

# Southeastern Yearly Meeting

## Quakers in Florida, southeast Georgia & coastal South Carolina

### Youth Epistle

Dear Friends,

We would like to share our experiences at the 2026 SEYM Yearly Gathering. The theme of this year's gathering is "Love, Hope, and Action in Troubled Times."

Our time together began on Friday. We started the day by talking about conscientious objection. We learned about the history of Quakers objecting to fighting in wars. We spent the rest of the morning crafting. This included painting mini clay and wooden butterflies that will be handed out to people going to appointments with ICE. This is our way of holding these individuals in the light and offering solidarity and support. Before heading to lunch, we journaled and made friendship bracelets.

After lunch we enjoyed the tree climbing and ropes course! This activity made us feel more confident and like we could do anything! Tree climbing challenged our minds and our bodies. Afterwards we listened to a presentation given by Kathy Hersh called "Tree Talk." This conversation allowed us to learn more about trees and appreciate all that they provide for the world. We also learned the real importance and necessity of respecting and protecting trees.

We ended Friday evening with intergenerational dancing. This activity remains a favorite tradition of the gathering. We especially enjoyed getting to meet new people and doing the last dance as it is a fun tradition.

Saturday began with some crafting and learning about Meeting for Business. We learned the purpose of Meeting for Business as well as its importance in Quaker process. We then did a mock version of the meeting then transitioned into worship sharing. We reflected on our time together and what lessons we learned from the gathering. This helped us begin writing the epistle.

After lunch we participated in a kite-making workshop led by Ian McDonald. We had a great time decorating and flying our kites. It was a test of our patience and the wind's.

Later that afternoon we enjoyed the cool water by canoeing and kayaking. This was a great way for us to decompress on the water and listen to the sounds of nature. We ended the day by playing games and attending an impromptu talent show. This was a beautiful way to end our last full day together and do yet another gathering tradition, Joel's laughter yoga!

On Easter Sunday we worked together to clean up our space and also hide all the Easter eggs outside. We went Easter egg hunting and the eggs contained pieces of a puzzle and candy! We ended our time together by putting together the puzzle.

**April 5, 2026**

**Archer May  
Juniper Orr**

**Melanie Figueroa  
Oliver Orr and**

**Cass Mendoza  
Magdalena Mendoza**

**Nova May**