

## New England Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice Revision Committee

To Monthly Meeting Clerks  
October 2021

Dear Friends,

We invite your meeting to review the next draft chapter for our new book of *Faith and Practice*, a chapter on Ministry and Counsel. We are asking your monthly meeting, or your Ministry and Counsel, to give us feedback. What needs clarification? Is anything missing? Are there things your meeting does in a significantly different way? What do you like or find helpful about the draft chapter?

The committee has worked a whole year on discerning how to write this chapter in a way that emphasizes the significant substance of Ministry and Counsel topics, without constraining individual meetings to the same division of labor or the same committee names as other meetings. Our goal is to articulate each part of the work well and allow meetings to continue to move pieces of the work under different umbrellas as their needs indicate. For instance, some meetings do not have both Ministry and Counsel *and* Pastoral Care Committees, but others have both. We wrestled with how to write something that applies to all these meetings.

Thanks to your responses last year, we have worked hard to integrate the Pastoral Care chapter and the Ministry and Counsel chapter in new ways. You will find some of the pastoral care text you have seen before now moved to places in the Ministry and Counsel chapter. Since many meetings divide responsibilities for Pastoral Care and Ministry and Counsel in different ways, we have attempted to write on both topics by describing their functions, while not confining meetings to particular structures.

Now we need your engagement. We are trying to write a *Faith and Practice* that reflects NEYM as it is today, in a way that leaves space for spiritual renewal and fresh spiritual insight. Does this draft create space for you and your meeting to find the way forward together on difficult issues, to nurture the Spirit, and to build community? Do you have a story of your meeting's experience to share with us? Is there an additional extract you'd like to recommend because it has been helpful to your meeting? The more we hear from you, the more our new book of *Faith and Practice* will reflect the living faith and practice of New England Friends.

We appreciate feedback that reflects how the meeting as a community is responding to the text. Please highlight responses that are widely shared in your group. A number of monthly meetings have taken the time to write minutes that reflect the sense of the meeting concerning the draft. We encourage more of this feedback from the meeting as a body, or its M&C committee.

If you have questions, please contact the Committee through clerk Phebe McCosker:  
[fandp@neym.org](mailto:fandp@neym.org).

Sincerely,  
NEYM Faith & Practice Revision Committee

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Meeting Members: Our hope is that this draft chapter on Ministry & Counsel will give your meeting much food for thought, and that you will share your reflections with us. As it is a long chapter, we draw your attention to these specific spots that represent new ground for NEYM, but we welcome comments on other parts of the chapter, too.

1. **CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION:** What is your meeting's experience of transformation from conflict to understanding? Appendix 5D, "Conflict Transformation in the Meeting Community," is new for our book of Faith and Practice. Does this section capture the spiritual heart of the process? Are there sections of this discussion that need to be clarified? Has your meeting used these processes differently? What can you share with the F&P committee about this?
2. **THE MUTUAL AND COVENANT PROCESS OF CLEARNESS:** What is your meeting experience with clearness committees for membership, marriage, or support of a ministry? In paragraph 26 in the discussion of the clearness committee we write about the mutual and covenant relationship in the clearness process concerning membership, marriage and the support of a ministry. Does this discussion of the covenantal relationship resonate with your meeting's experience? Would your meeting articulate this differently?
3. **RECOGNIZING AND SUPPORTING LEADINGS AND MINISTRY:** Our 1985 F&P writes about recording of gifts in the ministry, and it is clear that the text is referring to gifts of vocal ministry. We have expanded this section with a broader coverage entitled "Recognizing and Nurturing Gifts, Leadings and Ministry," paragraphs 47-57. Appendices 5I and 5J describe the work of the care and accountability committee which supports the Friend and their work. Is this discussion sufficient to guide a meeting in this work? Are there sections that need to be more fully developed in regards specifically to Ministry & Counsel's role in supporting ministry? (Keep in mind that there will be a full chapter on Gifts and Leadings to address it from other perspectives.)