

**New York Yearly Meeting**  
**Fall Sessions—Minutes**  
**November 1-3, 2019**

Powell House, Old Chatham, New York  
Saturday, November 2, 2019; 3:45p.m.

Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick), Clerk  
Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), Assistant Clerk  
Mary Eagleson, (Scarsdale), Recording Clerk  
Robin Mallison Alpern (Amawalk), Reading Clerk

2019-11-01. Clerk Jeffrey Aaron opened the session by commenting on how blessed we are by the many wonderful, loving Friends among us. In the face of some challenging discernment before us, he shared two recent quotes from *The New York Times*:

*In litigation, you get to choose who your opponents have to face in the courtroom. Why not choose the one firm they fear most? Quinn Emanuel is the law firm major companies least want to face. [poll quoted] So call us — and strike fear in the hearts of your opponents.*

—NY Times full page ad, p. B5 10/4/2019

*We live in a time of acute bitterness and acrimony, where people's first... impulse is to brutalize, insult, embarrass and demean those who hold different views. The purpose of language, as they see it, isn't to clarify or enlighten or reason together. It is to inflict the maximum pain possible on other human beings.*

—Peter Wehner, NY Times, 8/29/2019 p. A27

He continued, "We all spend most of our lives in this poisonous, often joyless atmosphere. We are all affected by it, but Friends have a powerful, Spirit based way to interact with grace. We refer to it as *sense of the meeting* business practice. It is accomplished with what is called *clerking consciousness*, where everyone has the same goal as the clerk: to find the best way forward for all. I am aware that I am preaching to the choir (much more after last night), but we all need reminders in stressful times. When we follow our practices well, we look for the Spirit in each other, we listen to each other carefully—not just waiting our turn to speak. We listen with an ear to understanding where the words are coming from so that our response is to the issue, not to each other, and our contributions are Spirit-led and constructive. It is different from secular consensus, where people look for the *lowest* common denominator. In a practice of the Spirit; we reach for the *highest* common denominator. As Paul says in the Bible, we are members one of another. It is not easy or fast, but when we hold to our practices, they lift us above the harshness around us to a Spirit based relationship, bringing us ever closer to the truly blessed community. I pray that even when we may disagree, we hold to our spiritual unity."

2019-11-02. The clerk introduced those at the clerks' table: Clerk Jeffrey Aaron, New Brunswick; Assistant Clerk Elaine Learnard, Conscience Bay; Recording Clerk Mary Eagleson, Scarsdale; Reading Clerk Robin Mallison Alpern, Amawalk

2019-11-03. Buffy Curtis, Mohawk Valley, read the attached acknowledgement of the land.

2019-11-04. The reading clerk read the names of the quarterly or regional meetings, with their constituent monthly meetings. Friends stood as the names of their meetings were read. All regions were represented. Maureen Lyons, an Indigenous elder to Indian Affairs committee, was reportedly on her way, but had not yet arrived.

2019-11-05. Steve Mohlke, Ithaca, and General Secretary of New York Yearly Meeting, reported on our experience with Pay as Led at Summer Sessions this past summer. The short version (complete notes attached) is that attendance was up, there were 81 who identified as first-timers or returnees after a long absence, and financially, we just about broke even. There were 72 attendees who self-identified as young adults. Steve Mohlke believes that both the greater affordability of the sessions and the Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series had a positive effect on the total number of young adults present.

Sessions Committee recommends that Pay as Led be used for summer sessions 2020, with reconsideration after the second year's experience. In response to a question about the cost in staff time, Steve Mohlke commented that in addition to initiating Pay as Led, the yearly meeting used master billing for the first time. This was not by choice; Silver Bay required it. The meeting approved Pay as Led for the coming year.

2019-11-06. Laura Cisar, New Brunswick, gave a preliminary treasurer's report as of Oct. 31 (to view, visit <https://nyym.org/session/fall-sessions-2019> and click on "Preliminary Treasurer's Report, October 2019"). A Friend asked how this report compares to last year's at the same date, and was told that it is comparable. Last year at the end of the year, there was a deficit. However, our treasurer is optimistic that we may break even this year.

Another Friend asked how much difficulty there was with cash flow, and the answer was that there were a few times during the year when we were very close to needing to dip into reserves. In response to another question about the budget deficit last year, Laura replied that the funds came from the operating reserve.

2019-11-07. Roseann Press, Housatonic Meeting and clerk of Trustees, gave a report from the Trustees on a plan for divestment of our funds in Friends Fiduciary Corporation from fossil fuels. (Click [HERE](#) to view.) This company now holds all our funds in the Quaker Growth and Income Fund, of which about 2% is invested in fossil fuel companies. The Trustees propose to transfer our funds from the Quaker Growth and Income Fund to the Quaker Green Fund, which is a much smaller fund, gradually over a period of six years, at the rate of 1/6 per year, beginning January 2, 2020.

Roseann presented a table on potential budget impacts of the transfer. The Green Fund currently distributes a lower percentage return than the Growth and Income Fund.

Trustees will closely monitor the performance of both funds, and if the negative impact of moving to the Green Fund is unacceptable, they may halt the process.

A Friend expressed concern about where the funds would be found to make up for the loss of income. Further, he pointed out that most of those present had driven to this area in gasoline-fueled cars, use plastic articles and wear clothing produced using fossil fuels. He saw a double standard between divesting from fossil fuel companies and using fossil fuels for many aspects of our life. Another Friend pointed out that rather than living a double standard, we are living through a transition. A third Friend asked about finding another or other green investment(s) besides Friends Fiduciary. A member of the newly re-formed investment committee of the Trustees responded that they are continuing to review the options.

2019-11-08. Mary Harpster, Rahway & Plainfield, Financial Services, presented a report from that committee and a proposal for the 2020 budget. (Committee report is attached. For proposed budget, visit <https://nyym.org/session/fall-sessions-2019> and click on “[Proposed Budget for 2020](#).”).

In 2018, Financial Services was charged with finding funds to support a full-time Children/Youth/Young Adult Field Secretary. It was not able to meet this challenge. It is now proposing a budget for 2020, which would contain funding for full-time staff support for children, youth, and young adults, starting in July, 2020, for a first reading. It is proposing a full-year budget with funding from January through June of 2020 for a part-time young adult field secretary.

The committee is first asking for approval of a process in which the budget including a part-year, part-time young adult field secretary is considered today, with the expectation that the budget with the full-time position starting in July will be brought back for consideration at spring sessions.

Several clarifying questions were raised and answered.

Leo Quirk, co-clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee, read a minute from that committee, pointing out that the possible redirection of several trust funds from Witness committees to the operating budget would be contrary to the goal expressed in our epistle from last year, of addressing structural racism within our yearly meeting. Most or all of the Witness funds being considered for redirection are used by Witness Committees to support people of color in various ways.

Discussion followed.

With one Friend standing aside, the meeting approved the process outlined above. It also approved a budget for 2020, which includes a part-time young adult field secretary through June, 2020. It will consider at spring sessions a revised budget which will include a full-time children/youth/young adult field secretary through year end. The hope is that this position would be continued for at least 3 years.

Powell House, Old Chatham, New York  
Saturday, November 2, 2019; 7:30p.m.

Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick), Clerk  
Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), Assistant Clerk  
Lucy (Lu) Harper (Rochester), Recording Clerk  
Robin Mallison Alpern (Amawalk), Reading Clerk

2019-11-09. The meeting centered in worship. Jeffrey Aaron read a quote from Charles Windsor, commonly known as Prince Charles, on the occasion of the canonization by Pope Francis of theologian John Newman. Charles, an Anglican, penned an editorial in which he said that Newman's fearless, honest example was needed today in an era of division and intolerance "for the manner in which...he could advocate without accusation, could disagree without disrespect and...could see differences as places of encounter rather than exclusion...In the image of divine harmony which Newman expressed...we can see how...as we follow with sincerity and courage the different paths to which conscience call us, all our divisions can lead to a greater understanding and all our ways can find a common home." Jeffrey noted that Charles clearly understands ways of the Spirit that Friends have tried to encourage the world to follow.

2019-11-10. Jeffrey Aaron introduced the clerk's table.

2019-11-11. Mary Eagleson, recording clerk for the afternoon session, read the minutes from the afternoon session. Friends approved the minutes.

2019-11-12. Jeffrey Aaron asked Friends to hold Karen Reixach (Ithaca) in the Light. Karen injured her shoulder and is not able to be with us tonight. Jeffrey introduced Lucy (Lu) Harper (Rochester) who will serve as recording clerk in Karen's stead.

2019-11-13. Assistant clerk Elaine Learnard clerked the remainder of the session.

2019-11-14. Karen Way (New Brunswick), clerk of the Committee to Revise *Faith & Practice*, brought forward the revised section on Clearness Committees for second reading (attached). A Friend raised suggestions pertinent to small meetings and suggested including "deep listening" in addition to "prayer" in the clearness process. Another Friend held up the importance of writing a letter requesting the clearness committee. A Friend upheld the centrality of our clearness process to Quakerism and encouraged us to find ways to share the process with our young people. Friends approved this section with the suggested additions.

2019-11-15. Karen Way summarized the multi-year process that led to the changes coming for a second reading to the Membership Section of *Faith & Practice* to create an additional membership pathway. The Additional (formerly Alternative) Membership Pathways Working Group, the Committee to Revise *Faith & Practice*, and the Ministry Coordinating

Committee have lovingly labored with how to best address the barriers of traditional membership to some Friends while honoring the rich tradition of local meeting membership in New York Yearly Meeting and the wider Religious Society of Friends. In the Advance Reports for Fall Sessions the membership section of *Faith & Practice* was included with the proposed revisions, along with frequently asked questions about alternative membership pathways and responses to the FAQs (attached). Karen read the new language that describes this additional pathway to membership.

A Friend asked whether other yearly meetings do this. Another Friend noted that the New Association of Friends and Ohio Yearly Meeting (Conservative) currently have variants of membership at the yearly meeting level. Friends raised questions about details of the process. Karen noted that it is expected that the details of the process will evolve. A Friend noted that incarcerated Friends will assume that membership does not apply to them if the language in *Faith & Practice* does not make it clear. This could be addressed in a later revision to *Faith & Practice*. Friends upheld membership as a “covenant relationship” rather than a “privilege.” A Friend expressed concern over the potential length of this process, but it was felt we could handle it. A Friend noted that adoption of this practice will require subsequent updating of handbook pages, for example, for the committee on Ministry & Pastoral Care. Friends offered additional suggestions which will be incorporated. Assistant clerk Elaine Learnard noted that early in the revision process the Committee to Revise *Faith & Practice* decided that not all the many details in the original proposal from the Alternative Membership Pathways Working Group needed to be included in *Faith & Practice*.

2019-11-16. After extended and tender discussion and ministry, the second reading was approved. Friends asked Ministry Coordinating Committee to report the names of new “at large” members at the next sessions after their acceptance, and in *Spark*.

2019-11-17. Fred Dettmer (Purchase) reported on the Federal lawsuit against the New York State Department of Correction and Community Supervision (DOCCS) on behalf of incarcerated members of Greenhaven Prison Preparative Meeting, Nine Partners Quarter, Bulls Head-Oswego Meeting, Poughkeepsie Meeting, the yearly meeting, and 10 individual Friends. [Green Haven Prison Preparative Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, et al. v. New York State Department of Corrections and Community Supervision, et al., United States District Court for the Southern District of New York (White Plains Division), Index No. 7:18-cv-08497 (KMK)]. Argument on the motion was held on October 30, 2019. Judge Kenneth M. Karas announced his decision to deny our motion, based partly upon the incarcerated members’ failure to follow the DOCCS internal grievance procedure. Fred is waiting to get the official transcript of the judge’s decision. A legal concern we may have with the judge’s decision is that he may have ruled that unincarcerated persons (such as the yearly meeting) do not have the right to bring a lawsuit regarding DOCCS decisions. If that is the case, we may appeal.

2019-11-18. Reading and approval of minutes occurred as the meeting progressed. The reading clerk read announcements. The meeting closed at 9:29 p.m. with waiting worship.

Powell House, Old Chatham, New York  
Saturday, November 3, 2019; 8:45am

Jeffrey Aaron (New Brunswick), Clerk  
Elaine Learnard (Conscience Bay), Assistant Clerk  
Mary Eagleson, (Scarsdale), Recording Clerk  
Susan Bingham, (Montclair), Reading Clerk

2019-11-19. After a period of centering, Clerk Jeffrey Aaron opened the meeting with the following remarks:

Words from the Talmud:

*Do not be daunted by the enormity of the world's grief. ... You are not obligated to complete our work, but neither are you free to abandon it.*

To avoid falling into despair at times in this harsh world, I find that I need to remind myself that some things have improved significantly. On my first birthday in 1945, an atomic bomb was dropped on Nagasaki to end years of unspeakable worldwide horror—with more horror. Race segregation would remain legal for years into the future and same gender sexual orientation was considered a mental illness—and remained so until only recently. When my mother was born, women were considered so inferior that they were not permitted to vote. A childhood friend told me that he had learned that humanity is the Crown of Creation. Apparently that meant in particular straight white men. *You are not obligated to complete our work, but neither are you free to abandon it.* And that's what Friends do. I am humbled by the undaunted striving of so many among us.

2019-11-20. Introductions: Assistant Clerk Elaine Learnard, Conscience Bay; Recording Mary Eagleson, Scarsdale; Reading Susan Bingham, Montclair

2019-11-21. Leo Quirk, Ithaca, Co-Clerk of Witness Coordinating Committee, read a proposal for a letter to Friends Fiduciary Corporation (attached), asking them to divest their funds from fossil fuel companies. Witness Coordinating Committee approved the attached minute, and requested that the letter incorporate the points made in that minute.

A Friend suggested changing the term “less developed countries” to “lower-income countries” or “marginalized and vulnerable communities.” Friends agreed on “marginalized and vulnerable communities.”

Another raised the question whether using the higher returns from the fossil fuels might not be morally preferable if those returns were invested in climate-mitigation actions. Trustees commented that as a result of their advocacy, Friends Fiduciary has begun to work on making its Green Fund more profitable. Second, they felt that using income from fossil fuel investments to fight the results of using fossil fuels might be inconsistent with integrity.

A Friend noted that the yearly meeting maintains a list describing its committees for use by those who might be seeking to become active at the yearly meeting committee level. She asked that the yearly meeting prepare a similar list of working groups, specifically to

encourage participation from younger Friends. This was referred to the clerks of the sections.

One Friend commented that as long as we maintain the current growth-based economic model, we may not succeed in reducing climate change. He asked how we might learn to develop relationships and regard wealth in more and other terms than monetary.

Margaret McCasland, Co-Clerk of the Earthcare Working Group, asked the floor whether we should add to the resources attached to the minute from Witness two books from the Quaker Institute for the Future (approved) or remove the reference to the UN Sustainable Development Goals (not approved.)

The body approved the minute, with the deletion of the phrase "Growth and Income Fund," in the second paragraph, and changing "Friends testimonies call us" to "we are called" in the first paragraph. The change from "less developed countries" noted above will also be incorporated. The body further approved sending a letter, signed by the clerk and general secretary, to Friends Fiduciary containing the concerns raised in the minute.

The working group will continue working on the several concerns raised here today. It was suggested that an epistle on the topic of divestment might be crafted and shared widely among Friends.

2019-11-22. Anne Pomeroy, New Paltz, read a travel minute for Emily Provance (attached). Ministry followed. The body directed the clerk to endorse this minute for Emily.

2019-11-23. Jeffrey Aaron introduced the Seasoned Business Items List (formerly "consent agenda"), from which the minute on gun violence has been removed, at the request of those proposing it. The meeting approved the list. Items are attached:

2019-11-24. Revisions to NYYM Handbook entry for the NYYM Board of Trustees

2019-11-25. A report from the Priorities Support Working Group

2019-11-26. A report from the Meetings for Discernment Steering Committee

2019-11-27. Nominations

2019-11-28. A second reading of the proposed changes to the Trustees' By-Laws.

2019-11-29. NYYM's endorsement of the Ribbon Project, plus supplemental materials.

2019-11-30. Lisa Gasstrom announced an event of interest to those who support the abolition of nuclear weapons, related to the Ribbon Project, which is one item on the Seasoned Business Items List. The event is the World Conference/Rally/March on Disarmament, Peace, Climate & Justice. It is scheduled for April 24-26, 2020 at Riverside Church, Manhattan. A planning meeting, to which all interested people are invited, will be held on Thursday, Nov. 14, at GODDARD RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY CENTER, 593 Columbus Ave at 88th Street, NYC.

2019-11-31. Margot Gardow, Chatham-Summit, has been nominated to the Powell House committee, class of 2022. Friends approved the nomination.

2019-11-32. Jeffrey Aaron reported on an interim actions item: signing on to an amicus brief to the Supreme Court dated October 4, 2019 on behalf of religious organizations from around

the country challenging the government's rescission of DACA (Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals), as was done previously for an amicus brief to the lower courts under the clerkship of Lucinda Antrim. The brief is available separately ([here.](#))

2019-11-33. Aeryn Cullinane, Rochester, presented the mission statement of the newly formed Differently Abled Friends and Allies Working Group of GSCC, and invited Friends to share concerns with them. (statement attached.)

Emily Provance noted that Britain Yearly Meeting has been working on this concern for some time, and can give advice to the working group if they ask. She knows that there are many yearly meetings throughout the world who feel a need for this work. She thanked the working group, and asked that generally, when the yearly meeting communicates news, it remember to say "*Spark*, InfoShare, Facebook and Instagram." The audiences reached by each of these platforms are different.

2019-11-34. Melanie-Claire Mallison, Ithaca, gave the final report for Sessions Committee (attached). She thanked the region, Powell House, Old Chatham Monthly Meeting, and a number of individuals on the host committee for hosting. She reported that there were 142 registered; 127 participants, including two babies. Next session will take place at Oakwood School, hosted by Sessions Committee, Purchase & Nine Partners, and possibly Butternuts. The theme for 2020 will be **Embracing our Past, Envisioning our Future**. This will be the 325<sup>th</sup> anniversary of NYYM. We hope to take an honest look at our past, both the beautiful and the heart-breaking. What have we learned over the past 325 years that our country needs to learn?

2019-11-35. Announcements followed.

# Attachments

## Acknowledgement of the Land

*See minute 2019-11-03*

Tonight, we give humble thanks to the original peoples of this land where we now meet, the “Muh-he-can-neak, the People of the Waters that Are Never Still,” known today as the Mohicans. The lands they lived on extended as far north as Lake Champlain, and south to Manhattan Island, and included both sides of the Hudson River.

For centuries, they lived on and cared for the vast bounty of life that surrounded them. Their families, clans, tribes and nations were strong and essential to survival and harmony.

Contact with the exploring settlers, the Dutch in the 1600's followed by the English, brought profound and deadly consequences to their lives and lands. Disease, missionizing, and continual wars decimated their populations. Dissention among the various bands, caused by having to choose sides in the conflicts, found warriors returning to their villages being forced to move westward as their lands became payment to the soldiers who won.

The Mohicans, like many of the Eastern native peoples, and their Haudenosaunee neighbors were forced to become part of the exodus west and into Canada by the conquering greed for land and resources. Those who chose to remain did their best to “fit in” or “disappear.”

And yet, to this day, they reside among us—we who are beneficiaries of the stolen lands. There is a renewal of connection and reclamation happening—an honoring of their presence and their “original instructions” to honor the Earth and all beings, for the good and survival of all. To this end, we bring forth this acknowledgement—to call us into the awareness of our original teachers, to help heal the many wounds, and to answer the imperative to work together in humility and gratitude.

To the Mohican/Lenape peoples, we give our deep and abiding thanks. May we walk forward together in knowledge and peace. (Source: <https://www.mohican.com/origin-early-history/>)

## Report on Pay as Led

*See minute 2019-11-05*

At Summer Sessions 2017, we (NYYM business meeting) decided to take a big risk and change the economic structure of how people pay for their stays (meals and lodging) at Summer Sessions. Rather than ask each person or family to pay the exact cost of their stay, we decided that at future Summer Sessions we would give people flexibility to decide to pay for their stay with an amount appropriate to them, to pay as led (PaL). It is an act of trust in each other. It is a way of acknowledging that the resources of the world we live in are not

distributed evenly, that our community is stronger when more of us are present for sessions, and that finances are a barrier to some being present.

For logistical reasons, Sessions Committee was not able to implement PaL in 2018. At that time Silver Bay, our host, still assigned rooms and collected payment for stays. It was not appropriate for them to take on the additional administration of PaL and Sessions Committee and NYYM staff were not ready to take on the role of assigning of rooms and collecting of payments which is also known as Master Billing. With an additional year to prepare and the planned transition to Master Billing, we tried PaL in the Summer of 2019.

### **How did it go?**

Attendance was up and financially we were about the same as the previous year.

### **Attendance**

Overall, approximately 480 people stayed overnight at least one night. Based on trends from the last few years, we would have expected roughly 410. Another big story is that 72 self-identified young adults attended. While we don't have attendance numbers from previous years specifically for young adult friends, this was a significant increase. The six-weekend Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series also contributed to the increase in attendance. The count of people who identified as first time attenders or first time in a long time attenders was 81. Though we don't have records for first time attenders at past Summer Sessions, experienced staff believe this is also a significant increase.

### **PaL and Master Billing**

Pay as Led and Master Billing are separate but we started both at the same time. Pay as Led is fundamentally about how we ask each other to pay for Summer Sessions. We can choose to continue or not. Master Billing, paying the venue on one master bill instead of the venue charging each person separately, is here to stay. We are the last group for whom Silver Bay assigned rooms and collected payments. Master billing is the standard process for groups of our size at most venues. The extra work associated with Master Billing took a great deal more time than previous Summer Sessions for existing staff and an unsustainable amount of time for a few volunteers. Sessions Committee, YM staff, and volunteers are exploring ways to improve this.

### **Finances**

NYYM was able to pay the bill from Silver Bay for our stays, in full, with funds we took in for Summer Sessions. With Pay as Led, many more people contributed and we were able to help many more people. The total bill from Silver Bay for all of our stays, including their discount for a group our size, was about \$250,000. The amount NYYM paid from budget lines including JYM Volunteer Support, Sessions Committee Program, Staff Travel, and other budget lines was about \$23,000. While people registered as individuals, families typically paid together so our financial counts are in terms of payer groups. Some payer groups were one person, some were multiple. In total, we had about 260 payer groups. Roughly 80 payer groups paid a total of \$23,000 less than the cost of their stay and therefore did not make the voluntary registration contribution. Their registration contributions would have been

roughly \$5,000 under the non-PaL system. Roughly 110 payer groups paid \$28,000 more than the cost of their stays plus registration. This generosity covered the stays and registrations for those who paid less. In prior years, and still for Spring and Fall Sessions, we use the Equalization Fund as a method for people to contribute and receive financial support.

### **Recommendation**

The Sessions Committee recommends that NYYM use the Pay as Led model for Summer Sessions for 2020. The committee does not recommend making a longer-term commitment to the Pay as Led model at this time.

## **Preliminary Treasurer’s Report as of Oct. 31, 2019**

*See minute 2019-11-06*

Visit <https://nyym.org/session/fall-sessions-2019> and select “Preliminary Treasurer’s Report, October 2019.” Or click [HERE](#) to view the document directly.

## **Trustees Plan for Divestment from Fossil Fuels**

*See minute 2019-11-07*

### **Trustees’ Suggested Plan for Divestment**

For a copy of the document that the Investment Committee of Trustees presented to the Trustees at their meeting on September 7, visit <https://nyym.org/session/fall-sessions-2019> and click on “Trustees Report on Plan for Divestment from Fossil Fuels.” Or click [HERE](#) to view the document directly.

## **Financial Services Committee Report on Proposed Budgets for 2020**

*See minute 2019-11-08*

Financial Services Committee (FSC) is presenting two budgets for New York Yearly Meeting’s 2020 operations—one that provides **partial** funding for children, youth and young adult staff support and one that provides **full** funding for children, youth and young adult staff support. Significant time and effort has gone into developing the budget that provides full funding; however, FSC believes the process is not yet complete and needs more time and discernment. **The committee is recommending the Yearly Meeting approve at Fall Sessions the budget that provides partial funding.** This will give the Yearly Meeting an approved budget for 2020 that contains funding to continue the current Interim Young Adult Field Secretary position through June. Meanwhile, FSC will continue the necessary seasoning of the budget that includes full funding, with the goal of completing the process by Spring Sessions.

## Background

At Summer Sessions 2018, the Yearly Meeting affirmed the need to create full-time staff support for youth and young adults (Y/YA) and directed FSC to craft a 2019 budget that included this position. At Fall Sessions 2018, a 2019 operating budget was presented that included the Y/YA position funded primarily by a drawdown from invested trust funds and redirection of funds away from several other Yearly Meeting activities. Since there was not support for this budget it was withdrawn. Per NYYM's financial procedures covering this situation, a small group of people drafted an interim budget for 2019 and FSC presented a new budget at Spring Sessions 2019, which was approved. It did not include funding for the Y/YA position.

Following Summer Sessions 2019, an ad hoc committee worked to identify sources of income that could be redirected towards funding full-time staff support for Y/YA.

## Where we are now

Using the ad hoc committee's work, FSC has drafted a proposed budget that includes full-time Y/YA support. This budget requires many difficult changes. On the budget spreadsheet, the column labeled "2020 Full Y/YA" is this budget.

As a preliminary matter, FSC affirms its belief that all of the ways we are currently using our resources support good work. A proposed decrease in financial support for an activity does not reflect a judgement of the value of that work. It simply reflects the fact that we are not able to afford to continue to do everything we are currently doing and also have the financial resources for full-time staff support of youth and young adults.

The Full Y/YA budget is based on the assumption that it is the first year of a three-year plan. That is, some of the changes made to support this plan are only being made for a three-year period. Before the end of this three-year period, the Yearly Meeting will need to do further discernment regarding appropriate next steps.

In drafting the full Y/YA budget, the ad hoc committee, and then FSC, considered all possible sources of income that could be directed towards funding the work with Y/YA. As part of this work, the Trustees have agreed to some drawdown of trust fund principal to support the Y/YA position, if needed. The total of the potential drawdown has been capped at \$109,000 over the three years of this plan. These funds will only be drawn down at the end of each year if there is a shortfall. Relying on trust fund principal to more fully fund the position is not sustainable.

While significant time has been spent in discernment of the Full Y/YA budget by FSC, it was the sense of the committee that it is not yet fully seasoned and would be better presented as a first reading at Fall Sessions. In particular, there are some decisions that need to be made by various committees, and some actions that need to be taken by the Yearly Meeting, before the budget will be ready to be approved. The affected committees have been working on making the necessary decisions, but there has not been adequate time for them to complete

the process. In addition, it was the sense of FSC that the Yearly Meeting could not be asked to approve a budget with significant changes, without first providing information on the impact of these changes—such as the impact of redirecting income from some trust funds to the operating account and away from Witness committees—and appropriate time to discern and reflect.

Therefore, FSC has also prepared a budget, labeled “2020 Partial Y/YA” on the spreadsheet. This budget includes funding to continue an Interim Young Adult Field Secretary through June, but without the need for the significant changes necessary for the Full Y/YA budget. FSC commits to continue the process that was begun by the ad hoc committee, and to continue to work with the affected committees, with the goal of bringing an updated, more fully-seasoned budget to the Yearly Meeting at Spring Sessions. This will also allow time for the Yearly Meeting body to review the information regarding the proposed changes that need to be approved, so these changes can be addressed at Spring Sessions.

**FSC is recommending approval of the 2020 Partial Y/YA budget and is requesting the Yearly Meeting’s discernment at Fall Sessions on the issues raised in the first reading of the 2020 Full Y/YA budget.**

## **NOTES ON THE PROPOSED BUDGETS**

All comments are regarding the Full Y/YA budget, unless noted otherwise. Any information pertaining to the Partial Y/YA budget is in *italics*.

### **Income**

#### **Donations**

- The Full Y/YA budget shows a modest increase in covenant donations on the assumption that the new staff support will be a motivating factor for Meetings to increase their covenant donations.
- The Development committee is projecting a \$20,000 increase in the annual appeal for the Full Y/YA budget, from the \$40,000 historic base, on the assumption that the new staff support will be a motivating factor. (The larger number in 2018 included a one-time single contribution of \$25,000.) *The partial Y/YA budget includes a \$5,000 increase.*

#### **Trust Fund distributions redirected from existing uses to operations**

- Meeting Houses and Properties Fund - This fund was established by Trustees to help Meetings with the expense of caring for their properties. The majority of the principal for the fund came from the sale of properties, so there is no donor restriction on the use of the fund’s distributions. The Full Y/YA budget would redirect trust fund distributions from the care of meeting houses and properties to Yearly Meeting operations for three years.

- Committee on the Expenditure of the H.H. Mosher Fund - The committee receives funding from the Edward B. Underhill Fund and Henry H. Mosher Fund, two funds that are under the care of the Yearly Meeting Trustees. The disbursements from these two trust funds are designated for the support of publications. The current major activity of this committee is the book table at summer sessions and the distribution of books to Monthly Meetings and other individuals and institutions. *In both proposed budgets, the distributions from these two funds would be redirected to operations in support of Yearly Meeting publications.* The committee would continue to manage the book table at summer sessions and would receive \$500 for operating costs and limited provision of free books. While this would not be sufficient to continue providing monthly meetings with free books at Summer Sessions, it would allow the committee to continue to provide books to prison worship groups. This will require the approval of a minute by the Yearly Meeting.
- *In addition to redirecting the trust fund income to operations, both budgets would lay down the Committee on the Expenditure of the H.H. Mosher Fund.*
- Lindley Murray Trust Fund - The trustees of the Lindley Murray Fund are appointed by the Yearly Meeting and are a separate body from the Yearly Meeting Trustees. The trustees of the fund meet annually to approve grants made from the proceeds of this fund. The Full Y/YA budget would direct all of the proceeds of this fund to Yearly Meeting operations for a three-year period, thus prioritizing Y/YA support over outside organizations. The chart below shows the 2019 contributions made by this fund. The lost contributions to Oakwood Friends School and Powell House would be offset by additional contributions in the operating budget.

<b>Lindley Murray Fund</b>	<b>Contribution</b>	
<b>NYYM Related Organizations</b>		\$ 8,550.00
Oakwood Friends School	\$ 6,000.00	
Powell House	\$ 2,550.00	
<b>Other Quaker Organizations</b>		\$ 9,900.00
American Friends Service Committee	\$ 1,900.00	
Friends General Conference	\$ 3,500.00	
Friends Journal	\$ 2,600.00	
FCNL	\$ 1,900.00	
<b>Other Contributions</b>		\$ 10,944.00
Scholarship	\$ 1,000.00	
Long Island Council of Churches	\$ 1,600.00	
Westbury Friends School	\$ 1,500.00	
YSOP	\$ 1,650.00	
Alternatives to Violence Project	\$ 1,350.00	
American Indian Community House	\$ 1,000.00	
Amerinda	\$ 1,394.00	
A Quaker Journey	\$ 500.00	
Creative Response to Conflict	\$ 950.00	
<i>Total Designated by Lindley Murray</i>	<b>\$ 29,394.00</b>	<b>\$ 29,394.00</b>

- Drawing Down Unrestricted Trust Fund Principal – The Trustees have committed to drawing down a maximum of \$109,000 of the principal of selected trust funds over the next three years, which represents \$100,000 to help fund staff support of youth and young adults, plus \$9,000 directed to annual operations to cover lost distributions associated with the \$100,000 drawdown. Trustees can only tap into the principal of funds that do not specify the preservation of principal. There is approximately \$1.8 million available to be drawn down. However, the proceeds from these funds are currently funding annual operations and every \$10,000 we draw down will reduce the income to operations by \$400 annually, assuming a 4% distribution rate.
  
- Trust Fund distributions without donor restrictions - These are distributions from trust funds that are no longer restricted in their use by the original donor designation. The primary reason for the change is that the amount of the original donation has already been distributed according to the wishes of the donor. The identification of trust funds with this status was made as part of a multi-year process to clarify the status and appropriate use of all the Yearly Meeting’s trust funds, with the assistance of the auditor. Following this discernment, in September 2018, the Trustees decided the funds listed below were now available for reassignment; and, for reasons of transparency and clarity, it would be most appropriate for the distributions from the funds to be directed to the operating budget, from which they would be allocated annually by the Yearly Meeting. Currently, the proceeds from these trust funds continue to go to uses similar to those originally identified by the donors. To accomplish the Trustees goal of transparency and clarity, the Yearly Meeting will be asked to approve directing the distributions of these funds to the operating budget.
  - The Full 2020 Y/YA budget includes allocations to offset the loss of the funds previously going to Powell House and Oakwood Friends School, and \$10,000 to the Sharing Fund to offset the loss of the funds to Witness. However, future budgets may make different designations, based on the priorities of the Yearly Meeting.

<b>Fund</b>	<b>Year</b>	<b>Donation Amount</b>	<b>Donor Designation</b>	<b>Designated Use</b>	<b>2019 Dividend</b>	<b>June 2019 Value</b>
<b>Witness Committees</b>						
Ellen L. Congdon	1926	\$4,000	Indians, Colored People, Mexicans	Barrington Dunbar	\$1,088	\$32,400
Levinus Painter Scholarship	1990	\$3,000	Indian Affairs Committee	Indian Affairs	\$308	\$9,165
Mae D. Barton	1967	\$13,594	American Indians	Indian Affairs	\$2,668	\$79,461
Ellen Collins	1914-1926	\$15,000	Temperance work	Prisons	\$4,080	\$121,500
Ella J. Chapman	1942	\$7,000	Missions	World Ministries	\$1,904	\$56,700
Ellen Collins Missionary	1914	\$10,000	Missions	World Ministries	\$2,720	\$81,000
Mary F. Thomas	1924	\$1,800	Home and Foreign Missions	World Ministries	\$490	\$14,580
Smyrna Meeting	1967	\$1,000	Missions	World Ministries	\$196	\$5,832
<b>Oakwood Friends School</b>						
High Point	1893-1936	\$12,125	African American students	Oakwood students	\$3,297	\$98,172
<b>Powell House</b>						
Maria W. Barton	1976	\$19,882	Educational Purposes	Powell House	\$3,514	\$104,652
<b>TOTAL</b>					<b>\$20,264</b>	<b>\$603,462</b>

## **Expenses**

### **Personnel**

In September 2019, the Yearly Meeting hired an Interim Young Adult Field Secretary. *Both budgets include funding for that part-time position until mid-year 2020.* Assuming, even with full funding, that the hiring of full-time staff would likely take place in mid-2020, the Full Y/YA budget adds funding for this position starting mid-year.

### **Contributions to Outside Organizations**

*Both budgets distinguish among the various outside organizations that are currently supported by the Yearly Meeting.*

- **NYYM-Related Organizations** - Oakwood and Powell House are the two organizations under the care of the Yearly Meeting. The Full Y/YA budget maintains the same level of support in 2020 for these organizations as they received in 2019 from all Yearly

Meeting sources. Funds previously directed to these organizations from Lindley Murray and the no-longer-donor-designated trust funds (mentioned above) are now included directly in the operating budget. In addition, Oakwood would continue to receive approximately \$54,000 in donor-designated trust fund income as part of that support.

- Affiliated Organizations (FUM, FGC, and FWCC) - The Yearly Meeting budget has traditionally included support for the named representatives to these organizations and a direct contribution to the organizations. *Both budgets maintain the same level of contribution in 2020 as these organizations received in 2019.* Both budgets also include support for named representatives.
- Membership Organizations - These are two State Council of Churches organizations: New York and New Jersey. *Both budgets include a proportional contribution to each council.*
- Other Organizations – *Both budgets use the rationale that discernment of which other external organizations should receive funding is best made by Witness Coordinating Committee, using Sharing Fund proceeds.* Neither budget includes any offsetting allocation to Witness to fund these organizations.

### **Proposed Operating Budgets for 2020**

Visit [nyym.org/session/fall-sessions-2019](http://nyym.org/session/fall-sessions-2019) and click on “[Proposed Budget for 2020.](#)”

## **Proposed Revision to *Faith and Practice* Clearness Committees, Second Presentation**

*See minute 2019-11-14*

### **CLEARNESS COMMITTEE**

[Replaces paragraph on p. 121 of 2018 edition]

Clearness Committees are focused, private meetings for worship intended to clarify a situation or a decision. Traditionally, the clearness committee is used in discerning readiness for a couple to marry or for an individual to be approved for membership. Additionally, the clearness committee can be used for personal discernment—to address particularly stressful personal decisions, to reconcile Friends in conflict, or to seek clarity in leadings and ministries. A Clearness Committee seeks to determine whether the way ahead is clear of encumbrances and whether persons are clear hearing the Spirit.

To set up a Clearness Committee for personal discernment, an individual or group usually approaches the clerk of Ministry and Counsel or Pastoral Care within a monthly meeting, regional meeting, or worship group. The person or persons asking for clearness works with Ministry and Counsel to select a few people who will form the Clearness Committee. It is helpful to designate a convener who will be responsible for scheduling, opening and closing

meeting, and managing discussion and worship. The person requesting clearness should have unencumbered participation in the meeting.

A Clearness Committee session begins with a period of worship and maintains the frame of worship throughout. Maintaining a spirit of openness and prayerful waiting, the committee seeks to help the individual discern the path forward. The members are there to listen without prejudice, to help clarify alternatives and their implications, to facilitate communication, and to provide spiritual support for the process of seeking God's will.

Clarity may be reached in one session or it might take several sessions. This process should not be viewed as an occasion for advice nor as a substitute for therapy or professional counseling. When it works well, the Clearness Committee allows an individual to draw on the gathered discernment of Friends to address immediate problems, concerns, or decisions.

p. 114 paragraph 3: replace overseers with pastoral care, lines 2 and 6

## **Proposed Revision to *Faith and Practice* Membership Through New York Yearly Meeting, Second Presentation**

*See minute 2019-11-15*

### **FAITH & PRACTICE REVISION FOR CONSIDERATION AT FALL SESSIONS 2019**

- > *New sections in red*
- > *For purposes of consistency, "Ministry and Pastoral Care" is used to mean any committee with those functions, including Ministry and Counsel, Ministry and Oversight, and other such usages*
- > *The proposed pathway revision being considered begins [HERE](#)*

#### **2. MEMBERSHIP**

Friends accept into active membership those whose declarations and ways of life manifest such unity with Friends' views and practices that they may be expected to enter fully into religious fellowship with the meeting. Part of the essential genius of the Society is the experience of growth through common worship and the loving acceptance of an individual by the group. It is an open fellowship that recognizes that of God in everyone.

Those inclined to join us should review carefully this entire book of *Faith and Practice* and other Friends' literature so as to gain an understanding of the basis of the Quaker faith, mode of worship, and manner of transacting business. They should attend meetings for worship and for business for a sufficient period of time to become convinced that membership will nourish and enrich their continuing growth in the life of

the Spirit. They should be aware that this growth may entail changes in every aspect of their lives.

**There are two paths to becoming a member of the Religious Society of Friends in New York Yearly Meeting. The first is to apply to a monthly meeting or executive meeting.** Membership in a monthly or executive meeting includes membership in the quarterly or equivalent meeting, the New York Yearly Meeting, Friends United Meeting, and Friends General Conference.

**The second path is to apply directly to the Yearly Meeting without specifying a monthly meeting. The application, addressed to the Clerk of Ministry & Pastoral Care of New York Yearly Meeting, should include the applicant's spiritual journey, their involvement in a Friends organization, and why applying to a monthly or executive meeting is inappropriate or impossible at this time. As with membership in a monthly meeting, membership in the yearly meeting includes membership in Friends United Meeting and Friends General Conference.**

All applicants for membership should have knowledge of the Friends World Committee for Consultation, the American Friends Service Committee, and the Friends Committee on National Legislation.

**Whichever path is chosen,** membership is a privilege and entails a corresponding responsibility. Members should be prepared to give resources of time and money. The shared ministry of the Society and the importance of the proper functioning of committees and meetings demand participation and cooperation. Membership is a commitment to enter wholeheartedly into the spiritual and corporate activities of the Society and to willingly assume responsibility for both service and support as the way opens.

**APPLICATION TO A MONTHLY MEETING.** A person applying for membership should address a letter to the monthly meeting, stating the reasons for wishing to join the Religious Society of Friends and indicating the extent of unity with its principles and testimonies. This letter, addressed to the monthly meeting, is forwarded to the meeting's committee on ministry and pastoral care, who should acknowledge it promptly.

The committee on ministry and pastoral care will appoint from among their members a clearness committee, which has the responsibility to evaluate an applicant for membership. Monthly meetings without a formal committee on ministry and pastoral care will undertake this responsibility directly. Although not requiring acceptance of any specific statement of faith or theological formulation of belief, the clearness committee should ascertain by personal visits the religious background and views of the applicant and the person's knowledge and acceptance of Friends' principles and practices. In particular, the applicant should be acquainted with the varieties of religious interpretation existing throughout the Society and with its emphasis on the loving spirit and teachings of Jesus.

The applicant should discuss frankly with the clearness committee any reservations concerning Friends' beliefs and practices.

The clearness committee will explain the responsibilities and opportunities inherent in membership. These include faithful attendance at meetings for worship and business, service on committees, sharing in financial support of the meeting, and involvement in regional and yearly meeting activities. The clearness committee will report to the monthly meeting's committee on ministry and pastoral care who will then make a recommendation to the monthly meeting. If the committee reports that they find no obstruction, the monthly meeting may immediately receive the applicant into membership. If the committee feels that the applicant is not yet ready for membership, they may postpone recommending action until a subsequent meeting. It is then their responsibility to become better acquainted with the applicant and to offer such instruction and guidance as seem appropriate.

When the monthly meeting accepts an applicant into membership, the clerk records the action and furnishes the new member a copy of the approving minute. The meeting may appoint a welcoming committee.

Each meeting has a corporate personality of its own, so it is inevitable that there will be local coloration in the interpretation of membership requirements. This should not be construed, however, as license to impose additional requirements for membership or to set aside the guidelines in this Discipline. The receiving meeting must be mindful of the fact that it acts not only in its own behalf but in the name of the Religious Society of Friends in its entirety.

#### **APPLICATION TO THE YEARLY MEETING.**

An adult who applies for membership "at large" in the body of New York Yearly Meeting is expected to have been actively involved in the yearly meeting business, committees, communities, worship, events, or sessions. Sometimes life circumstances make it difficult or impossible to join or regularly attend a monthly meeting. Applicants may be incarcerated, living in remote locations, frequently traveling, working as caregivers, or simply not finding a spiritual home in a nearby monthly meeting. Those seeking membership by this path should be prepared to give resources of time and/or money, and to participate in the work of the yearly meeting through committees, task groups, sessions, and Powell House. A commitment to enter wholeheartedly into the spiritual and corporate activities of the Society and to assume responsibility, as way opens, is expected.

The prospective Friend should write a letter addressed to the clerk of the Ministry and Pastoral Care Committee of New York Yearly Meeting stating the reasons for joining the Religious Society of Friends and why membership under the care of the yearly meeting is sought at this time, rather than membership through a monthly or executive meeting. The letter should include the applicant's experience in worship, how the applicant is in unity

with Friends' testimonies and principles, and how the applicant envisions being involved in New York Yearly Meeting.

A designee of Ministry and Pastoral Care and at least one other Friend with a seasoned understanding of New York Yearly Meeting will consider the application letter and appoint a clearness committee of at least three people. If the applicant is recommended for membership by the clearness committee and the Committee on Ministry and Pastoral Care unites with that recommendation, the clerk of Ministry and Pastoral Care will advise the clerk of Ministry Coordinating Committee and the New York Yearly Meeting office to record the new friend as a member. Ministry Coordinating Committee may appoint a welcoming committee.

CHILDREN. Friends have a particular responsibility to bring children under the loving care of the meeting. Friends should be sensitive to the needs of these young people, nurturing their spiritual well-being and helping them grow into mature and concerned members.

Meetings differ in the ways in which they encourage children's participation. Some monthly and executive meetings record children as members at birth or adoption when both parents are members, unless parents request otherwise. Meetings may also extend membership to children under age 18: a) by written request of both member parents; b) by request of a member parent and written consent, if possible, of the nonmember parent; c) by request of a guardian; OR d) by request of the child upon recommendation of the committee on ministry and pastoral care.

Some meetings record children as associate members.

[It is] our desire that all persons on whom involuntary membership has been conferred, either by birth or through entrance of parents into membership, be reaffirmed by commitment at an age which would make this appropriate.  
—Yearly Meeting Minute #13, 1976

All members age 18 and over are considered adult members for statistical and financial purposes.

SOJOURNING MEMBERSHIP. Friends who expect to be residing temporarily within the limits of monthly meetings not their own may request from their own meetings recommendations of sojourning membership. If their meetings approve, they may issue certificates commending these Friends to the other meetings and stating the lengths of time during which the sojourning memberships are to be effective. This temporary residence may include intermittent periods, such as that of students attending school or college or of Friends working under concerns that take them from home. Following the general procedures for membership applications, the meetings with which they wish to associate may accept Friends into sojourning membership, according them the same privileges and responsibilities as full members but not including them in the total membership of the meetings for statistical reports.

A certificate of sojourning membership does not terminate the membership in the originating meeting.

**ATTENDERS.** Attenders are those who manifest a continuing interest in the life of the meeting. Friends should welcome their participation in activities of the meeting, but they may not serve as clerks of the meeting, treasurers, elders, trustees, or members of ministry and pastoral care, or on the Finance, Advancement, or Nominating Committees, and they should know that it is the members who must make the decisions in the meetings for business.

**TRANSFER OF MEMBERSHIP.** **When a monthly meeting or the yearly meeting receives a request for transfer** from one of its members, the relevant Committee on Ministry and Pastoral Care should carefully inquire into the condition of the member's religious and temporal affairs. If, on such inquiry, it seems proper to do so, the meeting should direct its clerk to issue a minute of transfer and promptly forward it to the monthly or yearly meeting to which transfer is desired. Transfer minutes for those recorded in the gifts of ministry should so state. If objection to a transfer appears, the clerks of the meetings involved should confer.

When the meeting to which the member wishes to transfer receives the minute, its clerk should refer it to the relevant Committee on Ministry and Pastoral Care. Unless objection appears, the meeting should accept and record the Friend as a member. Until this is done, the Friend remains a member of the former meeting. The clerk of the meeting accepting the transfer should notify the former meeting of that action. One or more Friends should be appointed to visit the transferred member and extend a welcome.

**JOINING OTHER DENOMINATIONS.** If a member wishes to join another religious denomination, **the monthly or yearly meeting may grant a letter of recommendation and remove the individual's name from membership.** When any member has joined another denomination without requesting a letter of recommendation, the monthly or yearly meeting should remove the individual's name from the list of members, and the clerk should send notice of this action to the person concerned.

**RELEASE FROM MEMBERSHIP.** **When a member requests the monthly meeting or yearly meeting to release her or him from membership,** the meeting should appoint Friends to visit (or write to) the member and to inquire sensitively into the matter. If the member does not reconsider, the meeting should release that Friend from membership. The clerk should write to the former member, quoting the minute of release. For reinstatement, the applicant must follow the usual order of application for membership.

**DISCONTINUANCE.** After having made sustained and diligent efforts to reclaim the commitment of those Friends who have lost touch with meetings, **monthly meetings or the yearly meeting may discontinue their membership.**

Before taking that action, the meeting should have sent letters of loving inquiry to such members at least once a year for a period of three years. Having received no satisfactory replies, the monthly meeting clerk or the clerk of the Committee on Ministry and Pastoral Care may make a minute discontinuing membership and so inform the person(s) concerned.

DISOWNMENT. Whether at the monthly or Yearly Meeting level, a meeting should not disown a member until every method of reconciliation has been exhausted. Formal complaints against a member should be considered prayerfully by the Committee on Ministry and Pastoral Care. A committee appointed to confer with the member should labor in love to try to resolve the problem. Care should be taken to distinguish between the deed and the doer. If the committee is unable to restore the member to fellowship with the meeting, the matter should be brought before the monthly meeting or the Yearly Meeting's Committee on Ministry and Pastoral Care which will, if it still be unresolved, prepare a minute of disownment. The member shall be given a copy of the minute and the membership records updated accordingly.

A disowned member of a monthly meeting may appeal the disownment to the appropriate regional meeting within six months for a review. If the regional meeting upholds the decision of the monthly meeting, the individual can still appeal to the yearly meeting. Likewise, a disowned member of NYYM can appeal to Ministry Coordinating Committee and then the yearly meeting. When there is a review before a quarterly or the yearly meeting, a committee of three should be appointed to represent the membership body from which the appeal is taken. Review may, by common accord, be conducted before a judicious and representative committee appointed by the meeting to which appeal is made rather than before the entire meeting.

## **Alternate Pathways to Membership FAQs**

*See minute 2019-11-15*

### **Alternative Membership Pathway Proposal**

Ministry Coordinating Committee, the Committee to Revise *Faith and Practice*, and the Alternative Membership Pathways Working Group are ***deeply grateful*** for the questions, feedback, and ministry received from individuals and monthly meetings regarding the proposed alternative pathway to membership with New York Yearly Meeting. Since 2016, we have lovingly labored with how to best address the barriers of traditional membership to some Friends while honoring the rich tradition of local meeting membership in New York Yearly Meeting and the wider Religious Society of Friends. We have heard and held each of your concerns and are prepared to offer a second reading of the proposed revision to *Faith and Practice* at Fall Sessions 2019.

To ensure that we as a Body are prepared for this item of business, we would like to offer responses to some of your most frequently asked questions and explain how we have

addressed your feedback. We also encourage you and your Monthly Meetings to refresh your memory and understanding of the [background](#) and [timeline](#) of this work.

*Background:* <http://bit.ly/backgroundampwg>

*Timeline:* <http://bit.ly/timelineampwg>

## **Your Questions and Concerns Answered**

### ***1. Monthly meetings are the basic unit of our Society. Doesn't that mean that membership should always live there?***

For many, monthly meetings remain the basic unit of our Society, and through our discernment we have learned that for many others this is not the case. Initially, there was no membership in our Society and identification as a Friend was that of a declaration of inward connection to the Light (God). Formalized membership was created in 1737 to ensure welfare was more carefully distributed to those who were an active part of the faith as well as to provide Committees for Sufferings for persecuted Friends. This formalized membership also sought to ensure leadings could be tested and corporately discerned. The new membership pathway does not take away the sacredness of membership with a Monthly Meeting; it instead offers an additional pathway for Friends who believe that the Yearly Meeting can and in many cases already does serve these functions for people who have not found a home in a Monthly Meeting.

### ***2. What happens with all our other practices that are linked to membership (marriage, religious education, transfer of membership, etc.)?***

This proposal only offers a process for membership with the yearly meeting and does not seek to address any related concerns. Additional revisions to *Faith and Practice* will take more time and require more discernment from our Body. We understand that this change might affect many areas of our practice and have faith that we can move forward without having every detail worked out. This is the beginning of an experiment in continuing revelation.

### ***3. Our monthly meeting hasn't experienced this concern. Where is this coming from?***

The people for whom this new pathway is most relevant often have not found a home at a monthly meeting. Therefore, it makes sense that you have not experienced or heard this concern firsthand. Since 2016, the Alternative Membership Pathways Working Group has held workshops, traveled to meetings, and collected stories from dozens of people who are not currently members but who are Quakers in faith *and* in practice. This new pathway seeks to invite people in from the margins and to tell them, "yes, you belong here with us."

### ***4. In the text of the first reading, there was no mention of regular worship, before or after someone sought such affiliation, nor was there any mention of a spiritual dimension of any kind in an applicant's process of seeking membership in the yearly meeting.***

When we presented the first reading, we neglected to include the full membership section of *Faith & Practice* where worship and spiritual grounding are emphasized as a part of membership. This was an oversight and led to misunderstandings. We have added some language to the Yearly Meeting Membership section itself to address this concern. However, this new pathway should be seen as a second option to membership with the same functions and accountability structures as membership with monthly meetings. We have included the full membership section with the second reading. It is important that we understand that this larger section is not being revised at this time and should we seek to redefine membership at large, we should follow our process to revise *Faith and Practice* to do so.

**5. *I joined a monthly meeting and membership has been so important to my experience as a Quaker. Why are we making exceptions to our practice? Are the people seeking this new form of membership trying to circumvent tradition?***

It is so important to understand that most of the people with whom we have spoken wish that they could become a member of a monthly meeting. Since 2016, the Working Group has identified several barriers that exist for those who are seeking to either enter Quakerism or remain within it but are isolated from or prohibited from attending regular monthly meetings. Some of these barriers are schedules, differences in culture, differences of theology, incarceration, not being understood on one's spiritual journey, scheduling, distance, and caretaking responsibilities. This proposed pathway does not in any way diminish the importance of membership with local meetings. Instead, it seeks to bring people into a different type of spiritual community that is more accommodating to certain people's lives.

**6. *Won't this take people away from our monthly meetings which are already struggling to find members?***

No, and we hope that the opposite will be true. Monthly meetings will remain the primary and most central entry point for new Friends and we do not expect for very active members to have any desire to transfer their membership to the yearly meeting. The people for whom this pathway would be relevant are mostly not members or not active members in monthly meetings. By providing an alternative pathway to membership, we anticipate welcoming more people into our Beloved Community and providing more opportunities for these Friends to interact with and potentially find a home in a local meeting.

**7. *Will members of the yearly meeting eventually become members of a monthly meeting?***

Some members of the yearly meeting may eventually find membership in monthly meetings, but this is not a requirement of membership with the yearly meeting.

**8. *What does accountability look like for members of the yearly meeting? How do we know that they're "in good standing"?***

Membership with the yearly meeting will follow the same accountability standards as monthly meetings. Ministry and Pastoral Care will provide oversight of membership, help members discern and test leadings, and offer mentorship, eldership, and support as needed. Members will contribute to the yearly meeting as they might to a monthly meeting by serving on committees, attending Sessions, and donating time and resources as appropriate.

**9. *Who will be the people seeking membership in the yearly meeting?***

We haven't tried it yet so we don't quite know who will be led to take this alternative pathway to membership. However, we expect that this pathway will be most appealing to people who are already involved with the yearly meeting and who are more transient, isolated, or unable to attend their local meetings. Some of the populations we have identified as likely to pursue this option are young adults, people who travel or move frequently, people who are incarcerated, and people who live far from a local meeting. In all cases, people seeking membership will participate in a clearness process to discern if membership with the yearly meeting is in good order.

**10. *Will this be the only pathway being added?***

For now, this is the only alternative pathway being presented for approval. As we learn and grow, other forms may emerge in the future.

## **Suggested Letter from New York Yearly Meeting to Friends Fiduciary Corporation**

*See minute 2019-11-21*

### **Preamble**

The following minute was written by the Ad Hoc Climate Justice Working Group, which formed as directed by the New York Yearly Meeting body on July 26, 2018, in response to our Friends World Committee for Consultation's "Call for Action on Climate Change."

The Ad Hoc Climate Justice Working Group includes people from New York Yearly Meeting's FWCC Committee, the Earthcare Working Group, the Finance Committee, Trustees, plus several individuals with relevant experience and interests. We are an open Working Group, and others are welcome to join us.

The Minute regards Friends Fiduciary Corporation, an investing company that holds all of New York Yearly Meeting's investments as well as those of many other Quaker organizations. It has been approved by New York Yearly Meeting's FWCC Committee, Earthcare Working Group, and Witness Coordinating Committee. It complements the Trustees Report on their plan to divest from funds which include shares in fossil fuel corporations. Other yearly meetings and Quaker organizations have expressed interest in joining us in bringing our concerns to Friends Fiduciary Corporation.

This Minute is one step in New York Yearly Meeting's response to the climate crisis. The Climate Justice Working Group will continue to work on all four actions recommended in the Call for Action on Climate Change, plus related climate justice concerns. These actions include 1) divesting from fossil fuels; 2) supporting ecological investments, 3) providing resources on ways to reduce carbon emissions, and 4) encouraging climate-related projects around our yearly meeting.

## **Minute**

New York Yearly Meeting thanks Friends Fiduciary Corporation for its leadership in investing Quaker monies in ways consistent with Quaker beliefs and testimonies. We are grateful for Friends Fiduciary Corporation's track record of socially responsible investing and feel that the Quaker Green Fund is a wonderful addition to the options that Friends Fiduciary Corporation offers. New York Yearly Meeting intends to begin moving New York Yearly Meeting's holdings into the Quaker Green Fund. We appreciate the environmentally conscious investing that Friends Fiduciary Corporation has already undertaken. However, because global climate disruption is happening even faster than predicted, and because its impacts are being felt most deeply by people in less developed countries, Friends' testimonies call us to do more and to act swiftly. The moral imperative to protect our planet is central to our witness as Quakers. We can no longer stay invested in technologies that are on course to end life as we know it on Earth.

New York Yearly Meeting requests that Friends Fiduciary Corporation divest with good speed from all companies on the Carbon Underground 200™ list, compiled and maintained by Fossil Free Indexes<sup>SM</sup>, and that they also divest all holdings from companies involved in fossil fuel development and production. We also ask Friends Fiduciary Corporation to redirect its investments into green technologies and solutions in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. This requires investing with asset managers who have expertise in climate-responsive investing in all seven sectors of solutions promoted by Project Drawdown. We hope that Friends Fiduciary Corporation will join us in expanding our efforts regarding a concern of vital importance to Quakers and indeed all people and living beings on Earth.

The Witness Coordinating Committee recommends that the Clerk and General Secretary write a letter to Friends Fiduciary Corporation sharing the concerns of New York Yearly Meeting expressed in this Minute and its Preamble.

## **Supplementary Material:**

**Fossil Free Indexes LLC** is a company that “delivers research, consulting and investment solutions to investors concerned about climate and environmental risk.” Their Carbon Underground 200 list **serves as a negative** screen for avoiding investing in companies holding the largest underground reserves of coal, oil and natural gas. Friends Fiduciary Corporation's Quaker Growth and Income Fund has stocks in at least 5 of these firms. <<https://fossilfreefunds.org/carbon-underground-200>>

**The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** "are the blueprint to achieve a better and more sustainable future for all. They address the global challenges we face, including

those related to poverty, inequality, climate, environmental degradation, prosperity, and peace and justice. The Goals interconnect and in order to leave no one behind, it is important that we achieve each Goal and target by 2030." <[www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals](http://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/sustainable-development-goals)>

GOAL 1: No Poverty

GOAL 2: Zero Hunger

GOAL 3: Good Health and Well-being

GOAL 4: Quality Education

GOAL 5: Gender Equality

GOAL 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

GOAL 7: Affordable and Clean Energy

GOAL 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

GOAL 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure

GOAL 10: Reduced Inequality

GOAL 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities

GOAL 12: Responsible Consumption and Production

GOAL 13: Climate Action

GOAL 14: Life Below Water

GOAL 15: Life on Land

GOAL 16: Peace and Justice Strong Institutions

GOAL 17: Partnerships to achieve the Goal

**Project Drawdown** is a science and engineering-based global collaboration which promotes 80 currently feasible ways to slow and then reverse global warming by reducing the levels of heat-trapping gases in our atmosphere. However we can only again stabilize our climate if sufficient changes are made in all seven sectors (listed from most to least important): Women & Girls; Transport; Materials; Land Use; Food; Electricity; and Buildings & Cities. <[www.drawdown.org](http://www.drawdown.org)>

**Right Relationship: Building a Whole Earth Economy**

by Peter G. Brown and Geoffrey Garver with Keith Helmuth, Robert Howell and Steve Szeghi, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2009

**Toward a Right Relationship with Finance: Debt, Interest, Growth, and Security**

Prepared by: Pamela Haines, Ed Dreby, David Kane, and Charles Blanchard

2016 download from <<http://www.quakerinstitute.org>>.

## **Travel Minute for Emily Provance**

*See minute 2019-11-22*

13 October 2019

Dear Friends,

We, Fifteenth Street Monthly Meeting, have united with Emily Provance's discernment that she is called by God to travel and share her gifts in ministry. Emily's life has been dedicated to carrying this out faithfully since 2013.

As Emily travels globally among Friends, she explores how diverse communities embody the Quaker spirit. Emily builds connections and understanding among Friends through her speaking, writing, social media platforms, and face-to-face visitation.

She encourages people to see and know each other while embracing differences. She accompanies them as they discern their spiritual gifts. She sees herself as a teacher and learner; she invites us to nurture the spark at the heart of our meetings.

Emily carries the love of Fifteenth Street Monthly Meeting with her as she seeks to enrich our society with her gifts. We hope that you will welcome Emily in your meeting and support her in her work while she is with you and as she travels among Friends.

Warmly,

Glenn Josey, Clerk, Fifteenth Street Monthly Meeting

## **Revisions to NYYM Handbook entry for the NYYM Board of Trustees**

*See minute 2019-11-24*

The following proposed revision to the NYYM Handbook entry for the NYYM Board of Trustees is for the sole purpose of aligning the entry with changes in the bylaws. Questions can be directed to Roseann Press, clerk of the Trustees Board and/or Peter Close, trustee attorney.

### **Purposes & Objectives**

New York Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends conducts its business affairs pursuant to the guidance set forth in Faith and Practice, the Book of Discipline of New York Yearly Meeting. It is incorporated under Section 15 of the Religious Corporation Law of the State of New York for the purpose of administering property, both real and personal, belonging to the Yearly Meeting or subject to its direction and disposition. All members of the constituent Monthly Meetings of the Yearly Meeting are members of the corporation. Any business meeting of the Yearly Meeting constitutes a meeting of the corporation.

### **Functions & Activities**

The by-laws of the Yearly Meeting assign to a Board of Trustees all business matters relating to property transactions, including management of the trust funds of the Yearly Meeting. The bylaws (see Faith and Practice), prescribe the duties of Trustees and general regulations for the conduct of their business. These include approval of a Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Recording Clerk, and Financial Clerk, and the appointment from within their number of an

Investment Committee. In addition, the Clerk of the Trustees serves as President of the Corporation, the Assistant Clerk of the Trustees serves as Vice President of the Corporation and the Recording Clerk of the Trustees serves as Secretary of the Corporation. The Clerk of the Corporation and the Treasurer of the Corporation serve as ex officio members of the Board of Trustees.

### **Organization & Method of Appointment**

The Board of Trustees is composed of five (minimum) to ten (maximum) trustees. Terms are four years long with staggered termination dates so one to two Trustees are appointed each year and there is overlapping continuity. Trustees may serve two successive terms for a total of eight years. The Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee brings forth Board nominations which are approved by the Yearly Meeting. Vacancies are filled at any meeting of Spring, Summer, or Fall sessions. Clerks are approved as previously described. Trustees name one representative to the General Services Coordinating Committee. Trustees also name one representative to the Audit Committee who may not be the Financial Clerk of Trustees.

### **Meeting Times & Places**

The Trustees meet and report to the Yearly Meeting body during Summer Sessions and they frequently hold one or more additional meetings during the year, according to need. They report the status of funds under their care and the disbursements of income to the several beneficiaries of the trust funds. They also make reports to Fall and Spring Sessions of the Yearly Meeting as needed. Finances Custodial fees, bookkeeping, and other expenses, except costs of securities transactions, are paid out of the income from the pooled trust funds. For purposes of transparency and accountability, the by-laws, trust fund descriptions, minutes of trustees' meetings and trust fund financial reports are available to all members of the Yearly Meeting.

## **Priorities Support Working Group Report**

*See minute 2019-11-25*

*Liaison Committee report on the Priorities Support Working Group and its request to be laid down. For questions, inquire of Clerk Jeffrey Aaron.*

- At Fall Sessions 2010, the Priorities Working Group was established under the care of Liaison Committee.
- At Summer Sessions 2014, Friends approved a statement of leadings and priorities for five years.
- At Spring Sessions 2015, the PWG was laid down at the request of the WG.
- At Summer Sessions 2015, the Leadings and Priorities Working Group was established under the care of Liaison. It later revised its charge and was renamed the Priorities Support WG.
- Fall Sessions 2019, PSWG has requested of Liaison that it be laid down.

The original charge of the WG anticipated wide representation totaling eighteen Friends from numerous committees and coordinating committees, as well as each region. That representation was never achieved to any reasonable extent. Recent meetings were attended by five or six Friends. Without the representation mandated in setting up the group, it has been difficult to discern progress. The WG applauds the transparency around financial reporting that has happened since the Priorities were approved. However, in general, they have not felt that the yearly meeting has specifically focused on living into the other priorities. Times have changed and other concerns, priorities and leadings have arisen. Given the time that has passed since the Priorities were approved and the WG's frustration with lack of perceived progress, the WG felt it was time to be laid down.

Liaison Committee has agreed to do so.

Liaison reminds Friends that our Yearly Meeting's commitment to the approved list of Priorities ended in July 2019, five years after approval. Liaison will be meeting to discern if there is more that should be done, but we expect that at minimum we will likely have a more complete report at Spring Sessions 2020.

—Jeffrey Aaron, Clerk, Liaison Committee

## **Report on the Meetings for Discernment 2019**

*See minute 2019-11-26*

Meetings for Discernment were held twice in 2019, at Poughkeepsie Meeting on February 23rd and at Silver Bay during Yearly Meeting Sessions on July 23rd.

There were two notable changes in these meetings from others in recent years. The first is that more young adult Friends than usual attended these meetings. The second is that the query for the summer meeting addressed a matter that is currently under consideration for action by the Yearly Meeting. And these two changes are connected.

Our February meeting was held on a Saturday and the organizers of the Young Adult Spiritual Nurture Series arranged to hold one of their workshops at Poughkeepsie Meeting the following day. This made it easy and inviting for young adults coming to the workshop to come for Discernment as well, enriching the worship and fellowship on Saturday.

The summer meeting centered on the query "what does membership mean to you?" This is directly related to the proposal now under consideration by the Yearly Meeting to create an additional pathway to membership. We have not previously attempted to labor over a specific issue through the Meetings for Discernment process, but the Steering Committee agreed that it was appropriate to do so at this point in our development. And, while the proposed new pathway would not solely apply to younger Friends, the suggestion originated with concerned young adults for whom membership through a monthly meeting is not readily achieved. Knowing that we may each have a different portion of the Light, our discernment together was deep and open. Some reported that they understood the feelings and needs of others when before they had not been able to and some reported feeling heard when before they felt excluded. Though the Yearly Meeting is yet to come to unity on some questions of membership, the Meeting for Discernment was an opportunity, well-used, to

listen, to speak, and to open to one another. We hope to continue exploring how these Meetings can have spirit-led practical uses for the Yearly Meeting.

Beyond the timing and topics of the Meetings, this year the Steering Committee made a greater effort to reach out, for clerks, to Friends who had not been called on before to clerk a session and whose gifts could become more widely known and appreciated by their clerking such a session. We learned (again) how this kind of recognition lifts up the individuals and the Meeting as a whole. We will continue to hold this as one of our objectives in seeking Friends to clerk Meeting for Discernment sessions.

Finally, we note that a minute approved in 2014 (2014-07-24) reads in part that “...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...” As the Steering Committee considers this over the coming months, we welcome any insights or concerns Friends may wish to share with us, and we anticipate bringing a recommendation on the future of the Meetings for Discernment to the Yearly Meeting body no later than Summer Sessions 2020.

Respectfully presented,  
Caroline Lane  
Elaine Learnard  
For the Meetings for Discernment Steering Committee

## **Nominations**

*See minute 2019-11-27*

### **APPOINTMENTS**

Jennifer Morgan-Davie		Powell House Committee	2022
Bryant Henning		Powell House Committee	2022
Tom Goodridge	Morningside	Youth Committee	2022
Jens Braun	Old Chatham	Bolivian Quaker Education Fund	2021
Gloria Thompson	Manhattan	Barrington Dunbar Fund	2022
Gabrielle Savory Bailey	Chatham Summit	Friends United Meeting	2020
Barbra Bleecker	Montclair	Ministry & Pastoral Care	2022

### **RELEASE FROM SERVICE**

Matthew Baney-Giampoa	Montclair	State of Society
Linda Chidsey	Housatonic	AFSC
Marissa Badgley	Poughkeepsie	FUM Triennial Delegate
Marissa Badgley	Poughkeepsie	Personnel

## **Proposed Changes to the Trustees' By-Laws, Second Presentation**

*See minute 2019-11-28*

*Summary of Changes to 2017 Version of NYYM By-Laws, presented at NYYM Summer Sessions 2019*

### **Article II. Board of Trustees**

Paragraph 1. Appointment: The number of members of NYYM to be appointed to serve as trustees is sought to be changed from between 5 and 7 trustees to between 5 and 10 trustees as the Board of Trustees feels the need for a larger Board in order to properly conduct the regular business of the Board.

Also, the Board of Trustees seeks to reduce the number of years each trustee serves from 5 years to 4 years in order to encourage more members of NYYM to consider appointment as trustees. It is felt that whatever is lost by reducing the number of years of each term is outweighed by the likelihood that more members of NYYM will consider serving as trustees when asked to do so by Nominating.

Further, the Board of Trustees seeks to reduce the number of consecutive terms a trustee may serve on the Board from 3 terms to 2 terms as the Board feels that the more frequent addition of trustees to the Board outweighs any benefit of having trustees serve more than two consecutive terms.

Additionally, the Board feels that, in the event of a vacancy, a trustee can serve up to 2 years to fill the vacancy of a trustee who is unable to complete the balance of his term and still be considered eligible for the subsequent appointment of 2 consecutive 4 year terms. Last, for its more effective functioning, the Board of Trustees is seeking the input of the Clerk of NYYM and the Treasurer of NYYM in the business before the Board whenever possible or necessary and seeks to make them ex-officio members of the Board of Trustees in order to facilitate their input.

Paragraph 3. Officers of the Trustees: The Board of Trustees seeks to appoint an Assistant Clerk in order to conduct the regular business of the Board in the absence of the Clerk of the Trustees.

The Board seeks to re-title the Secretary of Trustees as the Recording Clerk and the Financial Officer as the Financial Clerk in keeping with the usual practice of Friends. The Board seeks to delete "The Clerk of the Trustees shall act as President of the Corporation when the acts of such an officer are required". In order to understand the reason for the deletion of this sentence here, see the changes to Article III. Officers below.

Paragraph 4. Meetings: The Board seeks to change the title of Secretary to Recording Clerk.

Paragraph 5. Quorum: Although it is hoped that the Clerk of NYYM and the Treasurer of NYYM will be able to attend a significant number of meetings of the Board of Trustees, the Board recognizes that this will depend more on their time availability and whether they feel

the need to attend a particular meeting. Therefore, the Board seeks to have their inability to attend a given meeting not affect the quorum requirement necessary for the Board to transact business at that meeting.

Paragraph 7. Limitations on Responsibilities and Liabilities: Add at the end of Paragraph 7 ", nor do the Trustees have authority over the spiritual concerns and the programs of the Corporation."

The Board seeks to further clarify its role in the functioning of the Corporation by setting forth these additional limitations in Paragraph 7.

### **Article III. Officers**

Paragraph 1. Officers of the Corporation: The Board seeks to specifically identify the additional officer(s) the Corporation may appoint in the future by adding at the end of the second sentence of Paragraph 1. ", including one or more assistant treasurers." The NYYM Treasurer has identified this as a need of NYYM going forward and the Board of Trustees agrees.

Further, the Board seeks to include a third sentence at the end of Paragraph 1. "The Clerk of Trustees shall serve as President of the Corporation, the Assistant Clerk of the Trustees shall serve as Vice President of the Corporation and the Recording Clerk of the Trustees shall serve as Secretary of the Corporation." Trustees seek this additional sentence in response to the concerns of our NYYM Treasurer that the practice of Friends in its titling of its Officers of the Corporation is confusing to the banks NYYM does business with, NYYM's investment manager and NYYM's insurers. In the secular business world as well as in the nonprofit universe and with other religious corporations, it is the usual practice more often than not that the officers of a corporation are titled as President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. However, it is the practice of Friends and NYYM to call our "officers" clerks, assistant clerks, recording clerks and treasurers. The term "officers" doesn't translate completely into the terminology of "clerks" as practiced in NYYM. By having the Clerk of the Trustees serve as the President of the Corporation, the Assistant Clerk of the Trustees serve as the Vice-President of the Corporation and the Recording Clerk of the Corporation serve as Secretary of the Corporation, it will make our banks, insurers and investment manager more comfortable doing business with us and make it easier for our NYYM Treasurer to have contracts signed and generally conduct our business with the secular, outside world.

Paragraph 2. Clerk of the Corporation: In the first sentence, insert after "The responsibilities of the Clerk" the words "of the Corporation"; in the last sentence, delete the word: "necessary".

Paragraph 5. Treasurer of the Corporation: Replace the title "financial officer" with the title "Financial Clerk" both times that it appears in Paragraph 5.

### **Article V. Meetings of the Corporation ("Sessions")**

Paragraph 4. Presiding Officer: After the words, “unavailability to serve”, insert “or a conflict of interest,”.

## **NYYM’s Endorsement of the Ribbon Project, plus Supplemental Materials**

*See minute 2019-11-29*

*The below is the New York Quarterly Meeting’s minute endorsing the Ribbon Project. We are asking the New York Yearly Meeting to also endorse the project.*

New York Quarterly Meeting, Religious Society of Friends  
Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business  
Quaker Cemetery, Prospect Park, Brooklyn  
13th day, 7th month, 2019

2019.07.10. Friends accept the reports of all monthly meetings, and consider also an action item from Morningside MM to support the minute endorsing the Ribbon Project—to commemorate the bombing of Nagasaki, support the campaign to abolish nuclear weapons, and build a culture of peace. Friends endorse this minute and direct the NYQM Clerk to forward the minute to the NYYM Witness Coordinating Committee for them to also consider endorsing. Friends should contact Charlene Ray at [moneycoach@earthlink.net](mailto:moneycoach@earthlink.net) if they wish to be more involved, and in these communications please put “Ribbon” in the subject line.

### **The Ribbon International**

Ribbon 2020 — Tangible Hope for No Nuclear War

Please join The Ribbon International on August 1, 2020, for the 75 th Anniversary of the Nuclear Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Follow us on Instagram: [@theribbon2020](https://www.instagram.com/theribbon2020), and look for our Facebook page.

The Ribbon International was founded by Justine Merritt in 1982, after she visited the Hiroshima Peace Memorial Museum in Japan. She was greatly affected by the tragedy caused by the Atomic Bomb in 1945. Returning to the United States, she was inspired to create a Ribbon panel, expressing her feelings, “What I cannot bear to think of as lost forever in a Nuclear War.” She decided to have a Ribbon event for the 40th Memorial Anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

It was in the middle of the Cold War between The United States and The Soviet Union, and using nuclear weapons could happen again at a moment’s notice.

On August 4, 1985, fifteen miles of Ribbons encircled the Pentagon and other important monuments. On the same day, the Atomic Bomb Dome was encircled with Ribbons.

The Ribbon International is now a Non-Governmental Organization in Association with the United Nations. These days the world is closer to the tragedy of nuclear war and a nuclear accident than ever before. On August 1, 2020, The Ribbon International is planning to have a Ribbon event in New York City, Tokyo, and other cities, towns, villages, and homes

around the world for the 75th Anniversary of the Nuclear Bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki. Please join us with Ribbons wherever you are, tie them together, and pray for a world without Nuclear Weapons and never another nuclear tragedy. (If you cannot join, please pray with us wherever you are.) Let's upload it on Instagram and Facebook.

### **How to make a Ribbon**

(Please also see our website: [www.theribboninternational.org](http://www.theribboninternational.org))

- Cut a panel of sturdy cloth, double thickness, of any color.
- Finished size: one meter by a half meter (or one yard by a half yard)
- Sew 20cm (9 inch) pieces of ribbon to each corner so the panels may be easily tied together.
- On this panel, sew, paint, write, embroider, weave, knit, tie-dye or use any other kind of ornaments to express what you most love about the world and want to protect from what is endangered on this earth.

If you wish, write your name and/or any message on the back of the panel.

## **Mission Statement of the Differently Abled Friends and Allies Working Group of GSCC**

*See minute 2019-11-33*

Differently Abled Friends and Allies is a working group whose purpose is to help make differently abled individuals in our community feel more welcomed and safe. Our primary purpose is to educate because we believe that ignorance is the root of even unintentional ableism among us. We welcome anyone interested in or who has concerns relating to inclusion of disabled or differently abled people to join us. If you see ableism in our community or if you are experiencing ableism yourself, please tell us so we can help advocate for our full inclusion and participation. You can reach us at [dafa@nyym.org](mailto:dafa@nyym.org)

## **Report from Sessions Committee**

*See minute 2019-11-34*

Thank you.

Thank you to the region.

Thank you EVER so to everyone at Powell House and the members of Old Chatham Friends Meeting — especially Jens Braun and Vicki Smith — for their joyful and successful support of this session.

Thank you to the host task group: Regina Baird Haag, Sheree Cammer, Nat Corwin, Dennis Haag, David Herendeen, Sunfire Kazmayer, Jennifer Lindop, and Jim Ralston (and I helped too...)

Thank you to the tireless and tasty kitchen crew! 5-6 teens assisted Tony and Shiri in every aspect of our meals so that we could get to our scheduled events without delay.

THANK THEM!!

“We” were 142 registrants and 127 [actually, 128 — one didn't register] participants. Including two wee ones.

Our next session will be held at Oakwood Friends School, April 3-6, 2020.

Our theme for 2020, named by Sessions Committee, is

Embracing our past,

Envisioning our future

2020 is the 325th anniversary of our yearly meeting. We hope that thru this theme, we take an honest look at who we have been in the past — the beautiful and the heartbreaking.

And use that discussion and discernment to inform who we are and who we will be for the next 325 years — most especially the months leading up to the November 2020 elections.

What have we learned over the past 325 that this country needs to hear?