

Responding to IYM 2016

*Living sustainably
and fairly on this earth*

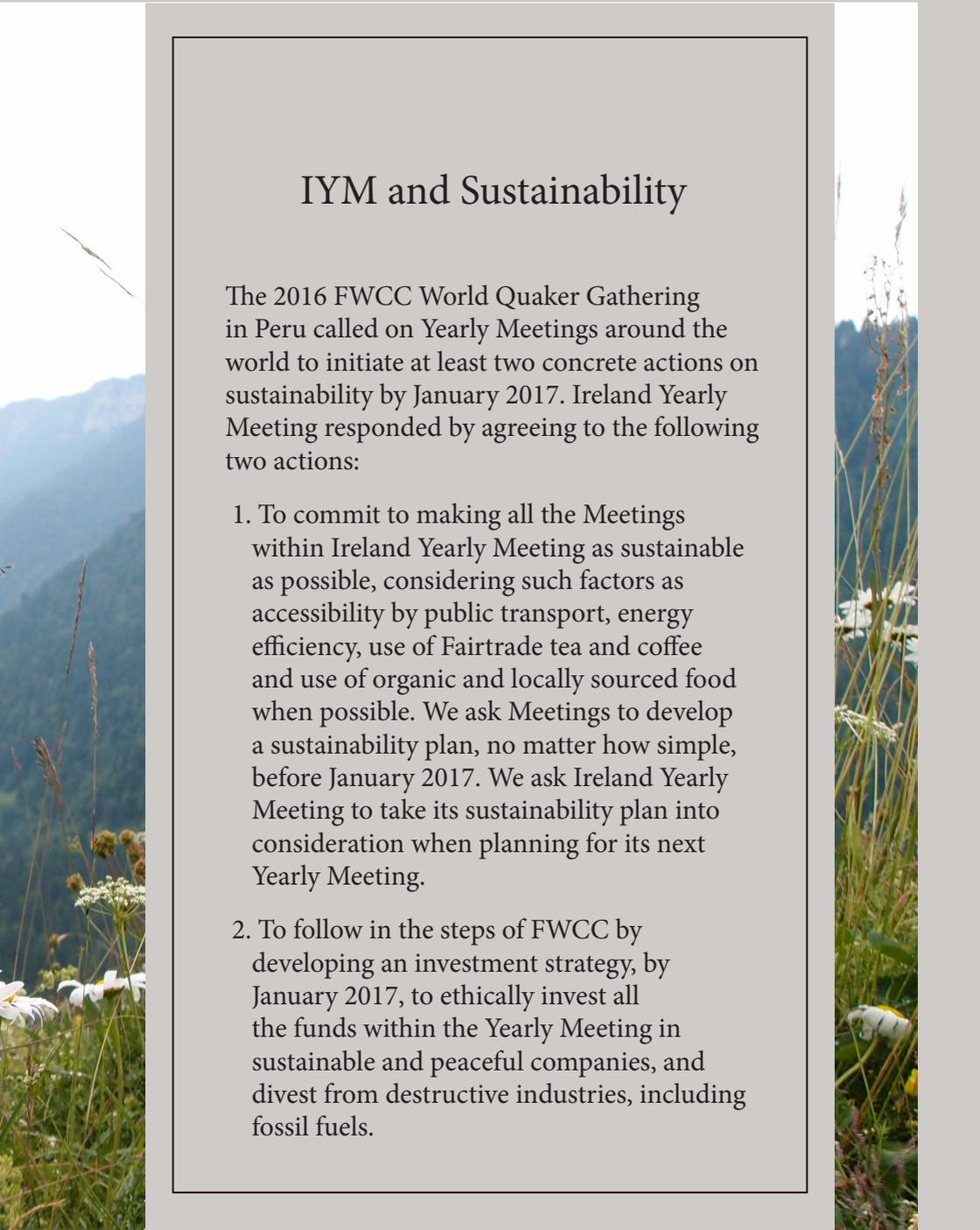
A Spiritual Call

The Quaker testimonies of equality and peace are witness to our vision of a world grounded in love and in answering that of God in each other. They call for a transformation of the economic and political system, as well as the ending of the misuse of the Earth's resources, which we recognise creates inequality, destroys community, affects health and well-being, leads to war and erodes our integrity.

Friends all over the world are – in the Quaker tradition – stepping out of our comfort zones to see where our lives may contain the seeds of war. We are willing to realise where we are part of a system of harm, and strive to live sustainably and fairly on this earth.

This challenge is as much a spiritual call as a material one, to act not in fear, but with hope and love.

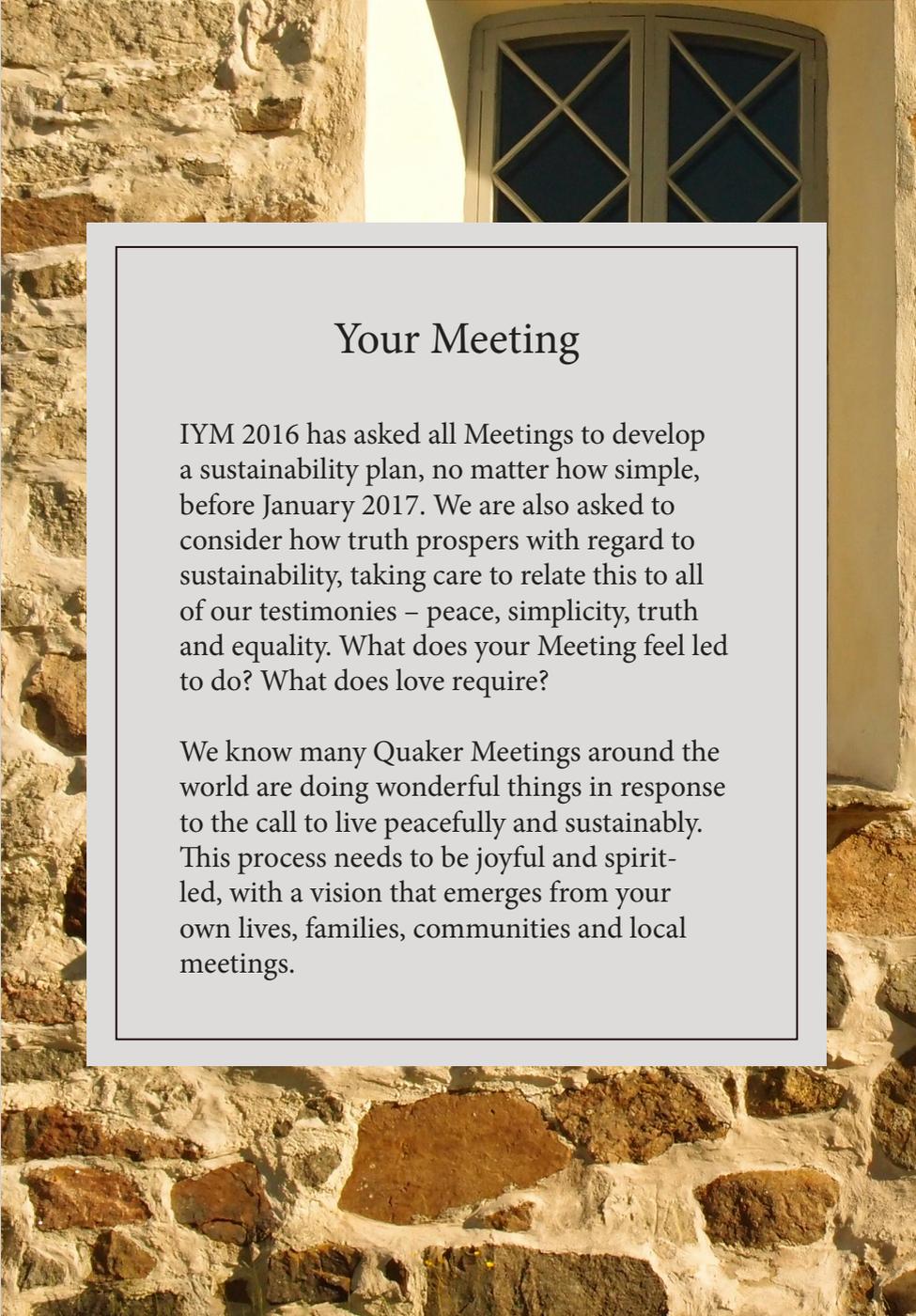




IYM and Sustainability

The 2016 FWCC World Quaker Gathering in Peru called on Yearly Meetings around the world to initiate at least two concrete actions on sustainability by January 2017. Ireland Yearly Meeting responded by agreeing to the following two actions:

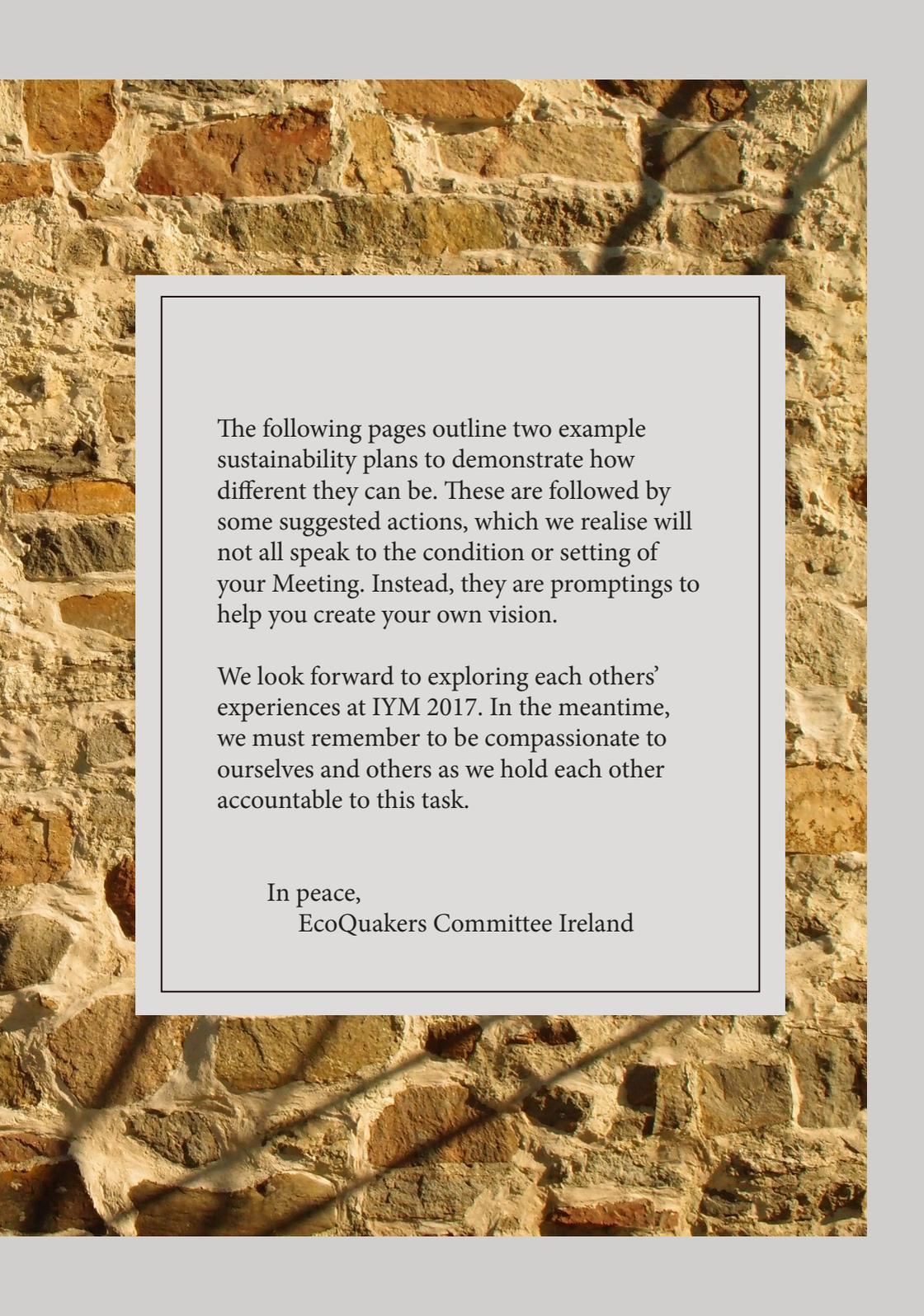
1. To commit to making all the Meetings within Ireland Yearly Meeting as sustainable as possible, considering such factors as accessibility by public transport, energy efficiency, use of Fairtrade tea and coffee and use of organic and locally sourced food when possible. We ask Meetings to develop a sustainability plan, no matter how simple, before January 2017. We ask Ireland Yearly Meeting to take its sustainability plan into consideration when planning for its next Yearly Meeting.
2. To follow in the steps of FWCC by developing an investment strategy, by January 2017, to ethically invest all the funds within the Yearly Meeting in sustainable and peaceful companies, and divest from destructive industries, including fossil fuels.



Your Meeting

IYM 2016 has asked all Meetings to develop a sustainability plan, no matter how simple, before January 2017. We are also asked to consider how truth prospers with regard to sustainability, taking care to relate this to all of our testimonies – peace, simplicity, truth and equality. What does your Meeting feel led to do? What does love require?

We know many Quaker Meetings around the world are doing wonderful things in response to the call to live peacefully and sustainably. This process needs to be joyful and spirited, with a vision that emerges from your own lives, families, communities and local meetings.



The following pages outline two example sustainability plans to demonstrate how different they can be. These are followed by some suggested actions, which we realise will not all speak to the condition or setting of your Meeting. Instead, they are promptings to help you create your own vision.

We look forward to exploring each others' experiences at IYM 2017. In the meantime, we must remember to be compassionate to ourselves and others as we hold each other accountable to this task.

In peace,
EcoQuakers Committee Ireland

Ballybeg Meeting

Sustainability Plan 2016

Ballybeg Meeting House is a small bungalow (built 1950) with a large garden on the outskirts of Ballybeg village. We meet fortnightly. Our membership is 21 adults and 3 children. We were tenants in this building for 20 years before purchasing it 15 years ago. It was heated by electric bar heaters and a fireplace until 2004 when we had the building rewired and electric storage heating installed. Water is heated by an instant hot water heater in the kitchen.

The building has no insulation except in the roof space, but it does have PVC double-glazed replacement windows. There are problems with condensation, damp areas on the kitchen walls, and rising damp on a north-facing wall. Otherwise the building is in fairly good condition. The roof was replaced before we purchased it.

We have an established vegetable plot, tended by local horticultural trainees as part of their course work. They also manage compost heaps. We are considering planting fruit trees in the garden. The students are talking about planting flowers and shrubs that attract pollinator insects.

This year our Premises Committee is looking at the rising damp problem and the possibility of insulating the walls to save energy. It seems that exterior wrap-

around insulation would be the most efficient solution because the walls are only single solid blocks. This will be expensive so it may take some time to raise funds.

We changed our electricity supplier to one with a higher proportion of renewable sources. Storage heating is a good system for the limited times we use the Meeting House, except the controls are confusing. We have a designated person and a back-up who set up the heating controls – it works much better now. We will start keeping records of usage and costs. We are replacing burnt out electric bulbs with new low-energy bulbs.

Since IYM we are buying Fairtrade tea and coffee (when we can get it). We have separated waste in the Meeting House for some time but have set up separate bins for compostables, recyclables and waste for bin collection so that Friends without access to recycling facilities can bring recyclables to the Meeting House. We are also collecting batteries. We will be purchasing 'eco' cleaning products as our supplies run out. We put a large bottle of water into the cistern so less water is used per flush.

Many Friends travel long distances to this Meeting. One Friend walks to Meeting and one cycles. We sometimes share transport, but there is little more we can do to reduce fuel use.

... example sustainability plan ...

Tir Na N'Og Meeting

Sustainability Plan 2016

OUR MEETING ... SIMPLE & SUSTAINABLE



We celebrate

Fairtrade food ü st

we're going to

... example sustainability plan ...

We are calculating our carbon footprint.

We look after our small peace garden.

We act with love and hope.

We plant bee-friendly plants and flowers.

We recycle and compost.

We have an eco-bookshelf.

Everyone's welcome.

to install solar panels

stall

ate earth-hour together.

ENERGY and TRANSPORT

- Have you done an audit of the environmental management of your premises, or calculated your Meeting's carbon footprint? Involve young people if they are keen
- Insulate buildings wherever possible
- Choose appropriate sized rooms for activities
- Timetable meetings to minimise heating use
- Consider a heating system with timer and thermostatic controls
- Fit energy saving light bulbs
- Encourage building users to switch off unnecessary lights and not leave items on stand-by
- Check water outlets. Fix drips and leaks
- If you are planning a major renovation, research sustainable architecture, passive energy and eco-construction materials
- Install water-saving devices (e.g. dual flush toilets and low spray flow or auto turn-off taps)
- Everyone has to travel to get to Meeting, so it's worth putting some thought into how and how far people have to move. The choices that the Meeting makes collectively (such as the time of worship) can make a difference to the options available
- Encourage walking, cycling and use of public transport to get to Meeting where possible

FOOD and BIODIVERSITY

- Consider purchasing Fairtrade, organic food where possible
- Consider farmers' markets and other local suppliers to promote local economy and reduce food miles
- Consider vegetarian catering as the default when hosting meals or events
- Do you support any urban agriculture, community gardens, community supported agriculture, or tree planting?
- Embark on a practical environmental or conservation project. Could you grow your own food or plant trees in any special places around your community?
- Could you turn some or all of your land into a peace or prayer garden, or area for outdoor worship? Meditative spaces can be important in communities, and help us dedicate personal time to nature
- Consider wildlife-friendly management that minimises the use of weedkillers and pesticides, leaves some areas wild, values old trees, hedges, walls, stones and native plants that benefit wildlife.
- Is there enthusiasm for a bird feeding station, bird nest boxes, bat boxes, piles of leaves and rotting logs for insects and hedgehogs?
- Get children, young Friends and adults out in nature to celebrate God's gift of creation!

CONSUMPTION and FINANCES

- Friends' witness has been that happiness has little to do with material consumption.
- Reduce consumption and use your consumer buying power to create change.
- Minimise waste by reusing and repairing
- For material you can't find another use for, recycle where possible
- Hold jumble sales to raise funds, recycle goods and promote the availability of goods at affordable prices
- Use environmentally-friendly cleaning materials and paint
- Purchase recycled paper and envelopes
- Use local suppliers where possible to promote a sustainable local economy and reduce transportation
- Use crockery rather than disposable cups and plates
- Check the environmental policy of your bank and see if you are satisfied with it
- Does your Meeting have funds invested in fossil fuels? Have an ethical investment policy for any savings*

*IYM has committed to divest from fossil fuels, and invest all funds within IYM in sustainable and peaceful companies. If your Meeting needs more information, contact EcoQuakers, or see www.divestinvest.org or www.gofossilfree.org for useful resources.

CULTIVATING COMMUNITY

- Do you support individuals and groups in your Meeting who feel called to take action on sustainability?
- Help Attenders and Members have access to sustainability resources, books, films, journals, and study material on environmental issues (e.g. through a sustainability notice board or a section in your newsletter)
- Sustainability-themed sessions can inform, inspire and encourage children's meeting and young Friends as they grow in faith
- Organise sustainability events: host a speaker, a film screening, a debate, lectures on creation theology, an earth hour celebration, a FairTrade stall, a 'One World Week' event
- Start a sustainability group: This can help us listen to each other lovingly, share our vision of a just, sustainable world, connect us, build solidarity, and renew our energy
- Inform building users of available environmental facilities
- Support or initiate community schemes with a positive environmental element (e.g. An Taisce Spring Clean in April, Tidy Towns, local exchange trading systems, barter websites)
- Support national and international events from groups like Eco-Congregation Ireland, Stop Climate Chaos, 350.org, A Rocha, WWF, Friends of the Earth, Trócaire, Christian Aid, Tearfund and Oxfam
- Celebrate your achievements with a group walk in nature, or a shared meal!

SPEAKING TRUTH TO POWER

Many Friends are called to speak 'truth to power' and to protest and resist practices and actions contrary to building a sustainable and peaceful society. This may take the form of joining campaigns or taking non-violent direct action.

- Do you practise speaking truth to power in relation to sustainability?
- Do you work to establish relationships with all sections of local communities, including politicians, businesses and schools, to encourage positive attitudes to sustainability?
- Look at the issues of public policy that we might be led to adopt and advocate in the political arena.
- Do you keep informed about the sustainability work being done locally, centrally and throughout the Quaker world?
- Do you support the work done by Quaker organisations such as the Quaker United Nations Office and the Quaker Council for European Affairs to ensure that international agreements and their implementation support sustainability?

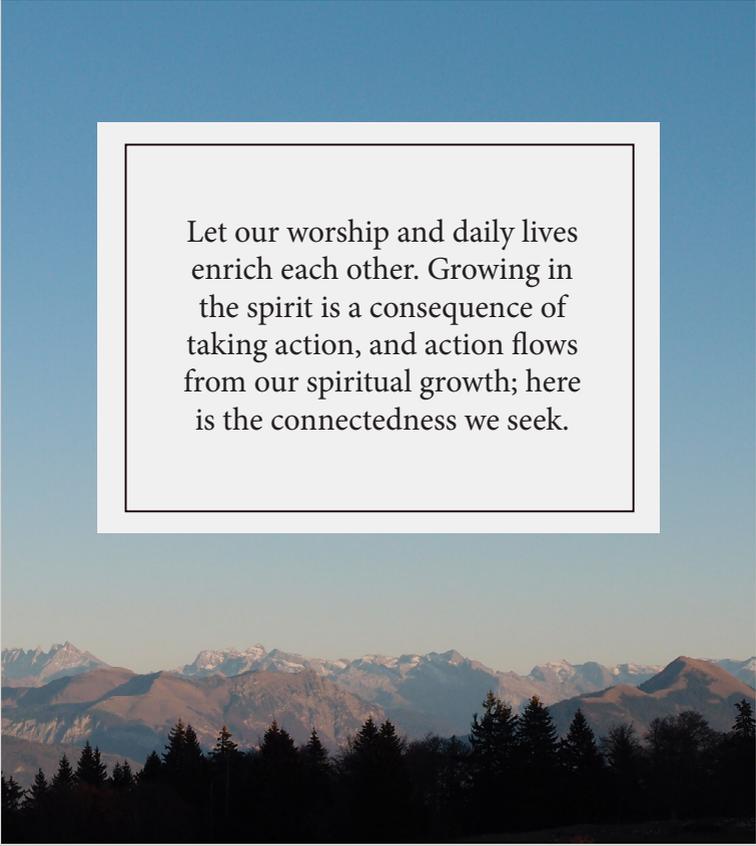
FURTHER RESOURCES

WEBSITES

- Eco-Congregation Ireland • www.ecocongregationireland.com
- Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO) • www.quno.org
- Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) • www.qcea.org
- BYM Sustainability Toolkit • www.quaker.org.uk/our-work/sustainability
- Living Witness 'Be the Change' study group sessions • www.livingwitness.org.uk/publications
- Study packs from Woodbrooke's Good Lives programme • www.woodbrooke.org.uk
- Quaker Institute for the Future • www.quakerinstitute.org

BOOKS

- *Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy*, Peter G. Brown and Geoffrey Garver, Berrett-Koehler, San Francisco, 2008
- *Costing not less than everything: Sustainability and spirituality in challenging times*, Swarthmore Lecture 2011, Pam Lunn, Quaker Books, 2011
- *Prosperity without Growth: Economics for a Finite Planet*, Tim Jackson, Routledge, 2011.
- *Sustainable Energy – Without the Hot Air*, David Mackay, Cambridge, 2008.
- *Coming Back to Life: Practices to Reconnect Our Lives, Our World*, Joanna Macey and Molly Young Brown, D&M Publishers, Canada, 1998.
- *Hell and High Water: Climate Change, Hope and the Human Condition*, Alistair McIntosh, Edinburgh Birlinn, 2008.



Let our worship and daily lives
enrich each other. Growing in
the spirit is a consequence of
taking action, and action flows
from our spiritual growth; here
is the connectedness we seek.

*The 'possible actions' section has been adapted from Eco-Congregations Ireland's (ECI) church check-up list, which can be found in the Resources section of the website – www.ecocongregationireland.com. ECI awards churches and Meetings that have worked consistently on environmental issues for at least two years in the following four areas – practical, spiritual, community and global. South Belfast and Rathfarnham Meeting have received this award. If you feel your Meeting is ready to apply for an award – or if you would like to sign up to receive their bi-monthly newsletter, send an email to info@ecocongregationireland.com

This booklet was compiled by EcoQuakers Ireland
contact: richardbloomfield52@gmail.com

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