

**Permanent Board Meeting  
February 23, 2019  
Providence Friends Meeting**

**19-01: Opening Worship**

Friends opened with a period of worship.

**19-02: Welcome**

Rebecca Leuchak, clerk of Providence Friends Meeting, welcomed us to their meetinghouse and acknowledged that we are meeting on the traditional homelands of the Wampanoag and Narragansett nations.

**19-03: Roll Call**

The recording clerk called the roll.

Present: Sarah Gant, Clerk; Hannah Zwirner Forsythe, Recording Clerk; Travis Belcher, Martin Zwirner Forsythe, Chris Gant, Ian Harrington, Betsy Kantt, Rebecca Leuchak, Ed Mair, Christopher McCandless, Jean McCandless, Gina Nortonsmith, Carole Rein, Sara Smith, Bill Walkauskas, Tom Vargo, Mary Zwirner

Ex-Officio: Bob Murray (Finance Clerk); Bruce Neumann (Rising Presiding Clerk); Elizabeth Reuthe (Secretary's Supervisor); Shearman Taber (Treasurer); Fritz Weiss (Presiding Clerk)

Guests: Betsy Cazden, LouAnne McDonald, John Reuthe, Steve Schwartz, Kathleen Wooten

Regrets: Deana Chase (Development Co-Clerk); Noah Merrill (Secretary); Kim Allen, Peter Bishop, Darcy Drayton, Ben Guaraldi, Anna Raddochia, Phil Stone, Elizabeth Szatkowski, Will Taber, Rosemary Zimmermann

**19-04: Minutes**

Minutes from our November meeting were approved at that meeting. Any final corrections should be submitted to the recording clerk.

**19-05: Presiding Clerk's Report**

Fritz Weiss, Presiding Clerk, shared some highlights from his written report.

As we meet, Noah Merrill and Jackie Stillwell are representing New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) at Cuba Yearly Meeting's (CYM) Sessions. NEYM continues to struggle with getting

visas for CYM representatives to our Sessions. Since our approval of a joint minute, “Una Propuesta para una Minuta Unida”, with CYM last year Fritz has been in contact with New England congressional delegates (Senator Patrick Leahy, and Representative James McGovern) inquiring into ways to advocate for permission for representatives from CYM to travel to New England.

Sessions Committee has approved a significant change to the Sessions schedule. Business meeting sessions are being moved from the evening to the afternoon to better allow for parents to participate in business discernment. This will also allow for evenings that are more focused on fellowship and spiritual connection.

There are more details on all of these topics in the Presiding Clerk’s report.

#### **19-06: Quarter Name Change**

Rhode Island/Smithfield Quarter has changed their name to Southeast Quarterly Meeting and Friends were asked to acknowledge that change and the stronger sense of identity and of becoming whole reflected in this change. Friends approved.

#### **19-07: Living Faith Gatherings**

Living Faith Gatherings (LFG) were approved by Permanent Board (PB) as an experiment three years ago. Coordinating and Advisory (C&A) has recognized that these gatherings have become a full program of the YM, organized by a volunteer committee that is gathered and supervised by the Yearly Meeting Secretary. PB is asked to approve LFG as a continued program of the YM and to approve updating the secretary’s job description to reflect his role in this program. Friends approved.

#### **19-08: Sessions Committee Recommendation**

Sessions Committee (SC) recommends extending our contract with Castleton University for two more years meaning that we will meet at Castleton through 2022. SC asked for a Site Selection Committee to be formed and for Permanent Board (PB) to name two members to that committee. Friends approved extending our contract with Castleton through 2022. Friends who have suggestions for members to the Site Selection Committee should bring them to the PB Clerk prior to our May meeting.

#### **19-09: Secretary’s Report**

Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting Secretary, provided an extensive written report in advance of our meeting. In his absence, Friends in other leadership roles were asked to speak to the pieces of Noah’s report that they have experience with. Though we miss Noah at our meeting we are grateful for the work he is doing in Cuba. The Secretary’s report is appended.

### **19-10: Data Privacy Policy**

New England Yearly Meeting collects, maintains, and uses data from individuals to support and strengthen the Quaker movement in New England and beyond. Our need for a data privacy policy is both good practice and a legal requirement. The policy before us describes our intentions as an organization and should be considered a living document that can and should be updated frequently. Friends had the opportunity to ask questions and provide feedback.

There are sections to be added on integration with Friends Camp, reviewing the use of our data by third party service providers, and our response to a breach of our data. The policy will also be reviewed by counsel. Friends approved the Data Privacy Policy with gratitude and the understanding that there are pieces to be added and revised. Any substantive changes to the policy will come to PB for approval. The draft Data Privacy Policy is appended.

### **19-11: Report from the Secretary's Supervisor**

Elizabeth Reuthe, Supervisor to the Yearly Meeting Secretary, conducted a performance review of the Secretary during the summer of 2018. This involved information from more than 40 people throughout the Yearly Meeting (YM) and the wider Quaker world. Noah is much loved by staff and members of the YM. Included in Elizabeth's review of Noah was feedback about the organization of NEYM. Detailed feedback is appended. Friends accepted the evaluation of Noah Merrill, with gratitude.

### **19-12: Areas of Focus**

Elizabeth Reuthe, Supervisor to the Yearly Meeting Secretary, and Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting Secretary, worked together to develop Noah's Areas of Focus which are grounded in a work/life balance and engaging with staff to create a more shared vision of the work and increase space for initiative and growth. Noah's Areas of Focus are leading the development program, coordinating the funding priorities process, supporting volunteer service empowerment, fostering religious education and expanding and improving communications. The Areas of Focus document for October 2018 to September 2019 is appended.

### **19-13: Treasurer's Report**

Shearman Taber, YM Treasurer, made himself available for questions.

### **19-14: Announcements**

Friends shared announcements about events in New England and beyond before breaking for lunch.

### **19-15: Faith & Practice Revision Committee**

Faith & Practice Revision Committee (F&PRC) asks Permanent Board (PB) to develop an “Organizational Handbook” (final title to be determined by a working group). In their revision of the organizational chapter of Faith & Practice (F&P) it became clear that the structures of the Yearly Meeting (YM) should not reside in this chapter because it will inevitably fall out of date long before each revision of F&P is produced. An “Organizational Handbook” will allow for the structures of the YM to be more accurately documented and more easily updated. This handbook will compile the documents which record the policies, practices, definitions, etc which will be organized and kept current.

PB is asked to take ownership of the “Organizational Handbook” which will reside online, releasing F&PR from writing the bylaws of our organization and from trying to capture the structure of our organization in the organizational chapter. Future substantive changes to the “Organizational Handbook” will be approved by PB. Friends approved.

Fritz Weiss and Rosemary Zimmermann will continue to do this work. Ian Harrington and Christopher McCandless volunteered to join them. They will work in conjunction with F&PRC.

### **19-16: Working Group to Examine NEYM Clerking Structures and Practices**

Martin Zwirner Forsythe, member of the Working Group to Examine NEYM Clerking Structures and Practices, briefly updated Friends on the work they have been doing since our November meeting. They have been interviewing Friends in leadership positions throughout the Yearly Meeting. They will bring a report to the May Permanent Board meeting.

Fran Brokaw has been working with this working group since November and asks to be officially added to roster. Friends approved.

### **19-17: Challenging White Supremacy Working Group**

Carole Rein reported that the Challenging White Supremacy Working Group is traveling in teams throughout the Yearly Meeting to discuss their work with monthly meetings. They are available to monthly meetings that are interested in visitation.

### **19-18: Reparations Working Group**

Leslie Manning shared the work that individuals in the Reparations Working Group are doing. This includes consultations with tribal leaders, meeting with political leadership about relations with local tribes, and sharing the Chiapas Photography project. A written report is appended.

### **19-19: Travel Minutes**

Friends approved minutes for Chris Miller (Framingham), Felice Lopez (Framingham), Carolyn Stone (Wellesley), Marybeth Toomey (Wellesley), and Lucy Arico-Muendel (Wellesley) to travel as Yearly Meeting representatives to Cuba Yearly Meeting.

### **19-20: Nominations**

LouAnne McDonald, recording clerk of Nominating Committee presented one nomination.

Ann Dodd Collins is nominated as an alternate representative to the next FUM board meeting because none of the current representatives can travel to that meeting.

Leslie Manning, presented one nomination from the Clerk's Table Nominating.

Peter Bishop is nominated as Recording Clerk for three year term, Class of 2021.

Sarah Gant, Clerk, presented two nominations for the Friends Camp Committee.

Steve Ball (Mt Toby), Class of 2022  
Chris Philbrook (Portland), Class of 2022

Friends approved.

### **19-21: Closing Worship**

Friends closed with a period of worship.

**Presiding Clerk Report to Permanent Board  
February 2019**

*We give each other God's grace; it is not something we can create for ourselves; but in community we must tell each other "You are Loved". (paraphrased from Nadia Bolz-Weber)*

Dear Friends,

One of the characteristics of our community is that we seek our way forward together. I frequently say that a primary part of the work of C&A is to support those who are serving the Yearly Meeting in leadership roles – the presiding clerk, the clerk of Permanent Board, the Secretary, the clerks of Ministry and Counsel, Finance and Nominating and the Treasurer. I don't say as often that all these individuals are servants to the community – that discernment is by the gathered community. I hope that C&A has been faithful in our discernment, but I also know I rely on the whole community for God's guidance.

C&A has met each month since November, alternating between in person meetings and zoom calls. C&A continues to support YM committees in their work. The clerk of the Nominating Committee (Jackie Stillwell) has joined C&A which has strengthened to connection between each committee and C&A. A few committees have requested support as they transition to new clerks.

C&A is bringing forward two items for Permanent Boards consideration.

The first item is to note that Rhode Island/Smithfield Quarter has renamed itself "Southeast Quarterly Meeting". We reached out to Jan Hoffman for some history of how the YM recognizes changes in quarterly names and alignment. Jan shared a fascinating account noting other instances of name changes and meetings moving from one quarter to another; the consistent thread was that there was only indirect records of these changes in the Yearly Meeting minutes. C&A is recommending that PB specifically note this change of the name of the quarter and to note that with this name change, the quarter is reporting a stronger sense of identity and of becoming whole.

The second item is the recognition that the Living Faith Gatherings which we approved as an experiment two years ago have life and should continue as a program of the Yearly Meeting. These gatherings have been planned and facilitated by a small planning group gathered by the Secretary and including both the Secretary and the Events Coordinator. It is C&A's recommendation that the planning and coordination continue to be a responsibility of the Secretary and those volunteers he recruits for assistance. In each report in the newsletter and at each gathering an invitation is made for Friends who wish to be part of the planning group to join the planning group. The Secretary, with the planning group is responsible for inviting individuals to participate in the planning. If PB approves affirming the Living Faith Gatherings as a continuing program of the Yearly Meeting, and as a responsibility of the Secretary, the Secretary's job description should be changed to reflect this.

There continue to be regular calls with leadership of quarterly meetings. Seven quarters participated in the call in January. I am heartened by the increased clarity I am hearing on these calls about the role of Quarters and the ways each quarter is doing the work of supporting local meetings, creating fellowship and nurturing ministry. Transitions in leadership at the quarters continues to be a challenge.

C&A is responsible for supporting the development of clerks and leadership and strengthening the understanding of Friends discipline of discernment. Jackie Stillwell and I will be offering a full day workshop on April 13<sup>th</sup> at Beacon Hill Friends House. Honor Woodrow and I are tentatively planning to offer a similar workshop at New Haven later in the year. Given the challenges in both the quarters and in committees in finding and supporting new clerks; these workshops seem timely.

C&A has contributed to the small group PB appointed to organize the task of compiling a "Organizational Handbook" for the Yearly Meeting. This is a task that the Faith and Practice Revision Committee has been asking be done for over a decade. There is a separate report in the advance documents with recommendation to Permanent Board on a way forward with this task.

Noah Merrill, the YM Secretary and Jackie Stillwell, clerk of Nominating Committee will be traveling to Cuba this month to represent NEYM at the Cuba Yearly Meeting (CYM) annual sessions. It continues to be impossible to obtain permission from the US State Department for Cuban Friends to attend NEYM sessions. Our relationship with CYM remains rich, deep and very important to both Yearly Meetings. The intention in having two members from C&A represent NEYM at CYM is to emphasize how important this relationship is to us. A year ago at the February Permanent Board Meeting, PB and CYM jointly approved a minute: "Una Propuesta para una Minuta Unida" Since then, this minute has been placed on the desk of the Secretary of State by Senator Leahy's staff and delivered to the Head of the US embassy in Cuba by Representative McGovern's staff. I have continued to be in touch with both Senator Leahy's office and Representative McGovern's office asking if there are additional ways we might advocate for permission for representatives from CYM to travel to New England.

One of the impacts of our governments' policy towards Cuba is that CYM is unable to access the funds that they had deposited in the FWCC accounts. Consequently CYM is experiencing significant financial stress. FWCC is working with various parties to try and transfer the funds back to Cuba.

In addition to joining CYM at their annual gathering, NEYM sent a delegation to continue the work of archiving the records of Cuban Friends. This archive is housed at the Dubois Library at UMASS alongside the NEYM archives.

Members of C&A participated in a consultation on January 5<sup>th</sup> with members of RSEJ, the Challenging White Supremacy working group, the Reparations working group, and the Noticing Patterns of Oppression working group. The Yearly Meeting is engaged in this work in multiple ways and under multiple charges. One of the goals of this consultation was to clarify how the work is coordinated and to support transparency. In each C&A meetings we try to pay attention to how we express the "Characteristics of White Supremacy" as outlined in the article "White Supremacy Culture" by Kenneth

Jones and Tema Okun which was brought to PB by Lisa Graustein. Friends can re-read the article at : [http://www.csworkshop.org/PARC\\_site\\_B/dr-culture.html](http://www.csworkshop.org/PARC_site_B/dr-culture.html)

Sessions committee has approved a significant change in the sessions schedule. Business meetings have been moved from evenings to afternoons; with the opportunities, workshops and other events which have occurred in the afternoon moving to the evening. The hope is that this creates a schedule which is more supportive of parents participation in the YM business. Sessions committee recognized that the decision to cease discernment in the evening when parents had to leave was more welcoming to parents, but that moving Meetings for Business to the afternoon could be a better choice. The Memorial meeting was moved to Sunday afternoon so that those who can only attend on the weekend could participate. We are hoping for Sunday morning worship program which integrates the plenary with the intergenerational worship and the launch of the Bible half-hours. Lisa Graustein, who will deliver the plenary program has begun a series of video presentations as a virtual plenary to help prepare Friends for the week we are together in August. By the May meeting of Permanent Board, the shape and flow of the Sunday morning worship should be clearer.

The Secretary and I released one public statement “The Love that Overcomes” <https://neym.org/public-statements/public-statement-love-overcomes> I have been aware that a number of monthly meetings have issued public statements over the past few months. When we approved the mechanism for the Secretary and I to endorse or issue time sensitive statements, the hope that local meetings would do so also was clear. I celebrate our voices in the public sphere.

There is so much going on among Friends in New England. One of the challenges of these reports is choosing what not to include. I am looking forward to when we gather in Providence.

Love

Fritz Weiss  
Presiding clerk



Sessions 2019 theme

**"Provoke one another to Love."**

This is from an epistle of Margaret Fell in 1656, and from the NEYM 2018 epistle. The quote from the NEYM epistle is:

*"... Friends have prophesied boldly. Early Friends were intimately aware of the discomfort of God working in us. A print of Margaret Fell's words appeared on our podium Tuesday: "Friends, let the eternal light search you, and try you, it will rip you up, lay you open. **Provoke one another to Love.**"*

The original, in Margaret Fell's "Epistle to Convinced but not yet Crucified Friends" in 1656 follows:

*"Now, Friends, deal plainly with yourselves, and let the eternal Light search you, and try you, for the good of your souls ... It will rip you up, and lay you open, and make all manifest which lodges in you; ... Therefore all to this come, and by this be searched, and judged, and led and guided. For to this you must stand or fall.*

...

*Therefore, dear Friends, abide in the cross, and keep your minds to that which is pure; ... Consider one another, and **provoke one another to Love** and to good works, not forsaking the Assembling of yourselves, but exhorting one another, and so much the more, ... Dwell in love and unity, in the pure eternal Light; there is your fellowship, there is your cleansing and washing."*

To: Permanent Board of New England Yearly Meeting  
From: Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting Secretary  
Re: Report in preparation for PB meeting on February 23, 2019

Dear Friends,

As you know, when the Permanent Board meets I will be in Cuba with Jackie Stillwell, representing New England Friends at the Annual Sessions of Cuba Yearly Meeting. I hope this written report will be helpful as you gather for worship, and to do the work of our Yearly Meeting. Please send me any questions at [ymsec@neym.org](mailto:ymsec@neym.org); I would be very happy to speak further with you when I return.

As previously, I am shaping my report according to my Areas of Focus for this year (see an updated version of that document in the advance documents for this meeting). Though I have not tried to be comprehensive, several specific ongoing projects or issues follow near the end of the report.

○ **Lead Development Program:**

- There has been a strongly positive response to our fall appeal to households, written by Honor Woodrow (Framingham) and Abby Matchette (Burlington). Several Friends have written to share that the message challenged and encouraged them in their spiritual work and sense of belonging to our wider faith community, and prompted them to contribute financially, either for the first time or with a significantly increased gift.
- We've also sent an appeal letter to local meetings, signed by Sarah Gant as she completes her service as Clerk of the Permanent Board, to thank them for their support, to share an update and context on the Yearly Meeting's progress toward financial sustainability, and to invite prayerful consideration of further gifts as we seek to balance our budget in this fiscal year.
- Since the fall, I have been visiting Friends to thank them for their financial support and to invite them to consider increasing their gifts. My illness this past fall limited my ability to travel, but I am looking forward to further connections and visits in the coming months this spring.
- We continue to grow into our partnership with Everence. We are finalizing print materials in order to educate Friends and local meetings about the supports and services now available to them. Lyle Miller, the Everence staff member who is partnering with us will be visiting New England this spring to join the annual "Money & Spirit" day, sponsored by Finance Committee, that supports Friends with financial stewardship roles in their local meetings to meet for peer support and training. He will also be offering a workshop at the April 6 Living Faith

gathering, and other events to help connect him to local meetings are in process. Lyle and his wife Bonnie plan to again join us for Annual Sessions in August, and we are exploring the possibility of a series of Zoom calls/webinars to further educate New England Friends about faithful stewardship and how Everence can support the work of our meetings.

- Development Committee has acknowledged the need for a more robust and integrated capacity to maintain and strengthen relationships with and among local meetings throughout New England. This spring, there are plans to experiment on a small scale with visiting meetings on behalf of the Yearly Meeting as part of helping the Yearly Meeting learn to better nurture these life-giving connections. I/we will provide more updates on this experiment as it unfolds.

- **Coordinate Funding Priorities Process**

- As Friends will remember, in November Permanent Board approved a set of funding priorities to inform Finance Committee in the development of the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2020 (which would be approved at Sessions in August to begin 10/1/2019). Those priorities have now been shared with the Finance Committee. The Budget Subcommittee will begin work on the FY2020 budget, guided by these funding priorities, in early March.
- As we live into this new funding priorities process, in late spring 2019 we will be soliciting guidance and suggestions from YM committees and other groups doing work on behalf of the Yearly Meeting to inform the FY2021 process. I hope this will allow opportunities for consultation and integration of proposals and ideas before Sessions 2019, since the FY2021 funding priorities will be approved by Permanent Board in November of 2019.

- **Support Volunteer Service Empowerment**

- Several projects related to this focus area are in process throughout the Yearly Meeting, including: improving and integrating the ways we work together to support nominating processes, the working group on clerking structures and practices; programming and opportunities focused on developing a culture of mentoring; revisions of job descriptions and clarifying responsibilities among staff and volunteer roles; exploring future programming/events on naming & nurturing gifts; continuing to develop plans for the new practice of “noticing patterns of oppression” and faithfulness for Sessions and beyond; working with staff and Sessions Committee to make schedule changes and increase childcare support at Sessions; and reviewing what training, orientation and support the YM staff and office provide to those serving on behalf of the Yearly Meeting.

I look forward to our continuing to support this work being undertaken by so

many, and to seeing and sharing (and I hope, celebrating) more of the fruits of this work in the coming months.

- **Foster Religious Education**

- **Staffing Transitions; Growing Edges for Youth Ministries, Quaker Practice, and Leadership Development**

This spring, we will be making explicit some shifts in staffing roles and responsibilities to better serve Friends in the area of “religious education”.

These changes respond to and arise out of several ongoing conversations—including: 1) the need (reflected in our FY2020 funding priorities) to better support opportunities for spiritual formation, leadership development, and training in Quaker practice; 2) how to support the growing edges of our youth ministries with the wider web of New England Friends while strengthening our existing youth programs and creating bridges between age-specific cohorts/programs; 3) fostering multigenerational spiritual community in local meetings; and 4) integrating and improving the quality, accessibility, and awareness of opportunities for Quaker spiritual formation and training overall.

The changes acknowledge ways we have already been experimenting for some time. They also make some new things possible. I’m grateful for the many Friends and committees or other bodies whose input, dreaming and support have been part of this process in recent months.

The first shift is that **we will be continuing Maggie Nelson’s coordination and program work with both the Junior High Yearly Meeting and Young Friends retreat programs** in the coming year. Maggie had initially been doing this work on a temporary basis as an experiment this year, supporting and working alongside both Gretchen Baker-Smith and Nia Thomas. After several months’ experience, we’re confident that continuing to have Maggie’s gifts and skills as part of the support for both of these age groups will be a great help and will allow for greater continuity, resilience, experimentation and connection among these two vital programs with junior high and teenage participants.

A second adjustment (made possible by the first) is that we will be **formalizing a shift in Nia Thomas’ role**—again, much of which has been in process for some time—toward a more comprehensive focus on **fostering, coordinating, and facilitating opportunities for spiritual formation, training in Quaker practice, and leadership development across the lifespan of New England Friends**. Nia will remain actively involved in overall leadership of programming with Young Friends (directing Maggie’s work) and work with young adult Friends. She will also be providing coordination, connection, networking and creation of events,

programming and relationships to help more fully share the gifts carried by so many Friends in these areas of ministry.

**These changes in staffing roles and responsibilities do not need further approval**, being within the scope of the Secretary’s responsibilities, but I have been grateful for consultation with the Clerks of Personnel, Ministry & Counsel, Youth Ministries, and Finance (as well as the other members of Coordinating & Advisory Committee) as these changes have taken shape and become more clear. I look forward to working with Personnel Committee when I return from Cuba to finalize new job descriptions for both of these roles.

In terms of financial implications, I believe that **these changes can be substantively made using the resources already set aside** from the position left open following Beth Collea’s laying down her work last fall.

For now, I hope you will join me in celebrating these shifts, and the opportunities I believe they will provide to help us continue to grow into our work in new and dynamic ways. I look forward to sharing more about how these changes have taken shape, and the fruits of these adjustments, at our meeting in May and beyond.

- **Opportunities for Religious Education, Faith Formation, Spiritual Nurture**

For the second year, the spring gathering joint gathering with New York Yearly Meeting Friends previously focused on pastoral meetings will welcome Friends who are called to “pastoral ministry”—broadly defined as those who are hold, tend, and nourish the whole life of their local meetings—regardless of the form this ministry takes in their meetings in New York and New England Yearly Meetings. This year, the gathering at Powell House in New York will be led by Emily Provance of NYYM, as well as NEYM’s Nia Thomas and Hilary Burgin, and will focus on an exploration of practical examples of how we might grow in how we “love one another” in our meeting communities, drawing on the Book of Acts for inspiration.

Invitations have been sent to all local meetings asking Ministry & Counsel/Ministry & Worship committees to prayerfully consider who in their meetings they might be led to send to this event. For more information, Friends should contact Honor Woodrow, Clerk of NEYM Ministry & Counsel, at [mc-clerk@neym.org](mailto:mc-clerk@neym.org).

- **Living Faith**

Living Faith planning for the Spring 2019 event is well underway. We’re celebrating a transition in leadership, with Hannah Forsythe (Beacon Hill) stepping into the clerking role for the planning team, while outgoing clerk Lisa

Graustein (Beacon Hill) offers ongoing support. The other members of the planning team for this incarnation of Living Faith are Sarah Cushman (Portland), Jay O'Hara (West Falmouth), Jen Higgins-Newman (Beacon Hill), Heidi Nortonsmith (Northampton), Newell Isbell-Shinn (Mt. Toby) and Elizabeth Hacala (Events Coordinator). Gretchen Baker-Smith is providing essential work with both the youth program and local area support and care for relationships in Sandwich Quarter, and as always other staff and many other hands are contributing.

We had very much hoped to be able to hold Living Faith close to (or at) the historic New Bedford meetinghouse, but due to accessibility needs and several other considerations were not able to do so this time. Gretchen and Elizabeth explored 14 potential sites in New Bedford itself before making a final recommendation that we hold the April Living Faith at Friends Academy, an independent school with a history of Quaker connection, in Dartmouth, MA 4.3 miles from the New Bedford Meetinghouse. We are hopeful that there will be an opportunity for an evening potluck and potential New Bedford Quaker history walking tour with local Friends on the evening of April 6; this remains in process.

We're trying a new experiment: holding the spring Young Adult Friends retreat in concert with Living Faith. Briana Halliwell (Vassalboro) will host a Friday-night gathering for young adults nearby, with young adult participants joining Living Faith on Saturday. This reflects our continuing exploration of ways to support age-specific opportunities for peer support and contextual programming while also creating bridges into multigenerational settings.

I am continuing to step back from direct logistics and arrangements, while maintaining attention to the overall intention, design, and integration of Living Faith with the other ministries of NEYM. As this ministry continues in its third year, we have been giving attention to how to document and affirm what is being learned in this new shape of service, and what support or resources it might need to stay fresh, vibrant, well-led, and intentional. More information on Living Faith including a registration announcement will be coming in March.

- **Expand and Improve Communications**

- **Website Redesign**

- Sara Hubner and I have continued to work with the web developers on the website redesign. With joy, I can share that we have essentially completed the design phase, and the website is now under construction in earnest. This phase requires a significant amount of time and energy, as each webpage and element of content on the current site is assessed and considered in terms of how it fits with the new design and whether it needs to be transferred, revised, or rewritten for the new site—or simply archived.

Provided way continues to open, we are on track for the site to launch in time for registration for Sessions in June 2019. As I've shared previously, if you have specific questions about the goals of the redesign, the process, or decisions we have made in terms of priorities and functionality, I would be happy to share more.

- **Data and privacy policy**

Sara Hubner and I, with input from several Friends including Sarah Gant and Martin Zwirner Forsythe as well as other staff have continued to develop the draft data privacy policy. At this point, we believe it is ready for substantive comment and consideration for approval by Permanent Board as a work in progress. We welcome comments both on the spirit of the document overall, as well as suggestions and questions about specific provisions or omissions. Please send comments to Sara at [office@neym.org](mailto:office@neym.org), as well as to me at [ymsec@neym.org](mailto:ymsec@neym.org).

*Past context as a refresher: Privacy and the responsible stewardship and use of data is a major issue in our wider society at this time. Many Friends have strong feelings about privacy and data sharing, and I recognize that underlying these perspectives are important questions about relationship—to one another as Friends; between local meetings, quarterly meetings, and the yearly meeting; between NEYM and Friends organizations more widely. There are concerns about trust, identity, and change. I hope we can honor the different perspectives, responsibilities, and cares involved as we find a way forward to effectively use data to help Friends thrive.*

- **Updates on Grants:**

**Received: Obadiah Brown's Benevolent Fund for "Partners in Spirit"**

We received (but I did not report in November) a grant for \$9,750 to support the weekend retreat held this past weekend (February 15-18, 2019) fostering intergenerational spiritual friendships and mentoring. I've just returned from this retreat, which was a blessed, nourishing, and gathered time.

I look forward to sharing (along with notes, next steps, and potentially an epistle from participants) what was learned, and to how those who participated might help seed a culture of intentional, joyful multigenerational mentoring among New England Friends. Permanent Board members Fritz Weiss, Anna Radocchia, and Rosemary Zimmerman also participated, and I hope they can share some of their reflections with the Permanent Board as well.

This work arises directly from—and is a continuation of—much of what we've learned in our partnership with New York Yearly Meeting, supported by the Shoemaker Fund, in fostering multigenerational meetings, and from listening at the growing edges of our young adult ministry in recent years.

**Received: Obadiah Brown’s Benevolent Fund for “Nurturing Faithfulness”**

While technically this grant is being administered by Woolman Hill, with whom we are partnering on this program, we received an additional \$3000 to support the second offering of the nine-month Nurturing Faithfulness program, to begin in September 2019.

**Not received: Proposal to the Lilly Endowment’s *Thriving in Ministry Initiative***

Friends may remember that last summer, following approval by Permanent Board, NEYM submitted a proposal to the Lilly Endowment’s *Thriving in Ministry Initiative*. We have received word from the Lilly Endowment that we were not selected for a grant in this cycle. I look forward to conversation with the program officers responsible for the grant program to seek feedback on our application, strengthen our relationship, and explore the possibility of another application in the future.

○ **North Fairfield Meetinghouse:**

At the recommendation of several Friends in Vassalboro Quarter, last fall I formally engaged the services of Joann Austin, who in addition to serving as clerk of Vassalboro Friends Meeting is also a practicing real estate attorney in the State of Maine with significant experience in the kinds of work needed to resolve the outstanding issues surrounding the North Fairfield Meetinghouse property.

Joann has recently completed a substantive report and clarification of the deed and other related information about the meetinghouse, and I expect (working with Joann and others in Vassalboro Quarter) to be able to bring to the Permanent Board in May a more detailed report and recommendations for further action.

○ **Organizational “handbook”:**

With great appreciation for the work of the Friends who have considered the question of what to include in a repository of essential policy and procedures for NEYM, I fully support their recommendation that formal policy—while it will certainly need and benefit from the care, attention, expertise and consultation of many Friends—be approved in its final form by the Permanent Board. I believe this will create greater clarity, limit liability and the potential for poor administration, create more consistent records, and help ensure that policies are discerned and implemented in alignment with the vision, goals, interests and needs of the Yearly Meeting as a whole.

For the past several years, I have understood that this is the emerging practice and intention in our governance work, but it seems that making this explicit as we embark on this important review and compilation of policy and procedures will serve Friends well both now and in the future.

I will look forward to working closely with Office Manager Sara Hubner and the



proposed small working group to bring this project to fruition.  
###



NEW ENGLAND  
YEARLY MEETING  
OF FRIENDS  
QUAKERS

## A Covenant of Trust:

*How We Steward Your Data and Protect Your Privacy*

### Purpose: Why Data?

New England Yearly Meeting of Friends (NEYM) collects, maintains, and uses data, including contact information, financial information, health data, and records of relationships and activities, to support and strengthen the Quaker movement, both in New England and beyond.

### Data Collection

Data comes to us from a number of sources, including:

- Through direct requests and sharing from you, including requests to stay informed about the life and ministry of New England Quakers;
- Through reports from in-person interactions with staff and other Friends serving on behalf of New England Quakers, including attending worship or other events at local meetings;
- Through your participation in events sponsored by New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, including Annual Sessions, Living Faith gatherings, Youth Ministries retreats, spiritual nurture workshops, and more;
- At your local meeting's discretion, through sharing your meeting's membership lists, nominating slates/service roster, and contact information for people active in the meeting;
- Through publicly available or widely shared information about Friends activities in local meetings affiliated with NEYM, and in the wider world;
- From other Friends organizations with which New England Yearly Meeting is affiliated, and with which we partner in specific ministries.

### Data Access

We recognize that Friends and Friends meetings' decision to share data is founded on a precious trust placed in us as we serve our faith communities, and we make every effort to sustain that trust. Access to data is only given to those who need access to the data in order to carry out their responsibilities in serving Friends. When it is unclear whether sharing your data is appropriate for these purposes, we will err on the side of confidentiality and will ask for your explicit permission to share your data.

Specifically:

**Development**—Overall access to giving information is limited to the Accounts Manager (for financial operations), Office Manager (as system administrator for the database), and the Yearly Meeting Secretary. The Treasurer and Clerk of Development will have access to giving information on an as-needed basis in order to carry out their responsibilities. Under some circumstances, to support the fundraising goals of the Yearly Meeting, limited giving data about a particular household’s giving may be shared with a trusted consultant of Friend serving in a leadership role, who would use that data only to support the development work of the Yearly Meeting.

Giving information shared in reports to the Development Committee, Permanent Board and other audiences is anonymized to protect the confidentiality of individuals, unless you have specifically given permission for your giving information to be shared more publicly (for example, to acknowledge and celebrate your family’s generous gift).

A small number of fundraising-related messages appeal per year will be sent to our general mailing list—one to paper and ~2 to our electronic list. If you don’t want to receive any fundraising communications, please let us know by emailing [office@neym.org](mailto:office@neym.org).

**Health information**—Health records will be kept strictly confidential and secure (both in electronic and paper formats), and shared only as needed to ensure the health and safety of participants in Yearly Meeting programs (including Youth Ministries retreats and Annual Sessions). Access will be restricted to the staff program coordinator (Young Friends Coordinator, Junior Yearly Meeting/Junior High Yearly Meeting Coordinator) and (in the absence of direct coordination by staff, such as during the Junior Yearly Meeting program at Annual Sessions) to the trusted volunteer or stipended coordinator supervised by a staff member. In an emergency, the Yearly Meeting Secretary or System Administrator may also access health records, but will not regularly review them unless there is a specific need or concern.

Health information will be collected either securely online (using a custom-built Salesforce implementation in the case of online registration for Annual Sessions) or in print form directly from parents or guardians, or from individuals themselves.

Wherever possible, unless previous consent is given, we will only share relevant health information that needs to be more widely known with adult program volunteers in *general terms*, for example, “there is a peanut allergy in the group” rather than “Jose has a peanut allergy.” The staff program coordinators welcome confidential conversations with parents and youth about how we can most responsibly and respectfully approach especially sensitive health information in the interest of all involved.

**Criminal Background Screenings**—NEYM provides criminal background screenings for youth workers as a service to local and quarterly meetings, and in support of the NEYM Youth Ministries programs. This is a key element of our commitment to child safety. The

NEYM Office Manager maintains a list of individuals who have been successfully screened to work with youth; the records of individual screenings which include confidential information are kept in a locked cabinet accessible only to the Yearly Meeting Secretary. When screenings are conducted and those screened pass the screening, those on whose behalf the screening was conducted (local meetings, youth program coordinators) are informed that the screening has been passed. In the event that someone does not pass a screening, the person who did not pass the screening will be contacted to inform them of this, and to give them the opportunity to communicate with the requesting group (e.g., local meeting, quarterly meeting). In all cases, the requesting party will be informed that a screening was not successful, either by the person who was screened, or by the Yearly Meeting Secretary. Further detail will not be shared with the requesting party, unless it is the judgement of the Secretary that withholding such information would endanger someone involved. A record for anyone not passing a screening will be securely retained by the Yearly Meeting, but will not be listed on the active list of screened persons in any way.

**Pastoral Care**—At times, staff and volunteers charged with caring for the spiritual life of New England Friends may need to keep records of tender, sensitive, or confidential conversations or information related to individuals, families, or meetings. When these notes are kept, they will be maintained securely in the NEYM database or other password-restricted format, and shared only on a need-to-know basis. In the case of paper documents, they will be kept in a locked filing cabinet. Electronic communications related to these concerns will use initials rather than full names to designate people whenever possible.

**Archives**—Data and records will be maintained and shared with the NEYM Archives according to the NEYM Records Retention and Destruction Policy (in process as of 2/2019), and with relevant archival procedures as recommended by the NEYM Archives and Historical Records Committee and UMass Special Collections and the University Archives (SCUA), and approved by Permanent Board.

#### Data Storage

Wherever data is kept, we commit to maintaining rigorous standards of security to protect your privacy and be worthy of your trust.

We maintain an integrated database built on the Salesforce platform, which is the central repository for personal data for the Yearly Meeting. This system is cloud-based, and the integrity and secure storage of the data is the responsibility of Salesforce, a globally recognized company committed to continuous improvement in industry-standard encryption and best practices. Salesforce is committed to the European-based GDPR standard of privacy compliance, which is stronger than the current US-based standards, and NEYM aspires to these standards as well.

We will keep up to date with improvements to security practices, and ensure that our database is up to date with appropriate, industry-standard security.

Financial data is also maintained in QuickBooks online, and some additional information (such as records of event participation) is also kept in NEYM's Google Drive file management system, where access is managed based on what each individual needs to see. These files are available only to roles [e.g., NEYM Treasurer, committee clerks] who are specifically granted access. We also keep some data temporarily in other software we use for specific, limited purposes (like *Eventbrite* for smaller-scale event registration).

For online/electronic financial transactions, including credit card donations and online purchases, NEYM uses a high-security process called tokenization which means that at no point are credit card numbers actually stored in the NEYM database. We are committed to maintaining professional financial processing standards and ensuring Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard compliance. When credit or debit transactions are processed at events (including event registration, bookstores, and on-site donations), we use a separate, secure (password-protected) network to do so. This is done either by using a mobile data plan, a secure wi-fi network separate from one that allows wider access, or a mobile wi-fi hotspot with its own distinct password.

#### Use of Data

We will use your data to support and strengthen the Quaker movement in New England. This may include sharing communications, including but not limited to: news, events, resources for youth and families, for Friends active in public ministry and witness, for Friends serving in clerking and other leadership roles in local meetings, stories of Quaker ministry and witness, invitations to serve and financially support Friends' shared ministries, and similar uses directly related to the ministry and witness of Friends in New England.

If you participate in an activity sponsored by New England Yearly Meeting of Friends (Annual Sessions, Living Faith, spiritual formation workshop, youth retreat), we will add you to the general print mailing list for New England Yearly Meeting of Friends, and to the monthly email newsletter. We make every effort to carefully steward these largest channels of communication to avoid overloading Friends with information while helping include and share the most important and useful news and opportunities. We welcome your feedback and suggestions on how we can learn and improve.

All mass email communications (newsletters and email blasts) will include the option to unsubscribe and to change preferences, as well as a description of why you are receiving a particular message. Requests to be removed will be honored as soon as possible; a record of your preferences will be kept in the database to help us honor your request and to prevent you being added again in future without a specific request. As of 1/2019, options that may be specified for email subscription include: Major Announcements, Monthly Email Newsletter, Outreach, Religious Education, and No Fundraising. In the database (for all communications) as of 1/2019, preferences for restrictions include: no youth mailings, no fundraising, no USPS mail, no email, etc.

You can also adjust your communications and privacy preferences by contacting the Office Manager at [office@neym.org](mailto:office@neym.org), or at 508-754-6760.

If you are serving in a formal service role (clerk of monthly meeting, member of an NEYM committee, youth ministry volunteer), we presume that you give consent to be contacted in connection with your service in this role. We may contact you individually (to ask how things are going in your meeting's First Day School) or add you to lists sharing role-relevant content (like a periodic email sharing resources and ideas for First Day School teachers).

If for any reason you are serving in a formal service role and would prefer that a part of your contact information not be publicly available, the NEYM office can work with you to balance the need for privacy with the needs for other Friends to be able to contact you.

If we want to contact you about another specific activity related to the life and ministry of Friends for which you have not given your advance permission (for example, if you have attended a Living Faith event and we'd like to make sure your family knows about Youth Ministries retreats), we will explain how we got your contact information and why we're contacting you in the communication we send to you. We will always try to balance respecting your privacy with making sure you're aware of opportunities in your wider Quaker community that we think—and hope—you might find nourishing or life-giving.

#### Sharing Data

We will share data consistent with the expressed wishes of the people the data is about. This includes individuals, families, and local meetings.

We do not share bulk (comprehensive) data with any other organizations or individuals.

We do not share information about youth under age 18 without their parents' consent, or contact youth without their parents' consent. We understand consent to participate in the Youth Ministries retreat programs to be consent for staff to contact youth participants about their participation.

In some cases, we may share limited, criteria-specific, one-time information (such as a list of recorded ministers, or emails of local meeting clerks) with Friends organizations with which New England Yearly Meeting of Friends is affiliated (FWCC, FGC, FUM) in order to promote activities (for example, speaking tours, curriculum, or program opportunities) that might support and strengthen the Quaker movement in New England. Whenever reasonable and feasible, we will send news through NEYM-specific channels (for example, distributing news about an FUM service opportunity in Cuba Yearly Meeting through the NEYM email newsletter) rather than sharing contact information with FUM for FUM to email directly.

On request, we will share data NEYM maintains about local meetings with those local meetings themselves (for example, to help local meetings with reconciling and updating lists of members and attenders). This will not include any confidential information such as giving data without explicit permission from the donor/person whose data it is.

NEYM is committed to continuing to listen, both to Friends and to the Spirit, for ongoing guidance in how we serve as stewards of your data, and to continuously learn and improve. We welcome your wisdom, and are grateful for your trust and support as we go forward together.

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# Proposed Document Retention and Destruction Policy New England Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends

## Purpose

The Document Retention and Destruction Policy identifies the record retention responsibilities of staff, officers, volunteers, and others creating documents on behalf of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends for maintaining and documenting the storage and destruction of the organization's documents and records.

The organization's staff, officers, volunteers, and others creating documents on behalf of the organization (independent contractors via agreements with them) are required to honor the following rules:

1. Electronic documents indicated under the terms for retention in this policy will be stored and maintained using the Yearly Meeting's cloud-based document sharing platform (currently Google Drive).
2. Paper documents indicated under the terms for retention in this policy will be transferred physically (at least annually) to the Yearly Meeting office and will be maintained by Yearly Meeting staff under the supervision of the Secretary.
3. All other paper documents may be destroyed by the Yearly Meeting office after three years.
4. All other electronic documents will be deleted from all personal (non-NEYM) computers, databases, networks, and back-up storage after one year, or upon completion of service in the role for which access was granted.
5. No paper or electronic documents will be destroyed or deleted if pertinent to any ongoing or anticipated government investigation or proceeding or private litigation.
6. No paper or electronic documents will be destroyed or deleted as required to comply with government auditing standards.

## Record Retention & Destruction Schedule

3 years	7 years	Permanent (Archives)
Bank reconciliations	Accounts payable ledgers and schedules	Audit reports
Bank statements	Expired contracts, mortgages, notes, and leases	Checks (for important payments and purchases)
Correspondence (general)	Expense analyses/expense distribution schedules	Correspondence (legal and important matters)
Correspondence (with Friends and vendors)	Invoices (to customers, from vendors)	Deeds, mortgages, and bills of sale

<sup>1\*</sup> Adapted from National Council of Nonprofits.



Duplicate deposit slips	Payroll records and summaries	Depreciation schedules
Employment applications	Personnel files (terminated employees)	Year-end financial statements
Internal audit reports	Timesheets	Insurance records, current accident reports, claims, policies, and so on (active and expired)
Inventory records for products, materials, and supplies	Withholding tax statements	Minute books, bylaws, and charter
		Patents and related papers
		Retirement and pension records
		Tax returns and worksheets

#### Resources

- National Council of Nonprofits [www.councilofnonprofits.org](http://www.councilofnonprofits.org)
- BoardSource Record Retention and Document Destruction Policy—Download 4 Samples (E-Policy Sampler) [www.boardsource.org/Bookstore.asp?Type=epolicy&Item=1071](http://www.boardsource.org/Bookstore.asp?Type=epolicy&Item=1071)
- Independent Sector [www.independentsector.org/issues/sarbanesoxley.html](http://www.independentsector.org/issues/sarbanesoxley.html)
- AICPA Management of an Accounting Handbook—2003 and IRS Appendix Document [www.cpa2biz.com/AST/Main/CPA2BIZ\\_Primary/PracticeManagement/PracticeAdministration/PRDOVR~PC-090407/PC-090407.jsp](http://www.cpa2biz.com/AST/Main/CPA2BIZ_Primary/PracticeManagement/PracticeAdministration/PRDOVR~PC-090407/PC-090407.jsp)
- Guide to Record Retention Requirements in the Code of Federal Regulations: Contact the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C. 20402-9325 or from CCH, Inc. at [www.onlinestore.cch.com](http://www.onlinestore.cch.com)

## New England Yearly Meeting Feedback Combined

During June and July 2018, as part of NEYM Secretary's Service Review, several constituencies were asked for feedback. The data gathered included members of the following groups::

- NEYM Staff
- Coordinating and Advisory Committee
- Elders of NEYM
- Committee Clerks
- Permanent Board
- Other Active Friends
- Local Meetings Clerks
- Liaison Organizations such as NYYM, FUM, et al

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Over seventy people were contacted to either participate in an interview or to share their feedback by email. Forty people responded. Several of the questions concerned NEYM as a whole.

1. What do you think is needed for New England Yearly Meeting Friends to thrive given our five goal areas of
  - Spiritual Development & Religious Education
  - Outreach, Welcome, Inclusion & Witness
  - Relationship & Communication
  - Leadership & Administration
  - Stewardship, Integrity & Accountability
2. How do you think the Quaker movement in New England is doing? How is it changing Positively?
3. Where are we struggling?
4. If you could change anything about NEYM as a whole, what would it be?

The following is a compilation of direct quotes answering these overarching questions about NEYM. They were provided by individuals from all the above groups to these overarching questions about NEYM. Themes have not been identified, nor have the answers been sorted to reflect similarity, however, their content is very powerful as C&A begins to think about the priorities for the next year.

**1. What do you think is needed for New England Yearly Meeting Friends to thrive given our five goal areas of:**

- **Spiritual Development & Religious Education**
  - **Outreach, Welcome, Inclusion & Witness**
  - **Relationship & Communication**
  - **Leadership & Administration**
  - **Stewardship, Integrity & Accountability**
- 
- Do more to help the world know that we exist and what we believe in. This means an emphasis on outreach combined with clear expression of our values and beliefs.
  - Faithful listening to the guidance of the Spirit. Friends responding whole-heartedly to their leadings.
  - Support for leadings both with support committees and financial support to release a Friend to pursue their leading.
    - A Friend from another yearly meeting lately expressed bafflement that we don't do more support and release of Friends in this manner. She said "we tithe". When someone has a clear leading for ministry we say "what do you need to help this happen?"
  - The five goals: not sure that all Friends and Monthly Meetings have them on their radar. So what is the missing piece?
  - Re-prioritize focus on the necessary inward, lonely spiritual work of individuals, in order to faithfully tune in to the "still small voice", especially to strengthen the willingness to follow it when it seems to be leading one away from "the crowd."
  - We have an outstanding job developing RE curriculum for our young Friends. We need a curriculum for adult RE. Gather resources from other Friends organizations and make them available to the MM's.
  - We are engaging in witness but not identifying ourselves as Quakers. WE need bling: baseball hats, t-shirts, banner for public witness. YM should provide graphic files to MM's and be able to assist with their use upon request.
  - Getting more people involved in some way.
  - Do a better job of outreach. Ad in the newspaper?
  - None of the goals will thrive until we bring back the unfettered spiritual ardor that (youth) can bring albeit with the wisdom of deep spiritual searching and discernment by all the generations.
  - One day programs
  - Spiritual development always needed.
  - Communications needs to find ways to reach people who do not get emails.
  - Having a stronger culture of supporting ministers and ministry
  - Investing in helping our children transition into adulthood
  - Making sure we are preparing people for the committee work we are asking them to do. Giving Guidance.
  - Board development of the Permanent Board
  - Back to worship on the local level
  - Inter-visitations local level – strengthens all five goal areas.

- Consider paying ministers or paying staff to do what ideally would be done by volunteers
  - To accomplish any of the goals with the depth and focus required, the YM must be sure to assign specific and measurable tasks to people who are being paid to manage the work, and to manage and engage volunteers. Project management and volunteer management are serious work and when done well, they do not diminish the gifts entrusted to individuals in the YM but serve to liberate those gifts and support them.
- Retaining young Friends as Quakers. Doesn't matter if they leave NE. Retaining them as Quakers is important.
- Working on a ministry of welcoming. Happy to have them.
- We are really welcoming to anyone who believes anything: doesn't invite anyone.
- More involved people. Better ways to get more people involved.
- Some kind of effort to make clerking roles less scary. That those who take on the roles are honored for doing it.
- Tension between professional staff and volunteers. Feedback for Volunteer leaders would be good.
- Stewardship and Accountability: Saying no to more stuff, not trying to do too much.
- How to care about the whole by setting good boundaries with individuals. How to be open and honest versus passive aggressive. How to be kind not nice.
- Communication: our new web site is really important. Lot of issue for people Not being able to access.
- Religious Education: in every case when there is good ministry happening, it transcends and speaks to people. If there is a person who every time they speak they are moving the people and draws them in, we need to acknowledge the gifts and celebrate/acknowledge what is already true.
- An institutional structure that does not absorb us: spending all of our time focusing on the institution. If the institution is not demanding our time, then the Secretary needs to pay attention to the communication, administration and accountability. Tension empowering volunteers to do wonderful work (transformative work) and the staff making it happen because of less volunteer time.
- To keep this institution healthy, creating space of friends to be faithful. A clear understanding of what we are inviting people to.
- Outreach and bringing other people in ...but we can't talk about that until we can be open to fluffernutter instead of quinoa
- We need to laugh together more, celebrate more. We need to begin with seeds of hope not pain. People seek us out because we are celebratory.
- More explicit outreach
- Need a vision of what the YM can accomplish
- 5 goals are the right things to focus on especially coupled with the mission statement of serving and supporting monthly meetings. To thrive we need to underline the goals and priorities, need to ensure what we do is aligned with the goals.
- Need more resources, more staff! Can do it bootstrapping but it takes time and demands relentless focus and difficult choice making.

- The GS position focused on building the administrative and leadership development infrastructure that supports others doing the work and witness rooted in worship.
- We need all the goals to thrive. They are so interrelated. Must have them all.
- In many ways NEYM is already thriving. We are living in a national and global period of enormous instability, inequity, wastefulness, and divisiveness and Friends messages and skills in building consensus, modeling simplicity, living with integrity, dwelling in the light, are important resource for the work before us. Many friends are taking leadership in this work within the Society of Friends and beyond. Noah himself has modeled what it means to be a public friend in this way.
- Availability of weekend programs around New England. On topics such as ministry and spiritual growth are really a great way to broaden Spiritual Development and Religious Education
- It is important to find the bridges to understanding of both our current and our historical experience. I really appreciate the plenary speakers over the past couple of years who have brought in voices beyond Quakerism to open us to further explore witness.
- Stewardship, Integrity & Accountability. NEYM must continue to develop ways to communicate and pull in participation of local meetings and committees. I feel challenged at times regarding how mechanics such as budgets etc. work – where and when do I need to be sure that the voice of the committee will be effectively heard and when is our discernment needed .
- We have to find ways to be as public as possible about our witness on important issues today. Faith in Action committee a good idea.
- More youth. Better communications in the channels that youth understand
- Listen to youth and families
- More participation, more fresh faces, more engagement and ways to engage
- Counteract individualism. Talk about the deep why of Quakerism. What are we reaching towards? We expect to be guided as we have emerging revelation!  
Supporting people's ministry. Doing business meetings more spiritually
- We don't meet the spiritual and religious educational needs of the younger ones.
- Religious education support
- Need leaders who set goals
- Leaders who step back reflect, worship and see the wider area. Prioritize and delegate. Messaging the changes that we make, sharing the intentions and why we are doing it, a willingness to experiment without certainty and be clear about the end point – what it is and make changes along the way.
- More discernment about when change is urgent, when it can be gradual: Gender, race, inclusivity, sense of urgency is really important to keep people coming back.
- Cross pollination instead of silos at the staff team level. The stronger the team, the less Noah must be the conduit. Establish a robust enough system that could intercept more on the way to Noah.
- More money. Recover from the financial crash a few years ago. Get donations up to the former level.
- Share the five goals from NEYM and let the Local meetings pick two they want to work on.

## New England Yearly Meeting Feedback Combined

- To discover the fire and the passion about our faith that makes us bold. When you know something is right and you are willing to fight for it. We are too timid. Passion is what helps people go beyond fear.
- Make it easier to see what is going on at the permanent board. The web site is complicated and doesn't help. Don't have a sense that input is welcome from the monthly meetings.
- What can we do so that the Yearly Meeting is felt as a daily presence and influence in the life of the Monthly Meetings

## 2. How do you think the Quaker movement in New England is doing? How is it changing Positively?

- There is tremendous positive energy and leadership among our younger adults. This was clearly evident at Sessions last year, which was one of the best one I've attended.
- The pay as lead model is a very positive change.
- How is it We are being uplifted and often positively elderd by our young adults: we are trying hard to be receptive to that passionate urgency.
- Quite well. Will always be people worried about the numbers and greying Friends. We have done an excellent job of developing and supporting youth programs. Friends camp is an excellent outreach vehicle.
- More visible than we used to be. Between letters from Noah and Fritz. Read every word of his letter on Sessions even though I am busy
- Don't feel like we have grown.
- Looking honestly and compassionately at issues especially racism.
- Think we are growing. See positive change in ministries released by Legacy gifts. We are more willing to do outreach.
- Amazing but then thinking about laying down local meetings. A particularly autocratic person has driven everyone away.
- Maine Friends visibility is rising with Friends being arrested in very important ways.
- Things in general are well ordered . Organization is healthy.
- Confronting white supremacy, more recent efforts to enliven and liberate ministry. \
- The depth of Christian rootedness that is also hospitable to others who are beyond naming God.
- More youthful vigor than we have had in many years
- Engaged more with activism and partnership with other groups
- Trending up! We are doing more! Making decisions faster.
- Continuing to be introspective and self-critical.
- Purposes and procedures Review process last year was enormously helpful in forcing us to look at how we're structured, what we do, why we do it, and make changes. Having the willingness to change things has enormous symbolic power.
- Glad to see young people rise into leadership. There has been an increasing willingness to experiment with forms- the organization of our staff structures, stop holding committee day, replacing some committees with other looser network structures building capacity to respond to events more swiftly, developing long range planning and budgeting practices. There are risks...openness to reinvention is itself a mark of vitality.
- Nationally the numbers and funds seem to be dwindling. Not sure if this is the case in NE but think we have shown creativity and leadership in responding to this dwindling.
- There is energy! How are we doing at keeping people pulled in? Love the newsletter. Lots going on! XX
- Hearts are catching fire!
- A lot changing! Trying new approaches, Working with Young Friends.
- Loving the energy, the increase in trust, the different people involved in many ways, the different collections of collaboration. Very hopeful!

- Always proud of what NE is doing. Open to new ways, new definitions and visions of what Quakers do. Examples:
  - Christina Keefe Perry's new worship group half programmed, a new time, specifically Christian but with a kind of programming that is loose, joyful, eating together.
  - Pastor's retreat open to anybody in a monthly meeting who felt that they were eldering or pastoring. Breaking down the barriers between programmed and non-programmed.
- Excited about challenging white supremacy! Work needs to be done urgently. Where change is needed, make a change in a timely fashion.
- 
- We may be the wealthiest Yearly meeting on the planet and we can do more to support Quakerism. What is at stake is the whole.
- Train others who are not Quaker. Come to a training, meet friends, then come to meeting
- We have forward motion. We are doing much better as an organization. We are communicating. Inter-visitation is important.
- We do well fostering a small community of those who hear about us on their own and chose to come to sit and work with us. There is much in our roots that says we need to stay close to that...but we need a critical mass to survive.



### 3. Where are we struggling?

- Freeing people for ministry. We have such deep distrust of paid staff and work.
- As a body, we sometimes fall into a malaise born of our privilege that can show up as clinging to a status quo with the excuse that it is not spiritual to “rock the boat.”
- Social witness and activism. Laying down NEYM peace and Social Concerns committee was hard but necessary. Nothing has taken its place.
- Weak clerking on committees. Develop a mechanism to evaluate our volunteer clerks and permits their removal when they cannot fulfill their responsibilities.
- So much to do, feeling overwhelmed and it is all so important.
- Making transition to the next generation – to people Noah’s age. Seem to be young friends but their presence doesn’t seem to impress upon me.
- We seem unable to speak with one spiritual voice.
- Bringing people in (past initial stages of interest) to continuous and ongoing engagement. Engaging those monthly meetings who only attend MM. Sharing across MM
- Our young friends are crumbling. If we want younger people involved we have to involve non-retirees.
- We are undisciplined in how we do business. WE get bogged down in Yearly meeting.
  - People talk about their own personal feeling.
  - Presentations not readable. Need people who are presenting to come early and get some feedback. What is our strategy? What is our end goal?
- There is a difference between facilitating and clerking.
- We have some really dysfunctional committees: ? two committees with parallel charges?
  - Should further collapse the number of committees.
  - Don’t know how to deal with conflict
- How to draw the line with bullies? How can we work on conflict, if we are conflict adverse? X Meeting didn’t have enough structure and training to notice it, recognize it and to handle it.
- Yearly meeting can’t prop up the quarter. How to offer more intense support for meetings.
- Worry about the impact of the baby boomers who have strong theological views based on what is NOT embraced. What is their baggage doing to the unfolding of the Quaker tradition?
- Structure: holding ourselves to a higher discipline.
- Make space outside of business to take care of each other and not use business to get our person needs met.
- Worry that we can have too many committees both locally and at the NEYM level. Committees can suck the life out of you. Any way to have less but focus on inward and outward work?
- Have YM volunteers take responsibility for cultivation, solicitation, and get some adult programming regarding faith and money off the ground.
- How to grow our meetings...attract young families with a real ministry of welcome. Everyone needs to be welcoming. Everyone goes over and has long conversations. Let us teach you what we are doing here...that we are very excited about
- Seeing there are some mental health issues in our community: when should we be calling in experts? If people aren’t capable of engaging in a committee process?

- We are struggling with not struggling. We are not acknowledging the struggle in the world if we are not struggling.
- Don't think that people have a common idea of what Quakerism is about and what it should be. Large part of NEYM are new and haven't understood the basics.
- We pay attention to problems and give them more power than they should have. If we paid attention to our gifts and struggles, they might become part of our defining experiences. If we are a community that loves one another then we to (meet people where they are and still love them).
- Always acting from the first principle of loving each other (we get frustrated with slower processes of discernment). Shouldn't feel like a burden or frustration
- We get distracted or sidelined by particular individual needs; small pieces of discomfort
- When we feel isolated and alone. When we feel we don't have enough people in our meetings.
- How to balance flexibility with being alive to NOW.
- We are taking a serious look at white privilege and racism, climate change work ... not easy but we are confronting that.
- Public statement from time to time. Very happy about that.
- Not sure about the numbers?
- We are taking risks that others are not taking. We are willing to trust each other more than if we were falling back on our structures. Visitor from another meeting observed several years ago: "it seems like you all really love each other." That is part of our resilience in the face of scary change. Our love for each other being held in that greater love.
- We are really listening to what monthly meetings are saying.
- Really wonderful stuff going on in New England – a lot to celebrate; Genuine passion
- Administrative and structural changes are amazing. They will enable spiritual growth.
- Being honest about what is working and what is not.
- Providing talking points to the community to carry back to the local meetings.
- Committees struggle – volunteers and staff don't have time
- To keep people engaged. Need to reaffirm our values, to let people know we are there and then make the experience one they want to be a part of. Have ways for them to participate at different levels of engagement.
- Small groups, far flung. How to be supportive without being threatening. What if we offered to support the Vassalboro Quarterly meetings?
- How to bridge intergenerational gaps and make people feel safe no matter what age.
- Too much stagnation in leadership over time. Some meetings same leaders for 20 years. need to help younger people who haven't been in leadership.
- Be clear enough in the roots of our tradition. Make a clear and specific invitation to join the Quaker path. Administrative kinds of things. Nominating struggles, committees that struggle, Lack of time, lack of sharing. Records not good. Information not good.
- Trying to be perfect. The perfect is the enemy of good. We can't stop doing out reach until we figure out how to be perfect. Need to invite friends to join us. We could be talking about a spiritual life.

- Gap between people who are on board and people who are not. The ship has gotten off the rocks with a ton of people on it. More people on the boat looking back at those who are still on the shore. We are trying to pull people in.
- We are struggling with honesty and being real about talking about the hard things in a tender way. Getting better at it but still struggling.
- It is a huge step to say we need a plan. Now we are at the next step of moving forward toward that plan and letting go of some priorities.
- How to be acceptable to a broader audience especially people new the quaker world.
- Is a week-long event (Sessions) the best method for engaging everyone or meeting all of our goals?
- Monthly meeting level. Want young people but when they return they are not recognized. That is the greeter's job.
- Recognition that the two-year old's gurgling and laughing are part of worship too, it isn't keeping you from worship. Need to open (our hearts/minds) to the different ways of being a Quaker, pastored, Christ and/or Bible based.
- We have invisible boundaries. Sometimes people don't say things because what they think is un-Quakerly. We don't talk about what those invisible boundaries are. What is our relationship with spirit? We are not comfortable with conflict. We need to create spaces to have those conversations (about what needs to fall away and what needs to be added).
- Continuing to struggle with Racism, White supremacy, Climate Change, Sexuality and Sexual identification.
- We struggle when we fail to live our faith as a Movement. There are times and issues when the possibility of living our faith like a movement intensifies and in those cases we can lose our spiritual focus.
- We also struggle under the weight of our own busy ness. The ways that we don't stop (more than our needs) create the more serious instance to grow in the spirit and as a blessed community.

#### 4. If you could change anything about NEYM as a whole, what would it be?

- That Friends would EXPECT to be astonished by Grace and would place their trust and their efforts in the expectation that Grace is always surrounding and upholding us waiting for us to cooperate with it and invite it into the world.
- Better ice cream at Castleton
- More people in the monthly meetings would get involved and see the benefit of the YM. Reports back are always heard with interest but they don't get involved.
- Bring back the spirit and vitality of the Valiant 60 for one year.
- Find ways to appeal to a more diverse group of people. Be less white.
- Maybe we could find a way to share the development of religious education with more yearly meetings.
- More money, more people, a process for getting there – it has to be organic.
- Continued bravery and faith. We have it and keep living into it.
- Broaden the social make up of the membership. More business owners, more line employees: the top and the bottom are missing.
- Would like us to be less corrupted by our culture, less bound by where we come from. There is life in our form That we are comfortable being the people we are called to be.
- That there would be a constant slow trickle of new comers. That people heard about us and joined us.
- Increased outreach /marketing
- Hire more staff to keep moving in the direction of sophistication...so that things that are routine, get out of the way.
- Larger more vital monthly meetings more tightly tied to the Yearly Meeting.
- NEYM would play a more central role in justice movements in New England. Historical Quakers were so radical! The work is wrapped up in spiritual deepening and the friends that change and justice.
- Be more alive in spirit. Bolder engagement with the (outside) world. The more we send love outside the Meeting House, the more love happens in the meeting.
- We would be more religious. Upset that some meetings removed all the Bibles because they were not relevant. Upset that some hold that we should not talk about Jesus Christ.
- Give 15 minutes more to your Meeting Community each week. What would that do to our communities if we put in a little more time, got to know each other a little bit more.
- Wish that there was less bickering. That we felt like we were all moving in the same range of relationship. Wish we had the feeling that "we really can figure this out." The meetings don't trust the yearly meeting. Is it because of our history of following our own guides or is it something else?
- That we wouldn't be afraid of new experiences, new people, expanding the size of meetings... it holds us back.
- Wish we had more conviction that we were going to prioritize ourselves and hold ourselves accountable. Staff is bending over backwards to fill gaps of volunteers not following through. We treat Volunteers like children who need us to pick up all their toys.

## New England Yearly Meeting Feedback Combined

- That every person who worships in a monthly meeting understands that we are all NEYM and that their gifts are needed (to keep the Quaker Movement vital)
- Laugh a lot more often so that we can make mistakes. We can't move forward without taking risks. Boldness is missing.

# Areas of Focus

*NEYM Secretary*

*October 2018-September 2019*

**Foundation:** Spiritual nourishment, prayer practice, relationship, exercise, retreats & recreation. Work 5 days/week. Sabbath on Monday, flexible additional day, with periodic multi-day time away. Personal time (including some full weekends) scheduled in advance. Mid-December weekend retreat. Work with staff team to facilitate more shared vision of the work, improve collaboration and coordination, and increase space for initiative and growth. With staff and C&A support, free Noah to focus on the work below. Integrate invitation and attention to challenging white supremacy and fostering racial justice in each area of focus.

## **1. Lead Development Program**

- a. Raise money to support ministry, to meet FY2019 income goals and beyond
- b. Help New England Friends transform our spiritual relationship with money
- c. Nurture relationships as the grounding for all of our work

## **2. Coordinate Funding Priorities Process**

- a. Support C&A discernment, ensure consultation, present to PB, connect with budget process, present to Sessions, evaluate to inform FY2020 funding priorities process and beyond

## **3. Support Volunteer Service Empowerment**

- a. Supporting response to charge to PB on support for clerks
  - i. Focus on resources available to support volunteer service
- b. Promote inclusion, remove barriers to participation, starting with barriers relating to age/life stage/family responsibilities, economic status, race
  - i. Childcare and support for families with young children
- c. Support mentoring, leadership development and training
- d. Increase capacity to name & nurture gifts
- e. Ensure staff integration and support of nominating functions, streamlining and clarifying processes

## **4. Foster Religious Education**

- a. Support and participate in conversation about ensuring high-quality, consistent religious education curriculum, teachers, resources, events
- b. Help local meetings connect with Friends active in public ministry
- c. Discernment and learning about needs/new directions in youth and adult spiritual formation, outreach, and meeting renewal

## **5. Expand and Improve Communications**

- a. Develop and launch new website
- b. Create data/privacy policy; improve quality and use of database to support engagement, publicity, coordination
- c. Continue to increase engagement, awareness through email newsletter, brochure, event publicity, etc.
- d. Experiment with increasing Secretary digital ministry presence; connecting travel in ministry outside NEYM with NEYM Friends (Cuba, Ireland)
- e. Integrate, support other 4 areas of focus

*Approved by Coordinating & Advisory Committee 8/26/2018*

*Revised by nm 11/1/2018*

Framingham Friends Meeting  
841 Edmands Road  
Framingham, MA 01701

January 20, 2019

Sara Gant, Clerk, NEYM Permanent Board  
Em McManamy, Co-Clerk, Puente de Amigos Committee  
Maggie Fogarty, Co-Clerk, Puente de Amigos Committee

Dear Friends,

On January 20, 2019, Framingham Friends Meeting found Chris Miller clear to travel on the 2019 Spring work trip of the Puente de Amigos Committee to Puerto Padre, Cuba.

Chris met with a Framingham Friends Clearness Committee comprised of Stacey Lancaster, Melissa Foster, and John Robinson on November 28, 2018 to explore his leading to travel to Cuba on this trip. Chris works in building construction and is active on the building maintenance committee of Framingham Friends. He is currently an attender of the Meeting but plans to seek membership. He has had lifelong connections with Friends through attendance at both a Quaker boarding school and college.

After worship and discussion, the Clearness Committee discerned that Chris Miller's leading is genuine and will enable him to use his construction expertise to assist the Puerto Padre Meeting in Cuba.

The Clearness Committee brought its report to Framingham Friends Meeting's Ministry and Counsel Committee on January 13, 2019, and it in turn recommended to the January 20, 2019 Meeting for Business that Chris have the Meeting's approval for travel.

Sincerely yours,

Morgan Wilson, Clerk  
Framingham Friends Meeting

cc: Cynthia Ganung, Wellesley Monthly Meeting

Framingham Friends Meeting  
841 Edmands Road  
Framingham, MA 01701

January 20, 2019

Sara Gant, Clerk, NEYM Permanent Board  
Em McManamy, Co-Clerk, Puente de Amigos Committee  
Maggie Fogarty, Co-Clerk, Puente de Amigos Committee

Dear Friends,

On January 20, 2019, Framingham Friends Meeting found Felice Lopez clear to travel on the 2019 Spring work trip of the Puente de Amigos Committee to Puerto Padre, Cuba.

On November 27, 2019 Felice met with a clearness committee comprised of Julie Heagney, Richard Lindo and Lee Miller for Felice to explore her leading to travel on this trip. Felice is a long-time Member of the Meeting who is currently serving on the Care and Community Committee and who has worked with young Friends at New England Yearly Meeting.

The clearness committee was particularly struck by Felice's leading to connect with young people in Cuba and to participate in singing and dancing as a form of worship which, though it is less common in New England, finds a resonance in her. Felice was comfortable with the theological differences between Cuban and New England Quakers as well, feeling at home with both programmed and unprogrammed Friends, believing that our spiritual bonds transcend these differences. There was also a discussion of the protocol for behavior of New England Friends who travel to Cuba, and Felice was in accord with respecting these expectations. In all, their sense was that Felice will make a joyful, deeply spiritual addition to the travel group.

The Clearness Committee brought its report to Framingham Friends Meeting's Ministry and Counsel Committee on January 13, 2019, and it in turn recommended to the January 20, 2019 Meeting for Business that Felice have the Meeting's approval for travel.

Sincerely yours,

Morgan Wilson, Clerk  
Framingham Friends Meeting

cc: Cynthia Ganung, Wellesley Monthly Meeting