

## Advance Documents — 2023 New England Yearly Meeting

# Be like a watered garden: open to grace, and loose the bonds of injustice

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Rebecca Leuchak, Presiding Clerk, New England Yearly Meeting  
*Providence, RI, Friends Meeting*

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### Welcome to New England Yearly Meeting's 363rd Annual Gathering of Friends from across Turtle Island and beyond!

On behalf of the Yearly Meeting, I want to welcome you here, joining us for this special event. Whether you are a first-time attender or someone who has been a part of our wider Quaker communities for years, we extend a warm and heartfelt welcome to each and every one of you.

This gathering is a unique opportunity for people from many walks of life to come together, share our experiences, and deepen our spiritual connection. It is a time for reflection, worship, learning, and building relationships with one another. We hope that during your time here, you will find inspiration, support, and a sense of belonging.

As Quakers, we value simplicity, equality, and community. We seek to live out our faith by listening for the “still small voice” within us and responding to the Divine Presence at work in others. This gathering is a chance to immerse ourselves in this Quaker way of life, to learn from one another, and to strengthen our collective commitment to lives that bear the fruits of peace, justice, and love.

Throughout the gathering, you will have the opportunity to participate in a variety of activities. We encourage you to attend the worship sessions, where we gather in waiting and expectation for divine guidance to move us. We also offer workshops and discussions on a wide range of topics, allowing for deeper exploration and engagement with our faith. We will have plenary presentations of music and poetry and storytelling and great wisdom, and a series of morning Bible-half-hour reflections. And each day we will discern the way forward in the business of our Yearly Meeting.

We seek to embrace diversity in many forms, and to respect each person's unique journey. But please remember that while our hope and intention is for our Quaker gathering to be truly inclusive and open to all, we also know we are imperfect. We aren't saying there will not sometimes be difficulties. But we seek to be the best we are able to be, and to acknowledge and learn from our missteps and correct our course. We hope you will join us in that journey. Feel free to reach out to your fellow attendees, ask questions, and engage in meaningful conversations. Our hope and intention is that this may be a place of grounded safety where you may share your stories, experiences, and insights.

In the spirit of community, we invite you to join Friends for meals, social events, and informal gatherings. These moments provide opportunities to connect on a personal level, forge new friendships, and strengthen the bonds of our Quaker family.

As we embark on this annual gathering together, let us embrace, and allow ourselves to be embraced by, the Spirit that moves in love, compassion, and understanding. Let us seek to listen deeply, speak truthfully, and act with integrity. May this gathering be a transformative experience for each one of us, leaving us inspired, refreshed, and ready to make a positive difference in the world.

Thank you for bringing your gifts and experience to our gathering. I look forward to journeying together with you in faith, fellowship, and spiritual growth.

Once again, welcome to this Quaker annual gathering. We are honored to have you here.

In Love and Light,  
Rebecca Leuchak, Presiding Clerk

## 2023 Sessions Business Agenda

### Saturday afternoon, August 5

#### 1:45–3:00 p.m.

- Opening Celebration
- Welcome
- Roll call
- Preview of the days ahead

#### 3:00–5:00 p.m.

- Worship; message from the Yearly Meeting Secretary
- Ministry and Counsel update and Spiritual Life Listening Group report
- Treasurer's report
- Finance Committee report and presentation of the Fiscal Year 2024 Budget
- Unity Agenda preview

### Sunday afternoon, August 6 (Hiroshima Day)

- FUM Delegates to Triennial presentation
- Israel Palestine Resource Group update
- No Way to Treat a Child Campaign endorsement
- Yearly Meeting Permanent Board report

### Sunday evening, August 6

- Reflections on leadings of Spirit in the realm of technology (David Coletta)
- Nominating Committee report
- Friends United Meeting delegates report on ongoing engagement
- Faith and Practice Revision Committee

### Monday morning, August 7

- Friends World Committee For Consultation report
- Quaker Indian Boarding Schools Research Working Group Report

### Monday afternoon, August 7

- Obadiah Brown Benevolent Fund reflections
- Legacy Gift Committee report
- Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee report
- Unity Agenda

### Tuesday morning, August 8

- Yearly Meeting staff reflections
- Fiscal Year 2024 Budget for approval

### Tuesday afternoon, August 8

- Message from Jorge Luis Peña Reyes, Presiding Clerk of Cuba Yearly Meeting
- Puente Committee report
- Reports from visitors to youth sessions
- Epistle first reading

### Wednesday morning, August 9

- Remaining business
- Report on Sessions
- Epistle final reading
- Epistles of youth groups and young adult Friends
- Presiding Clerk closing thoughts
- Closing worship

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## Elders serving to support ministry at Sessions this year

In Friends tradition, an Elder supports, encourages, and challenges the minister and helps them to be faithful. During preparation and during our week together, these individuals are holding and grounding specific Friends in their work and ministry.

**Elders for Noah Merrill:** Julia Forsythe, John Leppman, Viv Woodland, Sarah Gant, Penelope Wright

**Elders for Rebecca Leuchak:** Deana Chase, Mark Conley, Evan McManamy

**Elders for Emma Condori Mamani:** Beth Collea, Minga Claggett-Borne, Jonathan Vogel-Borne, Benigno Sanchez Eppler

**Elders for Anna Fritz:** Susan Davies, Jay O'Hara, Julie Peyton

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## DRAFT Schedule 2023 Annual Sessions – Be Like a Watered Garden, Open to Grace and Loose the Bonds of Injustice

	Friday 8/4	Saturday 8/5	Sunday 8/6	Monday 8/7	Tuesday 8/8	Wednesday 8/9
6:30 to noon			6:30–7 Early Morning Worship	6:45–8:30 Breakfast		
		8:00–11:00 Check-in	9:00 All-Ages Worship*	8:30 Bible Half Hour*	8:30 Bible Half Hour*	8:30 Bible Half Hour*
		9:00 Bible Half Hour*	10:30 Bible Half Hour* 10:30–noon Check-in	9:15–11:15 Meeting for Business*	9:15–11:15 Meeting for Business*	9:15 Meeting for Business* 10:15 Final closing, youth epistles, and celebration*
		10:00–11:30 Workshops/Reflection Groups				
				11:15–12:45 Lunch		
Noon to 3:00		12:45 Obadiah Brown Ice Cream Social 1:00–4:00 Check-in 1:45 Opening Celebration*	1:15 Plenary*	1:15–2:45 Memorial Meeting* Reflection Groups/ Free Time/Workshops	1:15–2:45 Reflection Groups/Free Time/Workshops	All dorms must be vacated
3:00 to 7:00	3:00–5:30 Check-in	3:00–5:00 Meeting for Business*	3:00–5:00 Meeting for Business*	3:00–5:00 Meeting for Business*	3:00–5:00 Meeting for Business*	
			5:00–6:30 Dinner			
			6:00–6:30 Vespers			
7:00 to 10:00	7:00–10:00 Check-in 7:00 Dorm parties, ingathering snacks	7:00 Concert with Anna Fritz*	7:00 Meeting for Business*	7:00 Block Party and Contra Dance Workshops/Interest Groups	7:00 Coffee House* Workshops/Interest Groups	

Items marked with \* will be hybrid events held in the Casella Theater (Fine Arts Center)

Bookstores: Jeffords

General and Family Bookstore hours will be posted in the Yearly Meeting News

Locations of other events will be posted in the Yearly Meeting News

# Campus Map

**Welcome to  
New England Yearly Meeting 2023  
Castleton University, VT**

**Upon arrival  
look for signs  
directing you  
to parking**

**Register in  
the Fine Arts  
Center**  
• Registration  
• Info Desk

**P** Free parking permits  
allow YM attendees to  
park in any lot.



**To Castleton, VT**

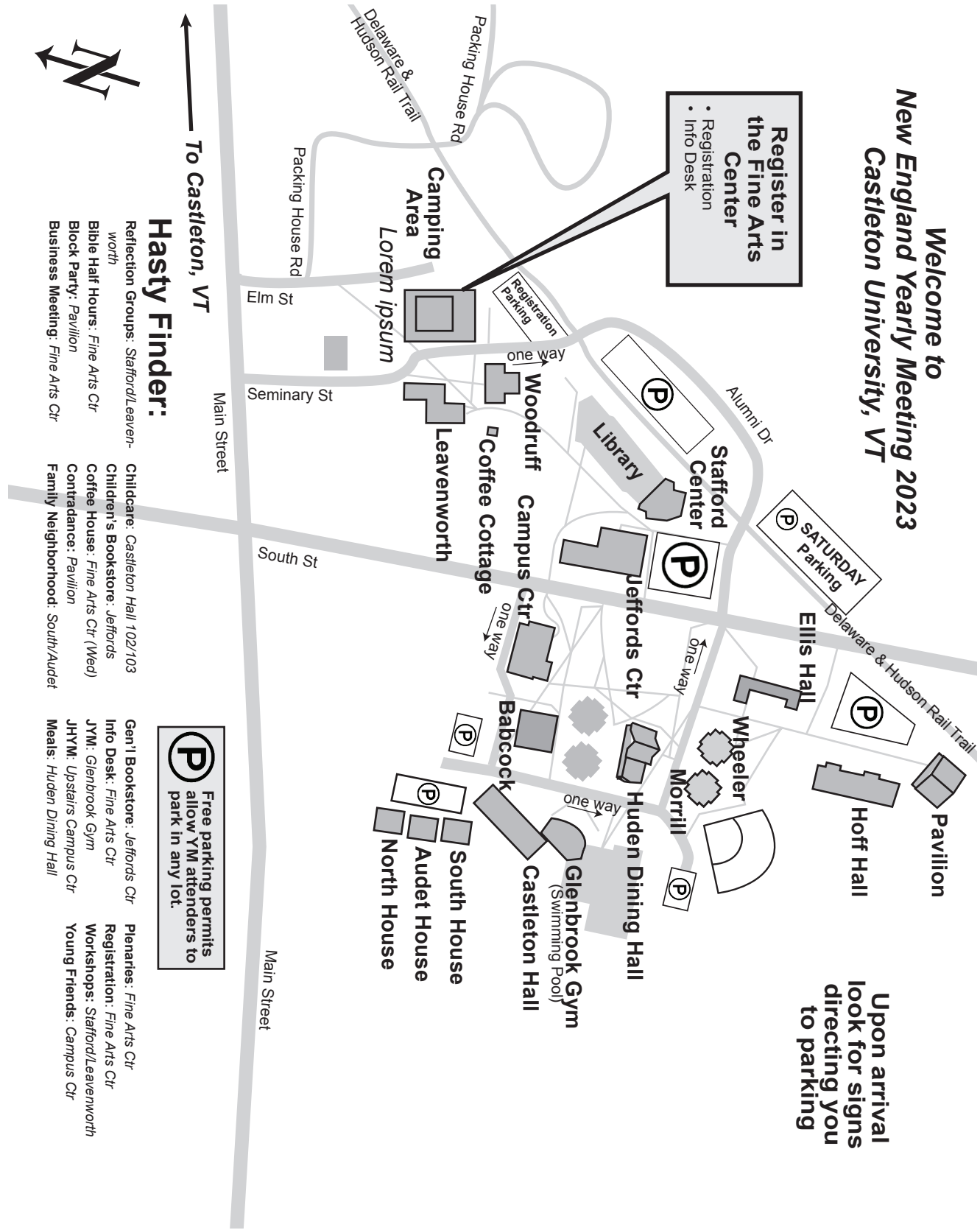
## Hasty Finder:

- Reflection Groups: *Stafford/Leavenworth*
- Bible Half Hours: *Fine Arts Ctr*
- Block Party: *Pavilion*
- Business Meeting: *Fine Arts Ctr*

- Childcare: *Castleton Hall 102/103*
- Children's Bookstore: *Jeffords*
- Coffee House: *Fine Arts Ctr (Wed)*
- Conradance: *Pavilion*
- Family Neighborhood: *South/Audet*

- Gen'l Bookstore: *Jeffords Ctr*
- Info Desk: *Fine Arts Ctr*
- JYM: *Glenbrook Gym*
- JHYM: *Upstairs Campus Ctr*
- Meals: *Huden Dining Hall*

- Plenaries: *Fine Arts Ctr*
- Registration: *Fine Arts Ctr*
- Workshops: *Stafford/Leavenworth*
- Young Friends: *Campus Ctr*



## 2023 Sessions Coordinators, Officers, Speakers and YM Staff

Accounts Manager	Frederick Martin*
Bible Half Hour Speaker	Emma Condori Mamani
Children & Family Ministries Coordinator	Kara Price*
Clerks	Rebecca Leuchak (presiding), Megan Jensen and Susannah McCandless (recording), Adam Kohrman and Michelle Wright (reading)
COVID Safety Coordinator	Ginny Kristl
Events Coordinator	Elizabeth Hacala*
Resource Group Coordinator	Fran Brokaw
Office Manager	Sara Hubner*
Office Assistant	Maille Wooten
Hybrid Experience Coordinator	Kathleen Wooten
Pastoral Care Team Leader	Abigail Matchette
Plenary Musician	Anna Fritz
Plenary Speakers	Joseph and Jesse Bruchac
Sessions Committee Clerk	Phillip Veatch
Tech Team Coordinator	David Coletta
Yearly Meeting Treasurer	Robert Murray
Worship Coordinator	Kristina Keefe-Perry
Yearly Meeting News Editor	Liz Yeats
Yearly Meeting Secretary	Noah Merrill*

\* = YM Staff

## 2023 Youth Program Coordinators and Staff

### Child Care

**Coord:** Rainer Humphries  
 Abigail Adams  
 Darien Brimage  
 Jerry Carson  
 Peter Colby  
 Chloë Grubbs-Saleem  
 Chris Jorgensen  
 JJ Smith

### Junior Yearly Meeting

**Coord:** MacKenzie Burpee  
 Beth Bussiere-Nichols  
 Brad Bussiere-Nichols  
 Luke Coletta  
 Rebecca Edwards  
 Newell Isbell Shinn  
 Sophie Jones  
 Leah Kelley  
 Cynthia Rankin

Joli Reynolds

Martha Schwoppe  
 Blair Tatman

### Junior High Yearly Meeting

**Coord:** Lilly Campbell  
 Anne Anderson  
 Buddy Baker-Smith  
 Gretchen Baker-Smith  
 Stephen Ball  
 Dave Baxter  
 Merritt Bussiere-Nichols  
 Celadry Humphries

### Young Friends

**Coord:** Drew Chasse  
 Hilary Burgin  
 Emily Edwards  
 Wendy Schlotterbeck

## Guide to Business at Yearly Meeting Sessions

NEYM Sessions are larger than our other experiences of discernment, and again we will be hybrid, so a few reminders may help us proceed gracefully.

We encourage Friends who are joining us online to become familiar with Zoom before Sessions; you can find an instruction video on the Yearly Meeting website at <https://neym.org/zoom-how-tos>.

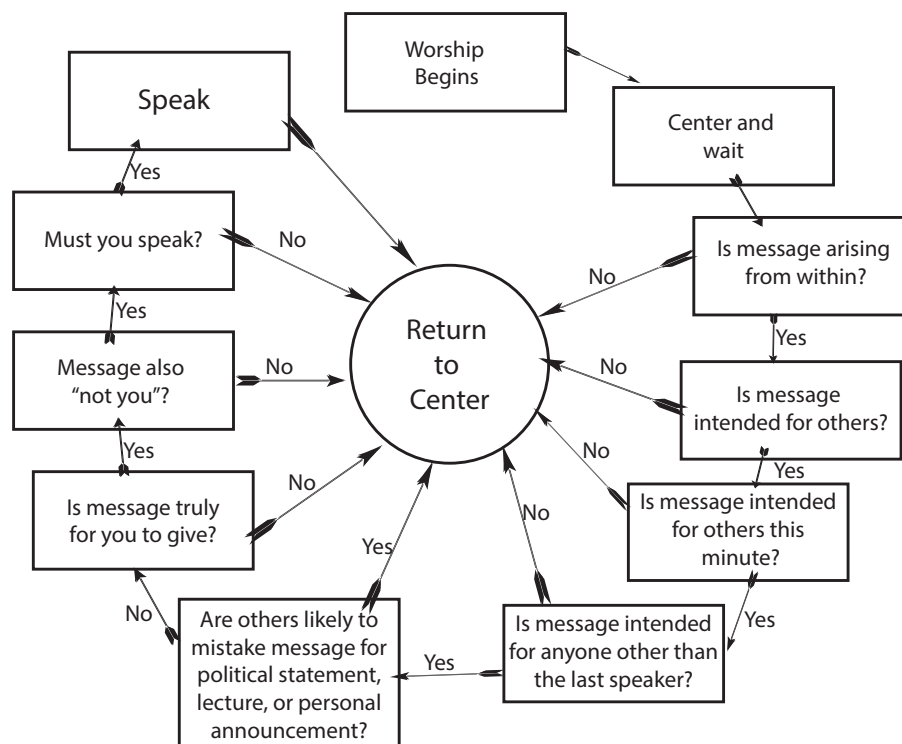
The physical room and the Zoom “room” will open for worship about 15 minutes early. Friends are asked to enter silently, to confirm that you are muted if you are on Zoom, and to sit in worship with the Friends gathered.

### Worship with a concern for business:

- The Spirit may speak through a less familiar voice if our oft-heard Friends refrain from the urge to speak too quickly.
- The order of business items is subject to change, depending on the Holy Spirit and Friends’ self-discipline.
- We seek not compromise nor a grumbling “well, OK,” but clarity on what God calls us to do here and now, knowing that we may be led later to some further action, understanding, and love.
- Please look for text being presented. If it was ready by press time, look in these Advance Documents. Otherwise, it will be displayed on screen
- The doors to the physical room will be closed to late-comers for 5 to 10 minutes while Friends settle into worship. Please wait quietly outside the plenary room. Please silence your cellphone. If you are on Zoom, please silence your cellphone, landline, and any other potential disruptions.
- For those joining worship with a concern for business in person:
  - Enter quietly!
  - Sit toward the front and center of the hall.
  - Leave room on the ends of the rows for late arrivals.
  - Reserve the wheelchair-accessible space for those who need it.

### During worship with a concern for business:

- Stand (or raise your hand high) to be recognized. Use “Raise Hand” in Zoom (on the Reactions menu) to be recognized (on the phone, press \*9).
- Remember that the clerk does not always call on people in the order in which their hands appeared.
- When the clerk has called on you, wait for the wireless microphone to come to you. For those on Zoom, unmute yourself (on the phone, \*6).
- Say your name and meeting.
- Speak slowly and briefly, limiting your remarks to the question at hand.
- For those in person, please be seated while someone else is speaking. For those on Zoom, consider lowering your hand—the person speaking may address your concern.
- Ordinarily a person should speak only once to an item of business, unless to answer a direct question or to signal a significant change of heart.
- If you are a Friend who does not speak easily, be bold if called. Your leading may be the way the Spirit has chosen to speak to us.
- Please do not try to argue the clerks (or anyone else) into your position.
- While the clerks are trying to formulate a minute, help by holding them in prayer. Remember that the minute will rarely be worded precisely as you would have said it.



## Unity Agenda

The items on the Unity Agenda are proposed for consideration on Monday afternoon. Before then, Friends are encouraged to familiarize themselves with the Unity Agenda, to read the information pertaining to each item, and to consult with the Friends named for each matter, if need be. General questions can be brought to the presiding clerk, Rebecca Leuchak. If there are significant concerns that remain, items can be removed from the Unity Agenda for further corporate discernment earlier in the week.

<b>Decisions and Actions Concerning...</b>	<b>See</b>	<b>Friends Available for Consultation</b>
Accepting staff reports	page 23	Staff
Accepting board, committee, working & resource groups, and representative reports	page 30	Report authors
Accepting Memorial Minutes	booklet	Leslie Manning, Permanent Board clerk
Approving nominations from YM Nominating Committee	page 19	Jackie Stillwell, Nominating clerk
Approving bank resolutions	page 11	Scot Drysdale, Finance clerk
Approving revised Purposes, Procedures & Composition	page 12	Leslie Manning, Permanent Board clerk
Approving clerks' authorization to make edits and corrections	page 12	Rebecca Leuchak, presiding clerk

## 2023 Sessions Business Materials for Gathered Discernment

### Welcome Friends

New England Yearly Meeting gathers this summer for the 363rd consecutive year. Our theme this year: “Be like a watered garden: open to grace, and loose the bonds of injustice,” describes the interconnectedness of grace and transforming justice.

The theme urges us to have faith in the nurturing and activating power of God’s grace. Being open to that Grace is a daily practice that roots us in Love as we listen to the Inward Teacher and to the Beloved Community. Grace moves us, beyond our flaws and hesitations, to break the cycles of injustice in our world. Transforming injustice in the world begins with this repair and revival of relationships, especially toward persons we have regarded as “Other.” Consider Nature, the Stranger, (so-called) Enemies, and anyone we treat as Them/Not-Us. We hope this theme serves as a path of spiritual renewal, a prayer of action, and a promise of continual revelation.

These Advance Documents contain reports from the committees, working groups, quarters, representatives, and staff sharing the good work that they have done since we met last August. The reports provide much of the context for the business before us this week. They deserve close attention.

I invite us into this work in this spirit. During these five days while we are together, we are invited to share our experiences, our joys, our concerns, and our understanding of how we are called to God’s work in this world at this time.

It is such a joy to be together again!

—REBECCA LEUCHAK (PROVIDENCE, RI, FRIENDS MEETING),  
PRESIDING CLERK, NEW ENGLAND YEARLY MEETING

### Progress Report to Annual Sessions on Yearly Meeting Support for Ministry, Eldership, and Spiritual Life of Local Meetings

#### Introduction

In 2022, Sessions approved a set of recommendations for next steps arising from recent years’ ongoing listening and experimentation in how the Yearly Meeting supports ministry, eldership, and the spiritual life of local meetings. The updates below include the title only for the approved recommendations. The full report and approved recommendations to Sessions 2022, including further context on the process in recent years, can be accessed here: [https://neym.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/Ministry%20%26%20Spiritual%20Life\\_%20Report%20%26%20Recs%20for%20Sessions%202022\\_as%20approved\\_0.pdf](https://neym.org/sites/default/files/2023-07/Ministry%20%26%20Spiritual%20Life_%20Report%20%26%20Recs%20for%20Sessions%202022_as%20approved_0.pdf).

This is a report and reflection on progress in implementing these recommendations in the past year, organized in the order of the approved recommendations. Consistent with guidance from Sessions in approving these steps, this report is being offered by Friends charged to constellate a “spiritual life listening group,” consisting of the clerk of Ministry & Counsel, the clerk of the Permanent Board, the clerk of the Meeting Accompaniment Group, the Yearly Meeting Secretary, and the Program Director. The Presiding Clerk also made meaningful contributions to these efforts. For questions, suggestions, or comments about this report, please contact Carl Williams, clerk of Ministry & Counsel at [mc-clerk@neym.org](mailto:mc-clerk@neym.org).

#### Updates

Each of these activities represents initial steps in what are intended to be multi-year and ongoing practices or processes, and so while much work has begun, we know these efforts will



continue to unfold, and learning will continue, in the coming months and years.

#### 1. Gather a small body to accompany and support local meetings

The Meeting Accompaniment Group, a nominated group with a charge approved by Sessions, was formed in the fall of 2022 and has met regularly since that time. It has responded to requests and accompaniment from more than 15 local meetings, and the group is deepening its cohesion and understanding of its work. Sarah Gant (Beacon Hill) clerks this group, and can be reached at [accompaniment@neym.org](mailto:accompaniment@neym.org).

#### 2. Hold an annual “meeting for listening” for the Life in local meetings

In June 2023, Friends from across New England and beyond gathered for the first Meeting for Listening, organized by the Program Director, clerk of Ministry & Counsel, and clerk of the Meeting Accompaniment Group. Over 30 people from 27 local meetings participated, including on site at the Concord (NH) Friends meetinghouse, at remote sites at Midcoast (ME) and West Falmouth (MA) meetinghouses, and individually from several locations via Zoom. In worship, worship-sharing, in fellowship, and large and small group conversation, Friends considered the state of society and statistical reports received from local meetings in our region, and together looked and listened for how the themes emerging from these reflections could inform and align programmatic priorities for the work supported by the Yearly Meeting in the coming months.

#### 3. As a regular part of Permanent Board meetings and at Annual Sessions, host opportunities for the wider body of Friends in New England to learn about and celebrate Friends active in public ministry

Advance documents for Permanent Board meetings have included reports on travel minutes that have been endorsed by the Yearly Meeting, and the clerk of the Permanent Board has begun a process of outreach and invitation to Friends carrying travel minutes to report to future meetings of the Permanent Board. Sessions planning has included awareness of the ministries being carried by Friends in our region, with attention to how this service can be highlighted at Sessions.

#### 4. Offer regular opportunities for prayerful holding of the wider body of Friends in New England, for those led, and invite Friends to this discipline

The clerk of Ministry & Counsel and clerk of Meeting Accompaniment are working with the Office Manager to establish an email prayer list for distribution throughout the Yearly Meeting, to invite Friends into prayer for particular concerns in local meetings, for particular needs of Friends, and for wider concerns. The list will be under the overall care of the clerk of Ministry & Counsel. Information about initial guidelines, moderation, and use of this list is still in development as of this writing, but will be shared widely when it is available.

#### 5. The Yearly Meeting recognizes the expressed desire for opportunities for Friends serving in ministry and eldership to gather as led for “shop talk,” mentoring, mutual accountability, and learning

While this acknowledgment does not commit the Yearly Meeting to a leadership role in specific work, we want to recognize and lift up the emergence of some informal, organic opportunities corresponding with the desires expressed and affirmed above.

One set of opportunities have been hosted by Friends Brian Drayton (Souhegan) and Noah Merrill (Putney) under a concern for the nurture of Friends called to gospel ministry. Opportunities for these gatherings have been offered in January and July 2023, shared publicly through the Yearly Meeting and informally through word of mouth, with an invitation to all who carry a sustained concern for the exercise of Spirit-led vocal ministry in Friends tradition in our meetings for worship.

We also want to lift up another organic series of opportunities for extended worship, arising out of the leadings and experiences of Friends Michael Wajda (Bennington) and Jean Rosenberg (Middlebury). Several of these opportunities have been held since May 2022, and these Friends are committed to offering such opportunities every 2 to 4 months as long as their leading continues, in various locations throughout our region. While these opportunities are being publicized in a variety of ways, as word is shared they will also be publicized through the Yearly Meeting in the same way as the opportunities above.

#### 6. Increase awareness of (and as able, increase capacity to offer) formal programming to support adult religious education, spiritual formation, and training in Quaker practices and disciplines

Please refer to the Program Director’s report in these Advance Documents (**page 26**) for an extensive update on formal programming offered by the Yearly Meeting this year, including many activities responding to this charge.

In addition to the programmatic opportunities offered directly by the Yearly Meeting, a major focus of this effort has been increasing our capacity to communicate effectively about high-quality and relevant opportunities offered by local and quarterly meetings, individual Friends, and other Quaker organizations.

One glimpse of ministry we especially want to highlight, distinct from formal programming of the Yearly Meeting but reflecting the abundance and richness of gifts active among Friends rooted in the meetings of our region, is the “Elements of Quakerism” program for adult religious education created by Phil Fitz of Northampton Friends Meeting. Phil generously agreed to share a “show and tell” about his experience of carrying this ministry of religious education and spiritual formation with a monthly Zoom call hosted by the Yearly Meeting for Friends in servant leadership roles in their local meetings. The excitement and interest generated in part by this opportunity led to several more meetings embracing and experiencing the fruits of this vital ministry, deepening their individual and corporate spiritual life.

We want to close this section with an affirmation that the limiting factor in the Yearly Meeting’s support of further programming in these areas is not a lack of vision, or insufficient awareness of opportunities, needs, Friends carrying gifts, or exciting ideas. The primary limiting factor is simply the capacity of the Yearly Meeting—primarily but not exclusively through the Yearly Meeting staff—to invite, plan, support, organize, encourage, publicize, and carry out more programming of this kind. We hope that increasing our capacity to respond to expressed yearnings and needs in this area can be a priority for the Yearly Meeting going forward.

#### 7. The Yearly Meeting consider a searching review with attention to purpose, care, and oversight for quarterly meetings

While (as anticipated) previous commitments have meant that further steps toward such a searching review of quarterly meetings have not been taken in the past year, requests for

support from quarterly meetings, and awareness of the challenges and changing contexts in which quarterly meetings are seeking to function, have further made clear the need for this review.

Salem Quarter's request in fall 2022 to the Permanent Board, that the Permanent Board assume responsibility for the Quarter's core functions while Salem Quarter engaged in a "sabbatical" period, has offered further opportunities to observe and reflect on the essential functions of quarterly meetings, especially in their role, described in Faith and Practice, in caring for the life cycle of local meetings, for seasoning concerns and business arising from local meetings, and in ensuring care for gifts of ministry.

We hope that the Permanent Board and Coordinating & Advisory Committee will bring further attention to beginning this work in the coming year.

### Conclusion

In all of these steps, large and small, we have continued to sense the Spirit tenderly and palpably at work among New England Friends, inviting us into new forms, rhythms, and practices, and aiding us in reclaiming old ones. It is a blessing to steward the unfolding of our shared service, and to reflect it back to the wider body of the Yearly Meeting, as we learn and grow together.

Respectfully submitted,

SARAH GANT (BEACON HILL), CLERK OF THE MEETING ACCOMPANIMENT GROUP; LESLIE MANNING (DURHAM), CLERK OF THE PERMANENT BOARD; NOAH MERRILL (PUTNEY), YEARLY MEETING SECRETARY; NIADWYNWEN THOMAS (NORTHAMPTON), PROGRAM DIRECTOR; CARL WILLIAMS (PLAINFIELD), CLERK OF MINISTRY & COUNSEL; SERVING, AS CHARGED, AS THE SPIRITUAL LIFE LISTENING GROUP

### Treasurer's Report

In the fiscal year ending September 30, 2022 (FY22), expenses exceeded revenues, resulting in a shortfall of \$24,597.28 in the Operating Division (excludes Friends Camp). This was in line with the budgeted shortfall of \$26,757. We used our Operating Reserves to cover the shortfall.

Several occurrences that affected the FY22 results are not likely to reoccur together in the same year in the future. Our hybrid Annual Sessions in August 2022 brought in about half of the budgeted program fees; in-person retreats only began late in the fiscal year; and due to a staffing change, we paid both the departing staff member and the incoming staff member simultaneously for several months to facilitate a good transition. In addition, individual and monthly meeting contributions were below the level that the Finance Committee believed was possible when the FY2022 budget was developed in the spring of 2021.

At the end of the fiscal year, our Pooled Funds (invested with the Board of Managers) showed a decline in value of 19.38%. This was in line with the general decline in value of U.S. stock market investments during that period, and amounted to a decline in dollar value of \$385,817.29.

The Operating Reserves, calculated as the sum of Working Capital plus the Quasi-Endowment divided by the Expense Budget, declined from 29.39% in FY21 to 12.8% in FY22—below the policy set by the Finance Committee "to have an operating reserve equal to one quarter of the annual budget (3 months) at the beginning of each fiscal year." Part of the

reason for the drop in reserves was the market-based decline in the valuation of the Quasi-Endowment. (The Quasi-Endowment is a board-designated [not permanently restricted] fund that is invested with the Pooled Funds.)

That said, the Balance Sheet showed that the Yearly Meeting was not (and is not today) in financial peril. At the end of FY22, we had Board-Designated Funds of \$1,196,445.42. (This is mostly in the Legacy Gift funds.) While these funds are currently reserved by the Yearly Meeting for specific purposes, Sessions or the Permanent Board has the option of reallocating them to address current financial needs in an emergency situation.

The full set of FY22 closing reports are on the Yearly Meeting's website in the section Who We Are/How We're Doing/Financial Statements.

The most significant project I did this year, apart from the FY22 closing, was the funds recalculation and restatement project. This project was designed to correct calculation errors in the accounting entries of our Permanently Restricted and Board-Designated Funds. The Permanent Board approved making the proposed changes in February 2023. A full report on this project may be found in the Permanent Board minutes for that meeting.

I am confident about the mission and value of the Yearly Meeting and I ask you to join me in building and protecting the Yearly Meeting for future generations of Quakers in New England. I have been grateful for the opportunity to serve as your Treasurer.

ROBERT MURRAY

### Budget Commentary

Due to the drop in the stock market, the budget deficit last year, and other factors described in the Treasurer's Report, our reserves are only about 13% of our expenses rather than the recommended 25%. In dollar figures, our reserve balance dropped from \$226,000 to \$120,000. The Finance Committee decided to propose a conservative FY2024 budget to try to avoid further deficits, and we hope that we can increase our reserves.

Projected income estimates have been lowered. For several years we have budgeted our income somewhat optimistically, counting on outreach to individuals and meetings to meet our goals. When we wrote these budgets it seemed reasonable that giving could increase by a total of 10% over a several year period. Then COVID intervened. Instead of increasing, giving dropped. Our FY2024 estimated income from individuals is \$7,000 less than in our FY2023 budget, and the monthly meeting contribution estimates are \$31,000 less than in our FY2023 budget, to better reflect our current reality.

As reported elsewhere, Sessions ran a substantial deficit last summer. In the past, Sessions fees paid for direct expenses and for some of the staff time used to prepare for and run Sessions. Last summer the in-person attendance was about half of what had been projected, while fixed costs increased due to the additional staff and equipment needed for hybrid Sessions and COVID precautions. Remote attendance and fee waivers reduced the fees paid for Sessions. Free attendance for children proved to be very successful in restarting our youth programs, even though it (as expected) reduced income.

Sessions 2024 attendance and costs are unknown and challenging to project. At this point we do not even know where

we will meet, so cannot with confidence predict our costs. The FY2024 budget increases the suggested Sessions fees to match inflation over the last two years. We project that half of the people who attended via Zoom last year will come back in person as COVID fears lessen. There are also plans to cut expenses, so expense estimates have been lowered.

Staff expenses have increased by nearly \$100,000 over the last two years. About half of that is due to cost-of-living increases and 17% is due to increases in benefit costs. Staff hours have not increased, and we are not proposing reductions in staff. Supporting our staff so that they can support monthly meetings is one of the priorities that the Permanent Board gave us.

The stipend supporting volunteer leadership was maintained, as this is a priority given to us by the Permanent Board.

Staff and the Finance Committee looked for places to cut expenses. One was reducing the budget for Travel in the expectation that many committees would meet by Zoom at least part of the time, or would be hybrid. We considered many options, including having only in-person or only Zoom Sessions in 2024 and eliminating or reducing the size of the NEYM office in Worcester. In all, the FY2024 budget cut a total of \$62,500 from expenses in many areas. However, this was not enough to get us to a balanced budget. Therefore, the FY2024 budget also reduces Support of Other Organizations to zero for one year.

This drastic step reduces expenses of this proposed FY2024 budget by \$46,000. The Finance Committee was not happy with this decision. When we reported it to the Permanent Board, its members were very unhappy. We and they have a number of concerns, including the effect that loss of income will have on those organizations and how we will maintain relationships with other organizations if we do not donate to them. That said, we expect that members of NEYM will continue to engage with these other organizations in either appointed or volunteer roles, and that NEYM will continue to reimburse representatives' travel expenses.

Many members of the Permanent Board asked us to look at the question again, and to at least find a way to give small donations to the organizations that we usually support. The Budget Subcommittee of the Finance Committee met to consider the concern. The Subcommittee came up with the idea that by increasing the estimated income from Sessions we could put a few thousand dollars into the line for donations to other organizations.

However, the full committee did not accept that recommendation. The Finance Committee is concerned that the reserves at the end of this fiscal year may be substantially under \$120,000, even before we begin the FY2024 budget that we are now considering. The current year's budget spends \$30,000 from what were thought to be excess reserves at the time that the budget was approved, so even if this year's budget is accurate, our reserves will drop to \$90,000.

The current year's budget projections for this year's Sessions were based on pre-COVID attendance. While the staff have worked hard to reduce expenses for Sessions, if this year's attendance is like last year's attendance, we can expect to again lose money on Sessions. (I write this over a month before Sessions will meet, and by the time I make my report at Sessions we will have a better idea of Session income and expenses.)

In short, there is a great deal of uncertainty in both the accuracy of the FY2023 budget and the FY2024 estimates. Furthermore, even if we break even on both budgets, that will not increase our reserves back to the level that our policy recommends. We should be building reserves.

While budgeting a few thousand dollars for contributions to other organizations could be done if the Yearly Meeting decides that it is important enough, the question was raised, "Is there integrity in donating money that we do not have?" It was also observed that until a working group recommends to the Yearly Meeting which groups we should support and what part of our donations should go to each, we do not even know which organizations would receive that money.

In the end, the Finance Committee agreed to submit the budget with no money for donations to outside organizations for FY2024.

SCOT DRYSDALE, CLERK OF FINANCE

*The budget appears on page 16*

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### **Yearly Meeting Nominating Report**

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*The nominating slate appears on page 19*

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### **Unity Agenda Materials**

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#### **Bank Resolutions**

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The following resolutions are brought by the Finance Committee:

1. That Robert Murray be appointed New England Yearly Meeting Treasurer until a successor is appointed and qualified.
2. That Kate Thornburg Monahan be appointed Friends Camp Treasurer for the ensuing year or until a successor is appointed and qualified.
3. That Robert Murray, Yearly Meeting Treasurer; and Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting Secretary, be individually authorized to open and close bank accounts in the name of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends as needed.
4. That Kate Thornburg Monahan, Friends Camp Treasurer; Robert M. Spivey, Friends Camp Assistant Treasurer; and Anna Hopkins, Friends Camp Director, be individually authorized to open and close bank accounts in the name of Friends Camp as needed.
5. That Noah Merrill, Yearly Meeting Secretary; Robert Murray, NEYM Treasurer; and Rebecca Leuchak, Presiding Clerk; be designated as alternate signers, individually, of all bank accounts of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends.
6. That Anna Hopkins, Friends Camp Director; Kate Thornburg Monahan, Friends Camp Treasurer; Robert M. Spivey, Friends Camp Assistant Treasurer; Evelyn Kirby, Friends Camp Assistant Director and Acting Director for fall and winter; and Natalie Bornstein, Friends Camp Committee Clerk, be authorized, individually, as signers of the Friends Camp bank accounts.

## Revised Purposes, Procedures, & Composition Youth Ministries Committee

### Purpose

The Youth Ministries Committee serves to regularly engage in on-going listening across the Quaker youth ministries “landscape” in New England. Based on their listening, the Committee regularly identifies both the growing edges of Quaker youth ministry in New England and current needs related to the spiritual development of Quaker children, youth, and families. The Committee act as storytellers and advocates, sharing relevant takeaways from their listening with the wider Yearly Meeting.

The Youth Ministries Committee provides and encourages opportunities for connection which strengthen the web of relationships between meetings, ministries, and ministers serving children, youth, and families.

Annually, (or more frequently if needed), the Youth Ministries Committee reviews and, as needed, recommends revisions to NEYM’s Child Safety Policies.

In these ways, the Youth Ministries Committee plays an essential role in nurturing the faith life, spiritual growth, safety, and leadership of children and youth of New England Yearly Meeting. The work of this committee also helps to ensure the vitality, health, safety, and relevance of the youth programs offered by the organization of NEYM, as well as youth ministries offered within and across the web of local meetings in our region. This work happens in the context of both family and community, in same-age and in multi-generational groups.

It is the committee’s intent that New England Quakers’ youth ministries enable young people to grow into adulthood with a full sense of belonging to both a local circle of Friends and the Yearly Meeting as a whole. The committee encourages ministries which provide a foundation of Quaker faith and experience, fostering an active spiritual life.

### Procedures

- The committee is responsible for conducting an annual review of the NEYM Child Safety Policy and its implementation.
- As requested, the committee consults on the right ordering of administrative aspects of NEYM youth programs: health, safety and welfare of children; policy and procedures; and ethical and legal issues.
- The committee communicates to the broader Yearly Meeting about the needs of NEYM youth, families, and youth workers.
- The committee meets regularly, virtually or in person, as the needs of the committee dictate. The committee reports annually to Sessions on the health of the programs, status of the Child Safety Policy, and other issues in our care.
- For local meetings, the committee offers opportunities for connection and networking, and, as possible resources, collaboration, and guidance for the health and welfare of children; policy and procedures; ethical and legal issues; program design and curriculum; outreach.

### Composition

- Committee membership should reflect the diversity within the Yearly Meeting. Gifts that we seek for the

committee include skills in pastoral care for children and families, and skills in youth programs and youth work, including program evaluation and planning. Committee membership should include people with familiarity with the NEYM retreat programs.

- Members are named for 3-year terms, two people in each class for a total of six named members. Friends may be appointed for a second, consecutive 3-year term, after which they should take a year away from the work. Members are named by the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee.
- The youth ministry staff—Children and Families Ministries Coordinator, Teen Ministries Coordinator, the Program Director, and the Friends Camp Director—are ex-officio members of this committee. Because of the high level of staff participation in the work of this committee, YMC needs to remain mindful of the risks of over-burdening staff.
- Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee, in consultation with the committee members, names the clerk of Youth Ministries Committee. This nomination is approved by the Yearly Meeting. The Youth Ministries Committee coordinates with and has linkages to the Meeting Accompaniment Group, and Permanent Board.

### Minute to Authorize Edits and Corrections

Friends authorize the presiding, recording, and reading clerks to make and approve edits, clarifications, and corrections to the minutes of NEYM Sessions 2023.

## No Way to Treat a Child Endorsement

### VQM 2021-4-4: VQM Minute on the Mistreatment of Palestinian Children

Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting (VQM) joins with Midcoast Friends in endorsing the AFSC’s No Way to Treat a Child campaign. This is a particular expression of our shared concern for the safe and just treatment of children.

VQM is in unity with Midcoast Friends in requesting that New England Yearly Meeting endorse the AFSC No Way to Treat a Child campaign, and in urging support for Rep. Betty McCollum’s H.R. Bill 2590.

Exercised in heart and mind by these complicated and tender matters, Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting approves sending to NEYM both:

- a. Midcoast Minute on the Mistreatment of Palestinian Children; and
- b. VQM Additional Statement of Support for No Way to Treat a Child

**VQM 2021-4-4-a** Midcoast Minute on the Mistreatment of Palestinian Children

Suffer the little children to come unto me," Jesus said "... for of such is the kingdom of heaven. (Matthew 19:14)

Forty-five percent (45%) of the 2.9 million Palestinians who now live in the occupied West Bank are children

under the age of 18. Since 2000, more than 10,000 Palestinian children have been seized and held in harsh military detention by Israeli forces. They have been subjected to cruel and brutal treatment without recourse to lawyers or parents. Many are held for months or even years—often in solitary confinement—all in defiance of relevant international law and the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

The No Way to Treat a Child campaign is exposing the treatment of Palestinian youth and developing interventions to stop the abuse. The treatment of Palestinian children is known to include: “blindfolding, sleep deprivation, verbal abuse, threats, and physical and psychological violence that in some cases amounts to torture.” The DCIP found that of the estimated 10,000 children who have been detained by Israeli forces and held in Israeli military detention since 2000, among other abuses, 95% have been hand-tied, 86% blindfolded, 64% verbally abused or intimidated, and 96% interrogated without the presence of a family member. Israel is the only country in the world that systematically prosecutes children in military courts without fair trial rights and protections. Each year, 500-to-700 Palestinian children are tried through the Israeli military detention system. The UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) has denounced the Israel’s ill treatment of Palestinian children.

The No Way to Treat a Child campaign demands that the Israeli government ensure basic due process rights and prohibit torture and mistreatment of Palestinian children. The campaign also hopes to ensure that when children are arrested, procedures are carried out in accordance with international juvenile justice standards, as represented in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child. The campaign seeks to ensure that children are detained for the shortest time possible; not be subjected to physical or psychological violence; have access to legal counsel and their parents; and not be blindfolded. The practice of using solitary confinement on children in detention must be stopped immediately. We hope to inspire and motivate Israelis to improve Israel’s justice system and to end the occupation of Palestinians in Israel, the West Bank, and Gaza.

Our efforts are consistent with our Quaker abolitionists’ roots and the situation is as perilous as was slavery. Midcoast Monthly Meeting urges that Vassalboro Quarterly Meeting consider the urgency of the issues and endorse No Way to Treat a Child in timely fashion, so that the matter can be added to the agenda for Annual Sessions. It is our hope that, after due and prayerful reflection, New England Yearly Meeting will unite to endorse the campaign as well.

**VQM 2021-4-4-b:** VQM Additional Statement of Support for No Way to Treat a Child

VQM supports the safe and just treatment of all children.

VQM is “painfully aware that the United States contributes to physical and psychological harm to children, both in its domestic policies and practices, such as juvenile justice and immigration detention, and through its foreign military aid to countries that violate children’s rights.” (South Central Yearly Meeting 2021, Minute on No Way to Treat a Child)

VQM endorses the American Friends Service Committee’s No Way to Treat a Child Campaign. We recognize “the widespread and systematic ill-treatment of Palestinian children in the Israeli military detention system. ... We believe the United States government must use all available means to pressure relevant Israeli authorities to end the detention and abuse of Palestinian children.” (AFSC resources on No Way to Treat a Child)

VQM calls on Congress to pass House Bill H.R. 2590, introduced by Rep. Betty McCollum (D-MN-4). H.R.2590: Defending the Human Rights of Palestinian Children and Families Living Under Israeli Military Occupation Act.

VQM requests that New England Yearly Meeting endorse the AFSC No Way to Treat a Child campaign and Rep. Betty McCollum’s H.R. Bill 2590.

VASSALBORO QUARTERLY MEETING, APRIL 24, 2021

### Burlington MM Minute on the Military Imprisonment of Palestinian Children by Israel

Responding to the NEYM presiding clerk’s call that we “live into” New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) Minute 2017-46, Burlington Friends Meeting endorses American Friends Service Committee’s “No Way To Treat A Child” campaign in order to address the systematic ill treatment of Palestinian children under the age of 18 in the Israeli system of military detention.

Since 2000, AFSC reports that at least 10,000 Palestinian children have been detained by Israeli forces and held in military detention. Often arrested in their homes at night, they are bound, blindfolded, and taken by military vehicle for interrogation. The process includes verbal abuse, threats, and in three out of four cases, physical violence. They are denied legal counsel and the presence of their parents. Subsequent trials take place in military courts where half receive custodial sentences averaging three to twelve months; some serve up to three years.

This treatment of minors violates the United Nations 1990 Convention on the Rights of the Child—ratified by 194 countries, including Israel—that guarantees detainees: due process, the presumption of innocence, legal representation, and an impartial judicial process, “which reinforces the child’s respect for the human rights and fundamental freedoms of others and which take into account the child’s age.” (Article 40).

The “No Way to Treat a Child” campaign is endorsed by 24 human rights organizations including AFSC, and urges public support for U.S. House of Representatives 2407, a bill introduced by Representative McCollum, that would forbid the use of U.S. funds to “support the military detention, interrogation, abuse, or ill-treatment of children in violation of international humanitarian law.”

Burlington Monthly Meeting will begin “living into” NEYM Minute 2017-46 by working to build public support for H.R. 2407 as one of several possibilities for action. Realizing that a public voice on this matter is urgent and appropriate, we ask that NEYM’s presiding clerk and secretary issue a public statement of support for “No Way To Treat a Child” and specifically for H.R. 2407.

BURLINGTON FRIENDS MEETING, 9 FEBRUARY 2020

### Northwest Quarter Minute

2021-03-10 We recognize our own involvement in the incarceration of children and youth, most of them black and brown, here in the United States. Whether in prisons or cages for recent immigrants, this is no way to treat children. We ask New England Yearly Meeting to begin to join in this work.

Spirit leads Northwest Quarterly Meeting to ask New England Yearly Meeting to engage wholeheartedly with American Friends Service Committee's No Way to Treat a Child campaign "which seeks to challenge and end Israel's prolonged military occupation of Palestinians by exposing widespread and systematic ill-treatment of Palestinian children in the Israeli military detention system." This rights-based effort to halt ongoing infringement of children's human rights stems from Friends' belief that no child should be denied due process or tortured.

NEYM Minute 2019-36 urged monthly and quarterly meetings to live into Minute 2017-46, particularly as it applies to Gaza and the West Bank. Consequently, Northwest Quarter requests that New England Yearly Meeting embrace No Way to Treat a Child by calling upon Friends everywhere to endeavor to end these violations of children's human rights by:

- a. Learning how placing children in military prisons violates international law and impedes the right to a childhood;
- b. Talking with Members of Congress to co-sponsor the bill that replaces H.R. 2407 – "Promoting Human Rights for Palestinian Children Living Under the Israeli Military;
- c. Writing letters in local newspapers as one of many ways of How Quakers can join No Way to Treat a Child;
- d. Accompanying American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)—as led locally, nationally, and internationally—in that Quaker organization's effort to end "the Israeli occupation of Palestinians by exposing the systematic ill treatment of Palestinian children in Israeli military detention;"
- e. Connecting what Friends learn about settler colonialism, here in the States, transnationally with Israel Palestine.

—NORTHWEST QUARTERLY MEETING, MARCH 7, 2021

### Faith and Practice Revision Committee

We will consider a chapter on Ministry & Counsel for preliminary approval. Downloads of that chapter and draft texts are available online at [neym.org/fp-revision/documents-discussion](https://neym.org/fp-revision/documents-discussion).

### Report from the Boarding School Involvement Research Group

For nearly two centuries, federal policies promoted the forced removal of Indian children from their families and communities through boarding schools, foster care, and adoption. Those policies were a targeted attack on the existence of Tribes, and they inflicted trauma on children, families and communities that people continue to feel today." –Interior Secretary Deb Haaland, in response to the 06/15/2023 Supreme Court decision to uphold the Indian Child Welfare Act.

**Federal Indian Boarding School Truth Initiative** The Native American Boarding Schools Healing Coalition (NABS) and

the Department of the Interior have asked religious bodies to search for and share school records showing names and tribal affiliations of children and their parents, along with any possible student burial sites located at or near school facilities, with identities and tribal affiliations of children interred at such locations.

**At Sessions 2022 NEYM committed to begin researching New England Yearly Meeting's involvement and participation in the Federal Indigenous Boarding School movement.** After consultation with the Archives Committee and Right Relations Resource Group, Permanent Board appointed Betsy Cazden, Andrew Grant, and Janet Hough to review the material in the NEYM archives. In February 2023 Permanent Board received our preliminary findings and approved the outline we presented for ongoing research. (pp 75-80 in the February 2023 Permanent Board Advance Documents: here [https://neym.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/2023-02-11%20PermBd%20Advance%20Documents\\_0.pdf](https://neym.org/sites/default/files/2023-02/2023-02-11%20PermBd%20Advance%20Documents_0.pdf)) Since February, Gordon Bugbee, Emily Neumann, Evan McManamy and Andy Grannell have contributed to the ongoing research. We meet regularly with Friends from other yearly meetings collaborating in bringing to light the ways Quakers from both Hicksite and Orthodox yearly meetings engaged in the forced cultural assimilation of Indigenous children in what were called "Industrial Boarding Schools."

**What we have found** Through the Associated Executive Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs (AECFIA), the Gurneyite Quakers of New England (NEYM-G) helped coordinate and supervise the agencies, schools, and missions in the Central Superintendency of "Indian Territory" (now parts of Kansas and Oklahoma).

John D. Lang (Vassalboro Meeting) served on the Board of Indian Commissioners from 1869 to 1879, helping shape early federal policies for Indigenous education. Asa and Emeline Tuttle went out from Dover Meeting to manage the Quapaw Agency, which included several schools. Lina Lunt from Durham Meeting taught for many years at the Kickapoo Mission school. Many more meetings collected clothing and books and sent financial contributions to the Quapaw, Kickapoo, and Wyandotte Missions, often through the Women's Foreign Mission Society. (The WFMS was the precursor to today's United Society of Friends Women). Detailed reports are included in the NEYM-G men's, women's, and joint minutes, which help illuminate the spirit that motivated these Friends.

**What we have not found** We have not found any class registers or detailed school records in the NEYM archives. The search goes on.

**S.1723, Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding School Policies Act** We encourage Friends and Meetings to urge their U.S. senators to cosponsor and support passage of this important piece of legislation. FCNL has regular updates.

**At Sessions this August** we will share more about some of the people we have encountered and some of our results to date. At Sessions in 2024, we will provide a more complete description and analysis of NEYM's entanglement in this deeply disquieting chapter in the history of Friends. We will also prepare a draft report to the Secretary of the Interior and the Native American Boarding School Healing Coalition for future consideration by the yearly meeting.

**Further research and collaboration are needed.** We have not yet delved into the WFMS of New England records held at UMass SCUA. We have explored some of the records

of the Associated Executive Committee of Friends on Indian Affairs (AECFIA) that are archived at Haverford College. These include correspondence from teachers, agents, and mission workers; sketch plans for school buildings; and account-books—but no class registers or detailed school records. It is possible that such records may be found in archives nearer to where the schools were located. Research further afield and ongoing collaboration with other yearly meetings and Quaker organizations will be necessary to fully understand the engagement and support provided by NEYM and its predecessors.

**Funding will be needed.** We ask that authorized individuals be able to draw travel reimbursement from the Yearly Meeting, consistent with NEYM policy. In the past year, a NEYM Legacy grant provided funds for Andrew Grant's research work as an individual ministry. We anticipate seeking grant funding

to undergo further work, but do not have a specific proposal at this time.

**Digitization of records** UMass/SCUA has digitized the printed minute books for the Gurneyite yearly meeting for the years 1847 to 1945.

**Visibility** We are exploring ways to make our research questions, process, and findings visible both within the yearly meeting and beyond.

This is dense material requiring tender care for past, present, and future generations. We intend to meet our spiritual ancestors in the course of their lives and to consider the impacts of decisions made, not to hold judgment but to be held together in the Light and Love that permeates all. We walk humbly on a path of truth and healing in response to explicit requests from the impacted Peoples.

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**Budget**

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**New England Yearly Meeting  
FY2024 Operating (Non-Camp) Budget Proposed—Summary**

Approved by Finance Committee 1/28/2023 and 4/22/2023

Category	FY2022	FY2022	FY2023	Δ FY23 to FY24 Budgets	FY2024 Proposed Budget
	Actuals	Budget	Budget		
<b>Income</b>					
4010 Individual Contributions Total	176,749	230,225	230,225	(7,225)	223,000
4020 Monthly Meeting Contributions Total	330,575	373,000	373,000	(31,000)	342,000
4025 Unallocated Income			31,000	(31,000)	0
4030 Organizations Contributions		0	0	-	0
4050 Interest and Dividend Income	11,749	9,000	12,000	-	12,000
4070 Books & Other Sales Income	10,650	17,000	17,000	(6,500)	10,500
4080 Retreat Program Fees	13,185	47,000	47,000	(9,500)	37,500
4085 Sessions Program Fees	117,821	221,300	227,400	22,075	249,475
4090 Change in Fair Market Value	-816	0	0	-	0
4099 Net Assets Released To/From	52,967	15,000	30,000	(25,000)	5,000
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>712,879</b>	<b>912,525</b>	<b>967,625</b>	<b>(88,150)</b>	<b>879,475</b>
<b>Expenses</b>					
Total 5000 Staff	486,606	452,112	493,684	10,158	503,842
Total 5100 General & Administration	106,159	105,715	93,615	(6,166)	87,449
Total 5300 Travel & Conferences	12,362	35,300	35,300	(13,000)	22,300
Total 6000 Programs	189,116	285,680	284,300	(28,288)	256,012
Total 6140 Books & Other Sales Expense	7,585	14,500	14,500	(6,500)	8,000
Total 6200-6590 Support of Other Organizations	42,890	45,975	45,975	(45,975)	0
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>844,719</b>	<b>939,282</b>	<b>967,374</b>	<b>(89,771)</b>	<b>877,603</b>
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>(131,840)</b>	<b>-26,757</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>1,621</b>	<b>1,872</b>
<b>Other Income</b>					
9940 Other Income - Transfers from other funds	184,870				
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>184,870</b>				
<b>Other Expenses</b>					
9950 Other Expense - Transfer to other funds	74,707				
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>74,707</b>				
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>110,163</b>				
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>(21,677)</b>				



**New England Yearly Meeting**  
**FY2024 Operating (Non-Camp) Budget Proposed—Detail**  
 Approved by Finance Committee 1/28/2023 and 4/22/2023

Category	FY2022	FY2022	FY2023	Δ FY23	FY2024	Notes
	Actuals	Budget	Budget	to FY24 Budgets	Proposed Budget	
<b>Income</b>						
4010 Individual Contributions						
General Fund Contributions	151,232	204,225	204,225	(6,225)	198,000	
Equalization Contributions	25,517	26,000	26,000	(1,000)	25,000	2
4010 Individual Contributions Total	176,749	230,225	230,225	(7,225)	223,000	
4020 Monthly Meeting Contributions						
General Fund Contributions	322,214	350,000	350,000	(17,000)	333,000	1
Equalization Contributions	8,361	23,000	23,000	(14,000)	9,000	
4020 Monthly Meeting Contributions Total	330,575	373,000	373,000	(31,000)	342,000	
4025 Unallocated Income			31,000	(31,000)	0	
4030 Organizations Contributions		0	0	-	0	
4050 Interest and Dividend Income	11,749	9,000	12,000	-	12,000	
4070 Books & Other Sales Income	10,650	17,000	17,000	(6,500)	10,500	
4080 Retreat Program Fees	13,185	47,000	47,000	(9,500)	37,500	
4085 Sessions Program Fees	117,821	221,300	227,400	22,075	249,475	2
4090 Change in Fair Market Value	-816	0	0	-	0	
4099 Net Assets Released To/From	52,967	15,000	30,000	(25,000)	5,000	3
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>712,879</b>	<b>912,525</b>	<b>967,625</b>	<b>(88,150)</b>	<b>879,475</b>	
<b>Expenses</b>						
5000 Staff						
5010 Salaries & Wages	381,651	349,425	378,053	2,935	380,988	4
5020 Payroll Taxes	28,118	25,201	27,392	1,754	29,146	
5030 Benefits				-		
5033 Health Benefits	38,772	36,873	45,123	4,076	49,199	4
5035 Retirements	35,743	32,943	35,806	2,293	38,099	
5040 Disability	1,092	1,500	1,100	-	1,100	
5045 Workers' Compensation	757	720	760	-	760	
5050 Spiritual Retreats	100	1,200	1,200	-	1,200	
5060 Staff Development	373	4,250	4,250	(1,000)	3,250	
5070 Sabbatical & Paid Leave				100	100	
Total 5030 Benefits	76,837	77,486	88,239	5,469	93,708	
Total 5000 Staff	486,606	452,112	493,684	10,158	503,842	4
5100 General & Administration						
5110 Administration						
5120 Bank Expense	6,369	7,000	7,000	-	7,000	
5130 Contracted Services	26,013	31,900	22,000	(4,000)	18,000	
5135 Accounting Services	2,500	2,500	0	-	0	
5140 Legal Services	2,500	2,500	2,500	-	2,500	
5145 Infrastructure	5,000	5,000	5,000	(5,000)	0	
5150 Liability Insurance	5,423	5,250	5,250	-	5,250	
5160 Payroll Service	6,288	5,200	5,500	-	5,500	
5170 Recruiting Expense	205	0	0	-	0	
5180 Rent	9,350	9,350	9,350	-	9,350	
5190 Misc. Expense	251	0	0	-	0	
Total 5110 Administration	63,899	68,700	56,600	(9,000)	47,600	
5200 Office						
5220 Archives Office Expenses		0	0	-	0	
5220 Cleaning Services	242	265	265	34	299	
5230 Maint - Equip & Hardware	73	1,250	1,250	(750)	500	
5240 Postage	3,585	3,750	3,750	-	3,750	
5250 Office Equipment	2,574	3,250	3,250	(1,750)	1,500	
5260 Office Supplies	1,595	2,500	2,500	(900)	1,600	
5270 Printing & Copying	9,184	14,500	14,500	(5,000)	9,500	
5280 Software & Updates	21,231	7,000	7,000	12,000	19,000	
5290 Telephone	3,540	4,500	4,500	(800)	3,700	
5295 Misc. Office	235	0	0	-	0	
Total 5200 Office	42,260	37,015	37,015	2,834	39,849	
Total 5100 General & Administration	106,159	105,715	93,615	(6,166)	87,449	

**New England Yearly Meeting**  
**FY2024 Operating (Non-Camp) Budget Proposed—Detail**  
 Approved by Finance Committee 1/28/2023 and 4/22/2023

Category	FY2022 Actuals	FY2022 Budget	FY2023 Budget	Δ FY23 to FY24	FY2024 Proposed Budget	Notes
<b>5300 Travel &amp; Conferences</b>						
5310 Travel - Committee		3,000	3,000	(1,600)	1,400	
5320 Travel - Clerk		4,500	4,500	(2,000)	2,500	
5330 Travel - Programs	3,175	3,700	3,700	(600)	3,100	
5335 Travel - Representatives Travel	2,060	6,700	6,700	(4,700)	2,000	
5350 Travel - Staff	7,128	17,000	17,000	(4,100)	12,900	
5360 Travel - Ministries		400	400	-	400	
<b>Total 5300 Travel &amp; Conferences</b>	<b>12,362</b>	<b>35,300</b>	<b>35,300</b>	<b>(13,000)</b>	<b>22,300</b>	
<b>6000 Programs</b>						
6110 Sessions Room & Board	126,044	186,850	192,950	(23,508)	169,442	2
6112 Retreats - Room & Board				-		
6114 Room Rental	8,575	17,530	13,550	(3,550)	10,000	
6150 Food Expense	8,835	17,430	15,930	(5,930)	10,000	
<b>Total 6112 Retreats - Room &amp; Board</b>	<b>17,410</b>	<b>34,960</b>	<b>29,480</b>	<b>(9,480)</b>	<b>20,000</b>	
6125 Program Expenses				-		
6105 Honoraria - Speakers/Wkshp Ldrs	15,930	22,000	22,000	2,000	24,000	
6107 Honoraria - Volunteer Leadership	8,250	15,000	15,000	-	15,000	3
6115 Equipment Rental	6,545	6,000	6,000	500	6,500	
6121 Supplies and Other Expenses	8,893	9,300	7,300	1,700	9,000	
6165 Pre-Sessions Expense	1,100	1,000	1,000	500	1,500	
<b>Total 6125 Program Expenses</b>	<b>40,718</b>	<b>53,300</b>	<b>51,300</b>	<b>4,700</b>	<b>56,000</b>	
6130 Committee Expenses - General	1,965	6,350	6,350	-	6,350	
6134 Childcare	210	2,000	2,000	-	2,000	
6137 Committee Day Expenses		0	0	-	0	
<b>Total 6130 Committee Expenses - General</b>	<b>2,175</b>	<b>8,350</b>	<b>8,350</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>8,350</b>	
6160 Program Support				-		
6163 Friends Camp	2,769	2,220	2,220	-	2,220	
6167 Religious Education & Outreach		0	0	-	0	
<b>Total 6160 Program Support</b>	<b>2,769</b>	<b>2,220</b>	<b>2,220</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>2,220</b>	
<b>Total 6000 Programs</b>	<b>189,116</b>	<b>285,680</b>	<b>284,300</b>	<b>(28,288)</b>	<b>256,012</b>	
6140 Books & Other Sales Expense		0	0	-	0	
6142 Books	3,311	14,500	14,500	(6,500)	8,000	
6145 Other Items for Sale	620	0	0	-	0	
6147 Consignment Sales	3,654	0	0	-	0	
<b>Total 6140 Books &amp; Other Sales Expense</b>	<b>7,585</b>	<b>14,500</b>	<b>14,500</b>	<b>(6,500)</b>	<b>8,000</b>	
<b>Total 6200-6590 Support of Other Organizations</b>	<b>42,890</b>	<b>45,975</b>	<b>45,975</b>	<b>(45,975)</b>	<b>0</b>	5
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>844,719</b>	<b>939,282</b>	<b>967,374</b>	<b>(89,771)</b>	<b>877,603</b>	
<b>Net Operating Income</b>	<b>(131,840)</b>	<b>-26,757</b>	<b>251</b>	<b>1,621</b>	<b>1,872</b>	
<b>Other Income</b>						
9940 Other Income - Transfers from other funds	184,870					
<b>Total Other Income</b>	<b>184,870</b>					
<b>Other Expenses</b>						
9950 Other Expense - Transfer to other funds	74,707					
<b>Total Other Expenses</b>	<b>74,707</b>					
<b>Net Other Income</b>	<b>110,163</b>					
<b>Net Income</b>	<b>(21,677)</b>					

**Notes:**

- The Sessions portion of this budget reflects steps under consideration to both reduce expenses and increase income for Sessions 2023 and 2024.
- FY23 Meeting contributions expected: \$325,600 for general fund, based on pledges so far. \$3K net increase over last year.
  - Sessions fees based on 5% increase 2022-23 and 6% increase 2023-24, and attendance of 455 adults and 100 kids/youth at Castleton. Does not include online attenders (80?) at approx \$11K income at same rate increase.
  - Funding the Honoraria Supporting Volunteer Leadership is being phased in over three years; in FY2024 \$5000 will come from reserves. The expense is being tracked in the new subcategory "Honoraria - Volunteer Leadership"
  - Staff expense calculated with COLA of 6.1%, annual change in CPI for New England as of December 2022. Staff expense budget has increased \$97.5K over FY2020 budget. Of that increase:
    - 49% is due to cost-of-living-adjustment consistent with yearly meeting personnel policy (COLA: 2.22% FY21, 0.5% FY22, 6.3% FY23, 6.1% FY24)
    - 24% is due to merit raises and other shifts in compensation reflecting scope of responsibilities
    - 17% is due to changes in benefits, mostly health care premiums consistent with yearly meeting personnel policy
    - 9% due to other reasons such as overtime hours by hourly program staff around Sessions & retreats, payroll tax for raises, etc
 Budgeted annual staff hours have stayed the same from FY2020-2024, at 12,104, or 5.8 FTEs; which is down from FY19 at 12,672 hours or 6.1 FTEs, not counting FY19 Shoemaker-funded positions.
  - Following the 2022 plan of the Financial Contributions Working Group, Support of Other Organizations is presented with only a total line.

**Yearly Meeting Committees & Nominations**

Names in **bold** are to be considered for approval. ***Bold italics*** indicate a reappointment.

These nominations are from the Permanent Board or the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee. Please be in touch with the Yearly Meeting Nominating Committee clerk, Jackie Stillwell (jacqueline.stillwell@gmail.com or 603-933-2608) with questions or concerns.

**Permanent Board (50)**

2024

Chase, Deana (West)  
 Gant, Christopher (Bhill)  
 Harrington, Ian (Cam)  
 Reuthe, John (Vass)  
 Schwope, Martha (Well)  
**Warnock, Eleanor (NHam)**

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2027

Brenner, Tom (Worc)  
 Drayton, Darcy (Souh)  
 Isbell Shinn, Newell (Mt Toby)  
 Jasaitis, Roger Vincent (Putn)  
 Jordan, Carolyn Lamar (Wfal)  
 Klepack, Meg (WSan)  
 Stamm, Liesa (Hart)

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**Archives & Historical Records (6)**

2024

Crosby, Eileen (Mt Toby)  
 Quirk, Brian (Law)

2027

Cazden, Betsy (Prov)

2025

Hanson, Beth (Wrly)  
 Lightsom, Fran (Wfal)  
 O'Connor, Bob (Vass)  
 Radocchia, Anna (Benn)  
 Rein, Carole (Nshor)  
 Weinholtz, Donn (Hart)  
 Weinholtz, Diane (Hart)  
 Wilson, Morgan (Fram)  
 Wooten, Kathleen (Fpon)

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2028

***Forsythe, Martin (Bhill)***  
***Mair, Edward (Ames)***  
**Randall, Allison (Keene)**  
***Taber, Willa (Fpon)\*\****

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2026

Allen, Kimberly (Durh)  
 Davies, Susan (Vass)\*  
 McCandless, Christopher (Burl)  
 Zwirner, Mary (Bhill)

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**Board of Managers of Investments & Permanent Funds (10)**

2024

Philbrook, Erik (Well)\*

2027

Hackman, Mathew (Prov)  
 David Eastman (Han)  
 John Ridgeway (Mt. Toby)

2025

McKnight, Jeanne (Well)  
 Taber, Shearman (Nham)

2028

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2026

Wernette, Tim (Win)

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**Clerks' Table**

2024	2025	2026
Kohrman, Adam (Bhill), Reading	Leuchak, Rebecca (Prov), Presiding	
<b>McCandless, Susannah (Mbur), Record'g</b>	Wright, Michelle (Putn), Reading	
	Jensen, Megan (Mon), Recording	

**Committee for Nurturing Friends Education (6)**

2024	2025	2026
Bourns, David (Prov)*	Steele, Ariana (Prov)	
Douthit, Zona (Prov)	Tripp, Dawn (Alln)	
Ekk, Vicky (Prov)		
Smith, Megan (Prov)		

**Faith & Practice (16)**

Armstrong, Doug (Mon)	Edwards, Eric (Wfal)	McCosker, Phebe* (Han)
Athearn, Marian (Wprt)	Godway, Eleanor (Hart)	Reilly, Sue (Port)
Cogbill, Rachel Walker (Pfld)	Hawthorn, Margaret (Mon)	
Edmondson, Maggie (Wint)	Hilles-Pilant, Carolyn (Bhil)	

**Finance (10)**

2024	2025	2026
Maurer, Philip (Nham)	Drysdale, Robert Scot (Han)*	Keith, Doug (Hart)
Sprogell, Sarah (Durh)	Olsen, Kathryn (ESan)	Corindia, Thomas (Han)
Wooten, Kathleen (Lawr)		

2027	2028

**Treasurer:**

2023 (continuing through transition)	2026
Murray, Robert (Bhill)	

**Friends Camp (7 to 15) (named by Friends Camp Nominating)**

2024	2025	2026
Baker, Carol (Wrly)	Kaviar, Molly (Camb)	
Bornstein, Natalie*	Marstaller, Mimi (Durh)	
Keller, Edie (Vass)	Monahan, Kate	
O'Connor, Bob (Vass)	Reuthe, John (Vass)	
	Rogers, Mike	
	Spivey, Robb (Brun)	

**Friends Camp Nominating (5) (3 named by NEYM Nominating, 2 named by Friends Camp Committee)**

2024	2025	2026
Burgin, Hilary (BHil)	Keefe-Perry, Kristina (FPon)	
Anna Hopkins and Natalie Bornstein, appointed by Friends Camp Committee		

**Legacy Gift Committee (9)**

2024	2025	2026
<b><i>Gant, Sarah (Bhill)</i></b>	Christopher, Megan (Well)	
Reixach, Karen (Keen)	Martin, Lori (NHav)	
<b><i>Rockwood, Susan (Mid)*</i></b>	Isbell Shinn, Jennie (MVin)	
	<b><i>Link, Mary (Mtob)*</i></b>	

**Meeting Accompaniment Group (5 to 7; 5-year terms)**

<b>2028</b>	2028
Baker-Smith, Gretchen (Wprt)	Gant, Sarah (Bhil)*
McArthur, Hugh (Han)	Grannell, Dorothy (Port)
Wilson, Morgan (Fram)	
Woodrow, Honor (Putn)	

**Ministry and Counsel Clerk**

2025  
Williams, Carl (Pfld)

**Nominating Committee (15) (nominated by Permanent Board)**

2024	2025	2026
Stillwell, Jacqueline (Mon)*	Lindo, Anna (Fram)	<b>Gant, Christopher (Bhill)</b>
	Smith, Sara (Con)	<b>Malin, Kathy (Smit)</b>
		<b>Hansen, Beth (Wrly)**</b>
		<b>Schwope, Martha (Well)</b>

**Puente de Amigos (9)**

2024	2025	2026
Fogarty, Margaret (Dov)	Lindo, Richard (Fram)	
Stone, Carolyn (Well)*	Schmidt, Maxine (NHAm)	
Kinsky, Deena (Matt)		

**Racial, Social and Economic Justice (under review)****Sessions Planning Clerk**

2025  
Veatch, Phillip (FPon)

**Sessions Theme and Speakers Team (5; one-year term)**

2024		
Godway, Eleanor (Hart)		
Hasbrook, Mey (Durh)		

**Supervisor to the YM Secretary**

2023 (continuing through transition) 2026  
Reuthe, Elizabeth (Vass)

**Youth Ministries (6)**

2024	2025	2026
Eller, Jessica (Port)	Dawson, Janet (Fram)	<b>Corindia, Nancy (Han)</b>
Sanchez-Eppler, Karen (Nham)		

**Representatives to Other Friends Organizations****American Friends Service Committee Corp. (4)**

2024	2025	2026
Steele, Rebecca (Port)	Barker, Mark (Conc)	<b>Weaver, Hal (Well)</b>
Woodrow, Peter (Port), convenor		

**Friends Committee on National Legislation (6)**

2024	2025	2026
Cazden, Betsy (Prov)	Grace, James (Bhil)	

**Friends General Conference Central Committee Representatives (8)**

2024	2025	2026
Hilles-Pilant, Carolyn (Bhill)		

**Friends Peace Teams Project (2)**

Claggett-Borne, Minga (Cam)

**Friends United Meeting 2023 Triennial Representatives (8, appointed to serve until the 2026 Triennial)**

Fogarty, Maggie (Dov)	Walker, Stefan (Nham)	Weinholtz, Diane (Hart)
Heath, Ruth (Con)	Weaver, Hal (Well)	Weinholtz, Donn (Hart)

**FUM General Board Representatives (3, appointed to attend 2023 Triennial and serve until the 2026 Triennial)**

Keefe-Perry, Kristina (Fpon)      Smith, Jennifer (Conc)

**Friends World Committee Representatives (7)**

2024	2025	2026
Williams, Carl (Pfld)		
Hopkins, Mary (Fpon)		
Goldberger, Judy (Bhill)		

**Friends World Committee Representatives to 2024 World Plenary (one in person; one virtual)****Quaker Earthcare Witness (1)**

Haines, Christopher (Fpon)

## Staff Reports

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### Secretary

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Dear Friends,

This is a season of paradox. Our Quaker spiritual ancestors invite us to anchor ourselves in the unshakeable hope of a Love that is still being born in the world—even as we mourn the losses of so much of what we have known and turn our attention, with prayerful discernment, to what the Holy Spirit might reveal of our condition and might require of us now. What a good time to gather together, seeking to abide in that which is Eternal.

It's a season for gratitude and celebration. In these Advance Documents, I encourage you to give particular attention to Nia Thomas' Program Director's report ([page 26](#)), and to the update on the Yearly Meeting's continuing experiments in supporting ministry, eldership, and the spiritual life of local meetings ([page 8](#)). I give thanks to all who have played a part, and to the One who moves through it all, for the continued focusing, clarifying, and strengthening of our offerings to help Friends meetings across our region to thrive. We have learned and grown so much in recent years, Friends. We have been given many gifts. And we have many opportunities before us for service.

It's also a season for stewardship and pruning. With the disruption and reorientation throughout our society, many of us find ourselves with less time and energy and fewer financial resources to share in service than in the past. In Friends' stewardship of the Yearly Meeting—the programs, services, staffing, and channels for volunteer service—Friends are discovering that we simply are not able to faithfully and fully sustain the number and scope of activities that many have come to expect—certainly not in some of the ways that have worked in the past. We need to adjust what we are doing and how we do it; we have already been adapting and learning in many ways for years. And there is more to do. Along with skillful labor and intentional design, this will take prayer, tenderness, persistence, and courage.

There is grief and loss in this season, a testament of love and gratitude for gifts of service, relationship, and faithful stewardship given in the past. We need to allow and acknowledge our griefs and losses. And yet, we are not called to make our homes there. If we allow it, this season also offers relief, and curiosity, and an opportunity to deepen our attention to what is truly ours to do at this time. Seeking to be faithful now to the same Spirit, rather than trying to keep things the same, is our most loving response to the faithful service of those who came before us.

We can't do it all. Trying to sustain activity beyond our capacities is a path to exhaustion, with resentment and shame close behind. We are not called to a spirituality of urgency, reactivity, and burnout. Friends have understood for generations that busyness is the mortal enemy of the spiritual life. I am reminded that we truly will not be given more to do by the Spirit than we can carry with God's help. We are offered an invitation to acceptance, to prayerful discernment of what is required now, and to pruning of what is no longer ours. Saying a real “yes” to just a few essential things makes our “no” possible.

This may be an easier message to hear and respond to in our personal lives than in our meeting life, or in our shared stewardship of the institution of the Yearly Meeting. And yet, for the wellbeing of our religious body—and for us as persons who make it up and who are shaped and formed by its influences, for good or ill—the corporate dimension of this pruning matters deeply. In releasing demands on our institutional structures, may we find more spaciousness for attention to the subtler and quieter rhythms of our faith journeys, not only in the formal activities of Quaker groups, but in the whole of our lives.

I pray this will be a season for renewing commitment to our inherited disciplines and rhythms in practices of worship, discernment, and life together. At their roots, these are not tired, outdated, or foolish forms, nor obstacles to faithfulness or new life. They are the fruits of the lived experience of Friends who through them found guidance, grounding, clarity, cohesion, and courage. When practiced in the Spirit, they anchor a corporate spirituality of resilience.

In recent years, especially in the context of the pandemic, many Friends have discovered that difficult and complex decisions can be made quickly and creatively, and that uncertain and changing circumstances may require departing from our long-established practices. There is much that is good in this.

And: this does not mean that all decisions should be quick; or that we should dismiss our tradition when it seems to ask more of us than what seems like an easier or faster approach; or that urgency and advocacy should replace prayerful seasoning, corporate discernment, and yielding to the often slow work of God among us. In discerning the most important matters, may we remember that the essential question is not whether a decision moves quickly or slowly, or even as we would like it to, but whether the Truth we discover in the searching has taken root in us deeply enough that our living might be changed by it.

These years have been hard on us, as persons and families, but also as communities of faith and practice. Beyond our activities, there is a deeper need for rediscovering ourselves as part of one Body. Where our social cohesion and relationships have thinned and frayed—both within meetings, and between and among them—how can we each join in rhythms of life that serve the weaving and mending? Trust is precious—difficult to weave, easy to unravel. Where trust has been undermined, how can our own personal commitments to Friends' shared practices of worship and discernment nurture it? Do we examine our habits of heart, speech, and action prayerfully, with care for how we—each of us—might help build up the unity of the Body in the Spirit?

In the present climate, it feels especially easy for us to be influenced by the polarization, urgency, and anxiety that permeates much of our wider society. I pray that each of us might redouble our inward watchfulness for how these kinds of influences may affect us. Let us seek to listen before we speak, to seek first to understand, and to mind the orientation of our hearts. Other voices within me—voices that are not the Guide—urge the logic of the World, not of the Spirit. It is sometimes tempting for me to dismiss these promptings

as small things, and to indulge them, but they are corrosive to my soul, and to the life of my spiritual community.

I hope we will each be wary of the distorting potential of these other voices. Whatever my experiences, whatever the depth or substance of my concerns, when I nurture resentment in myself or cultivate a habit of tearing down, rather than seeking to build up, I embark on a road that leads to othering, contempt, and division. Friends have been down this road in our history. It is an easy road to travel, once we first begin. Followed, it leads to ruin.

I continue to hold in my heart the imperfect, willing, beloved human beings among us who have accepted a call to servant leadership among Friends. In these turbulent times, many Friends are experiencing heartbreak, exhaustion, and disillusionment, suffering in love for the communities they serve. It's helpful for me to remember that these Friends are called to serve the Body—not to meet individual demands, or to become scapegoats for anxieties and frustrations, but to nurture the life of the Spirit present among us in our meeting communities as a whole. I find myself asking: What is my—and each of our—personal responsibility to those who serve on our behalf? How might I—and we—be an encouragement to them, as they seek to encourage us all? Knowing we are already forgiven and beloved beyond measure, may we embrace, in whatever ways we may be given, a new season of humility, and of gratitude.

Perhaps the greatest fruit of the pruning that I pray we might experience is the capacity to focus more deeply on what is essential. I hope we will renew our attention to meeting one another where we are in our journeys and supporting each other's formation and growth in gifts for service throughout our lives. This orientation offers both a present path and blessing for our journey together, and a prospect of nourishing fruits to come. I am grateful for Friends responding to the call to articulate and lift up the core invitation and purpose of our fellowship, even in changing times. When we become more clear about what we are inviting people to, and why we are led to offer this invitation, it becomes more and more possible to remove barriers to those seeking to join this adventure of life together in the Spirit.

I want to close with gratitude again, for so many Friends whose preparations throughout the year are setting a table for us for Annual Sessions 2023. I remain grateful for the opportunity to serve alongside them—and you, dear Friends—in this work of Love.

In the Spirit in which we can never be separated, may we remember—and freshly experience—an invitation to this shared journey of Friendship. May our time together in the coming days be gathered in the Presence of the Friend. And may we be blessed in the meeting.

—NOAH MERRILL

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### Accounts Manager

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Although the most disruptive times of the pandemic are receding in the rear-view mirror, the financial repercussions for the Yearly Meeting—and the Accounts Manager's duties—continued to reverberate this past year. My fall and winter were mostly devoted to closing the books, as usual, and then to analysis of the deficit in our operating results in this “new normal” since our return to in-person Sessions—recalling that truth is the primary spiritual goal of bookkeeping, even when

these truths may be difficult. That analysis then informed the calculations for the “new normal” FY24 budget. Another reverberation of the pandemic's financial effects requiring much analysis was the possibility of qualifying for Employee Retention Tax Credits—still in process with our payroll service as of early July. We also brought the funds recalculation project to a conclusion, presenting its final summary, with recommended adjustments, to Permanent Board for approval in February. With that project finished, we turned to beginning a search for a CPA firm to do an independent review of the Yearly Meeting's books. We began saving for such a review several years ago, before the pandemic, seeing it as a prudent step for a growing organization under normal circumstances. I hope that as we go forward, the outside point of view will prove helpful in providing clear, honest, accurate, and useful financial records.

—FREDERICK MARTIN

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### ARCH Coordinator

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It's been less than a year since New England Yearly Meeting brought me in as our first Aging Resources Consultation and Help (ARCH) Coordinator. Based in New York Yearly Meeting, ARCH currently has six part-time coordinators and one interim director. This is its first expansion. I join NY staff meetings as well as meet regularly with Nia and other New England staff as needed.

Let me tell you more about ARCH and how I have begun my service.

In 2007, the Friends Foundation for the Aging (FFA) was founded, funded by the closing of NYYM's boarding home for older people. ARCH funding continues to be provided by FFA, along with individual donations. FFA's original plan was for NYYM to assist older people. Way opened when two retired Friends—already experienced in a wide range of aging services—formed a working group to design the program that became ARCH. Goals include encouraging more Friends to complete their health care proxies and incorporating Quaker values with end-of-life decision-making.

In a few years ARCH grew geographically and a visitor-training program was developed. Strategic planning brought additional focus. ARCH expanded to serve those who are growing older while incarcerated. Recently all coordinators have added specializations in specific areas such as grief and loss, aging with cognitive disorders, caregiving, and working with age groups 60-79 and 80+.

Last fall New England Yearly Meeting applied for an FFA grant to expand ARCH to our region. I attended the fall ARCH Foundations training program, which also includes an opportunity for community monthly check-ins. During the Foundations course other New England Quakers were welcomed along with NY members, and ARCH online programs have already drawn Quakers from other yearly meetings.

My service began with facilitating an end-of-life group for NY, concurrently with another for New England. Now I'm facilitating a monthly end-of-life reflection group for NEYM that welcomes Quakers to join on a drop-in basis. Having developed community guidelines and a resource list, we are now alternating between sharing time with queries and discussion of Pendle Hill Pamphlets, starting with *On Hallowing One's Diminishments*. Members now offer leadership with



presentations on the pamphlets. The sharings run deep, and I emerge from each gathering feeling blessed and enriched.

I also collaborate with others to develop a vision and program for NE Quakers. I have attended worship at monthly meetings and led discussions at our Yearly Meeting listening sessions. I invite Friends to share stories, gifts, and needs to deepen our support of one another in our journeys.

I especially love how ARCH is developing a growing commitment to mutual spiritual accompaniment. Quakers (and we are not alone) seem to have a norm of setting up a helper/recipient power dynamic. Many of us feel much more comfortable helping others, which can make it feel selfish to ask for help. That dynamic is challenged; in ARCH we are all giving and receiving.

This Sessions I facilitate three workshops: Caregiving Stories, Challenging Conversations, and Sharing the Road Ahead. I invite Friends to join us for any or all of them as we savor spiritual companionship.

ARCH will soon have a new offering. The 2016 booklet *Quaker Values and End-of-life Decision Making* is about to get better; an updated version is being produced and we hope will be available this fall. I'm looking forward to offering what I expect to be a 3-part workshop series online. With the booklet as a guide, we will explore Quaker testimonies and values in "Mapping Our Journey Home."

—PATTI MULDOON

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### Children and Family Ministries Coordinator

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I feel deeply blessed by my first year as NEYM's Children and Family Ministries Coordinator.

The Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM, elementary-aged youth) community is healthy and thriving. Most of this young group just completed 2nd or 3rd grade. Our three retreats (2 in-person, 1 virtual) were just one night each, which seemed right for these children who hadn't yet spent much time away from home due to both their age and the pandemic. We explored themes of friendship and the cozy practice of hunkering down (Hygge) with anywhere from 10-30 children present at each event. JYMers have also been exposed to the wider world of Quakerism through what I hope will be a long-lasting connection with a Friends School in Rwanda. Two parents of JYMers joined the retreat staff this year, totaling three parent-staffers. The newness and enthusiasm of these JYMers and parent volunteers gives me hope for the future of NEYM youth ministries.

The Junior High Yearly Meeting (JHYM, middle school-aged youth) community explored themes of friendship, peace, music, self-care, and service in five separate events, with anywhere from 5-13 youth present. They also used Quaker process to take up decisions about phone use, masking, and inclusivity. This year's transitions have been hard on the JHYM community. 7th and 8th graders returned with strong emotions attached to vivid memories of what was: friends who have stopped coming, the leadership of my beloved predecessor, and pre-COVID freedoms. I believe that the intensity of these memories also widened the gap that naturally exists each year between newcomers/6th graders and the returning JHers. In part to address these tensions, we made some mid-year changes to the retreat calendar, resulting in a couple of vibrant but poorly attended events. I learned that such changes are disruptive for many families and intend to avoid

them in the future. Even so, I believe we have a strong group of committed 6th and 7th graders who will continue to grow closer while drawing bigger circles of welcome.

Anne Anderson, Buddy and Gretchen Baker-Smith, Cynthia Rankin, Dave Baxter, Kenzie Burpee, and Leah Kelley shouldered the continuity of the programs by staffing almost every event. The communities were also blessed on several occasions by the presence of Amy Greene, Carol Baker, Jerry Carson, Katy MacRae, Kevin Lee, Kristin Wilson, Leah Kelley, Lilly Campbell, Mary DeSilva, Mary Beth Toomey, Nate Perkins, Newell Isbell Shinn, Rainer Humphries, Rebecca Edwards, Sara Hubner, Steve Ball, Wendyl Ross, and one junior staffer, virtually.

I am also grateful for the mentorship of Christel Jorgensen, Emily Edwards, Gretchen Baker-Smith, Kevin Lee, Kim Allen, and Lisa Graustein, each of whom drew on their past coordination/staffing experiences to offer me advice and encouragement when I needed it.

Finally, I would like to thank all of the parents and guardians. I prepared myself for some reticence, especially from those of you who didn't know me prior to this year. But I felt nothing but support, appreciation, and trust from you and it helped me feel at home in this Leading. I look forward to many more years with you and your wonderful children.

While learning the ins-and-outs of retreat coordination was central to my first year in this position, I look forward to serving NEYM families in other ways as well. To that end, there will be only three retreats for each age group in the coming year, so that I can also devote time to supporting the youth ministry of local meetings. The Living Faith Gathering in April will also be an opportunity for families to gather for a Saturday, and for teens to participate in a retreat.

I write this report as I prepare for another layer of this work: Sessions. Rather than leading one program, while supervising others, I will be available for pastoral care and program support/visits. Rainer Humphries and Kenzie Burpee will coordinate Child Care and JYM again this year, respectively, and JHYM will be coordinated by Lilly Campbell. I am in awe of the many unique gifts that each of these Sessions Coordinators brings to this work.

—KARA PRICE

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### Events Coordinator

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Have you had the experience of going back to a house or school you used to be in regularly? It is funny how the memory of a place and the reality of that place are tightly linked yet different. My work as Events Coordinator for the Yearly Meeting has been like that, like returning to a familiar place in many ways yet different; small details forgotten and relearned.

This past April we had our first Living Faith since 2019. Approximately 100 Friends joined together for a day of workshops, worship, and community in Portland, Maine. It reminded me what I love about that event and how it feeds my work throughout the rest of the year. It was a reminder of all that has changed during the COVID pandemic and how we have adapted to this new reality. For the first time, we merged Living Faith with a Young Friends retreat and it was great to have the Young Friends there and holding the space leading up to the gathering. I hope it was rewarding for them as well. The next Living Faith gathering is scheduled for April 6, 2024, in

southeastern Massachusetts; more details will be available in the fall.

Sessions planning has been going well and it has been wonderful to have Phil Veatch in his second year as Sessions Planning clerk. This has been a year of a lot of changes and it has shone a light on how the work we have done to work with each other more than alongside each other has made us more resilient and flexible. We are continuing to collaborate with so many talented Friends whose work helps make Sessions happen.

It is very hard to believe that this will be my sixth Sessions with the Yearly Meeting. In many ways, I still feel like a new kid on the block. I look forward to seeing many familiar faces in Castleton and on Zoom in August.

—ELIZABETH HACALA

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### Friends Camp Director

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I am writing this report exactly 1 month before the first counselors arrive at camp. Before Sessions this year, more than 400 campers and 50 staff will have arrived to camp. Each day I start work with a prayer that our summer season is safe, healthy, and restorative for all those in attendance and that the joy we generate together can ripple beyond camp to our larger communities. For all in our camp community, I pray for the courage to create connections across difference, support each other at camp through physical jobs as well as through friendship and mentorship, and to learn more about ourselves through listening to our inner teacher.

Preparing for this season has included some extra tasks for me, as my husband and I are expecting our first child in August. Throughout this process of preparation, I have felt extremely grateful for the support of the Friends Camp Committee, NEYM Staff, and the leaders who will step into new roles in my planned absence towards the end of our summer season. I am reminded that creating a wider web of leadership helps us create a resilient institution and that new voices of leadership bring richness and creativity.

Overall, our camp preparations are as busy as ever! We will welcome staff members from across the United States, Ireland, Norway, Jamaica, and Turkey. This summer we will also be accredited by the American Camp Association with an in-person visit—their most recent visit was in 2017! As part of a continuous process of living in community together, our staff and campers have been working on ways to increase our intentional inclusivity. This has meant hosting trainings on gender and sexuality at camp, a staff-led affinity table for Black campers and staff who wanted to lunch together, and intentionality around hosting an international community at camp. Projects on our property this year have included repairs and renovations to bathroom floors, removing a few large trees, new roofs on camper cabins, preparations for a major Health Hut renovation, and of course the work of managing almost 80 acres and more than 30 buildings.

This year Yearly Meeting began work on a governance review for Friends Camp, as is prescribed in our governance document approved by Permanent Board in 2016. The first of its kind, this review affirmed the importance of camp as an outward facing ministry to New England Yearly Meeting and the importance of Spirit and Friends as the “fire at the center” of Friends Camp. The report also affirmed the institutional strength of camp and the requirements of operat-

ing a youth camp in today’s world, recognizing an ongoing need for investment in the camp property and in equitably compensating staff. I am particularly grateful to the work of Nia Thomas and the working group who so eloquently put into words the vitality of Friends Camp and its relationship to wider Friends. As always, I am so grateful for the support of Friends throughout New England who make camp possible. Wishing all a wonderful summer!

—ANNA HOPKINS BULLER

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### Office Manager

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I’ve started and abandoned my 2023 annual report at least three times. What do I have to say? Is anything new?

Outwardly, no: Nothing is new. My work hasn’t changed. (Something I have accomplished this year, though, is collecting complete Permanent Board minutes for the past several years and sending them to Archives. [Friends, we have not been faithful in finalizing minutes.]

I keep coming back to the idea that G\*d cares less about what I do and more about how I do it. Tedious tasks need to get the same care and attention I give to the interesting tasks, just as I endeavor to treat the Friends I work with—staff and volunteers—with that same care and attention. (I can’t claim that I always succeed.)

*Blessed be the longing that brought you here  
And quickens your soul with wonder.*

*May you have the courage to listen to the voice of desire  
That disturbs you when you have settled for something safe.*

*May you have the wisdom to enter generously into your own  
unease  
To discover the new directions your longing wants you to  
take.*

*May the forms of your belonging—in love, creativity and  
friendship—*

*Be equal to the grandeur and the call of your soul.*

(John O’Donoghue)

The call of the soul is to be more—more loving, more adventuresome, more daring, more creative, more grateful, more so-much-more.

May I not only hear the voice of desire but have the courage and will to listen and discover what it asks of me. May I be not only willing, but brave enough to sit with unease and wait in discomfort for some clarity.

May I recognize the love and friendship and new ways that will help me meet the call of my soul.

—SARA HUBNER

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### Program Director

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In November, the shape of my role in NEYM shifted somewhat, as I moved from serving as Quaker Practice and Leadership Facilitator into the new position of Program Director to better support and integrate our ongoing program work, the heart of which is spiritual formation through Quaker practice. Whether the focus is on strengthening local meetings, developing servant leadership, encouraging Spirit-led action, or nurturing youth, all our programs are about how we each can come to live lives that reflect the Light and Love of God more fully.

Much of my energy is spent not just on the content and quality of specific programmatic opportunities but also on “strengthening the web”; paying attention to the connections between things: between groups, Quaker organizations, and individuals striving towards overlapping goals; between events, the journeys of individual participants or facilitators, and the local meetings we serve; between different parts of the Yearly Meeting.

In all my work, I strive to hold the following “big picture” questions, which are an anchor to me in this service, and draw from our Yearly Meeting’s discernment about its overall purpose and priorities:

- How is our approach to program in alignment with the Yearly Meeting’s overall work of fostering a thriving, multigenerational Quaker movement in New England, and our particular focus on strengthening local meetings?
- How can we design programs to feed not only the individuals that participate, but to feed their worship community as well?
- How are we leaving space to listen for and respond to the movements of Spirit in our programmatic endeavors?
- How are we stewarding our limited resources of time, attention, and money in a way that honors and responds to the varying needs of Friends and Friends meetings?

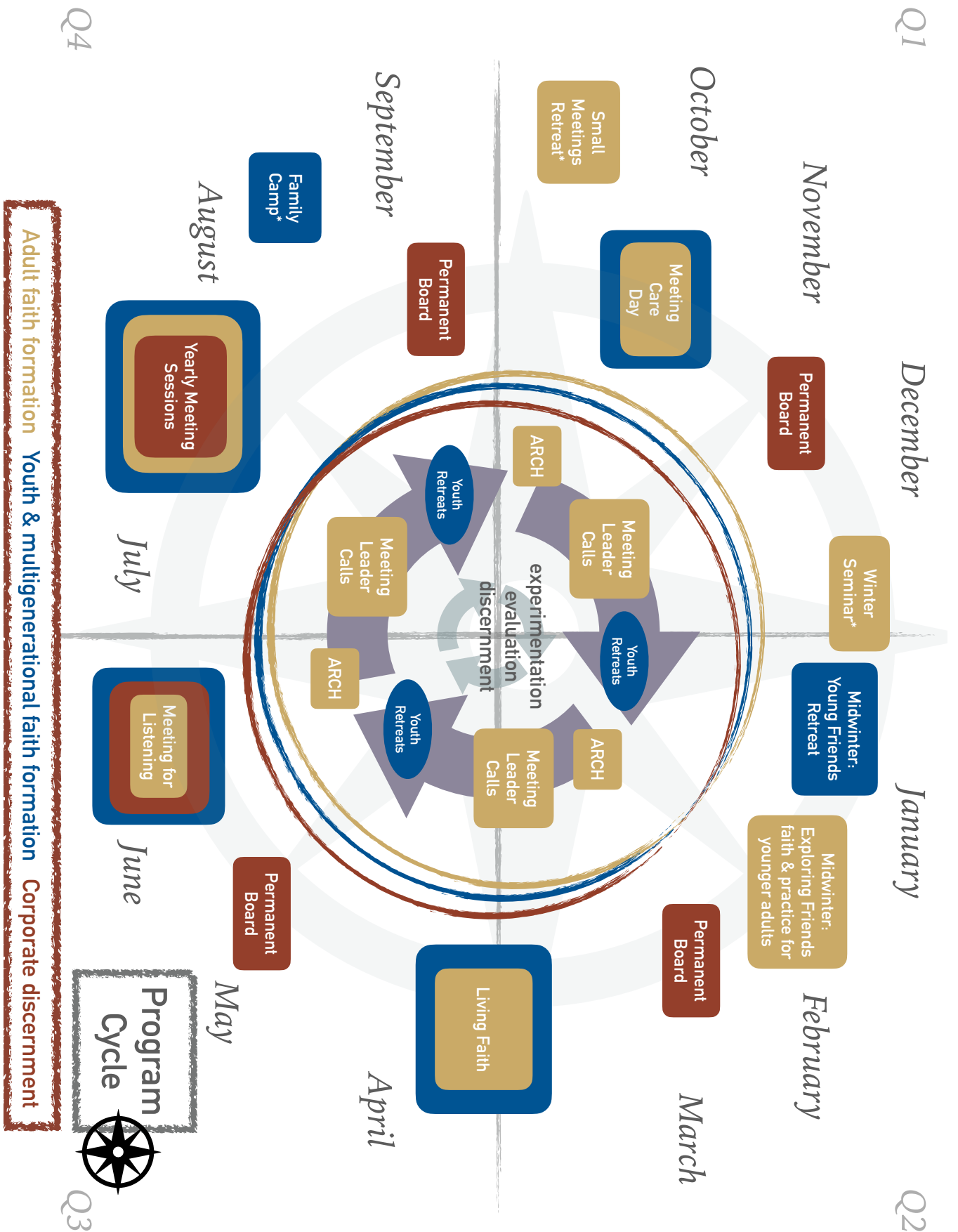
Looking back on the last year, there is so much to be grateful for. Indeed, in pausing to dwell in my appreciation, I find I can’t resist blowing past the suggested word limit for this report! Here is a significantly abridged list of happenings from the last year that I give thanks for and hope Friends are aware of:

- Continued, consistent participation from Friends serving in leadership roles in so many of our meetings in our monthly check-in calls for meeting leaders, an opportunity not only to share resources but more importantly to enliven the network of mutual support between meetings. (Email [nia@neym.org](mailto:nia@neym.org) if you are serving your meeting and aren’t on the email list for these calls, but would like to be).
- Workshops throughout the year that focus on particular areas of service to one’s meeting such as clerking, nominating, and financial stewardship, not only as a space for sharing best practices but to foster meaningful dialogue about the challenges and possibilities alive in our meetings now and to facilitate “peer circles” among those in similar roles across our Yearly Meeting.
- A fully enrolled and multigenerational cohort completing the most recent offering of the 9-month Nurturing Faithfulness program. This high-commitment, “deep end” offering was made possible by core teachers Marcelle Martin and Hilary Burgin; a wonderful group of teachers, elders, and associates (former students who serve as mentors and teaching assistants); and partnership with Woolman Hill and Beacon Hill Friends House, as well as to financial and staff support by NEYM. As one participant explains the power of such a program, “I know my spiritual development over the course of these nine months will take me places that I cannot now imagine.”

- A particularly rich midwinter retreat (held at Woolman Hill) for young adults on gifts, leadings, and vocational discernment, coordinated (with my direct support) by Eva Whittaker, and attracting not only young adults who have grown up Quaker but also a delightfully surprising number of participants exploring Quakerism for the first time as young adults. As one participant shared, “I came away from my first YAF retreat feeling more connected with and inspired by Quakerism. I realized I need to slow down and prioritize my spiritual development and healing.”
- Continued growth among the youth ministries staff and volunteers in tending to points of integration (with local meetings, with families, and between age groups), to our growing edges, and to offering weekend retreats for youth amid staffing transitions.
- The joy of the first Living Faith gathering in four years, held at Friends School of Portland this April, an opportunity for us all to grow multigenerational relationship through shared worship, fellowship, and spiritual nurture,
- The first year of our partnership with New York Yearly Meeting in expanding the Aging Resources Consultation and Help (ARCH) ministry to New England Friends, under the leadership of our ARCH Coordinator Patti Muldoon and thanks to funding from the Friends Foundation for the Aging.
- This June, our first Meeting for Listening, an opportunity for Friends to reflect on the life in local meetings and prayerfully consider how the Yearly Meeting’s programmatic priorities and activities might faithfully support the spiritual life of meetings in the coming year. (See the Program Cycle graphic on the next page for a visual overview of plans for the 2023–2024 program year).
- Receiving encouragement as I began my (very part-time) graduate studies in Program Evaluation through online courses at Michigan State University.

Everything listed above has gotten where it is due to shared, slow, sustained attention over long periods of time. Much work in the Yearly Meeting is like raising a child: You almost never see the growth day to day, but when you look back at what was one, two, or three years ago, it is incredible what our daily diligence can help to bring about.

Yet, with so much to celebrate, it would be a lie of omission to write a report only celebrating what’s been accomplished and where there are signs of growth and even thriving, without also plainly acknowledging where we are facing significant challenges and often find ourselves disappointed, overwhelmed, and stuck. Our wider world is in a liminal season, and so is the Religious Society of Friends; navigating rapidly changing terrain and a demographically and culturally historic generational transition, it is remarkably unclear what the next fifty years will look like for our world and our faith communities. Tending to collective efforts while living in these “in between” times can be confusing (“What’s going on?”), scary (“Will we be OK?”), frustrating (“Are we there yet?”), and exhausting (“When will it be easy again?”). More than anything, I see Friends asking many “Who are we now?” questions. Who are we now that many of our seekers and newcomers have never been a member of a faith community before? Who are we now that Sessions costs are rising and



fewer of us can volunteer? Who are we now that some of our meetings and many of our youth retreats are smaller? Who are we now that meeting for business no longer requires physical gathering? Who are we now that we've lost beloved and weighty Friends?

Surrounded by these uncomfortable questions and the immediate anxious reaction they can elicit, I can find myself tempted to leap into something (anything!) that looks as though it may yield quick results, to blame others when things don't come together as easily as I wish they would, and to act as though capacity limitations (such as my own need for rest) aren't real. Serving in an atmosphere saturated with grief and uncertainty requires moving at a slow but intentional pace. Grounding myself in prayer before each meeting can't be viewed as an "added bonus" to strive for when it's convenient, but rather as an essential discipline; taking space after each meeting for forgiveness and release of expectations threatening to turn into resentments is, likewise, as core to my service as anything I manage to get done.

Beyond reminding myself to move with steady care even when my to-do list and inbox are overflowing, I also have been prioritizing cultivating capacity—clearing space—for the efforts most central to the Yearly Meeting's purpose; making way for new Life by being discerning in how to steward my time and attention. I must regularly pause to ground myself in these intentions and the wisdom of Friends' discernment.

As I reach the end of this much longer-than-advised report, I'd like to leave you with a few affirmations my service has left me with this year:

- When staring at the yearning gap, first: be grateful.
- There is no "yes" to God's invitation too small to celebrate.
- Programming is not the purpose of the Quaker faith or the Yearly Meeting; programming is one way we attend to the possibility of our faith and the purpose of the Yearly Meeting.
- If you feel exhausted, ask if you might be lonely. Connect with others tending the same challenges. (Hint: If you are serving your local meeting, you can email me at [nia@neym.org](mailto:nia@neym.org) to receive invitations to calls with other meeting leaders; you could also consider attending Meeting Care Day this November)
- If we can't do it and be present to the movement of the Spirit, we are moving too fast or taking on too much.
- New times mean we will need to try new things. We must remember that not everything we try will be successful. We need to learn to fail well with each other.
- Don't ever let the heartache and the challenge steal your ability to be with Presence, to encounter the ending reality of that joy.

With humility and hope,

—NIADWYNWEN THOMAS

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### Teen Ministries Coordinator

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*Small and deep* has been the theme of my work with Young Friends and Quaker teens in New England this past year—fostering as much spiritual nurture and growth as I could with a relatively small number of events and attendees. We had three in-person Young Friends retreats for high schoolers, and one more which was a new experiment building a retreat for teens

(in middle and high school) around the Living Faith Gathering. This was particularly exciting because it combined peer support with plugging teens into the life of the wider community in meaningful ways—a vital growing edge for our youth programs. Over the course of the year, we explored what it means to be spiritual seekers, what the Quaker spiritual path feels like, and how being playful can help us be more present with each other and Spirit. It's hard for Quaker teens, and for us all, to push back against the worldly mandate to "succeed" in order to just be beloved children of God together. And yet we do it anyway!

As I leave this position, I notice how the Young Friends Program is a very different place than when I began volunteer staffing eight years ago. It used to operate like one of our big monthly meetings, with the diversity and infrastructure to meet many of the needs of its participants so that they were less likely to venture outside of their bubble for spiritual support. Now however, Young Friends is like a tiny local meeting. It's still just as deep and nurturing as before, and it can provide the safety, peer connection, and open door to Quakerism that teens need. And they need more than that to truly walk the Quaker path into adulthood. They need real purpose in their local meetings, they need Quaker adults to show them curiosity about their spiritual lives, and authentic relationships with Quakers that live near them. Most of all they need to be ministered to by Friends outside of the youth programs, to invite them into a radical kind of Quakerism that resonates with their lived experiences and gives them hope for a burning world.

I'm grateful for the trust this community has granted me in my service to Quaker teens, especially the teens themselves and their families. Every time I thought I might be changing things too much, you showed me gratitude, understanding, and confidence in my vision for the future of this program. I'm grateful for my staffers, especially the dedicated "usual suspects" who have shown up again and again for these teens and for me. You've made me feel so seen in both my joys and struggles with this work and shown me the care I didn't know I needed. I'm grateful to the three Friends serving on my support committee, and by extension Portland Friends Meeting, who have walked with me through this work with deep care, compassion, and tremendous patience. You taught me so much about what faithfulness and the call to ministry look and feel like. And I'm grateful to each one of you who have shown me how my work with teens has power that ripples into the rest of New England Yearly Meeting and into our future—even if it was just a quick anecdote told in line for dinner, or a short response in an email, or an exchange with a parent at the end of a retreat. Your reflections and affirmations fuel this work.

Next year the Young Friends Program will look similar in format, with some new faces, offering three weekend retreats plus an encore of the Living Faith Teen Retreat. I have complete trust in the incoming interim coordinator, Drew Chasse, to listen deeply to Young Friends and to Spirit to offer programming that is rich and nourishing. A small but mighty crew of dedicated volunteer staffers will offer continuity and accompaniment through this transitional time. We do not yet know who will fill the position of Young Friends Coordinator permanently, and the search is ongoing.

In God's hands.

Love,

—MAGGIE NELSON

## Committee and Board Reports

### Permanent Board

The Permanent Board has met five times since last year's Sessions and will be meeting on Saturday at this Sessions; all are welcome to attend. There is a complete record of our discernment and decisions on the [neym.org](https://neym.org/who/governance/decisions-discernment) website at <https://neym.org/who/governance/decisions-discernment>, which includes minutes and advance documents for each meeting.

We have had full agendas, as we undertake the work given to us by Sessions, heard regularly from our various working and resource groups, and received regular reports on our programs, spiritual nurture, finances, and the care of our community. We approved Carl Williams of Plainfield, VT, meeting as clerk of Ministry and Counsel, and Susan Davies of Vassalboro, ME, as the incoming clerk of the Permanent Board. The Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness working group is also under our care and is an active part of our meetings, as we are all invited to participate in the practice of noticing and interrupting patterns that hold us back and affirming those which lift us up. Yet, to seek to stop oppression is not enough, Isaiah reminds us in Chapter 58; we must actively engage in the business of liberation and justice for all creation.

We are bringing to you this year the requested laying down of the Earthcare Witness Committee and a transition to a new form for this essential work, as proposed last year and approved by Permanent Board in our Minute 22-62:

- that the new working title of the ongoing team of Friends called to this work be "Earth Quaker Justice Team"
- that PB recommend to Sessions 2023 to lay down the Earthcare Ministry Committee and to affirm and lift up the new Earth Quaker Justice Team and its work.

Other business before the Board includes our financial situation and proposed budget under the care and attention of the Finance Committee; a comprehensive restatement of fund balances by our Treasurer and Accounts Manager, and a three-phase plan for the review of our governance agreement with Friends Camp. This review invites us into a visioning session and celebration of the work of and our relationship with the Camp.

We are responding to the request from the Finance Committee to determine a process for discerning how financial contributions to other Quaker organizations is made. Finance determines how much in total is available to contribute but not how the organizations are chosen or how much to award to each. We have also approved the disbursements of the new Bodine-Rustin Fund, with thanks to the members of the Legacy Gift Committee for their stewardship of this endeavor and to those who suggested recipients.

We have been given the responsibility to care for the disposition of two meetinghouses no longer in use (N. Fairfield in Vassalboro Quarter and S. Pittsfield in Dover Quarter) and, as Salem Quarter is on sabbath and as approved at Sessions in 2022, to consider the recommendation from Fresh Pond Meeting that Three Rivers Worship Group be approved as a new monthly meeting.

We have also requested, and in many cases, received, updates from some of those traveling in the ministry beyond our yearly meeting under the endorsement of their home meeting, their quarter and the Permanent Board on behalf of the yearly meeting.

All of this work, and more, is undertaken with preparation, attention and deep listening, with the care and support of trusted staff, conscientious volunteers, and open meetings where all are invited to participate in the discernment. None of this work is separate from what is the uncertainty and incipient chaos present in the outer world, nor from the tensions and conflicts present in our own communities of faith. We remain seekers of unity, of wholeness, through being present to each other and to Divine will.

It has been an honor and a joy for me to to serve our community in this way, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity.

### Updates from Working Groups

The Israel-Palestine Resource Group has hosted conversations with Friends who know and love the region, Jennifer Bing and Max Carter, as another way for Friends in our region to learn more about life "on the ground." Here's a link to the conversation with Max: <https://neym.org/israel-palestine-resources-engagement>.

We remain concerned that a third human rights organization has reported that Israel is an "apartheid state" (<https://www.hrw.org/report/2021/04/27/threshold-crossed/israeli-authorities-and-crimes-apartheid-and-persecution> and <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/campaigns/2022/02/israels-system-of-apartheid/>) as well as by the ongoing detention of Palestinian youth, including a student at the Ramallah Friends School.

We are cognizant of how much financial support to Israel is included in the federal budget, which is addressed by both the American Friends Service Committee and Friends Committee on National Legislation. We look forward to a time of discernment and discussion as we consider the "No Way to Treat a Child" minutes coming back to us from 2021.

The Antiracism Consultation working group has been meeting regularly and has still not found a consultant to work with on behalf of the Yearly Meeting. We hope to have an update at Sessions about our ongoing discernment.

Please contact me directly if you have any questions before Sessions at [pbclerk@neym.org](mailto:pbclerk@neym.org) and please continue to hold the Board and our staff in the Light.

May we continue to be blessed with open hearts, inquiring minds and the gift of grace. May we take none of it for granted.

—LESLIE MANNING, CLERK

### Indigenous Boarding Schools (IBS) Research Group

Since February, we have co-opted four additional Friends to the working group: Gordon Bugbee, Emily Neumann, Evan McManamy, and Andy Grannell have joined Andrew Grant, Betsy Cazden, and Janet Hough. While sufficient for now, we look forward to welcoming engagement with Friends with Indigenous perspectives, when and as appropriate.

**Focus of our Work:** Since February Andrew spent three weeks at Haverford College, reading records held there at the Quaker and Special Collections Archives. These included records of the Associated Executive Committee of Friends for Indian Affairs (AECFIA), in which NEYM-Gurneyite participated, and personal papers of Enoch Hoag, a New England Friend who moved to Iowa and became an early superintendent of the Central Superintendency (now Kansas and Oklahoma) in what was then known as Indian Territory. There were some letters, general agency accounts, and reports from New England Friends, but we have not yet located class lists or detailed records of the schools under the collective care of Orthodox Friends or the particular care of New England Yearly Meeting. Janet spent three days with Andrew looking through records at Haverford. As clerk of the working group, she helps keep the group grounded and focused, while being open to what arises. Gordon's earlier reading of the digitized reports from Quakers who served on the Federal Indian Commission, and other published materials, has brought useful insight in considering the Yearly Meeting minute books for the President Grant era. Emily has joined in reading the early printed minute books, and helping organize an inventory of what we have found. Evan has focused on transcribing handwritten minutes. Andy Grannell had previously digitized NEYM minute books from 1945 onwards. From these, he has extracted Indian Affairs committee reports. Betsy continues to focus consideration of possible Wilburite involvement with Indigenous individuals and communities.

**Going forward:** In sharing our research questions, processes and findings with the Yearly Meeting, and in further refining our focus for reporting and interpreting what we have found, we see a need to include Indigenous participation, as well as to continue to build relationships with the wider web of Quaker yearly meetings and institutions. We welcome input from the Right Relationships Working Group as well as from interested individuals in the wider yearly meeting.

**Visibility:** We will be working to make sure that our research questions, process, and findings are visible both within and without the yearly meeting, and in ways that respectfully include Indigenous perspectives.

#### Updated plan of work

##### Gathering Phase (March–July 2023)

- Inventory primary texts from NEYM sources, starting with NEYM minutes and committee reports
- Tabulate relevant financial records; consider intangible assets as well
- Be alert for names and tribal identities of children enrolled in schools under the care of NEYM, as well as children from the NEYM region who were taken to Quaker boarding schools and children sent from NEYM managed schools to other boarding schools, such as the Carlisle Indian Industrial School.
- Identify key New England Quaker individuals who were teachers or who were involved in other aspects of the boarding school initiative

##### Reporting Phase, Round 1 (July and September 2023)

- Report to NEYM Sessions 2023, followed by ongoing regular reporting to Permanent Board.
- Work with others (Paula Palmer and other yearly meetings) to report of relevant findings to the U.S. Department of the Interior and to the National Native American Boarding Schools Healing Coalition (NABS),

possibly as a lead-up to Orange Shirt Day, 30 September 2023, a day in honor of the Indigenous children who were sent to residential schools and forced to assimilate into the dominant culture, and to remember the children who perished.

(<https://www.orangeshirtday.org/about-us.html>)

##### Interpretation Phase

- Consider publication of the findings, especially how relevant and sensitive information is conveyed to tribal partners, following a trauma-informed practice.
- Develop stories/narratives to move NEYM toward acknowledgment and repair.

##### Expanded Research

- Involve monthly and quarterly meetings in filling out information—personal biographies, artifacts, family stories—from the boarding school era.
- Use lists of NEYM Friends involved in this work to seek out correspondence, journals, artifacts, etc. to further illuminate the experience of Friends, and additional detailed information about the schools and students.

#### Right Relationship Resource Group

The Right Relationship Resource Group (RRRG) serves as a “resource to support local meetings in following their leadings to initiate and/or further develop relations with their Indigenous neighbors, and to help Friends learn from the ongoing experience of local meetings.” We are under the care of Permanent Board.

We were formed following the distribution of the “Apology to Native Americans” (in July 2022) after the working group charged with shepherding that work was laid down. Many members of that group have continued on the RRRG as new members joined us.

As we have endeavored to understand our new charge, we continue to have questions about what body is charged with responding to openings from the Indigenous community as a result of the Apology. Many of us were involved in the work of the Apology and we continue to carry a deep concern for how Friends prepare spiritually for this journey. How can we be a bridge between NEYM Quakers and our Indigenous neighbors now that the Apology has been delivered?

Many of us have been attending weekly meetings of Quaker Indigenous Boarding Schools, convened and facilitated by Andrew Grant, which bring together Friends from around the U.S. and Canada to share their research and learnings as we uncover more about our history and complicity in cultural genocide and erasure.

For Indigenous Peoples Month in November, we collaborated with Friends Peace Teams and the Beacon Hill Friends House to offer a hybrid, interactive workshop that was attended by more than 145 participants. The workshop, “Quakers and Indigenous Boarding Schools: Facing Our History and Ourselves” (<https://lu.ma/qibs22>), was created and led by Paula Palmer with Gail Melix (Herring Pond Wampanoag, East Sandwich) and Andrew Grant (Mt. Toby). It was supported by a grant from the Legacy Gift Funds and pay-as-led registration fees. The funding structure also provided for a contribution to the Wôpanâak Language Reclamation Project, <https://www.wlrp.org/> in Mashpee, MA. The recording of this workshop is available on the Beacon Hill Friends House website and has been used, especially by Paula Palmer, to

bring this material to Friends in various settings—colleges, yearly meetings, local workshops.

We supported Southeast Quarterly Meeting in welcoming the chiefs of the Allied Tribes to their March 19 meeting in Providence. The program included a presentation about the Pocasset/Pokanoket Land Trust's food access program, Indigenous Roots Forever, based in southeastern Rhode Island and Massachusetts. (For more information:

<https://www.pocassetlandtrust.org/quaker-community-shows-historic-support-for-new-england-tribes/>)

We helped facilitate a dialogue between Worcester meeting and the Pocasset/Pokanoket Land Trust for possible use of office and/or meeting space at the Worcester Meetinghouse.

In June, some of us joined with Quakers from Quaker City/Unity, NH, Meeting at the Ko'asek PowWow and were warmly welcomed by the chief and other tribal members.

We encourage Friends to attend a powwow this summer and offer these suggestions for how to show up: [bit.ly/42QZZSw](http://bit.ly/42QZZSw); and powwows in the Northeast: <https://wanderingbull.com/events/>.

Members of the RRRG are available to visit with your monthly meeting and we are eager to learn how meetings are engaging with our Indigenous neighbors. Please contact us at [rightrelationship@neym.org](mailto:rightrelationship@neym.org).

We look forward to connecting with Friends at Sessions. As of this writing we are planning two workshops and a meeting for listening: "What are Friends and Meetings doing? What do Friends need?" Check the *YM News* for time and location. SUZANNA SCHELL, CLERK; GORDON BUGBEE, ANDREW GRANT, DON CAMPBELL, SARA SMITH, KIM WEST, EMILY NEUMANN, LISA GRAUSTEIN.

### Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness

The Noticing Patterns of Oppression and Faithfulness Working Group has been living into a charge from Annual Sessions 2018: "to develop a practice to ... observe, name, and reflect back to us long-standing, unseen patterns and practices that result in our complicity in oppression," and which soon after expanded to include "to take up an active, persistent and loving practice of noticing and interrupting patterns of oppression and cultivating and affirming new patterns of faithfulness" across the yearly meeting. Staying engaged with this work when we bump into each other's tender feelings is a challenge for New England Friends. The working group tests our leadings in love and is aware of tensions expressed by the corporate body around the practice of noticing. We ask Spirit's guidance in seeking way forward with this transformative work.

There are some who respond to the noticing practice from a place of feeling really thirsty, and who experience this practice as bringing them water.

It has felt to others as if this practice is bringing them something poisonous. It can feel threatening to our beloved community to be asked to acknowledge unintended and unrecognized consequences of actions that reflect our complicity with systems of oppression.

All of us need to hold each other with compassion. This work is long, messy, difficult, and nowhere near complete. Let's consider together the following queries:

**What have been the unmet needs that are starting to be met by the noticing practice?**

**What is being lost or disrupted in the noticing process?**

**What can we learn from the answers to these questions?**

The Working Group looks forward to hearing how Friends are being led in this practice. We are eager to engage with your ideas, leadings and concerns during Sessions and throughout the year.

Thank you,

—MEMBERS OF THE NOTICING PATTERNS WORKING GROUP—  
POLLY ATTWOOD (CLERK), MELODY BRAZO, MELISSA FOSTER, LISA GRAUSTEIN, JANET HOUGH, BECKY JONES, PAMELA TERRIEN. ALSO, SUSAN DAVIES (ELDER FROM PERMANENT BOARD) AND MEY HASBROOK (ELDER FOR PB WITH THE NOTICING PRACTICE)

### Archives & Historical Records

This year the committee has continued its work with two primary foci. We have begun the work of creating a guideline records management and records retention policy for use by monthly meetings. We plan to provide guidelines on what meetings need to keep as well as what should be archived. We also met with interested Friends from Maine as a follow-up to last year's workshop and began planning for a workshop in Maine. In connection with this work, Andy Grannell has joined us and contributed to both our understanding of some of the needs of meetings in Maine as well as supporting the research efforts into Yearly Meeting participation and support of Indigenous boarding schools. We look forward to his appointment to the committee.

Elise Riley, the Yearly Meeting outreach archivist, supported meetings by providing reference or consultation via email on topics such as donation, preparing and organizing records, and historic records. She also worked specifically with Vassalboro, Dover, Mt. Toby, and Northeast Kingdom Monthly Meetings and NEYM's office to donate 1932 files to SCUA. She also initiated contact with the Maine Historical Society as part of the follow-up to the workshop she co-hosted on *Preserve Your History: Maintaining Your Quaker Meeting's Historical Records & Archives* held in 2022. Elise has been a real asset to the work of the committee as she has helped to define the role of outreach archivist. The committee has valued her professional advice and is grateful for her many contributions, including suggestions for fine-tuning the job description. We will miss her as she moves on at the end of April 2023.

We also want to acknowledge the work of UMass Amherst Special Collections and University Archives, which has found funding to digitize bound yearly, quarterly, and monthly meeting records. In addition, some funds remaining from our grant to them to complete the organization of records transferred from Rhode Island Historical Society will be used to digitize loose materials. SCUA gladly responded to a request to priori-



tize the digitization work to support the research on boarding schools

—CAROL FORSYTHE, CLERK

### Coordinating and Advisory

The Coordinating and Advisory Committee (C&A) shepherds the work of the Yearly Meeting in alignment with the core purpose and priorities articulated by the Yearly Meeting, and advises and coordinates the various committees, quarterly meeting leadership, staff, and other initiatives within the Yearly Meeting. The members of this committee hold a particular responsibility to build a culture of inclusive and sustainable leadership development. C&A is responsible for supervising and evaluating the work of the Yearly Meeting Secretary.

C&A is accountable to Permanent Board and to Sessions and coordinates the work of Yearly Meeting committees, striving to prevent duplication of effort and facilitate efficiency and effectiveness in the work of the Yearly Meeting. With a goal of ensuring alignment with Yearly Meeting priorities, C&A regularly reviews each committee's Purpose, Procedure, and Composition and works in consultation with the Committee in this task.

We are a group of Friends serving the Yearly Meeting who work collaboratively to support each individual member's role and responsibilities within the Yearly Meeting, to foster their spiritual gifts and strengths for that work, to foster creativity of approaches, and to enhance decision-making, all towards the goal of improving overall efficiency and effectiveness in the stewardship of our Yearly Meeting community. As a group we also provide the space for gathered reflection, consultation, and discernment around matters of concern within each individual committee member's sphere of responsibilities.

This year, we have held monthly meetings on Zoom with seasonal in-person weekend retreats in fall, winter, and spring. Through this regular interaction and cooperation, we have built trust and strong working relationships, ensured close communication, and built a Spirit-grounded and positive work environment. We are committed to supporting and encouraging the ongoing work of spiritual transformation happening in many different ways across our Yearly Meeting.

Some of the areas we have considered this year include:

- Ongoing support for the Nominating Committee, both strengthening the team, grounding, and in reducing burdens to its function.
- Implementing and shepherding recommendations for Spiritual Life, Ministry & Eldership.
- Encouraging establishment of a process to determine funding for other Quaker groups out of our Yearly Meeting's annual budget.
- Supporting the programming that nurtures local meetings and meeting leaders in clerking, recording clerking, nominating & naming gifts, stewardship, pastoral care, and more.
- Continuing encouragement of the Faith and Practice Revision Committee as it enters new phases of its work.
- Creation and beginnings of the work of the Meeting Accompaniment Group, which supports monthly and quarterly meetings.
- Supporting the new Ministry and Counsel clerk and planning for initiatives in Pastoral Care.

- Supporting the Friends Camp Revisioning process and the Legacy Gift Fund Committee's review.
- Shepherding the revision of the Purposes, Procedures, and Composition of the Youth Ministries Committee.

In our work together and in our individual roles serving the Yearly meeting, we are witness to how many Friends in New England are living into the Spirit. We are grateful for the support, feedback, guidance and prayer we have received throughout the year. We recognize that it is Divine Spirit that guides and provides the foundation upon which together we are all building our beloved community.

In all of the above, we serve with joy and love and commitment to the nurture of our Yearly Meeting.

—REBECCA LEUCHAK, PRESIDING CLERK

ON BEHALF OF COORDINATING AND ADVISORY COMMITTEE:  
SCOT DRYSDALE (FINANCE COMMITTEE CLERK), SARAH GANT (MEETING ACCOMPANIMENT GROUP CLERK), LESLIE MANNING (PERMANENT BOARD CLERK), SUSAN DAVIES (RISING PERMANENT BOARD CLERK), NOAH MERRILL (YEARLY MEETING SECRETARY), BOB MURRAY (YEARLY MEETING TREASURER), ELIZABETH REUTHE (SUPERVISOR OF THE YEARLY MEETING SECRETARY), JACKIE STILLWELL (NOMINATING COMMITTEE CLERK), NIA THOMAS (YEARLY MEETING PROGRAM DIRECTOR), CARL WILLIAMS (MINISTRY AND COUNSEL CLERK)

### Faith & Practice Revision

The Faith & Practice Revision Committee devoted its first two meetings this year to a review of all the documents that the committee has sent out to the monthly meetings; we also shared our spiritual autobiographies to help ground ourselves in a better understanding of each other and the work of the Yearly Meeting we are called to do. We reviewed documents with preliminary approval, draft documents that the committee is actively working on, and draft documents that were put aside. Some documents were put aside because we were unclear on how they would fit in the structure of the book and thus how they might be best edited. Some documents were set aside because the comments from monthly meetings indicated they needed serious rethinking.

Some documents were written to help the Yearly Meeting know how the committee was approaching the work, and were not meant to be part of the book.

As we reviewed these documents, we considered writing style and how it has changed over the iterations of the committee. We considered content and how to organize the remaining sections of the book. We noted in the committee's earlier work the writing was more succinct. Was it because the material covered (Worship, Corporate Discernment, Testimonies, A Peculiar People) was of a more spiritual nature than later topics (Membership, Marriage, Pastoral Care, Ministry & Counsel)? In the later topics we were repeatedly asked for more detail—meetings were asking for clarity on their responsibilities surrounding these topics and for guidance on how to approach these issues. With those question in mind, we set back to work.

In 2003, F&P sent the Yearly Meeting "A Peculiar People," a document we wrote for ourselves to clarify what it means to be a Friend. This year we went back to that document and revised it to serve as an introduction to the book. In the fall we will send it out to the monthly meeting for input. We have also reviewed the input from monthly meetings on the chapter on Ministry & Counsel and revised it to bring to Sessions for

preliminary approval. A small group within the committee has continued working on a text tentatively named “Responding to the Promptings of the Spirit,” which looks at how individual Friends are called to witness to their faith.

Our committee remains small. Although we gained two members over the past two years, this year one member resigned from the committee and we lost another member to cancer. Our numbers are still fewer than the intended sixteen Friends, and though we do not reflect the demographic diversity of the yearly meeting, we are grateful for our theological diversity, which does more closely represent the varieties of religious experience among the Quakers of New England. Our work together is not always easy but always contributes to our spiritual understanding and growth. We hope our chapters embody that seasoned discernment.

—PHEBE MCCOSKER, CLERK; DOUG ARMSTRONG, MARION ATHERN, MAGGIE EDMONDSON, ERIC EDWARDS, ELEANOR GODWAY, MARGARET HAWTHORN, CAROLYN HILLES, SUE REILLY

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### Finance

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The primary job of the Finance Committee is to oversee the Yearly Meeting’s finances and to propose budgets for future years. Projecting future income and expenses was complicated by COVID, but for the first couple of years our expenses and income were approximately equal. Unfortunately, last year’s actual results had a significant deficit; combined with a decline in the value of our investments, this meant our reserves fell well below the 25% of annual expenses specified in our policy. The Treasurer’s report ([page 10](#)) explains the many reasons for this shortfall.

We followed our usual procedure of appointing a budget subcommittee which met several times in early 2023 to come up with a draft budget for fiscal year 2024, which was then approved by the Finance Committee and passed on to Permanent Board for their comments. The budget that we developed is an austerity budget, and cuts expenses in several areas. However, the budget cut that we liked the least reduced the amount of donations to other organizations to zero for one year. Permanent Board was even less happy about this decision than we had been and suggested that we find alternatives. The Budget Subcommittee and Finance Committee seriously considered a number of possibilities, but eventually decided to make no change to the proposed budget. The reasons for our choices are explained in a separate Budget Commentary document ([page 10](#)).

Specialized endowed funds of the Yearly Meeting are invested in the NEYM Pooled Funds. Over the years income from the Pooled Funds was inconsistently credited to these funds. Former Treasurer Shearman Taber, current Treasurer Bob Murray, and Accounts Manager Frederick Martin have been working for years on an NEYM Funds Recalculation Project to determine the amounts that should have been credited and to correct the balances in these funds. This project was completed this year, and the Finance Committee reviewed and approved the recalculation, passing it on to the Permanent Board for final approval. The Treasurer’s Report will discuss more of the details of this project.

For several years the Finance Committee, the Treasurer, and the Accounts Manager have been planning for a review/audit of the NEYM finances. The last few budgets have set aside money to pay for this review. With the Funds Recalcula-

tion Project complete we decided that it was time to put out a Request for Proposals to several CPAs or accounting firms, inviting them to apply for this job. We hope to work with an accounting firm based in New England with experience working with churches. A committee consisting of Tom Corindia (clerk), Kathleen Wooten (recording clerk), and Noah Merrill will review these proposals, with help from Frederick Martin (accounts manager). They will recommend a CPA or firm to the Finance Committee. Finance Committee will select a CPA or firm and recommend them to the Permanent Board for final approval.

—SCOT DRYSDALE, CLERK

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### Friends Camp

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Dear Friends,

This report follows a meaningful and productive year for the Friends Camp Committee. At the time of writing, we are celebrating the start of a fully enrolled summer season. We are particularly grateful for this milestone, after the challenges of offering camp in the midst of the pandemic. This year our committee has experienced joys and successes in fundraising, maintaining our buildings and grounds, and in strengthening our relationships to each other and our commitment to the work of stewarding Camp. We are particularly excited about the visioning process and governance review that we have engaged in alongside NEYM. As we emerge from two difficult years and navigate changes in committee leadership, it has been particularly affirming to recognize the love for and commitment to Camp that exists within our committee, NEYM, and the wider Quaker community.

This year, our committee was composed of 15 members with diverse connections to Camp. Committee members include camper parents, former campers and counselors, and folks who are engaged in Quaker community. The committee includes members living throughout the New England region, including several in Maine and local to Friends Camp. Our committee met quarterly, including one in-person meeting on Camp grounds. Each of our committee members is involved in at least one sub-committee, including Development, Finance, Health and Safety, Personnel, Buildings and Grounds, and Nominating. Our sub-committees are active and engage in monthly meetings throughout the fall, winter, and spring.

This year we have also experienced bittersweet changes in leadership. In September 2022, our long-standing and much beloved clerk, John Reuthe, stepped down from the role. I am personally grateful for all of John’s care and support as I have transitioned into the role of clerk this year. As of our September 2023 meeting, three members will step away from the committee and two new members will join us. This September, our treasurer, Robb Spivey, will transition out of his role and Kate Monahan will begin a new term as treasurer. Our committee is profoundly grateful to both the outgoing and incoming treasurer for their work attending to Friends Camp’s economic well-being. We are also preparing to support members of Friends Camp staff as they assume temporary leadership roles while our Director, Anna Hopkins, is away on parental leave. Our committee is deeply appreciative of the planning, leadership, flexibility, and commitment of the Friends Camp staff!

Finally, it is worth noting that there is rarely a meeting where committee members do not express gratitude for

Anna and amazement at all she is able to accomplish! She is a thoughtful, loving, grounded, and enthusiastic advocate for Camp. Our committee and the camp community benefit immensely from her work. Thank you for reading, and I wish all a good summer and a joyful time at Sessions!

—NATALIE BORNSTEIN, CLERK

## Legacy Gift

The Legacy Gift Fund continues to support the movement of the Spirit among us.

Through offering two funding cycles each year, in spring and fall, we are nurturing and enabling Friends faithfulness to God's calls to witness and ministry.

In the past year **Witness & Ministry** funds have supported leadings such as developing right relationship with the land and the Indigenous people, research and a workshop on our historic relationship with Quaker Indigenous Boarding Schools, demystifying economic structures so that Quaker activists and others can use that knowledge in the fight against systemic oppression of people and the earth, and recording interviews with Friends carrying important ministries related to Quaker responses to climate change and care of the Earth, resulting in short videos.

**Requests and renewed life for Futures Fund:** We were asked by Salem Quarter if we would administer their funds while they are on sabbatical. Having lost the Futures Fund in 2020 when it was expended (as planned), Salem Quarter's funds are reinfusing the Futures Fund on a temporary basis—resulting in immediate requests. Already these funds are helping educate the Cambridge Friends School community and parents about Quaker values, and helping a Maine meeting rebuild their handicapped accessible ramp and rotting porches.

Funding for **time-sensitive requests** continues. In the last year we have helped Hal Weaver travel to London and Geneva to present about the Black Quaker Project and retrospective justice to the Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust and QUNO, helped a YAF coordinator attend Beyond Diversity 101 at Pendle Hill, helped a NEYM friend living abroad to bring a disabled Friend and assist at Sessions, and enabled a junior member of Fresh Pond Meeting (the only youth from New England) to travel to the FUM Triennial this summer in Nakuru, Kenya.

**The new Bodine-Rustin Fund:** We were asked by NEYM to apply our expertise in grant oversight to taking on the administration of this newly created fund. As this was the initial year, it took time to get started—figuring out the whole process, creating suggestion forms, and doing outreach to all NEYM meetings to get the suggestions of groups to support in this first year. A subcommittee, which included an NEYM FUM Representative, then reviewed the seven suggested organizations, researching each group, teasing out the needs and where limited funds might be most effective, and recommending funding amounts—first to Legacy Gift, then forwarded to Permanent Board for final approval and distribution. The funds (\$5,047.40 this year) have gone to a variety of groups. Of the seven groups proposed for funding, two are involved in Africa: FUST gets Ugandans threatened with prison or death because of who they are to safer places, while GALCK is a national organization in Kenya working on systemic levels, including education about rights, advocacy, and litigation. Three groups based in New England are providing asylum. Two groups support local teens and Pride events in CT and rural northern VT

where there is a high suicide rate for gay youth and this support is life-saving—perhaps differently than for those seeking asylum, but life-saving none the less. Being present with the oppression, trauma, and needs of these LGBTQIA+ groups was painful, and also inspiring—and joyful in being able to support their work without their having had to ask.

Dates for Fall cycle & Workshop: We encourage individuals carrying ministry or leadings, and Meetings with carbon reducing or other facility improvement needs to apply. Our next Deadline is October 21, 2023. Stay tuned for our workshop Tuesday evening Sept 26, 2023, on financially supporting ministry.

All of these funds spring from holy abundance. This year, the Futures Fund, which we were feeling the loss of since it had been expended, was blessed with renewed life. We have learned through all these years about watering the seeds of holy abundance and creating agency, employing minds and hearts to both invite and notice where the Light is moving and support it in shining ever more brightly.

## 2024 Legacy Gift Review Committee:

In 2014 New England Yearly Meeting created the Legacy Gift Fund from the money realized by the sale of the New England Friends Home and started giving grants to support the witness and ministry of Friends in New England. At the time, some of the money was designated to be fully spent, and that has happened. The other portion of the money was restricted for ten years, with grants made only from earnings. In 2024, the Yearly Meeting will discern where the life is for the future use of these funds. The 2024 Review Committee has been set up to collect and compile data and reflections on the experience of these first ten years and make recommendations for the future to Sessions next year.

The 2024 Review Committee is composed of Mary Link (Legacy co-clerk and convenor of the 2024 committee), Bob Murray (NEYM Treasurer), Suzanna Schell (prior clerk of Legacy Gift), and Fritz Weiss (prior NEYM clerk). We have been meeting every couple months for the past year, planning and beginning this review process. We have announced the review in the monthly email newsletter, pulled together a list and a map showing all individual grantees and meetings touched by Legacy Funds to date, and are in process of updating the slide show depicting the witness, ministry and building improvements that have been supported. To date, 40 of our 62 monthly meetings and 25 other related Friends' groups have been involved in a Legacy Gift grant, over half of them in more than one grant application.

As we want this review to include reflections from as many people as possible, we are about to send letters with questionnaires to all grantees, Monthly Meetings and other NEYM contacts. We look forward to getting your responses!

Here are some of the queries we are seeking responses to:

- What have we learned about supporting ministry among Friends over the past ten years?
- What has changed since 2014? How are we being called today?
- What advice do you offer for the Legacy Gift Funds for the next decade? How could these funds continue to help us answer God's call now?

We'd love to get your responses. Please contact us at [Legacy2024review@neym.org](mailto:Legacy2024review@neym.org).

—SUE ROCKWOOD AND MARY LINK, CO-CLERKS

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### Meeting Accompaniment Group

Sessions 2022 approved the creation of the NEYM Meeting Accompaniment Group. Permanent Board approved the clerk in September 2022 and additional members in February 2023. These Friends, together with the clerk of ministry and counsel, and ex officio members including the yearly meeting secretary and presiding clerk, come from each of the NEYM states but for Connecticut. We gathered together for the first time in March 2023.

Named qualifications for this service include: spiritual and emotional maturity, being a non-anxious presence, confidentiality, prayerful holding, gifts in oversight, pastoral care, boundary-setting, conflict resolution, communication, administration, and “love for and commitment to the nurture of local meetings as the foundation of Friends life together.”

Together, we strive to uphold these aspects of service. Many of us also carry particular concerns or expertise, for example, for children’s safety and programming, the life cycles of meetings, and stewardship of property. We learn well together and regularly consult with Friends for additional wisdom and support.

When invited by meeting leaders—typically by clerks of monthly meetings or quarters, as well as ministry and counsel clerks—we visit to listen, offering a prayerful “outside ear” to reflect what we hear, nurturing and supporting existing capacities within the meeting. We also offer resources as requested. Engagements have ranged from a single phone call to weekly meetings over a period of months, presence at worship and meetings for business, facilitation of threshing sessions, invitations to potluck discussions and meeting retreats.

In our first ten months, fifteen meetings, one quarter seeking support for care of two meetings, and one committee have sought this accompaniment. Additionally, we regularly listen for concerns named in State of Society reports, in monthly meeting newsletters, news from traveling Friends, participation in the monthly Meeting Leaders calls and other NEYM-sponsored events including Living Faith, the Meeting for Listening and participation in quarterly gatherings.

The work of the group is not to “fix,” but to listen and to connect meetings to resources that might be useful as they find—and are supported in—their own discernment practices grounded in the particular context of their community. Prayerful accompaniment is not “fixing,” but “making”—making perhaps some brokenness visible while also supporting the community’s role in making something new together, integrating the reality of our human brokenness into a common, wiser wholeness. This is spiritual work with administrative components, wrapped in pastoral love. When this works well, we may come to know and love each other even across differences, valuing our rich diversities.

Accompaniment reports regularly to monthly gatherings of Coordinating and Advisory, to raise up where needs exist and where programming or other resources might be useful.

Some themes are emerging as common concerns for accompaniment: behavioral issues and how to establish appropriate and loving boundaries; consideration of when buildings drain rather than enrich community life; and unclear administrative structures and processes, especially around meeting life cycles.

In service,

—SARAH GANT, CLERK

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### Ministry & Counsel

Dear Friends,

I was invited into this service last November, and after a long period of discernment and with the support of a clearness committee, I became clear. My name was approved by Permanent Board last February. And, though there is a title of “clerk” that feels inaccurate—as there currently is no committee. Perhaps emissary or delegate or shepherd might be more precise.

I’ve stepped into the role by listening. I listened at the Aging Resources Coordinating and Help (ARCH) program training, with the Meeting Accompaniment Group, at Noticing Patterns meetings and presentations, and at the monthly leadership calls. I’ve listened at Permanent Board and at Coordination and Advisory Committee. I’ve been grateful for a number of individual Friends who have contacted me about issues that weighed heavily with them. I’ve also “listened” to our State of Society reports and witnessed where there is spiritual life, as well the challenges we face and grief we carry.

And here’s what, at least in part, I’ve heard: I’ve heard that exploring new ways of supporting life and ministry has reinforced a willingness to continue on this path, though some of us remain uncomfortable with our experimental discernment. I’ve heard that we are both open to the process of forming a re-focused, re-vitalized committee in God’s time and that we wish God’s time moved a little faster. I’ve heard there is much joy amongst us, but also much pain and wanting; some of us are able to carry both—others of us are learning.

In the past four months two areas of care have moved forward. The planning of the Meeting for Listening—held at Concord Monthly Meeting and virtually the end of June—created an opportunity for friends to come together in worship, celebration, and discovery to reflect on the life in our local meetings and how the yearly meeting might be a support. Working on this with Nia Thomas, Program Director, and Sarah Gant, clerk of the Accompaniment Group, was a blessing. They provided gentle leadership in the planning and the opportunity to spend time with them was instrumental to me sliding into this service. Secondly, pastoral care and ways to support Friends and monthly meetings has become a focus in planning. Part of this is the resurrection of a Yearly Meeting list to share prayer requests, joys and sorrows.

So our experiment continues. I have no answers, but I know that if we sit with the Teacher in expectant waiting together, a path will open. Please, Friends, do not hesitate to let me know your thoughts on where the life of the Spirit abides among us.

In the faith that nurtures and challenges,

—CARL WILLIAMS, CLERK

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### Moses Brown School Report

Under Interim Head of School Ron Dalgliesh’s leadership, the Moses Brown School community has been finding its way back to normal after the pandemic. We look forward to welcoming our new Head of School, Katie Titus, beginning July 1. Katie’s experience aligns beautifully with our needs and commitments, and there is much excitement about her arrival.

Senior leaders continued engagement with Quaker business practices, focusing on transparency in decision authority, input, and outcomes. Engagement with process and transparency is an important part of our Quaker identity, and as adults become more experienced we can better support students’ use

of business practice. A group of rising seniors is eager to support this project in the Upper School.

A survey of faculty and staff this spring shows a consistent commitment to our ideals, as well as a widespread desire to learn more about Quaker practices and tenets. Integrity, equality, and community have been guiding lights through the challenges of COVID. Quakerism tends still to be more ‘caught’ than ‘taught’ (as in many Quaker schools) and students arriving later at MB may have gaps in their understanding. These insights will inform the development of programs for new students, employees, and families, as well as for ongoing support.

A new All-School Quaker Life Committee supports the Director of Friends Education in three key areas: institutional service; practice development; and student support. This committee will bridge separations across divisions and enable colleagues and students to compare experiences and learn from challenges, coordinate initiatives, build cross-divisional skills, and support student voice and concerns.

The Bayard Rustin Center for Peace and Belonging, opened this year. It includes the offices of Friends Education, Wellness, and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion. The naming of the Center honors Rustin’s concern for the marginalized, which drove him to speak out powerfully against injustice. The Center provides spaces for various campus groups and offers a place for collaboration and “angelic troublemaking.” (As an example, see this land acknowledgement mural: [https://docs.google.com/document/d/152hKftk\\_vvZaAjClo9-ZQu9xCIKbSwVICHYnIMjGaok/edit](https://docs.google.com/document/d/152hKftk_vvZaAjClo9-ZQu9xCIKbSwVICHYnIMjGaok/edit), designed and painted by Anishinaabe student Lily Larson, Class of 2023, as part of her senior project.) Next September, the Rustin Center will host Paula Palmer (Boulder Meeting) and Gail Melix (East Sandwich). Thanks to a generous grant from the Obadiah Brown Benevolent Fund, students will learn about the work of Friends to address and heal from past injustices inflicted on Indigenous people.

In February, five Upper School students attended the Quaker Youth Leadership Conference at Sandy Spring Friends School in MD. They returned empowered, eager to help facilitate Meeting for Worship and bring greater attention to student conversations on testimonies. In October and April, three MB educators attended Friends Council on Education’s Spirited Practice and Renewed Courage program, which draws on Parker Palmer’s mentoring model for teachers. In a series of four workshops over two years, Friends school educators from across the US immerse themselves in Spirit-led discovery, reflection, and sharing. The relationships that have evolved are profoundly enriching, for both the participants and the schools they serve.

If Friends have questions or would like to hear more details, please contact me at [jmcfadden@mosesbrown.org](mailto:jmcfadden@mosesbrown.org).

—JENNIFER MCFADDEN, DIRECTOR OF FRIENDS EDUCATION

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## Nominating

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In order to help Friends answer God’s call, the Nominating Committee identifies, encourages, and nominates Friends with the gifts and skills needed to serve in a wide variety of volunteer roles on behalf of the Yearly Meeting. In this work, the Committee seeks to remove barriers to the full expression of the spiritual gifts and skills given through each Friend, to support the building up and thriving of local Friends meetings.

This work includes, in its fullness, understanding the vision of the Yearly Meeting and what is needed to live into it; leadership development and capacity-building; nurturing a culture of healthy evaluation and feedback; and expressing gratitude and recognition for faithful service in its many forms.

This second year of Nominating Committee integration has been an opportunity to continue learning new ways of doing our work together. While our committee membership has diminished to 7, our work continues to be Spirit-led while prioritizing the health of our Yearly Meeting. In doing this work together, we have found both great joys and some huge challenges, recognizing that God is in charge while each of us does our best to live into what we are called to do with the time and energy available to us.

Realistically, in a changing culture with fewer people available to volunteer, there are pieces of work we haven’t been able to attend to because there are not enough people sharing the work. We are especially grateful to LouAnne McDonald, Willa Taber, and Honor Woodrow for their diligent and faithful service on Nominating Committee; they will be rotating off this year to serve in new ways.

One of our biggest joys this year was launching the Meeting Accompaniment Group. We also offered two workshops on Best Practices in Nominating, and created a 10-minute video describing the wholistic components of nominating work that was shared at the monthly meeting leadership check-in call in April. Resources for nominating can be found on the NEYM website: <https://neym.org/strengthen-your-local-meeting/care-one-another/nominators>.

Writing a description for each opportunity of service that includes the job description, current situation, and gifts desired has provided clear communication to support us in raising up names, and for individuals in seeking clearness to serve. We hope this practice will ripple out to everyone who has not yet discovered it.

What are some of the challenges? Over time and with changes in the Yearly Meeting, the work of the Youth Ministries committee has evolved. Therefore, the committee has been on pause since August 2022, while the Purposes, Procedures and Composition have been under review. A revised draft was shared with members of Youth Ministries and Coordinating & Advisory, and forwarded to Permanent Board. (The revised Youth Ministries Committee PP&C appears on [page 12](#).)

We have encountered a similar situation with the Racial, Social, and Economic Justice Committee. This committee has been on pause as the Yearly Meeting works together to better understand our collective vision for this work. The Permanent Board Antiracism Consultation working group is earnestly seeking a consultant to help us more clearly understand and define this work as a Yearly Meeting. Friends have offered to serve on RSEJ committee; however, no action will be taken until the new definition emerges, with an updated PP&C, so that Nominating is clear what gifts and service are needed.

The over-abundance of Nominating Committee work has been balanced with a healthy practice of gratitude for what we have accomplished, clear focus on next steps, and letting go of some exciting opportunities until the future. We are enormously grateful to staff for the support with record keeping, planning events, and introducing new Friends to us to cultivate gifts.

As a committee we love our work and are looking for ways to promote a general awareness among monthly meetings of what opportunities for service are available with the yearly meeting. This doesn't have to mean accepting a huge job; taking on a small role can be very helpful. Working groups and specific projects also need your gifts.

Nominating Committee work requires a broad variety of gifts and skills. Might you be called to serve on the NEYM Nominating Committee? For a complete description see the Purpose, Procedures & Composition on the NEYM website.

Thank you to each of you for sharing your gifts. We look forward to connecting with you and growing together during the coming year.

With Light and Love,

—JACQUELINE STILLWELL (NOMINATING@NEYM.ORG)

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### Puente de Amigos

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The Puente de Amigos Committee is responsible for maintaining the Bridge of Love between NEYM and Cuba Yearly Meeting (CYM). With the easing of the pandemic, we have been able to send two delegations to Cuba under our care in the past year. There are solid plans for another to go in September. Each delegation carries financial support for CYM raised by the Puente contributory fund. We also carry goods and medical supplies. The leadership of CYM discerns how best to disperse the funds and goods. Each delegation goes through a clearness process with their monthly meeting and with the Puente Committee. They also meet over several months to create a functioning spiritual group among themselves.

Through the reports of visitors, we learn of significant food and fuel shortages, exacerbated by high inflation. The community is further strained by the emigration of young people. Visitors report on the strength of the spiritual communities despite these circumstances. When we ask Cuban Friends whether our visits are a burden, they insist that the benefits of intervisitation far outweigh the costs.

Late last year a member of our committee from Portland Monthly Meeting traveled to Cuba with the FUM Living Letters program in which she learned of a need for medical supplies. As the group from Portland and Durham Meetings prepared for their trip, they gathered the supplies needed. The delegation consisted of Kim Bolshaw from Durham and Sue Calhoun, Hannah Colbert, and Fritz Weiss from Portland. They attended the annual sessions of Cuba Yearly Meeting and visited many Monthly Meetings, including their sister Meeting, Velasco.

In June Benigno Sanchez-Eppler of Northampton Meeting visited to offer support to the pastors of Cuba Yearly Meeting. Due to extensive emigration, there are not enough pastors to go around, and there is a lack of lay leadership to assist pastors or provide leadership. Benigno sent back moving daily epistles about his ministry and his experience of living and worshiping among our Cuban Friends. We know from Jorge Luis Peña, clerk of CYM, that Benigno's visit was exceedingly enriching.

In September two members of Providence Meeting will travel to Havana to offer training in Alternatives to Violence for Friends from all around Cuba. They are planning the work jointly with Kirenia Criado Perez, pastor of Havana Meeting, and Jorge Luis Peña, and a Friend from Mexico. A generous gift from Hanover Meeting will cover travel and accommodations for Friends from eastern Cuba. This is the first time that Puente has supported such a delegation.

Plans for trips in 2024 are taking shape.

Lastly, we received a request from CYM for funds to begin repairs to the pastor's home in Puerto Padre. This is an historic house, built in the early 20th century by missionaries from the US. Benigno Sanchez-Eppler delivered the funds, and we have pictures of the supplies already purchased.

We know from our communications in person and on WhatsApp, that our connections are very important to Cuba Friends. They yearn for contact through the sister meeting relationships. They want to be included and remembered.

—CAROLYN STONE & RICHARD LINDO, CO-CLERKS

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### Sessions

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Sessions planning always begins with a look backwards at the previous year. In 2022 we held our first hybrid meeting at Castleton. From the COVID safety point of view, it was a perfect year with no cases at Sessions and none reported afterwards. From a hybrid point of view, while the Tech Team was amazing, we could see areas where better communication with the online community would have made a better experience. This year we have an online experience coordinator who is embedded in the planning process and will be very active at Castleton during Sessions. Deeper consideration of the contra dance has led us to turn that night into a broader themed "block party" that we believe will be more inclusive of all interests at Sessions (and a lot of fun).

The reorganization of the large, monolithic Planning Committee into five focused teams is now in its second year. In my experience, the five team approach has been a success with clear lines of responsibility for almost all planning activities. I could go on about the many ways that I have seen these teams work long hours and struggle faithfully to create plans for Sessions. Just one small example: the Theme and Speakers Team has historically been focused on getting speakers for a single year's program. But this year the Team took it upon itself to begin considering the advantages of multi-year planning for speakers. This would help provide more continuity and would allow us to consider popular speakers whose calendars have very long lead-times. This wasn't in the Team's mandate but they saw a way to make Sessions better, and they pursued it. I see this dedication over and over again in the professional staff and in others in positions of responsibility for planning.

Before starting as clerk of Sessions planning, I had the impression that the planning was the key to making Sessions a success. The more work I do in planning, the more my view is changing. While planning is absolutely necessary, and insufficient planning will ruin the experience, the real heart of a successful annual gathering is in the attenders who reach out and give their gifts to us all; from the bookstore to the healing center to the golf carts; from people who make the tech work possible to the dozens of elders deepening worship and meetings for business; and especially the youth staff volunteers who nurture the life blood of our future gatherings; you are the beating heart of New England Yearly Meeting.

It has been a good year and I look forward to the fruits of our labor in August.

—PHILLIP VEATCH, CLERK

## Reports of Representatives to Other Quaker Organizations

### American Friends Service Committee

Connecting for Lasting Change, the theme of American Friends Service Committee's hybrid Corporation meeting, emphasized "relationships among Friends, with staff and community partners, and throughout a world in powerful need of lasting change."

Recordings of Ambassador Andrew Young's inspiring keynote speech, workshops, and a panel discussion with heads of Quaker agencies can be found on YouTube (<https://youtu.be/e2hpbJGLWQ>).

The retiring Interim Board Clerk opened AFSC's 2023 Corporation meeting by praising "the power of Quaker process" and summarizing the work of several committees: Community, Equity, & Justice; Governance; Stewardship & Finance; and the Board Program committee.

The General Secretary followed with her report in which she signaled "a new era of Quaker engagement" and said that "we need to listen deeply." She also noted that during this year the Board had approved recommendations for restructuring both the staff and complementary governance structures—designed to support implementation of the current Strategic Plan, passed in 2020 and available here.

The Friends Relations Committee arranged threshing sessions to hear Corporation members—both in person and online—exchange views on seven queries of interest to Quakers everywhere. One was how to reground conversations of faith between Friends and AFSC; others included the liaison network, evaluation, and diversity. Become involved by going to AFSC's updated Friends Engage web page.

—SUBMITTED BY SCOTT RHODEWALT

### Friends Committee on National Legislation

This is an abridged version of a report by Mary Lou Hatcher, clerk of the FCNL General Committee. The full report is available on the FCNL and NEYM websites.

In the past year, FCNL has played critical roles in these areas:

- Bringing congressional attention to U.S. complicity in the Saudi-led war in Yemen.
- Addressing the legacy of Indian boarding schools.
- Advancing environmental justice and addressing climate change.
- Compensating people exposed to nuclear testing.
- Advocating for diplomacy and peacebuilding to bring about a just solution to the war in Ukraine.
- Setting FCNL's legislative priorities for the 118th Congress (2023-24). More than 250 meetings, churches, and individuals took part in this process. See [fcnl.org/](http://fcnl.org/) priorities for the priorities statement approved at Annual Meeting.

This year, FCNL's Policy Committee is requesting input around how FCNL's policy statement should address issues of reproductive health care, including abortion.

FCNL has recommitted itself to antiracism, anti-bias, justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in all aspects of our work.

FCNL is working to reduce partisanship and address the root causes of division in our country. We are building new partnerships with networks such as Braver Angels, Faiths United to Save Democracy, and the TRUST Network.

—BETSY CAZDEN, SCOT DRYSDALE, AND HOLLY WEIDNER, REPRESENTATIVES

### Friends Peace Teams

"We cry for justice. We cry for healing. We cry for peace."

Listen to FPT voices around the world:

"We acknowledge the genocidal crimes against Indigenous peoples, ...complicity, and the transgenerational trauma. We call for an end to the vestiges of white supremacy in our hearts... and our societies. We commit to working for justice... among all peoples." FPT Epistle 2022

"We experience equal partnership- we work in schools, workplaces and religious institutions. We make a difference between people who usually don't talk, or don't even like each other- people in prisons and gangs. Join us in creating cultures of peace." Rosie (Aotearoa)

Here on Turtle Island, many at FPT are considering acts towards reparative justice. NEYM is accounting for our involvement in running Indian Boarding Schools. What is the impact, even today of taking Indigenous children out of the home?

"We work on a people-to-people and a program-to-program approach." says Ruwaidah (Indonesia). FPT's facilitators work in countries such as Ukraine, Rwanda, Honduras, Nepal, Palestine, and Korea. Our workshops include Healing from Trauma, and Creating Cultures of Peace (peace libraries).

FPT works with survivors and perpetrators, sometimes in the same workshop. "FPT has compassion for people, and with healing we are assured that transformation will prevail." Judith (Kenya)

I attended a FPT workshop where Chechnya teachers taught 12 year olds how to be respectful to peers who are gender non-conforming. I laughed. It was incredulous, watching cis-gendered boys break stereotypes. FPT invites us to release ourselves from the dominant pattern. In a strange way, Jesus of Nazareth popped to mind. Jesus healed those mistreated in Palestine. Healing and Liberation are twins. Laughter helps.

What does Spirit ask of us to heal injustice? Join us!

—MINGA CLAGGETT-BORNE

### Friends General Conference

For a fuller report on the year at Friends General Conference (FGC), see the NEYM website. I have decided to use my short Advance Documents report space on Gathering highlights:

By the time this report is shared, the first in-person Gathering in three years will have been held at Western Oregon University in Monmouth, OR (July 2–8). The organization is balancing the needs of many constituents in its Gathering planning, and experimenting with new forms, including Young Adult and Youth (YAY) Gatherings in alternate years and hybrid multigenerational events.

FGC is excited to announce that the 2024 Gathering will be held in person and virtually at Haverford College June 30-July 6, with additional dormitory space available at nearby Bryn Mawr College. The Gathering has not been held in the Northeast since 2014 and it is likely to be a long time till it is in this region again. The greatest concentration of FGC Quakers is in the Northeast and it is hoped that the attendance numbers will return to pre-pandemic scale. I hope that we will have a strong showing of NEYM Friends, including first-time attenders who have not had the opportunity to be part of a Gathering within

driving distance. Plan to come for a week of worship, workshops, singing and fellowship among Friends!

Looking further out, the Gathering in 2025 will be an in-person YAY event with a virtual program for other attenders. The 2026 Gathering will be in person.

FGC is starting to form a committee to help plan next summer's Gathering. There are many ways to be involved. Consider signing up as a volunteer on the FGC website, [www.fgc-quaker.org](http://www.fgc-quaker.org).

—CAROLYN HILLES-PLANT, REPRESENTATIVE