

Faith and Practice Revision Committee Annual Report 2025

This year the Faith & Practice Revision Committee welcomed two new members. We are grateful for their fresh energy on the committee. One longtime member retired. Once again, we took time at the beginning of our year to review where we stand with the work still before us. This year we have continued work on a chapter on the meeting as a spiritual community and a chapter on testimony.

In 1999, the Review Committee which recommended the writing of a new Faith & Practice noted the need for an F&P that was descriptive, one that reflected the reality of the YM today rather than an authoritative, prescriptive document. They also noted NEYM was now largely a YM of Friends who came to the Society as adults. They fully expected this would mean there would be new topics in both the faith and the practice parts of the book.

We have taken to heart that F&P may be a significant resource for those newer to the faith; the book needs to be both a reference for monthly meetings and an introduction for newer Friends. We have begun work on a new chapter on the meeting as a spiritual community which, through a series of shorter sections—pastoral care, leadership, education, etc.—is intended to help a newer Friend see how the spiritual life of the meeting is tied to the faithfulness of its members and to a sense of community.

In response to a questionnaire the Revision Committee sent out in 2002, many monthly meetings asked for a more thorough discussion of the testimonies. The 1985 F&P does not have a section focused on testimony. In 2008 the Revision committee sent a draft chapter to the monthly meetings titled “The Meaning, Understanding and Use of Testimonies.” The monthly meetings were clear that the chapter was not what they were looking for. The Revision Committee put that draft aside. When we returned to the chapter last year, we worked to respond to the request for a more detailed description of SPICES as testimonies, all the while maintaining the understanding of early Friends that simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship are the outward manifestations of the fruits of the inward spiritual life. We will be bringing the chapter to Sessions this year for a listening session and sending it on to the monthly meetings in the fall for review.

Our committee remains small, yet we believe our membership reflects the theological diversity among Friends in New England. Our work together is not always easy but always contributes to our spiritual understanding and growth. We trust our chapters embody that seasoned discernment.

Phebe McCosker, clerk

Marion Athearn Carolyn Hilles-Pilant

Maggie Edmondson Bruce Neumann

Eric Edwards Alana Parkes

Eleanor Godway Susan Reilly

Margaret Hawthorn (co-opted)