

**WE BEGIN WITH GRATITUDE**

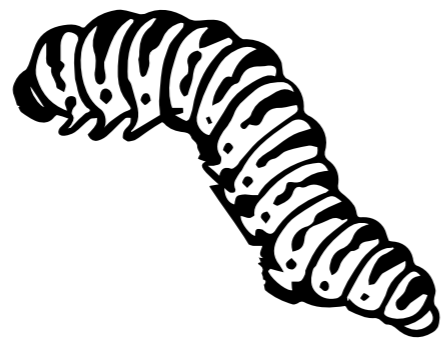
---

**Thank you**

# WHAT WE'RE SHARING TODAY

---

1. How we got here
2. What we heard
3. What we're recommending



# SOME PREVIOUS WORK

---

*Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good...*

*...For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ...*

*...The eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."...If one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.*

(1 Corinthians 12: 1-26, excerpted)



# OUR CHARGE

---

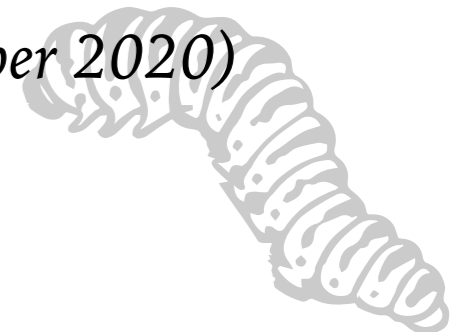
*Created by Permanent Board at the direction of Sessions 2019, in response to the recommendations of the Clerking Practices and Structures Working Group*

*Approved charge of the working group:*

*“to explore where and how support for ministry and spiritual life currently happens among New England Friends and offer recommendations for structures, practices and leadership roles that would best serve the current needs of Friends.” (based on NEYM Minute 2019-46, approved at a joint meeting of Permanent Board and Ministry & Counsel, 9/2019)*

*Accountability:*

*Recommendations shared with Ministry & Counsel, and to be presented to the Permanent Board for consideration and action (originally in May 2020, revised to October 2020)*

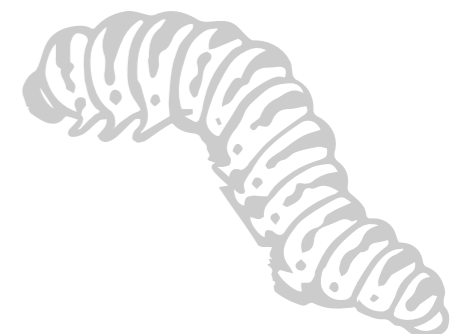


# OUR PROCESS

---

## *Grounded in...*

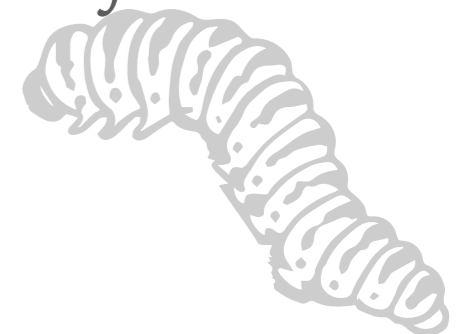
- *...worship and prayer*
- *...direct experience of working group members*
- *...learning from previous work: reports, minutes, role descriptions, Faith and Practice, other writings*
- *...listening: focus groups, informal consultation—the experiences, suggestions, and reflections shared inspired and shaped our work*



# HOW WE FOCUSED OUR ATTENTION

.....  
Consistent with our charge, we focused on the *particular role of the Yearly Meeting*—as an organization—asking:

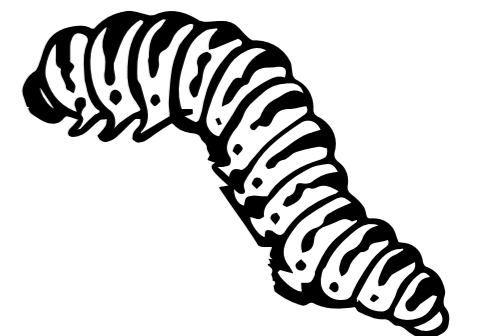
- *How can the Yearly Meeting support local meetings in nurturing those called to ministry and eldership?*
- *What can the Yearly Meeting in particular help to happen, that local meetings can't do alone?*
- *Where might the Yearly Meeting contribute, as part of the wider “ecosystem” of support for ministry, eldership, and spiritual life?*



# WHAT WE HEARD: OUR CONDITION

---

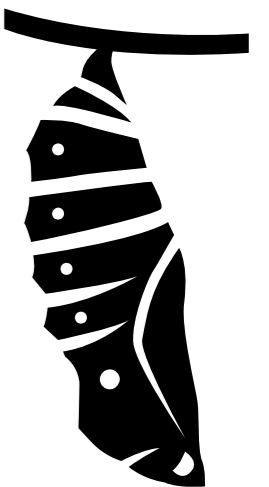
yearning  
devotion  
grief



# WHAT WE HEARD: AN AFFIRMATION

---

change is needed





# WHAT WE HEARD: LOCAL, LOCAL, LOCAL

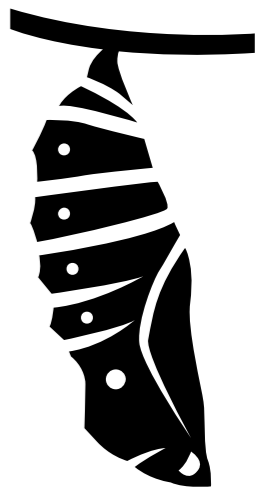
---

Meetings often struggle to recognize that people are gifted in different ways, and need different kinds of nurture for those gifts

Meetings need help to strengthen their capacity to more fully include and support the diversity of Friends identities, experiences, and kinds of gifts

**AND**

Local meetings have an essential role to play in the sustainable and fruitful nurture of ministry

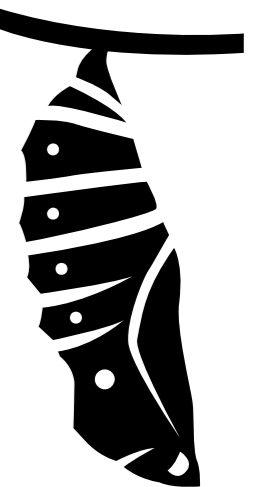


# WHAT WE HEARD

---

We're trying to do too much

In trying to do it all,  
we lose focus and grounding

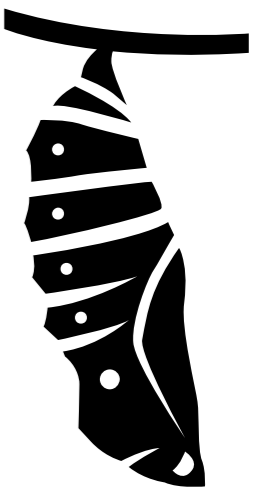


# WHAT WE HEARD

---

We need to foster a *cultural* shift

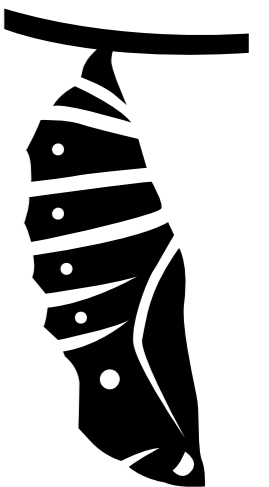
We can create new “tools” in  
response to needs as we go



# WHAT WE HEARD: THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER

---

*1* Practice—*not* “*perfect*”

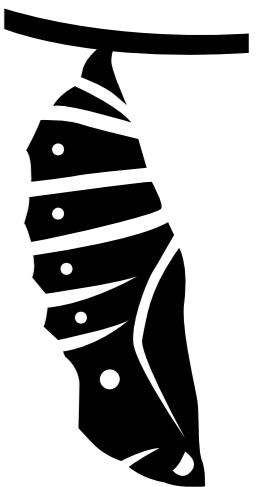


# WHAT WE HEARD: THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER

---

2 *It's about nurturing gifts  
—naming is not enough*

*gifts of preaching and teaching  
are especially needed now*

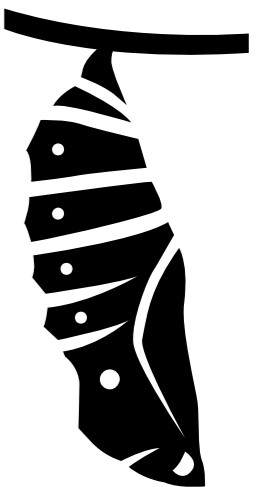


# WHAT WE HEARD: THREE THINGS TO REMEMBER

---

3

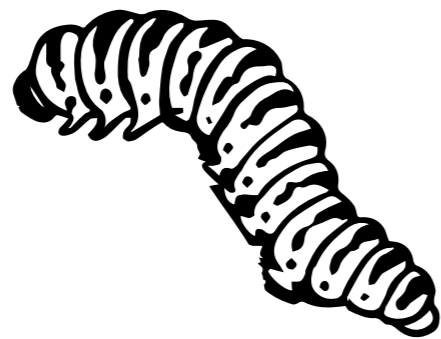
*Focus on the fruits*



# WHAT WE HEARD

---

allow the transformation  
to unfold in God's time—  
the important thing is to  
*begin*



# WHAT WE HEARD: A VISION OF THRIVING

---

If we were successful, what might thriving ministers, elders, and the spiritual life of local meetings look like?

What evidence would we see that our work has been fruitful?





# WHAT WE HEARD: A VISION OF THRIVING

---



# OBSTACLES TO THIS VISION BEING REALIZED

---

- *some meetings are unable, unwilling, or resistant to name, nurture, and hold accountable those called to ministry*
- *distractions from nurturing ministry, eldership, and spiritual life*
- *conversations about nurturing ministry are often **abstract**, rather than grounded in practical needs and present experiences*
- *Ministry & Counsel has been **overburdened** by administration and unnecessary responsibilities*



## OUR RECOMMENDATION

---

# Open Space for New Life

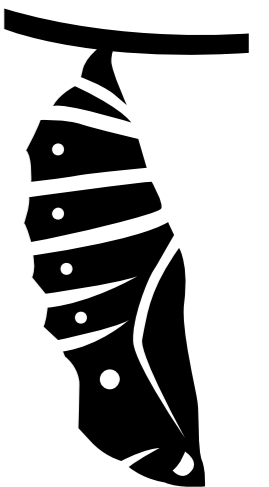
*“Meetings for Ministry and Spiritual Life”*

# MEETINGS FOR MINISTRY & SPIRITUAL LIFE

---

## *What would change?*

- “a *meeting*, not a *committee*”
- host seasonal gatherings of Friends (autumn, winter, spring)
- welcome those currently serving on M&C *and* new participants—no formal appointment necessary
- release those participating from administrative burdens and formal decision-making

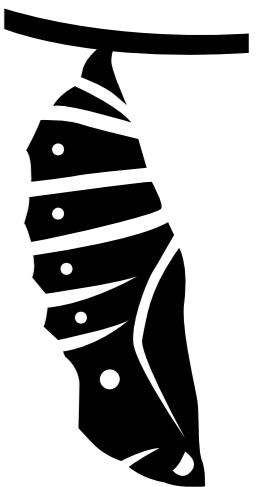


# MEETINGS FOR MINISTRY & SPIRITUAL LIFE

---

## *What would we do at these meetings?*

- worship together
- hold space for those actively engaged in ministry and its nurture, especially in local meetings
- nurture relationships
- reflect on the current practice of ministry, the work of elders, and the spiritual life of local meetings
- honor the challenges of this work
- share upcoming opportunities to nurture ministry and spiritual life
- celebrate how Friends are experimenting, building capacity, and being faithful

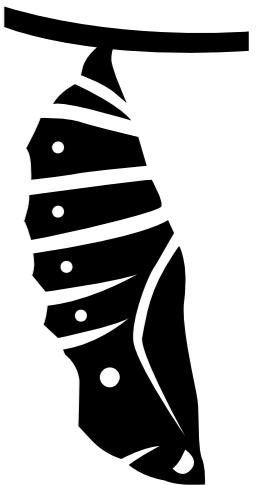


# MEETINGS FOR MINISTRY & SPIRITUAL LIFE

---

## *How would this happen?*

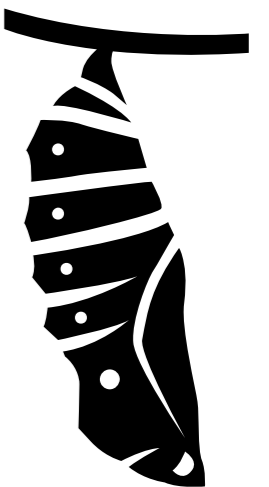
- Meetings would be hosted by the interim clerk of Ministry & Counsel, supported by a group of Friends who together would “set the table” for these meetings
- The group of 5-6 “hosts” would be nominated and approved by the Permanent Board, based on their having demonstrated the gifts and experience needed to ensure this work is carried forward with intention, consistent with the vision offered here
- The fruits of the experiment would be reflected on after each gathering, regular reports would be offered to Permanent Board and to Sessions, and the practice would be reconsidered in 2022



# BUT WAIT! HOW WILL WE...

---

- *...care for worship at Annual Sessions?*
- *...support Yearly Meeting-wide discernment on weighty concerns?*
- *...respond to pastoral care concerns in local meetings?*

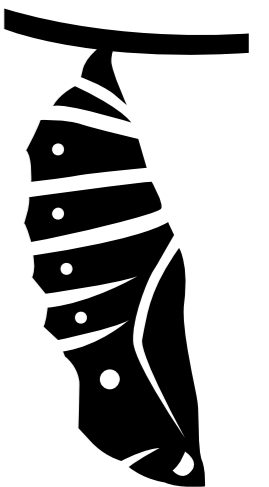


# HOW WE COULD...

---

## *...care for worship at Annual Sessions*

- *continue: During planning for Sessions, the interim clerk of M&C, YM secretary, the Sessions clerk, and others would consult to ensure vital roles are filled*
- *A new role of worship coordinator for Sessions planning, would focus on care of worship, elders for speakers, care for “sacred space”, and supporting Friends holding the memorial meeting*





# HOW WE COULD...

---

## *...support Yearly Meeting-wide discernment*

- *continue: appoint “resource groups” to support and shepherd MM, QM discernment, under the care of Permanent Board, with integration, partnership, and support from staff and volunteer leadership*
  - *e.g. Right Relationship Resource Group*

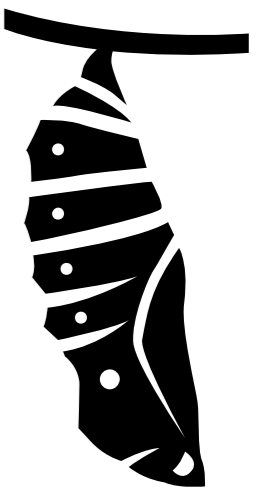


# HOW WE COULD...

---

*...respond to pastoral care concerns from local meetings*

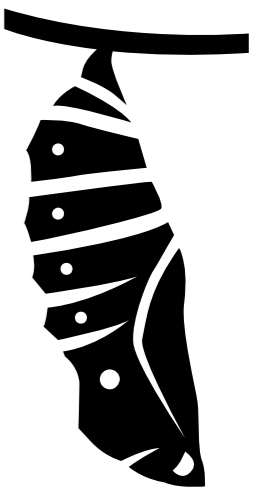
- *continue: pastoral care coordinator and team at Annual Sessions*
- *continue: pastoral care resource people, in partnership with interim M&C clerk, secretary, presiding clerk*
- *continue: peer circles of support for Friends engaged in this service in local meetings*



# WHAT ABOUT THE CURRENT FORM OF MINISTRY & COUNSEL?

---

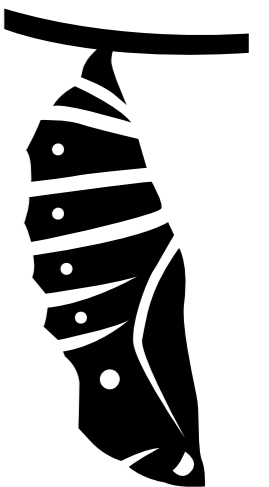
- During this experiment, the current structure of the Committee on Ministry & Counsel would be set aside, with an update to Sessions 2021, and discernment about next steps in 2022
- Local meetings would be encouraged to send Friends to the Meetings on Ministry & Spiritual Life, but not asked to appoint formal representatives for the time being
- The Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee would also refrain from appointing members-at-large
- Friends currently serving as part of M&C would be encouraged to participate in these meetings, and invited to related service according to their gifts (Sessions, pastoral care, etc.)



# NEXT STEPS

---

- A “hosting group”, approved by Permanent Board based on a wide call for nominations of Friends who demonstrate the needed gifts, would work with the interim Clerk of Ministry & Counsel to “set the table” for a first gathering in keeping with the proposed vision
- If approved, a first Meeting on Ministry & Spiritual Life could be organized as soon as Spring 2021
- In keeping with the spirit of experimentation, reflections on the gatherings and their fruits would be collected and shared in an ongoing way—allowing for shared learning, celebration, and continuing discernment



**WE HOPE YOU HEARD**

---

**yearning**

**devotion**

**grief**

# WE HOPE YOU HEARD

---

Honor  
our traditions,  
Friends with *AND*  
many years  
of service

Welcome  
newcomers,  
Friends of  
younger  
generations

WE HOPE YOU HEARD

---


*we all have a part to play  
in nurturing ministry*



WE HOPE YOU HEARD

---

*There is a cost—  
both in choosing change, and  
in choosing not to change*





WE HOPE YOU HEARD


---

*there is a* focus



# WE HOPE YOU HEARD

---

- 
1. *we're part of a continuing journey*
  2. *we need cultural change*
  3. *we can practice and learn as we go*
  4. *let's begin—anew*

*What do you hear that you can affirm?*

*“I feel Life in...”*

*What questions do you have?*

*“Have you considered...?”*

*What concerns do you have?*

*“How will we...?”*