

NEW YORK YEARLY MEETING STATEMENT OF LEADINGS AND PRIORITIES

In approving this Statement of Leadings and Priorities, we commit to focus the energy and resources of our Yearly Meeting for the coming five years on achieving a vision of growing and vital monthly meetings which are open and loving communities, effective in their outreach, active in the world, and skillful in nurturing the spiritual lives of Friends of all ages. We envision a yearly meeting structure which is devoted to furthering this vision, is an effective focal point for organizing our collective work in the world, and which communicates that work broadly. We envision a yearly meeting structure which is accountable to these priorities, transparent in its finances and integrally connected to the monthly meetings it represents and supports. We envision a yearly meeting where there will no longer be “yearly meeting Friends” and “monthly meeting Friends,” but rather one, whole yearly meeting devoted to faithfully living out the leadings of the Spirit. We reaffirm our commitment to utilize these Leadings and Priorities in “preparing budgets, staff work plans, and other services and initiatives of the Yearly Meeting and its committees and constituent parts.” (Minute 2011-4-33.)

We Envision A Yearly Meeting Deeply Grounded In The Practice Of Our Faith

We hear a clear sense from Friends that the core of all they do centers in their Meeting for Worship and their life as a community. In support of this, their primary focus, Friends seek help in spiritual deepening, in developing clerking skills, in understanding principles of meetings for business, in understanding the role of vocal ministry and afterthoughts, in practicing pastoral care and conflict transformation, in participation in first day school and adult religious education programs. We, the Body of Friends gathered through our New York Yearly Meeting, recognize as a Priority for the Yearly Meeting the development of programs to teach and share our spiritual skills with each other, and to help meetings to revitalize themselves.

We Envision A Yearly Meeting Made Up Of Strong, Vital Monthly Meetings

Meetings and Friends seek information and assistance with the necessities of operating a meeting, such as insurance, cemetery maintenance, fund-raising and advancement. We, the Body of Friends gathered through our New York Yearly Meeting, recognize as a Priority for the Yearly Meeting the development of programs to help sustain our monthly meetings financially and to increase membership.

We Envision A Yearly Meeting Gathered Together Into One Body

Friends express a deep yearning for increased contact and connection with each other. Regular interaction among Friends throughout New York Yearly Meeting helps sustain and deepen our Society. We, the Body of Friends gathered through our New York Yearly Meeting, recognize as a Priority for the Yearly Meeting the pursuit of greater contact and spiritual relationship among Friends.

We Envision A Yearly Meeting That Nurtures Our Children, Youth, And Young Adults

We hear Friends' call to focus attention on integrating our children, youth and young adults into the fabric of our community and to provide opportunities for them to experience and reflect on our spiritual practices. We seek to offer abundant opportunities and welcoming spaces for exploring and growing into the Light. We seek to make our monthly meetings a place where they can develop loving relationships with peers and adults, where youth are supported as they transition to adulthood, and where young adults are recognized for their gifts and encouraged in their participation in their monthly meetings and beyond. We, the Body of Friends gathered through our New York Yearly Meeting, recognize as a Priority for the Yearly Meeting the nurturing of our children, youth, and young adults.

We Envision A Yearly Meeting That Supports and Amplifies Our Witness

Meetings and Friends look to the Yearly Meeting to be an active presence in the broader society for Friends' faith, values, ministry and witness. Through the Yearly Meeting, Friends can magnify our impact on our communities, nation and the world. Our collective voice speaks more loudly than those of individual Friends or monthly meetings. The Yearly Meeting affords the opportunity for Friends carrying common concerns to act in concert. We, the Body of Friends gathered through our New York Yearly Meeting, recognize as a Priority for the Yearly Meeting the responsibility to be an active voice for Friends' faith, values, ministry and witness in the world, and to support Friends active witness.

We Envision A Yearly Meeting That Is Accountable and Transparent

Meetings and Friends express concern that the Yearly Meeting organization has not been fully accountable and transparent in its operations. We envision a yearly meeting whose structure and operations are well understood by all Friends, and which is a faithful expression of the leadings of those Friends that make up the Yearly Meeting. In approving this Statement to guide our activities in the immediate future, we also bear a duty to assure that these Leadings and Priorities are faithfully implemented. We, the Body of Friends gathered through our New York Yearly Meeting, recognize as a Priority for the Yearly Meeting the responsibility to hold itself accountable to the above priorities, ensuring their faithful fruition.

While particular committees may be well-suited for pursuing parts of this vision, these are the Priorities of the Yearly Meeting as a whole. We are all responsible for all the aspects of this work. The Priorities arise from considerable and consistent input from Friends across the Yearly Meeting. Their realization will require the worshipful and focused dedication of everyone within the Yearly Meeting, including all our committees and working groups, all our staff, and all concerned Friends and meetings. We are called to work together to make this vision a reality.