

Illinois Yearly Meeting

143rd Annual Sessions

Sixth Month 21-25, 2017

Illinois Yearly Meetinghouse, McNabb, Illinois

Theme: Open Hearts

Advance Documents

Illinois Yearly Meeting

5615 S. Woodlawn Ave.
Chicago, IL 60637-1622

www.ilym.org

AdminCoor@ilym.org

773-288-3066

PRESIDING CLERK:	Cathy Garra	(Lake Forest)
ASSISTANT CLERK:	David Shiner	(Lake Forest)
RECORDING CLERK:	Kent Busse	(57th Street)
READING CLERK:	Chris Jocius	(Rolla)

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In addition to these Advance Documents, there are four copies of the red Session Notebook on a table in the display area for Friends to read which contain the minutes of each business session (added each day), supplementary and late-arriving reports, State of Society reports from the monthly meetings, memorials, and minutes from the Continuing Committee which meets in the Fall and Spring between Annual Sessions. There is also a notebook containing Epistles from other yearly meetings.

Please consider the reports in this document as preliminary. Changes may be made before approval. Reports as approved will be printed in the Minute Book for this Annual Session.

**Proposed Agenda for
Illinois Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions**

Sixth Month 21 to 25, 2017

Sixth Month 21

Opening worship
Welcome to Annual Sessions and welcome to visitors and new attenders
Epistle reading
Clerk's Announcements
 Advance Documents and Red Books
 Clerk's Committee membership
 Epistle Committee membership (p. 8)
 Request for Exercises Committee volunteers (p. 8)
 Harassment policy
 Friends unable to come
 Remarks--agenda and breaks
Committee of Care for Annual Sessions—Ministry and Advancement
Nominating Committee Report, first reading (p. 31)
Bank resolutions for Co-Treasurer
Environmental Concerns Committee Report (p. 21)
Extend the provisional Personnel Manual to 2019
Faith and Practice Committee
 Report (p. 21)
 Presentation of sections on Sample Membership Form (p. 52) and
 Quarterly Meetings (p. 55) (highlight changes; indefinite approval requested)
Reports from Representatives to Quaker Organizations
 Friends Meetinghouse Fund
 Others to be announced

Sixth Month 22

Opening worship
Welcome to visitors and new attenders
Epistle Reading
Clerk's Announcements
 Children joining us in worship and business
 Advance Documents and Red Books
 Clear Creek Monthly Meeting's 175th Anniversary
 Committee of Care
 Exercises Committee
Treasurer's Report (p. 9)
Finance Committee (p. 22)
 Report; two items proposed for approval
 First presentation of budget
Review Committee

Development Committee Report (p. 20)
Children's Religious Education Committee Report (p. 17)
 Request for continuation of Children's Religious Education Coordinator position
Children's Religious Education Coordinator Report (p. 19)
Ministry and Advancement Committee
 Report (p. 29)
 Request to renew the service of the Field Secretary
 Request for Harassment and Sexual Abuse Policy approval
Field Secretary Report (p. 15)
Faith and Practice Committee
 Presentation of sections on The Light Within and Its Religious Implications, (p. 62)
 and Testimonies (p. 58) (highlight changes, indefinite approval requested)
Reports from Representatives to Quaker Organizations—to be announced

Sixth Month 23

Opening worship
Welcome to visitors and new attenders
Clerk's Announcements
 Advance Documents and Red Books
 Children joining us for worship and business
 Master Calendar
 Committee of Care
Epistle reading
Handbook Committee
 Report (p. 26)
 Three Sections for approval
Stewards Report (p. 15)
Maintenance and Planning Committee Report (p. 27)
Site Envisioning Committee Report (p. 35)
Peace Resources Committee Report (p. 33)
 Proposed minute against torture for approval
Publications and Distribution Committee Report (p. 35)
Faith and Practice Committee
 Reading of sections on Pastoral Care, (p. 54) and Friends and the State. (p. 48) One year
 provisional approval requested
Reports from Representatives to Quaker organizations, to be announced

Sixth Month 24

Opening worship
Welcome to visitors and new attenders
Clerk's Announcements
 Advance Documents and Red Books
 Children joining us for worship and business
 Master Calendar
 Committee of Care
Epistle Reading

Nominating Committee Report
 Second Reading for final approval
Authorization for Bank Resolutions for Co-Treasurer
Ad hoc Committee for Caretaker Report
 Composition and future steps
Children's Religious Education Coordinator
 Continuation of position requested for approval
Finance Committee
 Second presentation of budget for final approval
 Other announcements
Youth Oversight Committee Report (p. 37)
Adult Young Friends Report (p. 40)
Other Committee Reports
Reports from ILYM Representatives to Quaker organizations, to be announced
Dates for 2018 Annual Sessions
Date and location for 2017 Fall Continuing Committee

Sixth Month 25

Opening Worship
Epistles and Exercises
Closing Worship

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Epistle & Exercises Committee Descriptions

Epistle Committee

The Epistle Committee is charged with writing a letter to all yearly meetings around the world expressing the perceived concerns and sentiments of the annual sessions. The Epistle is Illinois Yearly Meeting's message about what we feel God is calling us to do. It is our way of telling the rest of the Quaker world about our search. It is NOT a description of what happened at Illinois Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions. Members of the Epistle Committee should reflect on the spiritual life of the yearly meeting throughout the year in preparation for writing the Epistle at next year's annual sessions. The Epistle, finalized at the Annual Sessions, should reflect the committee's continuing interaction with one another and monthly meetings throughout the year. The Epistle should reflect the critical issues being confronted by the monthly meetings of Illinois Yearly Meeting.

To best accomplish this, the epistle committee shall consist of three persons brought forward by the Nominating Committee and approved by the Yearly Meeting at the first or second day of Annual Sessions. The Reading Clerk is an *ex officio* member of the committee. One or two Friends may be asked to serve a second year for continuity. Every effort should be made to have a Young Friend or an Adult Young Friend on the committee. The Epistle should be prepared for review by the Presiding Clerk and approved by the Yearly Meeting before the end of Annual Sessions.

Exercises Committee

Consisting of two or three people appointed at the beginning of Annual Sessions, the Exercises Committee usually includes one new attender and one who has attended before. A Young Friends is also encouraged to participate,. The committee is charged with writing a report which attempts to reflect the spirit of the Meeting that prevailed at Annual Session as well as briefly recounting the principal activities that occurred. This report is to be given to the Administrative Coordinator and the Publications and Distribution Committee after the close of Annual Sessions so that it can be included in the Minute Book.

(From the ILYM Handbook, Rev. Fall 2010)

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Treasurers Report

Illinois Yearly Meeting: Statement of Financial Position/Balance Sheet For the period 7/1/2016-6/3/2017 (prepared 6/3/17)

	To Date 6/3/2017	Opening Balance 7/1/2016
Assets		
Cash		
Checking Account	245,895.53	211,699.52
Friends Meetinghouse Fund	10,000.00	10,000.00
PayPal	4,052.22	198.45
Total Cash	<u>259,947.75</u>	<u>231,897.97</u>
Accounts Receivable	3,905.00	3,080.00
Undeposited funds	<u>3,285.00</u>	<u>12,530.50</u>
Total Assets	<u>267,137.75</u>	<u>247,508.47</u>
Liabilities		
Loans from Individuals	1,000.00	1,000.00
Accounts Payable	7,227.15	403.59
Payroll Taxes Payable	1,769.80	0.00
Funds Held for 2017 Women's Weekend	0.00	100.00
Total Liabilities	<u>9,996.95</u>	<u>1,503.59</u>
Net Assets		
Unrestricted Undesignated	44,370.01	53,234.09
Unrestricted Designated	162,739.44	142,739.44
Temporarily Restricted	50,031.35	50,031.35
Total Net Assets	<u>257,140.80</u>	<u>246,004.88</u>
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	<u>267,137.75</u>	<u>247,508.47</u>

Note: Because it is difficult to appraise, the value of the McNabb site (land and buildings) is omitted from the Assets section of this report.

**Illinois Yearly Meeting – Statement of Fund Activity
For the period 7/1/2016 – 6/3/2017 (prepared 6/3/17)**

	A	B	C	D	E	F
	Balance 7/1/2016					Balance 6/3/2017
ASSETS						
UNRESTRICTED		Income	Expenses	Budgeted Transfers	Other Transfers	
1. General Operating	53,234.09	97,140.25	(93,504.33)	(12,500.00)	0.00	44,370.01
DESIGNATED						
2. Special Gifts	42,361.24	7,500.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	49,861.24
3. Current Projects	9,122.17	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	9,122.17
4. Payroll Reserves	36,000.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	36,000.00
5. FWCC World Meetings	1,000.00	0.00	0.00	1,000.00	0.00	2,000.00
6. Maintenance Reserve	54,256.03	0.00	0.00	11,500.00	0.00	65,756.03
RESTRICTED						
7. Property Improvement	50,031.35	0.00	0.00	0.00		50,031.35
TOTAL ASSEST	246,004.88	104,640.25	(93,504.33)	0.00	0.00	257,140.80
LIABILITIES						
Loans from Individuals	1,000.00					1,000.00
Accounts Payable	503.59					8,996.95
TOTAL CASH	247,508.47.84					267,137.75

<u>Fund</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Oversight Committee</u>
1.	General Operating	Finance Our general operating fund, where we organize our annual budget.
2.	Special Gifts	Finance A reserve fund to receive larger unrestricted contributions, used for special projects.
3.	Current Projects	Site Envisioning Unrestricted donations to be used for renovation projects, as approved at 2013 Annual Sessions.
4.	Payroll Reserves	Finance A reserve fund that would be used for payroll only during unexpected financial circumstances.
5.	FWCC World Meetings	Finance A reserve fund to provide travel assistance to ILYM's reps to FWCC World Gatherings.
6.	Maintenance Reserve	Maintenance & Planning Used to save for and pay for irregular site maintenance, repair & upgrade projects.
7.	Property Improvement	Site Envisioning with Development Restricted by donors to be used for new building projects.

**Illinois Yearly Meeting
Operating Budget 7/1/2016-6/3/2017**

Prepared 6/3/2017

	16-17 Anticipated	16-17 Actual YTD	Previous YTD
Income			
Contributions from Meetings	82,000	61,145	74,887
Contributions from Individuals	29,000	23,435	27,990
Other Contributions	0	0	0
Gatherings & Retreats	15,500	11,930	11,151
Fundraisers & Other Income	0	35	404
Interest	600	595	592
<i>Total Income</i>	127,100	97,140	115,024
Expenses & Transfers			
Operating			
Personnel (Payroll, Staff Travel, Office)	(55,200)	(53,860)	(47,720)
YM Travel Support	(5,500)	(2,500)	(689)
Gatherings & Retreats	(15,000)	(5,285)	(4,582)
Site (Facilities & Maintenance)	(16,700)	(15,517)	(15,715)
Committees	(12,550)	(5,692)	(7,400)
Support to Others	(10,650)	(10,650)	(9,550)
Total Expenses Operating Expenses	(115,600)	(93,504)	(85,656)
Transfer to <i>Maintenance Reserve Fund</i>	(11,500)	(11,500)	(11,500)
Transfer to <i>FWCC World Meetings Travel</i>	(1,000)	(1,000)	(2,000)
Total Expenses & Transfers	(127,100)	(106,004)	(99,156)
Net General Fund Income (Deficit)	0	(8,864)	15,868

Expense Line Item Details

(1) Personnel			
Salaries & Payroll	(43,700)	(42,964)	(42,871)
Staff Travel	(5,500)	(4,801)	(4,110)
Office	(1,000)	(595)	(739)
Contingency	(5,000)	(5,500)	0
Total	(55,200)	(53,860)	(47,720)
(2) YM Travel Support			
ILYM Committee Travel	(2,000)	0	(99)
ILYM Reps Travel	(2,500)	(2,500)	(590)
Total	(4,500)	(2,500)	(690)
(3) Site			
<u>Annual Facilities Expenses (Oversight: Stewards)</u>			
Insurance	(5,500)	(5,570)	(5,521)
Repairs	(1,200)	(1,318)	(1,389)
Mowing & tree trimming	(5,000)	(5,495)	(3,940)
Annual services (inspections, winterizing)	(1,500)	(1,669)	(1,570)
Utilities	(3,500)	(1,465)	(3,294)
Total	(16,700)	(15,517)	(15,714)

	16-17 Anticipated	16-17 Actual YTD	Previous YTD
(4) Committees			
Ad hoc	(100)	0	(100)
Children's Religious Education	(300)	(211)	(9)
Development	(1,100)	(581)	(531)
Environmental Concerns	(200)	(20)	0
Faith & Practice	(150)	0	0
Finance	(450)	(59)	(110)
Handbook	(50)	0	0
Maintenance & Planning	(200)	0	0
Ministry & Advancement	(250)	0	0
Nominating	(300)	(37)	(149)
Peace Resources	(250)	0	0
Peace Tax Fund	(50)	0	0
Personnel	(150)	0	0
Publications	(6,000)	(4,484)	(5,248)
Site Envisioning	(200)	(31)	(15)
Adult Young Friends	(300)	(137)	(157)
Youth Oversight*	(2,500)	(132)	(1,172)
Total	(12,550)	(5,692)	(7,400)

(5) Support to Others

Quaker organizations -ILYM assigns representatives

Friends General Conference (FGC)	(4,000)	(4,000)	(4,000)
Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC)	(3,500)	(3,500)	(2,500)
American Friends Service Cmte. (AFSC)	(400)	(400)	(400)
Friends Cmte. on Natl Legislation Edu. Fund (FCNL)	(400)	(400)	(400)
Friends Peace Teams (FPT)	(300)	(300)	(300)
Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW)	(250)	(250)	(250)
Friends for Lesbian & Gay Concerns (FLGBTQC)	(50)	(50)	(50)

Regional Quaker educational institutions

Chicago Friends School (CFS)	(300)	(300)	(300)
Scattergood School	(200)	(200)	(200)
Earlham College	(200)	(200)	(200)
Earlham School of Religion (ESR)	(100)	(100)	(100)
Olney Friends School	(100)	(100)	(100)
Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR)	(300)	(300)	(300)
Project Lakota	(200)	(200)	(200)
Friends Journal	(200)	(200)	(200)
National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT)	(100)	(100)	0
Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO)	(50)	(50)	(50)
Total	(10,650)	(10,650)	(9,550)

*Note: Youth Oversight Income from Quake registrations and HSF fundraising are offset by YO expenses.

**Illinois Yearly Meeting - Monthly Meeting Contributions
July 1, 2016 - June 3, 2017 (prepared June 3, 2017)**

	Unrestricted	Property	World Conference	Total	Previous YTD
Blue River Quarterly	0			0	0
Bloomington-Normal	720.00			720.00	2,549.00
Clear Creek	0			0	5,000.00
Columbia	2,640.00			2,640.00	2,640.00
Downers Grove	3,625.00			3,625.00	3,500.00
Duneland	1,920.00			1,920.00	2,160.00
Evanston	6,840.00			6,840.00	11,810.00
57th Street	3,400.00			3,400.00	2,400.00
Lake Forest	16,500.00			16,500.00	16,500.00
Northside	1,355.00			1,355.00	1,898.00
Oak Park	2,340.00			2,340.00	2,880.00
Oshkosh	25.00			25.00	30.00
Rock Valley	0			0	0
Rolla	0			0	0
South Bend	0			0	4,560.00
Southern Illinois	1,200.00			1,200.00	1,320.00
Spoon River	720.00			720.00	720.00
St. Louis	9,120.00			9,120.00	9,120.00
Upper Fox Valley	1,500.00			1,500.00	1,500.00
Urbana-Champaign	9,240.00			9,240.00	6,300.00
Total	61,145.00	0	0	61,145.00	74,887.00

<p>Recommended Annual Contribution Per Adult Resident Member is \$242 if change is approved</p>
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Stewards Report

The Stewards continue in service to the yearly meeting. We realize that the need to be prepared for others to assume some of our site care responsibilities is becoming more important. In that light, we have begun work on two projects. The first is a documentation of what we are currently doing and are responsible for getting done. The second is beginning to reach out to local people in the area around McNabb to help us do our work. We hope that this work will assist the Finance Committee's ad hoc committee (on the topic of the caretaker) to move this issue forward.

What follows is some of the work done by the Stewards over the past six months. Some of this work was previously described in our Spring report to the Continuing Committee.

The Clear Creek House furnace needed a new condensation pump for the furnace. Water had been collecting on the floor for months and though Neil had rigged up a system to catch that water it needed someone to regularly empty the bucket. Dick ordered the replacement pump from Grasser's (\$75) but hired a local person (grandson of "inactive" member) to install it (\$80).

The goal is to start a "pool" of people to do certain jobs. We are adding to our list of contractors, (heating/air conditioning/plumbing people, and barn experts) to assist the stewards in care for the building and grounds. In our opinion, to address caretaker's duties, we would prefer that a local person or a Quaker who could move to the area. We would prefer not to hire some firm to take over the jobs.

The maple tree in the Clear Creek House front yard had lost a large limb, which was mostly cut and cleared away by a local person who took the lumber for his pay. Large chunks of the remaining limbs are still in the yard. We look to have them cut up and hauled away. This will take chainsaws and help.

Chris Goode, Dick Ashdown, and Chip Rorem met three contractors (sequentially) at the campground bathhouse to discuss improvements to the facility. These contractors will submit proposals to Chris for review. This work will be discussed in the Site Envisioning Report.

Our last work weekend on May 20 was canceled due to rain. The work that Maintenance and Planning scheduled for us to do remains. We appreciate the help of all those good Friends willing to care for our property and look forward to their help as weather permits.

Dick and Chip changed the water filters in the basement of Clear Creek House, and also chlorinated the well at Clear Creek House. The water was retested shortly thereafter and the septic system was pumped and serviced. When we chlorinated the well, we took photos.

Our goal, over the days of the Annual Sessions, is to take advantage of the collective memories and experiences of those gathered on site at that time and use it to expand the Stewards site responsibility document. We thank Carol Bartles for her ongoing help with the site duties and look forward from input from others as we document our work.

Respectfully submitted, Dick Ashdown, Beth Carpenter, Grayce Mesner, Neil Mesner, and Chip Rorem

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Field Secretary's Report

This November, if the body approves my continuation as Field Secretary, I will enter my seventh year serving you in that role. My joy in what I do is undiminished, and I continue to be blessed by this work.

Again, I report here some major themes for further discussion, as well as where I have been, how far I have traveled, where I plan to go next, and what I expect to be offering in the future. This year I have again traveled more miles, visited more meetings more often, listened, facilitated retreats, introduced new topics of discussion, and, I hope, served the yearly meeting as well as you might hope I would.

I continue to be concerned about small meetings, which I experience as deeply grounded in worship, yet struggling to find ways to increase their numbers, and to not burn out from the responsibilities that cannot be shared widely due to their small numbers. I look forward to finding ways to nurture and support these Friends, and to find ways to help forge connections and commitment across meetings and among individuals.

Once again, I offer here a list of new and persisting topics being raised by Friends in my visits, discussions, emails and other correspondence from meetings and individuals:

- Eldering and supporting Adult Young Friends in their discernment of the actions they are called to take in the world now and how they can take those actions.
- Need for purpose and encouragement in this time of political uncertainty—What actions are we led to take at this time? How do we find ways to go forward, when we are bombarded with opportunities to be stuck in blaming and ridicule?
- Discussion of “What Is God?”—What does “God” mean to each of us? What names do we use? How does what I believe and can articulate join with what other Friends say? How can what I believe align with what someone of another tradition believes? What is the Truth we seek? Can talking about our different perspectives help us to join together?
- Issues around meeting spaces: renewal, renovation, finding new space, intentionally using questions around space to strengthen community and commitment.
- Continuing work on issues of race and privilege and how to address them, especially in ourselves.
- Building on the work we have begun to fully welcome and integrate all our children, youth, and young adults into the full life of their monthly meetings and our yearly meeting.
- Continuing to commit to and connect with one another and with the Light.
- Continuing to discern ways to build and nurture our community.
- Continuing to seek ways to foster better communication, resolution of conflicts, and reconciliation.
- Learning more about the issues of gender identity and acceptance.
- Recognizing individuals’ gifts and finding ways to help individuals use their gifts.
- Outreach and welcome to those seeking deeper spiritual experience.

In my visiting I continue to encounter wisdom in vocal ministry, and to experience the value and efficacy of our shared silence. I believe that it is our sharing of silence and listening that gives us strength and courage to take action in the world, and to support Friends as they do so also.

Travel and Visits

During the fiscal year 2016-2017 I will have driven approximately 7,550 miles for the yearly meeting. I will have visited with Friends in Bloomington-Normal, Carbondale, Clear Creek, Columbia, Downers Grove, Hyde Park, Evanston, the mid-week meeting for worship at the Admiral in Chicago (under the care of Evanston), Lake Forest, Northside, Oak Park, Oshkosh, Duneland (Valparaiso), Burlington (IA), Urbana-Champaign, Upper Fox Valley, Rolla, Rockford (Rock Valley), South Bend, Elkhart, Springfield, and St. Louis, several of them more than once. I attended Blue River Quarterly meetings in DuBois and Cantrall, the SnowQuake Gathering hosted by 57th Street (attended by Chicago area Friends and others, including some from South Bend).

I attended Women’s Weekend in McNabb, and Friends Committee on National Legislation’s programs at Downers Grove and at the Admiral in Chicago. I attended the Women’s March with Friends from Downers Grove, wearing banners made by Margaret Nelson. With her permission, I shared some of them with Friends meetings I visited. (At the SnowQuake, young people and adults wore the banners for the 57th Street Friends’ candlelight vigil in front of the meetinghouse.)

I have offered programs, facilitated discussions and worship sharing, and offered care, encouragement and resources in person and by phone and email to individuals and meetings. As time permits, I continue to correspond by notes, email and phone calls with those I am unable to visit in person. I have also been privileged to visit and spend time with Friends in their homes, and to participate in “Meetings for Eating” in Normal and in Downers Grove.

We are strengthened by our contacts and commitments to one another, especially across meetings. Friends’ commitments to each other, their communities, and to justice issues in the world and their efforts to be educated on issues of racism and culture are inspiring. My goal is to continue to connect meetings and individuals to each other. I encourage Friends to connect to one another across meetings, to keep in contact by visiting, phone calls, emails, cards, and letters.

Future Visits and Programs

I am planning to visit Burlington Worship Group, St. Louis Friends, Rolla Friends, and Columbia Friends before I give this report at Annual Sessions. I was unable to visit Spoon River Friends, though I was able to keep in contact by phone with them. I was also unable to worship with Macomb Friends, but have been able to visit with most of them at BRQ and other events. I hope to visit both Macomb and Spoon River in the fall.

I have been asked to present a program on pastoral care for 57th Street Meeting, which I expect will be scheduled for late summer or fall. I will be doing a workshop discussion for High School Friends, and a workshop with Phyllis Reynolds at Annual Sessions. I also plan to continue to attend and help facilitate the 4th Sunday program at Downers Grove Friends Meeting during the next year. This discussion group has been a rich opportunity to learn and bring new ideas to other ILYM monthly meetings.

Friends’ suggestions of places that you think might want a visit or a program are always appreciated. And I am always delighted to have the chance to develop new programs as requested.

I continue to aspire to do more and better work as your representative. Therefore, as always, I invite your thoughts, ideas, and concerns, Friends. I ask that you continue to let me know how I can serve you and your meetings. I continue to be honored to serve the yearly meeting, and joyful in service to you, my Friends. Thank you for all the ways you continue to support, nurture, guide and trust me.

Respectfully submitted, Judy Wolicki, Field Secretary

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Children’s Religious Education Committee Report

Children’s Religious Education Coordinator: The CRE Committee was grateful that our vision for a coordinator came to fruition with the experiment of having a part-time staff member of ILYM to oversee children’s programming at Blue River Quarterly and in preparation for the 2017 Annual Sessions. Much of our work in 2016 was in discussion of the parameters of the CRE Coordinator position and then the search and screen process for this position. In January of 2017, we were thrilled that Joy Duncan accepted our offer to be the part-time Religious Education Coordinator. We had already been supporting Joy and Marcy Harmon in putting together a middle school program, which began with a retreat at Continuing Committee in the fall of 2017 at Clear Creek House at McNabb. The SnowQuake in February 2017, hosted by 57th Street Meeting, provided excellent children’s and intergenerational programming led by Joy as a volunteer. Joy began serving as a staff member on March 1, 2017 and organized the Middle School program of Blue River Quarterly. She attended a Quaker conference on religious education in May and has been working with Barb Harroun and Erin Taylor, as well as Mike

Dennis who is organizing the service project, to plan the Children's Sessions at ILYM Annual Sessions. That will be the end of the Children's Coordinator experiment for now. The Children's Religious Education Committee asks that ILYM fund a quarter-time Children's Religious Education Coordinator for the next year for the following reasons:

1. Children's ministry is vitally important to meetings and Friends as a whole. Our vision is to embracing the children and bringing them into worship, service, and community as much as possible. Part of the reason the ILYM Children's Sessions are more organized this year, and the planning has been smooth for the volunteer coordinators, is that it is an actual position. Joy was able to carry her knowledge from coordinating last year's session forward. There is an ease and lack of intimidation for those who are the Children's Sessions coordinators.
2. Our community is built on volunteer labor and ministry, but you can have a lot of good people and no central focus because there is no organizer. A staff person takes responsibility and keeps the program organized.
3. For a while, a volunteer can play the role of a staff person, but eventually they burn out. If you do not have someone who is dedicated and central, the volunteers can get frustrated and quit. Things can fall through the cracks.
4. We have meetings with First Day Schools and we have a number of meetings without them (even though there are children in some of them). There are other meetings without middle or high school programs. What the Children's Religious Education Coordinator offers is family or multi-generational retreats during the year, providing middle school programming and keeping kids connected. A coordinator can help other meetings have events like Snowquake. Our meetings are small and spread out, even in the Chicago metro area. We need to keep fostering the connections, especially across the generations. Our style of worship makes it challenging for children. We have to get creative and commit to children's education and connections across distance. The children who stay involved with Quakerism long term tend to be the ones that get involved in the yearly meeting.
5. Quakers have a message that the world needs—mysticism, but being in the world, not a monastery. If we are going to continue into the future, we need to nurture our children in faith and practice as they go out into the world.

Our Whole Lives Training. The CRE committee has also been discussing a new curriculum that all meetings can benefit from: the Our Whole Lives (OWL) program for children and teens, which had caught the attention of Evanston Monthly Meeting. OWL is a program designed by the Unitarian Universalists. It is "a comprehensive, lifespan sexuality education curricula for use in both secular settings and faith communities" (www.uua.org/re/owl). Based on the information presented by committee member Michael Pine and conversations between Joy Duncan and Robyn Sullivan of Evanston Monthly Meeting, the CRE Committee approved asking ILYM for help in funding a training retreat for ILYM members interested in doing this work. In May 2017, we learned that there would be an OWL training in Rockford, Ill. in the fall of 2017 and that Evanston Meeting had committed to funding attendance by several members and their part-time religious education coordinator, Charlotta Koppányani. We are asking ILYM to fund Joy Duncan's attendance at this conference and are committed to publicizing it as an opportunity for other monthly meetings to send Friends to be trained in the curriculum.

We appreciate the opportunity to serve ILYM by overseeing children's ministry and we look forward to the continued work and joy this offers us and others who are in touch with the committee's work and see the fruits in their meetings.

Committee members: Joy Duncan (ex officio), Dale Gardner, Barb Harroun, Michael Pine, Monica Tetzlaff (clerk), Bobbi Trist.

Children's Religious Education Coordinator Report

I want to start by thanking you for creating this new ILYM position. It has been a tremendous year since last year's Annual Sessions in terms of children/youth programming. In just a year it is obvious to me that more ILYM programming has made a significant difference. I strongly recommend continuing this momentum on a yearly meeting level.

As the Children's Sessions Overall Coordinator for the Chicago South Planning Group last summer, my eyes were opened to things that I had not noticed before:

- Too many ILYM monthly meetings do not have First Day School (FDS). Interestingly enough, some of our youth claim to be associated with these meetings without children's religious education.
- ILYM monthly meetings are in general small and if they have a FDS, they struggle with what to do with a small number of children with a wide range of ages.
- Only 2 ILYM monthly meetings other than my own have FDS specifically for middle school children. This is so important because this is an age when these Friends can go deeper with their faith or they can feel unsupported and fall away from Friends.
- ILYM Annual Sessions are often the only opportunity our children/youth get to come together with other similarly-aged children/youth.
- ILYM covers a huge area and ranges across 5 states. We are geographically isolated from each other.

These are the facts as I see them and they lead me to see the intensity of the need for more connections within ILYM and more opportunities for religious education that is spearheaded by the yearly meeting.

I have responded to this need throughout this year. I organized and led a middle school retreat with Marcy Harman during fall continuing committee (as volunteers). We had 11 middle schoolers attend.

As the ILYM Children's Religious Education Coordinator, I planned and led the middle school program during the Spring Blue River Quarterly gathering. Eight Middle School Young Friends participated in that weekend retreat.

Another big part of my job has been planning 2017 ILYM Children's Sessions. Working with Erin Taylor and Barb Haroun on this has been a pleasure and has made such a big difference in ILYM planning. We are continuing the momentum that was begun last summer. Children's Sessions is a place that connections are being made in a big way. During 2016 Annual Sessions, the Peace Resources Committee and the Environmental Concerns Committee worked with the children, sharing what they do and inviting the children into that work with activities. This year the Finance Committee and the Maintenance and Planning Committees will do the same. The significance of this cannot be understated.

My most recent news is that I applied for a Lyman grant to travel to New England Yearly Meeting for three Junior High Yearly Meeting retreats over the next nine months and to be mentored by Gretchen Baker-Smith, who has been deep in this spiritual work for 25 years. The idea is to bring back my experience and new knowledge to my monthly meeting and ILYM. My proposal was accepted and it is very exciting.

You are noticing that I focused on Middle School Young Friends this year. But this is not the only need. I also know of a great need for multigenerational programming as well as programming for families, High School Friends and Adult Young Friends within ILYM.

I know we, as a yearly meeting, are seriously concerned about the budget and making ends meet. I want to turn that idea on its head and tell you that we cannot afford to continue the way we are with regard to religious education and programs in ILYM. This model of scarcity will only continue to weaken us and make us afraid to make changes.

The purpose of religious education is to awaken a person to the life of the spirit and to provide some context for spiritual formation—for discovering your identity as a spiritual and/or religious person. Religious education is a life-long process that begins in childhood and continues throughout our whole lives.

It is not a successful model to expect young adults, newcomers to Quakerism, and families with children to put this together all on their own without preparation, resources, or support from the wider Quaker community. Meanwhile older Friends bemoan our inability to hold onto our Quaker children/youth when they become middle schoolers, high schoolers, young adults, and so on.

Let's focus on families for a minute. Most families bring their kids to Quakerism because they want and need support with religious education. Isn't this our job as members of the Religious Society of Friends? For me, it is barely scratching the surface to say that we need to do this for the future of Quakerism. The real reward is in the here and now. Working with children can be an extremely rich spiritual experience. Broadening our experience with the Divine through singing, fellowship, sharing stories, worship sharing and more will make us a richer, more vital faith community. All this work to include, nurture and welcome families and children will be an experience that will help us grow, not only in numbers, but more importantly grow and renew us spiritually.

Religious education is about sharing our rich, amazing Quakerism—what we believe, how we work and what our experience of the Divine is with the world starting with the ones who are already here with us, all the adults, families, youth/children and everyone. This is how we answer that of God in our members/attenders of all ages.

I have a proposal. I want to continue on as the Children's Religious Education Coordinator for the next year, running 2 Middle School Young Friends overnights (fall and spring) and also a retreat for families, as well as providing support and continuity for ILYM children's sessions. I will continue the tradition of 57th St. Meeting's SnowQuake as a multigenerational event that has been going strong for 3 years already (to be clear, this is not part of the staff position). This model of a monthly meeting with energy and leadership that hosts an event that welcomes all ILYM Friends, seems to be particularly suited to the demographics of our yearly meeting. As the Children's Religious Education Coordinator, I would encourage and offer support to other monthly meetings to hold similar events without actually running them as a staff person myself (keeping in mind budget concerns). This proposal speaks to the need for ILYM to take ownership of meaningful religious education programming for more than 4 1/2 days each year (Annual Sessions). ILYM support is essential because of the five points I highlighted at the beginning of this report. This is big, radical work that has the power to transform individual Friends, our monthly meetings, our yearly meeting and even the world at this critical time.

I am deeply grateful to the ILYM Children's Religious Education Committee and especially to the children and families of ILYM. We are all growing in this work together and I feel a huge commitment to my religious education ministry.

Joy Duncan, ILYM Children's Religious Education Coordinator

Development Committee Report

Contribution totals as of June 1st (11 months into the fiscal year)

Type of Contribution	Fiscal 2015-16	Fiscal 2016-17	% Change
Individual Undesignated	\$27,965.36	\$22,858.93	18% DECREASE
General Fund (Monthly Meetings)	\$69,566.50	\$63,324.70	9% DECREASE
Restricted/Designated	\$6,470.00	\$7,500.00	16% INCREASE

Individual contributions to the yearly meeting for the 2015-16 fiscal year exceeded expectations. At the 2016 Annual Sessions the Yearly Meeting approved a \$5,000 increase in the 2016-17 budgeted income for individual contributions. The table above indicates that the expected increase in donations has not yet happened; instead there has been a decrease.

At the 2016 Annual Sessions, the Finance Committee and the Development Committee indicated that increases in monthly meeting contributions were highly unlikely. The table above provides evidence that reinforces that opinion.

The regular expenses of the yearly meeting for the next fiscal year are likely to exceed expected contributions. This issue will be addressed in the report of the Finance Committee. The Development Committee reports only on the success of raising needed funds and the likelihood of being able to raise needed funds.

The table above clearly indicates that the yearly meeting has a serious financial problem. We have not yet raised the funds that we expected to need for this year's budget. It does not look likely that enough funds will be raised during the coming year unless expenses are controlled (either by not increasing or somewhat reducing them) or expensive and extensive fundraising is done (or both).

It should be noted that the cost of the annual appeal letter has been kept to approximately \$500. More extensive fundraising will necessitate additional appeal letters and individual contacts. This will necessitate an increase in Development Committee expenses.

All of these matters must be carefully considered by the Yearly Meeting at the 2017 Annual Session. Attention must also be given to whether qualified volunteers are willing and available to undertake the fundraising work necessary to meet expanded budget goals. It should be noted that the Development Committee membership this year is three people. One is non-resident and the other two are non-resident during the winter months.

Frank Young, Development Committee Clerk

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Environmental Concerns Committee Report

The Environmental Concerns Committee has only met in the fall of 2016.

In response to concerns about the osage orange trees that have been planted on the west side of the property, a clearness committee was held on August 21, 2016 with Clear Creek Friends and other representatives from various committees, clerked by Judy Wolicki. As a result of the findings, Adrian Fisher, Noel Pavlovic, and Chris Goode met in the winter to discuss and redesign the windbreak that we had proposed previously.

The revised windbreak plan has not yet been presented to the rest of the committee, but will be done prior to Annual Sessions. At Annual Sessions, we will present the design as a poster with questionnaires and also as a workshop. We hope to have feedback to present a revised plan to the Continuing Committee in the fall of 2017. We will also present the plan to Clear Creek Friends during the summer.

Due to the rainy and inclement weather and the cancellation of the work weekend in May, we hope to address property landscaping issues that were identified last fall at site preparation on June 17.

We have two actions items that we want to present to the Yearly Meeting. We request permission to remove half of the Osage orange saplings so that there spacing is 20 feet apart. We also request permission to mulch the remaining trees in the interim to assist with protecting the trees and managing the grass adjacent to them. We will use the 2017-2018 budget to purchase mulch. We estimate the mulch for the 18 remaining Osage orange trees will cost approximately \$100.

Clerk Noel Pavlovic, and committee members Alice Howenstine, Bill Howenstine, Sarah Pavlovic, Fariba Murray, Chris Goode, David Wixom, Adrian Fisher, Don Moorman and Nancy Halliday.

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Committee on Faith and Practice Report

The Faith and Practice Committee has met five times since the 2016 sessions of Illinois Yearly Meeting, and has held several workshops with monthly meetings to receive feedback on various texts.

Our attention this year has been divided among several new and existing texts. We reviewed the following sections whose provisional periods are now expiring, and made a number of revisions. These are indicated by underlining new material and ~~striking through~~ material to be deleted. We now propose that these texts be adopted for an indefinite period:

- The Light Within and its Religious Implications (adopted 2014 for a 3-year period)
- Testimonies (adopted 2014–2015 for a period ending 2017; no revisions proposed)
- Quarterly Meetings (adopted 2012 for a 5-year period)
- Sample Membership Form (adopted 2012 for a 5-year period)

The following two sections have been workshopped and revised several times but not yet considered by the yearly meeting body. We now propose that they be adopted for a one-year provisional period:

- Friends and the State
- Pastoral Care

Two newer sections will be presented and discussed at workshops at our yearly meeting sessions this year:

- Addiction, Substance Abuse, and Gambling
- Clearness and Support Committees

We welcome comments and suggestions for how to improve these sections, whether in the workshops or communicated separately.

A draft of the following section is also available for comment, although no workshop on it is being held during the yearly meeting sessions:

- Glossary

We continue to work on the following section, in light of a very helpful recent workshop with Southern Illinois Meeting:

- Recognizing Spiritual Gifts and Leadings

The following sections are still in the planning or early development stages, but we hope to have them ready for presentation next year:

- Religious Education
- History of Illinois Yearly Meeting
- Sexuality and Gender
- Preface

We continue to consider summer 2018 to be our target date for having a complete draft of the entire book. The committee welcomes all comments and suggestions, and urges Friends to communicate them early.

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Finance Committee Report

Finance committee was in unity with a proposal to reduce Annual Session fees for Adult Young Friends who help with site preparation prior to the Annual Sessions in 2017. We will evaluate this experiment and report back to Fall Continuing Committee.

Finance Committee is continuing to support the Stewards, Site Envisioning Committee, and Maintenance and Planning Committee with ongoing work, including the renovations to the bathhouse approved at Continuing Committee.

Finance committee is concerned about the ongoing financial sustainability of the yearly meeting. We have a large property to maintain, which we appreciate greatly, but which has ongoing maintenance costs. Having a property allows us to charge very low fees for annual sessions compared to if we had to rent space from another institution. In addition, we have hard working staff members to whom we would like to give cost of living raises each year, and ILYM has other tasks which would benefit from additional staff, as the Children's Religious Education Coordinator and property caretaker. On the other hand, we are seeing declining contributions both from our monthly meetings and individual Friends as

of our April meeting.

Therefore, we present the following two action items:

1) We propose increasing the recommended contribution 5% from monthly meetings to \$252 per adult resident member. This increase is calculated to match the salary increases we have given to our staff over the past 5 years. In addition, Finance Committee intends to recommend future increases equivalent to the increase in staff salary each year. This amount is still a recommended amount, recognizing that some of the monthly meetings have very small budgets, and that the monthly meetings are also facing budget strains. However, we think it is important to recognize that ILYM's fiscal needs expand by a small amount each year, and that we need increased contributions to meet those needs.

2) We propose increasing the Annual Session fee to \$42 per adult per day for 2018. This amount is designed to cover some (but not all) of the property maintenance costs, recognizing that Annual Sessions is one of the biggest users of the ILYM campus, and that having the property available makes Annual Sessions much lower cost than for yearly meetings that are not as fortunate.

Finance committee will be presenting a proposed fiscal year 2017-2018 budget for discernment to the Yearly Meeting. In addition to the operating budget shown, we note that any increase in permanent staff positions will require an increase in payroll reserves.

Submitted by Ted Kuhn, clerk

Illinois Yearly Meeting Operating Budget 2017-2018

	PROPOSED		
	with CREC 17-18 Anticipated	No CREC 17-18 Anticipated	16-17 Anticipated
Income			
Contributions from Meetings	86,000	82,000	82,000
Contributions from Individuals	29,000	25,500	29,000
Gatherings & Retreats	16,275	16,275	15,500
Fundraisers	0	0	0
Site Use Fee	0	0	0
Interest	600	600	600
<i>Total Income</i>	131,875	124,375	127,100
Expenses & Transfers			
Operating			
Personnel (Payroll, Staff Travel, Office) ¹	(58,700)	(51,200)	(55,200)
YM Travel Support ²	(5,500)	(5,500)	(5,500)
Gatherings & Retreats	(15,300)	(15,300)	(15,000)
Site (Facilities & Deferred Maint) ³	(28,675)	(28,675)	(28,200)
Committees ⁴	(12,550)	(12,550)	(12,550)
Support to Others ⁵	(10,650)	(10,650)	(10,650)
Faith and Practice Reserve	(500)	(500)	
<i>Total Expenses</i>	(131,875)	(124,375)	(127,100)
Budget Surplus (Deficit)	0	0	0

Expense Line Item Details

(1) Personnel

Salaries & Payroll	(51,600)	(44,600)	(43,700)
Staff Travel	(6,100)	(5,600)	(5,500)
Office	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)
Children's Religious Education Coordinator	0	0	(5,000)
Total	(58,700)	(51,200)	(55,200)

(2) YM Travel Support

ILYM Committee Travel	(2,000)	(2,000)	(2,000)
ILYM Reps Travel	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)
Transfer to <i>FWCC World Meetings Travel</i>	(1,000)	(1,000)	(1,000)
Total	(5,500)	(5,500)	(5,500)

(3) Site

<u>Annual Facilities Expenses (Oversight: Stewards)</u>			
Insurance	(5,500)	(5,500)	(5,500)
Repairs	(1,675)	(1,675)	(1,200)
Landscaping	(5,000)	(5,000)	(5,000)
Annual services (inspections, winterizing)	(1,500)	(1,500)	(1,500)
Utilities	(3,500)	(3,500)	(3,000)
Facilities Total	(17,175)	(17,175)	(16,700)
<u>Deferred Maintenance (Oversight: M&P)</u>			
Transfer to <i>Deferred Maintenance Fund</i>	(11,500)	(11,500)	(11,500)
Total	(28,675)	(28,675)	(28,200)

	PROPOSED		
	with CREC	No CREC	
	17-18	17-18	16-17
	Anticipated	Anticipated	Anticipated
(4) Committees			
Ad hoc	(100)	(100)	(100)
Children's Religious Education	(300)	(300)	(300)
Development	(1,100)	(1,100)	(1,100)
Environmental Concerns	(200)	(200)	(200)
Faith & Practice	(150)	(150)	(150)
Finance	(450)	(450)	(450)
Handbook	(50)	(50)	(50)
Maintenance & Planning	(200)	(200)	(200)
Ministry & Advancement	(250)	(250)	(250)
Nominating	(300)	(300)	(300)
Peace Resources	(250)	(250)	(250)
Peace Tax Fund	(50)	(50)	(50)
Personnel	(150)	(150)	(150)
Publications	(6,000)	(6,000)	(6,000)
Site Envisioning	(200)	(200)	(200)
Adult Young Friends	(300)	(300)	(300)
Youth Oversight	(2,500)	(2,500)	(2,500)
Total	(12,550)	(12,550)	(12,550)

(5) Support to Others

Quaker organizations -ILYM assigns representatives

Friends General Conference (FGC)	(4,000)	(4,000)	(4,000)
Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC)	(3,500)	(3,500)	(3,500)
American Friends Service Cmte. (AFSC)	(400)	(400)	(400)
Friends Cmte. on Natl Legislation Edu. Fund (FCNL)	(400)	(400)	(400)
Friends Peace Teams (FPT)	(300)	(300)	(300)
Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW)	(250)	(250)	(250)
Friends for Lesbian & Gay Concerns (FLGBTQC)	(50)	(50)	(50)

Regional Quaker educational institutions

Chicago Friends School (CFS)	(300)	(300)	(300)
Scattergood School	(200)	(200)	(200)
Earlham College	(200)	(200)	(200)
Earlham School of Religion (ESR)	(100)	(100)	(100)
Olney Friends School	(100)	(100)	(100)
Right Sharing of World Resources (RSWR)	(300)	(300)	(300)
Project Lakota	(200)	(200)	(200)
Friends Journal	(200)	(200)	(200)
National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT)	(100)	(100)	(100)
Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO)	(50)	(50)	(50)
Total	(10,650)	(10,650)	(10,650)

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Handbook Committee Report

As the Illinois Yearly Meeting book of Faith and Practice (F&P) nears completion, with more sections being provisionally approved each Annual Sessions, the Handbook Committee has been considering how the Handbook and F&P can best complement each other. We would like to remind Friends that while some parts of F&P are probably taken from the Handbook (a good source) and it sometimes reads like the Handbook, it does not replace the Handbook. Some things we noted:

- While F&P gives a general description of the practices of the yearly meeting, the Handbook gives many more details of our Quaker process.
- The Handbook is a repository of the decisions that have been made that describe the specifics of our practice. It is the place people go when they want to know who to contact about a specific concern or if they want to understand how a committee functions.
- More than just a summary for the Nominating Committee, the Handbook represents the specific charges the yearly meeting gives to each committee or individual with specific responsibility in order that they may carry out the work during the year.
- The Handbook is a living document that is constantly updated with the latest information. It is flexible (in a three-ring binder or online). The information is (hopefully) easy to access.

The committee recommends the following new description of the Handbook:

Handbook Description

The Handbook communicates the specifics of Quaker process for the functioning of the Illinois Yearly Meeting as a body. The Handbook is descriptive rather than prescriptive. It is a compilation of the Yearly Meeting decisions that describe the direction, practice, and organization of the yearly meeting. The Handbook reflects the most up-to-date minutes or approved committee reports from Annual Sessions or in some cases Continuing Committee. The Handbook also includes important approved documents such as the ILYM by-laws. The Handbook is a resource and reminder to individuals and committees of the charge given by the Yearly Meeting at Annual Sessions. It provides information to various people in ILYM such as officers, committee clerks, and those who want to know who to contact when they have a specific concern or want to know how a committee functions.

The committee discussed the role of the Handbook Committee and recommends the following description.

The Handbook Committee

The Handbook Committee continually examines the details of our Quaker process and strives to make it clear to our members. The work of the Handbook Committee (with help from members of the yearly meeting) includes:

- Attending Annual Sessions and Continuing Committee, when possible, and reviewing the minutes and approved reports for decisions that change the direction or charges of committees or individuals with specific responsibilities. In a timely manner, to rewrite these minutes in the same style as the Handbook and bring them to Continuing Committee or Annual Sessions for action. When approved, add them to the Handbook.
- Read through the Handbook annually to identify inaccuracies or places where our practice has evolved and bring them to the attention of appropriate committee, individual, or sometimes the yearly meeting as a whole at Annual Sessions.
- Look for inconsistencies in the Handbook and correct them.
- Edit the Handbook for stylistic consistency. The committee is empowered to do these edits without necessarily bringing these changes to the Yearly Meeting for review.

- Try to identify omissions that should be in the Handbook.
- To Electronically send the revised Handbook annually to the Administrative Coordinator to update the online version and inform monthly meetings. Print out new copies for the Presiding Clerk, Assistant Clerk, members of the Handbook Committee and anyone else who requests it.

The committee also discussed the section on changes to the yearly meeting and recommends the following description:

Changes in Practices by the Yearly Meeting

Most deliberate changes in yearly meeting practices come from standing or ad hoc committees which may bring forward a recommendation for change to Annual Sessions. For significant changes, the idea should first be brought to Continuing Committee for seasoning. Further, it might be sent to monthly meetings for feedback. The originating committee is responsible for bringing the suggested change to the yearly meeting at Annual Sessions. The Handbook Committee will incorporate changes based on the approved minute from Annual Sessions. Occasionally committees working together may bring forward changes in a similar manner as above.

When an officer, individual with a specific responsibility, or an individual who is a participating member feels moved to bring forward a recommendation for change, it should first be seasoned and tested by a smaller body. The body may vary depending on the recommendation. It could be the Friend's monthly meeting and then quarterly meeting. It may be the clerk's committee or an appropriate standing committee. Individuals may also season a concern by approaching Friends in neighboring meetings or with the Field Secretary. Often the Yearly Meeting will appoint an ad hoc committee to season the leading. The recommendation would then be brought to Annual Sessions as in the paragraph above.

When a change in practice or policy in the conduct of business or organization of the yearly meeting has evolved into a new practice that does not fall under the auspices of a committee or individual with specific responsibilities, that change should be brought to the attention of the Handbook Committee. The Handbook Committee will then notify the yearly meeting at Annual Sessions of such changes. If the committee has accurately described the new direction and if the Yearly Meeting approves the change, the Handbook Committee incorporates it into the next version of the Handbook.

The committee would like to request that the "Handbook" be added to the banner of the ILYM website rather than as a link on the publications headline.

Sue Styer and Pam Kuhn

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Maintenance and Planning Committee Report

Maintenance Planning canceled its spring workday this month due to non-stop rain. We have not met since fall 2016 and have not yet rescheduled a spring workday. I have not scheduled conference call meetings as was suggested to me at Continuing Committee. Many of the items on M&P's To Do List require contracting with and scheduling with local professionals. This task is as much beyond the skills or abilities of this committee as are most of the jobs that need to be done. I would like to adjust our committee role to being supportive of a professional caretaker or contractor. It is overwhelming to keep

up a 12 acre farm with an aged meetinghouse, a large house, and outbuildings from hours away with a geographically diverse committee. I have maintained an updated To Do List (following), but that is only a computer skill. My apologies for my abominable committee leadership and lack of construction skills.

Respectfully overwhelmed, Meredith George

ILYM M&P To Do List (as of 05/13/17)

Meetinghouse:

Replace rotten lowest board exterior southwest corner.

Hire someone to pressure wash the north and west sides for mildew on the paint.

Kitchen:

Find, buy, install range hood.

Would it be useful to redesign front stairs to dining hall so that they are to code with a wider run? They might have to extend further into the dining room.

Ask Wil to laminate instructions signs for kitchen. The papers have mildewed.

Sand and paint the flat surfaces of the island shelving. *Need sandpaper and gloss paint. It might be oil-based.*

Call Zack Schobernd to see if ILYM needs to buy anything else for the kitchen this year. Ask if he needs for ILYM to buy a new roaster to replace the old broken one.

Junior Yearly Meetinghouse:

Repair or replace windows. Many broken panes are caused by the worn window frame no longer supporting the glass. Windows don't open and shut easily, or without coming apart. Two windows on south wall need to be closed at the top.

Put the A/C units that we managed to take out for winter back in the windows.

Center room smoke detector battery is beeping (again).

Repair doors that do not latch because they have too much weather stripping.

Penn House:

Remove old carpet and put in dumpster during Sessions. *Is the old carpet here for a reason?*

Is there a better use for this building? It has electricity. Could it be fixed up as a cabin for those with CPAP machines?

Fox Hole:

Replace hinges and rehang double doors on east side of building.

Clear Creek House Storage Shed:

Bolt down east wall so east door will open, shut, and latch.

Clear Creek House:

Call/text Mic, plaster repair person, to repair CCHouse plaster. Save pieces of plaster on a piece of paper to use as paint chips to have the right color paint.

Basement: remove the old water pump sump pump and throw out.

Remove any wood sitting on the floor.

Take squeegee from CCH basement over to Meetinghouse basement.

Wipe the dehumidifier clean.

Buy whole house water filters and replace whole house filters on the water treatment/filtration system.

Call Paul Ebener for instructions on how to do this.

Get estimate from Grazer's to extend the main baffle for CCH furnace ductwork to increase effectiveness of heating and cooling system of CCH 2nd floor. Also ask them to repair the loud boom sound that happens every time furnace kicks off. *Sounds like ductwork is not tightly attached to furnace.*

Clear Creek Garage:

Repair or replace electric garage door opener.

Would it be more economical to house guests needing accessible facilities in a local hotel and pay their bill for them rather than rehabbing the garage to make two apartments?

Barn:

Clean out, remove containers, recycle plastic 5 gal buckets - far west barn by silos. Call Marshall Brennan 815.712.8847 see if he will haul for us again. This time we should pay him.

Outside:

Swingset: check S hooks, chains, and everything else for safety and durability.

Pick up brush and branches and take to brush pile. Saw downed trees.

Remove little cedars near peace pole at Clear Creek House.

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Ministry and Advancement Committee Report

Ministry and Advancement has not met since Spring Continuing Committee. We are including several highlights from our spring report as we consider these significant to our ongoing process. As reported then, a significant focus for our committee at our past two meetings has been to develop community and greater connection among us. Judy Wolicki led us on a morning retreat exploring our spiritual gifts at our fall meeting. We continued this process by taking time for a connecting exercise during our winter meeting. We are grateful to Judy for facilitation of these activities. It has made a significant difference in the spiritual life and connection in the committee.

In addition to specific reports on our visits and connections with ILYM meetings, the committee has reflected upon trends we experience in meetings and in our national mood. Many people are looking for a safe and grounding space. Peace and Social Justice concerns are evident in the energy of many meetings. What draws people to Friends in contrast with other traditions? The fact that we are unprogrammed allows us to “improvise like jazz”; each meeting can respond to the Spirit in the ways that seem called for in this national moment building on the foundation of our faith and practice. Meetings need to season our collective responses to the mood of the country and find ways to reach out and connect with other communities for support and to show support.

Field Secretary

Judy Wolicki continues to find joy in the work of supporting meetings and worship groups. She has been with us for 6 years and her desire to serve is undiminished though she wants to make sure that she is making room for another who may be called by Spirit to offer their gifts to the role of Field Secretary. This longevity has deepened her relationships within ILYM. Her familiarity with meetings and theirs with her, provides her visits with the sense of Presence and Opportunities that has bound Friends historically. The committee affirms Judy’s work and are grateful for her thoughtful discernment process to continue with us as Field Secretary for the time being. She has been the primary connective tissue for our committee and member meetings. She visits an ILYM meeting most Sundays and has become a familiar presence who is known by members and attenders. Her deep knowledge of the strengths and needs of the various meetings she attends contributes to her ability to offer program related to their need. Judy attended a School of the Spirit Retreat to help keep her grounded for this important work.

Sexual Abuse and Harassment Policy

We are presenting to Annual Sessions our latest draft of a Sexual Abuse and Harassment policy. We determined that it was too complicated to contain all our concerns around sexual abuse and harassment in one policy. This policy is a simple process for the most obvious issues that arise. We have invited the Clerk of Youth Oversight (and any member who can attend) and the Youth Coordinator for a conversation during Annual Sessions reflecting the needs for a safe space for our youth to feel comfortable with each other and clear ideas of whom to turn to if there are concerns. In general, we know that our Youth Coordinator and the Youth Oversight Committee have essentially been serving in this capacity for some time. M&A wants to work with them to develop an ILYM policy that is supportive to their particular needs and programs within the yearly meeting.

Sexuality and Faith and Practice

As we considered the Sexual Abuse and Harassment policy, we were aware that much of the good work done previously by Roxy Jacobs and David Finke for the yearly meeting was not appropriate for this policy document. As we reported in the spring, we considered that a faith and practice for the modern day needs to include a statement on sexuality and gender and that some of the good work that Roxy and David did for the yearly meeting a few years ago could be a helpful starting point.

Such as section in faith and practice could include such areas as:

- Awareness of the changing attitudes toward gender and people's use of pronouns to describe themselves
- Friends respect for persons around affection, body awareness and sensitivity to touch or concern for personal space
- The “dignity of all Children of God must be protected and Friends desire to provide a safe and loving space for all—a spiritual mandate not legal one”
- How concerns around these areas might be addressed by local meetings,
- Queries that address sexual concerns. Some that were proposed in the earlier document were: “Is my sexual behavior consistent with the testimonies of Friends on honesty and integrity? Does it promote a trusted, safe sense of a Beloved Community? What may it say to the larger world about Friends? Is all my behavior such that both I and those around me are led to greater growth in God's Spirit?”

Spiritual Deepening

We were contacted by one of the FGC ambassadors of the Spiritual Deepening program as to the needs and awareness of ILYM members around the online Spiritual Deepening program. The committee will explore how this program can be used within our member meetings and worship groups. We would appreciate hearing from anyone in the yearly meeting who has used this tool about your experience with it.

Ministry and Advancement has lost members over the past couple of years because of personal and family needs. I have decided not to continue as clerk as my contract work has involved a good deal of travel. I have indicated my willingness to stay on the committee for another year for continuity with the new committee. We continue to hope that Friends in yearly meeting feel called to work with our committee on the spiritual life and growth of ILYM.

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Nominating Committee Report

OFFICERS:

Clerk: Cathy Garra (presides 2017-2018, assists 2019)

Asst. Clerk: _____ (asst. 2018, presides 2019-20, assists 2021)

Recording Clerk: Angie Reeks (assists 2017, records 2018-19, assists 2020)

Asst. Recording Clerk: Kent Busse (2018)

Reading clerk: Chris Jocius (2018)

Treasurers: Judy Erickson (2018)

Co. Treasurer: _____ (2020)

Stewards: **Richard Ashdown (2019)**, Grayce Mesner (2020), Neil Mesner (2020), Beth Carpenter (2021), Chip Rorem (2021), 6 year terms

STANDING COMMITTEES:

Children Religious Education Committee

Clerk: Monica Tetzlaff

2018: Monica Tetzlaff

2019: Joy Duncan, Dale Gardner, Michael Pine

2020: Babara Harroun, Bobbi Trist

Development Committee

Clerk: _____

2020: Ashlee Miller-Berry, Alex Lippitt, _____

Environmental Concerns Committee

Clerk: Noel Pavlovic

2018: Sarah Pavlovic, Noel Pavlovic, Chris Goode, John Hackman, Fariba Murray

2019: Alice Howenstine, Bill Howenstine

2020: David Wixom, Adrian Fisher, Nancy Halliday

Committee on Faith and Practice

Clerk: Peter Lasersohn

Janice Domanik, Peter Lasersohn, Colleen Reardon, David Shiner, Sarah Pavlovic

Finance Committee

Clerk: Ted Kuhn

2018: Judy Jager, Ashlee Miller-Berry

2019: Margie Haworth-Davis, Ted Kuhn

2020: **Val Lester, _____, _____**

Ex-Officio – Co-Treasurers:

Handbook Committee

Clerk: Pam Kuhn

2018: Pam Kuhn, Sue Styer

Maintenance and Planning Committee

Clerk: Meredith George

2018: Meredith George, Mike Dennis

2019: Neil Mesner

2020: **Bill Howenstine, _____, _____**

Ministry and Advancement Committee

Clerk: _____

2018: Brad Laird, **Beth Burbank**

2019: Phyllis Reynolds, Chris Jocius, Erin Taylor

2020: _____, _____

Nominating Committee

Clerk: _____

2018: Peter Albright

2019: Barb Harroun, Steve Tamari

2020: Brenda Schaut, Andrea Kintree

Peace Resources Committee

Clerk: Jan Mullen

2018: Kent Busse, Mark McGinnis, Naoki Nakamura, Dan Stevens, John Knox

2019: Jan Mullen, Dave Moorman, Contessa Miller

Personnel Committee

Clerk: Mike Dennis

2019: Dawn Rubbert, Nancy Wallace

2020: _____, _____

ex-officio: _____ (M&A), _____ (Youth Oversight), _____ (Finance)

Publications and Distribution Committee

Clerk: Sean West

2018: Grayce Mesner

2020: **Sean West**, _____

Ex Officio Administrative Coordinator: Will Brant

Ex Officio Editors of Among Friends: Caryn Kuhn, Pam Kuhn

Site Envisioning Committee

Clerk: **Chris Goode**

2018: Bill Howenstine, Marlena Amos,

2019: Sandy Bales, Mark Robinson

2020: Chris Goode, Noel Pavlovic, _____

Ex-Officio Steward - Richard Ashdown

Youth Oversight Committee

Clerk: Brittany Koresch

2018: Warwick Daw, Andrea Kintree

2019: Kate Gunnell

2020: _____, _____, _____

APPOINTMENTS TO WIDER QUAKER ORGANIZATIONS

American Friends Service Committee Corporation

2018: Carol Bartles, Contessa Miller, Phyllis Reynolds

2020: _____

Friends Committee on National Legislation - young adults, diversity, advocacy teams

2018: Hal Mead, Kevin Brubaker

2019: Fariba Murray, Michael Batinski

2020: _____, _____

Friends General Conference Central Committee

2019: Janice Domanik, Bruce Kanarek

2020: _____

Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, & Queer Concerns

2019: Colleen Reardon

Friends Peace Teams

2018: Debra Penna-Fredericks

Friends Secondary School Liaison

2019 Olney: Grayce Mesner

2019 Scattergood: Katherine Young

Friends World Committee for Consultation

2018: Nancy Duncan

2019: Nancy Wallace

2020: **David Shiner**

National Religious Campaign Against Torture

2018: Jan Mullen

Quaker Earthcare Witness

2018: David Wixom

2019: Noel Pavlovic

2020: _____

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Peace Resources Committee Report

Committee members: Kent Busse, Rebekah Buchanan, Mark McGinnis, Dave Moorman, Jan Mullen (clerk), Dan Stevens. John Knox and Dave Moorman are members of the Subcommittee on the Peace Tax Fund.

Financial Status: The committee has a \$100. budget and no expenditures this year.

Overview: This year has seen a decrease in activity of our committee, as its members have been drawn in many directions to work on the challenges to many of our Quaker values in the current political climate. Some members have been led to join the FCNL local advocacy teams in order to advocate for Quaker values directly to legislators. Following are the activities of the PRC committee with regard to the objectives as directed by ILYM.

Conscientious Objection: The first objective for Peace Resources is “To develop a proactive conscientious objection counseling program.” An early member of the Peace Resources Committee David Finke has lent his support and shared his depth of knowledge in this subject, and with Mark McGinnis is presenting two workshops on Conscientious Objection at this Annual Sessions. Any Friends interested in joining this Working Group are invited to contact members of PRC.

The next objectives are related to education of children, teens, and young adults. PRC members Mark McGinnis and Dan Stevens will be meeting with teens at Annual Sessions to present information on Conscientious Objection.

Opposition to the use of Torture: ILYM is now a participating member of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture (NRCAT). Jan Mullen is the current delegate. Monthly meetings are encouraged to join NRCAT as either Participating Members or Endorsing Members. PRC can provide monthly meetings with materials or a speaker on the issue of torture including solitary confinement. Monthly meetings are being encouraged to write a minute stating their opposition to the use of torture, including solitary confinement, so that these minutes may be published on the ILYM website as well as being sent to QUIT, the Quaker Initiative to End Torture.

Peace Resources Committee is proposing the following minute written by Rebekah Buchanan opposing the use of torture for consideration by Yearly Meeting:

Illinois Yearly Meeting joins other Friends in other meetings to oppose any practice of purposeful harm, torment, or torture, including solitary confinement, on any person. We condemn all forms of torture.

ILYM believes that the practice of torture does not create or further reconciliation. Instead, torture, especially as utilized by the United States government, creates fear and demeans and destroys the humanity of all involved. In doing so, it compromises the integrity of law, due process, and international agreements.

In addition, torture violates the belief of the Illinois Yearly Meeting that God is in everyone, by denying the rights of all involved. We believe, as William Penn wrote, "A good end cannot sanctify evil means; nor must we ever do evil that good may come of it."

ILYM supports Quakers world-wide, and other peace organizations hoping to raise awareness of the policies and practices which we find in violation of fundamental human rights. If this minute is approved, it will be published on the ILYM website as well as being sent to QUIT, the Quaker Initiative to end Torture. Such a minute would be useful when peace workers are interacting with the media on the issue of torture.

Sanctuary Movement: A recent concern among monthly meetings has been the political climate with regard to refugees and immigrants. Some have expressed an interest in the Sanctuary movement which has been strongly supported by the American Friends Service Committee in the 'Sanctuary Everywhere' program: www.afsc.org/sanctuaryeverywhere. The Peace Resources Committee has recently encouraged support of an Illinois bill called the Immigration Safe Zones bill which is still pending and encourages monthly meetings to use the ILYM Yahoo group to share information.

Communications: In the belief that the best resource for monthly meetings is the shared wisdom of all the Friends working for peace in worship groups and monthly meetings, PRC has developed several initiatives:

- ILYM website - under review.
- Facebook: PRC monitors the Facebook Peace Resources page which is a 'closed group.' Friends can send a message to the group moderator to join.
- Online Connections: PRC has developed a Yahoo group for all Friends who are on peace and social concerns committees or otherwise interested in issues of peace. We developed a list of contacts and have invited 38 Friends to join this online group called ILYM Peace. We encourage any Friends who are interested in sharing messages with other meetings regarding readings, activities and questions or messages of encouragement about peace are encouraged to join this group and post messages, or upload files to the website. To join, please email Jan Mullen at jrsmullen@gmail.com.

We are very enthusiastic about facilitating more communication among monthly meeting peace and social justice committees. We look forward to hearing from monthly meetings on many of these issues as well as their own initiatives. The following quote exemplifies our purpose:

As many candles lighted and placed in one place add to the light and make the light shine brighter, so when many are gathered together in the same life, there is more of the glory of God and the power of God, to refresh each individual, for each takes part not only of the light and life raised in himself or herself, but in all the rest. (Robert Barclay)

Respectfully submitted by Jan Mullen

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Publications and Distribution Committee Report

Print

Plummer Lectures: Everything is up to date, no new publications

Among Friends: Winter 2016, printed and distributed

Web

ILYM.org : BRQ.org has been converted to WordPress and is now live so Sean has some time to start working on ILYM.org

Monthly Meeting WordPress Sites:

We recently had an issue with a monthly meeting not keeping their WordPress installation and plugins up to date. One of the plugins they were using was discontinued and was no longer compatible with WordPress causing their site to go down. If your monthly meeting is hosting a WordPress site on the ILYM server it is highly recommended that you have a dedicated person check on the site at least once every other month to make sure everything is up to date.

During this issue Sean also discovered that the base level backup service that HostMonster provides was not working. They are supposed to provide daily, 1 week, and 1 month backups but none of them are working. HostMonster is aware of this and said they were working on it but have no idea when it will be fixed. While they provide this backup service as well as a pro backup services, which costs more, they do not guarantee that they will work and suggest we make our own backups.

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Site Envisioning Committee Report

The committee met twice since last yearly meeting; once in October and once in February and discussed the following items.

Campground Bath House Renovation: Chris Goode and Chip Rorem met with three local contractors early in February and asked them to price the project. Spring Continuing Committee approved spending up to \$60,000 on the project with an additional \$6,000 emergency contingency to be used only if required once the project is underway. We received pricing from Tieman Builders of LaSalle and are working with them to determine what portions of the work we can accomplish with that budget. It looks like we will be able to replace the sink area with new mirrors and phone charging stations, new plumbing fixtures and piping, weather resistant partitions with doors, new LED or fluorescent lighting, new epoxy finish on floors and painted interior walls. We are trying to see if we can also replace the shutters with sturdy awning windows. Furnishings may be more affordable as plastic chairs rather than powder coated metal benches. We have chosen to eliminate the skylights, outdoor showers, painted ceiling and exterior siding. Any work to paint the exterior will be done by us at a workday. The work should be done later this summer and fall and should be ready for use at next year's Annual Sessions. The building has given us about 45 years of good use so far and expect that this work will give us more of the same well into the future.

The Wood Barn: The barn has no current use, nor was one proposed in the campus plan approved in 2012. It has several parts to it, some of which with more importance to us than others. The tallest portion is likely the first and original barn structure and has a heavy timber frame. There is a

desire to keep it for some possible future use and is the part that we most want to take care of. The lean-to on the east side and the concrete block dairy structure on the west side are of less importance. A portion of the dairy structure has lost its roof and can be removed in the near future if this can be done inexpensively. The tallest structure has the newest roof but a portion of it at the northwest corner has torn off in the wind and needs to be replaced. We are investigating to see how this can be fixed as soon as possible. The siding is old weathered boards with gaps and porous enough to let in rain with wind. We may need to reinforce the base of the heavy timber elements as the wood close to the ground is growing soft. In a workshop at Annual Sessions a few years ago Tim Narkiewicz, who worked with old barns thought it might be possible to take apart and relocate the heavy timber frame and re-erect it at another location. The siding likely could not be reused as it is, but could possibly be milled for some other use, or sold. Renovated at its present location it might be reused as a recreation/education structure or gathering place for groups. If relocated it might become an indoor/outdoor dining pavilion. Dick Ashdown did a walk-thru with a local barn contractor who we hope to meet with, and we intend to have a meeting with Dean Tieman, the Bath House contractor during Annual Sessions to tour our buildings and discuss construction and maintenance issues with the participation of M&P and the Stewards. The committee feels that we should continue to maintain the roof to the best of our abilities to slow the deterioration and keep it for future use.

Caretaker: Site Envisioning does not have anything to add to this concern at this moment. We look forward to the formation of the Ad-Hoc Caretaker Committee under the oversight of the Finance Committee to help find some creative solutions toward this issue in the near future. In last year's discussions with Finance Committee at sessions to fund two new part-time positions (Children's Religious Education Coordinator and Caretaker) it became apparent that it will be extremely difficult to fund the Caretaker position in a conventional fee-for-service way as the budget is stretched with revenue from personal donations as well as monthly meeting contributions making up the income side, with few possibilities to increase it. Looking for a creative solution we discussed Quaker Voluntary Service, the possibility of an adult young friend in residence, and the possibility of trading use of some of our land in return for mowing and other caretaking duties from someone who shares our values. We will continue to explore and develop these ideas further, but we also feel that we should create a budget line item and set aside some money each year for the future as we continue to look for solutions.

Property Purchase: Dick Ashdown will approach the owner of the adjacent property again about trying to purchase the three-quarter acre strip of property south of the meeting house. We look forward to hearing what he is able to find out.

Clear Creek House Addition: The addition as currently sketched out assumes that the existing garage is able to be repurposed for this addition and that this might be more economical. That may not be the case and another configuration with south facing roof might prove more workable for solar panels and other reasons. We will investigate alternate configurations and in our June contractor campus walk-thru will discuss these options and ask for updated pricing for this project.

Respectfully submitted by Christopher Goode, Clerk

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Youth Oversight Committee Report

Youth Oversight had a meeting at the end of Blue River Quarterly in April. During this meeting, we discussed the need for background checks for members of the Youth Oversight Committee. Since members of the committee assist with events with high school friends (HSF), we need to ensure that those working with children have a clear background. We have not decided as of yet what is the criteria that would clear someone for being on the committee. Currently we are gathering more information about the process and any fees. The information would stay with other background checks. It would stay on file as long as a person is on the committee, only viewable by the potential member, the clerk of Youth Oversight, administrator, and ILYM clerk.

We also discussed having each member complete the Mandated Reporter for child abuse training through Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS). This would be a yearly training for members on the committee. We would like to start this training schedule in July and have members complete it before Fall Blue River Quarterly.

The clerk and Youth Coordinator have created a timeline of tasks, attached. They are working on bringing in other members of the committee to help with delegation of tasks. One of those tasks is purchasing supplies. Another is making follow-up calls to HSF after the Youth Coordinator has made the initial call prior to events.

Brittany Koresch, Dianne Clark-Dennis, Kate Gunnell, Rose Johnson, Andrea Kintree

Follow this approximate timeline to help organize events "Socials" = group specific e-mail list, ILYM newsletter list, Facebook group, Twitter, Google+, etc.			
Date	Event	Task	People Involved
June <i>(after Annual Sessions)</i>	Site Prep	Thank participants for helping via e-mail, socials, in person, letters	Youth Coordinator, YO committee
		Post pictures on socials	YO clerk, committee, other attenders
	Annual Sessions	Thank workshop leaders and Friendly Adults for helping via e-mail, socials, in person, letters	Youth Coordinator, YO committee
		Post pictures on socials	YO clerk, committee, other attenders
	Committee Organizing	E-mail ILYM Admin Coord. a copy of epistle Transition new clerk and committee members as needed	YO clerk, former clerk, committee members
July	All events	Update website with new dates for events for the year to come	
August	Corn Roast	Publicize via socials	Youth Coordinator
		Remind via socials	Youth Coordinator, YO committee
		Coordinate transportation	Youth Coordinator
	Fall BRQ	Create event and publicize via socials	Youth Coordinator
September	Fall BRQ	Discuss having a Youth Oversight Committee meeting at BRQ	YO Clerk
		Distribute registration information	Youth Coordinator
		Coordinate transportation	Youth Coordinator
		During event, host meeting w/ attention to business	Youth Coordinator, HS clerks, HSF
		Attend Youth Oversight Committee meeting	Youth Oversight committee members
		Distribute notes and follow up with tasks from bus. meeting	HS clerks, Youth Coordinator
October	Budget	Submit receipts to ILYM Treasurer	Youth Coordinator, Supplies Organizer, Workshop leaders, YO Clerk
		Update budget	Youth Coordinator, YO Clerk, ILYM Treasurer
	Continuing Committee	Submit 1st draft of report	YO Clerk
		Edit report for CC	YO Clerk, YO committee members
		Submit final report to ILYM Admin Coordinator	YO Clerk
		Attend and present report at CC	YO Clerk, YO committee members, Youth Coordinator
November	Quake That Rocked The Midwest	Contact Scattergood, Ohio River Valley, Lake Erie, Northern youth coordinators	Youth Coordinator
December	Quake That Rocked The Midwest	Send out registration information	Youth Coordinator
		Create Facebook event	Youth Coordinator
		Publicize event and registration deadline on socials	Youth Coordinator, YO committee
January	Quake That Rocked The Midwest	Maintain communication with Youth Oversight regarding registration, workshop leaders, supplies organizer, meeting host	Youth Coordinator
		Collect registration	Youth Coordinator
		Confirm with workshop leaders	Youth Coordinator
		Confirm with Friendly Adults	Youth Coordinator
		Purchase food/supplies	Supplies Organizer
		Host event	Youth Coordinator, Friendly Adults, other YOs

February	Budget	Submit receipts to ILYM Treasurer	Youth Coordinator, Supplies Organizer, Workshop leaders, YO Clerk
		Update budget	Youth Coordinator, YO Clerk, ILYM Treasurer
	Committee Committee	Coordinate Youth Oversight Committee via phone/in person	YO Clerk
		Complete Youth Coordinator evaluation	YO Clerk
		Send Youth Coordinator copy and provide time for response	YO Clerk
		Craft a response to evaluation and submit it to YO Clerk	Youth Coordinator
		Submit evaluation to Personnel Committee	YO Clerk
March	Continuing Committee	Submit 1st draft of report	YO Clerk
		Edit report for CC	YO Clerk, YO committee members
		Submit final report to ILYM Admin Coordinator	YO Clerk
		Attend and present report at CC	YO Clerk, YO committee members, Youth Coordinator
	Spring BRQ	Create event and publicize via socials	Youth Coordinator
		Discuss having a Youth Oversight Committee meeting at BRQ	YO Clerk
		Distribute registration information	Youth Coordinator
April	Spring BRQ	Coordinate transportation	Youth Coordinator
		During event, host meeting w/ attention to business for HSF	Youth Coordinator, HS clerks, HSF
		Attend Youth Oversight Committee meeting	Youth Oversight committee members
		Distribute notes and follow up with tasks from bus. meeting	HS clerks, Youth Coordinator
May	Site Prep	Create Facebook event	Youth Coordinator
		Create Facebook event	Youth Coordinator
	Annual Sessions		Youth Coordinator
		Coordinate with workshop leaders	Youth Coordinator
		Plan outtrip	Youth Coordinator
	Budget	Submit receipts to ILYM Treasurer	Youth Coordinator, Supplies Organizer, Workshop leaders, YO Clerk
		Update budget	Youth Coordinator, YO Clerk, ILYM Treasurer
June	Site Prep	Maintain communication with Youth Oversight Committee and Site Prep Organizers about registration numbers	Youth Coordinator, YO committee members, Site Prep Organizers
		Coordinate transportation	Youth Coordinator
		Remind via socials	Youth Oversight committee members
		Host Site Prep	Youth Coordinator, Friendly Adults
		Establish lines of communication during Site Prep with HSF and Friendly Adults	Youth Coordinator, HSF
		Establish rules with HSF and post them in the Bunkhouse	Youth Coordinator, HSF, HS Clerks, Friendly Adults
		Ensure HSF has copy of Site Prep schedule	Youth Coordinator, HSF, HS Clerks, Friendly Adults
	Annual Sessions	Coordinate transportation	Youth Coordinator
		Remind via socials	Youth Oversight committee members
		Update supplies list	Youth Coordinator
		Shop for supplies	Supplies Organizer
		Establish lines of communication during Annual Sessions with HSF and Friendly Adults	Youth Coordinator, HSF
		Establish rules with HSF and post them in the Bunkhouse	Youth Coordinator, HSF, HS Clerks, Friendly Adults
		Ensure HSF has copy of Annual Sessions schedule	Youth Coordinator, HSF, HS Clerks, Friendly Adults
		Lead workshops during mornings	Workshop leader, Youth Coordinator, Friendly Adults
		Lead outtrip	Outtrip leader, Youth Coordinator, Friendly Adults
		Ensure HSF create an epistle by Sat evening	Youth Coordinator, Friendly Adults
Assist as needed for sharing of epistle	Youth Coordinator, Friendly Adults		

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Adult Young Friends

This year brought some new faces, ways of communication, and opportunities for Adult Young Friends (AYF).

We have had some new and returning AYFers attend potlucks and wider events such as Blue River Quarterly. We will continue to spread the word via social media but more importantly encourage others to speak up and share information at their monthly meetings.

AYF also created an information pamphlet this year. This pamphlet has information about who we are, what events we hold, how people can participate, and contact information. We mailed paper copies out to as many meetings as we could. We also posted the digital version on our AYF page of the ILYM website. If anyone would like more paper copies of these to display at their monthly meeting as well as for handing out, please contact the co-clerks at ayf@ilym.org and we can send out more.

Finally, this summer brings a new opportunity. It puts the co-clerks in a position of being fortune tellers since the opportunity is about Site Prep which has already happened when this report is read but has yet to happen at the penning of this report. So, we will write with hope in our hearts that it went well. We are speaking of the fee reduction trial run. During Continuing Committee in March, people discussed ways to increase AYF participation in Site Prep and Annual Sessions. After bringing the idea to the Finance Committee meeting in April, AYF will try this idea.

The reduction in fees is for any AYFer who worked any day of Site Prep. That person would receive a reduction of fifty percent of their fees for Annual Sessions. This is an experiment and the topic will be revisited with insight from Finance Committee at the next Continuing Committee to discuss the outcome and future of the idea.

Peace, Brittany Koresch and Rose Johnson, co-clerks

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AFSC Representatives Report

Our report to Illinois Yearly Meeting is shared with appreciation and joy for the opportunity to be a connection of our yearly meeting to the American Friends Service Committee.

Shan Cretin, the retiring General Secretary shared the following during the AFSC Annual Sessions: “The American Friends Service Committee is a complex, 100-year-old, and still evolving Quaker organization. It is tempting to say that our witness has never been more needed. But that would be a mistake. The truth is that since its beginnings in 1917 AFSC has worked for peace and justice in turbulent, violent, even hateful times. In the past century, we have different incarnations of strongmen, Red Scares, internment camps, civil wars, genocide, apartheid, segregation, McCarthyism, world wars, immigrant raids, and religious bigotry. And still we persist. Now, as throughout the past 100 years, we are called to live up to the Light we are given and do our best to be a beacon of hope. We know that we don’t have to be perfect to make a difference in the world. We just need to be honest with ourselves and others and persistent about learning from our mistakes. AFSC has taken some hard hits, but we are finding ways to repair and heal—and still be a needed voice for peace and justice. As we enter our second century, the incoming leadership will be blessed with amazing staff and governance volunteers ready to chart a course together that is true to our courageous legacy and answers today’s calling. It has been the greatest honor of my life to be a part of this organization and to serve as general secretary over the past seven years. On September 1, Joyce Ajlouny will take over this often challenging, always humbling role. I look forward to seeing AFSC thrive under her leadership and ask you to join me in offering her our prayers and wholehearted support.”

We, yearly meeting representatives serving on the AFSC Corporation, look forward to the next 100 years of the American Friends Service Committee. Anyone seeking to join in serving as a volunteer with the AFSC is welcome to contact any of us to learn more about the opportunities for service in AFSC.

Kind Regards, Phyllis Reynolds, Bridget Rorem, Contessa Miller,
Carol Bartles, Yearly Meeting representatives

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FCNL Representatives Report

The Annual Meeting of Friends Committee on National Legislation met November 11–13, 2016, with a Lobby Day immediately preceding on the 10th. Most ILYM representatives and attendees arrived early to an organization, city, and nation in shock.

Personally, I used the time for composure and healing. I found repose in worships, commiserated with fellow travelers over meals, and listened in to anguished and inspired messages and sermons. Our work would go on.

With support from FCNL staff, Illinois representatives (including ones from Northern and Western Yearly Meetings) lobbied Congress. Of course lobbying also included some activists and friends besides the reps. Though our original goal of promoting legislation to reduce prison time for non-violent offenders had been knocked off the likely agenda by the surprise election results, we forged on ahead. We visited with the staff of our Representatives and Senators, making our concerns known and giving them opportunities to share with us too. Besides sharing understandings and solace, we also had to push back with a discouraged, but ranting lame-duck Republican staffer.

After the Lobby Day, we got down to business. We heard inspired talks from the likes of Diane Randall (www.fcnl.org/updates/healing-the-heart-of-democracy-annual-meeting-message-446), Amelia Kegan (www.fcnl.org/updates/when-the-impossible-becomes-possible-451), Jose Woss, Jim Wallis and others. We also celebrated the life of Ed Snyder, FCNL's Executive Secretary Emeritus. We even broke ground for the Quaker Welcome Center, intended, among other things, as neutral ground for bi-partisan negotiation, made possible by FCNL's recent Capital Campaign.

We wrestled with FCNL policy for the upcoming Congress and Administration. Previous work and input from numerous monthly meetings on setting lobby priorities was left largely intact. However we did minute a special concern on institutionalized sexism. Finally we placed full, continued trust in FCNL staff to respond as needed to changing circumstances expected over the coming year.

As I departed on Sunday, I felt heartened and energized, knowing that we could still persevere.

For more information on FCNL and their many issues and advocacy, please find their webpages at fcnl.org.

Dale Gardner

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FGC Representatives Report

Illinois Yearly Meeting is one of the affiliated yearly meetings with Friends General Conference (FGC). Jonathan Plummer was instrumental in the start of FGC and so we have a long history together. Each year the representatives try to let members know about the work of FGC. We can never let you

know the full scope of the work but I will attempt to give you a taste of this year's work.

At this year's Central Committee meeting we agreed to move forward with an Institutional Assessment to uncover structural racism within the organization when the funds to support it were obtained. A working group was formed to begin the process while funds were being solicited. The money has been obtained and a contract will be signed with the consultants who will teach FGC Friends how to do the assessment. The work which FGC does will be shared with affiliated yearly and monthly meetings. We are aware that there are barriers to full participation by some in our meetings and we are all spiritually diminished by this. We move forward with this work trusting that it will lead to spiritual transformation for us as a community.

We continue to plan, prepare, and launch units for the Spiritual Deepening Program. The first of these was launched on October of 2016. An eight week online eRetreat will be offered quarterly. Some local meetings have embarked on the small group portion of the program. Meetings are invited to participate in the program which is a pay-as-led program with a suggested donation of \$20 per participant per set. The newest set is the Beloved Community and it is an eRetreat which starts June 4, 2017.

The Quaker Cloud is now being supported by a vendor which has been able to clear all the backlog of problems with the Quaker Cloud. At this time a problem that is submitted is usually clear within a day or two.

The Gathering will be at Niagara University July 2-8, 2017. The theme is "Ripples Start Where Spirit Moves." In 2018 the Gathering will be at the University of Toledo in Ohio. This is a location that is close to most of us in Illinois Yearly Meeting. It is a wonderful opportunity for families with children to give the children a chance to be in a room filled with other Quaker children. I will never forget my son Stephen's face the first time he walked into a junior gathering group. He did not realize there were lots of Quaker children his own age.

This year we have worked to improve QuakerBooks service. The online ordering has been improved with inventory synchronization. There are additional offerings besides books and so the service is now referred to as QuakerBooks&More.

Faith & Play volunteers continue to create new curricula to explore Quaker practice and faith via the Faith and Play methodology. Four new Faith and Play stories will be released in an e-book format this fall. This will be followed by a revised edition of the Faith and Play Curriculum including the new stories available in a paperback or e-book format. This work is being done by a group that works autonomously with support from FGC.

The Christian and Interfaith Relations Committee brings a Quaker perspective to ecumenical and interfaith work. It also connects FGC with faith-based conversations about truth, justice and reconciliation.

The Ministry on Racism Program offers assistance and support to meetings that want to develop their racial and ethnical awareness, increase their diversity and strive to address the impact of racism on our Society. It provides a Pre-Gathering Retreat for People of Color and their Families and organizing support for Friends to attend the annual White Privilege Conference (WPC). In 2018, WPC will be in Grand Rapids, Michigan. A location close for many members of ILYM. In addition, planning is underway for a regional gathering of People of Color in New York this fall.

While doing all this work, we have made tremendous strides toward cutting our expenses. We are focusing on providing quality programs and materials. As we do this we hope that Friends will continue their individual and meeting support. As one of your representatives, I want to thank you for your continuing support of FGC's programs. I have seen the work FGC provides transform lives.

Janice Domanik

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FPT Representatives Report

Following is a report from Friends Peace Teams forwarded to ILYM by ILYM Representative Debra Penna-Fredericks

First, Friends Peace Teams would like to thank you for your support, both spiritually and financially. During this past year, our peace work has intensified, and we have new leadership for two of our initiatives. For AGLI (the African Great Lakes Initiative), David Bucura, a long-time coordinator with a local partner organization, stepped in for David Zarembka as our new coordinator. Monica Maher is our new coordinator for PLA (Peacebuilding in Las Americas), taking over the leadership responsibilities from Val Liveoak who is one of the founders of FPT.

The FPT Council (our governing body) has begun an examination our infrastructure, specifically the financial authority and responsibilities, with the goal of more transparency and accountability. Examples of what we are looking at are: What is the Council's role for oversight? What is the role of the working groups for each of the initiatives? And what is its relationships with partner organizations?

Our decentralized structure calls for the three initiatives (AGLI, PLA, and AWP—Asia West Pacific serves us well. Abiding by and honoring our commitments to Friends process and practice as we solve conflicts and work through opportunities. Just recently, we established a Governance Committee, to be sure our practices continue to empower us all in the manner of Friends.

To help celebrate our 22nd year, Friends Peace Teams held our annual meeting at Wellesley Monthly Meeting (Massachusetts) on May 18 & 19, followed by our third annual PeaceQuest, where we celebrate FPT's and Friends' work with peace around the world, on Saturday, May 20. PeaceQuest was also held at Wellesley.

The Initiatives This Year:

Friends Peace Teams Asia West Pacific Initiative engages with peace workers in Central Java, North Sumatra, Aceh in Indonesia; Manila, Tagbilaran City, and Davao City in the Philippines; Seoul in Korea; Kathmandu, Pokara and Bhutanese camps in Nepal; and we maintain a concern for peace workers in Palestine, Israel, Afghanistan, Chechnya, Ukraine, New Zealand and Australia. As our peace-work follows the calling of our volunteers, in 2016 we actively worked in Nepal, Indonesia, the Philippines and Korea supporting nonviolence, peace, trauma healing, conflict transformation, and social justice advocacy for communities recovering from war or religious violence.

We completed earthquake relief activities in Nepal. We also provided a grant to Peace Place in Central Java to expand their training center and school. We continue to develop and support pre-schools, after-school programs, and parent, family and teacher training based on peace and nonviolence. The book, *The Power of Goodness: Art and Stories for a Culture of Peace* was published and is now available. It is a collection of short stories from the lives of real people who chose nonviolence and reconciliation and is accompanied by illustrations by young artists.

Peacebuilding en las Américas (PLA) has over ten active peacebuilding and trauma healing programs in Colombia, Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras, Peacebuilding en Las Americas (PLA) provides grassroots solidarity, tools and hope to those most discriminated against and marginalized. 2016 marked an important year for the continued sustainability of PLA's programs. After 13 years of volunteer service, Founding Coordinator, Val Liveoak, retired, continuing as advisor to the new team: Monica Maher, Initiative Coordinator; Allie Prescott, Communications Specialist and Andy Cross, Financial Specialist. During this transition, the new team focused on growing and solidifying relationships with in-field Facilitators, Coordinators, and Volunteers who have passionately supported and facilitated workshops.

In 2016, each of PLA's programs focused work with at-risk youth, teachers, war survivors, former and active gang members, prison personnel, indigenous communities and grassroots leaders. Some program highlights include: the first ever workshop in a Mayan Language in Guatemala; trauma healing workshops in El Salvador with female war survivors who have disappeared relatives; workshops that empowered women in Afro-Indigenous and Indigenous communities defending their land rights against illegal development in Honduras; workshops that provide rehabilitation for former gang members and prisoners in a Honduran Prison; and workshops with victims of violence as well as demobilized guerrilla and paramilitary fighters in Colombia during the historic signing of the Peace Accords. For more information on our work, please visit: <http://pla.friendspeaceteams.org/>.

The African Great Lakes Initiative of Friends Peace Teams (AGLI) has continued its work in Central East Africa: Burundi, Rwanda, Kenya, and Democratic Republic of Congo. This includes Healing and Rebuilding Our Communities (HROC), Friends Womens Association's, clinic in Bujumbura, Burundi, the Alternatives to Violence

Project AVP, and other work. David Zarembka, the founder of AGLI resigned in August, and was partially replaced by David Bucura, a Rwandan. AGLI will be seeking a US-based person for outreach.

FPT's office in St. Louis continues to be run efficiently and frugally by our Administrative Specialist, John Kintree. A new Communications Specialist, Hayley Hathaway, has been doing a great job updating our website and producing the beautiful new brochure available on our table. Tom Martin and Nancy Shippen continue as co-Clerks. We are grateful to the many volunteers who help us and our partners abroad continue to do this work.

Please visit our table in the display area for newsletters and more to take back to your monthly meetings, and also our website at: www.FriendsPeaceTeams.org.

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Secondary Schools Representatives Report

Olney Friends School

Olney Friends School is a progressive independent day and boarding high school founded in 1837. This school year, celebrating its 179th year, it has 55 students, an average class size of 8 and a student to faculty ratio of 4:1. While they currently enroll their highest number of day students, in recent history, the majority of students attend as either 5 or 7 day boarders. Ken Hinshaw, class of 1974, is the head of the school.

In September 2015, Olney Friends School issued a redesign of its internet home so as to give visitors a more comprehensive authentic glimpse of what makes the school so special. In the past 15 months, the school website has yielded a nearly 200% increase in daily web traffic. Combined with their increasing social media presences and various admissions efforts, prospective student interest is rapidly rising.

A 2015 graduate, Kayla Killen, wrote her senior class "Graddy" essay titled "Olney Friends School and Solar Energy: A Case Study." She knew the 2013 decision (included in my last report) of Olney to decline the sale of mineral rights would impede financing such an ambitious product. However, she knew her proposal would not be forgotten and felt certain that under Ken Hinshaw's leadership the school would continue pursuing renewable energy installments. Nearly 17 months later her vision was brought to life. During the 2016 Christmas break they had new solar panels installed on the Girls Dorm and they were to be fully operational by the time school resumed early in January. Olney looks forward to having about 1/3 of the campus energy needs met by solar.

In March, students and faculty visited the University of Pittsburgh for a reading by National Book Award winner and MacArthur Grant recipient Ta-Nehesi Coates. He is a memorist, educator and regular contributor to numerous periodicals including *The Atlantic*, *Time*, and *The Washington Post*.

Stanley Plumly, born in Barnesville, OH came to Olney April 14 for a reading. He graduated from Wilmington College and is the current poet laureate for the state of Maryland, is a professor of English and director of the University of Maryland, College Park's creative writing program. He is the author of numerous collections of poetry, his latest being *Against Sunset*, published by W.W. Norton in 2016.

On the Olney farm, as of April 21, seven kids have been born on campus. A video can be seen at their website, showing the students helping in the birth of one kid.

This is only a small report of what activities go on at Olney. If interested, learn more about this Quaker institution: Olney Friends School, 61830 Sandy Ridge Rd., Barnesville, OH 43713; olneyfriends.org

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FWCC Representatives Report

The mission of the Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) is to bring together Quakers from all over the world, as it did in 2016 by means of the World Plenary in Pisac, Peru. The biannual meeting of FWCC's Section of the Americas, which took place in Stony Point, New York in March, involved only Friends from the Western Hemisphere—still a pretty sizable region, representing a wide range of views on what it means to be a Quaker. All three of ILYM's representatives to FWCC (Nancy Duncan, David Shiner, and Nancy Wallace) attended the Stony Point meeting as well as last year's World Plenary in Pisac.

The focus of this year's meeting was on how to bridge the divergences in the Quaker spectrum—as the advance materials put it, “seeking pathways to an attitude of both/and rather than either/or.” This is squarely in the center of FWCC's mission, which is to bring Friends of varying religious traditions and cultural experiences together in worship, communication, and consultation to express our common spiritual heritage and our Quaker message to the world. Those of us at Stony Point found ourselves broken open to new spiritual ideas and presented with many opportunities to connect and deepen ourselves, our meetings, and the Society of Friends.

The event was chock full of memorable moments, of which it is possible to mention only a couple in this brief report. Carl Magruder, an environmentally active Quaker, ministered to us on the first morning. Carl, a hospice chaplain in San Francisco, explained that when people are near death they are frequently able to cross bridges that they could not previously. Our earth may be near to death now; as Carl surmised, that might allow us to cross bridges that we have not been able to until now. In the worship that followed Carl's address, a woman reported that during a meditation she had asked the earth what we could do to save her and the earth replied, “Don't worry about me. I will survive. But if humans don't fix your ways, I will purge you.” Perhaps she is right. In geological time the earth will repair itself, but we might not be here to enjoy it.

As usual, Bible study was a staple of each morning's events. This year's approach to Bible study was through Godly Play/Faith & Play, which has been explored by members of Religious Education committees from several ILYM meetings in recent years. As the presenters demonstrated, this way of telling Bible stories renders them engaging and opening to the spirit. Anyone who thinks this program is only for children is missing out on an amazing way of accessing the Bible.

Throughout the meeting at Stony Point, Friends shared why they come to FWCC events and what they have experienced at those events. Their stories were remarkable and moving: “It allows me to go out of myself and my traditions and prejudices and into other's lives. The door springs both ways and lets others into my life as well”; “I received a call 50 years ago from God and Jesus to devote my life to community building in God's community (Peace Corps, international development, etc.). FWCC is a direct extension of this calling”; “The world for the future needs Quakers. Quakers have a disproportional impact because we can show the world how peace can work”; “FWCC expands my spiritual horizons, opening my heart and mind to different experiences”; and “FWCC is grassroots peace. It is something that I can do, and it has also helped me grow spiritually.”

But FWCC is about much more than providing a transformative experience for its representatives. It seeks to awaken Friends to the gifts that the various branches have to offer each other. Its current foray in this direction is formation of the Traveling Ministries Corps, a group of gifted Quakers who share their spiritual experiences across the branches of Friends and encourage Friends to learn from one another. Their goal is to visit every Quaker Meeting and Friends Church in the Section of the Americas within the next five years. A traveling minister (along with an elder who travels with them) is being scheduled to visit Evanston, Lake Forest, and Northside this fall. We will be happy to arrange for other traveling ministers to visit any of ILYM's monthly and quarterly meetings.

As with all Quaker organizations, nurturing the younger generation is a necessity and a challenge. At FWCC gatherings, due to recently-taken intentional measures, the percentage of young adults has been growing steadily. For next year, though, ILYM will have the same three gray-haired representatives to FWCC as in recent years. We suggest that the yearly meeting ask some of our young adults to represent us so they can experience the power of FWCC gatherings and nurture their own meetings in turn.

FWCC supports Friends throughout the world. It provides Friends with the experience of crossing bridges and touching hearts, nurturing skills that are greatly needed in today's world. We who represent ILYM cherish the opportunities we have had through FWCC to have such experiences, and we hope to continue to bring them to the meetings and individuals within the yearly meeting.

Nancy Wallace and David Shiner

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NRCAT Representative Report

NRCAT provides many ways in which monthly meetings, peace committees and individuals can support the elimination of torture:

- **June Torture Awareness Month activities:** Every June, human rights and faith organizations join together to mark Torture Awareness Month because on June 26, 1987, the nations of the world took a major step against the immoral and abhorrent practice of torture. On that day, the Convention Against Torture and other Cruel, Inhuman and Degrading Treatment or Punishment (CAT for short) entered into force and the United Nations later declared June 26 the "International Day in Support of Victims of Torture." NRCAT has on its website, nrcat.org, many creative ideas on how meetings can create more awareness of torture, solitary confinement, and the relationship to anti-Muslim sentiment to torture.
- **Membership:** ILYM has joined NRCAT as a Participating Member. This level of participation includes naming a representative and making a modest financial contribution. Meetings that are not ready for that level of participation can join as Endorsing Members who endorse the Statement of Conscience and agree to consider using their programs. Monthly meetings are encouraged to become members of NRCAT at either level, to create a minute in opposition of torture, and submit that minute to the Peace Resources Committee which will publish it on the ILYM website and also send it to the John Calvi website, www.quit.com
- **Statement of Conscience:** Individuals can sign this Statement which is on the NRCAT website. Torture is a Moral Issue Statement of Conscience: *"Torture violates the basic dignity of the human person that all religions, in their highest ideals, hold dear. It degrades everyone involved—policy-makers, perpetrators and victims. It contradicts our nation's most cherished ideals. Any policies that permit torture and inhumane treatment are shocking and morally intolerable. Nothing less is at stake in the torture abuse crisis than the soul of our nation. What does it signify if torture is condemned in word but allowed in deed? Let America abolish torture now—without exceptions."*
- **Petition to the President:** NRCAT has on its website a petition to the President which individuals can sign: "Dear Mr. President: Torture is Always Wrong" Petition. By signing this, individuals can bring more awareness of this moral issue.
- **Anti-Muslim Sentiment: Coalition called Shoulder-to-Shoulder:** NRCAT joined other national denominational and faith groups to form a new campaign to combat anti-Muslim

bigotry. "Shoulder-to-Shoulder: Standing with American Muslims; Upholding American Values," is a coalition of 28 religious organizations. Additionally, regional and local religious organizations are invited to join Shoulder-to-Shoulder. The labeling of Muslims as "other" was one critical factor that led to the U.S. government's use of torture in the last decade, and the majority of the U.S. government's post September 11 detainees have been Muslim. By reducing anti-Muslim sentiment, NRCAT hopes to ensure that the dignity of each person is upheld and that torture is prohibited without exception.

Respectfully submitted by Jan Mullen

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Friends and the State

Proposed for a one-year provisional period.

While we recognize the need of law and order, which in the present condition of mankind can perhaps only be maintained by governments resting on human authority, we believe that in the degree that we come individually under the government of that principle of justice and unselfish regard for the welfare of others, that lies at the foundation of the Christian faith, we shall render governments sustained by force, unnecessary, and build up through self restraint, the government of Righteousness in the earth.

Rules of Discipline and Advices of Illinois Yearly Meeting of Friends, 1878

Friends' relation with civil government proceeds both from our recognition that government plays a useful and beneficial role in promoting the common good, upholding justice, and providing a system for collective decision-making; and from our awareness that government sometimes depends on violence or threats of violence to achieve its goals, and may be diverted from the pursuit of justice into the service of powerful interests. It is our responsibility to participate in the civic life of our communities, states, nations and world. But it is also our responsibility firmly to oppose governmental structures, actions and policies which promote war or injustice of any kind.

Civic Responsibility and the Political Process

Remember your responsibility as citizens for the government of your town and country, and do not shirk the effort and time this may demand. Do not be content to accept things as they are, but keep an alert and questioning mind. Seek to discover the causes of social unrest, injustice and fear; try to discern the new growing-points in social and economic life. Work for an order of society which will allow men and women to develop their capacities and will foster their desire to serve.

London Yearly Meeting, 1964

Love of God and humankind calls us to labor for a just, equitable and peaceful society. Friends are urged to participate fully in public life, working to build and maintain civic institutions which strengthen communities, promote health and safety, and protect the rights and freedoms of all people. Friends should stand willing to serve their communities as needed, in elected or appointed office, through volunteer work, organizing, or in other ways. Friends communicate their views on public policy to those in positions of authority, promoting policies and decisions which build peace and justice.

Engagement in the political process is a necessary and useful part of efforts to improve the world, but also requires a good deal of care. Decisions in the public sphere, as in a Friends meeting, are most effective when those affected by them are deeply convinced of their rightness. A contentious, partisan spirit is rarely helpful in producing such conviction. Friends engaged in political activity must guard diligently against letting triumph over political adversaries become a goal, rather than reaching a real collective understanding of how an issue is to be resolved.

...and we are not for Names, nor for Men, nor for Titles of Government, nor are we for this party, nor against the other, because of its name and pretence; but we are for Justice, and Mercy, and Truth, and Peace, and true freedom, that these may be exalted in our Nation; and that goodness, righteousness, meekness, temperance, peace, and unity, with God, and one with another; that these things may abound, and be brought forth abundantly...

Edward Burrough, 1659

Friends' religious values provide ample motivation for advancing peace, justice, compassion and equality in public life and government policy. But the promotion of such values must be clearly distinguished from the promotion of religion itself. Friends are firmly committed to the separation of church and state, and do not countenance any role for government in supporting religion, or any role for religious institutions in the operation of government.

Meetings are cautioned that their legal status as tax-exempt religious organizations may be threatened if they campaign for particular political candidates, or engage in substantial lobbying.

Police, Judicial, and Penal Institutions

Over more than three and a half centuries, Quakers have often faced imprisonment or other legal penalties for the sake of religious conscience. Based in part on this experience, Friends have been concerned to improve the institutions by which society deals with criminal and civil wrongdoing of all kinds. We work for the creation of a justice system which treats all people fairly, recognizes the value of every life, and promotes honesty, compassion, and regard for others as central principles by which society is ordered.

True justice consists not in the punishment of wrongdoers, but in kind and equitable treatment of all people. Once wrongdoing has occurred, the possibility of complete justice is lost. The first priority in building justice, therefore, is to foster the values of kindness, fairness, charity, and respect—in ourselves, in others, and in the general organization of society. To the extent that people order their lives around these values, and perceive themselves to be treated by others in accordance with them, the need for a system of responding to crimes and other wrongs is diminished.

The present reality of injustice requires some means of investigating crime and bringing those who commit it to account. Friends therefore recognize the legitimate police powers of the state. However, we stand in opposition to the militarization of police equipment and tactics. We recognize too the problems caused by real or perceived bias in police conduct, and support efforts to reduce it, and to hold officers accountable when bias occurs.

When crimes are committed, Friends generally favor responses which focus to the extent possible, on repairing the damage caused by the crime, involving all the affected parties in the resolution, and creating the conditions under which both those who have been affected by crimes and those who have committed them can resume safe and responsible roles in society.

In some cases, people who have committed crimes may have proven so dangerous that it is necessary to separate them from the rest of society, at least for a time. Such separation must not be imposed as a form of vengeance or retribution, but conducted in a way which recognizes and respects the humanity of prisoners. Prisoners, no less than other people, have a moral right to good quality healthcare, human interaction, and the opportunity to maintain family relations. The families of prisoners must not be excessively burdened by obstacles to communicating with their loved ones in prison such as unreasonable fees. Every effort must be made to provide prisoners with the skills, habits, and attitudes which will allow for a safe and successful reintegration on release. It is the responsibility of society as a whole to provide opportunities for people released from prison to build honest and productive lives; the lack of such opportunities all too often encourages ex-prisoners to resume criminal activity.

While we recognize a need to restrain those whose dangerous behavior is a threat, that restraint and any help offered must reflect our concern for that of God in everyone. The prejudice, dishonesty, and racism prevalent in society frequently lead to unfair and unjust sentences and to brutality in the handling of prisoners. Improvement in the parole system and the reduction of pretrial time are greatly needed.

New York Yearly Meeting, 1995

Capital Punishment

Friends have long felt a special concern to end the use of capital punishment as a penalty for crime. It is our faith that something of God is present in all people, even those who have committed the most heinous acts. A proper regard for the sanctity of human life weighs heavily against the idea of destroying life, even when intended as an act of justice. No person is beyond God's power of redemption, but to cut short an offender's life is to give up hope for his or her eventual reclamation. Execution of offenders by the state also tends to create in people's minds the impression that killing is a legitimate response to perceived offenses. It has a degrading and brutalizing effect on society, and offers no better safety than alternatives.

No man is ever utterly lost, and however deep he is sunk in evil, the only just approach to him is to work for his recovery. This principle led John Bellers, the earliest Friend to pay serious and systematic attention to social reform, to plead for the abolition of the death penalty. Society had done enough for its own protection, he argued, when it had rendered a murderer harmless by putting him in prison; if it did more it was acting in a spirit of revenge.

Harold Loukes, 1960

Oaths

In certain legal contexts, such as when testifying in court, Friends may find that they are asked to swear oaths. Since the very earliest days of the Quaker movement, Friends have resisted this expectation, taking seriously Jesus' injunction "Do not swear at all... Let what you say be simply 'Yes' or 'No'; anything more than this comes from evil" (Matthew 5:37). Swearing sets up a double standard, implying that a lie is more acceptable if not sworn to. In place of swearing, Friends generally give a simple affirmation that what they say is true. Statements made after such an affirmation are subject to perjury laws, just as sworn statements are.

The distinction between swearing and affirming may seem minor to some people; but the right to affirm rather than swear was hard-won, and many of our predecessors suffered greatly to establish it. Friends are urged not to abandon it lightly.

Conscientious Objection and Civil Disobedience

Friends have long held that participation in war is incompatible with a life of compassion and love for one's enemies as taught by Jesus. We stand in support of those who refuse for reasons of conscience to be conscripted into military service, or to register for such conscription. We likewise support those who withhold a portion of their taxes, up to the amount which would otherwise go to military spending, provided the withheld amount is set aside for charitable donation if not seized by the government.

More generally, we hold that no government or other human authority may compel people to act contrary to their conscience. When one's deeply and sincerely held moral convictions are incompatible with the demands of the state, it is one's right and responsibility to refrain from complying with those demands. The witness of those who conscientiously disobey a law is badly undermined if they—or those with whom they are associated—are perceived as having little regard for law even apart from issues of conscience. For this reason, all Friends are strongly urged to adhere strictly to the law in all cases where conscience permits.

When one's conscience is in tension with the expectations of the state or other authorities, difficult decisions must be faced. Noncompliance without sacrifice may not be possible and should not be expected. Those who violate the law for the sake of conscience must be prepared to receive punishment as the law provides. Employees who find that they cannot conscientiously perform essential parts of their jobs must be prepared to lose them. In many cases it may make more sense to resign, than to insist on remaining in a job while refusing to perform it.

Friends feeling led to violate the law for reasons of conscience, or to pursue any course of action which may result in adversity for themselves or others, are urged to seek a clearness process from their meetings. Young Friends who believe that they may eventually seek legal status as conscientious objectors are advised to document their anti-war beliefs and activities, starting as early as possible. In some cases it may be appropriate to seek a minute from one's monthly meeting in support of action pursued as a form of religious witness. See 'Recognizing Gifts and Leadings', pp. xx-xx. Meetings should stand ready to provide spiritual and practical support to Friends and others who may be suffering for their convictions.

Meetings have a role not only in supporting individuals as they face such issues, but also in taking action themselves, as a meeting. The corporate action of a meeting may provide a powerful witness to the unjustness of a law. Modern examples include Friends meetings which have sheltered refugees who were in the United States without proper documentation, and meetings which held same-sex marriages under their care before such marriages were legal. Meetings must approach such actions very seriously, and only with deep, prayerful discernment, and clear-eyed attention to possible consequences. But if, after such careful discernment, a meeting is united in its perception of what God requires it to do, it must proceed as led.

Civil disobedience means open, considerate, non-violent defiance of some law which is against the conscience of those who disobey it, and is resorted to after all means of altering it have been exhausted. Since the purpose of civil disobedience is to compel others to re-examine the conscientious basis of the law, the proposed disobedience and the reasons for it are widely announced in advance. The law enforcement authorities are given every opportunity to prevent the proposed action and to punish the participants. The necessary role of the authorities in enforcing the law is recognized and they are treated courteously, but opposition to the law is unyielding and its opponents willingly accept prison sentences and sacrifice all rather than comply. This builds a moral force which no law can withstand if the cause is just and the disobedience is sufficiently widespread and prolonged.

Lawrence S. Apsey, 1960

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Appendix A: Sample Membership Record

Proposed for an indefinite period. Revisions are indicated by underlining new material and ~~striking through~~ material to be deleted.

The following form may be used for keeping the membership records of a monthly meeting. This form is intended only as a sample; meetings should feel free to alter it or design their own forms, according to their needs.

Some meetings may not recognize all the categories of membership mentioned on the form, such as birthright membership and associate membership.

Some information included on the form, such as data about members' families, may be useful but not strictly necessary for meetings to record. Meetings are urged to consider carefully what information to gather, and how much of this information they will regard as optional.

Meetings may receive requests for information in their records, from individuals researching their family histories or for other reasons. Clear policies should be adopted about when such information may be shared. These policies should be made clear to new members as they provide their data for the records.

Membership Record

Record number: _____

Record closed |

Name: _____

Previous name(s): _____

Contact Information

Address: _____

Telephone number(s): _____

E-mail address(es): _____

Admission Data

Date of Admission: _____ | by birth or adoption
| by application
| by transfer from _____

Membership Type: | full
| associate, expires on _____

Termination Data

Date of Termination: _____ | by death
| by release
| by transfer to _____

Remarks:

Personal and Family Data

Birthdate: _____ Place of birth: _____

Father's Name: _____ Is/was a member? |

Birthdate: _____ Location: _____

Mother's Name: _____ |

Birthdate: _____ Location: _____

Marriage or Civil Union 1 to: _____ |

Date: _____ Location: _____

Marriage or Civil Union 2 to: _____ |

Date: _____ Location: _____

Marriage or Civil Union 3 to: _____ |

Date: _____ Location: _____

Child/Stepchild 1: _____ |

Birthdate: _____ Location: _____

Child/Stepchild 2: _____ |

Birthdate: _____ Location: _____

Child/Stepchild 3: _____ |

Birthdate: _____ Location: _____

Child/Stepchild 4: _____ |

Birthdate: _____ Location: _____

Child/Stepchild 5: _____ |

Birthdate: _____ Location: _____

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Pastoral Care

Proposed for a one-year provisional period

Quakers regard all individuals in their meeting community as “members one of another” (Romans 12:4). As Friends, we regard ourselves as being called to care for each other’s spiritual, emotional, and physical well-being. The traditional term for this form of ministry is “pastoral care.” For Quakers in Illinois Yearly Meeting, pastoral care is the collective responsibility of the entire meeting.

Pastoral care begins when we recognize the needs of our fellow worshippers. We do this by coming to know one another deeply and by listening to each other actively and lovingly. Every encounter, whether at the meeting house or elsewhere, is an opportunity for us to learn about the needs of others and to respond to those needs.

The spiritual welfare of a meeting is greatly helped if its social life is vigorous, and members take a warm personal interest in one another’s welfare. The pastoral work of the Society is specially committed to [the Care and Counsel Committee], but our members should generally not allow themselves to feel that they are relieved from responsibility. In the greater events of life, such as marriage, birth of a child, illness or death, it is our duty and privilege to share in one another’s joys and sorrows; and sympathy thus shown is a potent means of binding us in closer fellowship.

London Yearly Meeting, 1925

Pastoral care often takes place informally, as a natural consequence of our concern for one another. When Friends find that informal means of care are insufficient for a particular situation calling for pastoral care, they should bring that issue to the care and counsel or similar committee (pp xx-xx) or to the meeting as a whole if there is no committee for such matters. Members of the committee that undertakes pastoral care are expected to take a personal interest in the spiritual, emotional, and physical welfare of each member and regular attender in the meeting, thus assuring that **everyone within the meeting community is supported in difficult times**. (Ministry to individuals outside of the meeting community is also of major concern to Friends (see Section xx), but it is not normally referred to as “pastoral care.”)

Situations for which pastoral care might be in order are discussed elsewhere in this Faith & Practice, including conflict within the meeting (pp xx-xx) and death and bereavement (pp xx-xx), among others. Individuals who are not members of the committee that undertakes pastoral care are encouraged to bring such issues to the attention of that committee, particularly when they discern that their individual gifts are not likely to be sufficient to deal with the issue at hand.

In order to undertake responsibility for pastoral care, members of the care and counsel committee are encouraged to:

- acquaint themselves with all members and attenders in order to keep informed about their various needs for personal encouragement and assistance;
- inform others, as appropriate, if there are needs for which the Meeting can be helpful;
- communicate with any Friend whose relationship with the Meeting has gone amiss;
- facilitate communication between individual Friends and the Meeting’s official structures for clearness and support.

The care and counsel committee is expected to undertake pastoral care with humility, tact, and discretion. This involves the ability to listen carefully and tenderly, to “speak the truth in love,” to maintain confidentiality, and to refrain from giving advice unless asked. Gifts of insight, experience, and emotional maturity are especially helpful.

The humility with which the care and counsel committee is called to carry out its work includes acknowledging any limitations in its abilities and resources. It is therefore beneficial for the committee to be aware of the presence of gifts and expertise among the members and attenders of the meeting.

In cases in which the care and counsel committee discerns that the meeting's resources are insufficient for a particular concern, it may wish to refer the Friend(s) under its care to an outside organization that provides practical or material assistance, counseling, or other services. The committee is urged to inform itself about the availability of such services and to keep an up-to-date directory with contact information on the organizations that offer them.

The role of the care and counsel committee, while important, should not detract from the responsibility of the entire meeting community concerning pastoral care. As "members one of another," Friends are called to take this responsibility seriously and to undertake it tenderly. Even when primary assistance for someone in the meeting community is beyond the resources of that community, committees or individuals within the meeting might be able to offer a caring presence as well as practical support in matters such as transportation, meals, or childcare. While it is important that Friends do not "outrun their guide" in attempting to provide care in ways for which they are not equipped, it is equally important that we endeavor to act in support of each other as the Spirit leads.

I have come to know that one essential ingredient is to recognize that we are not responsible for fixing the situation. Except for the few situations in which provision of some material aid is needed, we are not likely to be able to resolve the situation, but rather to be with the person or family in the midst of it. . . . We are called to be instruments for the work of the living God; we are called to be channels through which the Spirit can move.

Arlene Kelly, "The Ministry of Pastoral Care" *Pastoral Care Newsletter* September 1993

Quarterly Meetings

Proposed for an indefinite period. Revisions are indicated by underlining new material and ~~striking through~~ material to be deleted

The Quarterly Meeting is designed to bring together for inspiration and counsel a larger group and to consider more varied interests than any single meeting embraces. Its most helpful function should be to aid and encourage the Monthly Meetings composing it to greater interest and service, and to give its members an increasing vision of the truth. It should be diligent in seeking opportunities to gather together groups which may be organized into meetings and should always be ready to help Monthly Meetings whenever they ask for advice or assistance.

1927 Uniform Discipline of Friends General Conference, p. 111

A *quarterly meeting* is a regional body of Friends, comprising more than one monthly meeting and forming part of a larger yearly meeting. By tradition, quarterly meetings hold their business sessions four times each year, but it has been found useful in some cases to maintain a less frequent schedule, particularly if the quarterly meeting covers a wide geographic area or includes few meetings of sufficient size ~~regularly~~ to host its sessions regularly.

Quarterly meetings serve several purposes. First, it is in the quarterly meeting that monthly meetings report in detail the recent condition of their meeting communities, with an opportunity for the gathered Friends to respond, offer advice or assistance if needed, and take inspiration or new ideas when presented. At least once each year, representatives of each monthly meeting in the quarterly read aloud their monthly meeting's State of Society report in the quarterly meeting's business session. Time should be left after each meeting's report for Friends to speak as they feel led in response. For information on the composition of these reports, see 'State of Society reports', pp. xx-xx.

Because the quarterly meeting is the venue in which monthly meetings present these reports, and the body which regularly considers them with members of the monthly meeting present and participating, the quarterly meeting serves as an important source of support, guidance, and assistance to local meetings,

including those experiencing difficulty. Meetings which find themselves in need of assistance are urged to bring such matters to their quarterly meetings. Help is also available from the Illinois Yearly Meeting Ministry and Advancement Committee, and from the Illinois Yearly Meeting Field Secretary.

Quarterly meetings serve as the appropriate bodies to decide issues which affect Friends on a region-wide basis, and to coordinate the efforts of local meetings when such coordination is called for. Projects which are too large or too general for a single monthly meeting to take on may more naturally be assumed by the quarterly meeting. In petitioning the state or addressing issues of public concern, the voice of the quarterly meeting will usually bear more weight than that of a monthly meeting.

Quarterly meetings serve to bring together Friends from different local meetings and promote a broader sense of community among Friends. Quarterly meetings may hold retreats, workshops, or social events, either in conjunction with their business sessions or separately, to build up connections among their local meetings. Meetings with few children may especially find that quarterly meetings and other regional gatherings provide a valuable opportunity for young Friends to find companionship and a sense of Quaker community.

Quarterly meetings serve as a valuable forum for the preliminary consideration of business to be brought before the yearly meeting. Monthly meetings with proposals to put before the yearly meeting are urged to bring such matters first to their quarterly meeting (if there is one), unless the next session of the yearly meeting falls before the next session of the quarterly meeting, and the matter is too urgent to delay. The quarterly meeting may also bring business to the yearly meeting business which originated in the quarterly meeting itself, rather than any of its monthly meetings.

Finally, quarterly meetings have specific responsibilities in the setting up and laying down of meetings. In particular, a quarterly meeting may set up or lay down a preparative meeting on the advice of ~~the its~~ its monthly meeting ~~of which the preparative meeting is to be a part~~; see 'Preparative Meetings', pp. xx-xx. In addition, proposals to set up or lay down a monthly meeting are normally approved by ~~the its~~ its quarterly meeting (if any) ~~of which the monthly meeting is a part~~, before ~~forwarding~~ being forwarded to the yearly meeting for final approval; see 'Setting up, laying down, and reaffiliation of monthly meetings', pp. xx-xx. A quarterly meeting may add an existing monthly meeting which is part of Illinois Yearly Meeting at the request of the monthly meeting.

Each quarterly meeting appoints a clerk, who also serves as representative to the Continuing Committee of Illinois Yearly Meeting. Quarterly meetings may appoint a treasurer, recording clerk, and such other committees and offices as seem useful. Quarterly meetings must keep accurate records of their business and finances, and archive them properly; see 'Archivist', pp. xx-xx.

Decisions of the quarterly meeting are made by the Friends gathered in the quarterly meeting business sessions, and do not require the approval or ratification of the monthly meetings which compose the quarterly meeting, though such approval may be sought in cases where the quarterly meeting deems it helpful to do so. Quarterly meetings must respect the local autonomy of their constituent meetings, and may not override their decisions or direct their affairs in purely internal matters.

Setting up and laying down quarterly meetings

To set up a new quarterly meeting, approval must first be secured from each of the monthly meetings which are to become a part of it. Any monthly meetings which already form part of a quarterly meeting should present the plan for establishing the new quarterly meeting to the existing quarterly meeting and seek its views on the matter. Monthly meetings are advised against belonging to more than one quarterly meeting simultaneously, so joining a new quarterly meeting will normally mean leaving the old one. After the approval of all monthly meetings has been obtained and the issue considered in any existing quarterly meetings, the proposal is forwarded either to Illinois Yearly Meeting, or to the Continuing Committee. Whichever group receives the request appoints a clearness committee, or may

request the Ministry and Advancement Committee to appoint a clearness committee. The clearness committee visits with the local meetings which are to be part of the proposed quarterly meeting to explore their readiness for this step. The following queries may be helpful in this process:

- What do you see as the spiritual and practical benefits of establishing a new quarterly meeting?
- What kinds of support can you provide as a quarterly meeting to the yearly meeting and to your monthly meetings? What kinds of support do you expect to receive from the yearly and monthly meetings?
- How strong is the commitment of each of the monthly meetings involved?
- Will you have a treasury? How will funds be raised? What will they be used for? How will the treasury be administered?
- How often will you meet and where? Have you considered potential scheduling conflicts?
- How will your gatherings be planned?
- Will your sessions include worship;? business;? workshops;? retreats;? fellowship—and? community building? How will you decide on the relative balance?
- Do you have any qualms, fears, or reservations about establishing a quarterly meeting?

The committee may also meet with Friends outside the proposed quarterly meeting, to gauge the impact the establishment of the new meeting might have on existing quarterly meetings, and on the yearly meeting as a whole. The committee reports to Illinois Yearly Meeting; the new quarterly meeting is established when the yearly meeting minutes its approval in its annual business sessions. After minuting establishment, the yearly meeting (typically through its Ministry and Advancement Committee) appoints a committee of welcome to attend the opening session of the new quarterly and provide assistance or advice as it begins to conduct business.

If a quarterly meeting is unable, over an extended period, to fulfill the functions and meet the responsibilities normally expected of a quarterly meeting, it is appropriate to lay it down. Normally, this is accomplished by minute of the yearly meeting, though in principle a quarterly meeting may also lay itself down. In either case, it is strongly urged that the approval of all functioning monthly meetings which form part of the quarterly meeting be obtained before the quarterly meeting is officially laid down. If the quarterly meeting lays itself down, it should inform the yearly meeting promptly of this decision.

Whichever body lays down the quarterly meeting appoints a committee to assist with the arrangements, or may ask the yearly meeting's Ministry and Advancement Committee to appoint such a committee. This committee should see to it that provision is made for the archiving of the meeting's records in a manner and location which keeps them accessible to Illinois Yearly Meeting. Deposit in the University of Illinois Library is recommended for this purpose. If the quarterly meeting has a treasury or other property, the committee should see that these are disposed of in an appropriate fashion, such as transferring them to the yearly meeting, dividing them among the monthly meetings, or donating them to some other Friends or charitable organization. The advice of Friends who were involved in the quarterly meeting should be a major consideration in deciding how to dispose of property.

Monthly meetings which do not belong to a quarterly meeting

Originally, Illinois Yearly Meeting was organized so that all monthly meetings belonged to a quarterly meeting. The quarterly meetings formed a systematic intervening level between the monthly meetings and the yearly meeting: business, communications and finances passed between the monthly meetings and the yearly meeting through the quarterly meetings, which also played an important role in such matters as nominating the clerk of the yearly meeting and appointing the equivalent of the Continuing Committee.

For historical reasons, Illinois Yearly Meeting now includes a number of monthly meetings which are not part of a quarterly meeting. Such meetings may find that some of the functions of a quarterly meeting are well-served by other regional gatherings. However, business which is strictly internal to Illinois Yearly Meeting is not generally considered at such gatherings. If a monthly meeting is not part of a quarterly meeting which can provide preliminary consideration of proposals before they are brought to the yearly meeting, the monthly meeting should submit such proposals first to the Continuing Committee, unless the next session of the yearly meeting falls before the next session of the Continuing Committee, and the matter is too urgent to delay.

~~Specifically~~, Regional gatherings which are not quarterly meetings of Illinois Yearly Meeting may not set up or lay down a preparative meeting as part of Illinois Yearly Meeting. Nor does Illinois Yearly Meeting require that the approval of such gatherings be secured before a monthly meeting or quarterly meeting is set up or laid down as part of Illinois Yearly Meeting. Proposals for setting up or laying down meetings which are part of Illinois Yearly Meeting but not part of a quarterly meeting are directed to the Continuing Committee or to the yearly meeting; see ‘Setting up, laying down and reaffiliation of monthly meetings’, pp. xx–xx; ‘Preparative meetings’, pp. xx–xx; and ‘Setting up and laying down quarterly meetings’, pp. xx–xx.

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Testimonies

Proposed for an indefinite period. Unrevised from version approved 2014–2015 for a provisional period ending 2017.

Among the distinctive Quaker principles are those known as the testimonies. These are values that Friends hold corporately, and which are reflected in our witness to the world.

The testimonies express our communal experience of the Light Within and our commitment to its fruits. We show this commitment in our outward lives: in our dedication to living peacefully, for example, and in our love for each other in “that which is eternal.” Living out the testimonies in thought and action reflects the influence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Be faithful in those testimonies of life and light, against all those things that have come up in this night of apostasy from the light, life and power of God.

George Fox, 1675

The testimonies are not a set of distinct tenets, such as those that might be found in a creedal religion. Still, for the sake of clarity, modern Friends often list the testimonies under separate categories such as “simplicity” and “equality.” In order to emphasize the unity of the testimonies, the testimony of integrity (“wholeness”) is often the first one cited, as wholeness characterizes the testimonies taken together.

Integrity

Perhaps the most fundamental testimony of Friends is that of integrity. This testimony calls us to a way of life aligned with the will of God as revealed by the Light Within us, reflecting our devotion to truth, honesty, authenticity, and wholeness. We endeavor to become whole within ourselves, and to make our actions reflect our words and beliefs. We strive to hold to a single standard of truth, saying what we mean and doing what we say.

Let your ‘yea’ be yea and your ‘nay’ be nay; anything more than this comes from evil.

The Gospel According to Matthew 5:37

The commitment of Friends to a single standard of truth has many practical implications. For example, Quakers do not swear to tell the truth in a court of law when instructed to do so, because we believe that swearing to tell the truth implies that we might otherwise lie or distort the truth. We invest our money on the basis of Quaker principles, rather than entrusting it to organizations that offer a higher rate of return but do not act in accordance with Friends' beliefs. Actions such as these might not be comfortable for us, but Friends hold integrity to be of a higher value than comfort.

The Inner Light does not lead men to do what is right in their own eyes, but that which is right in God's eyes.
Ellen S. Bosanquet, 1927

Peace

Friends are widely known for our efforts to bring about a more peaceful world. We shun violence in word and deed, holding that war is inconsistent with God's will. Early Friends steadfastly refused to participate in wars, preferring imprisonment and persecution to harming other children of God.

We...utterly deny...all outward wars and strife, and fightings with outward weapons, for any end, or under any pretense whatsoever. This is our testimony to the whole world...[T]he Spirit of Christ, which leads us into all truth, will never move us to fight and war against any man with outward weapons, neither for the Kingdom of Christ nor for the Kingdoms of this world.

Friends' Declaration to Charles II, 1660

In recent times, Friends who have refused to fight have often requested to serve in some humanitarian way, and many have done so. Illinois Yearly Meeting stands in support of Friends who engage in conscientious objection, war tax resistance, relief and reconciliation work, and similar efforts to promote peace and justice.

Mindful of the presence of evil in the world, Friends attempt to counter it by using nonviolent means of preventing harm to others while bearing in mind that the perpetrators are also children of God. We have ministered to those on all sides of any conflict, in accordance with our belief that God "sends rain on the just and on the unjust," as Jesus states in *The Gospel According to Matthew* (5:45).

The Quaker peace testimony is not simply a denunciation of outward violence, but also an affirmation of the power of inner peace. As Quaker founder George Fox wrote about his response to those who offered him a military commission, "I told them that I lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars." Fox understood that once we achieve peace inwardly, participation in war and violence becomes impossible. The closer we come to achieving the inward condition that God wants for us, the better able we are to cultivate peace in our family, our workplace, our community, and the world.

Simplicity

The Quaker testimony of simplicity denotes an inward centeredness that is responsive to the Divine. As we become centered, we are drawn away from the complexity and clutteredness of secular life and led toward the purity and simplicity of truth to which Friends aspire.

Life is meant to be lived from a Center, a divine Center – a life of unhurried peace and power. It is simple. It is serene. It takes no time but occupies all our time.

Thomas Kelly, 1941

Friends do not have a set procedure for reflecting inward simplicity, but we have found that outward adornments can be impediments to achieving and maintaining it. Early Friends believed that wearing unadorned plain dress helped free them from vanity. Few contemporary Quakers wear traditional plain dress, but we continue to believe that some measure of detachment from material possessions and worldly aspirations helps us attend to the Light.

The increase of business became my burden, for though my natural inclination was toward merchandise, yet I believed Truth required me to live more free from outward cumbers and there was now a strife in my mind between the two; and in this exercise my prayers were put up to the Lord, who graciously heard me and gave me a heart resigned to his holy will.

John Woolman, 1774

Friends regard church rituals and material trappings as having the potential to hinder our attention to God's word. We gather in unadorned meeting houses and wait in holy silence for the Divine Spirit to guide our worship.

Equality

The testimony of equality is based on Friends' belief that there is that of God in everyone. We regard outward differences between people as less significant than the spiritual equality of all human beings. Quakers have always regarded men and women as equally worthy in God's eyes.

The power and spirit of God gives liberty to all, for women are heirs of life as well as men.

George Fox, 1676

Early Quakers refused to address their "superiors" by honorifics or titles, nor would they bow or doff their hats to them. These countercultural practices, which resulted in the persecution of our 17th-century forebears, have informed our tradition ever since that time. Quakers accepted and upheld the equality of people of different races, classes, and sexual orientations earlier than most of the rest of society, and have worked toward economic equality and social justice. In our meetings we strive to create an inclusive environment, one in which all of those attending feel fully welcome.

The testimony of equality does not imply that everyone has the same talents, but rather that each of us is equally a child of God, blessed with gifts that are different from and complementary to those of other people. When we unite as a meeting community, our diverse gifts unite to serve that community.

There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

Paul's First Epistle to the Corinthians 12:4-6

Community

The testimony of community is central to Friends' practices. We worship together in order to be receptive and responsive to God's Light, and we minister to all members of our meeting community.

Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations against another; but praying for one another and helping one another up with a tender hand.

Isaac Pennington, 1667

Friends' orientation toward community stands in contrast to the individualism that characterizes our contemporary secular world. We interpret Jesus' injunction to love one another as calling us to share concerns and practices with each other. Our collective attention to God's word, undertaken corporately in Meeting for Worship, serves as the foundation of the faith community to which Friends aspire. As Quakers, we believe that we are called to be responsible and accountable to each other. We respond to the needs of our meeting community in many ways. These include pastoral care and the formation of clearness committees, in which an individual Friend is held in the Light by fellow worshippers who seek God's will for that Friend.

A Quaker community offers loving support, guidance, comfort, and inspiration to all of those who become a part of it. It also serves as a foundation for our witness to other communities of which we are also a part.

We are an imperfect human community, growing into a more perfect relationship with God.
Lloyd Lee Wilson, 1993

Stewardship

Quakers consider all possessions and resources to be gifts that God has entrusted to our loving care. As individuals and as a community, we are called to selflessly consider whether our lifestyles and daily practices are consistent with this understanding.

O that we who declare against wars and acknowledge our trust to be in God only, may walk in the Light and thereby examine our foundation and motives in holding great estates! May we look upon our treasures, and the furniture of our houses, and the garments in which we array ourselves, and try whether the seeds of war have nourishment in our possessions...

John Woolman, c. 1770
A Plea for the Poor

In prayerfully reflecting on how we obtain and use our possessions and resources, we are likely to discover the seeds, not only of war, but also of oppression, self-indulgence, injustice, and ecological damage. Faithful stewardship consists in sincere efforts to remedy those ills. Each of us is called to consider what changes we can make in our lives, lifestyles, and relationships to better support the earth and all its creatures, and then to make those changes as best we can. Such reflection and transformation can be difficult and even painful, but Friends believe that faithful stewardship is essential to being in right relationship with one another and the Divine.

We are called to live in right relationship with all Creation, recognizing that the entire world is interconnected and is a manifestation of God.

Quaker EarthCare Witness
Vision and Witness Statement

As Friends, we are called to bear the testimonies in our hearts, minds, and actions. This is not a matter of memorizing lists of categories, whether those cited above or any others, but of responding to our experience of the Divine and gaining strength and insight from those who have preceded us in doing so. In learning of the courageous witness of our predecessors over the centuries — those devoted Quakers who have witnessed to that of God in all human beings, spoken truth to power, and honored the earth and all its creatures — we orient ourselves toward more fully reflecting Quaker testimonies in our lives and encouraging others to do likewise.

A “testimony” is a declaration of truth....It is not an ejaculation, a way of letting off steam, or baring one’s soul. It has a purpose, and that is to get other people...to turn to God.

John Punshon, 1987

The testimonies are neither fixed nor unchangeable. In accordance with Friends’ belief in “continuing revelation” they evolve, and our understanding of them evolves as well. Many of the issues to which early 21st-century Friends feel called to respond, such as nuclear power and recombinant genetic engineering, are the products of recent technological innovations which did not exist for earlier

generations of Friends. In such cases we endeavor to discern God's will concerning whether a new testimony, or perhaps an extension of an old one, is in order.

Friends sustain and deepen their commitment to the testimonies through various means, including prayer, reading devotional literature, and attending to vocal ministry in meeting for worship. Some of us have found it helpful to regularly ask ourselves questions such as "How am I living the testimonies?" and "How am I being faithful?" In attending to the testimonies, we often find that issues that seemed complex or even insoluble are better understood and resolved through devoted attention to the leadings of the Holy Spirit.

The testimonies represent our highest values as Quakers. Learning to live in accordance with them is challenging. We often fall short, but we continue to strive.

I don't regard the testimonies as rules to walk by but ideals to aim for, as guides and reminders of how we should try to live.... We have not attained perfection; we are still on our way.

Kathleen Douglas, 2000

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The Light Within and its Religious Implications

Proposed for an indefinite period. Revisions are indicated by underlining new material and ~~striking through~~ material to be deleted.

Deep within us all there is an amazing inner sanctuary of the soul, a holy place, a Divine Center, a speaking Voice, to which we may continuously return. Eternity is at our hearts, pressing upon our time-torn lives, warming us with intimations of an astounding destiny, calling us home unto Itself. Yielding to these persuasions, gladly committing ourselves in body and soul, utterly and completely, to the Light Within, is the beginning of true life.

Thomas R. Kelly, 1941

Introduction

The Society of Friends encompasses a wide variety of beliefs and perspectives, but perhaps the most distinctively Quaker religious concept is that of the *Light Within*. Also frequently called the "Spirit" or "that of God in everyone," the Light is a Divine presence within each of us: a manifestation of God in all people. Identified by early Friends as the living Spirit of Christ, the Light serves as a moral guide, a comfort in times of need, a spur to action, and the Seed from which inward spiritual transformation can grow.

Light is that which makes visible, and the first function of the Light Within is to make clear to us our true spiritual nature, laying bare what we may have hidden from ourselves, whether good or bad, and showing us ourselves as we really are. For some, this may mean seeing one's true worth after years of imagined worthlessness; for others, it may mean recognizing for the first time one's own capacity for evil. For all, gaining a more honest and complete understanding of oneself is a crucial step in spiritual growth.

By this light it hath pleased the Lord to give me the distinction of things inwardly in my own heart. The Lord hath shewn me by it evil and good in my own heart, and taught me to chuse the good, and refuse the evil. So that as my eye hath been turned to this light, and kept to this light, I have known and walked in the way of life; for the power which hath appeared in this light, hath created me anew, made me a child of light, and taught and caused me to walk in this light, as God is in the light.

Isaac Pennington, 1681

The Light not only clarifies our own inward nature, but also helps us discern how to live our lives. The Light informs and excites the conscience, turning us away from what we know is wrong, and toward what is right and true and just. The Light is the source of authentic "concerns"—the persistent,

growing sense we sometimes feel that some moral or spiritual issue requires our attention and discernment; and of authentic “leadings” — the sense that one is impelled by Divine will toward a particular course of action.

We can just let go and contemplate the painful reality as the Light reveals it to us, turning it slowly around the way a child holds a glittering pebble up in the light. In this more expansive, less judgmental state of consciousness we may gradually become aware of new dimensions, or causes, or outcomes of the problem as we continue to hold it in the Light.

William Taber, 1992

The Light can be unsettling but is ultimately a source of inward peace and comfort, both in the assurance it provides that God is always with us, and in the clear conscience it brings to those who do what they know inwardly to be right. Friends have a special calling to build peace in the world; but true peace is rarely built by those who are dominated by turmoil in themselves. Those who would bring peace out to others must find it also within. It is by turning to this inward source of reconciliation and forgiveness that we find the foundation for outward action.

This I told them was their first step to peace, even to stand still in the light...

George Fox, recounting events of 1652

Discerning the Light

Attending to the Light Within requires effort, and a careful discernment of what in ourselves is truly of the Divine Spirit, and what instead is simply the expression of our own egos, desires, or assumptions. The Light endows all people with the capacity to perceive and act in accord with what God would have us do, but our exercise of that capacity is frequently imperfect.

The experience of Friends has been that the Light is most reliably recognized from a state of inward calm and quiet. It is for this reason that in our meetings for worship, including our business meetings, we try to empty our minds and put aside anything which might mask or distract us from our perception of the Light: the stresses and worries of daily life, the bitterness of resentment or anger, the diversion of idle fantasy, or whatever else might so fully occupy our thoughts as to crowd out what we most need to see. We should hesitate to accept as the Light’s guidance any impulse which does not persist as these things are set aside.

Give over thine own willing; give over thine own running; give over thine own desiring to know or to be any thing, and sink down to the seed which God sows in the heart, and let that grow in thee, and be in thee, and breathe in thee, and act in thee, and thou shalt find by sweet experience that the Lord knows that, and loves and owns that, and will lead it to the inheritance of life, which is his portion.

Isaac Penington, 1661

Discerning the Light is most effective when pursued communally. Not everyone is led to the same actions, and we cannot expect that what the Light makes clear to one person will always be made clear to everyone; but checking one’s perceptions against the understanding of a broader spiritual community provides an invaluable anchor and partial safeguard against a false sense of Divine leading. The Light does not contradict itself; when Friends’ understandings of what the Light requires are not just different but incompatible, this is a sign that more discernment is needed.

Since there is but one Light and one Truth, if the Light of Truth be faithfully followed, unity will result. “The Light itself,” says Thomas Story, “is not divided, but one and the same entire, undivided Being continually.” The nearer the members of a group come to this one Light, the nearer they will be to one another, just as the spokes of a wheel approach one another as they near the center.

Howard Brinton, 1952

Friends have often found that living as the Light leads us requires personal sacrifice. Early Friends faced severe persecution for their beliefs, and even in modern times Friends have frequently found themselves in confrontation with the state or other powerful interests. Friends who face no such dangers may still find that the lit path conflicts with their natural desires to pursue comfort, pleasure, wealth, or prestige. Sacrifice by its nature involves hardship, but sacrifices to which one feels deeply called can also be spiritually enriching.

The natural Mind is active about the Things of this Life; and, in this natural Activity, Business is proposed, and a Will in us to go forward in it. As long as this natural Will remains unsubjected, so long there remains an Obstruction against the Clearness of divine Light operating in us; but when we love God with all our Heart, and with all our Strength then in this Love, we love our Neighbours as ourselves; and a Tenderness of Heart is felt toward all People...

John Woolman, 1772

Friends should not feel troubled if the Light is difficult to discern, or if they do not feel clearly led to any particular course of action. Our first responsibility is simply to wait and to listen. No more can be asked than a sincere effort to discover and live out what one knows inwardly to be right. Even those most experienced in cultivating the spiritual life report long periods of drought; our part is to keep the ground prepared so that the Seed may sprout in its own time.

The first gleam of light, 'the first cold light of morning' which gave promise of day with its noontide glories, dawned on me one day at Meeting, when I had been meditating on my state in great depression. I seemed to hear the words articulated in my spirit, 'Live up to the light thou hast; and more will be granted thee.'

Caroline Fox, 1841

A Religion of First-Hand Experience

A religion based on discerning and responding to the Divine Light within each of us must be a religion of first-hand personal experience. Friends have long held that religion known only through accounts in books, intellectual systems of theology, the mediation of clergy, or in any other way than personally and directly leaves out what is most essential in spiritual life and may even displace the necessary work of opening ourselves to the inwardly transformative power of the Spirit.

And then [George Fox] went on, and opened the scriptures, and said, 'The scriptures were the prophets' words, and Christ's and the apostles' words, and what as they spoke they enjoyed and possessed, and had it from the Lord:' and said, 'Then what had any to do with the scriptures, but as they came to the spirit that gave them forth. You will say, Christ saith this, and the apostles say this; but what canst thou say? Art thou a child of light, and hast walked in the light, and what thou speakest, is it inwardly from God?' &c. This opened me so, that it cut me to the heart; and then I saw clearly, we were all wrong. So I sat down in my pew again, and cried bitterly; and I cried in my spirit to the Lord, 'We are all thieves, we are all thieves, we have taken the scriptures in words, and know nothing of them in ourselves.'

Margaret Fell, recounting events of 1652

Through much of our history, Friends objected even to the performance of psalms and other hymns, as "singing the condition of David" — that is, as expressing the spiritual state of King David, presumed author of many of the psalms — which would be a poor substitute for discovering and expressing one's own spiritual state. Few Friends object to hymn singing nowadays, but we continue to recognize the importance of personal authenticity in religious expression, and the danger of putting vicarious religion in the place of real experience.

To say that religion must be known first hand does not mean that hearing the religious perspectives of others is of no profit; on the contrary, this can be of immense value. But the words of

others have an effect only to the degree that they strike a respondent chord in ourselves and so lead us to experience something on a personal level. Other people may give a clearer articulation to what we know only dimly in ourselves, or may present it in a new way or from a novel perspective, or may lead us to see elements of our own views as inconsistent with what we know more deeply to be true.

Conversely, in our own religious speech and conduct toward others, we may expect to be helpful only if what we say and do finds an echo in what the Spirit already testifies to them inwardly, or to use George Fox's phrase, if it "answers that of God" in them.

...be patterns, be examples in all countries, places, islands, nations, wherever you come; that your life and conduct may preach among all sorts of people, and to them. Then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one; whereby in them ye may be a blessing, and make the witness of God in them to bless you: then to the Lord God you shall be a sweet savour, and a blessing.
George Fox, 1656

We cannot hope to call forward the Light in others unless our own communication with them flows from the Light in ourselves. Indeed, Quakers have traditionally held that all religious speech, whether ministry or prayer, in meeting for worship or elsewhere, should be under the direct and extemporaneous influence of the Spirit, and not simply recited from memory or composed by the "natural intellect":

The worship, preaching, praying, and singing, which we plead for, is such as proceedeth from the Spirit of God, and is always accompanied with its influence, being begun by its motion, and carried on by the power and strength thereof; and so is a worship purely spiritual...

Robert Barclay, 1678

Diversity of Belief

Our paramount concerns in religious life are to properly attend to God's Light in ourselves and all people, discern what we are called thereby to do, and respond to that call as led, both as individuals and as a community. A sincere effort in all these things leaves room for a wide variety of theological perspectives. Issues of religious doctrine are of secondary importance at best, and at worst serve as a divisive and harmful distraction from the real business of spiritual engagement and building a more just and peaceful world. Partly for this reason, we do not require assent to any specific list of religious tenets as a condition of membership in the Religious Society of Friends, nor does Illinois Yearly Meeting formally affiliate with any organization which requires such assent.

Humanity and Purity, Bowels and Holiness, they are the pure Religion and undefiled in God's Sight, in his Account; not Creeds but Practice, not Profession tho' of true Words, but Experience and good Living.
William Penn, 1692

Just as faith without works is dead, so too is a merely intellectual belief in religious ideas without the quickening power of the Spirit. Instituting a standard of belief in a religious organization encourages the false view that belief, by itself, has some redemptive or salutary effect. But the Light, properly attended to, effects a far more thoroughgoing and deeper transformation than simply coming to believe a doctrine.

For by our works we must be tried, and not by a profession founded on belief or faith; nor by faith only; for belief never saved the soul, except when it has become an operative belief—till the soul is led to condescend to those things that are pointed out to it by the light, and to work by it and with it...

Elias Hicks, 1826

In any organization in which a confession to specific articles of faith is required, some individuals will inevitably feel pressure to make such a confession, whether they are inwardly convinced of its truth or not. Such requirements tend therefore to undermine the integrity of the members, and to promote dishonesty and hypocrisy. Friends value authenticity above conformity, holding that any expression of religious faith should arise from the operation of God's Spirit within, not from external expectations.

And, dear friends, be faithful in what you know, take heed of making a profession of what you are not, and so you be found dissemblers before the Lord; but keep low in meekness and patience, standing in the will of God in all things...and then you shall be brought into a possession of what you have but had a profession, and find the power of what you had but in words, which is hid from all professions in the world, and is revealed no other way, but by the pure light of God dwelling in you, and you in it.

James Nayler, 1653

Many Friends have felt that some important elements of religious Truth resist formulation in words. Any statement of faith to which Friends were expected to subscribe would therefore provide an incomplete and distorted view of what we really regard as most important.

The deepest spiritual insights are wordless. A Friend called one morning to say that in meditation that morning she had had an overwhelming awareness of the reality of the Inner Self, the God Within. Her voice was filled with awe. The awareness was accompanied by a certainty, an understanding that could not be disputed, yet there were no words with which to express what had transpired....A wordless knowing, an indisputable clarity of understanding — such is the eloquence of the mystical experience. It speaks to something deep within us, and we are never quite the same.

Betty Clegg, 1982

Although there is no specific list of doctrines to which we expect our members to assent, this does not mean that there are no specifically Quaker religious ideas. Far from it: Friends have developed a rich system of Quaker religious thought over a period of more than 350 years, and we encourage participants in our meetings to familiarize themselves with it and consider its principles carefully. Nor can it be said that we regard every conceivable religious idea as an equal expression of the Truth which God reveals in all people. In the clearness process for membership, for example, meetings may consider whether an applicant's views are broadly compatible with the perspective of the meeting community as a whole and of Friends more generally. But the utmost caution must always be exercised not to let a concern for doctrine divert us down a divisive and lifeless path.

Christ and Christianity

Early Quakers understood themselves to be engaging in “primitive Christianity revived” (to use William Penn's phrase), and through most of our history, Friends have been united in placing the person and teachings of Jesus Christ at the center of their spiritual life. Present-day Friends recognize and value the Christian foundations of Quaker faith, although an overtly Christian perspective is no longer universal among Friends. To varying degrees in our different meetings, many of us draw as heavily from other spiritual traditions as from Christianity, or understand the Light Within and other Quaker religious concepts in ways which are largely independent both of Christianity and of other traditional religions. Not a few of us approach such matters from a primarily or entirely non-theistic perspective. Many also of us are committed Christians—and diverse in our understanding of what that entails.

Yet underlying this diversity is a deeper unity, and a commitment to discerning and following the Light Within. We have found by experience that we reap more spiritual fruit through love and care for one another, through forbearance and forgiveness, through service and community, than we do through a vain attempt at achieving a homogeneous theological position.

It may nevertheless be useful and interesting to Friends of all perspectives to have some familiarity with historic or traditional Quaker thought on Christ — not as a normative standard of belief, but as an aid to understanding the original motivations for some of our concepts and practices, as a reference point in understanding our current diversity, and as part of the common heritage of the Religious Society of Friends. Many Friends have also found — sometimes to their surprise — that engaging with the perspectives of earlier generations of Friends serves to advance their own spiritual growth, or to significantly alter their understanding of Christianity.

But as I had forsaken the priests, so I left the separate preachers also, and those called the most experienced people; for I saw there was none among them all that could speak to my condition. And when all my hopes in them and in all men were gone, so that I had nothing outwardly to help me, nor could tell what to do; then, Oh! then I heard a voice which said, ‘There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition.’ When I heard it, my heart did leap for joy.

George Fox, recounting events of 1647

As understood by Fox and other early Friends, Christ is found first and foremost by turning inward. They perceived the Light Within to be the Spirit of Christ, working in and through all people to guide us and redeem us into the life which God would have us live. Present within us at first perhaps only as a small seed, Christ is strengthened in us as we hearken to such guidance, remaking us anew. The voice of Christ within teaches a life of love, forgiveness, humility, and compassion; and turns us away from all that is contrary to such a life.

What is the *sum and substance of the true religion*? Is it not love from a principle of life? Is it not a travel out of the enmity of the creature into the love of God? Doth not the light of life spring in the love, and gather into the love? Doth not Christ, revealed in the heart, and leavening the heart with the favour of life, teach love to enemies, to bear with them in love, to seek them in love, to forgive them in love, to pray for them in love, to wish good to them, and wrestle with God for mercy towards them, even while they are hating and persecuting?

Isaac Penington, 1663

In contrast to many of their Puritan contemporaries, who understood salvation as an external payment of our debts by Christ, early Quakers saw redemption in Christ’s inward work transforming and purifying the spirit.

Here is light, here is life, here is righteousness, here is peace, here is heavenly joy, here is the holy power, springing and bringing forth their fruits, and precious operations and effects in the heart; and here is assurance of the love of God in Christ for ever, and that God will never leave nor forsake that soul which is joined to him, and abides with him in this seed; but it shall be kept by the power of God, through the faith that springs from this seed, unto perfect redemption and salvation.

Isaac Penington, undated

It is not always clear from the writings of seventeenth century Friends how they understood the respective roles of the inward operation of Christ in the spirit and the outward, “historical” crucifixion and resurrection in effecting salvation. This issue became a major point of schism in the 1820’s. In keeping with our general openness to diversity of belief, most of us are now content to regard such questions as matters of individual faith.

Friends and the Bible

Just as we are diverse in the roles we ascribe to Jesus in our spiritual lives, we are diverse also in the ways we use and interpret the Bible. There can be no doubt that to George Fox and the other founders of Quakerism, the Bible was deeply important and influential. Their writings are rich in scriptural allusions, and they clearly took themselves to be advancing the same religion as advocated by scripture, taken as a whole and rightly understood.

Yet it would be a mistake to think that early Friends favored a “Bible-based” religion. Friends have always held that religious belief and practice ought to be based on what God reveals inwardly through the Light. Fox and other Friends claimed that what God taught inwardly could frequently be found also in the testimony of scripture, but it is the Light, not the Bible, which serves as the foundation.

This I saw in the pure openings of the light without the help of any man; neither did I then know where to find it in the scriptures; though afterwards, searching the scriptures, I found it. For I saw in that light and spirit which was before the scriptures were given forth, and which led the holy men of God to give them forth, that all must come to that spirit, if they would know God or Christ, or the scriptures aright, which they that gave them forth were led and taught by.

George Fox, recounting events of 1648

Early Friends believed that the scriptures were written under the guidance of the Light Within, and that therefore there could be no contradiction between scripture, rightly understood, and what the Light reveals to us now. While this may seem to imply that one can “test” apparent revelations by checking whether they are consistent with scripture, Friends have often held that such testing is problematic, because the correct interpretation of scripture—at least for the purposes of spiritual discernment—can itself be reliably garnered only under the guidance of the Light. Without confidence that we are discerning accurately what God reveals inwardly and directly, we can have no confidence in our interpretation of scripture. Indeed, we would have no reason to trust the scriptures at all if not for a respondent spark in ourselves which finds itself echoed in them.

Friends believe that Divine guidance is freely available to all people, to guide our speech and actions. The idea that the scriptures were written under Divine guidance therefore does not accord them a unique status in human history. Revelation continues down to the present day; there can be no closed canon. Many of us feel that other writings, including some from very different religious traditions, express the Light no less than the Bible.

We now recognize that the writings of the Bible reflect to some extent the varying personal experiences and cultural perspectives of its authors; just as our own speech in meeting for worship, though offered under a sense of Divine guidance, may ~~be colored by our limited~~ reflect the limitations of personal experience and understanding. The Bible is perhaps all the more useful for expressing a variety of different conceptions of God and the relation between God and humanity, including some from historical and cultural contexts quite far removed from our own. Yet underlying this variety we perceive a deeper unity: a single Spirit that finds expression in many ways.

Quakerism and Other Religious Traditions

Our experience of the divine-human relationship is that it is constant and eternal, and includes every human being at every moment.

Lloyd Lee Wilson, 1993

Friends hold that the Light Within is present in all people; ~~not just Quakers or Christians,~~ regardless of religious affiliation. ~~We Quakers~~ claim no monopoly on religious truth, and we welcome the insights we may gain from other religious traditions.

There is a Principle which is pure, placed in the human Mind, which in different Places or Ages hath had different Names; it is, however, pure, and proceeds from God. It is deep and inward, confined to no forms of Religion, nor excluded from any, where the Heart stands in perfect sincerity. In whomsoever this takes Root and grows, of what Nation soever, they become Brethren in the best Sense of the Expression.

John Woolman, 1760

What is truly important in spiritual life may be found among the adherents of many different outward faiths. This is not to say that all religions are equally true or that all spiritual paths are equally legitimate, for it seems clear that different faiths make different and incompatible claims. But discerning and responding to the Light Within does not require adherence to any particular tradition or organization. In a deeper sense, all those who humbly and sincerely commit themselves to do what they know inwardly to be right are united: on a single path and in a common community, despite all superficial diversity.

The Humble, Meek, Merciful, Just, Pious and Devout Souls, are every where of one Religion; and when Death has taken off the Mask, they will know one another, though the diverse Liveries they wear here, make them Strangers.

William Penn, 1682

Just as spiritual Truth is not confined to any one outward religion, so neither is any outward religion immune from error, even of the most egregious kinds. History provides innumerable examples of atrocities and crimes committed in the name of religion. Even though Friends are known for our work toward justice, peace and equality, we are far indeed from being able to claim a spotless record. Many of the accomplishments for which Quakers are best known were the result of long efforts by small minorities of Friends who had to labor hard against resistance from other Quakers. Our attitude to other faiths must be one of openness and humility, and we must be diligent in seeking out and uprooting the seeds of injustice, both in our individual beliefs and practices, and in the institutional structures of the Society of Friends.

I was then carried in spirit to the mines, where poor oppressed people were digging rich treasures for those called Christians, and heard them blaspheme the name of Christ; at which I was grieved; for His name to me was precious. I was then informed that these heathen were told, that those who oppressed them were the followers of Christ; and they said among themselves, ‘if Christ directed them to use us in this sort, then Christ is a cruel tyrant.’

John Woolman, 1772

Rites and Ceremonies, Days and Times

Friends have made an honest effort to take that last step which the Reformation did not take. They have wished to exhibit a genuinely *spiritual* religion.... They have wanted every step and stage of salvation and of worship to be *a living process*. They are afraid of phrases which are supposed to have some *sacred* efficacy. They are anxious not to have officials who belong in a special class and are assumed to have peculiar powers that others lack. They do not recognize places or buildings as having any inherent sanctity. They count only on those operations which are truly ethical and spiritual; that is, those operations which produce in the person *a new spirit and a new power to live by*. The religious life, for them, is witnessed by a new creation. There are no substitutes for life; there is nothing that can take the place of a momentous spiritual event.

Rufus Jones, 1927

For Friends, the essence of spiritual life is to attend diligently to God’s promptings within, and respond as led. In our experience, a faithful response to such leadings will serve the practical goals of cultivating peace, forgiveness, justice, and loving care — in ourselves and in the world. The performance of rites and ceremonies is largely extraneous to such goals, and Friends have generally regarded ceremonial performance as inessential to religious life. Seventeenth century Friends took the unusual step of discontinuing the rites of baptism with water and the Lord’s supper, which had been part of Christian practice from the earliest times. Most Friends today continue to view such ceremonies as separable from, and much less important than, the spiritual realities they represent.

It is perhaps not humanly possible to live a life completely free of ritualized behavior, and from some perspectives Quaker practices such as meeting for worship might be seen as rituals. We do not attempt to

eliminate everything in our conduct which serves to mark certain activities as religious. But we keep the level of ceremony low, in order to concentrate on what is truly vital.

Friends have sometimes claimed that to those who experience the spiritual reality which a ceremony symbolizes, the outward form becomes superfluous; and to those who have no such experience, it is pointless: an empty form. But rituals often seem much more powerful than we would expect of empty forms and superfluities. A well-designed ritual, like well-composed music, can induce a vivid sense of connection with the Divine. This power gives us all the more reason to be cautious about rituals. Authentic connection with the Divine is not simply a feeling, however vivid, but a regeneration of the spirit, bearing real fruits of love, compassion and forgiveness. An artificially induced feeling may or may not have such a regenerative effect; it is important not to let the feeling itself become one's primary goal in spiritual practice.

The whole of life is a sacrament. The worst, the poorest and meanest, of us as well as the bravest and the noblest before our brief day darkens, have broken divine bread. If we believed it wholly, for others as for ourselves, we should have peace. Even now, the measure of our peace is our belief in it, and our forgetfulness of it is the measure of our unrest. To forget it utterly is despair. That the daily bread of human existence, with all its hope and joy, its agony and failure, is broken to men by no blind fate, but by an Eternal Wisdom that is Eternal Love,—this is the underlying faith that saves us from madness. But it is a faith that must be proved, and striven for, and actualised, hour by hour and day by day. We must grip it hard, if we are to recognise God's sacraments as, one by one, they enter into our experience.

May Kendall, 1902

Ceremonies, religious holidays, and visits to places with religious significance can serve as occasions to rejoice in God's grace and bounty, and may invite a deeper connection with the Divine. However, we might be misled in confusing such observances and the emotions that accompany them with the divine encounter itself. True religious experience contributes to inward transformation and its outward expression in how we live our lives.

For most of our history, Friends did not celebrate holidays; and while simple celebrations of Christmas and Easter have now become common, we continue to hold that all days are equally holy in the sight of God. Similarly, while we may feel special attachment to our old meetinghouses and other places associated with our Quaker heritage, we do not regard them as more holy than the world in general, all of which is consecrated to God's purposes.