

To Friends everywhere,

Dear Friends,

From May 24<sup>th</sup> till 26<sup>th</sup> some 60 Friends gathered in the 'Friends of Nature House', Bosbeek, including six children and guests from Belgium and Luxemburg YM, Britain YM and Sweden YM. We have also welcomed new attenders.

Our theme was: *Sowing Peace – Seeds of Peace.*

Swallows were flying low, there was rain in the air.

The brooklets in the forest were full and all around there was the pink, white and purple of the foxgloves.



We live in turbulent times. Wars, crises, polarization.

We spoke of hope

What is hope?

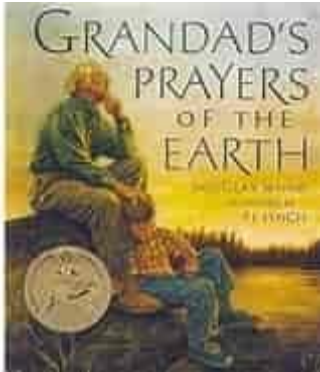
How do we keep hope?

Does hope help us to persevere?

How do we deal with fear and despair?

Are we able and do we dare to face up to our fears?

During epilogue the first evening the story of 'Grandad's Prayers of the Earth' was read.



**To stoop in order to smell a flower is a prayer** this book tells us.

And: just *being* as everything in nature is also a prayer.

Frits ter Kuile, a peace activist made us work on Saturday. We engaged with questions about our principles of nonviolence and how to practice this. Which seeds of peace are there and how do we sow them?

And Kees Nieuwerth told us about the practical book/project document on '*Inclusive Security*' which will be launched on the 14<sup>th</sup> of September during the Week of Peace in the Saint John 's Church in Amersfoort (see also [www.samenvelig.earth](http://www.samenvelig.earth)).

### **Trees pray by reaching out to heaven.**

During the afternoon session Tracey Martin of the Quaker Council for European Affairs (QCEA) told us about her five seeds of peace. She told us about how her work in in different countries and different projects moulded her to work for peace.

She spoke from her own experience, which was inspiring and impressive.

Her two questions for us were:

- How have the seeds of peace been sown in you?
- Where can we find seeds of peace nowadays?

In our homegroups we explored these questions together.

### **Flowers pray by offering their fragrance and colour.**

Later during our Meeting for business we took a decision about our two Quaker meeting houses. For our Yearly Meeting this was a big and emotional step. We would like to use our financial capacities to make the divine visible in this world. By letting go of our properties and widening our involvement in our finances we can prepare the way to do this.

At the end of a long day we were offered in our special interest groups still more examples of how people are sowing seeds of peace in practice. From the work of QCEA,

the movement started by the book '*Moral Ambition*' by Rutger Bregman, to the work of Charles Tauber in Vukovar, to Judy Moody-Stuart reminding us about the relationship between Friends in the Netherlands and the Friends Girls School in Sohagpur, India.

**The high grass prays while it waves its arms under the sky.**

This Yearly Meeting Session brought us a lot.

To be together again, to get to know one another even better, has nurtured us.

We have been made to think and important decisions have been taken.

Seeds of Peace have been sown.

Do not forget to water them!

From our second epilogue:

'If you smile at me, I will understand. Because that's what everybody everywhere does in the same language' (from the song 'Wooden Ships' van Crosby, Stills and Nash)

Loving and peaceful greetings,

Peter Spreij,  
Clerk

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