

Epistle 2022 from Friends in Italy at Borgo Basino, Italy – in English

Dear Friends,

Friends and friends of Friends in Italy gathered at Borgo Basino in Cursecoli, Emilia-Romagna, Italy 9-11 September, 2022.

This Annual Gathering of Friends in Italy brought 15 Quakers, seekers and friends of Quakers and 5 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, which coordinates and supports Friends in Europe in the Middle East. Our first gathered session on Saturday morning centered 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 helped label honey produced on the farm and 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.

In peace and Friendship,

Quakers in Italy

11 September, 2022, Borgo Basino, Cusercoli