



# Friends World Committee for Consultation

## WORLD OFFICE

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### **Letter to Yearly Meetings** **From the Friends World Committee for Consultation World Office**

Dear Friends,

May 2020

I wanted to be in touch with you during this time of uncertainty and loss, of scrambling to adjust to new ways of supporting our spiritual communities, and of (eventually) imagining something new coming out of it all.

With a view across the world, many churches and meetings are worshipping online, allowing people from far away to return to worship or even to try out new forms of worship, while others are mourning the loss of weekly worship, feeling isolated and alone. Many are feeling an increased sense of God's presence, appreciating things with new awareness, while others are wondering where God is in all of this suffering. And many are mourning the loss of loved ones, struggling to find ways for the community to come together to mourn and celebrate the people we have loved. There are other losses. Our Quaker communities are called upon to be present and serve at this unsettling time.

At FWCC, we are called to serve the global community of Friends in a way that serves the most vulnerable among us.

I want to acknowledge the challenges for yearly meetings, doing its own work as well as supporting local churches and meetings. Many of you have or are planning to hold your yearly meeting sessions or conferences online, and it challenges everyone to be flexible and creative – and within a quick time frame. You may not get it exactly right, but you are being responsive to your sense of care, and you are bringing Friends together! Whatever you are able to manage, I want to thank you for serving Friends where you are, and perhaps you can see new blessings coming out of it.

As FWCC strives to hold the world family of Friends, I wanted to reach out to all our communities and churches with words of encouragement. For all of us, the basis and purpose of our work remains unchanged. We are committed to serving Quakers, to expressing the joy of being together in God's care, and to caring for God's creation in a way that will sustain life on earth.

As we begin to move out of peril, let us see what love can do! God has given us another chance, as Bible stories tell us, and we remember that through God all things are made new. Let us shape a movement that helps not only Quakers but those who are ready, to bring meaning to this time. It is the role of the Church to help make sense of suffering, and it is the role of the Church to open us to God's transformative love. Since the world has been forced to slow down, there is greater potential for the world to see with new eyes. Conversations within our neighborhoods, within our meetings and churches, within our yearly meetings, and within FWCC Sections can help us consider what it means to have a radical faith.

Wishing you every blessing,  
Gretchen Castle  
General Secretary

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gretchen Castle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'G' and a decorative flourish at the end.