

Sessions Committee Announcement Regarding Spring and Fall Sessions

Sessions Committee met on June 6th and discussed a new “modus operandi” regarding NYYM Spring and Fall Sessions. We continue to hear concerns from the regions about the stress of hosting a Spring or Fall Sessions and we were determined to change this dynamic.

As most of you know, a few years ago, Sessions Committee created a new volunteer position called the Spring Fall Sessions Coordinator and Liaison. This person has taken on many of the responsibilities of creating and running each Spring or Fall Sessions, but clearly this was not enough to relieve the burden on our regional and quarterly meetings.

We discussed and ultimately approved the following two major changes to our policies.

First, starting in 2021, Spring Sessions will be held at Oakwood Friends School in Poughkeepsie, NY. The school is an incredibly welcoming and accommodating location for our sessions. Chad Cianfrani, OFS Head of School, has already agreed to put the dates on their calendar for our next five Spring Sessions! Because of the ease of working with Chad and with the school, our Spring Fall Sessions Coordinator and Liaison is able to take on all of the logistics of the event, only inviting the surrounding regions (Nine Partners, Northeast, and Purchase) to offer “day of” volunteers for hospitality, the registration table, microphone running, etc.

While we were comfortable settling Spring Sessions at Oakwood Friends School, we felt it was important to have Fall Sessions move around the regions so that everyone feels welcome and encouraged to attend when the event happens close to home.

To make this easier on the regions, however, we approved researching four or five venues appropriate to our Fall Sessions and located around the YM map, but “flipping the script” on how we arrange these venues. Instead of inviting regions or quarters to host, we will, once again, have the Spring Fall Sessions Coordinator and Liaison take on the primary responsibility of finding and reserving these venues, coordinate the logistics and details, and then, once a venue is booked, the clerk of Sessions Committee will invite the appropriate regions to consider assisting to the level they are able, most especially focusing on “day of” volunteers. This change in our modus operandi will take the pressure off of the regions, ensure that venues are accessible and appropriately sized, and allow Sessions Committee to book venues well in advance.

Now, Fall Sessions 2020 is already set to be hosted by Rahway & Plainfield Monthly Meeting the weekend of November 6-8 – God willing and the COVID-19 creek don’t rise – and as noted early, Oakwood Friends School is all set to host Spring Sessions from now on. This means we have plenty of time to research locations that could host our future Fall Sessions. Some of the locations that have been used in the past could be used again (Caldwell University, Powell House, Friends Seminary, Chatham-Summit Meetinghouse, to name a few). And we are of course always willing to research the locations you suggest!

We hope that these major changes to our Spring and Fall Sessions planning will ease the minds of our yearly meeting members and attenders, giving our friends and our Friends the energy and time to attend our sessions instead of worry about them.

Sincerely,
Melanie-Claire Mallison, Sessions Committee clerk
Dawn Pozzi, incoming Sessions Committee clerk