

Epistle of the All Poland Gathering, November 8th 2024

Dear Friends,

The 2024 All Poland Gathering was held in Nikiszowiec, a historic district of Katowice. The meeting was attended by 16 Friends, including guests from the Czech Republic, Germany and the UK. Also among us was Konstancja, who intends to describe the Quaker meeting from an ethnological perspective. We are curiously subjecting ourselves to this experiment. Thank you for the greetings from EMES, from Friends from Sweden and those from Poland who could not be with us.

We were prompted to pay more attention to the essence of Quakerism than to its form by Pavel Marušinec's lecture. It dealt with Quaker practice and the meaning of Silence, what is in, behind or underneath it, which Friends sometimes take years to arrive at. During the discussion after the lecture, we shared personal perspectives, difficulties and discoveries. We also addressed the topic of membership, considering what made us join the Religious Society of Friends or what keeps us from doing so. We heard stories of Friends in which the words identity, belonging, home were repeated. We also saw a photo report from a trip to remembered and forgotten Quaker places. A short presentation about FWCC EMES emphasized that we are part of a larger whole, and showed what activities we can still engage in.

We also heard a report on the activities of the "Podróżnych ugościć" Association, to which last year we donated funds from the Lyna Atterburra bequest to help migrants and support humanitarian activities on the Polish-Belarusian border. During the meeting, we listened to Saad and Abdelhalim's stories about how, using their own immigrant experiences, they support the Association's work. Their joint activities are helping to create a multicultural relief environment.

During the convention, we also shared knowledge and skills related to fiber crafts. We learned black embroidery and knitting. It was an opportunity to focus on the value of detail and movement awareness. We also visited old mining settlements that combine historical beauty and modern life: Nikiszowiec and Giszowiec. We may remember these places from the films of Kazimierz Kutz.

The time spent together among friends was an opportunity to exchange experiences, learn about different perspectives on spiritual matters. We shared the hardships and joys we experienced during this year. We look forward to the next meeting of Polish Friends in 2025 in Gdańsk.