



Friends World Committee for Consultation

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Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait upon the Lord.

Psalm 31: 24

Letter of Greeting from the FWCC World Office 2021

To Friends around the world,

God bless you and keep you. Greetings from the FWCC World Office.

I am writing to offer condolences and encouragement at a time when our Quaker communities in many parts of the world are struggling. Our sadness is overwhelming. Survival and care for one another is a global challenge. We share our grief across time and space.

We so long to be together. We miss the hugs and singing and dancing that are part of our gatherings for worship and business. How fortunate that some churches and yearly meetings have been able to hold worship and business sessions online. However you are gathering (or not), we wish you continued blessings. We are learning a lot, using what we can, when we can. Many Friends have been able to join worship with Friends on the other side of the globe. I have been able to worship with my home meeting in the US even though I live in London. And I have been welcomed to worship in Kenya, Bolivia, Northern Ireland, South Africa, and Australia, to name a few. Still... we long to be together.

God is very present and helping us through these many challenges. Let us look to God. Let us grieve together – and let us look ahead with new eyes and reshape our world. We are learning to be creative, to be resourceful, to find God in our homes and in nature, to rely on each other in times of need. We see signs of deep resilience and compassion.

Our Quaker ways of worship and waiting serve us well as we adapt to the changes around us. In Romans 8:38 we are reminded that *neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor rulers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor powers, nor height, nor depth, nor anything else in all creation (including COVID) will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

Wherever you are, whatever you are struggling with, whatever you are grateful for -- you are not alone. God is with you. Your Quaker family is with you. Your community is with you. Take heart and be strong. Most of all, stay safe.

With love and hope,

Gretchen Castle, FWCC General Secretary