I HAD NO idea Iowa was so beautiful. My apologies to Iowans, but I just never thought about it. Driving across Iowa to the Friends General Conference Gathering was magical, with one little farm after another nestled in green fields. The windmills were breathtaking, bright white in the sunlight, the blades turning in slow, stately circles. I could not stop staring at them. They were so compelling because they looked so hopeful.

At the FGC Gathering and at North Carolina Yearly Meeting–Conservative, I participated in one workshop about climate change and led two small discussion groups. At all three, people were willing to talk about the hard topics, their fear and despair, grief and sense of helplessness. At NCYM-C, I asked: What do Friends have to offer?

That is such a critical question. My answer is that we have Friend’s process and Friend’s testimonies. Friends know how to sit still, and wait in the Light, and for the Light. We know how to be silent in the Light and trust that Way will open. We know that our work is defined by all our testimonies, especially integrity and simplicity, and that we are better able to do this work when we do it in community. What a profound set of resources.

When we don’t even know what to ask for, we can literally pay attention to the gifts that arrive. The FGC Gathering is one place where simple conversations become gifts of the Spirit. I was reluctant to go inside my first night of the gathering, so I was sitting out on a perfect summer evening watching the fireflies. A man I didn’t know walked by, and said hello, so I said, “Are you seeing those fireflies?” We ended up talking and he eventually sat down to talk more. He is an environmental engineer whose company works on retro-fitting buildings so they are more “green.” If there was anyone at the Gathering that I would have wanted to talk to, who better than a green engineer? I can’t explain it, but I am coming to trust it. Sort of like trusting that, on this lovely summer morning, there are windmills in Iowa.