

Ministry Coordinating Committee
Fall Sessions 2015, 7:00 p.m.
Agenda

Friends present: Annie Bancroft, Mary Pugh Clark, Tim Connolly, Nathaniel Corwin, Steven Davison, Carolyn Emerson, Cheshire Frager, David Herendeen, Irma Guthrie, Kenn Harper, Lu Harper, Elaine Learnard, Barbara Meli, Peter Phillips, Anne Pomeroy, Emily Provance, Tom Rothschild, Ed Seliger, Claire Simon

1. Meeting began with a period of silent worship.
2. Gathering, Check-in: Clerk Irma Guthrie asked Friends to share something that makes us hopeful or that we find hopeful. The Clerk reviewed the agenda.
3. State of Society Process: Friends reviewed our discussion from Spring Session. Friends suggested the following query: What is the spiritual condition of your meeting? And will ask meetings to reply by March 1st, empowering the State of Society committee to format its presentation to Summer Sessions as led. A friend raised the concern about how we might contact Joy Weaver & Marissa Badgely to share our enthusiasm about how they might prepare their report. Steve Davison will contact Joy & Marissa.
4. Response to Request from Meeting for Discernment Steering Committee. Emily Provance presented a request (below) from Meeting for Discernment Steering Committee to take under its care the concern for how our meetings can be caring towards those living with a mental illness, and how our meetings can hold this care without being derailed.

To Ministry Coordinating Committee
Dear Friends,

As our ongoing experiment of the Meetings for Discernment continues, we are learning more ways to make use of this practice and are living further into our original charter which includes the charge to "...serve as a body to listen to what is rising at the monthly meeting level, and communicate rising issues throughout the Yearly Meeting body."

At summer sessions 2015, following the Meeting for Discernment at Old Chatham the first week of March and in response to ministry heard there, the steering committee asked Friends to "hold the question of how we might better live into that which is given to us including the mental health of our communities, our members, and our attenders. How might we welcome and nourish these tender places as they are brought forward, and how might we find our practices useful in making room for them without being derailed?"

Also at summer sessions, we recommended "that Ministry Coordinating Committee take this concern under its care."

This message is meant to serve as a reminder of that recommendation and a request that that the recommendation be considered at Ministry Coordinating Committee's next meeting. We would be glad to speak with you about this recommendation if that would be helpful to your discernment.

In Friendship,
Meeting for Discernment Steering Committee

With humble awareness of the need for professional care for individuals with mental illness, we also agree that meetings can be affected. How are we going to live into responding to what has been heard at Meeting for Discernment? Friends will return to this at Coordinating Committee weekend.

5. Items from the Committee to Revise Faith and Practice for our Discernment and Possible Approval.
 - a. Changes to sections G [Yearly Meeting] & H [Representative Meeting] and references to representative meeting. Friends reviewed the sections, made suggestions for changes removing the specific location of the YM offices and excluding specific job titles, and approved sending it to Spring Sessions for a first reading. (attached)
 - b. Language re: use of technology. Friends approved sending it to Spring Sessions for a first reading. (attached)
 - c. Changes to language about revising F&P, a revision that had a first reading at Spring Sessions. Revised text:

Proposed revisions to Faith & Practice may originate in a monthly or regional meeting or a Yearly Meeting body. When the proposed revision has been seasoned by the Committee to Revise Faith & Practice and approved by Ministry Coordinating Committee, the Committee to Revise Faith & Practice may bring the proposed revision to any Yearly Meeting session for a first reading. After being brought forward the first time, the proposed revision is brought for a second reading and final approval to a subsequent Yearly Meeting session.

Friends approved sending the text to the body for a second reading.

6. Irma Guthrie Announced that we hope to get 100 friends from the Yearly Meeting to attend the White Privilege Conference.
7. The meeting ended with a period of worship at 8:57 p.m.

▲ G. The Yearly Meeting

▲ MEMBERSHIP. The yearly meeting comprises the entire membership of constituent monthly meetings, all of whom share in its deliberations. Members of other yearly meetings are welcome to attend yearly meeting sessions.

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▲ FUNCTION. The yearly meeting exists principally to worship together. It is a meeting for the transaction of business and can engage in any activity or foster any work that the membership considers appropriate. This may include provision of funds and supervision for common projects. By pooling efforts and resources, the yearly meeting can consider wider and more varied concerns.

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▲ The yearly meeting meets to conduct business in the spirit of worship three times each year: at Fall, Spring, and Summer Sessions. It approves the yearly meeting's annual operating budget. It receives memorials of deceased Friends.

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▲ Among its other functions, the yearly meeting issues to the monthly meetings queries, advices, and reports of its proceedings, and it maintains contact with other yearly meetings and Friends' organizations. It alone has authority to establish or change the Book of Discipline, or to issue statements of faith.

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▲ The yearly meeting should inspire and support its constituent meetings, broaden their awareness of other Friends' concerns, and help them develop their own concerns. Much of the work is carried forward by yearly meeting committees. The yearly meeting receives reports from them and from its constituent meetings. It reviews the State of the Meeting reports and considers communications addressed to it. It provides for the due consideration of epistles and of minutes of Friends from other yearly meetings.

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▲ It provides for participation in the work and financial support of Friends' groups including the Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting, and the Friends World Committee for Consultation.

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▲ ORGANIZATION. The yearly meeting follows the general principles of organization and uses the same general business procedures as do monthly meetings, but it is more elaborate in structure due to the multiplicity and variety of functions that it performs. The New York Yearly Meeting is incorporated under Section 15 of the New York State Religious Corporation Law for the purpose of holding title to and administering property of the meeting and deeds of trust committed to its care. As such, any business meeting of the yearly meeting constitutes a meeting of the corporation, and all members of the yearly meeting are likewise members of the corporation.

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▲ The yearly meeting appoints a clerk to preside at its sessions, and carry out associated administrative functions. It also appoints an assistant clerk and such recording and reading clerks as may be needed to assist the clerk in the conduct of the meetings. It appoints a treasurer, assistant treasurer, and such administrative secretaries as it may decide to engage for designated functions.

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Each monthly or executive meeting may appoint representatives for terms of three years, during the spring quarter of the year. If a named representative cannot attend a yearly meeting Session, the appointing meeting may name an alternate and notify the yearly meeting office.

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The activities of the yearly meeting are carried on by four specialized sections-the Ministry Coordinating Committee, General Services, Nurture, and Witness – having the following functions:

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Comment [1]: Tom Rothschild had a concern about this; I'm not clear whether MCC was clear to change the language?

- To develop and coordinate services and programs, implementing them directly or through committees, task groups, staff, or volunteers;
- To explore new ways of service and respond to concerns of individual Friends and monthly and regional meetings;
- To recommend for yearly meeting action any major change of activity within their general areas of responsibility;
- To help plan yearly meeting programs.

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The Ministry Coordinating Committee exercises general care of the ministry and spiritual life of the yearly meeting and receives and considers concerns of members or meetings regarding their spiritual needs.

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The Section on Nurture is responsible for the advancement of the principles of Friends and for educational functions and personal services to members of the yearly meeting. Some of the interests have become the responsibilities of separate corporate entities, such as Powell House, and the Oakwood Friends School.

The Section on Witness makes visible both the traditional testimonies and the newer concerns of Friends in ways that extend beyond the Religious Society of Friends. Its work attempts to express beliefs in action.

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The Section on General Services provides the main administrative, financial, and reporting services of the yearly meeting, including the operation of the yearly meeting office.

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(More detailed information on the section is to be found in the current edition of the yearly meeting Handbook.)

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Each section has a coordinating committee, composed of representatives chosen by its constituent committees and groups, as well as members-at-large appointed by the yearly meeting.

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The Ministry Coordinating Committee, includes in addition, a representative appointed by each quarterly or regional meeting (two from Farmington-Scipio) for a three-year term, according to established rotation.

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The coordinating committees are enabling bodies. They consider the activities within their respective sections in relationship to each other, assist in their coordination, and

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help allocate the resources of people, time and money. They prepare the section budgets, are responsible for their overall administration, and participate in preparation of the total yearly meeting budget.

▲ The yearly meeting may establish or lay down committees according to the need for the conduct of particular functions of the meeting. Regular standing committees include, among others, Advancement, Financial Services, and Sessions. The yearly meeting also appoints representatives to various Friends' groups such as the American Friends Service Committee, Friends United Meeting, Friends General Conference, and the Friends World Committee for Consultation, and the governing boards of various other institutions or agencies.

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▲ When the yearly meeting establishes a committee, it must also determine and approve a statement of its purpose and functions and provide adequate funding. All appointments are to be made for a specified term. A current record of all committees and their membership is published annually in the Yearbook of the yearly meeting.

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▲ Four committees of the General Services Section fulfill specific administrative functions:

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▲ **SESSIONS COMMITTEE:** The Sessions Committee is responsible for selecting and arranging a suitable place for the sessions of the yearly meeting and for the preparation of schedules and programs. It advises committees on presentation of reports to the yearly meeting and serves as an advisory committee to the clerks during the sessions. It is responsible for publicity, hospitality, and financial arrangements for these meetings. The composition of the Sessions Committee appears in the yearly meeting Handbook.

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▲ **FINANCIAL SERVICES COMMITTEE.** (To remain as is, with appropriate deletions of representative meeting if any.)

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▲ **AUDIT COMMITTEE.** (To remain as is, with appropriate deletions of representative meeting if any.)

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▲ **PERSONNEL COMMITTEE.** (To remain as is, with appropriate deletions of representative meeting, if any.)

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▲ **YEARLY MEETING NOMINATING COMMITTEE.** (To remain as is, with appropriate deletions of representative meetings if any.)

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▲ **OFFICE AND ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF.** The Yearly Meeting maintains an office staffed by a variety of professionals who implement or administer ministerial functions identified by the Yearly Meeting.

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USE OF TECHNOLOGY IN THE CONDUCT OF BUSINESS

The use of modern communication systems in the conduct of Friends' business has great benefits and has also created challenges for Quaker business Process. The use of technologies such as telephone and video conferencing and electronic mail have made it possible to reduce the need for travel, and thereby have expanded participation by distant Friends. Our business can be responsive to the fast pace of developments in the modern world. Young Friends, who have grown up with these technologies, expect to use them as they integrate into the life of the Society.

Use of these technologies, however, which may replace or augment face-to-face meetings, requires discipline so that corporate worship, spiritual discernment, and the presence of the Spirit in our committee meetings and larger assemblies is retained. Each committee or meeting that uses these technologies should establish agreements and protocols to ensure that their use of communication will ensure inclusivity and full participation, protect privacy and confidentiality, and maintain collegiality.

Committees seeking to conduct business by ways other than physical meetings should do so only upon the unanimous consent of their members. Committees should use email to schedule meetings or distribute documents. They are advised not to use it to share ministry, respond to proposals, or engage in substantive discussions. These activities are best suited to synchronous communication such as physical meetings or telephone or video conferencing.

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