



Friends World Committee
for Consultation
EUROPE & MIDDLE EAST SECTION

Europe & Middle East Section

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***Message from the FWCC Europe & Middle East Section Annual Meeting held
online, 1-2 May 2020***

To Friends everywhere,

Meeting online for Annual Meeting 2020 has been a new and perhaps daunting experience. It required a lot of hard preparatory work. We have learned together as a community throughout the two days. The success of a meeting is not about the food, weather or working computers; it comes from the opening hearts of all who participate and supportive behaviour.

The theme, discerned last autumn: “Heeding the prophecy of our sons and daughters, daring to dream dreams and see visions” (Joel 2,28) has needed re-interpretation. Realising our privilege, giving ourselves space to connect in different ways with each other and to open ourselves to the spirit in the future is our task now. We have been given an opportunity through the wake up call of Covid-19 to create new ways of working towards a more just and equal world and a more resilient society. What is God calling us to do? How can we as a Quaker community in EMES grasp the gift that Covid 19 has offered us? Let us allow ourselves to be swept forward in God's grace.

Lindsey Fielder Cook of the Quaker United Nations Office Geneva told us a story at our Annual Meeting. In 2015, she was working with negotiators on the Paris Agreement on climate change. Conditions were tense. Lindsey went with her daughter to the river in Bonn and they collected some pebbles. They brought the pebbles home and painted on them the words “Courage and Compassion for all.” They gave these pebbles to negotiators who they were working with. In Paris, different negotiators came up to Lindsey independently of each other to show her that they were still carrying their pebbles with them with a constant reminder of the message, courage and compassion for all. Even a year later she still got shown the pebbles by negotiators when they saw her. Small acts can make a big difference.

We have a responsibility to work together for a better future. We must name injustice. We will pass a beacon of light to the next generation. What are the legacies to leave to our sons and our daughters?

We leave our Annual Meeting refreshed and ready to face new challenges. We are strengthened by our time together and we look forward to meeting again in Paris in 2021 while experimenting further with online ways of meeting in the future. Let us dare to dream with courage and compassion.

Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)