



Kvekersamfunnet

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Norway

To Friends Everywhere

In its 197th year the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Norway gathered at Agder Folk High School in Søgne for its yearly meeting from June 25^h to 28th 2015. In all there were 70 participants, of whom 22 children and young people, in addition to guests from the British, Danish and Swedish Yearly Meetings

Our theme this year revolved around Climate Justice and meeting *That of God* in the whole of creation, summed up as follows: “Be the change that you wish to see in the world!” (Gandhi) “*Sustainability and life - in spirit and in practice.*” How may we, together with others, be a light for a sustainable future wherever we live. Per Ingvar and Frøydis Haukeland and Rigmor Fløgstad introduced the topic through relating inspiring examples. The theme was further developed in inspiring group conversations and a plenary session and ran as a red thread through all our activities, including a meditative pilgrim walk in the forest by the beach.

Through this theme we are encouraged to act and participate in activities near our homes to help create joy and fellowship. If we work together, we may resist feelings of powerlessness and may improve quality of life, achieving greater results than we might reach on our own. We are part of a loving network which connects all living things. This web is fragile and now threatened, and we are called to work for healing and renewal. We approach the call with joy, determination and love.

The groups of children and young people also used the theme in their parallel yearly gatherings. Five of our young people have worked in a group for two years to learn more about Quaker traditions and Quaker roots and gave us a slide show about their experiences, which included a visit to central Quaker places in England. Three of them chose to affirm their membership during our final period of worship on Sunday. This gives hope for the future.

Our Yearly Meeting has worked for three years on eldership and oversight. Julia Ryberg from EMES/Sweden YM and Linda Karen Eide from our worship group in Bergen reminded us how essential this work is, to foster and care for this fire that burns in us and between us – that all may warm themselves by the fire and none be excluded.

Quaker Service Norway held its own Annual Meeting during this weekend. They have been through important readjustment because of changes in the conditions for government project support. They continue to support work for peace and reconciliation in the African Great Lakes Area as well as Kindergartens in Gaza, and are working to develop more sustainable plans for future work.

The following quotes by the dear friend of Quakers, Martin Nag, who died recently, will follow us home: “The inner light never burns down”, and “Give us this day our daily courage.”

Søgne, 28th Day of 6th Month, 2015

Stephen Collett
Yearly Meeting Clerk

The epistle from the children at Norway Yearly Meeting gathered in Søgne, 2015

- We have walked outside and done some exercises. We want to befriend the nature around us.
- We have illustrated ecological footprints, one small and one large. We have talked about what helps the environment and what harms it.
- We have made reusable shopping bags. That was fun. We made them in order that we should not use so many plastic bags. We sold the shopping bags and gave the money to Quaker Service Norway.
- Lara and Jon-Magne told us about the wars in some parts of Africa and how Quakers are working for peace. They also explained how African Friends do their worship, singing and dancing, and sometimes the worship sessions lasted 3 hours or even more.
- Tonje told us about Gaza and the kindergartens which Quaker Service supports.
- It was useful to learn more about climate and the environment and what we can do.
- We have seen that there is much more in the nature around us than we knew before.
- We took part in an interest group about bees. We have made a nest for bumble-bees and an insect hotel. Many insects have died because it has been hard for them to find a place to rest and nest in towns.
- We have played with the little twins, Hugo and Ivan.
- Ulrich took part in an interest group to learn about communication and how we may understand one another better.
- We had fun playing the “Flag” game and we were happy that so many people would join with us.
- We bathed in a lake and the water was lovely. Bendik picked a water lily.
- We have embroidered parts of a panel for Quaker Service.
- We have done yoga with Helene and learned how to use our breathing well.
- We have done guided meditation. It was very relaxing.
- We had fun playing football. And we enjoyed when people wanted to photograph us.
- We did a meditative walk. It felt like a very long walk but really we did not go very far. Odd said we looked like very long centipede. While walking, we meditated on the work of creation and how to take care of it.
- We enjoyed playing in the gym hall.
- We participated in the social gatherings and heard songs, poems and funny stories.
- We enjoyed the photos from the youth visit to England.
- We have been glad to be in the children’s group. We had a great time together.

Greetings from Linus Mathias, Emma, Ellen, Ella, Bendik, Thomas Aleksander, Olivia, Ingvild, Saskia, Maria og Ulrich
+ the adults Judy, Odd, Marit Z, Frøydis og Tonje