



Photo: The Dominican Retreat Centre in Tallaght, Dublin, location of Ireland Yearly Meeting.

Ireland Yearly Meeting: Fran Brady & Denise Gabuzda report

‘It is important to be honest with each other.’

by Fran Brady & Denise Gabuzda 22nd May 2026



Our theme was ‘Deepening our Spirituality’, and the sessions, activities and interest groups of Ireland Yearly Meeting (9-12 April) explored the connection between spirituality and creativity of all kinds.

The Public Lecture, given by artist Brian Maguire, witnessed to unfairness and divisions in the world, and how people can be erased. Whether focusing on injustices experienced by indigenous communities, by migrants, or by those in jails and homeless shelters, Brian’s art shows the cost of inhuman treatment of the vulnerable and dispossessed. His work was exhibited at a nearby café.

Emily Provance spoke about the idea that God speaks to different people through different media, including art, song and dance. She explained that musical theatre was often used as a way to raise awareness of social problems in a socially acceptable way. One message, from the musical *Rent*, is whether we choose to love knowing it will lead to grief. Emily’s response was that we should love as hard as we can, for as long as we can.

Zack Jackson described the *Thee Quaker Podcast* and how it is helping the Quaker message reach people who are seeking hope amid the chaos unfurling in the USA.

An informative report on Quaker Council for European Affairs was given by the new director, Andrew de Sousa. High priority concerns include people displaced by climate change, and rethinking security. We learned from Paris Weavers about the new Sojourner Truth House for refugees in Calais. Our Middle East Working Group has been exploring how Friends can support Palestinian refugees.

Our Ministry & Oversight Session considered a survey carried out by all Meetings in Ireland. This affirmed the value of carrying out a self-evaluation of the spiritual life of each Meeting. It is important to be honest with each other about which Meetings are thriving and which may be going through a period of spiritual lifelessness, so that we can most effectively support each other.

Simplifying Quaker structures is an important but at times elusive aspiration. An opportunity in this area is provided by work on revising and updating Ireland Yearly Meeting’s book of discipline. The Review Committee is getting feedback on chapters already drafted, and is working on a draft set of *Advices & queries*, which it is hoped will be ready for review sometime this summer.

Young Friends took part in a range of activities. A session led by them explored a range of questions – serious and not-so-serious – in an informal way. It is an ongoing challenge to ensure that our Meetings are safe spaces for young people and vulnerable adults. Young Friends expressed a concern that more people be trained in the support of neuro-divergent Friends.

It was a real joy to gather and share our spiritual creativity, but our thoughts were never far from the ongoing conflicts in Europe and the Middle East, and all those who are suffering as a result of war.

Comments

Please [login](#) to add a comment

Subscribe to the Friend today

Become a subscriber to enjoy unlimited access to our articles, dating back to 2009! Online subscribers get the Friend to their inbox each week, can comment on articles, and dive into our 1914-18 digital archive too!

Whether you are new to Quakerism or have been going to Meeting for years, you’ll find something here to inspire, inform and challenge you.

[News](#) | [Views](#) | [Reviews](#)

Written by and for Friends on the bench

[Subscribe](#)

