

Quakers

NEDERLANDSE JAARVERGADERING VAN
HET RELIGIEUS GENOOTSCHAP DER VRIENDEN

Epistle from Netherlands Yearly Meeting

Held at Natuurvriendenhuis De Bosbeek, Bennekom on 19 – 21 May 2017

To Friends everywhere,

In the shady woods around Bennekom we gathered in De Bosbeek for our Annual Gathering on the 19th, 20th and 21st of May, 2017.

60 Quakers from The Netherlands and abroad, among them 6 children, assembled to contemplate the theme 'Living the Transformation.' On Friday evening we worked in small groups on 'building bridges' (an extension of our overall theme) in a playful and creative way. With childlike enthusiasm, coupled with much laughter, we constructed bridges using blank sheets of paper, tape, staples and markers. We went through a hands-on process of design to achieve our goal; a pleasant alternative. At the presentation the final products were much appreciated by all Friends present.

The new international theme, 'Inclusive Safety,' developed further by two of our members, was presented from different points of view by four Friends, including Andrew Lane of the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) and Maarten van der Werf of Christian Peacemaker Teams (CPT). Johannes Borger and Kees Nieuwerth also shared about their activities, both in the Netherlands and internationally, to bring peace activists together, using this theme as a foundation. With fascination we listened to all four speakers, after which we split up into groups to dive deeper into the theme.

A crucial question was put forward during the weekend: how do we shape both our in- and outreach? This question requires further elaboration.

Saturday evening started with a campfire and singing, followed by Friends dispersing into 5 interest groups.

During the Meetings for Business, interludes with inspirational contributions of poetry, prose, images or music invited us to do more silent contemplation.

Being gathered with so many Friends, the Meeting for Worship on Sunday morning was a rich experience.

It was a beautiful and fruitful weekend.



Marlies Tjallingii

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