

FAITH AND PRACTICE  
of the  
Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting  
of the  
Religious Society of Friends

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## INTRODUCTION

Friends have no creed or fixed doctrine but cherish the fundamental Quaker faith that the Inner Light, the light of Divine Truth, is in every human being. We are concerned that, in our religious life, we should have ample room for growth in the Spirit, unfettered by limiting words or formal articles of faith. Yet Friends individually and as a religious society have felt the need for a document called a *Book of Discipline*, or today, in most Meetings, *Faith and Practice*, to guide them in their life as Friends.

*Faith and Practice* describes the system of order by which the Meeting seeks to remain true to its principles and help its adherents to live in accord with them. It sets forth as guideposts not only the attitudes and experience of Friends but also the practices which Friends Meetings have tested and revised over the years. Each *Faith and Practice*, therefore, reflects the attitudes, the experience, and the unique approach to Quakerism of a given body of Friends at a particular time and place. This edition of *Faith and Practice* describes Quaker beliefs and practices that Pittsburgh Friends find valid today.

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, with which Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting is affiliated, has not adopted its own book of *Faith and Practice*. However, in 1949 Pittsburgh Friends developed their own Book of Discipline to meet their needs and to establish the Meeting's organization. This is the 2018 updating of that document.

Our history shows that our book of *Faith and Practice* is dynamic, not static. It reflects changes in society and religious outlook and our response to those changes. At the same time, it affirms Quaker openness and obedience to Truth. Thus, it is constantly under scrutiny for timeliness and relevance, and periodic changes are welcomed, even expected, while the basic principles remain unchanged.

## PART I – THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE MEETING

### HISTORY OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS<sup>1</sup>

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) is a fellowship that had its beginnings over three and a half centuries ago in England. In 1643, nineteen-year-old George Fox began a search for something that would give a sense of meaning and purpose to his daily life. Neither his family, nor ministers of the established church, nor people of other religious groups were helpful. Four years later, when all hope of finding human assistance was gone, he heard a voice that said, “There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition,” and “Mark and consider in silence, in lowliness of mind, and thou wilt hear the Lord speak unto thee in thy mind.” What he

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<sup>1</sup> The main sources used for this section are: Edwin B. Bronner, Ed., *American Quakers Today* (Philadelphia, PA: Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas, 1972); “Historical Statement,” *Faith and Practice of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends* (1950); “Origin and Organization of the Society of Friends,” *Discipline of the Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends* (1961); Sidney Lucas, *The Quaker Story* (New York, NY: Harper, 1949).

had sought in outward teaching was the Inner Light within himself. He had discovered not only the Inner Teacher but also a way of worship based on silence.

Fox had no intention at first of founding a new sect, but the rest of his life was dedicated to an effort to “walk in the Light” and to encourage others to find it for themselves. He traveled widely, speaking in and out of churches, debating with preachers and professing Christians, and forming many meetings for worship. The seekers and finders whom he gathered about him at first called themselves “Children of the Light”; their successors are now known as the Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers.

Fox began his ministry in 1647 at the age of twenty-three. The Friends were organized as a Society in 1652, when Margaret Fell, wife of Judge Thomas Fell, and others in her household were “convinced.” Margaret Fell, who became the wife of George Fox eleven years after Judge Fell's death, helped to unify Friends through correspondence and through providing a gathering place at her home, Swarthmore Hall. She was also active in working with the poor and those in prison. By the time of the death of Fox in 1691, there were 50,000 Friends in England, organized in monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings, as well as large groups in America and elsewhere.

In the late seventeenth century, Fox and his early followers were regarded by the state Church of England as revolutionaries. These first Quakers offended the Church of England by declaring that its creeds were stultifying, and that people need not attend “steeple houses” to find God. They offended the civil authorities by refusing to take oaths in court or to go to war. At least 21,000 Quakers in England were fined or imprisoned, and, as a result, at least 450 died. Persecution in England was most severe between 1662 and 1689.

Quakers found their way to America within a decade of the beginning of George Fox's public ministry in England; some arrived as early as 1655. At first, they were persecuted as in England. In Boston, Quakers were publicly whipped, and between 1659 and 1661 four were hanged, one of them a woman, Mary Dyer. The first Friends Meeting in North America was established in Rhode Island in 1661. George Fox's visit in 1671-73 spurred the growth of the Society. William Penn began a 75-year Quaker governance of his colony of Pennsylvania in 1682.

Quakerism spread and grew throughout the American colonies, so that between 1700 and 1725 it was the third largest religious body, surpassed only by the Congregationalists in New England and the Anglicans in the South.

American Quakerism declined in numbers and vitality in its period of Quietism between 1725 and 1825. The Quietists expected worshippers to deny human impulse and thought in favor of supernatural revelation. This discouraged growth and led to a sterile vagueness of thought.

The decline in the eighteenth century of the revolutionary vigor of American Quakerism was also due in part to the growing wealth of Friends and the desire not to risk offending others. The life of John Woolman (1720-1772) is an exception to these tendencies. Woolman kept his tailor's trade to a minimum and traveled among Friends, quietly trying to persuade them against slavery. By 1780 few Quakers owned slaves.

For American Quakers, the nineteenth century was a period of divisions. In 1827-28, there was a split between the liberals and the orthodox. The liberals were influenced by Elias Hicks (1748-1830), who stressed the authority of the Inner Light, which he believed to be the universal Spirit of God in all people. For Hicks, this Spirit of God was the Christ, distinct from the historical Jesus considered as a model person. The orthodox Quakers, on the other hand, were influenced by the evangelical preachers, who stressed the authority of the Bible and the deity of Christ. Orthodox Friends called the views of Hicks unchristian, while the liberals believed they were defending traditional Quaker beliefs. Liberal Friends Meetings, often called Hicksite, were organized into the Friends General Conference in 1900. They continue to maintain unprogrammed worship based on silence, emphasis on the authority of the Inner Light, and respect for differing theologies.

Within the Orthodox branch of Friends, another division began in the 1840s. One group, “pastoral,” became much like mainline Protestants, with paid pastors and programmed worship, while maintaining many Quaker testimonies such as nonparticipation in war. This group, called Gurneyites, was led by Joseph John Gurney (1788-1847), an English Friend, and continued to carry the Orthodox name as well. The members of the other group, which split away from the Orthodox under the leadership of John Wilbur (1774-1856), were called Wilburites or Conservatives. Ohio Yearly Meeting (Conservative) is in this group, which defended traditional Christian beliefs and Quaker practices. Like the Hicksites, Conservative Friends maintained unprogrammed worship based on silence.

The Gurneyites agreed on a pastoral type of worship, but disagreement arose later concerning Quaker beliefs and testimonies. In 1902, when Gurneyite Friends Meetings organized nationally into the Five Years Meeting, Ohio Yearly Meeting refused to join, claiming that Five Years Meeting was not sufficiently Christ-centered and biblical in its beliefs. Other Yearly Meetings, including some who left Five Years Meeting, joined with Ohio Yearly Meeting (Independent) in 1965 to form Evangelical Friends Alliance. In 1966, Five Years Meeting changed its name to Friends United Meeting, and in 1990 Evangelical Friends Alliance changed its name to Evangelical Friends International.

The main trend of American Quakerism in the twentieth century has been toward unity. Friends from the different branches work together for peace, especially through the American Friends Service Committee and the Friends Committee on National Legislation. Young Friends of North America also come from different backgrounds to work and worship together.

## HISTORY OF PITTSBURGH FRIENDS MEETING

Friends have been meeting in Pittsburgh at least since 1878, when an unofficial group of a few families gathered regularly in each other’s homes. Later, Benjamin Lightfoot’s home across the street from the old Shadyside Hospital became their regular meeting place.

Sometime between 1906 and 1909, Pittsburgh Friends moved to the downtown YMCA to accommodate a larger group. For many years during this period, Charles Wright, Robert and Sarah Magill, Mary and Harriet Eck, and Carl and Elizabeth Van der Voort were the faithful core of the group. In the late twenties, they were joined by Gertrude Campbell (Mead), William



Cartledge, J. W. Harrison, Winthrop Leeds, Willard Mead, Henry Pope, and Edgar and Sarah Shiner.

As the group grew, more convenient and quieter quarters were sought. In 1933, a Colonel Withers offered the use of a little red schoolhouse, built in 1867 and located in Shadyside off Aiken Avenue near Fifth Avenue. He wanted the building to be maintained for its historical value. Pittsburgh Friends moved into the building, but its maintenance proved to be beyond their means, and in 1938 the City condemned the building for want of major repairs. The meetings were then moved to the Oakland Community Center, which was hospitable but quite inconvenient. The next move, in 1940, was to the College Club on Craig Street in Oakland. However, Friends' testimony in opposition to World War II made the officers of the Club uncomfortable; consequently, in 1944, Pittsburgh Quakers moved to the East Liberty YWCA at Spahr and Alder Streets.

For some time, the worship group was under the care of the Friends Fellowship Council. When it sought official standing as a Friends Meeting, a committee from the Council consisting of Bernard Walton, LaVerne Forbush, and Albert Livezey made an official visit to Pittsburgh. Following that visit, on December 15, 1940, the group was recognized as a Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, affiliated with the Friends Fellowship Council and the American Section of the Friends World Committee for Consultation. The Lake Erie Association of Friends, formed in 1939, included Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit, Ann Arbor, and ten smaller Meetings. The Association met once a year for fellowship and discussion of mutual concerns, and, in many respects, took the place of a yearly meeting.

During the East Liberty YWCA period (1944-1955), attendance at Meeting increased greatly, and the resulting larger number of children clearly indicated the need for a First Day School. In 1955, further growth in size and activity led the Meeting to purchase the old Alpern residence at 1353 Shady Avenue for a Meeting House. The rooms on the second floor were used for First Day School. Meeting attenders Marian and Ernest Dalglish lived in the third-floor apartment as caretakers.

As a result of persistent work by Friends and others, the American Friends Service Committee established an office in the Meeting House breakfast room in 1961. From this office, a succession of staff and volunteers conducted a regular program of work camps and seminars for high school students for about five years. Meanwhile, in the North Hills, several Meeting families met for worship once a month in one another's homes. For a few years, two other small groups, with Meeting encouragement, followed this pattern.

In 1963, the Lake Erie Association organized itself as a Yearly Meeting. It was recognized by the Friends General Conference, of which it became a member, and by the Friends World Committee for Consultation. Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting thus became part of an official Yearly Meeting and an integral part of the larger Society of Friends.

In 1965, expanding membership required that the entire Shady Avenue Meeting House be given over to First Day School on Sunday mornings. Meetings for worship were held in the boardroom of the nearby Home for Crippled Children on Denniston Avenue. An intensive search for larger

quarters in a more convenient location began, and in April 1966 the Meeting purchased The Greystone, a former residence at 4836 Ellsworth Avenue in Oakland.<sup>2</sup>

During the summer of 1966, Norman and Sally Dewees lived in the carriage house, so that Norman could coordinate the renovation of the main building. More than 60 volunteers contributed over 2300 hours of manual labor, which, together with the work of contractors, restored and adapted the building to the Meeting's needs. The adjacent house and lot were purchased; the house was torn down, and the land converted to the present parking lot, with a grassy area at the back. The foundation stones of the demolished house were used to form the low wall around the perimeter of the parking lot.

On Sunday, October 23, 1966, the first Meeting for Worship was held in the new Meeting House, with 126 adults and children present.

The carriage house on the grounds was remodeled to serve as a residence for the caretaker. Roy and Audrey Knestrick lived there with their young children and served briefly as the first caretakers. They were succeeded in 1967 by Willard and Gertrude Mead. Willard was a frequent spokesperson for the Meeting, and Gertrude played a major role in the First Day School until their full retirement in the early 1980s.

With the opening of the new Meeting House, the youth program of the American Friends Service Committee moved into the office quarters on the second floor and continued there until mid-1968. An AFSC Vietnam volunteer then used the office until October 1969. During this same period, a young attorney volunteer established a Wednesday evening draft counseling service in

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<sup>2</sup> The property on which the Meeting House stands was deeded in June 1883 by David Aiken, Jr., and his wife to Edmond M. Ferguson. In March of 1890 the Fergusons deeded it to Margaret Boyle. It is reported that a one-story frame house, the original 4836, was given to John D. Boyle as a wedding gift to his daughter Margaret. The frame house was razed, and the present three-story stone house was constructed, perhaps in 1902. It was leased from 1909 to 1914 by J. W. Friend, of the Pressed Steel Car Company, and was purchased in 1916 by William S. Stimmel. The Stimmels added on a picture gallery (now our meeting room) and a billiard room above. In 1936, when the house again changed hands, it was made into a boarding house and named The Greystone. The new owner, L. Louella Hogue (later, Mrs. Charles Cantrell), made the former art gallery into a dining room, the billiard room into four rooms and three baths, part of the basement into a kitchen, and the former kitchen and "pantry" into a bedroom, bathroom, and sitting room. Mrs. Cantrell extended the operation to four other houses: 4842 next door; two doubles – 4803-5 and 4811-15 across the street; a mansion (now gone) on Ellsworth Avenue across from Winchester-Thurston School; and an apartment in The Gable at 4800 Ellsworth. All of these were part of the Greystone Club, whose members, "slightly more than 100 guests," took breakfast in the Greystone dining room. This was a veritable home away from home, where, as a former resident wrote, "strangers could live in a congenial atmosphere and meet and make new friends with ease." A niece who inherited the house was ill for ten years; after her death, the house came on the market and the Meeting bought it. About 22 people were still living there, and a few meals were still being served. A serving table on a linoleum-covered portion of the floor beside the doors to the basement kitchen was a mute reminder of the hundreds of meals consumed there. The house had been sadly neglected as to cleaning and upkeep during the illness of the owner. Conditions for working in the basement kitchen were deplorable, with rat poison in every window recess and an ancient cast iron cooking stove on which to prepare meals. The rest of the basement was largely given over to a maze of storage sections for the residents. The custodian at the time of purchase was a man named George Fox.

the office, with active help from Willard Mead and Marian Hahn. Interested persons also used this office to coordinate various peace and civil rights activities.

In the fall of 1969, the Meeting authorized the establishment of a Friends Peace Center in the office area. Under the direction of a committee of the Meeting, staff was hired, and a wide variety of peace activities was initiated and coordinated in Pittsburgh.

Ten years later, the Center was laid down with some reluctance, because it was felt that it was too independent of the Meeting and that Meeting members were not sufficiently involved in its activities. Thereafter, the Meeting as a whole accepted the responsibility for peace work and social justice programs. Since 1983, the Peace and Social Concerns Committee of the Meeting has initiated and coordinated such activities.

In the mid-1980s, members of the Meeting were leaders in forming two active organizations for peace in the Pittsburgh area. While no longer in existence, the Middle East Forum provided speakers on problems of the Middle East and promoted dialogue between Jews and Arabs, while the Pittsburgh Peace Institute offered speakers and provided courses on conflict resolution and the theory and practical applications of nonviolence. The Meeting is an active member of the East End Cooperative Ministry<sup>3</sup> and of the Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network, and members of the Meeting have served on the boards of local organizations with peace-related concerns (Global Solutions Pittsburgh, the Thomas Merton Center, Peace Links, etc.). In 1987, the Meeting accepted the responsibility for disbursing funds bequeathed to it by Laura R. Paine for the purpose of “feeding hungry children,” and in 1988 adopted a plan that accomplished that end. Under the guidance of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee, new projects are now and then added to the list of programs undertaken by the Meeting.

Each year since the late 1950s, the Meeting has conducted a weekend Fall Gathering for its members and attenders. The program includes discussion groups, outdoor recreation, general socializing, and worship. Special programs are provided for children and young people.

From time to time, the Meeting has provided support and Clearness and Care to Western Pennsylvania groups interested in establishing a Friends Meeting. Such groups are commonly called “Preparative Meetings.” In the past, Preparative Meetings were established and then laid down, after a period of time, in Meadville, Slippery Rock, and Indiana, Pennsylvania. The Indiana Meeting, which was formed in 1986, continues as a worship group to this day.

In May 2017, the Meeting listed 128 adult members and 17 junior members. In addition, a considerable number of non-members in regular attendance were participating in the life of the Meeting. During 2016-2017, an average of 80 people attended Meeting for Worship. With regard to enrollment in First Day School 2017-2018, only 4 of the 17 children registered were junior members.

A major renovation of the Meetinghouse, which began in 1988, was essentially completed in 1990. This made the third floor available for use by a resident caretaker and overnight visitors,

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<sup>3</sup> The East End Cooperative Ministry consists of 35 congregations in the eastern section of the city.

provided an accessible restroom on the main floor, and remodeled the kitchen to support our hospitality.

In the mid-1990s, Friends had concerns over the financial and volunteer capability of our Meeting to physically maintain the Meetinghouse. A Long-Range Planning Committee, formed in 1996, was charged with preparing a detailed financial investigation of several Meetinghouse options, in the context of facilitating consideration of the spiritual, community, and witness needs of the Meeting. The committee began its work by listening to many members of our community through private interviews, followed by an opportunity to share in worship our hopes and needs for our Meeting, our community, and our building. The technical wing of the committee evaluated numerous possible financial scenarios for the Meetinghouse, including the possibility of selling the building and either renting or building a new Meetinghouse. In this spirit, the committee arranged a tour of 10 properties in the East End, located in Oakland, Point Breeze, East Liberty, Homewood, and Squirrel Hill, that could be used as a Meetinghouse. These properties, which ranged from small residential buildings to large churches and synagogues, offered different opportunities to shape our community and our work. With this information in mind, small discussion groups met over the summer to seek a common understanding of our worship, our Meetinghouse, and our stewardship. At the end of the process, Meeting joined in worship and united on the following minute:

*Thirty years ago, Pittsburgh Meeting committed to making the building at 4836 Ellsworth Avenue into a meetinghouse. Time has proven this to be a wise choice, as our meetinghouse has been a home for the meeting, providing a place for spiritual growth and a base for bearing witness to our Testimonies to the larger community.*

*Over the years, many members and attenders have dedicated their time, money and energy to supporting this property. Recently, we have questioned whether different use of our resources would be more appropriate, perhaps allowing the meeting to grow in different ways. Over the past two years, we have carefully considered our needs as individuals and as a community. We have also considered the needs of maintaining this property and our responsibilities in that regard. We have reached unity on this issue.*

*Pittsburgh Meeting reaffirms our current commitment to the meetinghouse at 4836 Ellsworth Avenue. Our stewardship of this property will reflect the commitment and dedication of our friends who have cared for the building in the past, and will attempt to provide for the needs of those who will use the building in the years to come. We seek to be guided by the Spirit in all decisions regarding this building and our future in the meetinghouse. This minute reflects our experience that the Spirit has moved us to growth in understanding who we are as a community. As our vision and understanding of our community evolve, we will respond to the leadings of the Spirit.*

— Minutes of Meeting for Business, December 13, 1998

Under the leadership of the House Committee, the Meeting worked to implement this commitment through a program of ongoing maintenance and upgrades to the building and property, including the establishment of a Major Projects Fund. By 2012, it became clear that major work was required if the Meetinghouse was to continue to serve our needs. Although the immediate concern was repairs to the walls in the Meeting Room, we acknowledged that our

building was not accessible to all members of our community and that it needed more than cosmetic repairs.

An ad hoc committee was charged with discerning a vision for the future of the Meetinghouse and defining a path forward to implementing that vision. The committee identified its task as building spiritual space and set forth under that name. Through community interviews, worship sharing, and a workshop, the committee developed a list of project requirements and the specific attributes that we wanted to provide for the Meeting Room. Cochran Associates, an architectural firm, was engaged to help with this process. The architect evaluated our space needs, exploring options ranging from additional ramps and walkways to improve accessibility, to constructing a new, expanded Meeting Room, to constructing an entirely new Meetinghouse on our current property. These options were shared with the Meeting community, and a clear preference was identified for one that included providing a new entrance to the building via an addition along the side by the parking lot, with level access to the current Meeting Room, combined with additional work to improve the lighting, energy efficiency, and acoustics of the room. While members of the Meeting expressed concern over the cost of the project and cautioned that the commitment of funds and resources to the building should not be at the expense of our work in and for the community, Meeting united in moving forward. The architect provided detailed plans, and a preliminary cost estimate was developed in partnership with a contractor, Bridges Inc. Based on this estimate, a financial plan was worked out and a capital campaign was conducted in early 2017. At the time of this writing, plans were being finalized and permits obtained, with the goal of breaking ground on the project in Spring 2018.

## CLERKS OF PITTSBURGH MEETING

On December 14, 1940, Winthrop Leeds was appointed to serve as Clerk of the Pittsburgh Friends Meeting for the following year. Term of service: January through December.

1941-48	Winthrop Leeds
1949-50	Richard H. McCoy
1951-52	Willard E. Mead
1953-54	William P. Taber
1955	Robert A. Clark
1956-58	Florence Shute
1959 to May 31, 1960	Robert M. Morgan

In 1960 the term of service changed. From then on, the new Clerk began service on the second Sunday in May and conducted the June Monthly Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.

1960-62	Sally R. Dewees
1962-64	Edward M. Arnett
1964-65	Willard Mead
1965-66	Stanley C. Marshall
1966-68	Samuel P. Hays

1968-70	Sylvia Gatwood
1970-72	Norman B. Dewees
1972-73	David R. Morrison
1973-75	Samuel Prellwitz
1975-77	Dorothy D. Bower
1977-79	Brigitte G. Alexander
1979-80	Edward M. Arnett
1980-81	Owen Richmond and Scilla Wahrhaftig
1981-82	Owen Richmond and Sue Beal
1982-84	Joseph Guthrie
1984-86	James C. Kuhn III
1986-88	Dolores E. Avner
1988-Oct.'89	Mahlon Fuller
Nov.'89-92	Linda Schoyer
1992-94	Rosemary K. Coffey
1994-96	Wallace Cayard
1996-98	Liane Norman
1998-2000	Dale Keairns
2000-02	Darryl Phillips
2002-04	Debby Hollingshead
2004-05	Zigmund Dermer
2005-Dec.'05	Zigmund Dermer and Dolores Avner
Jan.'06-'07	Dolores Avner and Nancy E. James

As indicated above, since the end of 2005 the Meeting has had Co-Clerks. There is also an Assistant Clerk, who moves up to the position of Co-Clerk after one year, as the senior Clerk rotates off. This rotation provides experience and support for incoming clerks.

2007-08	Nancy E. James and Valerie Vogel
2008-09	Valerie Vogel and Elise Yoder
2009-10	Elise Yoder and Jon Webb
2010-11	Jon Webb and Ian Samways
2011-12	Ian Samways and Chris Hollingshead
2012-13	Chris Hollingshead and Mary King
2013-14	Mary King and Jo Schlesinger
2014-15	Jo Schlesinger and Von Keairns
2015-16	Von Keairns and Mary Parish
2016-17	Mary Parish and Gina Godfrey
2017-18	Gina Godfrey and Kathie Hollingshead
2018-19	Kathie Hollingshead and Susan Loucks

## THE RELATIONSHIP OF PITTSBURGH MEETING TO OTHER FRIENDS AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS<sup>4</sup>

Pittsburgh Friends Meeting, like most other Quaker Meetings, meets once a month to conduct its business and is therefore called a Monthly Meeting. Monthly Meetings are the basic unit of organization in the Society of Friends; one becomes a Friend by joining a Monthly Meeting. A group of local Meetings in a geographical area may form what is called a Yearly Meeting, since it meets once a year. In some areas, Monthly Meetings form Quarterly Meetings, which are part of the Yearly Meeting. Yearly Meetings may serve to focus on projects too large for Monthly or Quarterly Meetings to undertake.

Eighteen Monthly Meetings in Ohio, Michigan, and Western Pennsylvania, of which Pittsburgh Friends Meeting is the largest, constitute Lake Erie Yearly Meeting (LEYM). Most LEYM Meetings are near college campuses and draw attenders from the academic community. Their membership, made up of Friends from a variety of backgrounds, finds in the shared worship and the outreach on social concerns an answer to its religious and ethical strivings and thus in the Society of Friends a home with kindred spirits.

Fifteen Yearly Meetings, including LEYM, and twelve individual Monthly Meetings in North America make up Friends General Conference (FGC). FGC has annual gatherings to which all Friends are invited for worship, study, fellowship, and the sharing of concerns. Through its staff and volunteers, FGC offers to its constituent member Meetings spiritual nurture and a variety of resources.

In their Faith and Practice, most Yearly Meetings of Friends General Conference recognize Quakerism, both historically and in its present form, as Christian. Many members of Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting, although not all, call themselves Christian, a designation with a variety of meanings. The wide range of religious viewpoints in the Meeting offers many paths to Truth. We learn from one another and can grow in the depth and clarity of our beliefs. We experience unity in our openness to the Inner Light and in our work for peace and justice.

There are five groups of Yearly Meetings in the United States: (1) Friends General Conference (FGC); (2) Friends United Meeting (FUM); (3) Evangelical Friends Church International (EFCI); (4) Conservative Friends; and (5) unaffiliated Meetings.

In general terms, EFCI, FUM, and FGC each account for nearly one-third of US Friends. With member groups in the Eastern Region, Middle America, and the Southwest, EFCI consists exclusively of pastoral churches. FUM, which is 80% pastoral, is moderate in theology. Friends General Conference is the most liberal; it consists predominantly of unprogrammed Meetings primarily on the East Coast and in the Midwest. Conservative Friends, representing 2% nationwide, are situated in Ohio, Iowa, and North Carolina; their unprogrammed meetings are largely based on biblical texts. And then there are the Holiness Friends, collected in one YM in

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<sup>4</sup> The main sources for this section are various websites, especially that of the Friends World Committee for Consultation.

the US, with links to some groups in Bolivia. There are a few remaining Yearly Meetings, such as Pacific Yearly Meeting, that are not connected to any of the five national groupings described above, although many of them are affiliated with the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) – Section of the Americas. In 2017, these five groups of Friends in the United States had about 80,092 members.

In 2012 there were more than 377,000 Friends across the world, in about fifty countries. The largest concentrations were in Kenya, the US, Bolivia, Guatemala, Britain, and Burundi. About eighty percent of the Friends outside the United States belong to pastoral Meetings or churches. African Yearly Meetings, which are mostly pastoral, account for 52% of Friends worldwide. Meetings in Europe and the Middle East, comprising about 7% of the world total, are unprogrammed; most are in Britain Yearly Meeting. The Asia-West Pacific Section has 6% of the total, while the Section of the Americas covers 35%, with Friends in the U.S., Canada, and Latin America. About 20% of the world total, in 34 Yearly Meetings or other groups, is in North America, with another 15% in the Caribbean and Latin America, most of them in Bolivia.

Since 1920, Friends from different countries have been meeting together periodically in Friends World Conferences; as of 1938, Friends World Committee for Consultation met triennially until about 2010. Now such World Conferences may be held only once every 7-10 years. The Section of the Americas, which used to meet every year, is now meeting only every second year. Over time, Friends in greater variety are attending these international gatherings for fellowship and spiritual nourishment, emphasizing their common beliefs and concerns while respecting their differences.

Friends work with other religious groups both in the United States and worldwide. In their concern for peace, American Friends of the different branches have been cooperating increasingly with the Mennonites and the Brethren, two other historic peace churches. This cooperative relationship resulted in the formation in 1978 of the New Call for Peacemaking, now known as Every Church a Peace Church. The peace churches have helped to influence many Catholics and mainline Protestants to be more active in peace work. At present, the official statements of a number of Protestant denominations concerning peace and justice are similar to those of Quaker organizations. Friends General Conference and Friends United Meeting are related to Christianity worldwide through their membership in the World Council of Churches. In this body, they help to spread the dual message of openness to the Inner Light and the need to work for peace and justice in the world.

## THE QUAKER FAITH

At the core of the religious beliefs of Friends is faith in the Inner Light, known over the years by many different names, all suggesting there is "that of God" in every person. George Fox found in the Inner Light the guidance he needed without aid from any religious institution or any individual. He declared that the Spirit was at work not only in Christians but also in Native Americans, Muslims, and others.



Like Fox, the large majority of Friends today consider themselves Christians. Most hold that the Inner Light was supremely manifested in the life and teachings of Jesus. Universalist Friends, who may also call themselves Christians, hold that, while the Inner Light was revealed in Jesus, it is also revealed in spiritual leaders of non-Christian religions. In Friends' experience, the Inner Light is the primary source of religious and moral truth. The God-given Light is to be distinguished from secondary sources of truth such as the Bible, conscience, and reason. One can best read and understand the Bible by being open to the Light, which was experienced by its most sensitive writers. Conscience, which is socially formed, is illumined and transformed by the Inner Light. Reason has to be consistent with the Inner Light. These secondary sources grow out of and can be corrected by the experience of the Inner Light.

Friends are aware of the need to be clear that the light they are following is indeed divinely inspired. The source of a person's inspiration is tested in group worship, wherein all seek divine guidance together, open to each other's insights. If one individual's leading runs counter to that of others, there may be a need for further seeking.

This seeking is another of the mainstays of the Quaker faith. Friends have differed from other religious groups in their belief that Divine Truth is still being revealed. They believe that there is a process of continuing revelation, open to all seekers who sincerely try to understand God's will; the Inner Light continues to illuminate the world as much today as at any other time in history.

The belief in continuing revelation is intimately related to the faith generally held by Friends in the unlimited possibilities of spiritual and ethical growth. This emphasis on the potential of all people contrasts with the view that human beings are inherently sinful. When people steadfastly hold themselves open to the Light, they can grow in understanding, and their care for others can become more responsive.

George Fox lived and taught the necessity of the unity of faith and practice so "that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone." The Quaker faith in that of God in everyone is not mere belief but a way of life. All persons are to be treated with respect and without violence and given equal opportunity to live their lives fully. Thus, there is a unity of faith and practice: we show our faith as we treat all people as children of God.

## MEETING FOR WORSHIP

Early Friends gathered in silent "waiting upon the Lord," without a formal program. Each worshiper was free, then as now, to offer vocal ministry as the Spirit moved. This freedom imposes perhaps greater restraint and more responsibility on each of us than would any formal rule. Before speaking, we must consider whether the Light given to us is a message to be shared with others here and now or is only for ourselves. Equally, we must consider whether the message that has come to us is one we must deliver despite our great reluctance to speak. Whether we speak or worship in silence, we minister to one another in the depth of our devotion.

Our unprogrammed, nonpastoral Meeting has no appointed minister or formal order of worship with hymns and readings, for words with deep meaning often cannot be sincerely repeated by everyone present at a given time. Neither do we observe outward sacraments of baptism or communion, nor use traditional symbols, which might be valued for themselves rather than for the thought they represent.

When we come to Meeting for Worship, we quietly enter the meeting room, seat ourselves, and endeavor to remove from conscious attention any physical discomfort or mental distraction. Gathered together in expectant silence, we "center down," seeking inward quietness and guidance through prayer and reflection, or in other ways opening our deeper selves to the Spirit of God.

The silence is of value in itself and may on occasion unite the worshipers in a strong spiritual bond. In our Meetings for Worship, however, after the silence has deepened, a worshiper, moved by a clear sense of urgency, may rise to share a message. The silence returns so that the message may be reflected on and the spirit of reverence preserved. After several minutes have passed, another person may also be moved to speak, and so on. Often each speaker enlarges upon or makes applications of the first thought. In a truly "gathered" meeting there is a sense of being drawn together in a profound and loving unity of mind and spirit. This may happen although not a word is said.

The Clerk or another designated person closes meeting by exchanging a friendly handshake with a neighbor, and everyone follows suit.

## THE TESTIMONIES

The testimonies tell us how Friends have responded to the Light in various aspects of our lives. The conviction that God can and does speak to all human conditions, enabling, directing, and working through us, is at the center of Quaker faith and practice. The Divine Spirit, which Friends variously call the Inner Light, Truth, or the Christ within, reveals and overcomes evil and enables us to follow God's will. The testimonies arise from Friends' common experience in listening to and obeying the Spirit.

### Love and Community

Insofar as we are guided by the Spirit of Love, we will strive for harmonious relationships. We believe that actions based on love are grounded in the real nature of God. We seek a unity, which is not an identity of views or uniformity of practice, but a unity of spirit founded in the common search for truth. The degree of such unity within a Meeting is an important measure of its spiritual health.

As individuals, we try to develop love in ourselves and to live according to it. As a group, we endeavor to conduct our Meetings for Business and our Meetings for Worship in this same spirit, while facing with honesty the real differences among us that may require tenderness and forbearance.

### Simplicity and Honesty

To Friends, simplicity historically meant the avoidance of extravagance, ostentation, and frivolous distractions, with considerable emphasis on simplicity in dress, speech, and behavior. Today, as in the past, we seek to express sincerity, genuineness, and simplicity in our manner of life. Although we are complex people living in a fast-moving and complicated world, we strive to live with integrity and serenity. Honesty means the statement of truth without affectation, equivocation, or needless embellishments. To witness to the standard of speaking the truth at all times, and not merely under legal compulsion, we continue the historic testimony against judicial oaths. This stand against oath taking led to the inclusion of the option of “affirmation” in American federal and state constitutions.

### Moderation

Friends seek wholeness of body and mind rather than forbidding specific activities. We recognize that such wholeness is threatened by excess of any kind, whether over-indulgence or overwork. We value moderation in order to keep the mind, body, and spirit ready to respond to the Light Within. We are mindful of the possibility of harmful effects on ourselves and those around us brought about by the use of addictive substances such as tobacco, alcohol, and other mind- or mood-altering drugs.

### Peace

From the earliest days, the peace testimony has been a significant and distinguishing aspect of the Society of Friends. This testimony grows out of the fundamental belief in that of God in every person. We violate the Divine in both ourselves and the victim when we kill a human being. Not only is war an evil, it violates the sacredness of human personality and tends to foster more violence and injustice in the world.

Quakers not only oppose war as a means of settling international disputes, but actively support positive and practical ways of achieving peace and justice. The American Friends Service Committee and the Friends Committee on National Legislation were founded to provide Friends with organized means of working toward the achievement of justice and the removal of some of the causes of war. For Quakers, "Peace is the Way." Thus, we are led to promote peace education and research, to study nonviolent methods of conflict resolution, to foster international exchanges, and to encourage the development and recognition of world law.

Throughout our history, young men of the Society of Friends have refused military training or service. Some have resisted any cooperation with the Selective Service System and have been sent to prison for their stand. Others have performed alternative service as conscientious objectors, while still others have served in the armed forces as noncombatants or even as combatants. Nevertheless, the peace testimony remains firmly established as the Quaker ideal. We hold in love and respect each member of our Society who follows where conscience leads.

### Equality and Social Justice

The principle of human equality before God is a cornerstone of Friends' beliefs. Friends pioneered in recognizing the gifts and rights of women; women were members and leaders of the

early Meetings and were listened to and respected. Although Friends came slowly to recognize the evils of slavery and discrimination, they have led in efforts to overcome these evils. Our activities for social justice reflect our growing understanding that equity requires that the exploited attain independence and control of their own lives.

## THE ADVICES

*Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all, with the measure of Light which is pure and holy, may be guided; and so in the Light walking and abiding, these may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.*

— *Postscript to an epistle to “the brethren in the north” issued by a meeting of elders at Balby in England, 1656*

Advices first appeared in the form of epistles sent among Friends to encourage and strengthen each other in their faith. A portion of the earliest surviving epistle is quoted above.

The first “general advices” were adopted for consideration by Monthly and Quarterly Meetings when the Queries were revised by London Yearly Meeting in 1791. Today’s Advices and Queries arise from the experience and aspirations of successive generations of Friends. They remind us of how we should seek to express our faith in all aspects of life.

Friends find their essential unity in the deep belief in the pervasive presence of God and in the continuing responsibility of each person and worshiping group to seek the leading of the Spirit in all things. Obedience to that Spirit rather than to any written statement or belief is the obligation of our faith. The Advices should have a quickening influence in shaping our daily lives and provide guidelines for examining our conduct.

The Advices that follow retain some of the expressive language of traditional Quaker writing.

### Spirituality

Heed the promptings of love and truth in your hearts, which are divine leadings. Do not resist these strivings within you, for they are the Light that shows your inner darkness and empowers you to live aright. Set aside time daily for study, meditation, prayer, and other ways of deepening your spiritual life. Bring the whole of your life under the healing and ordering of the Spirit.

### Unity

Seek to live in affection as true Friends in your Meeting, in your family, in all dealings with others, and in your relationship with the larger society. Maintain love and unity. Avoid tale bearing and detraction. Settle differences promptly, in a spirit free from resentment and all forms of inward violence. Visit one another. Share with sympathy and understanding the joys and sorrows of each other's lives. Be ready both to give help and to receive it. Bear the burdens of one another's failings; share the buoyancy of one another's strengths.

## Meeting for Worship

*None that is upon the earth shall ever come to God but as they come to that of God in them – the Light that God has enlightened them with. The Spirit leads (us) to wait upon God in silence, and to receive from God.*

— George Fox

As we gather for worship, open yourself and your concerns to God's guidance, that our hearts may be joined together in love.

Remember that to everyone is given a share of responsibility for the Meeting for Worship, whether in silence or through the spoken word. Do not assume that vocal ministry is or is not to be your part. Be sure of your guidance so that your ministry may arise from deep experience or concern and you may speak only the necessary words. Faithfulness and sincerity in speaking, even briefly, may open the way to ministry from others. Wait to be sure of the right moment for giving the message. Beware of unnecessarily adding to a previous message when it was well said before. Different ways of understanding the Divine Light may occur among us. These differences should be recognized and understood so that a deeper and more vital unity can be reached. Keep faith and friendship with each other, waiting in the Light for that unity that draws us together in the divine love and power.

## Equality

Friends are reminded that it is the experience and testimony of our Society that distinctions between persons, for any reason, such as gender, race, or wealth, do not elect some to domination. Live in love and learn from one another. Family life in which husband and wife or parents and children strive to assert supremacy is incompatible with the conviction that there is that of God in everyone. Amid the growing distempers of social existence, Friends are urged to maintain our witness of truth, simplicity, and nonviolence, and to test our personal lives by them. In witnessing to the Inner Light, guard against religious intolerance. Strengthen a sense of all people as sisters and brothers, and make service, not self-promotion, the chief aim of our outward lives as Friends, as employees or employers, and as citizens.

Let the sense of universal equality and friendship inspire us to unceasing efforts toward a social order free of violence and oppression in which people are not hindered in their development by meager income, limited education, or too little freedom in directing their own affairs.

## Simplicity and Moderation

Observe simplicity and moderation in your life, in your activities, and in your possessions. True simplicity does not consist in particular forms or the absence of grace and beauty, but in attending to the essentials, avoiding overindulgence, maintaining humility of spirit, and keeping material possessions in proportion to human needs. To accomplish this, avoid self-indulgent or wasteful habits and luxurious living. Speak truth without either exaggeration or the omission of essential facts.

Shun gambling, the use of intoxicants and mind-changing drugs, and other detrimental practices. They deaden the individual to spiritual values and have effects that also harm the family and the community.

## Stewardship

Use your capabilities and your possessions not as ends in themselves but as God's gifts temporarily entrusted to you. Share them with others; use them with humility, courtesy, and affection. Guard against contentiousness and love of power; be alert to the personalities and the needs of others. Show loving consideration for all creatures, and preserve the beauty and wonder of God's creation for future generations. Attend to pure wisdom and be teachable. Use your income and inheritance in accord with our testimony of simplicity, for maintaining your family and dependents, for the education of your children, and for meeting the human needs of the wider community. Be aware, in the enjoyment of amenities that you take for granted, that many people whose income is limited may be deprived, with their children, of life's necessities. Remember, and serve, the homeless and the hungry. Consider the effect of your charitable gifts, your investments, and all your major expenditures in the light of our concern for the right sharing and use of the world's resources. Remember too that right sharing includes future generations.

## Peace

Be faithful in maintaining our testimony against all war and other forms of violence as contrary to the spirit and teaching of Jesus. Every human being is a child of God with a measure of God's Light. War and other instruments of violence and oppression ignore this reality and violate our relationship with God. Keep primary our concern for the elimination of combat in the outward world as in our personal lives. Strive to live in the strength of that Life and Power that takes away the occasion of all wars. Aid in all ways possible the development of a just order and understanding in your community and in the world.

## Social Justice

Do not only minister to those in need, but seek to know the facts of social and economic ills so as to work for the removal of those ills. Let the Quaker testimony of that of God in everyone lead us to cherish every human being regardless of the ways in which we may be different. Encourage all efforts to eliminate injustices and antagonisms. Try to identify and overcome all forms of prejudice in ourselves.

## Civic Responsibility

Friends believe that the aim of government should be to promote a community in which justice, peace, good order, individual development, and education are possible. Accept your responsibility as citizens of the community and the nation. Quakerism is not intended to be a refuge from the disturbing events of our times but rather a source of strength and support in facing them.

Consider with care your responsibility in influencing legislation and educating others on public issues. Be ready to work with like-minded people in other congregations and in the community to bring about desirable ends through the institutions of society.

## Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business

Be faithful in attending business meetings and in participating in the Meeting's business affairs. Find a seat promptly and try to achieve quietness of mind and spirit. Avoid conversations just as the meeting is about to begin. In all meetings, be willing to wait as long as may be necessary for the emergence of a decision that clearly recommends itself as the right one. Differences should not be ignored for the sake of a superficial agreement, but recognized and understood so that a deeper and more vital unity can be reached.

The right conduct of our Meeting for Business requires us to come in an active, seeking spirit, rather than with minds already made up on a particular course of action, determined to push this through at all costs. But open minds are not empty minds, nor uncritically receptive: the service of the Meeting calls for knowledge of facts, often painstakingly acquired, and the ability to assess their relevance and importance. This demands that we be ready to listen to others carefully, without antagonism if they express opinions unpleasing to us, trying always to discern the truth in what they have to offer.

Remember the task laid upon the Clerk, and try to be helpful. Give the Clerk information about matters to come before the meeting in good time, preferably in writing. If you speak, do so simply and audibly. Do not address another Friend across the room, but speak to the Meeting as a whole. Except in very small Meetings, speak while standing. Do not repeat views that you have already expressed. Be certain of your facts, and avoid stating as facts things that are matters of opinion. Value the Meeting as a social occasion, promoting the spirit of friendship.

## THE QUERIES

*“Which Friends in service to the Society departed this life since the last Yearly Meeting?”*

*“Which Friends, imprisoned on account of their testimony, died in prison since the last Yearly Meeting?”*

*“How among Friends did Truth advance since last Yearly Meeting, & how do Friends fare in peace and unity?”*

These three questions (or Queries) were used by London Yearly Meeting in 1682 to ascertain the state of the Society only a few years after its founding. In the early 1700s, the questions, which previously sought only factual information, began to concern personal conduct as well. After 1760, the purpose of the Queries became principally disciplinary, with disownment the ultimate sanction. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, their purpose shifted more to personal devotional uses. Changes of subject and emphasis have occurred with changing times. Today the Queries provide a challenge and an inspiration to Friends in our personal lives and in our life as a Meeting community.

Most of the Monthly Meetings in Lake Erie Yearly Meeting use the Queries listed in the *Faith and Practice* of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. In the past, LEYM used to request annually a

carefully considered response to one of the Philadelphia Queries. It now uses its own Queries, agreed upon by its Ministry and Nurture Committee, for this purpose. It also requests a report from each member Meeting on the state of the Meeting. Pittsburgh has had its own Queries since 1949. Each Sunday at the close of the Meeting for Worship, the Queries for the month are read aloud.

#### Queries for January: Justice and Equality

Do we answer that of God in every person?

Do we look for opportunities to establish personal and professional relationships with people of different class, race, gender, age, or sexual orientation? Do we avoid stereotyping people?

In what ways do we work to change our society so that it provides equal opportunities for everyone?

What are we doing to remove the institutional causes of suffering and want? Do we help to care for those in need?

Are we working to end the death penalty?

What are we doing to humanize the treatment and care of people in institutions?

#### Queries for February: Simplicity and Moderation

Is our commitment to simplicity and moderation reflected in our daily lives?

Are we careful in our use of time and energy? Do we incorporate opportunities for spiritual growth and service into our daily life? Do we avoid wasteful consumption and undue attachment to possessions? Does our recreation reflect moderation, and does it strengthen body, mind, and spirit? Do we avoid harmful practices and substances?

Do we practice simplicity in our manner of living, avoiding waste and ostentation? Does our commitment to simplicity bring beauty and harmony to our surroundings?

#### Queries for March: Stewardship

Do we revere life and the splendor of the universe and act as stewards of God's continuing creation?

What are we doing to conserve natural resources and use them wisely?

Are we sensitive to the effect of our actions on future generations? How can we best preserve an environment in which diverse species can flourish?

Are we exercising stewardship of our financial resources so that we can share with others?

Are we taking good care of Meeting property for ourselves and those who will come after us? How do we use Meeting property to witness to our testimonies?

#### Queries for April: Caring

Do we care for those around us?



How do we show respect and consideration for all people, including those with whom we differ?

When contentions arise, what steps do we take to address them speedily and in a spirit of love and respect? Do we avoid bearing grudges?

Are we faithful in keeping promises and just and honorable in all our dealings?

As individuals or as a Meeting, are we supportive of those who are experiencing major changes in their lives?

In our close relationships, do we assume our share of responsibility for our own and each other's welfare? Are we sensitive to the needs of the individuals affected by the relationship?

#### Queries for May: Participation in Meeting

Do we participate as fully as we can in the Meeting community and accept our share of responsibility for carrying out its work?

Do we widen our circle of friendship within the Meeting and welcome newcomers?

How do we provide for family participation in Meeting activities?

How do we order our time before Meeting for Worship so that we can come prepared with hearts and minds in a spirit of true devotion and living expectancy?

Are Meetings for Business held in expectant waiting for the guidance of the Light? Do we seek the appropriate course of action in a spirit of love, understanding, and forbearance?

#### Queries for June: Spirituality

Do we seek to keep ourselves sensitive and responsive to the Inner Light and to live according to its promptings?

How does our religion find expression in daily life?

Do we respond to that of God in those with whom we differ?

What are we doing to develop our own spiritual gifts and those of our fellow worshipers?

Does our vocal ministry arise from a clear spiritual leading? Do we encourage mutual respect for varying expressions of religious belief among fellow Quakers?

#### Queries for July: Unity in Meeting

Do we seek to nurture a spirit of unity in our Meeting?

If a problem or conflict arises within the Meeting, do we make timely efforts to address the issue in a spirit of love and humility? As we seek unity, do we listen to one another carefully and with openness to Truth?

Are we able to express our views honestly and with respect for those who differ with us? Are we prepared to set aside our individual desires or opinions in order to reach unity in the divine Light?

Are we willing to wait patiently for divine guidance rather than be hurried by the passing of time?

When the Meeting has made a decision, do we continue to care for and respect one another, regardless of our differing personal views?

#### Queries for August: Vocations

Do we perform our work guided by the Light within?

In following our vocations do we contribute to the well-being of the larger community? Does our work reflect Friends' testimonies of honesty, equality, peace, and simplicity?

Do we conduct our business affairs so that all parties are treated fairly?

Do we have respect for all honest work, paid or unpaid, whether at home or in the community?

Are we open to helping individuals who are making vocational decisions?

#### Queries for September: Children

Do we respect the dignity of our children?

Are we helping our children to recognize and respond to the Light in themselves and others?

How do our lives exemplify peace and caring? Do we encourage children to live simply, non-violently, and with a concern for others, despite temptations from peers, the media, and society?

Do we listen to our children so that they learn to value their inner life and strength? Do we continue to love and support them when their actions hurt or grieve us?

Are we involved in the support, care, and religious education of the Meeting's children? In the First Day School, are we teaching them about the history and practices of Friends and the application of Friends' beliefs to everyday life? Do we teach them about the Bible and about other faiths?

What are we doing to improve the quality of education in the public schools? In what ways are we seeking to meet other needs of children in our communities?

#### Queries for October: Home Life

Do we endeavor to make home a place of friendship, peace, love, and refreshment of the spirit?

How do we use our shared time to nurture that of God in each of us?

In what ways do we make our homes places of spiritual and religious growth?

Do we share our religious insights with those we love?

Do we respect the needs for intimacy or separateness of those with whom we live?

#### Queries for November: Nonviolence

Are we working to increase our understanding and use of nonviolent action?

How well do we apply nonviolence to the settlement of disputes? What are we doing to encourage the use of nonviolent means to settle national and international differences?

Are we learning to channel our anger, fear, and frustration in healthy, creative, and peaceable ways?

Do we teach our children how to meet aggression creatively and without violence?

In our commitment to nonviolence, are we sensitive to the differing claims of the sanctity of life and the quality of life in situations such as unwanted pregnancy or the artificial prolongation of life?

#### Queries for December: Peace

Do we live in the strength of that Life and Power which takes away the occasion for all war?

What are we doing to remove the causes of war? Where there is hatred, division, or strife, how are we instruments of reconciliation? Where there is oppression, how are we instruments of justice?

How do we communicate to others the basis of our peace testimony? Do we join with them in working for peace?

Are we ready to stand by our peace testimony when it conflicts with the opinions of others or with established public policy?

How do we reconcile our peace testimony with the payment of taxes that support war? What are we doing to encourage consideration of alternatives to military service?

## PART II – ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURES

Friends endeavor to carry out their commitment to follow the Light by making the Meeting organization and procedures a part of their spiritual life. Accordingly, Meetings for Business as well as committee meetings are held in a spirit of worship.

Part II describes how Pittsburgh Friends Meeting conducts its affairs at the present time. Organization and procedures may change in response to new circumstances, but at all times they reflect Quaker principles.

### THE CORPORATION AND THE ANNUAL MEETING

The Pittsburgh Friends Meeting is a corporation as well as a religious society.

As a corporation, the Meeting is known as the Religious Society of Friends of Pittsburgh, a Pennsylvania non-profit corporation recognized as exempt from federal taxation under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The corporate form is required by state law for the ownership of real estate and is practical both for receiving donations that are tax deductible to the donor and for the limited liability which corporations enjoy. Monthly Meeting for Business and the Meeting's activities are also acts of the corporation, even though the officers of the corporation are not necessarily the officers of the Monthly Meeting.

The annual meeting in May closes the organizational year of both the Religious Society and the corporation. At some point during the May business meeting, the corporation holds its annual meeting to nominate and elect its officers and to transact any business that may require corporate action. The officers are President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Vice President for

Maintenance. The Treasurer of the Religious Society also serves as the Treasurer of the corporation. The convener of the House Committee is usually the Vice President for Maintenance.

As a religious society, the annual Meeting for Business in May receives written reports from committee conveners for the previous year. The Clerk may summarize the year in retrospect. The Nominating Committee then presents for Meeting action its recommendations for officers, committee members, and conveners. The new term for officers and committees begins at the rise of the May Meeting for Business.

The fiscal year ends on August 31. The budget proposed for the coming year is presented by the Finance Committee for action at the September Meeting for Business.

## MONTHLY MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS

Once each month, the Meeting gathers to carry on its business. The officers and committees derive their authority from and report to this Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. It makes all program and administrative decisions, usually upon recommendation from one or more committees of the Meeting. The program decisions include responding to new concerns of individuals or committees, as well as continuing the established activities of the Meeting. Administrative decisions include receiving and transferring members; managing the Meeting House and other property of the Meeting; and adopting an annual budget. Careful records are kept of all proceedings.

Like the Meeting for Worship, the monthly Meeting for Business is based on reliance on the Inner Light and on the experience of Friends that unity can be reached by a group seeking to know the Divine will. The meeting begins and ends with a period of silent worship and is conducted in a worshipful spirit. The Clerk presides, having been informed, before planning the agenda, of the matters that committees or individuals intend to present for Meeting action. It is helpful for a committee to submit in writing a proposed minute about any matter on which it seeks approval. Members endeavor to attend Meeting for Business so that the actions taken reflect the judgment of the entire community. All persons present are participants in the decision-making process; the legal responsibility for decisions rests with members of the Meeting.

Friends are expected to come to Meeting for Business with minds open to the leading of the Spirit. It is important that all persons be heard if they feel concerned to express an opinion. They address the Clerk when recognized, and speak briefly and to the point, presenting their own views, although, if someone else has already stated their position satisfactorily, they need only offer a word or two of agreement. They hesitate to speak more than once on a subject unless they have new light on it. Although they may disagree, Friends avoid refuting statements made by others, and give each other credit for purity of motive. At any time during the meeting, anyone may request a period of silence. In the silence differences may be reconciled and a better course of action brought forward than had appeared before. As consideration of each matter approaches

unity, the Clerk formulates what seems to be "the sense of the Meeting." Agreement generally expressed, or an absence of disagreement, is recorded in the minutes as the decision of the Meeting. In complicated or delicate matters, a minute is carefully written and read aloud for the Meeting to approve or alter. It must always be remembered that the final decision as to whether the minute represents the sense of the Meeting is the responsibility of the Meeting, not of the Clerk. If it becomes apparent that general agreement cannot be reached, the matter is set aside for the time being or is referred to a committee for further study.

The unity that Friends seek in making decisions is a unity of spirit and will that draws them together, although there may not be unanimity of opinion. This means that the Meeting must find its way in love and understanding, listening to one another carefully and with respect. A decision arrived at by this process may not be fully satisfactory, but it may be the best that can be made at the particular time on the particular subject.

Occasionally, one or more Friends may object to the Meeting's proposed decision in a matter on which other Friends agree. In such a situation, the opposing Friends have a choice of what to do. They may simply remain silent and permit the matter to go forward. They may say that they do not agree with the proposed decision but will not stand in the way. In a stronger stand, they may request that their names be minuted as opposed, although they will not stand in the way. If they find those choices contrary to their principles or to their spiritual leadings, they may say that they are unable to unite with the proposal, and the Meeting may defer action until clearness is reached.

Friends' procedure for finding unity requires time for deliberate consideration, and change is often slow. However, sound procedure in the Light ensures that, when action is taken, it has the understanding of all.

## MEMBERSHIP

### Admission to Membership

Pittsburgh Friends Meeting welcomes into membership all who are in substantial unity with its testimonies and practices and find themselves strengthened by the Meeting for Worship. Membership involves accepting one's appropriate share of responsibility for the spiritual life and practical affairs of the Meeting, including care of the buildings and grounds, and financial support. Regular attenders who are clear about their commitment to the Meeting and its significance in their lives are encouraged to consider becoming members.

The period of acquaintance with the Meeting before requesting membership is usually at least one year or longer. Newer attenders who express an interest in the Meeting should be encouraged to read the writings of Friends and to become familiar with the activities and concerns of Friends generally, through reading Friends' periodicals and attending conferences and sessions of the Yearly Meeting. They are advised to attend our Meeting for Worship and monthly Meeting for Business regularly in order to deepen their understanding of the Society of Friends. Study of the

Testimonies, Advices, and Queries will help them to know whether they feel truly in harmony with the spirit of Quakerism.

One becomes a member of the Society of Friends by joining a particular local Meeting. Therefore, persons considering membership in Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting should be especially familiar with its aspirations and concerns and be willing to share in its responsibilities, challenges, and joys. They should be familiar with this *Faith and Practice* and feel free to discuss its content with members. Membership in Pittsburgh Friends Meeting includes membership in Lake Erie Yearly Meeting and Friends General Conference.

When inquirers are clear as to their desire, they write to the Clerk requesting membership. The Clerk promptly acknowledges the request and forwards it to the Clearness and Care Committee. This committee selects a committee of three or four members of the Meeting, including at least one from the Clearness and Care Committee, to meet with the applicant, and reports their names to Meeting for Business, to be included in the Minutes. This clearness committee for membership becomes acquainted with the applicant; they explore together the responsibilities and implications of membership, and the committee reports its recommendation to the Clearness and Care Committee within an appropriate length of time. That committee, after deliberation, makes a recommendation to Meeting for Business. The Meeting acts on the recommendation, and the Clerk sends a letter notifying the applicant of the result. If the application is approved, the Recorder contacts the new member to solicit information needed for the Meeting's official records.

The membership committee should make certain that the applicant understands this procedure. If the committee feels that the applicant is not ready for membership, it may suggest a delay during which he or she may become better acquainted with Quakerism and Pittsburgh Meeting. Sometimes it may become clear to the applicant or the committee that membership is not advisable, and the application is not carried forward.

The membership committee should make sure that the applicant has no commitment to other Meetings (unless dual membership will be agreed upon) or to other religious groups. For 79 years, attenders who wished to retain membership in another group but at the same time to express their unity with the Society of Friends were able to become members of the Wider Quaker Fellowship; however, in 2015 this program came to an end. It is still possible to access the organization's library of pamphlets online at "[VoicesOfFriends.org](http://VoicesOfFriends.org)". In addition, the Friends World Committee for Consultation continues to maintain a directory of Friends Meetings and churches as part of its continuing mission to bring together Friends of varying traditions and cultural experiences.

Applicants should understand Friends' emphasis on personal experience rather than formal creed. The committee may want to discuss with prospective members what their experience of God or of the Inward Light means to them.

The committee makes clear that, although there are no creedal requirements for membership, Friends emphasize the responsibility of striving to live out our Quaker beliefs and testimonies.

Applicants should feel free to discuss any difficulty they foresee in acting in accordance with the testimonies; they should understand that, when the Meeting seeks unity in action based on the testimonies and interpreted under the guidance of the Inner Light, it is following a basic principle of Quakerism.

The committee may wish to inquire what led the applicant to seek membership in the Meeting and to explore the reasons. It should learn the degree of the applicant's commitment to the Meeting in terms of regular attendance at meetings for worship and business. It should be made clear that the Meeting members carry on the work that in other religious groups is performed by paid clergy. The applicant also needs to know of the Meeting's financial responsibilities, as stated in the annual budget, to carry on its work, to maintain the Meeting House, and to support the work of Friends' organizations such as the American Friends Service Committee and the Friends Committee on National Legislation.

Applicants need to understand and appreciate the spirit and principles underlying our worship based on silent waiting, the absence of paid ministry and of outward sacraments, and the conduct of marriage and memorial services. Strong emphasis on the decision-making process and the importance of the Spirit in Meeting for Business will help new members to share the responsibility for this process.

Those seeking membership should have some knowledge of the history and principles of Quakerism and should be aware that most Quakers consider themselves to be a part of the Christian community. They should also know of the diversity of practice and belief in the wider body of Friends.

At the close of the session or sessions together, both the applicant and the members of the membership committee should feel that they have shared in an open, friendly, clarifying, and useful experience.

### Membership of Children

Children under the age of sixteen may be enrolled as junior members at the written request of parents, when one or both of them are members of the Meeting. When members add a child to their family or when new members with children join the Meeting, the Clearness and Care Committee informs them that junior membership is available. Children should be prepared at home and through the First Day School and other Meeting activities for understanding the meaning and responsibilities of membership.

### Young People

As children grow older, it should not be assumed that they will simply continue as Friends without making a formal decision. Members who know them best should make them conscious

that the Meeting is sincerely interested in them and hopes that their junior membership has become a tie that has meaning to them.

When junior members reach the age of sixteen, the Recorder, on behalf of the Clearness and Care Committee, sends them a letter encouraging them to become adult members if they are ready. They should be informed that this decision can be made any time before they become twenty-five, when junior memberships terminate. The requests of junior members for adult membership are usually considered according to the regular procedure for membership.

Young people who are not eligible for junior membership because neither parent is a member or because one or both parents joined after the young person was sixteen may, if they wish, apply for adult membership. Application for adult membership from persons under sixteen should be accompanied by an indication of parental consent. Ordinarily the regular procedure for membership is followed with these young people.

### Transfers

Members who have moved permanently from the area are encouraged to seek a congenial Meeting in their new community and to ask for the transfer of their membership. When the Meeting has received and acted upon the request from them for a certificate of removal, the Recorder issues the certificate, which commends them to the care of the Meeting that they have designated.

When requests for transfer from another Meeting are received, it is the practice of Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting to accept them upon the recommendation of the Clearness and Care Committee. Children under the age of sixteen in families transferring their membership may be received as junior members. Children over sixteen will be consulted as individuals for their own decision. Care should be taken to determine that the persons applying for transfer of membership intend to be active members of Pittsburgh Meeting.

### Dropping Members

If the way of life of any member is seriously contrary to the principles of Friends, the Clearness and Care Committee should attempt to help the member in a spirit of humility and love, trying meanwhile to find out whether membership in the Society still has meaning for him or her. In extreme cases, the Meeting may drop the person from membership, but only after approaching him or her in a spirit of reconciliation.

Members who have shown no interest in the Meeting for five or more years may, after appropriate inquiry and recommendation by the Clearness and Care Committee, be dropped from membership by Meeting for Business.

When a member announces, whether by letter to the Meeting or any other public means, that he or she has officially accepted membership in another Friends Meeting or religious community,



the Clearness and Care Committee may recommend to the Meeting for Business that that person's membership in Pittsburgh Meeting be laid down. This is in keeping with our practice of ensuring that applicants for membership have no commitment to other Meetings or religious groups without specific prior arrangement.

## FINANCES

The activities of the Meeting and the care of the Meeting House are supported by contributions from members and attenders and by the rental of space in the Meeting House, the Carriage House, and the parking lot. Each year, the Finance Committee reviews requests for funds and prepares a proposed budget, which is presented to the Meeting for Business in September. After careful review and appropriate changes, the Meeting for Business approves the budget for the coming year. Copies of the budget are available for everyone.

Friends determine their responsibility for financial support of the Meeting from the size of the budget and their own financial situation. It is helpful to the smooth running of the Meeting finances to make regular contributions through the year. If, as sometimes happens, contributions do not cover expenditures, that news is included in the Newsletter. If necessary, the Finance Committee sends out a special letter requesting support.

## OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

Friends bear in mind that, since we have no paid clergy, all members share responsibility for the work of the Meeting and for ministry and pastoral care according to their capabilities. Certain functions of the Meeting are carried out by officers and by standing committees, listed below. In response to a specific request or a special need, the Meeting may appoint an ad hoc committee, which is laid down when its work is completed. The work of all committees is carried on in the same manner and spirit as the Meeting for Business. Conveners are responsible for orderly procedures and for arriving at decisions on the basis of unity. Committee conveners are expected to attend the Monthly Meeting for Business. When the committee recommends action by the Meeting, it should present a carefully drawn minute for consideration.

As a general policy, the Pittsburgh Friends Meeting rotates people serving as officers or on committees, taking into account their capabilities and commitment and the Meeting's need for continuity. The Co-Clerks and the Assistant Clerk are members of Pittsburgh Friends Meeting. Other officers, as well as members of the Ministry, Clearness and Care, Finance, and Nominating committees, are persons thoroughly familiar with Friends' principles and beliefs and with the ways of organizing and conducting the work of this Meeting; they are usually but not necessarily members of the Society of Friends. The Nominating Committee proposes in April, for approval at the May Meeting for Business, the names of officers, conveners and members of standing committees, and representatives to Quaker organizations. At the May Meeting for Business, the Nominating Committee presents the final list of officers, committee members and conveners, and Meeting representatives to other organizations for the Meeting's approval.

### Officers

Co-Clerks (2)

Assistant Clerk  
Recording Clerks (2)  
Treasurer  
Assistant Treasurer  
Recorder

### Standing Committees

#### *The Caring Community*

Clearness and Care  
Communications  
Counseling  
Fall Gathering  
Funeral  
Hospitality  
Outreach

#### *Education and Service*

Child Care  
Child Care Clearances  
Draft Counseling  
First Day School  
Library  
Ministry  
Peace and Social Concerns  
Quaker Community Fund

#### *Organization and Meeting House*

Archives  
Finance  
House  
Nominating  
Personnel and Building Use

### Ad Hoc Committees

Building Spiritual Space (BSS)  
BSS Capital Campaign  
Clearness, Marriage  
Preparative Meetings

### Representatives

American Friends Service Committee  
East End Cooperative Ministry

Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Lake Erie Yearly Meeting  
Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network

## Officers of the Meeting

### Co-Clerks

One of the Co-Clerks presides at Meeting for Business and sees that its decisions are carried out. The Presiding Clerk facilitates the progress of Meeting for Business in an orderly fashion after the manner of Friends. The Co-Clerks represent the Meeting in making public statements on behalf of the Meeting.

Ordinarily, the Presiding Clerk closes Meeting for Worship and is responsible for announcements at that time.

Each Co-Clerk serves a two-year term after being Assistant Clerk for one year. This rotation provides experience and support for incoming Clerks.

The Co-Clerks, with the help of the Assistant Clerk, see to it that officers and committee conveners are aware of their duties. In order to coordinate the Meeting's work, the Clerks hold a meeting of all officers and conveners at least once a year. The senior Co-Clerk then prepares an annual report on the state of the Meeting, which is shared at the May Meeting for Business and then forwarded to the Yearly Meeting.

### Assistant Clerk

The Assistant Clerk acts for the Clerks when the latter are unable to serve and is available to advise and help the Clerks as needed. The Assistant Clerk serves ex officio as a member of the Personnel and Building Use Committee.

### Co-Recording Clerks

The Co-Recording Clerks keep the minutes of the Meeting for Business and may handle correspondence and otherwise assist the Clerks.

The rotation of Co-Recording Clerks follows the same pattern as that of the Co-Presiding Clerks, in that their two-year appointments begin in alternate years, so that there is always one experienced Co-Recording Clerk.

### Recorder

The Recorder keeps the records of the membership of the Meeting accurate and up-to-date. This includes details of births, deaths, marriages, new adult and junior memberships, and transfers of membership into and out of the Meeting. At the annual Meeting for Business, the Recorder gives a written report on membership statistics, including a summary of any changes during the past year. Continuity in the office of Recorder is desirable.

## Treasurer

The Treasurer manages the Meeting funds and keeps an accurate record of receipts and disbursements, presenting a monthly report at Meeting for Business and an annual report in September. As a member of the Finance Committee, the Treasurer helps to prepare the annual budget.

Continuity in the office of Treasurer is desirable. It is advisable that an incoming Treasurer serve as Assistant Treasurer before taking office.

## Assistant Treasurer

The Assistant Treasurer assists the Treasurer and, in the absence of the Treasurer, is authorized to sign checks.

## Standing Committees

### *The Caring Community*

#### Clearness and Care

The Clearness and Care Committee seeks to build a community in which all members and attenders find acceptance, loving care, and opportunity for service. It seeks to establish, among members and attenders, the friendship that makes possible informed caring for the welfare of individuals and families. It is sensitive to signs of need or of distress.

The committee ensures that newcomers are welcomed and takes note of absences due to illness or other reasons. It gives friendly attention to those who may be losing interest and maintains occasional contact with Friends who have left the community. It is responsible for the orderly conduct of weddings under the care of the Meeting and appoints a marriage committee in consultation with the couple. It welcomes new babies and may be available for assistance in parenting. If a military draft is in effect, the committee makes sure that young people nearing the age of eighteen are in touch with the Meeting's draft counselors. It supports those seeking assistance in addressing difficult concerns, especially by appointing clearness committees to meet with individuals.

The committee acts in all personal matters with tact and discretion, maintaining confidentiality and respect for the individual's privacy. It is aware of its own limitations and is ready to refer people in difficulty to persons with professional competence.

The committee promotes community through activities, visitation, and social gatherings, with special care to seek out newcomers and those in need of friendship. It suggests ways in which people may be drawn into Meeting activities and committees.

The committee is responsible to the Meeting for following proper procedures concerning applications for adult or junior membership. It also can recommend the dropping of members.

In response to a request for membership, the Clearness and Care Committee appoints a committee of three or four members of the Meeting to meet with the applicant. It reports to the Meeting for Business the names of the persons appointed and submits the names for inclusion in the Newsletter. It sees to it that the Friends on the membership committee are familiar with the

section in Faith and Practice on Membership, so that when the committee makes its recommendation to the Clearness and Care Committee, both the applicant and the committee members are satisfied that a friendly and thorough process has taken place. Although it is acceptable for the membership committee to deliberate without the applicant present, it is desirable for the committee and the applicant to reach a decision together. The membership committee reports to the Clearness and Care Committee, which in turn reports its recommendation to the Meeting for Business.

When members add a child to their family or when a family with children joins the Meeting, the committee informs them that junior membership is available. To enroll a child, the parents complete a junior membership form. When junior members reach the age of sixteen, the Recorder sends them a letter encouraging them to become adult members, if they are ready. They should be informed that this decision can be made at any time before they reach the age of twenty-five. If they request adult membership, they are encouraged to ask for a membership committee. When junior members reach the age of twenty-four, the Recorder writes to them indicating that one year remains in which they can confirm their membership as adults, since junior memberships terminate at age twenty-five.

The Recorder is a member ex officio of the committee in order to facilitate the easy flow of information on membership records. The committee is also responsible for setting policy on the maintenance, publication, and use of any Meeting directory or list of attenders and members.

### Communications

Communications Committee prepares the monthly newsletter. It also updates the web page and Meeting directory, and distributes the directory along with the weekly Bulletin, which is prepared by the Meeting Clerks. The Newsletter includes a calendar of coming events, Minutes from the Meeting for Business, and other items of interest to the Meeting.

### Counseling

The Counseling Committee consists of mental health professionals in the Meeting who agree to be available for consultation. Members of the committee offer consultation and referral services to anyone in the Meeting. No fee is involved, and confidentiality is maintained.

### Fall Gathering

The Fall Gathering Committee is responsible for planning and conducting the Meeting's annual weekend event, including reserving the site, planning and carrying out the program for adults and children, registering participants, and collecting payments. The goal of the weekend is to build community and provide participants with an opportunity for spiritual growth.

### Funeral

The Funeral Committee consists of seasoned Friends who, at the time of a death, can respond to the needs and wishes of the family and friends of the deceased. The committee may, if requested, advise and assist in arranging a Memorial Meeting for Worship. It also may share responsibility with clergy of other faiths for conducting a service for non-members. The committee seeks to

support family and friends in time of bereavement in whatever way is helpful. On behalf of the Meeting, the Funeral Committee deals with matters relating to the gravesites owned by the Meeting in two small areas of Homewood Cemetery.

The Co-Clerks are ex officio members of this committee.

### Hospitality

The Hospitality Committee is responsible for refreshments after Meeting for Worship. The committee may also be asked to assist with food and hospitality at other Meeting events such as the annual Christmas celebration or potluck suppers. It is ordinarily not responsible for wedding receptions.

The committee's specific duties are to recruit, schedule, instruct, and, when necessary, assist the people needed each Sunday to prepare and serve the refreshments and leave the kitchen and serving areas in clean and orderly condition, and to provide the necessary supplies.

### Outreach

The Outreach Committee provides information to seekers, potential members, and the general public, in order to promote understanding of the Religious Society of Friends and of Pittsburgh Meeting. By sharing the Meeting's spiritual values with others, the committee bears public witness to our belief that there is that of God in every human being. While the witness of our personal lives will always be central, such witness is also made through special meetings, talks, leaflets, advertisements, letters, posters, and the like. The committee sees to it that the bulletin boards in the Meeting House reflect the Society of Friends and are kept orderly and current.

The committee also supplies free tracts and reaches out to Friends who live in our wider region. It invites scattered Friends to participate in the life of the Pittsburgh Meeting to the extent possible, organizing occasional gatherings in convenient locations to bring these Friends together with members of the Meeting. In addition, the committee encourages and facilitates inter-visitation between Meetings in our area.

### *Education and Service*

#### Child Care

The Child Care Committee coordinates child care for Meeting events that take place after Meeting for Worship, such as committee-sponsored events, adult classes, and Meeting for Business. It also coordinates child care providers for Meeting-related events, such as weddings and evening discussions. During the summer months, the committee coordinates care for children during Meeting for Worship. The members of the committee may take turns providing such child care, or they may find other caregivers, paid or volunteer, from within or outside the Meeting.

## Child Care Clearances

The Child Care Clearances Committee works with the First Day School and Child Care committees to support the Meeting's compliance with the 2014 state laws requiring that all volunteers who work with children have background clearances from (1) the Pennsylvania State Police (state police background check), (2) the Pennsylvania Child Abuse Registry (child abuse background check), and (3) either the FBI (federal criminal background check) or an affirmation that the applicant has been a continuous resident of Pennsylvania for the past 10 years. The committee maintains a semi-public list of "cleared" volunteers who may legally work and volunteer with the Meeting's children. It also maintains copies of the clearance documents in a secure, locked, private location at the Meetinghouse. The committee works with the Clerks to help people complete their forms, and with several other committees to keep the Meeting's forms updated and compliant with state law. Two members serve on this committee in staggered terms.

## Draft Counseling

The Draft Counseling Committee used to consist of trained military and draft counselors and other interested Friends. The counselors were available to give information and support to Friends and others who had questions of conscience concerning military service, the draft, and related issues. The committee kept track of pertinent legislation, maintained files for conscientious objectors, and stocked literature for distribution. It will be reactivated if the military draft is revived in the future.

## First Day School

The First Day School Committee is concerned with the spiritual growth of the children in the Meeting as well as their religious education. The committee brings the children and their concerns into the life of the Meeting. It works with parents, children, and others in conducting a program of religious education for children and youth. This program seeks to develop an appreciation of our religious heritage, of Friends' history and principles, of the ideals of other faiths, and of the relation of religious values to everyday life. The committee proposes the curriculum, guides the teachers, and purchases books and materials.

The committee arranges an annual picnic at the beginning or end of the school year; and it produces a children's program for the Meeting's celebration of Christmas. It may also act as consultant to the persons arranging the children's program for the annual Fall Gathering.

## Library

The Library Committee is responsible for purchasing books, periodicals, and pamphlets for the Meeting library in accordance with the wishes and needs of the Meeting. The committee maintains the collection, catalogues library acquisitions, administers the loan system, and keeps the library room and the shelves in good order. It promotes the use of the library by special exhibits, by reviews in the Newsletter, and by other appropriate means.

## Ministry

It is the function of the Ministry Committee to foster and deepen the spiritual life of the Meeting. The committee is concerned for the quality of the Meeting for Worship, which depends upon the devotion and preparation of each individual. Thus, it is the committee's responsibility to provide opportunities for the inner growth of all persons in the Meeting toward faithfulness to the Light Within. The committee assists members, especially young people and new members, to grow in their understanding of the principles and practices of Friends. It may, with discretion and humility, offer spiritual counsel when needed. At times, tactful advice may be given concerning inappropriate speaking in Meeting for Worship.

The committee arranges for the adult classes of the Meeting. It may set up retreats or special meetings and make use of devotional and other literature to increase spiritual depth and sensitivity within the Meeting. It is charged with stimulating interest in Friends' literature and periodicals, and is responsible for maintaining the supply and display of Pendle Hill pamphlets.

## Peace and Social Concerns

The function of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee is to engage with the Meeting in understanding and implementing Friends' testimonies and principles as they bear upon public issues. After studying an issue, it may bring information and recommendations for action to the Meeting. In addition, the committee considers concerns that rise from Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. It may, with the Meeting's approval, act in the name of the Meeting on specific matters.

The committee may assign areas of concern to subcommittees, which may be formed or laid down as appropriate. In recent years these have included the Working Group Against Racism and the Earthcare Working Group.

## Quaker Community Fund

The Meeting has under its care a fund created through the sale of several properties in Point Breeze that were acquired with contributions from Meeting members. This fund was donated to the Meeting with the stipulation that it be used for programs of the Meeting.

The committee has two tasks: to prepare for approval by Meeting for Business guidelines and procedures for the disbursement of funds, and to make recommendations to Meeting for Business for expenditures from the Fund.

Members of the committee, whose names are proposed by the Nominating Committee, include at least one person also serving on the Finance Committee. Because of the nature of the committee's responsibilities, continuity of membership is desirable.

## *Organization and Meeting House*

### Archives

The Archives Committee appraises, collects, organizes, and preserves records of enduring value to the Meeting. These are stored in the Archives Room and are available for research upon request. They include the monthly Newsletters from 2002 to-date and the approved minutes of



Meeting for Business from 2002 through 2011, which are also archived in electronic form by the Recording Clerks. Approved Meeting for Business Minutes since 2011 continue to be archived in electronic form, but they are no longer printed out and stored in paper format. Draft versions can be found in the monthly Newsletters. Paper copies of the Annual Directories are archived. Less formal records that reflect the life of the Meeting are collected, organized, and preserved as well.

Newsletters from 1954 through 2001, along with the printed, approved Meeting for Business Minutes from 1985 through 2001, are archived at the Swarthmore Historical Library at Swarthmore, PA.

## Finance

The Finance Committee is responsible for preparing the annual budget and providing guidance for the Meeting in its financial affairs. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer are members ex officio.

The committee meets as needed to consider financial matters and develops recommendations on concerns referred to it by the Monthly Meeting. At the September Meeting for Business, at the start of the Meeting's fiscal year, the Finance Committee presents for action the proposed annual budget, incorporating committee requests. Experience and continuity are valuable for the Finance Committee.

## House

The House Committee is responsible for maintaining the appearance and working order of the Meeting House and grounds. To carry out this responsibility, it works closely with the House Manager and also may negotiate contracts with outside vendors.

The committee implements security measures, supervises the custodial care of the Meeting House, and maintains the house in a safe, clean, and orderly condition. It purchases cleaning, maintenance, and other supplies. The committee schedules Meeting-wide work days twice a year.

The convener of the House Committee usually serves as Vice President for Maintenance of the Corporation.

## Nominating

The Nominating Committee annually uses a process of spiritual discernment to identify Meeting members or regular attenders who rise to its members' awareness and who feel led to help guide the Meeting through the upcoming year. To assist its process of discernment, the committee may consult confidentially with other members of the Meeting for suggestions or advice. Having consented to perform such service, those nominated by the committee will serve as officers and as conveners and members of committees for the next year. While mindful of the Meeting's practice of rotating officers and committee members, the committee also balances this practice with the Meeting's need for continuity in its leadership. The committee presents its draft slate of nominees at the April Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business. Approval of the final slate by the Meeting occurs at the May meeting.

Once the slate has been so approved, the Nominating Committee is also responsible for filling any vacancies that may occur subsequently. When needed, the committee will nominate other members or regular attenders of the Meeting for approval at the next Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business.

Two new members of the Nominating Committee are proposed each year for a three-year term by a Naming Committee, two of whose members are appointed by the Meeting for Business; in addition, one of the Clerks participates as an *ex officio* member. The Naming Committee sends the names of its candidates for the upcoming year to the Nominating Committee by March 31, so that they can be included in the draft slate presented at Meeting for Business in April. At the May meeting, these nominees are approved along with the committee's slate of other nominees. If a member of the Nominating Committee is unable to complete a three-year term, another Naming Committee is formed to fill the vacancy.

### Personnel and Building Use

The Personnel and Building Use Committee serves as liaison between the House Manager and the Meeting. It supports and oversees the Manager and assists in making decisions about building use.

The committee assesses the need for positions with compensation; develops and proposes personnel policy and terms and conditions of employment including housing, if applicable; prepares job descriptions and contracts; and interviews and recommends applicants for employment.

The concerns of employees or of Meeting members that pertain to employment are channeled through the Personnel and Building Use Committee. Members of this committee regularly evaluate the performance of all employees. The committee prepares a summary report of its actions for inclusion in the Meeting's Annual Report.

The committee sets the fees to be charged for use of the meetinghouse by outside groups and establishes the type of use permitted, both of these subject to Meeting approval. The committee makes decisions on applications for use of the house. When it has questions concerning the appropriateness of a particular activity, it presents the matter for decision to the Meeting for Business. The committee and the house managers cooperate to assure proper use of the Meetinghouse and grounds. This includes screening applicants, making reservations, instructing in proper use, monitoring use and cleanup, restoring to proper condition, and billing.

The committee consists of the Assistant Clerk *ex officio*; one member each of the Finance and House committees, selected by those committees; and one member-at-large who is proposed by the Nominating Committee. (Ordinarily, employees of the Meeting do not serve on the Personnel, Finance, or Nominating committees.) Except for the Assistant Clerk, each member normally serves a three-year term in order to provide continuity. The terms should be staggered, so that no more than two new persons join the committee in any one year. The committee chooses its own convener. When appropriate, the committee also deals with reassignment of responsibilities, reorganization of employment, and termination. All recommendations made by the Personnel Committee are subject to approval by the Meeting for Business.

## Ad Hoc Committees

### Clearness

When a member or attender of the Meeting has a concern, a problem, or a difficult decision to make, he or she may ask the Meeting to appoint a clearness committee for assistance. The request may be made confidentially to the Clearness and Care Committee or to a Clerk of the Meeting. The individual concerned may wish to suggest some of the people to serve on the clearness committee. This committee meets with the individual to help that person to reach clearness about the concern or problem. Given the task of the committee, the members should be spiritually grounded, able to work with each other and the person making the request, and capable of asking hard questions in a loving and caring way. Membership and Marriage committees are special cases of clearness committees.

The exact approach a particular committee takes to reach clearness cannot be prescribed. However, certain guidelines can be laid out. The committee needs to discuss with the person making the request the nature of the problem or concern, and together they explore what options are available, what resources are needed, and what consequences could be expected from following any of the options. The meetings are held in a spirit of love, care, and worship. All involved need to understand that the process of reaching clearness is a shared one between the individual and the committee; the committee cannot impose clearness on the individual. (In the case of a request for membership or marriage, the decision should arise out of unity.) Unless it is otherwise agreed, confidentiality must be ensured: anything shared in a clearness committee must remain within the committee or may be summarized only to the Clearness and Care Committee. A clearness committee may meet only once or may continue over a period of time, depending on the circumstances. It is also possible that the committee may be laid down without the individual's having reached clearness, if it is agreed that further meetings would not be helpful.

### Marriage

Friends intending marriage under the care of the Meeting should state their intention in a letter to the Clerk. The Meeting ordinarily expects a period of three months or more between receiving the request and the desired day of marriage.

If the couple wish to have their marriage recognized by the Commonwealth, they need to procure, from the County Marriage License Bureau, the special form of license that does not require the signature of a minister or other official, and in addition comply with other legal requirements.

At the Meeting for Business to which the intention of marriage is presented, the Clerk will ask the Clearness and Care Committee to appoint a Marriage Committee of three or more Friends to inquire into the couple's clearness and readiness for marriage. Ordinarily, at least one member of this appointed committee is a member of the Clearness and Care Committee. Upon receipt of a favorable report from the Marriage Committee, including a clearness report from any other Meeting to which one or both members of the couple may belong, the Clearness and Care Committee makes its recommendation to the Meeting for Business. If the Meeting gives approval, the marriage may proceed at a special Meeting for Worship. In order to facilitate the

conduct of the wedding, the Marriage Committee may at this point be augmented by other Friends, including persons suggested by the couple. The committee sees to it that the marriage is accomplished after the manner of Friends and with simplicity and dignity; that all desired legal requirements are met; that a certificate is properly drawn and ready for signatures; and that the accomplishment of the marriage is duly reported to the Meeting for Business.

If only one of the couple, or neither, is a member of the Society of Friends, but they unite in making application for a marriage to take place under the care of the Meeting, the Meeting may authorize this to be done, after a favorable report from the Clearness and Care Committee, as in the case of members.

At the appointed time on the day of the wedding, the couple enter the meeting room and sit side by side facing assembled friends. The Meeting for Worship begins. An experienced Friend may make an introductory statement on the nature of a wedding ceremony after the manner of Friends, and the reverent silence resumes. The couple, who should be thoroughly familiar with the words of the promise they have agreed upon, rise after an appropriate period of silence. Taking one another by the hand, they each in turn affirm their commitment to the other in the words of their promise.<sup>5</sup> After these declarations have been made, the couple sign the certificate, which is then read aloud by a person appointed for this purpose.<sup>6</sup>

The Meeting for Worship then continues in silence, during which time worshipers may share messages appropriate to the occasion. The meeting is closed when an appointed Friend shakes a neighbor's hand. This Friend then requests all persons present to sign the certificate as witnesses to the marriage. It is fitting that social events in connection with the wedding be conducted with moderation and simplicity.

### Preparative Meetings

Friends in Western Pennsylvania who live too far from Pittsburgh Meeting to participate on a regular basis may form a worship group in their area. Such a group may make a request to become a Preparative Meeting under the care of Pittsburgh Meeting. In Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, the term suggests that they are preparing to become an independent Monthly Meeting.

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<sup>5</sup> A historic wording of the certificate is the following: "Whereas A.B., of ....., son of C.B., of ....., and H., his wife, and D.E., of ....., daughter of F.E., of ....., and K., his wife, having declared their intentions of marriage with each other to Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, according to the good order used among them (insert, if applicable: "and having the consent of parent" or "guardians"), their proposed marriage was allowed by the meeting."

<sup>6</sup> "Now these are to certify to whom it may concern, that for the accomplishment of their intentions, this ..... day of the ..... month, in the year of our Lord ....., they, the said A.B. and D.E. appeared in a public meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, held at ....., and A.B., taking D.E. by the hand, did on this solemn occasion declare that he took her to be his wife, promising, with divine assistance, to be unto her a loving and faithful husband so long as they both should live; and then, in the same assembly, D.E. did in like manner declare that she took him, A.B., to be her husband, promising, with divine assistance, to be unto him a loving and faithful wife so long as they both should live. And in further confirmation thereof, they, the said A.B. and D.E. (she, according to the custom of marriage, adopting the surname of her husband) did then and there to these presents set their hands. (A.B.) ..... (D.B.) ..... And we, having been present at the solemnization of the said marriage, did, as witness thereto, set our hands."

After evaluation and approval of the request by Meeting for Business, the Clerk may appoint an ad hoc committee of members of the Meeting. The Committee's tasks may include supporting the outlying group of Friends, worshiping with them, bringing their concerns to the Advancement Committee of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, and nurturing the development of the Preparative Meeting. If such a committee is appointed, it reports periodically to Meeting for Business; if not, the Preparative Meeting reports directly. Attenders of the Preparative Meeting who wish to become members of the Society of Friends may request membership in Pittsburgh Meeting.

When the Preparative Meeting has either achieved Monthly Meeting status or been laid down, the ad hoc committee is laid down.

### Representatives

The Meeting appoints representatives to certain organizations:

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting representatives attend annual and representative meetings of LEYM in order to take to it the concerns of the Monthly Meeting and to bring back the decisions and concerns of Yearly Meeting. On significant questions of policy or corporate action by LEYM, the representatives first determine the sense of their Monthly Meeting. American Friends Service Committee representatives communicate the concerns of the Meeting to the Service Committee and the needs and activities of the Service Committee to the Meeting.

Friends Committee on National Legislation representatives attend the annual meeting of FCNL, bring its concerns and activities to the attention of the Meeting, and stimulate the Meeting to appropriate action.

The Meeting coordinates and serves meals at the East End Cooperative Ministry (EECM) Shelter and may consider support of other EECM programs upon request.

Pennsylvania Interfaith Impact Network (PIIN) Representatives attend the meetings of that organization, participate in its work, and bring its concerns to the attention of the Meeting.

Representatives to other organizations may be appointed as the need arises.

## CALENDAR

This is the Calendar in practice in 2017. Regular activities may vary in summer months.

### Regular Events

Every Sunday	Meeting for Worship 9:00 and 10:30 am
First Sunday of the month	Bible Study 12:15 pm
Second Sunday of the month	Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business 12:15 pm
Third Sunday of the month	Adult Education 12:15 pm

### Periodic Events

December Business Meeting	Naming Committee is named from the floor to propose two members to serve on new Nominating Committee.
April Business Meeting	Naming Committee proposes members to serve on new Nominating Committee; current Nominating Committee makes preliminary report.
May Business Meeting*	Annual Meeting: committee reports, Nominating Committee final report, Corporation Annual Meeting
First Sunday in June	First Day School Recognition Day, potluck picnic
August Business Meeting	Committees submit proposed budgets to Finance Committee.
September 1 – August 31	Fiscal Year
September Business Meeting	Treasurer's annual report; Finance Committee presents new budget for approval.
September/October	Meeting's Fall Gathering

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\*After the May Meeting for Business, new officers and committees assume their responsibilities.

## QUAKER ORGANIZATIONS

**Lake Erie Yearly Meeting** was formed in 1963 out of the Lake Erie Association. It includes 18 Monthly Meetings in Ohio, Michigan, and western Pennsylvania, with Pittsburgh Friends Meeting the largest. Members of these Monthly Meetings come together for a long weekend in July for business and fellowship. Its website is [www.leym.org](http://www.leym.org).

**Friends General Conference (FGC)**, organized in 1900, is a North American association of 15 Quaker yearly and 12 monthly meetings in the United States and Canada that choose to be members as well as regional groups in North America. Lake Erie Yearly Meeting is a member. Its Monthly Meetings usually have unprogrammed worship. Every summer FGC holds a weeklong Gathering of Friends for worship, study, and fellowship. See [www.fgcquakers.org](http://www.fgcquakers.org) for more information. QuakerBooks of FGC carries an extensive catalog of books for Quakers, Quaker meetings, and people interested in learning about Quakers. Visit the online catalog at [www.quakerbooks.org](http://www.quakerbooks.org).

**Friends World Committee for Consultation** – Section of the Americas, formed in 1938, has its office in Philadelphia. Other Sections are Africa, Asia-West Pacific, and Europe & Middle East. Each section has a wide-ranging program of conferences and publications. All sections, coordinated by the World Office headquartered in London, England, are represented at periodic world conferences to facilitate understanding and work among Friends. For more information, see [www.fwcc.org](http://www.fwcc.org).

**American Friends Service Committee**, founded in 1917, is the social service arm of the Quakers, which grew out of relief efforts in World War I. AFSC sponsors diverse programs dealing with peace and social justice both in the U.S. and abroad. It supports people struggling for human rights and helps refugees and others to help themselves. See [www.afsc.org](http://www.afsc.org) for more details.

**Friends Committee on National Legislation**, formed in 1943, is the Washington, DC, lobbying arm of the Quakers. A monthly newsletter reports on legislative issues on which the committee is working. Testimony is given before congressional committees regarding concerns such as health care, campaign finance reform, Native American issues, and international conflict resolution. See [www.fcnl.org](http://www.fcnl.org) for further information.

**Pendle Hill** is a residential Quaker center for study and contemplation near Philadelphia. Founded in 1930, it offers resources and the time for integrated spiritual, intellectual, and personal learning. It offers each year three ten-week terms of courses and publishes pamphlets and books. It also sponsors weekend and week-long workshops and summer conferences and maintains a Quaker bookstore. See [www.pendlehill.org](http://www.pendlehill.org) for additional information.

**Right Sharing of World Resources**, founded in 1967 as “The 1% Fund” designed to encourage US Friends to donate one percent of their annual income to those who need the assistance, funds micro-enterprise projects with marginalized women in Kenya, India, and Sierra Leone. The

money donated to local women's groups is loaned to individual women for their business endeavors; when it is repaid, it is passed on to other women, thereby staying in the community and multiplying its effect. See [www.rswr.org](http://www.rswr.org) for more information.

**Quaker Voluntary Service** was launched with a pilot service house in Atlanta, GA, in the fall of 2012. This house was the first step in developing a growing network of QVS programs, with two more houses launched in August 2013 in Philadelphia, PA, and Portland, OR. In 2015 the fourth house was launched in Boston, MA, along with a pilot Alumni Fellowship program in Philadelphia, where first year QVS alumni can continue programming with QVS and work for Quaker organizations in Philly. In sum, QVS partners in its service cities with community-based non-profit organizations, which cover a wide range of social and environmental issues. Its Fellows increase the capacity of organizations to do work they might not otherwise be able to do. See [www.quakervoluntaryservice.org](http://www.quakervoluntaryservice.org) for additional details about the work.

## SUGGESTED READING

The following selection of classic and recent publications is useful for those in search of writings on Friends' beliefs, practices, and history. Many of these are in our Meeting Library.

**Ambler, Rex** - *Light to Live by: An Exploration of Quaker Spirituality* (June 2017).

**Ambler, Rex** - *The Quaker Way: A Rediscovery* (2013).

**Bill, J. Brent** - *Life Lessons from a Bad Quaker: A Humble Stumble Toward Simplicity and Grace* (2015).

**Boardman, Elizabeth** - *Letters from Lillian: Faith and Practice Among Modern Liberal Quakers* (2012).

**Brinton, Howard** - *Friends for 350 Years* (rev. 2002).

**Chase, Steven** - *Letters to a Fellow Seeker: A Short Introduction to the Quaker Way*. Quaker Press of FGC (2012). Paperback. 98 pages.

**Dayton, Brian, and Taber, William P.** - *A Language for the Inward Landscape: Spiritual Wisdom from the Quaker Movement* (2015).

**Fox, George (ed. by Rex Ambler)** - *Truth of the Heart: An Anthology of George Fox*. Revised Edition Paperback (2007).

**Loring, Patricia** - *Listening Spirituality: Volumes I and II* (2009).

**Magnani, Laura, and Wary, Harmon L.** - *Beyond Prisons*. AFSC (2006).

**Martin, Marcelle** - *Our Life is Love: the Quaker Spiritual Journey* (2016).

**McDaniel, Donna, and July, Vanessa D.** - *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship: Quakers, African Americans & the Myth of Racial Justice* (2009).

**Navias, Matilda** - *Quaker Process for Friends on the Benches* (2012).

**Palmer, Parker J.** - *A Hidden Wholeness: The Journey Toward an Undivided Life* (2004).

**Palmer, Parker J.** - *Let Your Life Speak: Listening for the Voice of Vocation* (1999).

**Pym, Jim** - *Listening to the Light: How to Bring Quaker Simplicity and Integrity into our Lives* (2000).

**Renfer, Linda Hill (Ed.)** - *Daily Readings from Quaker Writings Ancient & Modern* (1890/1995).

**Smith, Robert Lawrence** - *A Quaker Book of Wisdom: Life Lessons in Simplicity, Service, and Common Sense* (1999)



### **Pendle Hill Pamphlets:**

- Ambler, Rex** - *The Light Within: Then and Now* (#425), 2015.  
**Brown, Valerie** - *Coming to Light: Cultivating Spiritual Discernment through the Quaker Clearness Committee* (#446), 2017  
**Davison, Steven** - *The Gathered Meeting* (#444), 2017.  
**Loring, Patricia** - *Spiritual Discernment: The Context and Goal of Clearness Committees* (#305), 1992.  
**Martin, Marcelle** - *Holding One Another in the Light* (#382), 2006.  
**Pryce, Elaine** - *Grief, Forgiveness and Redemption as a Way of Transformation* (#416), 2012.  
**Schenck, Patience** - *Living Our Testimony on Equality: A White Friend's Experience* (#415), 2011.  
**Snyder, Daniel** - *Quaker Witness as Sacrament* (#397), 2008.  
**Taber, William P.** - *Four Doors to Worship* (#306), 1992.  
**Wanda, Michaela** - *Expectant Listening: Finding God's Thread of Guidance* (#388), 2007.

### **AFSC Pamphlet:**

- Barnes, Gregory A.** - *A Centennial History of the American Friends Service Committee*. Friends Press, 2016.

### **Electronic Resources**

Introductory Booklist, from the Earlham School of Religion's Quaker Information Center:  
<http://www.quakerinfo.org/resources/books>.

Early Quaker Writings .pdf from A Bookish Blog: [https://www.adturtle.biz/LP\\_TA/index.cfm?T=437420](https://www.adturtle.biz/LP_TA/index.cfm?T=437420). This is downloadable and looks interesting and informative.

The Quaker Electronic Archive: <http://www.qis.net/~daruma/>, which is just that, an archive of various online Quaker document links on many aspects of Quakerism, including Biblical Issues; Journals; Peace & Pacifism; Book Reviews; Minutes, Queries, Epistles, Faith & Practice; Poems & Prayers; Historic Material; Miscellaneous Material; Resource Guides; Introductions to Quakerism; Outreach Services; Same Sex Issues. There are also many links to other pages/Quaker entities.

Free e-books from the Digital Index pertaining to Quakerism: [http://www.digitalbookindex.org/\\_search/search010religionquakersa.asp](http://www.digitalbookindex.org/_search/search010religionquakersa.asp). It lists various formats including Kindles, some .pdf, some graphics, HTML and HTML graphics, and a couple of Questia.

Earlham's Digital Quaker Collection: <http://esr.earlham.edu/dqc/links.html>. This lists many sources and links, some by subscription.