

Minutes of NEYM Ministry and Counsel  
9/28/2019 Amesbury, MA

[Minutes from the joint meeting with the Permanent Board will be inserted here]

List of attenders and regrets still to be added

1. **Announcements.** The approval of minutes is postponed until next meeting, to give Friends time to review them. The Committee's Purposes and Procedures have been distributed; they will be reviewed this year.
2. **What we have care of.** The Clerk has reviewed the wide range of issues that are supposed to be under our care, and has suggested a narrowed list for a focus for our work this coming year as follows:

Sessions work

- Care of Memorial Meeting
- State of Society Report
- Logistical support of worship (including finding microphone spacers, people to have care of worship, and people to serve as greeters)
- Overall care of worship
- Sacred Space (currently being stewarded by Paul Spence)
- Healing Center

Anchor Group facilitation/working group throughout the year

Naming and Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness

Pastoral Care Events

Supporting Religious Education in local meetings

Travel Minutes/shepherding

Visitation of meetings

Review of supporting Ministry

We have also minuted that we have a desire to hold a background awareness of, and receive regular updates and reports on, the following:

- Eccumenical Relations
- ARCH collaboration
- Sessions Committee
- Youth Ministries
- Public Statements
- Legacy Gift
- Who has been recorded

Other possible issues that we should attend to

- Care of local Meetings on Ministry and Counsel

- Periodic reflection on the condition of the YM. One Friend noted that, in the past, meetings of ministers and elders focused on the core of things, out of which all these specific tasks should arise. How can we hold the consciousness that all these different kinds of work are pieces of a whole?

We are mindful that this list has grown without design — some Friends described it as having things placed with us because there was no other place to put it. What of these that we can say should not be on the list? Which of the background topics are not part of M&C agenda, but rather of interest for all members? The issue is not just what shall we do, but how shall we do it? How to make concrete the abstract responsibility? What is our capacity to be faithful to our responsibilities?

In the discussion, we realized that there are two slants on responsibility. There is "reporting" responsibility — we can feel that we need to know about, be aware of, certain things that are happening around the yearly meeting. Or we can feel that we have things that we must do — "administrative" responsibility. Our strengths clearly will limit what we can do administratively, though there are some things we should properly have that kind of care of. Yet the "reporting" responsibility is of great importance for the self-awareness and regulation of the body.

Religious education is a huge responsibility, that should perhaps have its own committee. How could we do it justice?

We are reminded that our core responsibility is to "feed my sheep" — and therefore we need to ask ourselves always, how does a particular task serve that purpose?

**Friends agreed that this important examination of our work and workload needs to continue.**

### **3. Naming and noticing patterns of oppression and faithfulness.**

**Ministry & Counsel agrees to reconstitute the Working Group "Naming and noticing patterns of oppression and faithfulness" under the care of M&C for the next year**, keeping some of the current members and adding new ones, with the intention of expanding and increasing the diversity of the group. At least one of the new working group members will be a continuing member of M&C. As with any M&C Working Group, they will report regularly to M&C, with a member from the WG regularly present at M&C meetings. Their charge remains the same:

“to observe, name, and reflect back to us long-standing, unseen patterns and practices that result in our complicity in oppression”

The Working Group will take time to sit with the Noticing Elders’ report and noticings from the 2019 Sessions and develop ways to share that information with Friends throughout NEYM to help us in our work at all levels.

The Working Group will provide workshops throughout the year, generally and for local meetings, on how we can notice & interrupt patterns of oppression and how we can affirm and grow patterns of faithfulness. There will also continue to be Noticing Elders at

Sessions, under the care of Ministry & Counsel, and the Working Group will find ways to work with the clerks effectively.

Over time the Working Group will develop ways to provide support and resources for First Day Schools and our youth programs so that we are doing this work as a whole Yearly Meeting.

If possible, they will meet with Coordinating & Advisory Committee, the Yearly Meeting clerks, and Permanent Board during the year to share noticings specific to how business and work gets organized. Noticing Elders will be provided to regularly participate as observers in M&C and Permanent Board meetings

#### **4. Increasing time for corporate worship at Sessions.**

We have read a letter from Jay O'Hara, expressing his sense that there is a need for more corporate worship at YM sessions, a concern that has been echoed in many places across the Yearly Meeting. Many Friends expressed appreciation of this concern. We recognize that this has been a long-running conversation within the Yearly Meeting generally, and Sessions Committee in particular. Ministry and Counsel believes that this is a matter of importance. We are united in requesting that there be additional daily opportunities for corporate worship at YM, and we ask the Presiding Clerk and Sessions Committee to give it serious weight in planning the schedule for the yearly Meeting in 2020. We also ask our clerk to forward Jay's letter to Sessions Committee and the Presiding Clerk to accompany this minute.

**5. Pastoral Care events.** Ministry and Counsel has committed to supporting Friends in local meetings in building their capacity for pastoral care. Jaqueline Stillwell (Monadnock, NH) clerk of Nominating Committee, Nia Thomas (Northampton, MA) Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator, and Honor Woodrow (Framingham, MA) clerk of NEYM Ministry and Counsel are working with Abby Matchette (Burlington, VT) to organize a "Meeting Care Day" on 2/29/20. Friends who are interested in participating in the planning or implementation of activities should contact these 3 Friends. More information will be forthcoming.

#### **6. Sacred Space.**

Friends expressed gratitude for Paul Spence's care for the Sacred Space at Yearly Meeting.

The clerk closed the meeting. After the close of the meeting Friends raised a question about the internal nominating committee. There is currently no one serving on internal nominating committee. Diane Dicranian volunteered specifically to help think of names for the Naming and Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness Working Group in the absence of an internal nominating committee. The process whereby people are named to the internal nominating committee is not clear. This will need to be addressed.

**Concluded in worship, purposing to meet 11/9/19, at a place to be determined.**