



Yearly Meeting 2020

Junior Young Friends Epistle

For this Yearly Meeting Junior Young Friends had a few challenges, including having to meet on Zoom from different time zones because of the pandemic. The older Quakers understand just how challenging Zoom can be. The pandemic has also given us time to reflect on the climate crisis. Being online meant it was also sometimes awkward, even with Friends we already knew. Unfortunately, we ended up not having as many JYFs as usual at Yearly Meeting. The positives were that it allowed JYFs to go to other sessions in the main Yearly Meeting program. Some of those sessions were Indigenous concerns, climate change share and tell, two business sessions, epilogues, climate justice share and tell, the Earthcare plenary session, and the Backhouse lecture. We also had lots of fun over two evenings playing online games!!

This year we, as JYFs, had a big focus on climate justice and regeneration as one of our fellow JYFs, Ryan, is making a documentary about climate change and its disastrous impacts. We found that a lot of the older Friends used this time to reflect on themselves and how they can use their privilege to support the younger generations confronting the many issues of today's society. From this, we also looked at ways in which we could help the earth. As a result, we came to realise that there isn't just one way to manage the issues we face, whether it is something as simple as donating to organisations that are helping to deal with these issues or something more complex like, lowering or cutting out of certain materials, objects, foods etc. from your life.

To begin the week, we had two introductory sessions. For the first session, we were able to have two small groups meeting in-person in Wahroonga Meeting House and at Goulburn. These groups were then able to join a zoom call with JYFs in other parts of the country. With lower numbers than usual it was a bit awkward at first, but we soon got into the swing of YM with a clever online adaption of the game The Big Wind Blows.

We had a session in which Ryan talked to us about his documentary and showed us how to make videos. This was quite fascinating, especially for those of us who struggled a bit with technology.

On Wednesday, we discussed the proposal for a JYF summer camp for 2021. We had to take into consideration how we would be able to hold a JYF camp with the world's current climate, as well as considering where we were likely to find accommodation. The idea of an all ages summer camp was brought to our attention by the Children and JYFs Coordinators, Tania and Gina, which would be a change from what we normally have.

On Tuesday and Thursday nights, the JYFs held online games night over zoom. Although it was over Zoom, everyone was able to enjoy it and have fun, as if we were meeting in person.

On Thursday morning, the JYFs ran an all ages Meeting for Worship in which we included a video that Ryan had created during the week about what we as JYFs were doing to solve this climate issue. We were happy to receive some reflective responses from our older Friends.

This unusual JYF get-together was oddly successful. While we didn't connect with as many of our Friends as usual, perhaps the smaller numbers were better suited to online gatherings. We're very excited to think about when we can meet face to face again.