

Handbook page (proposed): Meetings for Discernment Steering Committee

Second Reading: Fall Sessions, 2016

The Meetings for Discernment are an ongoing experiment of the Yearly Meeting. At Summer Sessions, 2014, this experiment was minuted to continue through Summer Sessions, 2020.

Friends approve the extension of Meetings for Discernment for an additional six years, at the end of which Friends will consider how and whether Meetings for Discernment are serving Spirit's purpose for New York Yearly Meeting. Two pages will be added to the New York Yearly Meeting Handbook: one for Meetings for Discernment and one for the Meetings for Discernment Steering Committee.

2014-07-24

Purposes and Objectives: The Steering Committee serves as the facilitating body for the Meetings for Discernment.

Functions and Activities: The Steering Committee discerns the structure and focus of each Meeting for Discernment, including queries or particular matters to be held in worship.

The Steering Committee oversees logistical arrangements, including discerning which Friends to invite to serve as clerks, elders and note takers for each Meeting for Discernment. For Meetings held outside of Yearly Meeting Sessions, the Steering Committee offers specific meetings or Regions/Quarters/Half Yearlies to serve as the host, and appoints a Steering Committee member as liaison with the host Meeting for local arrangements.

The Steering Committee produces advance materials for and reports on each Meeting for Discernment and prepares an annual report for the Yearly Meeting. It disseminates these to the Meetings for Discernment appointees, Monthly Meeting clerks, and the wider Yearly Meeting body.

The Steering Committee may offer recommendations to Yearly Meeting committees, to the body of the Yearly Meeting, and/or to Monthly and Regional Meetings and Worship Groups.

The Steering Committee ensures the Meeting for Discernment accomplishes its functions and activities.

Organization: The Steering Committee annually appoints its clerk or co-clerks and a recording clerk or notetaker. The Steering Committee clerk or another appointee represents the Meetings for Discernment in the Yearly Meeting budget process and when invited, at Sessions Committee and Liaison Committee.

Method of Appointment to the Steering Committee: The Meeting for Discernment appoints approximately six at-large members to serve on the Steering Committee, chosen from among those who have participated in Meetings for Discernment. At-large members serve for staggered three-year terms and may be reappointed for a second consecutive three-year term. Names are proposed by a nominating committee made up of

Friends appointed by the Steering Committee who have been integrally involved in Meetings for Discernment, either through participating in Meetings for Discernment, serving on the Steering Committee or in some other role. Once approved by participants at the next Meeting for Discernment, names of new Steering Committee members are reported to the Yearly Meeting in session to be recorded in the minutes of the Yearly Meeting, and are listed in the Yearbook.

The Yearly Meeting Clerk, the Assistant Clerk and the General Secretary serve as ex officio members of the Steering Committee. In addition, the clerks or named representatives of General Services, Ministry, Nurture, and Witness Coordinating Committees are asked to serve on the Steering Committee.

Meeting Times and Places: The Steering Committee meets monthly by conference call, at Yearly Meeting sessions, and at other times as needed. In addition, members of the Steering Committee are expected to participate in the Meetings for Discernment.

Finances: The Yearly Meeting operating budget provides money for Steering Committee expenses. These expenses may include: administrative and program facilitation needs, travel expenses for those serving the Meetings for Discernment (including Steering Committee members) and others, as funds are available. These funds are administered by the Steering Committee.