

WESTERN YEARLY MEETING OF FRIENDS

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WYM encourages, supports, and equips Meetings and individuals to grow and share their faith in Jesus Christ as we seek the will of God through Scripture and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, expressed in the Quaker tradition.

Western Yearly Meeting of Friends is excited to announce the search for a new Superintendent.

To help you discern your possible interest in this position, we have put together an honest, but bird's eye view, of Western Yearly Meeting of Friends and an *Invitation to Leadership* which outlines the kind of leader we seek, the kind of work we need, and what you can expect from us.

Our hope is that your spirit will be stirred by reading through this document and that you would be led to join us in this discernment process as a possible candidate for consideration.

A Brief Glimpse of Western Yearly Meeting

Western Yearly Meeting is comprised of 33 Quaker meetings in the western half of Indiana and Chicago. We are one of 40 yearly meetings that comprise Friends United Meeting, a diverse and global partnership of Quakers. The meetings of Western Yearly Meeting cover the theological and social spectrum—rural, suburban, and urban; traditional, progressive, and moderate. Some of our meetings are affluent, others face financial challenges. Most employ pastors, either full-time or part-time, a few do not. Regardless of form or circumstances, we are determined to cherish all our meetings.

Like many denominations in the United States, the past several decades has seen numerical decline in Western Yearly Meeting. The population shift from rural to urban and suburban, and the cultural waning of religious life and institutions have taken their toll on our yearly meeting. We have struggled to offer meaning and purpose in a post-religion culture. We have also experienced theological disagreements that have left some members feeling bruised and betrayed. We are determined to be agents of healing as we move forward.

Many of the leaders of our yearly meeting are advanced in years, and while we are grateful for the reservoir of knowledge available to us, we are determined to cultivate fresh and younger leaders, realizing the changes they suggest will undoubtedly lead to new ways of being the Church in a Quaker context. Because we love Christ's gospel of love and justice more than our personal comfort, we are determined to bring timeless truth in fresh ways. We are acutely aware that the business framework of our yearly meeting is often unwieldy, designed for a much larger community, and realize the need to be more nimble, responsive, and liberating. We know people do not become Quakers to serve on committees, so

the maintenance of our structure is not our chief priority. We want to help others discover what we have—the profound joy of Christ’s light and love, and the blessings of a vibrant family of faith.

While our challenges are considerable, we are not without advantages. Though some yearly meetings are financially weakened, we are blessed with resources through steady stewardship dating back to our founding in the 1850s. We confess that our fears have sometimes kept us from investing in ministry, and we seek to wisely and faithfully nurture new growth wherever God brings it, no matter the cost. We do not want to die with a full bank account.

We learn from our mistakes. When things do not work as we had hoped, we struggle to learn why, and resolve to do better. We are not indifferent. We are heavily invested in the well-being of our local meetings and the welfare of our yearly meeting and Friends United Meeting.

We realize no summary can convey every dimension of a community’s life, so welcome your questions as you consider partnering with us in service to our world.

Invitation to Leadership

We believe it is time to move Western Yearly Meeting of Friends into a new era with engaging leadership. To do that, we have developed the following synopsis of what we are looking for and the expectations we have for ourselves in making this a reality. These are inspiring times filled with exciting opportunities for growth and transformation. Might *you* be the leader we seek?

The Kind of Leader We Seek

Are you a person who is self-directed and self-disciplined, someone who appreciates the concerns of others, while still possessing a keen vision for the church’s duty?

- Not a blank slate upon whom the most insistent among us can impose their preferences.
- Someone who embodies our Quaker values of inclusion, justice, mutuality, and spiritual growth.
- A person who leads with intelligence and insight, who does not scorn tradition, but neither is enslaved by it.
- One not intimidated by theological differences or strong opinions, who doesn’t manipulate events or circumstances to achieve their purposes, and
- One who is transparent, honest, authentic, and straightforward.
- An individual whom others delight in being with, admire, trust, and enjoy.
- Someone who knows when it is best to hold our hands, and also, when it is best to hold our hands to the fire.
- A leader who is pastoral and prophetic.

Are we describing you?

The Kind of Work We Need: Our Core Expectations

When thinking about the expectations of this position, might you have the desire, vision, and ways of implementation for:

- Promoting and encouraging wider monthly meeting participation.
- Guiding and organizing daily operations.
- Helping develop a vision for our future.
- Shepherding, nurturing and challenging our pastors.
- Cultivating a keen sense of stewardship.
- Utilizing clear communication practices, while employing the most current technology.
- Assisting in hiring strong personnel and overseeing their work.
- Promoting a robust Quaker witness to today's world.
- Fostering the promotion of new leaders and pastors.
- Modeling leadership that is healthy, compassionate, energetic, joyful, and hopeful.

Our Leader Can Expect These Things From Us

Even though we know that there is no perfect situation and at times mistakes will be made, we believe it is necessary to commit to you these expectations for this position:

- Expect to have sufficient time to be with your family and friends.
- Expect a clear chain of oversight, so you are not directed to do different tasks by different people.
- Expect to not be bullied, intimidated, made to feel inferior or unsafe.
- Expect to earn enough money so you are liberated to minister with us, free of financial anxiety.
- Expect us to assist in your spiritual, intellectual, and emotional growth and well-being.
- Expect us to provide clear and measurable objectives so your ministry can be fairly evaluated.

Are you up to this challenge? Is the Spirit stirring in you after reading this synopsis? If so, we would love to speak with you.

For more information, please contact Bob Henry, Clerk of the Western Yearly Meeting Leadership Search Committee at bobhenry@indyfriends.org.

Sincerely,

The Western Yearly Meeting Search Committee