, current economic systems not only embed but also tend to perpetuate many of the root causes of injustice, conflict, and lack of sustainability. QUNO Geneva's Sustainable and Just Economic Systems (SJES) programme thus aims to be a catalyst for the transformation of economic systems to make them more just, equitable, and environmentally sustainable by focusing on imminent processes and topics where the seeds of systemic change can be planted.

SJES programme associate Andres Naranjo leads QUNO Geneva's work at the World Trade Organisation's newly formed pluri-lateral initiatives on trade and the environment, where member states are supported to work collaboratively on trade policies that

support global environmental sustainability. In November 2022, SJES participated in the first session of UNEP's Intergovernmental Negotiating Committee toward a Treaty to End Plastic Pollution (INC).

QUNO Geneva's Human Impacts of Climate Change (HICC) programme had an intense 2022. This office is the only active faith-based observer accredited to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). It submitted at least 60 interventions to protect science language from political weakening, and to strengthen language on human rights, Indigenous Peoples rights, rapid reduction of fossil fuels, increase in renewable energy systems and sustainable consumption and diets.

At the COP28 in Egypt, the HICC programme was invited as an expert panellist to speak to governments on holistic and integrated approaches to climate action.

QUNO Geneva ended 2022 on a high note, anticipating the celebration of its 75th anniversary in 2023.

Madlala-Routledge says they "look forward to celebrating the historic achievements we have made at the UN over the years since our founding in 1948".



WOODBROOKE UPDATE

Looking back at 2022 the work of Woodbrooke Learning & Research continued to change and grow.

A number of courses have been held in partnership with other organisations such as Exploring a Quaker Commitment to Reparative Justice which was offered in collaboration with Pendle Hill in Pennsylvania and Exploring Faith and Climate Justice the ongoing course in partnership with Quaker Peace and Social Witness of Britain Yearly Meeting.

Woodbrooke also hosted a blended conference with Britain Yearly Meeting's Quaker Committee for Christian and Interfaith Relations titled Experiencing a Changed World: How Are We Being Reshaped?

Our partnership with EMES continues to provide online worship open to anyone around the world with 11 opportunities for worship, and extra sessions for young adults and parents, supported by Britain Yearly Meeting.

We also ran the Quaker in Europe course in Spring 2022 which offered an opportunity to explore the quaker way from a European-wide perspective, which 26 participants took part in.

Helen Minnis' impactful Swarthmore Lecture Perceiving the temperature of the water spoke to Quakers about racial justice and meaningful reparations, both in the lecture itself at Britain Yearly Meeting but also in videos, sessions and resources before and after. The lecture book was published by Woodbrooke in December. You can still watch Helen's lecture via the Woodbrooke website at woodbrooke.org.uk/swarthmore

Discomforting Quaker history was explored through two online conferences with researchers around the world sharing their

studies on reevaluating the role of Quakers around the world. Sessions followed this, including one on Quakers and Empire.

As well as applying our understanding of the past to current injustice we also focused learning on contemporary challenges of peace in response to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. Sessions were offered on Human Rights in Russia and Misinformation and War. An important highlight of the year was participating in EMES Peace and Service Network monthly sessions and annual gathering.

December saw the graduation of two PhD students who undertook research degrees in Quaker Studies through the University of Birmingham working in partnership with Woodbrooke's Centre for Research in Quaker Studies.

Our resources continue to develop with the launch of the Guide to Quaker Clerking website which was put together by Judith Roads with input from Friends across Europe. You can read about it on our blog woodbrooke.org.uk/blog or view it alongside other resources, such as past Swarthmore Lectures at woodbrooke.org.uk/resources. At the end of the year we welcomed new members to our team; Aled Vernon-Rees (Communications Officer), Jacquie Cole (Programme Coordinator Quaker Service & Roles), Kim Harrison (Project Manager Climate Crisis), Simonne Wood (Programme Coordinator Worship & Spirituality) and Tanya Hubbard (Programme Coordinator Racial & Social Justice).

We look forward to engaging with Friends across Europe and the Middle East in 2023 as we continue to develop our online programme, offer worship and support Quaker research.



THINK OF SOMETHING YOU LOVE— A PERSON, A PLACE, A THING...

- How will environmental and climate breakdown affect them?
- What is needed to reduce the risk of harm? ● What action will you take to help?

The Loving Earth Project is helping people to engage with these questions without being overwhelmed and to make changes for the sake of love. Why not join in?

lovingearth-project.uk LovingEarthProject @lovingearthpro1

Bank account & how to contribute to FWCC-EMES

The work of FWCC-EMES depends on contributions from the Yearly Meetings in the Section and from individual donations. Contributions for the general work can be made using the bank details below.

For payments in **Euros** please use these account details:

EMES account at Wise

Account Name: FWCC-Europe & Middle East Section

IBAN: BE33 9672 0215 6046

SWIFT/BIC: TRWIBEB1XXX

For payments in **Sterling** please use these account details:

EMES account at CAF Bank

Account Name: FWCC-EMES

IBAN: GB03 CAFB 4052 4000 0255 78

SWIFT/BIC: CAFBGB21XXX

Sort Code: 40-52-40

Account Number: 00025578



Friends World Committee
for Consultation
EUROPE & MIDDLE EAST SECTION