

Junior Gathering Epistle 2026

To all Friends everywhere,

From the 22nd to the 29th August 2026, 53 young people aged 11-14 and 19 staff gathered at the Pioneer Centre near Kidderminster to share worship, togetherness, learning and fun. Our chosen theme was “Young people’s involvement in society”. We explored the theme through staff-led sessions, external speakers, workshops and base groups. Each day we had time for worship, socialising, fun activities and evening sessions.

We delved into the theme through a staff-led “Build a Campaign” session. Anya Nanning Ramamurthy talked about her experience of protest and the history of strikes and we tried it ourselves in a fun role-play protest. Jenny Baines from Quakers in Britain helped us to explore Quakerism and faith through interactive discussion, drawing, and writing letters to future JG participants. We heard from Moya Barnett who, with other Friends, set up a safe house in Calais for women and children trying to get to the UK. She highlighted the inhumanity of the camps, the dangers of attempting to cross the Channel, and why people are forced to do it. We wrote cards to some of the children which gave us an interactive way to support and connect with others.

Every day, we participated in different activities: music making, sports, arts and crafts, and various indoor games. Afternoon activities included a fete (with a slip and slide), treasure hunt, and a site-led adventure course with high ropes, archery, climbing chase, and zip-wire. In the evenings we had a crazy quiz, a construction activity, a disco and the final-night entertainment. Two members of staff shared the challenges and the blessings in their lives in Lifelines.

We also had free time where young people could use their phones and talk among one another. Many young people also found that shared dorms gave them a new way to connect and socialise with others that they might not have done beforehand. On Wednesday, we met up with Senior Conference for shared Meeting for Worship and then explored the charity shops and cafes in Stratford-upon-Avon.

We felt it was important to hold periods of worship that highlighted the spiritual nature of Quakerism. In the mornings, we gathered for Meeting for Worship which included ministry through silence, readings, and connection. In the evening, we held epilogue which came with music and a gentle calmness; we held two epilogues outside under the stars where we reflected on the day and upheld one another.

This week brought new connections, friendships, and joy which might not have been achieved if any one of us had not been here. We found the quote from Advices and Queries 22 captures the theme of the week: *“Respect the wide diversity among us in our lives and relationships. Refrain from making prejudiced judgments about the life journeys of others. Do you foster the spirit of mutual understanding and forgiveness which our discipleship asks of us? Remember that each one of us is unique, precious, a child of God.”*

We are very grateful for this event, the staff that ran it, and everyone attending. We thank everyone involved; it has allowed new experiences and friends. We look forward to next year’s event and hope the 14 year-olds moving up to Senior Conference enjoy it as much as we did this year.

In our Meeting for Worship for Business, it was discerned that the theme for Junior Gathering 2027 would be “Faith in Action”.

Signed in and on behalf of Junior Gathering 2026,

Clerks: Sollie and Anne; Elders: Amani and Eve