



## Quaker Earthcare Witness Epistle from Spring 2019 Steering Committee Meeting



"The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of people when they realize their relationship, their oneness with the universe and all its powers, and when they realize at the center of the universe dwells the Great Spirit, and that its center really is everywhere. It is within each of us." -- Black Elk

To Friends Everywhere,

Greetings from the Quaker Earthcare Witness Spring Steering Committee Meeting, April 11 - 14, 2019.

We write from the occupied lands of the Dakota, in St. Paul, Minnesota, where an April blizzard greeted our arrival. Due to the storm, some were unable to attend the meeting and others arrived late, reminding us that climate disruption is a reality that increasingly affects all of us.

Friends from the vibrant local Quaker community graciously welcomed our group of 30 Friends from across the United States into their homes, their worship spaces, and their hearts. We thank Twin Cities Coordinating Committee for their tender care.

Our opening evening worship brought forth a shared sense of "coming home" and recognizing that being faithful means acting without knowing. What we need is right here. Daily worship-sharing helped us deepen our personal relationships and our connection with Spirit.

We meet twice yearly to do the business of the organization. Our smaller committees met to discuss





finance and development, publications, outreach, spiritual nurturance, and nominating issues. Our working groups focused on projects related to population concerns, work at the United Nations and the diaspora, mini-grants, and connecting with Friends Committee on National Legislation.

We sense that we are steadily getting better at what we do: being faithful to our individual leadings and our corporate action, worshipping for business together, raising money to facilitate the work, engaging in conflict and difficult conversations with grace, sharing a Quaker message of eco-spirituality and the urgency of climate disruption, connecting with Friends across the US and Canada, and strengthening ties between branches of Friends.

"Our faith teaches us that what is small and humble is often a profound message." We shared in appreciation for individual ministries of Friend's zero waste work and for the creation of a profoundly beautiful movie about Quaker Earthcare Witness ministry.

We shared much of our weekend with local friends, including two potlucks, one lunch, two evening presentations, a forum, and Sunday worship. Middle-school students from the Friends School of Minnesota shared their documentary about protecting pollinators as part of their work with the Environmental Action Club. The young friends spoke our minds and hearts, as we feel the urgency expressed by the recent report by the International Panel on Climate Change:

- "We have to help pick up the world because right now it's not doing so great."
- "One of the scariest things for me is that [climate disruption] isn't sometime in the indefinite future—there is a clock and it's ticking."
- "I really like social justice issues and being an activist and I really like spending time in nature and I wanted to combine those things."

We were also treated to a bus ride to learn about the history and geography of the area and heard a beautiful testimony from a Friend suffering from brain cancer on the healing power of the Mississippi River as we crossed it.

We asked, "What does transition look like?" with a panel of five Friends who are putting Transition principles into their daily lives. On Sunday afternoon, fifteen of us visited an urban farm, a Friend's personal garden, and a Friend's zero energy-use house.

By the time we were preparing to leave, much of the snow had melted, and spring was in the air. This was an opportunity for our beloved community to hear, share and care about each other and the Earth and how to care thoughtfully about "the others" - people who do not share our thoughts, concerns or understandings.

How do you walk gently on Earth answering that of God in everything, everywhere, in all Life Spirit? How do we live our lives in the spirit of connection with all life? How can we collectively create a community of healing and resolve?

A constant thread throughout our time together was the love of all living things - people, animals, nature and planet — and each other. How we love is how we live.

The world we seek begins with the relationships we make. We at Quaker Earthcare Witness are grateful for our Friends in St. Paul and Minneapolis and our global community of Friends who keep the Light shining brightly.

[Feeding Us with Love and Local Tradition](#) [1]

[How to Help Pollinators in Your Own Neighborhood](#) [2]

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