

## QEW Fall Gathering 2026 Agenda:

# *The Fires That Renew*

**Location:** Prairiewoods Franciscan Spirituality Center Hiawatha, Iowa (67 acres)

(See [online agenda and zoom link here](#))

**Dates:** October 15–17, 2026 (CCC Members through October 18)

### **Thursday, October 15**

The Story of the Land - Arrive, connect over meals, and explore the history and native ecology of the Great Plains. Culminate the night with a worship and inspiring glimpse into QEW's work in 2026-27.

- **3:00 – 5:00 PM | Check-in & Registration**
- **5:00 – 6:00 PM | Dinner & Fellowship**
- **6:00 – 7:00 PM | Telling the Story of the Land** (*Online Worship at 6:30 to accompany Iowa Sunset*)  
Join us for a worshipful habitat walk by QEW's own prairie restoration expert [Jim Kessler](#) alongside Prairiewoods staff, we will ground ourselves in the history of the Great Plains, envision a pre-Columbian and rewilded Iowa, explore native flora, and contrast Indigenous perspectives of the Earth as a living relative with colonial narratives of dominion.
- **7:00 – 7:15 PM | Sunset Worship**
- **7:30 – 8:30 PM | Opening Plenary: Welcome to the Land and QEW** (*Hybrid*)  
Together, we'll gather with a formal greeting from Prairiewood staff, practical details about our stay, overview of our weekend. Following this we'll dive into the inspiring work of Quaker Earthcare Witness as we work to build a Society of Friends suffused with Earthcare and Sacred Nonviolent Resistance to critical fights around the world.
- **8:30 – 9:45 PM | Evening Home Groups: Personal Stories of Loss and Renewal** (*Separate Online/In-Person Groups*)  
*Potential Queries:* We will finish off our evenings by gathering with a small group of Friends to deepen in our worship. After sharing our personal stories in connection with the theme, we'll be invited to speak our prayers out loud for the return of the tallgrass prairie. We will hold space to mourn the wounds of history: waters eutrophied by fertilizers, poisoned soils, factory-farmed confinements, the trauma of Indigenous boarding schools, and the legacy of Christian supremacy. Praying for true decolonization, Land Back, and an Earth restored our ultimate query will be: "*How might my hands become worship as I tend the land tomorrow?*"
- **9:45 PM Onward | Rest & Fellowship**  
Quiet evening holding in the Light the land and all its inhabitants.

# QEW Fall Gathering 2026 Agenda:

**Friday, October 16th**



Our Hands as Worship – be inspired in service to land, worship, community, and our Keynote

- **6:30 – 7:30 AM | Sunrise Worship** (*Walking & Sitting – remote participation encouraged*)
- **7:30 – 8:30 AM | Breakfast**
- **8:30 – 11:00 AM | Worshipful Service Action & Hands-On Prairie Restoration** (*Walking & Sitting – remote participation encouraged*)  
A hands-on practicum with local earthcare experts from the Indian Creek Nature Center and Prairiewoods. Learn native ecosystem management and engage in invasive species removal, carrying the worshipful spirit and intentions from morning prayers directly into the soil.
- **11:00 – 12:15 AM | Home Groups: Prayers for the Land** (*Separate Online/In-Person Groups*)  
*Reflection Theme:* How was it to commune with the prairie and the land at Indian Creek? How did it feel to sow my prayers into the Earth? What was most powerful and what pulled me out of the experience? It's often said that healthy hope must be active – how did this small act, done in community touch me as I hold the tender and precarious state of life on our planet? How can I bring prayerful action more fully into my life?
- **12:15 – 1:00 PM | Lunch**
- **1:00 – 2:30 PM | Keynote Address: Sikowis Nobiss on Rematriation** (*Hybrid*)  
"The Fires that Renew" – Sikowis Nobiss (Plains Cree/Saulteaux), founder of the Great Plains Action Society, draws from her frontline experience at Standing Rock.
- **2:30 – 4:00 PM | Rest & Fellowship** (*Online hang out open*)
- **4:00 – 5:30 PM | Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business #1** (*Hybrid*)
- **5:30 – 6:30 PM | Dinner** (*Online hang out open*)
- **6:30 – 7:00 PM | Sunset Worship** (*Walking & Sitting – remote participation encouraged*)
- **7:15 – 8:30 PM | Policy, Advocacy & Direct Action Interest Groups** (*Hybrid*)  
Led by QEW Staff and Steering Committee members. Topics include: watershed impacts of Data Centers, Polluters Pay Climate Superfund Laws, 30x30 Conservation Movement, Grid Modernization, LNG & Fracking Resistance, Farm Bill, and International Climate Finance.
- **8:30 – 9:30 PM | Evening Sessions** (*Hybrid*)
  - *For Newcomers:* Listening Session on Earthcare Concerns.
  - *For Steering Committee:* Practicum on QEW Outreach.
- **9:30 PM Onward | Rest & Fellowship**  
Quiet evening holding in the Light the land and all its inhabitants.

# QEW Fall Gathering 2026 Agenda:



## Saturday, October 17th

Seeds of Tomorrow - conclude our gathering with worship, ceremony, and fellowship

- 6:30 – 7:30 AM | **Sunrise Worship** (*Walking & Sitting / remote participation encouraged*)
  - 7:00 – 8:30 AM | **Breakfast**
  - 8:30 – 9:45 AM | **Home Groups: Bringing the Fire Home** (*Separate Online/In-Person Groups*)  
*Potential Queries: What lessons of healing and repair do I wish to take home with me? How can the fires of my life lay bare the seeds of my tomorrow? How do we see through cycles of destruction to the seeds of new life, and how can we share this message with others?*
  - 10:00 – 11:00 AM | **Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business #2** (*Hybrid*)
  - 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM | **Closing Worship & Ceremony** (Semi-Programmed) (*Hybrid*)
  - 12:00 – 1:00 PM | **Lunch**
  - 1:00 – 2:30 PM | **Packing & Farewells**
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**Post-Gathering Activities** – *Note: All CCC Members (QEW Committee Clerks and Officers) stay through Sunday for a dedicated Post-Gathering meeting focusing on strategic planning, detailed business, and the future of QEW.*

### Potential Field Trips: Saturday Afternoon (2:30 PM Onward)

#### 1. (*CONFIRMED*) **Restoration Tour: Kessler Prairie**

Status: Proposed – awaiting finalization

- Overview: Field visits exploring local native ecosystem management, featuring [Kessler Prairie](#) (*Jim Kessler's 30-acre restored tallgrass prairie, oak savanna, and wetland preserve*)

#### 2. (*Proposed*) **Historical Reckoning: White's Iowa Manual Labor Institute Visit**

- Overview: A trip to the historical site of White's Iowa Manual Labor Institute (a local Quaker-run Indigenous boarding school). Participants will reflect upon the history of Quaker participation in the cultural erasure of Native peoples.

#### 3. (*Proposed*) **Community Projects: Local Regenerative Farming & Activist Projects**

- Overview: Visits to local regenerative agriculture farms and initiatives to learn about sustainable food systems and regional environmental justice efforts.

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Location: Zoom

Dates: October 15–17, 2026 (CCC Members through October 18)

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## Thursday, October 15

The Story of the Land

- **6:30 – 7:00 PM (CT) | Zoom Worship** (Join us for Worship during the Iowa sunset)
- **7:00 – 7:30 PM (CT) | Zoom Orientation**
- **7:30 – 8:30 PM (CT) | Opening Plenary: Welcome to the Land and QEW (Hybrid)**  
Together, we'll gather with a formal greeting from Prairiewood staff, practical details about our stay, overview of our weekend. Following this we'll dive into the inspiring work of Quaker Earthcare Witness as we work to build a Society of Friends suffused with Earthcare and Sacred Nonviolent Resistance to critical fights around the world.
- **8:30 – 9:30 PM (CT) | Evening Home Groups: Personal Stories of Loss and Renewal (Separate Online/In-Person Groups)**  
*Potential Queries:* How have the fires of this time moved through my life, this land, and my lineage, laying the soils bare? How is my personal story an echo of the land's story? What longs to return and take root in these barren soils?
- **9:30 PM Onward (CT) | Rest & Fellowship**  
Quiet evening holding in the Light the land and all its inhabitants.

# QEW Fall Gathering 2026 Agenda:



## Friday, October 16th

### Our Hands as Worship

- **\*Time Zone Dependent\*** | **Sunrise Worship** (*Encouraging all Friends to greet the Sunrise outside in worship wherever they are - Friends in Iowa will be outside from 6:30-7:30am Central Time*)
- **8:30 – 9:30 AM (CT) | Home Groups: Prayers for the Land** (*Separate Online/In-Person Groups*)  
*Reflection Theme:* Speaking our prayers out loud for the return of the tallgrass prairie, bur oaks, bison, and 15-foot deep topsoil. We will hold space to mourn the wounds of history: waters eutrophied by fertilizers, poisoned soils, factory-farmed confinements, the trauma of Indigenous boarding schools, and the legacy of Christian supremacy. Praying for true decolonization, Land Back, and an Earth restored. How might my hands become worship today?
- **1:00 – 2:30 PM (CT) | Keynote Address: Sikowis Nobiss on Rematriation** (*Hybrid*)  
*"The Fires that Renew"* – Sikowis Nobiss (Plains Cree/Saulteaux), founder of the Great Plains Action Society, draws from her frontline experience at Standing Rock.
- **4:00 – 5:30 PM | Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business #1** (*Hybrid*)
- **6:30 – 7:00 PM (CT) | Zoom Worship** (Join us for Worship during the Iowa sunset)
- **7:15 – 8:30 PM (CT) | Policy, Advocacy & Direct Action Interest Groups** (*Hybrid*)  
Led by QEW Staff and Steering Committee members. Topics include: watershed impacts of Data Centers, Polluters Pay Climate Superfund Laws, 30x30 Conservation Movement, Grid Modernization, LNG & Fracking Resistance, Farm Bill, and International Climate Finance.
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Seeds of Tomorrow

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*Reflection Theme: What lessons of healing and repair do I wish to take home with me? How can the fires of my life lay bare the seeds of my tomorrow? How do we see through cycles of destruction to the seeds of new life, and how can we share this message with others?*
- 10:00 – 11:00 AM (CT) | Meeting for Worship on the Occasion of Business #2 (Hybrid)
- 11:00 AM – 12:00 PM (CT) | Final Ceremony (Hybrid)

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**Post-Gathering** – *Note: All CCC Members (QEW Committee Clerks and Officers) stay through Sunday for a dedicated Post-Gathering meeting focusing on strategic planning, detailed business, and the future of QEW.*