

Quaker Earthcare Witness is a network of North American Friends (Quakers) and other like-minded people who are taking spirit-led action to address the ecological and social crises of the world, emphasizing Quaker process and testimonies.



QUAKER EARTHCARE WITNESS

Allen McGrew

Looking Past the Great Dying to the Next Great Living

Six months before I joined Quaker Earthcare Witness Steering Committee, I was stricken by a nasty infection that got into my blood and precipitated a near-fatal cascade of platelet death, septic shock, that plunged my blood pressure to 35/50, overwhelmed my kidneys, and induced a heart attack as the clumping platelets transformed into tiny missiles simultaneously assaulting every organ in my body.

Somewhat amazingly, I remained conscious throughout the event. I vividly recall a nurse asking me to describe the pain, and as I looked up at her I suddenly realized that I could not see her face. Where her face had been, there was now just a warm, fuzzy glow. In a sudden panic, I looked around at the other medical staff and realized that I couldn't see them either, until at last I found my wife's face. Of the seven or so people working over me in the trauma room, her face was the only one that I could see—my last tenuous thread of connection to the living world.

I just kept thinking that I wanted to find my way to that transformed state of consciousness that I know as being

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BEFRIENDING CREATION

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Image Above: Photo by Kathy Barnhart, Strawberry Creek Monthly Meeting.

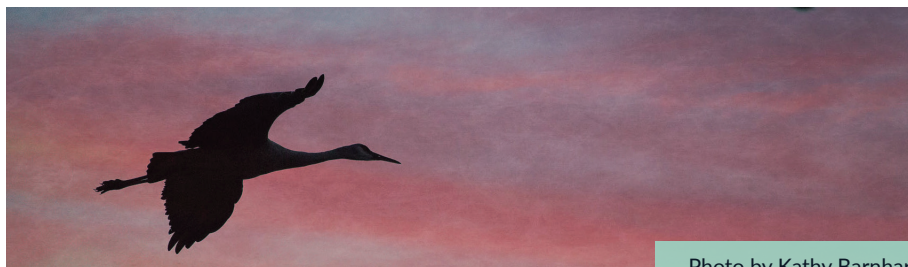


Photo by Kathy Barnhart.

From the Editor's Desk

Dear Friends,

This is my last issue as the editor of *BeFriending Creation* and as the director of Quaker Earthcare Witness. After six and half years, I have discerned that it is time for me to pursue other paths.

I reflect back on my time at QEW with pride, warmth, and humility. Shelley, our General Secretary, and I have worked together to help this organization grow and strengthen. I am so grateful for QEW's committed volunteers, especially our Clerks' Table and the Publications Committee.

I am happy that my vision of a new website came into fruition; now we have an accessible, simple, and information-packed place where you can go to explore, learn, and connect.

BeFriending Creation has changed too. I hope my commitment to environmental justice, inclusivity, diversity, and a Quaker aesthetic of simplicity and beauty has shown through in each issue.

Working during the pandemic, QEW staff saw an opportunity to create a new type of programming for our community: online events and workshops. Thanks to that, we have lots of new people joining us in virtual spaces. I hope QEW continues these offerings and continually finds ways to be a support and a source of community for Friends in this time of isolation and continual crisis.

Shelley and I have also dedicated much of our time over the years to fundraising, successfully increasing our budget each year to better meet the needs of this moment. In April we launched a successful fundraising campaign to raise money for *BeFriending Creation*. Thanks to everyone who donated.

Thank you everyone. I am so grateful for all of you, who are putting your faith into action every day in myriad ways. I'll miss you!

Hayley Hathaway
Director, Quaker Earthcare Witness



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Our Vision & Witness

WE ARE CALLED to live in right relationship with all Creation, recognizing that the entire world is interconnected and is a manifestation of God.

WE WORK to integrate into the beliefs and practices of the Religious Society of Friends the Truth that God's Creation is to be respected, protected, and held in reverence in its own right, and the Truth that human aspirations for peace and justice depend upon restoring the earth's ecological integrity.

WE PROMOTE these truths by being patterns and examples, by communicating our message, and by providing spiritual and material support to those engaged in the compelling task of transforming our relationship to the earth.

BeFriending Creation

We publish *BeFriending Creation* to promote the work of Quaker Earthcare Witness, stimulate discussion and action, share insights, practical ideas, news of our actions, and encourage a sense of community and spiritual connection with all Creation.

Opinions expressed are the authors' own and do not necessarily reflect those of Quaker Earthcare Witness, or of the Religious Society of Friends. The editor is responsible for unsigned items. Please share our work widely and broadly, always attributing it to Quaker Earthcare Witness.

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in meeting. If I could just do that, everything would be okay. In a moment of inspiration, my wife began coaching my breathing, just as I had once coached hers through the traumatic birth of our second son.

Somehow, I survived. I woke, or perhaps more accurately, was re-born the next morning more alive, more buoyant than I had ever felt in my life. Each day since has been a bonus day. Each bird, each flower, each rainbow, each belly laugh with friends, even each rain cloud, even each poignant moment of grief, is a moment I might not have lived. Of all the blessings I have experienced since that day, I count as the greatest the opportunity that arose a few months later to serve as the QEW Steering Committee Representative for Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting.

As I faced in my personal health crisis, so also is our planet now facing a dangerous infection, an infection that is careening out of control into a kind of planetary septic shock. We stand on the verge of a dangerous nonlinear death spiral that has been introduced into the planetary blood stream by the most powerful creature ever evolved. But I refuse to believe that the infection is human beings. Was the poison introduced by the Aboriginal Australian or the San people of the Kalahari or the Inuit—each with thousands and even tens of thousands of years of history living in healthy community with the co-inhabitants of their respective ecosystems? No. The poison that threatens us is an idea, an ideology of separation and domination and mastery over the living world and one another

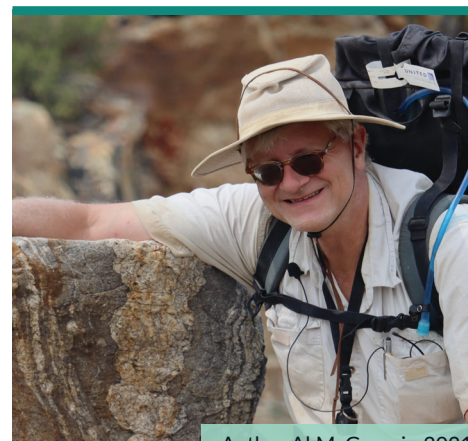
that poisoned the consciousness of what we name as “Western civilization.”

It was human beings who saved me and who restored to me that great gift Life. Recalling the fuzzy glow that I saw where their faces had been, the realization suddenly dawned on me a couple days afterward: “I saw their Light.” Despite the pain and the trauma, I did find my way into the Presence, and it did save me. The Presence was in them, in my wife, and in our relationships with both the human and the extra-human world. The Presence is Life itself, and it would have saved me, even if my body had perished.

I can testify to this: We are held in the palms of a Life larger and more beautiful and more enduring than any of us can imagine. It is this same transformative insight that is our Quaker Earthcare Witness to the world. If it is an idea that is killing us, it will be a more powerful idea that saves us. And just as I woke the next day to a life restored and more vivid than I had ever known before, so too can our children or our grandchildren or our great grandchildren to the seventh generation one day awaken to a new life vaster and more beautiful than we can ever imagine.

This is the vision that animates me and brings me to life as I serve with dear F/friends on Quaker Earthcare Witness’ Spiritual Nurture Committee or Mini-Grants or elsewhere in our organization (F/friends who I remind myself I might never have known).

Friends, the labor is worth the effort because the labor is Love itself. The labor is Life itself.



Author Al McGrew in 2021.

Yes, I fear that we and our children will live to see too much death—deaths that will threaten to slay our souls. But I live and work in the confidence that the Life that embraces us is a Life beyond death. The Life that enfolds us transcends our failings and our human weaknesses. It gives us life and we owe it all the life that we can return to it.

Two days after my crisis, my wife bumped into the same nurse who had asked me about my pain, and she confided that I had given them quite a scare.

They didn’t know if I was going to live or die. They didn’t pause to wonder if I was going to live or die.

They just worked.
They just worked.
That was their Light.
Friends, I see your Light.
You know our witness.
You know our Need.

Please live as generously as Life and Spirit have given to you.

Allen McGrew is a QEW Steering Committee Representative for Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting, clerk of QEW’s Mini-Grant Working Group, worships with Dayton Friends, and is a professor at the University of Dayton.



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Carolyn W. Treadway

Slowing Down to the Speed of Life

Editor's Note: This is an excerpt from one of QEW's classic print resources.

LIFE has its own cycles, rhythms, and processes, which need to be honored for maximum benefit, or to prevent disastrous consequences. Gestation, for example, cannot be speeded up. Yet in 21st century America, who has enough time for life, for living?

Our society and our own cultural expectations seem to require us to live in "fast forward," asking more of us than we can sustain over time. We are using ourselves up, and using our planet up. Everything seems accelerated.

Rainwater, which in the old days sank into the soil, streams, and water tables, now rushes across paved-over lands, erodes stream banks, and causes floods and subsequent droughts. Similarly, we are deluged with incessant information which does not sink into us to become knowledge and eventual wisdom.

Children growing up are too often rushed from one activity to another, without time to play in the sand or discover shapes in the clouds. Because of busy schedules, there are fewer family meals, thus depriving children of shared "wisdom time" around the table.

All of us are affected by the current pace of living, and it all is taking a toll on our planet. As a therapist and life coach, I frequently hear people's distress at being overworked and overwhelmed. I hear variations on themes of:

- » Incessant pressure and busyness.
- » Ever-rising expectations, never-ending demands.
- » Multi-tasking, no time to concentrate.

- » Fatigue, restlessness.
- » Breakdown of relationships and social networks, intimacy famine.
- » Disconnection from nature.
- » Lack of focus and meaning.
- » Soul-hunger, spiritual void.

It seems we have no time for rest, reflection, heart opening, or spiritual deepening! Many people crave something different, but don't know what or how to find it. In 1941, Thomas Kelly wrote words even more relevant today: "Strained by the very mad pace of our daily outer burdens...over the margins of life comes a whisper, a faint call, a premonition of richer living which we know we are passing by."

Kelly invites us to honor our fundamental Quaker testimony of simplicity: "Life is meant to be lived from a divine Center. Each one of us can live a life of amazing power and peace and serenity, of integration and confidence...on one condition, that is if we really want to."

Life coaches, like Quakers, raise queries: Are you living your own life as you truly wish to live? Are you living from a divine Center? What is really important to you? What are your key values, priorities, passions, testimonies, and witnesses? Does your life actually reflect and honor these?

What do you want more of, and less of, in your life? What brings you energy, fulfillment, and joy? Since you and the planet are profoundly interconnected, what are the contributions you want to offer our world?

Life itself is sacred. Time and energy are gifts from our Creator. Are you using them reverently? Is there time in your life for rever-

ence? Slowing down to the speed of life does not mean dropping out or doing without. It does mean deliberately creating your life through the power of choice.

Clearly and with commitment, tend what is really important to you, and do much less of what isn't. Your beliefs and values guide your priorities. So will God's leadings on how to use your time, energies, and talents, if you create space to discern them.

Where can you start?

- » Slow down! Just breathe. Rest, reflect a while, take time to pray. Then slowly, bit by bit, reclaim your own life.
- » Develop a spiritual practice to center your days.
- » Make careful choices about how you use your precious, finite time and energy.
- » Consider your energy. What activities and involvements feed you and bless you? Which drain you and stress you? Increase the former, weed out the latter.

ALL this comes down one basic truth: The simple life begins inside us, with our connection to the Divine. Slowing down frees time and space for spiritual connection and reverence for life. We must act on what our deep hearts already know: All life is sacred. Everything is connected. From this space, we can create a world we are proud to leave to our children and all future generations. Reverence for life empowers us to take responsibility for, and to care for, ourselves and each other. Through our choices and actions of love for the sacredness of life, we "re-member" our own lives, and we contribute to the renewal of our planet.

Eileen Flanagan

Moving Money Publicly to Move Vanguard

In response to right-wing pressure, Vanguard, one of the world's biggest investors in fossil fuels, announced in December 2022 that it was backing away from one of its few public climate commitments, the Net Zero Asset Managers initiative. This was disappointing for Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT), which has been trying to push Vanguard in the opposite direction for well over a year. In addition to persistent nonviolent direct action—including civil disobedience and worshipping outside the CEO's home—our initial campaign strategy involved asking customers to join some of our global campaign partners by calling and emailing Vanguard to share their climate concerns. Now, after watching Vanguard backslide, we feel led to take the next logical step: mobilizing Vanguard customers to move their money in a way that Vanguard will feel pressured to act.

With over \$7 trillion under management, Vanguard executives won't care if a few Quakers quietly start moving their life savings, even if some of the accounts seem large to us. What Vanguard executives do care about is the company reputation built by its founder John Bogle, a man who praised Quaker values like simplicity and prioritized helping average investors save for the future. By moving our money and publicizing our collective total, we will send a message that the Vanguard of today is clearly putting the short-term profit of the few above all else. While we took on this campaign out of a deep concern for climate justice, we have become convinced that Vanguard

is not even acting in the long-term interests of its own clients, since climate catastrophe will hurt the economy, as well as the lives of hundreds of millions, if not billions, of people.

There is another reason that acting together will make a bigger impact. From our collaboration with the global Vanguard S.O.S. campaign, we know that other organizations, including faith-based groups, are also considering divesting from Vanguard. Our decision could encourage them. That's why we are describing this Quaker-led effort as "the tip of the iceberg." We hope that Friends across the country will join us! While we are not equipped or legally able to give people financial advice, we're working on compiling resources to help people seek out investment options in alignment with their values.

While getting our savings out of companies like Exxon, Chevron, and Enbridge will be satisfying, we also want our witness to be as effective as possible. Some people may choose to begin the money-moving process while standing in Vanguard's driveway with a sign, explaining to employees why they are taking this action. Others may write an op-ed for a local paper about why they are moving away from Vanguard. When possible, we



Chester residents at Vanguard's Big Climate Change Walk. Photo by Rachael Warriner.

plan to publicize batches of money-movers to the press (totaling the amount moved by a group to protect everyone's privacy).

We also have strategies for those who are not Vanguard customers. We know that Vanguard recruits many employees from Philadelphia-area colleges, where students will pledge not to work for a company ignoring climate risk. Some may also pressure their schools to stop making Vanguard the default choice for faculty retirement. Likewise, Vanguard customers whose employer gives them no other option can start pushing for their institution to leave Vanguard. Friends across the United States may show up to support frontline struggles against the companies in Vanguard's portfolio, sending photos and letters to Vanguard leadership about the pipelines, oil refineries, and other dangerous projects the asset manager is enabling.

Follow these developments and help us be more impactful together at eqat.org.

Eileen Flanagan was a longtime volunteer with Earth Quaker Action Team before becoming the Director of Strategy and Partnerships. An award-winning author, she is a member of Chestnut Hill Meeting where she carries a minute of religious service related to her work for environmental and climate justice.

Liz Robinson

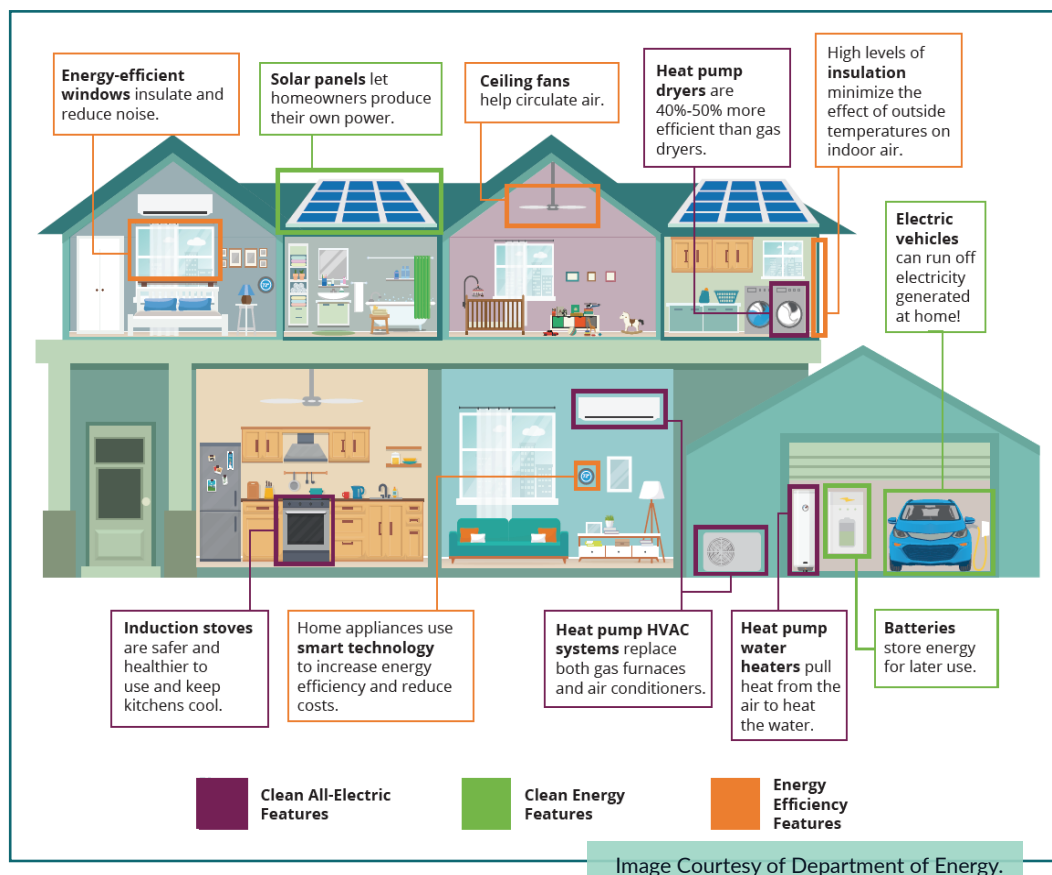
Incentives for Green Energy: Practical Impacts of the Inflation Reduction Act

With the passage of the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA), people in the US finally have the tools necessary to rapidly decarbonize our lives and help accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy. The law provides \$369 billion dollars for climate action and clean energy, and is governed by Justice 40, the policy requiring at least 40% of the funding to flow to environmental justice communities nationwide. The IRA is projected to reduce greenhouse gas emissions (GHGs) between 32% and 45% over the next seven years. The law incentivizes both the supply and demand for clean energy, creating a powerful push/pull to get this transition moving faster. Its incentives for manufacturing clean energy technologies in the US, as well as for research and development, are already improving the availability of cutting edge technologies and a broader range of solutions.

The success of the IRA depends on all of us becoming part of the solution and taking concrete steps to electrify our homes, schools, businesses, and government buildings with clean energy and to do so ASAP.

The IRA provides tax credits, rebates, and other incentives for all these clean energy technologies. A wonderful tool from “Rewiring America” will help you determine quickly what you may be eligible for. Visit [RewiringAmerica.org](https://www.rewiringamerica.org).

The Energy Efficient Home Improvement Credit provides a 30% tax credit for a wide range of energy efficiency upgrades. The High Efficiency Electric Home Rebate Program provides rebates for



households for heat pumps, water heaters, stoves, insulation and more.

The bill also offers Electric Vehicle (EV) Electrification Tax Credits: \$7,500 for a new EV or \$4,000 for a used EV.

The Solar Tax Credits are equally generous. The minimum tax credit is 30%, but many projects will qualify for 40%, 50% or possibly even 60%! Solar energy is clearly the cheapest clean energy money can buy. Another amazing change is that the solar tax credits are now available to nonprofit entities, i.e. schools, churches, government buildings, nonprofits in the form of a direct payment from the IRS. Yes, I know, it seems too good to be true.

The *Inflation Reduction Act Guidebook* provides a summary of the clean energy, resilience, and conservation-related tax incentives and incentives in the IRA. It is continually updated and you can find it online.

So make a plan and start saving money, carbon and the planet today. Your children and grandchildren will thank you.

Liz Robinson is a member of the Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting and the Environmental Justice Collaborative.

Nickolas Hein

One Family Electrifies!

We live in Madison, WI in a 1000-square-foot, 2-story, 3-bedroom home built in 1918. Most of our energy goes to heating and transportation, so in 2017 we began the process of upgrading and electrifying to eliminate fossil fuels and increase efficiency.

An energy audit identified where to start, what to include and estimated costs and benefits. Insulation and sealing were obvious first steps, because they would reduce the heating and cooling load. The furnace and water heater needed immediate replacement, so we bought efficient gas versions even though we knew we'd be replacing them when heat pump versions were available. The next step was solar photovoltaic (PV). We installed 4 kilowatts (as much as we could fit) to support eventual full electrification.

Our next big changes would be

HVAC, water heating, and an electric car, but technology and availability were still evolving. Most significantly, we didn't know whether we should use air source heating or hold out for geothermal. We couldn't determine whether we'd save energy (early answers weren't promising) and options were changing rapidly while outdated advice lingered unhelpfully. While we waited for answers (and an EV that fit our needs and small driveway) we replaced our minor appliances with efficient electric models. We made other minor upgrades like windows and window coverings. In 2022 we found a used EV for the same price as an average gas car, and installed a home charger.

Finally at the end of 2022, with the announcement of the Inflation Reduction Act, we ordered an air-source HVAC heat pump (rated to -13F) and Energy Recovery Ventilator (ERV). As of January 10 we are fully electrified. We're using much less energy: a third of what it was even with efficient gas heat.

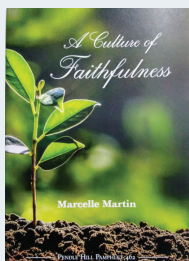
The project aligned with our Quaker ethics and personal goals:

- » Don't make messes for others to clean up. (Electricity is less polluting)
- » Don't use more than you need. (Electricity makes heat and power efficiently)
- » If you have extra, share it with others who need it. (Mostly information in this case)
- » Solar PV makes our energy cost nearly fixed to align with our fixed retirement income.
- » Solar PV supplies our heating and household electricity needs for free. We consider the car to be the only energy use that we pay for, encouraging us to limit its use.

Thankfully the process is much easier for anyone starting today. Contractors are more familiar with the technology. Rebates, deductions and loans are available to ease the cost burden because of the IRA. We hope that electrification will be even more attainable in the future.

Nick Hein is a former aerospace engineer, avid bicyclist and now does occasional environmental consulting and analysis. He is a member of Madison (WI) Monthly Meeting.

Upcoming Workshops with QEW



Introduction to Faithfulness Groups for Those Called to Earthcare with Marcelle Martin & Mary Ann Percy

June 7th @ 7:30 pm - 9:00 pm EDT

Marcelle Martin and Mary Ann Percy will introduce Faithfulness Groups as an ongoing small group practice to support Friends (and others) in their work, ministry, and leadings around Earthcare, environmental witness, environmental justice, ecological grief, education about climate change, and building resilient communities.

Fifty Acres and Fool: The Ploughshares Farm Story with Brent Bill

June 12 @ 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm EDT

In 2002, Brent and Nancy Bill acquired fifty acres of Nancy's father's farmland to build a house across the road from him. Brent will share how and why this land was transformed into a wildlife habitat and protected forest and how he was transformed as well.

Sign up for both of these and see more events at QuakerEarthcare.org/events.





Jennie M. Ratcliffe

Conscientious Objection, Conscientious Protection

Photo by Michael Afonso on Unsplash.

There are multiple interconnections between conscientious objection to militarism and what we can call the conscientious protection of all life on Earth. Conscientious objection, both to warmaking and to militarism that seeks to maintain and assert our so-called national security or “interests,” has long been advocated by Friends. In recent decades, we are increasingly seeing the multiple interconnections between militarism and the ecological and climate crisis.

Through bombs, scorched earth policies, and more, conflicts and wars destroy vast numbers of human and other life-forms, lands, water supplies, crops, and infrastructure. They cost vast amounts of materials and money, representing an enormous “opportunity cost” that could be used for ecological conservation, adaptation, and regeneration. At the same time, more and more conflicts are caused by “resource wars” over water, food, energy and scarce materials (such as the Gulf and Iraq wars), or result from climate-related disasters and the resultant displacement or fleeing of refugees (e.g. the wars in Syria or Tigray in Ethiopia), typically

affecting poorer countries and peoples first and worst, and who have fewer means for adaptation and restoration.

The US Department of Defense’s own Center for Climate and Security has long identified climate and ecological breakdown as a major threefold “threat multiplier” to US national security, naming

How can conscientious objection to war and conscientious protection of all life be connected in practice?

climate-related disasters, conflicts over vital resources, and refugee movements as major factors equal to or greater than any strictly political challenges. Yet the US military alone has a vast ecological and climate footprint. It uses more fossil fuels than any other single institution in the world, according to Brown University’s Costs of War project. The Pentagon budget

(now close to \$800 billion for 2023) is larger than the next seven countries combined and more than any other sector of the US’s annual discretionary budget (not including approximately \$2 trillion of supplemental war spending over the last 20 years), while ecological disasters have cost at least \$200 billion in 2022 in the US alone and uncounted billions worldwide. To date, however, the US’s nationally-oriented “armed lifeboat” approach has been focused largely on maintaining and expanding military and corporate control of resources rather than assisting affected countries or meaningfully reducing both our own military and our overall ecological footprint.

Why, despite the urgent and existential threat of climate and ecological breakdown, is militarism still the most powerful paradigm of how we achieve long-term security and protection, while the protection of all life, and the Earth we depend on, through conservation and life-sustaining social transformation, still considered to be utopian?

Both the seeds of war and militarism and the seeds of ecological

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destruction are extreme expressions of violence to each other and to all life and the Earth, and of our paradigms of domination, competition, individualism, and nationalism, and systematically ignore the voices of women, Indigenous peoples, the poor and oppressed, and the wider natural world. At bottom, they are about a sense of separation from all other life forms and the Earth. If so, the seeds of peace and a restored earth rest on a recognition of our bond of unity with all life, compassion for the “other,” and an inward conviction of the sacredness and integrity and wholeness of all life.

We are intimately interdependent, and as we do to other life, we do to ourselves; we are in intimate reciprocal interrelationship with the whole Earth community. And as we cannot so easily destroy that which we love and feel connected to, what really makes us secure, then, is nonviolence to each other and the Earth and, as one writer puts it, the movement toward wholeness.

How can conscientious objection to war and conscientious protection of all life be connected in practice?

Conscientious objection can be expanded from refusing to actively engage in war to refusing employment and investment in ecologically destructive enterprises. This would include the fossil fuel industrial complex, highly polluting industries, and the production and consumption of luxury goods. Both military and fossil fuel divestment movements are growing, while industries can be converted with re-investment to those which support the prevention, adaptation and reparation of ecological destruction.

Many climate analysts consider that we will need both a significant reduction in carbon emissions and consumption and the rapid conversion of current industrial (including military) production to renewable technologies and systems, on the scale of the reverse conversion achieved in months in World War II. For example, in

the mid 1970s I participated in meetings of peace, environmental and labor union groups in the UK supporting the Lucas Aerospace Alternative Plan, which proposed converting weapons and aerospace production to “socially useful” products, including solar energy, heat pumps, and mass transit vehicles. The Lucas plan was defeated at the time, but its vision remains as a practical proposition in a growing movement. It is but one of many preventive strategies.

I invite us all to strive to be conscientious objectors and protectors, peacemakers, and ecojustice defenders. We can be an integral part of Life defending itself, and align ourselves with divine love in action and with Earth’s creative and healing power.

Jennie M. Ratcliffe is a retired environmental epidemiologist, a long-time activist and the author of “Nothing Lowly in the Universe: An Integral Approach to the Ecological Crisis.” She is a member of Durham Friends Meeting (NC).



Climate and Money: A Guide to Fossil Fuel Divestment & Reinvestment

Created by Friend Jennie Ratcliffe and members of the Earthcare Witness Committee of Durham (NC) Friends Meeting, this guide provides resources on the what and why of divestment, which banks or funds to divest from, how to go about divesting, and how to reinvest in a more livable whole earth community.

The latest IPCC AR6 report concludes that we are very close to the greenhouse gas levels that will tip us into

catastrophic global warming. Around 70-80% of remaining fossil fuels must remain unburned to try to prevent this, yet the world’s 60 largest banks have invested more than \$3.8 trillion in fossil fuel companies since 2015. Over \$1 trillion has come from the four largest US banks.

An increasing number of individuals and pension funds, banks, academic, healthcare, faith-based and other institutions have now divested from fossil fuel extraction, refining, transport

and insurance, amounting to an estimated \$40+ trillion worldwide. In addition, reinvesting these funds in socially responsible and “green” banks and funds is an important strategy to mitigate the climate crisis and create a more just, regenerative, and ecological economy.

Visit [QuakerEarthcare.org](https://www.QuakerEarthcare.org) to download the full guide with links to help you and your community in your discernment!



Left above: 1. Kathy Barnhart cuts up her credit card. 2, 3, & below: Ann Arbor F/friends and protest together. Below left: Bay Area activists with Third Act protest in front of Wells Fargo.

Friends Cut Up Credit Cards

On Tuesday, March 21, 2023, thousands of people across North America—led by older Americans who are Third Act supporters—gathered inside and outside branches of big banks and at climate-impacted sites as part of Third Act’s 3.21.23 Day of Action to demand that banks stop financing the expansion of fossil fuels. Bank of America, Chase, Citibank, and Wells Fargo are using our money to bankroll the climate crisis, investing in oil drilling, pipelines, and fracking wells that cause global warming.

Seventy percent of the country’s financial assets belong to Baby Boomers and the Silent Generation. Tens of thousands of older Americans have signed the Banking on our Future Pledge to move their money out of these banks if the banks don’t move out of fossil fuels.

In March, QEW hosted a webinar with Third Act volunteers to support Friends getting involved across the country. Here we share a few highlights of how Quakers participated:

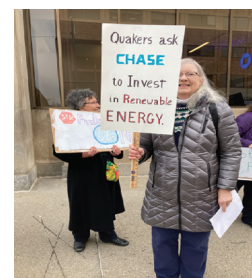
From Berkeley, CA

From Kathy Barnhart: In Berkeley, about 30 hardy souls gathered in the rain at Chase Bank at the top of Solano Ave., then marched to Wells Fargo Bank, and then to the Bank of America. We waved signs, handed out flyers, sang, marched, and chanted. Several people cut up their credit cards and handed in letters to the bank managers saying they would divest from the bank if the bank didn’t divest from fossil fuels. Taking this action together, knowing that groups all over the country were doing the same thing, inspires us to keep on making our voices heard. Third Act continues on with campaigns regarding democracy and the climate crisis, and is a good national organization for people 60 and over to join and become active.



From Ann Arbor, MI:

From Jan Smith: About fifty people, mostly elders, gathered on a busy corner at the downtown Ann Arbor branch of Chase Bank to call for an end to big banks’ funding of fossil fuels. The action involved several Quakers but came into being on such short notice that Ann Arbor Friends Meeting’s Earthcare Committee was not able to consider co-sponsoring. I do most of my climate work through a local organization called Interfaith Council for Peace & Justice, and we did cosponsor and publicize the Day of Action. In addition to singing, holding signs and a banner, and chanting, some people cut up their credit cards. People from at least seven religious faith traditions were present—probably more—as well as people of conscience who were not part of a faith community.



Nationwide

Friend Ruah Swennerfelt of Middlebury Friends Meeting (VT) helped organize an Interfaith Service of Solidarity supporting Third Act’s Day of Action, using QEW’s Earthcare for Friends curriculum. The service sought to connect people to each other, to the sacred, to the Earth, and to those who are bearing the brunt of the climate disaster, and also created a sacred container to hold all those who were a part of the action the next day.

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will survive the climate crisis. The answer, however, is not straightforward. On the one hand, there are reasons to be optimistic. Humans are a remarkably adaptable species, and we have already demonstrated our ability to overcome many challenges throughout history. We have developed technologies that have allowed us to thrive in a wide range of environments, from the frozen tundra to the scorching desert.

Furthermore, there are signs that we are starting to take action on climate change. The Paris Agreement, signed in 2015, represents a global commitment to limit global warming to well below 2°C above pre-industrial levels. Many countries are investing in renewable energy and phasing out fossil fuels. Individuals are also taking action, by reducing their carbon footprint and supporting sustainable businesses.

However, there are also reasons to be pessimistic. The scale of the challenge posed by climate change is immense, and we are currently not doing enough to address it. The current trajectory of greenhouse gas emissions suggests that we are on track for a catastrophic temperature rise of 3-4°C by the end of the century. This would have devastating consequences for the planet and for humanity.

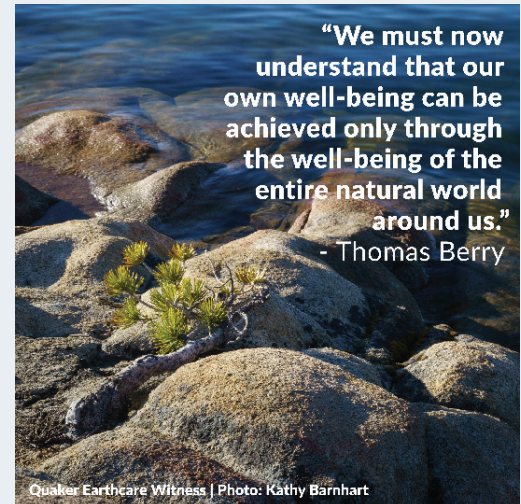
Furthermore, climate change is not just a technical problem that can be solved with technology and policy. It is also a deeply social and political issue, involving questions of power, justice, and inequality. The impacts of climate change are not felt equally around the world, with vulnerable communities often bearing the brunt of the damage. Addressing climate change requires not just technical solutions, but also changes in our values, priorities, and social structures.

So, will humans survive the climate crisis? The answer is that it depends on the actions we take in the coming years and decades. If we continue on our current trajectory, the future looks bleak. We will face more extreme weather events, food and water shortages, and mass migration. Many species will go extinct, and the planet will be fundamentally altered.

However, if we take bold and decisive action to address climate change, there is still hope. We can limit the rise in global temperatures, protect vulnerable communities, and preserve biodiversity. We can create a more sustainable and just society, one that is based on cooperation, stewardship, and respect for the natural world.

In conclusion, the question of whether humans will survive the climate crisis is a complex and difficult one. It is not a matter of technological fixes or policy solutions, but of fundamental values and priorities. The fate of humanity rests in our hands, and the choices we make in the coming years.

What do you think of this AI's writing?



Worship Sharing

"We must now understand that our own well-being can be achieved only through the well-being of the entire natural world."
– Thomas Berry

Each month, Friends gather online for QEW's monthly worship sharing. In February, we reflected on the above quote and worshiped on these queries:

- » How do you understand the connection between your own well-being and the well-being of the "entire natural world"?
- » Thinking beyond our individual actions, what are ways that we, as the collective, can support the well-being of the natural world?
- » Share about where (and if) you find Spirit in these quotes. Where are you being called?

Sign up on our website for our monthly worship sharing.

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ChatGPT

AI Writes 600 Words on Human Survival

We asked ChatGPT, an artificial intelligence chatbot, to “give us a 600 word article that answers this question: will humans survive the climate crisis?” This is what it wrote:

The climate crisis, also known as global warming, is one of the most pressing issues facing humanity today. The effects of climate change are already being felt around the world, with rising sea levels, extreme weather events, and melting glaciers. With the continued increase in greenhouse gas emissions, it is natural to ask whether humans will survive this crisis. In this article, we will explore this question and consider the factors that will determine the fate of humanity in the face of climate change.

Firstly, it is important to note that climate change is not a new phenomenon. The Earth’s climate has always been in a state of flux, with periods of warming and cooling occurring throughout history. However, what is different about the current situation is the rate at which the climate is changing. The planet is now warming at an unprecedented rate, and this is largely due to human activities such as burning fossil fuels and deforestation.

The consequences of this rapid warming are already apparent. Sea levels are rising, putting coastal communities at risk of flooding and displacement. Heat waves and droughts are becoming more frequent and severe, leading to

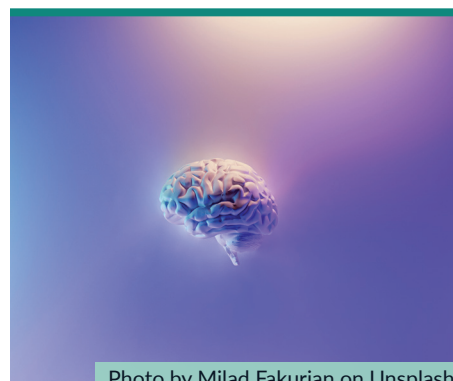


Photo by Milad Fakurian on Unsplash.

crop failures and water shortages. Biodiversity loss is accelerating, with many species facing extinction due to habitat destruction and changes in climate.

Given these alarming trends, it is natural to wonder whether humans

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