

2025 Report from the Coordinating and Advisory Committee

The Coordinating and Advisory Committee (C&A) shepherds the work of the Yearly Meeting in alignment with the core purpose and the priorities articulated by the Yearly Meeting. It advises and coordinates the work of 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. The Committee holds close to our collective heart(s) the condition of the whole body of Friends in New England.

Made up of various leadership positions, C&A takes on work as requested by the Permanent Board (PB) or Sessions and may, based on our discernment, bring concerns or proposals to PB. It is important to note that C&A has no independent authority to make important decisions or policy changes. In our work we support each other, providing an opportunity to share our joys and concerns, to give feedback and encouragement. Underlying all that we do is our commitment to listening for the guidance of Spirit, the divine grounding which, when profoundly present, gives us the strength to engage in this challenging work. There is substantial synergy between service domains of the Yearly Meeting that is supported through communication among members of the Committee. The group often functions as a sounding board for creative responses to concerns that arise in the body of New England Friends.

Current committee membership includes: presiding clerk of the Yearly Meeting, clerk of the Permanent Board, clerk of Ministry and Counsel, clerk of the Finance Committee, clerk of the Nominating Committee, clerk of the Accompaniment Group, Yearly Meeting treasurer, Yearly Meeting secretary, the Yearly Meeting secretary's supervisor, and the Yearly Meeting program director. C&A meets monthly via Zoom and gathers in person for working retreats three times a year: fall, winter, and late spring.

Some of the shepherding work we engaged in this year:

Ministry and Counsel: Ongoing support for the flourishing of initiatives for care of the Yearly Meeting's spiritual health including the unfolding strengths of the Meeting Accompaniment Group and the formation of the Ministry and Elders Group. We provide encouragement and a sounding board for planning events such as the Meeting for Listening Day and the Day of Discernment, which afford Friends the opportunity to share our understandings of, and aspirations for, our faith community.

Fiscal priorities and drafting of the Annual Budget: This is a standing responsibility to support the Finance Committee and Yearly Meeting treasurer in their work and in gathering input on what Friends consider to be priorities with potential impact on the budget.

Development initiatives: Overall concerns for fiscal prudence and responsibility have necessitated creative thinking about the stewardship of the organization through sustainable, creative ways of fund raising. The Committee supports the efforts of our Secretary and advisors in this work.

Purposes and procedures: Another standing responsibility of C&A is the periodic review of the purpose, procedures and composition documents of each of the standing committees of Yearly Meeting, as charged by Sessions minute 2019-46. Some of the committees whose Purposes, Procedures, and Composition have been reviewed fit well with the current needs of the YM and need only minor adjustments. A few other committees have needed more time to reflect on how their PP&C can responsibly meet the changing needs of our yearly meeting in these times. C&A recognizes that some committees are standing groups that support overall administrative work of the Yearly meeting, while others hold responsibility for serving and supporting the monthly and quarterly meetings and Yearly Meeting as these communities engage with and witness to specific concerns of peace and social justice.

Permanent Board: C&A works closely with this body to improve coordination of our responsibilities with the priorities and needs of the Permanent Board. We have witnessed an increasing sense of working together and enthusiasm for mutual support towards our common vision and goals. Communication between these bodies is increasingly more open and coordinated to the benefit of the Yearly meeting, local meetings, and quarters. Together we have explored how in our faith community, as a working partnership, we can be an example and witness of Spirit at work in the world.

Nominating: We recognize the vital role of this committee within the Yearly Meeting in helping us all live into our vision. We are keenly aware of how substantial volunteer service is essential for the health of our faith community. Friends who step in to help, connect and enrich us and strengthen our community. And by their efforts, Friends make an impact and expand the reach and effectiveness of our corporate witness. C&A is supporting the Nominating Committee as it transitions this year into new leadership. We affirm the Yearly Meeting's commitment to a healthy and faithful nominating process.

Sessions planning for 2026 and beyond: Sessions visioning over the past year has been an evolving and broadly consultative process supported by C&A. The process has given Friends in the Yearly Meeting the opportunity to engage with each other in deep discernment and imagining of new forms. The actual planning will move forward thanks to Sessions planners and

staff, with continued engagement of C&A, and with clear communication to Friends of the status of this work. More will be shared during meeting for business this week.

Witness committees: Support of current and emerging forms of witness (such as resource groups and mutual support opportunities) continues to be a part of C&A's work. We have had a number of conversations about how witness is (and sometimes is not) supported around the YM. How can our approach to witness better integrate with and build upon the discernment of local and quarterly meetings?

Quarterly Meetings: The nurture of the life of Quarterly Meetings through planned gatherings of clerks to share news, resources, and concerns has been a key initiative of the Permanent Board this year which C&A has supported through consultation and advice.

The above is a glimpse of the breadth and scope of the attention and care that the Coordinating and Advisory Committee brings to our Yearly Meeting community. We strive to hold a perspective which is Spiritually grounded and wholistic, remaining keenly aware of the need for all Friends of New England Yearly Meeting to discern how and where each of us might lend our assistance in supporting our Quaker community and nurturing the presence of God's infinite love throughout New England and the wider world.

Rebecca Leuchak
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Yearly Meeting Presiding Clerk