

**FAITH AND PRACTICE**  
  
of the  
**Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting**  
  
of the  
**Religious Society of Friends**

Adopted June 1949  
Revised August 1957  
Second Revision March 1961  
Third Revision February 1971  
Fourth Revision July 1993  
Updated March 2003  
Updated March 2007

The Religious Society of Friends of Pittsburgh  
4836 Ellsworth Avenue  
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania 15213

Information updated 2003 on the following pages:  
Front Cover, Inside Cover, 2, 3, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 24,  
25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 37, 45, 46, 47, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55

Information updated 2007 on the following pages:  
Front Cover, Inside Cover, 9, 10, 11, 35, 39, 41, 42  
All previous references to Oversight Committee have been changed to  
Clearness and Care Committee.

Committee members  
for fourth revision:

Brigitte Alexander, Convener  
Dorothy Bower  
Peter Broad  
Leonora Cayard  
Wallace Cayard  
Sally Dewees  
James Kuhn  
Richard McCoy

Committee members for  
2003 updated version:

Brigitte Alexander  
Leonora Cayard  
Wallace Cayard

Committee members for  
2007 updated version:

Dolores Avner  
Rosemary Coffey  
Nancy E. James

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## INTRODUCTION

Friends have no creed or fixed doctrine, but cherish the fundamental Quaker faith that the Inner Light, the light of Divine Truth, is in every human being. We are concerned that the religious life have ample room for growth in the Spirit, unfettered by limiting words or formal articles of faith. Yet Friends individually and as a religious society have felt the need for a document called a "Book of Discipline," or today, in most meetings, "Faith and Practice," to guide them in their life as Friends.

The Faith and Practice describes the system of order by which the Meeting seeks to remain true to its principles and help its adherents to live in accord with them. It sets forth as guideposts not only the attitudes and experience of Friends but also the practices which Friends meetings have tested and revised over the years. Each Faith and Practice therefore reflects the attitudes, the experience, and the unique approach to Quakerism of a given body of Friends at a particular time and place. This Faith and Practice describes Quaker beliefs and practices that Pittsburgh Friends find valid today.

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, with which Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting is affiliated, has not adopted a book of Faith and Practice. However, in 1949 Pittsburgh Friends developed their own Book of Discipline to meet their needs and to establish the Meeting's organization. This is an updating of the fourth revision of that document.

Our history shows that our book of Faith and Practice is dynamic, not static. It reflects changes in society and religious outlook and our response to those changes. At the same time it affirms Quaker openness and obedience to Truth. Thus it is constantly under scrutiny for timeliness and relevance, and periodic changes are welcomed, even expected, while the basic principles remain unchanged.

PART I  
THE SPIRITUAL LIFE OF THE MEETING  
HISTORY OF THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF FRIENDS<sup>1</sup>

The Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) is a fellowship that had its beginnings over three and a half centuries ago in England. In 1643, nineteen-year-old George Fox began a search for something that would give a sense of meaning and purpose to his daily life. Neither his family nor ministers of the established church nor people of other religious groups were helpful. Four years later, when all hope of finding human help was gone, he heard a voice which said, "There is one, even Christ Jesus, that can speak to thy condition" and, "Mark and consider in silence, in lowliness of mind, and thou wilt hear the Lord speak unto thee in thy mind." What he had sought in outward teaching was the Inner Light within himself. He had discovered not only the Inner Teacher but also a way of worship based on silence.

Fox had no intention at first of founding a new sect, but the rest of his life was dedicated to an effort to "walk in the Light" and to encourage others to find it for themselves. He traveled widely, speaking in and out of churches, debating with preachers and professing Christians, and forming many meetings for worship. The seekers and finders whom he gathered about him at first called themselves "Children of the Light"; their successors are now known as the Religious Society of Friends, or Quakers.

Fox began his ministry in 1647 at the age of twenty-three. The Friends were organized as a Society in 1652 when Margaret Fell, wife of Judge Thomas Fell, and others in her household were "convinced." Margaret Fell, who became the wife of George Fox eleven years after Judge Fell's death, helped to unify Friends through correspondence and through providing a gathering place at her home, Swarthmore Hall. She was also active in working with the poor and those

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<sup>1</sup> The main sources used for this section are: Edwin B. Bronner, ed., *American Quakers Today* (Philadelphia: Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas, 1972); "Historical Statement," *Faith and Practice of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends* (1950); "Origin and Organization of the Society of Friends," *Discipline of the Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends* (1961); Sidney Lucas, *The Quaker Story* (New York: Harper, 1949).

in prison. By the time of the death of Fox in 1691, there were 50,000 Friends in England, organized in monthly, quarterly, and yearly meetings, as well as large groups in America and elsewhere.

In the late seventeenth century, Fox and his early followers were regarded by the state Church of England as revolutionaries. These first Quakers offended the Church of England by declaring that its creeds were stultifying and that people need not attend "steeple houses" to find God. They offended the civil authorities by refusing to take oaths in court or to go to war. At least 21,000 Quakers in England were fined or imprisoned, and, as a result, at least 450 died. Persecution in England was most severe between 1662 and 1689.

Quakers found their way to America within a decade of the beginning of George Fox's public ministry in England; some arrived as early as 1655. At first they were persecuted as in England. In Boston, Quakers were publicly whipped, and between 1659 and 1661 four were hanged, one of them a woman, Mary Dyer. The first Friends Meeting in North America was established in Rhode Island in 1661. George Fox's visit in 1671-73 spurred the growth of the Society. William Penn began a 75-year Quaker governance of his colony of Pennsylvania in 1682.

Quakerism spread and grew throughout the American colonies so that between 1700 and 1725 it was the third largest religious body, surpassed only by the Congregationalists in New England and the Anglicans in the South.

American Quakerism declined in numbers and vitality in its period of Quietism from 1725 to 1825. The Quietists expected the worshiper to deny human impulse and thought in favor of supernatural revelation. This discouraged growth and led to a sterile vagueness of thought.

The decline in the eighteenth century of the revolutionary vigor of American Quakerism was also due in part to the growing wealth of Friends and the desire not to risk offending others. The life of John Woolman (1720-1772) is an exception to these tendencies. Woolman kept his tailor's trade to a minimum and traveled among Friends, quietly persuading them against slavery. By 1780 few Quakers owned slaves.

For American Quakers, the nineteenth century was a period of divisions. In 1827-28 there was a split between the liberals and the orthodox. The liberals were influenced by Elias Hicks (1748-1830), who

stressed the authority of the Inner Light, which he believed to be the universal Spirit of God in all people. For Hicks, this Spirit of God was the Christ, distinct from the historical Jesus considered as a model person. The orthodox Quakers, on the other hand, were influenced by the evangelical preachers, who stressed the authority of the Bible and the deity of Christ. Orthodox Friends called the views of Hicks unchristian, while the liberals believed they were defending traditional Quaker beliefs. Liberal Friends meetings, often called Hicksite, were organized into the Friends General Conference in 1900. They continue to maintain unprogrammed worship based on silence, emphasis on the authority of the Inner Light, and respect for differing theologies.

Within the Orthodox branch of Friends, another division began in the 1840s. One group, "pastoral," became much like mainline Protestants, with paid pastors and programmed worship, yet maintained many Quaker testimonies such as nonparticipation in war. This group, called Gurneyites, was led by Joseph John Gurney (1788-1847), an English Friend, and continued to carry the Orthodox name as well. The members of the other group, which split away from the Orthodox under the leadership of John Wilbur (1774-1856), were called Wilburites or Conservatives. Ohio Yearly Meeting (Conservative) is in this group. They defended traditional Christian beliefs and Quaker practices. Like the Hicksites, Conservative Friends maintained unprogrammed worship based on silence.

The Gurneyites agreed on a pastoral type of worship, but disagreement arose later concerning Quaker beliefs and testimonies. In 1902, when Gurneyite Friends meetings organized nationally into the Five Years Meeting, Ohio Yearly Meeting refused to join, claiming that Five Years Meeting was not sufficiently Christ-centered and biblical in its beliefs. Other Yearly Meetings, including some who left Five Years Meeting, joined with Ohio Yearly Meeting (Independent) in 1965 to form Evangelical Friends Alliance. In 1966, Five Years Meeting changed its name to Friends United Meeting, and in 1990 Evangelical Friends Alliance changed its name to Evangelical Friends International.

The main trend of American Quakerism in the twentieth century has been toward unity. Friends from the different branches work together for peace, especially through the American Friends Service Committee and the Friends Committee on National Legislation. Young Friends of North America also come

from different backgrounds to work and worship together.

#### HISTORY OF PITTSBURGH FRIENDS MEETING

Friends have been meeting in Pittsburgh at least since 1878, when an unofficial group of a few families gathered regularly in each other's homes. Later, Benjamin Lightfoot's home across the street from the old Shadyside Hospital became their regular meeting place.

Sometime between 1906 and 1909, the Friends moved to the downtown YMCA to accommodate a larger group. For many years during this period, Charles Wright, Robert and Sarah Magill, Mary and Harriet Eck, and Carl and Elizabeth Van der Voort were the faithful core of the group. In the late twenties, they were joined by Gertrude Campbell (Mead), William Cartledge, J.W. Harrison, Winthrop Leeds, Willard Mead, Henry Pope, and Edgar and Sarah Shriner.

As the group grew, more convenient and quieter quarters were sought. In 1933, a Colonel Withers offered the use of a little red schoolhouse, built in 1867, and located in Shadyside off Aiken Avenue near Fifth Avenue. He wanted the building to be maintained for its historical value. The Friends moved into the building, but its maintenance proved to be beyond their means, and in 1938 the City condemned the building for want of major repairs. The meetings were then moved to the Oakland Community Center, which was hospitable but quite inconvenient. The next move, in 1940, was to the College Club on Craig Street in Oakland. However, Friends' testimony in opposition to World War II made the officers of the Club uncomfortable; consequently, in 1944 the Quakers moved to the East Liberty YWCA at Spahr and Alder Streets.

For some time the worship group was under the care of the Friends Fellowship Council. When it sought official standing as a Friends Meeting, a committee from the Council consisting of Bernard Walton, LaVerne Forbush, and Albert Livezey made an official visit to Pittsburgh. Following that visit, on December 15, 1940, the group was recognized as a Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, affiliated with the Friends Fellowship Council and the American Section of the Friends World Committee for Consultation. The Lake Erie Association of Friends, formed in 1939,

included Pittsburgh, Cleveland, Detroit, Ann Arbor, and ten smaller Meetings. The Association met once a year for fellowship and discussion of mutual concerns, and in many respects it took the place of a yearly meeting.

During the East Liberty YWCA period (1944-1955), attendance at Meeting increased greatly, and the resulting larger number of children clearly indicated the need for a First Day School. In 1955, further growth in size and activity led the Meeting to purchase the old Alpern residence at 1353 Shady Avenue for a Meeting House. The rooms on the second floor were used for First Day School. Meeting attenders Marian and Ernest Dalglish lived in the third-floor apartment as caretakers.

As a result of persistent work by Friends and others, the American Friends Service Committee established an office in the Meeting House breakfast room in 1961. From this office, a succession of staff and volunteers conducted a regular program of work camps and seminars for high school students for about five years. Meanwhile, in the North Hills, several Meeting families met for worship once a month in one another's homes. For a few years, two other small groups, with Meeting encouragement, followed this pattern.

In 1963, the Lake Erie Association organized itself as a Yearly Meeting. It was recognized by the Friends General Conference, of which it became a member, and by the Friends World Committee for Consultation. Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting thus became part of an official Yearly Meeting and an integral part of the larger Society of Friends.

In 1965, expanding membership required that the entire Shady Avenue Meeting House be given over to First Day School on Sunday mornings. Meetings for worship were held in the boardroom of the nearby Home for Crippled Children on Denniston Avenue. An intensive search for larger quarters in a more convenient location began, and in April 1966 the Meeting purchased The Greystone, a former residence at 4836 Ellsworth Avenue in Oakland.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> The property on which the Meeting House stands was deeded in June 1883 by David Aiken, Jr., and his wife to Edmond M. Ferguson. In March of 1890 the Fergusons deeded it to Margaret Boyle. It is reported that a one-story frame house, the original 4836, was given to John D. Boyle as a wedding gift to his daughter Margaret. The frame house was razed, and the present three-story stone house was constructed, perhaps in 1902. It was leased from 1909 to 1914 by J.W. Friend, of the

During the summer of 1966, Norman and Sally Dewees lived in the carriage house so that Norman could coordinate the renovation of the main building. More than 60 volunteers contributed over 2300 hours of manual labor, which together with the work of contractors, restored and adapted the building to the Meeting's needs. The adjacent house and lot were purchased; the house was torn down, and the land converted to the present parking lot with a grassy area at the back. The foundation stones of the demolished house were used to form the low wall around the perimeter of the parking lot.

On Sunday, October 23, 1966, the first Meeting for Worship was held in the new Meeting House with 126 adults and children present.

The carriage house on the grounds was remodeled to serve as a residence for the caretaker. Roy and Audrey Knestrick lived there with their young children and served briefly as the first caretakers. They were succeeded in 1967 by Willard and Gertrude Mead. Willard was a frequent spokesperson for the Meeting, and Gertrude played a major role in the First Day School until their full retirement in the early 1980s.

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Pressed Steel Car Company, and was purchased in 1916 by William S. Stimmel. The Stimmels added on a picture gallery (now our meeting room) and a billiard room above. In 1936, when the house again changed hands, it was made into a boarding house and named The Greystone. The new owner, L. Louella Hogue (later, Mrs. Charles Cantrell), made the former art gallery into a dining room, the billiard room into four rooms and three baths, part of the basement into a kitchen, and the former (and present kitchen and "pantry" into a bedroom, bathroom, and sitting room. Mrs. Cantrell extended the operation to four other houses: 4842 next door; two doubles - 4803-5 and 4811-15 across the street; a mansion (now gone) on Ellsworth Avenue across from Winchester-Thurston School; and an apartment in The Gable at 4800 Ellsworth. All of these were part of the Greystone Club, whose members, "slightly more than 100 guests," took breakfast in the Greystone dining room. This was a veritable home away from home where, as a former resident wrote, "strangers could live in a congenial atmosphere and meet and make new friends with ease." A niece who inherited the house was ill for ten years; after her death, the house came on the market and the Meeting bought it. About 22 people were still living there, and a few meals were still being served. A serving table on a linoleum-covered portion of the floor beside the doors to the basement kitchen was a mute reminder of the hundreds of meals consumed there. The house had been sadly neglected as to cleaning and upkeep during the illness of the owner. Conditions for working in the basement kitchen were deplorable, with rat poison in every window recess and an ancient cast-iron cooking stove to prepare meals on. The rest of the basement was largely given over to a maze of storage sections for the residents. The custodian at the time of purchase was a man named George Fox.

With the opening of the new Meeting House, the youth program of the American Friends Service Committee moved into the office quarters on the second floor and continued there until mid-1968. An AFSC Vietnam volunteer then used the office until October 1969. During this same period, a young attorney volunteer established a Wednesday evening draft counseling service in the office, with active help from Willard Mead and Marian Hahn. Interested persons also used this office to coordinate various peace and civil rights activities.

In the fall of 1969, the Meeting authorized the establishment of a Friends Peace Center in the office area. Under the direction of a committee of the Meeting, staff was hired and a wide variety of peace activities was initiated and coordinated in Pittsburgh.

Ten years later, the Center was laid down with some reluctance because it was felt that it was too independent of the Meeting and that Meeting members were not sufficiently involved in its activities. Thereafter, the Meeting as a whole accepted the responsibility for peace work and social justice programs. Since 1983, the Peace and Social Concerns Committee of the Meeting has initiated and coordinated such activities.

In the mid-1980s, members of the Meeting were leaders in forming two active organizations for peace in the Pittsburgh area. The Middle East Forum, recently revived, provides speakers on problems of the Middle East and promotes dialogue between Jews and Arabs. The Pittsburgh Peace Institute, no longer in existence, offered speakers and provided courses on conflict resolution and the theory and practical applications of nonviolence. The Meeting is an active member of the East End Cooperative Ministry<sup>3</sup> and of the Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network, and members of the Meeting serve on the boards of organizations with peace-related concerns (Citizens for Global Solutions, the Thomas Merton Center, Peace Links, etc.). In 1987, the Meeting accepted the responsibility for disbursing funds bequeathed to it by Laura R. Paine for the purpose of "feeding hungry children," and in 1988 adopted a plan that accomplished that end. Under the guidance of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee, new projects are now and then added to the list of programs undertaken by the Meeting.

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<sup>3</sup> The East End Cooperative Ministry consists of 49 congregations in the eastern section of the city.

Each year since the late 1950s, the Meeting has conducted a two-day Fall Gathering for its members and attenders. The weekend program includes discussion groups, outdoor recreation, general sociability, and worship. Special programs are provided for children and young people, and about 80 to 100 individuals attend.

From time to time, the Meeting has provided support and Clearness and Care to Western Pennsylvania groups interested in establishing a Friends Meeting. Such groups are commonly called "Preparative Meetings." In recent years, Preparative Meetings were established and laid down after a period of time in Meadville and Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania. A third Preparative Meeting, which continues in Indiana, Pennsylvania, was formed in 1986 from a Quaker Worship Group that had met in the Indiana community for some 20 years.

Adult classes are scheduled on Sunday mornings by one or another Meeting committee. In one series, for example, a number of people from the Meeting discussed their spiritual journeys, and in another Wallace Cayard led a series of classes on liberation theology.

In May 2006, the Meeting listed 151 adult members and 30 junior members. In addition, a considerable number of non-members in regular attendance were participating in the life of the Meeting. During 2005-2006, an average of 70 people attended Meeting for Worship.

A major renovation of the Meeting House began in 1988, and was essentially completed in 1990. This made the third floor available for use by a resident caretaker and overnight visitors.

The Meeting has purchased a small area in Homewood Cemetery for use by families of the Meeting.

## CLERKS OF PITTSBURGH MEETING

On December 14, 1940, Winthrop Leeds was appointed to serve as Clerk of the Pittsburgh Friends Meeting for the following year. Term of service: January through December.

1941-48	Winthrop Leeds
1949-50	Richard H. McCoy
1951-52	Willard E. Mead
1953-54	William P. Taber
1955	Robert A. Clark
1956-58	Florence Shute
1959 to May 31, 1960	Robert M. Morgan

In 1960 the term of service changed: the Clerk begins service on the second Sunday in May and conducts the June monthly meeting.

1960-62	Sally R. Dewees	1994-96	Wallace Cayard
1962-64	Edward M. Arnett	1996-98	Liane Norman
1964-65	Willard Mead	1998-2000	Dale Keairns
1965-66	Stanley C. Marshall	2000-02	Darryl Phillips
1966-68	Samuel P. Hays	2002-04	Debby Hollingshead
1968-70	Sylvia Gatwood	2004-05	Zig Dermer
1970-72	Norman B. Dewees	2005-Dec.'05	Zig Dermer
1972-73	David R. Morrison		Dolores Avner
1973-75	Samuel Prellwitz	Jan.'06-'07	Dolores Avner
1975-77	Dorothy D. Bower		Nancy E. James
1977-79	Brigitte G. Alexander		
1979-80	Edward M. Arnett		
1980-81	Owen Richmond and Scilla Wahrhaftig		
1981-82	Owen Richmond and Sue Beal		
1982-84	Joseph Guthrie		
1984-86	James C. Kuhn III		
1986-88	Dolores E. Avner		
1988-Oct.'89	Mahlon Fuller		
Nov.'89-92	Linda Schoyer		
1992-94	Rosemary K. Coffey		

THE RELATIONSHIP OF PITTSBURGH MEETING  
TO OTHER FRIENDS AND RELIGIOUS GROUPS<sup>4</sup>

Pittsburgh Friends Meeting, like other Quaker meetings, meets once a month to conduct its business and is therefore called a monthly meeting. Monthly meetings are the basic unit of organization in the Society of Friends; one becomes a Friend by joining a monthly meeting. A group of local meetings in a geographical area may form what is called a yearly meeting, since it meets once a year. In some areas, monthly meetings form quarterly meetings, which are part of the yearly meeting. Yearly meetings may serve to focus on projects too large for monthly or quarterly meetings to undertake.

Twenty monthly meetings in Ohio, Michigan, West Virginia, and Western Pennsylvania, of which Pittsburgh Friends Meeting is the largest, constitute Lake Erie Yearly Meeting (LEYM). Most LEYM meetings are near college campuses and draw attenders from the academic community. Their membership, made up of Friends from a variety of backgrounds, finds in the shared worship and the outreach on social concerns an answer to its religious and ethical strivings and thus in the Society of Friends a home with kindred spirits.

Fourteen yearly meetings and regional groups in North America, including LEYM, make up Friends General Conference (FGC). FGC has annual gatherings to which all Friends are invited for worship, study, fellowship, and the sharing of concerns. Through its staff and volunteers, FGC offers to its constituent member meetings spiritual nurture and a variety of resources.

In their Faith and Practice, most yearly meetings of Friends General Conference recognize Quakerism, both historically and in its present form, as Christian. Many members of Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting call themselves Christian, a designation with a variety of meanings. The wide range of religious viewpoints in the Meeting offers many paths to Truth. We learn

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<sup>4</sup> The main sources for this section are: Edwin B. Bronner, *American Quakers Today* (Philadelphia: Friends World Committee for Consultation, 1972); *Finding Friends Around the World* (London: Friends World Committee for Consultation, 1994); *Finding Quakers Around the World*, a chart published by Friends World Committee for Consultation, updated April 2002.

from one another and can grow in the depth and clarity of our beliefs. We experience unity in our openness to the Inner Light and in our work for peace and justice.

There are five groups of yearly meetings in the United States: 1) Friends General Conference; 2) Friends United Meeting (FUM); 3) Evangelical Friends International; 4) Conservative Friends; and 5) unaffiliated meetings.

In general terms, Friends United Meeting is the largest in membership and is moderate in theology; eighty per cent of the meetings in FUM are pastoral. Friends General Conference is the most liberal; it consists predominantly of unprogrammed meetings primarily on the East Coast and in the Midwest. Evangelical Friends International, based primarily in the West and the Midwest, consists of pastoral churches. Its churches, combined with the pastoral meetings of FUM, constitute sixty percent of all local Friends groups in the United States. Conservative Friends are based in Ohio, Iowa, and North Carolina and have unprogrammed meetings. The remaining yearly meetings, such as Pacific Yearly Meeting, are not affiliated with any of the four national groupings previously described. In 2002, these five groups of Friends in the United States had about 92,000 members.

There are an additional 246,000 Friends in about fifty other countries. About eighty percent of the Friends outside the United States belong to pastoral meetings or churches. African yearly meetings are mostly pastoral. Kenya's fourteen yearly meetings have 133,000 members. European meetings are unprogrammed; the largest is Britain Yearly Meeting with 16,000 members.

Since 1920, Friends from different countries have been meeting together periodically in Friends World Conferences; in addition, since 1938, Friends World Committee for Consultation has been meeting triennially. Over the years, Friends in greater variety are attending these international gatherings for fellowship and spiritual nourishment, emphasizing their common beliefs and concerns while respecting their differences.

Friends work with other Christian groups both in the United States and worldwide. In their concern for peace, American Friends of the different branches have been cooperating increasingly with the Mennonites and Brethren, the two other historic groups of peace churches. This cooperative relationship of peace churches resulted in the formation in 1978 of the New Call for

Peacemaking, now known as Every Church a Peace Church. The peace churches have helped to influence many Catholics and mainline Protestants to be more active in peace work. At present the official statements of a number of Protestant denominations concerning peace and justice are similar to those of Quaker organizations. Friends General Conference and Friends United Meeting are related to Christianity worldwide through their membership in the World Council of Churches. In this body they help to spread the dual message of openness to the Inner Light and the need to work for peace and justice in the world.

### THE QUAKER FAITH

At the core of the religious beliefs of Friends is faith in the Inner Light, known over the years by many different names, all suggesting there is "that of God" in every person. George Fox found in the Inner Light the guidance he needed without aid from any religious institution or individual. He declared that the Spirit was at work not only in Christians but also in American Indians, Muslims, and others.

Like Fox, the large majority of Friends today consider themselves Christians. Most hold that the Inner Light was supremely manifested in the life and teachings of Jesus. Universalist Friends, who often call themselves Christians, hold that while the Inner Light was revealed in Jesus, it is also revealed in spiritual leaders of non-Christian religions. In Friends' experience the Inner Light is the primary source of religious and moral truth. The God-given Light is to be distinguished from secondary sources of truth such as the Bible, conscience, and reason. One can best read and understand the Bible by being open to the Light, which was experienced by its most sensitive writers. Conscience, which is socially formed, is illumined and transformed by the Inner Light. Reason has to be consistent with the Inner Light. These secondary sources grow out of and can be corrected by the experience of the Inner Light.

Friends are aware of the need to be clear that the light they are following is indeed divinely inspired. The source of a person's inspiration is tested in group worship, wherein all seek divine guidance together, open to each other's insights. If one individual's leading runs counter to that of others, there may be a need for further seeking.

This seeking is another of the mainstays of the Quaker faith. Friends have differed from other religious groups in their belief that Divine Truth is still being revealed. They believe that there is a process of continuing revelation, open to all seekers who sincerely try to understand God's will; the Inner Light continues to illuminate the world as much today as at any other time in history.

The belief in continuing revelation is intimately related to the faith generally held by Friends in the unlimited possibilities of spiritual and ethical growth. This emphasis on the potential of all persons contrasts with the view that human beings are inherently sinful. When people steadfastly hold themselves open to the Light, they can grow in understanding, and their care for others can become more responsive.

George Fox lived and taught the necessity of the unity of faith and practice so "that your carriage and life may preach among all sorts of people, and to them; then you will come to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in everyone." The Quaker faith in that of God in everyone is not mere belief but a way of life. All persons are to be treated with respect and without violence and given equal opportunity to live their lives fully. Thus there is a unity of faith and practice: we show our faith as we treat all people as children of God.

#### MEETING FOR WORSHIP

Early Friends gathered without a formal program in silent "waiting upon the Lord." Each worshiper was free, then as now, to offer vocal ministry as the Spirit moved. This freedom imposes perhaps greater restraint and more responsibility on each of us than would any formal rule. Before speaking, we must consider whether the Light given us is a message to be shared with others here and now or is only for ourselves. Equally, we must consider whether the message that has come to us is one we must deliver despite a great reluctance to speak. Whether we speak or worship in silence, we minister to one another in the depth of our devotion.

Our unprogrammed, nonpastoral Meeting has no appointed minister or formal order of worship with hymns and readings, for words with deep meaning often cannot be sincerely repeated by everyone present at a given

time. Neither do we observe outward sacraments of baptism or communion nor use traditional symbols, which might be valued for themselves rather than for the thought they represent.

When we come to Meeting for Worship, we quietly enter the meeting room, seat ourselves, and endeavor to remove from conscious attention any physical discomfort or mental distraction. Gathered together in expectant silence, we "center down," seeking inward quietness and guidance through prayer and reflection, or in other ways opening our deeper selves to the Spirit of God.

The silence is of value in itself and may on occasion unite the worshipers in a strong spiritual bond. In our Meetings for Worship, however, after the silence has deepened, a worshiper, moved by a clear sense of urgency, may rise to share a message. The silence returns so that the message may be reflected on and the spirit of reverence preserved. After several minutes have passed, another person may also be moved to speak, and so on. Often each speaker enlarges upon or makes applications of the first thought. In a truly "gathered" meeting there is a sense of being drawn together in a profound and loving unity of mind and spirit. This may happen although not a word is said.

The Clerk or another designated person breaks meeting by exchanging a friendly handshake with a neighbor, and everyone follows suit.

#### THE TESTIMONIES

The testimonies tell us how Friends have responded to the Light in various aspects of our lives. The conviction that God can and does speak to all human conditions, enabling, directing, and working through us, is at the center of Quaker faith and practice. The Divine Spirit, which Friends variously call the Inner Light, Truth, the Christ within, reveals and overcomes evil and enables us to follow God's will. The testimonies arise from Friends' common experience in listening to and obeying the Spirit.

## Love and Unity

Insofar as we are guided by the Spirit of Love we will strive for harmonious relationships. We believe that actions based on love are grounded in the real nature of God. We seek a unity, which is not an identity of views or uniformity of practice, but a unity of spirit founded on the common search for truth. The degree of such unity within a Meeting is an important measure of its spiritual health.

We try as individuals to develop love in ourselves and to live according to it. As a group we endeavor to conduct our Meetings for Business and our Meetings for Worship in this same spirit, while facing with honesty the real differences among us that may require tenderness and forbearance.

## Simplicity and Honesty

To Friends historically, simplicity meant the avoidance of extravagance, ostentation, and frivolous distractions, with considerable emphasis on simplicity in dress, speech, and behavior. Today, as in the past, we seek to express sincerity, genuineness, and simplicity in our manner of life. Although we are complex people living in a fast-moving and complicated world, we strive to live with integrity and serenity.

Honesty means the statement of truth without affectation, equivocation, or needless embellishments. To witness to the standard of speaking the truth at all times, and not merely under legal compulsion, we continue the historic testimony against judicial oaths. This stand against oath taking led to the inclusion of the option of affirmation in American federal and state constitutions.

## Moderation

Friends seek wholeness of body and mind rather than forbidding specific activities. We recognize that such wholeness is threatened by excess of any kind, whether over indulgence or overwork. We value moderation in order to keep the mind, body, and spirit ready to respond to the Light Within. We are mindful of the possibility of harmful effects on ourselves and those around us brought about by the use of addictive substances such as tobacco, alcohol, and other mind-or mood-altering drugs.

## Peace

From the earliest days, the peace testimony has been a significant and distinguishing aspect of the Society of Friends. This testimony grows out of the fundamental belief in that of God in every person. We violate the Divine in both ourselves and the victim when we kill a human being. Not only is war an evil, it violates the sacredness of human personality and tends to foster more violence and injustice in the world.

Quakers not only oppose war as a means of settling international disputes, but actively support positive and practical ways of achieving peace and justice. The American Friends Service Committee and the Friends Committee on National Legislation were founded to provide Friends with organized means of working toward the achievement of justice and the removal of some of the causes of war. For Quakers, "Peace is the Way." Thus, we are led to promote peace education and research, to study non-violent methods of conflict resolution, to foster international exchanges, and to encourage the development and recognition of world law.

Throughout our history, young men of the Society of Friends have refused military training or service. Some have resisted any cooperation with the Selective Service System and have been sent to prison for their stand. Others have performed alternative service as conscientious objectors, while still others have served in the armed forces as noncombatants or even as combatants. Nevertheless, the peace testimony remains firmly established as the Quaker ideal. We hold in love and respect each member of our Society who follows where conscience leads.

## Equality and Social Justice

The principle of human equality before God is a cornerstone of Friends' beliefs. Friends pioneered in recognizing the gifts and rights of women; women were members and leaders of the early meetings, listened to and respected. Although Friends came slowly to recognize the evils of slavery and discrimination, they have led in efforts to overcome these evils. Our activities for social justice reflect our growing understanding that equity requires that the exploited attain independence and control of their own lives.

## THE ADVICES

Dearly beloved Friends, these things we do not lay upon you as a rule or form to walk by, but that all, with the measure of Light which is pure and holy, may be guided; and so in the Light walking and abiding, these may be fulfilled in the Spirit, not from the letter, for the letter killeth, but the Spirit giveth life.

Postscript to an epistle to "the brethren in the north" issued by a meeting of elders at Balby in England, 1656

Advices first appeared in the form of epistles sent among Friends to encourage and strengthen each other in their faith. A portion of the earliest surviving such epistle is quoted above.

The first "general advices" were adopted for consideration by monthly and quarterly meetings when the Queries were revised by London Yearly Meeting in 1791. Today's Advices and Queries arise from the experience and aspirations of successive generations of Friends and remind us how we seek to express our faith in all aspects of life.

Friends find their essential unity in the deep belief in the pervasive presence of God and in the continuing responsibility of each person and worshipping group to seek the leading of the Spirit in all things. Obedience to that Spirit rather than to any written statement or belief is the obligation of our faith. The Advices should have a quickening influence in shaping our daily lives and provide guidelines for examining our conduct.

The Advices that follow retain some of the expressive language of traditional Quaker writing.

### Spirituality

Heed the promptings of love and truth in your hearts, which are divine leadings. Do not resist these strivings within you, for they are the Light that shows your inner darkness and empowers you to live aright. Set aside time daily for study, meditation, prayer, and other ways of deepening your spiritual life. Bring the whole of your life under the healing and ordering of the Spirit.

## Unity

Seek to live in affection as true Friends in your Meeting, in your family, in all dealings with others, and in your relationship with the larger society. Maintain love and unity. Avoid tale bearing and detraction. Settle differences promptly, in a spirit free from resentment and all forms of inward violence. Visit one another. Share with sympathy and understanding the joys and sorrows of each other's lives. Be ready both to give help and to receive it. Bear the burdens of one another's failings; share the buoyancy of one another's strengths.

## Meeting for Worship

None that is upon the earth shall ever come to God but as they come to that of God in them -- the Light that God has enlightened them with. The Spirit leads (us) to wait upon God in silence, and to receive from God.

George Fox

As we gather for worship, open yourself and your concerns to God's guidance, that our hearts may be joined together in love.

Remember that to everyone is given a share of responsibility for the Meeting for Worship, whether in silence or through the spoken word. Do not assume that vocal ministry is or is not to be your part. Be sure of your guidance so that your ministry may arise from deep experience or concern and you may speak only the necessary words. Faithfulness and sincerity in speaking, even briefly, may open the way to ministry from others. Wait to be sure of the right moment for giving the message. Beware of making additions toward the end of a meeting when it was well left before.

Different ways of understanding the Divine Light may occur among us. These differences should be recognized and understood so that a deeper and more vital unity can be reached. Keep faith and friendship with each other, waiting in the Light for that unity that draws us together in the divine love and power.

## Equality

Friends are reminded that it is the experience and testimony of our Society that distinctions between persons, for any reason such as gender, race, or wealth, do not elect some to domination. Live in love and learn

from one another. Family life in which husband and wife or parents and children strive to assert supremacy is incompatible with the conviction that there is that of God in everyone. Amid the growing distempers of social existence, Friends are urged to maintain our witness of truth, simplicity, and nonviolence, and to test our personal lives by them. In witnessing to the Inner Light, guard against religious intolerance. Strengthen a sense of all people as sisters and brothers, and make service, not self-promotion, the chief aim of our outward lives as Friends, as employees or employers, and as citizens.

Let the sense of universal equality and friendship inspire us to unceasing efforts toward a social order free of violence and oppression in which people are not hindered in their development by meager income, limited education, or too little freedom in directing their own affairs.

#### Simplicity and Moderation

Observe simplicity and moderation in your life, in your activities, and in your possessions. True simplicity does not consist in particular forms or the absence of grace and beauty, but in attending to the essentials, avoiding overindulgence, maintaining humility of spirit, and keeping material possessions in proportion to human needs. To accomplish this, avoid self-indulgent or wasteful habits and luxurious living.

Speak truth without either exaggeration or the omission of essential facts.

Shun gambling, the use of intoxicants and mind-changing drugs, and other detrimental practices. They deaden the individual to spiritual values and have effects that also harm the family and the community.

#### Stewardship

Use your capabilities and your possessions not as ends in themselves but as God's gifts temporarily entrusted to you. Share them with others; use them with humility, courtesy, and affection. Guard against contentiousness and love of power; be alert to the personalities and the needs of others. Show loving consideration for all creatures, and preserve the beauty and wonder of God's creation for future generations. Attend to pure wisdom and be teachable. Use your income and inheritance in accord

with our testimony of simplicity, for maintaining your family and dependents, for the education of your children, and for meeting the human needs of the wider community. Be aware, in the enjoyment of amenities that you take for granted, that many people whose income is limited may be deprived, with their children, of life's necessities. Remember, and serve, the homeless and the hungry. Consider the effect of your charitable gifts, your investments, and all your major expenditures in the light of our concern for the right sharing and use of the world's resources. Remember too that right sharing includes future generations.

#### Peace

Be faithful in maintaining our testimony against all war and other forms of violence as contrary to the spirit and teaching of Jesus. Every human being is a child of God with a measure of God's Light. War and other instruments of violence and oppression ignore this reality and violate our relation with God. Keep primary our concern for the elimination of combat in the outward world as in our personal lives. Strive to live in the strength of that Life and Power that takes away the occasion of all wars. Aid in all ways possible the development of a just order and understanding in your community and in the world.

#### Social Justice

Do not only minister to those in need, but seek to know the facts of social and economic ills so as to work for the removal of those ills. Let the Quaker testimony of that of God in everyone lead us to cherish every human being regardless of the ways in which we may be different. Encourage all efforts to eliminate injustices and antagonisms. Try to identify and overcome all forms of prejudice in ourselves.

#### Civic Responsibility

Friends believe that the aim of government should be to promote a community in which justice, peace, good order, individual development, and education are possible. Accept your responsibility as citizens of the community and the nation. Quakerism is not intended to be a refuge from the disturbing events of our times but rather a source of strength and support in facing them.

Consider with care your responsibility in influencing legislation and educating others on public issues. Be ready to work with like-minded people in other congregations and in the community to bring about desirable ends through the institutions of society.

#### Meeting for Business

Be faithful in attending business meetings and in participating in the Meeting's business affairs. Find a seat promptly and try to achieve quietness of mind and spirit. Avoid conversations just as the meeting is about to begin. In all meetings, be willing to wait as long as may be necessary for the emergence of a decision which clearly recommends itself as the right one. Differences should not be ignored for the sake of a superficial agreement, but recognized and understood so that a deeper and more vital unity can be reached.

The right conduct of our Meeting for Business requires us to come in an active, seeking spirit, rather than with minds already made up on a particular course of action, determined to push this through at all costs. But open minds are not empty minds, nor uncritically receptive: the service of the Meeting calls for knowledge of facts, often painstakingly acquired, and the ability to assess their relevance and importance. This demands that we shall be ready to listen to others carefully, without antagonism if they express opinions unpleasing to us, trying always to discern the truth in what they have to offer.

Remember the task laid upon the Clerk, and try to be helpful. Give the Clerk information about matters to come before the meeting in good time and preferably in writing. If you speak, do so simply and audibly. Do not address another Friend across the room but speak to the meeting as a whole. Except in very small meetings, speak standing. Do not repeat views that you have already expressed. Be certain of your facts, and avoid stating as facts things that are matters of opinion. Value the meeting as a social occasion, promoting the spirit of friendship.

## THE QUERIES

"Which Friends in service to the Society departed this life since the last Yearly Meeting?

"Which Friends, imprisoned on account of their testimony, died in prison since the last Yearly Meeting?

"How among Friends did Truth advance since last Yearly Meeting, & how do Friends fare in peace and unity?"

These three questions (Queries) were used by London Yearly Meeting in 1682 to ascertain the state of the Society only a few years after its founding. In the early 1700s the questions, which previously sought only factual information, began to concern personal conduct as well. After 1760 the purpose of the Queries became principally disciplinary, with disownment the ultimate sanction. In the latter part of the nineteenth century their purpose shifted more to personal devotional uses. Changes of subject and emphasis have occurred with changing times. Today the Queries provide a challenge and an inspiration to Friends in our personal lives and in our life as a Meeting community.

Most of the monthly meetings in Lake Erie Yearly Meeting use the Queries in the *Faith and Practice* of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting. In the past, LEYM used to request annually a carefully considered response to one of the Philadelphia Queries. It now uses its own Queries, agreed upon by the Ministry and Clearness and Care Committee, for this purpose. It also requests a report on the state of the meeting. Pittsburgh has had its own Queries since 1949. Each Sunday at the close of the Meeting for Worship the Queries for the month are read aloud.

Queries for January: Justice and Equality

Do we answer that of God in every person?

Do we look for opportunities to establish personal and professional relationships with people of different class, race, gender, age, or sexual orientation? Do we avoid stereotyping people?

In what ways do we work to change our society so that it provides equal opportunities for everyone?

What are we doing to remove the institutional causes of suffering and want? Do we help to care for those in need?

Are we working to end the death penalty?

What are we doing to humanize the treatment and care of people in institutions?

#### Queries for February: Simplicity and Moderation

Is our commitment to simplicity and moderation reflected in our daily lives?

Are we careful in our use of time and energy? Do we incorporate opportunities for spiritual growth and service into our daily life?

Do we avoid wasteful consumption and undue attachment to possessions?

Does our recreation reflect moderation and does it strengthen body, mind, and spirit? Do we avoid harmful practices and substances?

Do we practice simplicity in our manner of living, avoiding waste and ostentation? Does our commitment to simplicity bring beauty and harmony to our surroundings?

#### Queries for March: Stewardship

Do we revere life and the splendor of the universe and act as stewards of God's continuing creation?

What are we doing to conserve natural resources and use them wisely?

Are we sensitive to the effect of our actions on future generations?

How can we best preserve an environment in which diverse species can flourish?

Are we exercising stewardship of our financial resources so that we can share with others?

Are we taking good care of Meeting property for ourselves and those who will come after us? How do we use Meeting property to witness to our testimonies?

#### Queries for April: Caring

Do we care for those around us?

How do we show respect and consideration for all people, including those with whom we differ?

When contentions arise, what steps do we take to address them speedily and in a spirit of love and respect? Do we avoid bearing grudges?

Are we faithful in keeping promises and just and honorable in all our

dealings?

As individuals or as a Meeting, are we supportive of those who are experiencing major changes in their lives?

In our close relationships, do we assume our share of responsibility for our own and each other's welfare? Are we sensitive to the needs of the individuals affected by the relationship?

Queries for May: Participation in Meeting

Do we participate as fully as we can in the Meeting community and accept our share of responsibility for carrying out its work?

Do we widen our circle of friendship within the Meeting and welcome newcomers?

How do we provide for family participation in Meeting activities?

How do we order our time before Meeting for Worship so that we can come prepared with hearts and minds in a spirit of true devotion and living expectancy?

Are Meetings for Business held in expectant waiting for the guidance of the Light? Do we seek the appropriate course of action in a spirit of love, understanding, and forbearance?

Queries for June: Spirituality

Do we seek to keep ourselves sensitive and responsive to the Inner Light and to live according to its promptings?

How does our religion find expression in daily life?

Do we respond to that of God in those with whom we differ?

What are we doing to develop our own spiritual gifts and those of our fellow worshipers?

Does our vocal ministry arise from a clear spiritual leading?

Do we encourage mutual respect for varying expressions of religious belief among fellow Quakers?

Queries for July: Unity in Meeting

Do we seek to nurture a spirit of unity in our Meeting?

If a problem or conflict arises within the Meeting, do we make timely efforts to address the issue, in a spirit of love and humility? As we seek unity, do we listen to one another carefully and with openness to Truth?

Are we able to express our views honestly and with respect for those who differ with us? Are we prepared to set aside our individual desires or opinions in order to reach unity in the divine Light?

Are we willing to wait patiently for divine guidance rather than be hurried by the passing of time?

When the Meeting has made a decision, do we continue to care for and respect one another, regardless of our differing personal views?

(Adopted March 1997)

#### Queries for August: Vocations

Do we perform our work guided by the Light within?

In following our vocations do we contribute to the well being of the larger community? Does our work reflect Friends' testimonies of honesty, equality, peace, and simplicity?

Do we conduct our business affairs so that all parties are treated fairly?

Do we have respect for all honest work, paid or unpaid, whether at home or in the community?

Are we open to helping individuals who are making vocational decisions?

#### Queries for September: Children

Do we respect the dignity of our children?

Are we helping our children to recognize and respond to the Light in themselves and others?

How do our lives exemplify peace and caring? Do we encourage children to live simply, nonviolently, and with a concern for others, despite temptations from peers, the media, and society?

Do we listen to our children so that they learn to value their inner life and strength? Do we continue to love and support them when their actions hurt or grieve us?

Are we involved in the support, care, and religious education of the Meeting's children? In the First Day School, are we teaching them about the history and practices of Friends and the application of Friends' beliefs to everyday life? Do we teach them about the Bible and about other faiths?

What are we doing to improve the quality of education in the public

schools? In what ways are we seeking to meet other needs of children in our communities?

Queries for October: Home Life

Do we endeavor to make home a place of friendship, peace, love, and refreshment of the spirit?

How do we use our shared time to nurture that of God in each of us?

In what ways do we make our homes places of spiritual and religious growth?

Do we share our religious insights with those we love?

Do we respect the needs for intimacy or separateness of those with whom we live?

Queries for November: Nonviolence

Are we working to increase our understanding and use of nonviolent action?

How well do we apply nonviolence to the settlement of disputes? What are we doing to encourage the use of nonviolent means to settle national and international differences?

Are we learning to channel our anger, fear, and frustration in healthy, creative, and peaceable ways?

Do we teach our children how to meet aggression creatively and without violence?

In our commitment to nonviolence, are we sensitive to the differing claims of the sanctity of life and the quality of life in situations such as unwanted pregnancy or the artificial prolongation of life?

Queries for December: Peace

Do we live in the strength of that Life and Power which takes away the occasion for all war?

What are we doing to remove the causes of war? Where there is hatred, division, or strife, how are we instruments of reconciliation? Where there is oppression, how are we instruments of justice?

How do we communicate to others the basis of our peace testimony? Do we join with them in working for peace?

Are we ready to stand by our peace testimony when it conflicts with

the opinions of others or with established public policy?

How do we reconcile our peace testimony with the payment of taxes that support war? What are we doing to encourage consideration of alternatives to military service?

PART II  
ORGANIZATION AND PROCEDURES

Friends endeavor to carry out their commitment to follow the Light by making the Meeting organization and procedures a part of their spiritual life. Accordingly, Meetings for Business as well as committee meetings are held in a spirit of worship.

Part II describes how Pittsburgh Friends Meeting conducts its affairs at the present time. Organization and procedures may change in response to new circumstances, but at all times they reflect Quaker principles.

THE CORPORATION AND THE ANNUAL MEETING

The Pittsburgh Friends Meeting is a corporation as well as a religious society.

As a corporation, the Meeting is known as the Religious Society of Friends of Pittsburgh, a Pennsylvania non-profit corporation recognized as exempt from federal taxation under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. The corporate form is required by state law for the ownership of real estate and is practical both for receiving donations that are tax deductible to the donor and for the limited liability which corporations enjoy. Monthly Meeting for Business and the Meeting's activities are also acts of the corporation, even though the officers of the corporation are not necessarily the officers of the Monthly Meeting.

The annual meeting in May closes the organizational year of both the Religious Society and the corporation. At some time during the May business meeting, the corporation holds its annual meeting to nominate and elect its officers and to transact any business that may require corporate action. The officers are President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer, and Vice President for Maintenance. The treasurer of the Religious Society also serves as the treasurer of the corporation. The convener of the House Committee is usually the Vice President for Maintenance.

As a religious society, the annual Meeting for Business in May receives written reports from committee conveners for the previous year. The Clerk may summarize the year in retrospect. The Nominating Committee

then presents for Meeting action its recommendations for officers, committee members, and conveners. The new term for officers and committees begins at the rise of the May Meeting for Business.

The fiscal year ends on August 31. The budget proposed for the coming year is presented by the Finance Committee for action at the September Meeting for Business.

#### MONTHLY MEETING FOR BUSINESS

Once each month the Meeting gathers to carry on its business. The officers and committees derive their authority from and report to this Meeting for Business. It makes all program and administrative decisions, usually upon recommendation from one or more committees of the Meeting. The program decisions include both responding to new concerns of individuals or committees and continuing the established Quaker activities of the Meeting. Administrative decisions include receiving and transferring members; managing the Meeting House and other property of the Meeting; and adopting an annual budget. Careful records are kept of all proceedings.

Like the Meeting for Worship, the monthly Meeting for Business is based on reliance on the Inner Light and on the experience of Friends that unity can be reached by a group seeking to know the Divine will. The meeting begins and ends with a period of silent worship and is conducted in a worshipful spirit. The Clerk presides, having been informed, before planning the agenda, of the matters that committees or individuals intend to present for Meeting action. It is helpful for a committee to submit in writing a proposed minute about any matter on which it seeks approval. Members endeavor to attend Meeting for Business so that the actions taken reflect the judgment of the entire community. All persons present are participants in the decision-making process; the legal responsibility for decisions rests with members of the Meeting.

Friends are expected to come to Meeting for Business with minds open to the leading of the Spirit. It is important that all persons be heard if they feel concerned to express an opinion. They address the Clerk when recognized, and speak briefly and to the point, presenting their own views,

though if someone has already stated their position satisfactorily they need only offer a word or two of agreement. They hesitate to speak more than once on a subject unless they have new light on it. Although they may disagree, Friends avoid refuting statements made by others, and give each other credit for purity of motive. At any time during the meeting anyone may request a period of silence. In the silence differences may be reconciled and a better course of action brought forward than had appeared before.

As consideration of each matter approaches unity, the Clerk formulates what seems to be "the sense of the meeting." Agreement generally expressed, or an absence of disagreement, is recorded in the minutes as the decision of the Meeting. In complicated or delicate matters, a minute is carefully written and read aloud for the Meeting to approve or alter. It must always be remembered that the final decision as to whether the minute represents the sense of the meeting is the responsibility of the Meeting, not of the Clerk. If it becomes apparent that general agreement cannot be reached, the matter is set aside for the time being or is referred to a committee for further study.

The unity that Friends seek in making decisions is a unity of spirit and will which draws them together, although there may not be unanimity of opinion. This means that the Meeting must find its way in love and understanding, listening to one another carefully and with respect. A decision arrived at by this process may not be fully satisfactory, but it may be the best that can be made at the particular time on the particular subject.

Occasionally one or more Friends may object to the Meeting's proposed decision in a matter on which other Friends agree. In such a situation, the opposing Friends have a choice of what to do. They may simply remain silent and permit the matter to go forward. They may say that they do not agree with the proposed decision but will not stand in the way. In a stronger stand, they may request that their names be minuted as opposed, though they will not stand in the way. If they find those choices contrary to their principles or to their spiritual leadings, they may say that they are unable to unite with the proposal, and the Meeting may defer action until clearness is reached.

Friends' procedure for finding unity requires time for deliberate con-

sideration, and change is often slow. However, sound procedure in the Light ensures that when action is taken it has the understanding of all.

## MEMBERSHIP

### Admission to Membership

Pittsburgh Friends Meeting welcomes into membership all who are in substantial unity with its testimonies and practices and find themselves strengthened by the Meeting for Worship. Membership involves accepting one's appropriate share of responsibility for the spiritual life and practical affairs of the Meeting, including care of the buildings and grounds, and financial support. Regular attenders who are clear about their commitment to the Meeting and its significance in their lives are encouraged to consider becoming members.

The period of acquaintance with the Meeting before requesting membership is usually at least one year or longer. Newer attenders who express an interest in the Meeting should be encouraged to read the writings of Friends and to become familiar with the activities and concerns of Friends generally through Friends' periodicals and conferences and by attending sessions of Yearly Meeting. They are advised to attend our Meeting for Worship and monthly Meeting for Business regularly in order to deepen their understanding of the Society of Friends. Study of the Testimonies, Advices, and Queries will help them to know whether they feel in harmony with the spirit of Quakerism.

One becomes a member of the Society of Friends by joining a particular local meeting. Therefore, persons considering membership in Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting should be especially familiar with its aspirations and concerns and be willing to share in its responsibilities, challenges, and joys. They should be familiar with this *Faith and Practice* and feel free to discuss its content with members. Membership in Pittsburgh Friends Meeting includes membership in Lake Erie Yearly Meeting and Friends General Conference.

When inquirers are clear as to their desire, they write to the Clerk requesting membership. The Clerk promptly acknowledges the request and forwards it to the Committee on Clearness and Care. The Clearness and Care

Committee selects a committee of three or four members of the Meeting, including at least one from the Clearness and Care Committee, to meet with the applicant, and reports their names to Meeting for Business and in the Newsletter. This clearness committee for membership becomes acquainted with the applicant; they explore together the responsibilities and implications of membership, and the committee reports its recommendation to the Clearness and Care Committee within an appropriate length of time. The Clearness and Care Committee, after deliberation, makes a recommendation to Meeting for Business. The Meeting acts on the recommendation, and the Clerk sends a letter notifying the applicant of the result. If the application is approved, the Recorder completes the records, with the help of the new member.

The membership committee should make certain that the applicant understands this procedure. If the committee feels that the applicant is not ready for membership, it may suggest a delay during which he or she may become better acquainted with Quakerism and Pittsburgh Meeting. Sometimes it may become clear to the applicant or the committee that membership is not advisable, and the application is not carried forward. The membership committee should make sure that the applicant has no commitment to other Meetings (unless dual membership will be agreed upon) or to other religious groups. Attenders who wish to retain membership in another group but want to express their unity with the Society of Friends may become members of the Wider Quaker Fellowship.

Applicants should understand Friends' emphasis on personal experience rather than formal creed. The committee may want to discuss with prospective members what their experience of God or of the Inward Light means to them.

The committee makes clear that, although there are no creedal requirements for membership, Friends emphasize the responsibility of striving to live out our Quaker beliefs and testimonies. Applicants should feel free to discuss any difficulty they foresee in acting in accordance with the testimonies; they should understand that when the Meeting seeks unity in action based on the testimonies and interpreted under the guidance of the Inner Light it is following a basic principle of Quakerism.

The committee may wish to inquire what led the applicant to seek membership in the Meeting and to explore the reasons. It should learn the degree of the applicant's commitment to the Meeting in terms of regular

attendance at meetings for worship and business. It should be made clear that the Meeting members carry on the work that in other religious groups is performed by paid clergy. The applicant also needs to know of the Meeting's financial responsibilities, as stated in the annual budget, to carry on its work, to maintain the Meeting House, and support the work of Friends' organizations such as the American Friends Service Committee and the Friends Committee on National Legislation.

Applicants need to understand and appreciate the spirit and principles underlying our worship based on silent waiting, the absence of paid ministry and of outward sacraments, and the conduct of marriage and memorial services. Strong emphasis on the decision-making process and the importance of the Spirit in Meeting for Business will help new members to share the responsibility for this process.

Those seeking membership should have some knowledge of the history and principles of Quakerism and should be aware that most Quakers consider themselves to be a part of the Christian community. They should also know of the diversity of practice and belief in the wider body of Friends.

At the close of the session or sessions together, both the applicant and the members of the membership committee should feel that they have shared in an open, friendly, clarifying, and useful experience.

#### Membership of Children

Children under the age of sixteen may be enrolled as junior members on the written request of parents when one or both of them are members of the Meeting. When members add a child to their family or when new members with children join the Meeting, the Clearness and Care Committee informs them that junior membership is available. Children should be prepared at home and through the First Day School and other Meeting activities for understanding the meaning and responsibilities of membership.

#### Young People

As children grow older, it should not be assumed that they will simply continue as Friends without making a formal decision. Members who know them best should make them conscious that the Meeting is sincerely interested in them and hopes that their junior membership has become a tie that has meaning to them.

When junior members reach the age of sixteen the Recorder, on behalf of Clearness and Care Committee, sends them a letter encouraging them to become adult members if they are ready. They should be informed that this decision can be made any time before they become twenty-five, when junior memberships terminate. The requests of junior members for adult membership are usually considered according to the regular procedure for membership.

Young people who are not eligible for junior membership because neither parent is a member or because one or both parents joined after the young person was sixteen may, if they wish, apply for adult membership. Application for adult membership from persons under sixteen should be accompanied by an indication of parental consent. Ordinarily the regular procedure for membership is followed with these young people.

#### Transfers

Members who have moved permanently from the area are encouraged to seek a congenial Meeting in their new community and to ask for the transfer of their membership. When the Meeting has received and acted upon the request from them for a certificate of removal, the Recorder issues the certificate, which commends them to the care of the Meeting that they have designated.

When requests for transfer from another Meeting are received, it is the practice of Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting to accept them upon the recommendation of the Clearness and Care Committee. Children under the age of sixteen in families transferring their membership may be received as junior members. Children over sixteen will be consulted as individuals for their own decision. Care should be taken to determine that the persons applying for transfer of membership intend to be active members of Pittsburgh Meeting.

#### Dropping Members

If the way of life of any member is seriously contrary to the principles of Friends, the Clearness and Care Committee should attempt to help the member in a spirit of humility and love, trying meanwhile to find out whether membership in the Society still has meaning for him or her. In extreme cases the Meeting may drop the person from membership, but only

after approaching him or her in a spirit of reconciliation.

Members who have shown no interest in the Meeting for five or more years may, after appropriate inquiry and recommendation by the Clearness and Care Committee, be dropped from membership by Meeting for Business.

#### FINANCES

The activities of the Meeting and the care of the Meeting House are supported by contributions from members and attenders and by the rental of space in the Meeting House and parking lot. Each year the Finance Committee reviews requests for funds and prepares a proposed budget, which is presented to the Meeting for Business in September. After careful review and appropriate changes, the Meeting for Business approves the budget for the coming year. Copies of the budget are available for everyone.

Friends determine their responsibility for financial support of the Meeting from the size of the budget and their own financial situation. It is helpful to the smooth running of the Meeting finances to make regular contributions through the year. If, as sometimes happens, contributions do not cover expenditures, that news is included in the Newsletter. If necessary, the Finance Committee sends out a special letter requesting support.

#### OFFICERS AND COMMITTEES

Friends bear in mind that, since we have no paid clergy, all members share responsibility for the work of the Meeting and for ministry and pastoral care according to their capabilities. Certain functions of the Meeting are carried out by officers and by standing committees, listed below. In response to a specific request or a special need, the Meeting may appoint an *ad hoc* committee, which is laid down when its work is completed.

The work of all committees is carried on in the same manner and spirit as the Meeting for Business. Conveners are responsible for orderly procedure and for arriving at decisions on the basis of unity. Committee conveners are expected to attend the Monthly Meeting for Business. When the

committee recommends action by the Meeting it should present a carefully drawn minute for consideration.

As a general policy, the Pittsburgh Friends Meeting rotates people serving as officers or on committees, taking into account their capabilities and commitment and the Meeting's need for continuity. The Clerk and Assistant Clerk are members of Pittsburgh Friends Meeting. Other officers as well as members of the Ministry, Clearness and Care, Finance, and Nominating committees are persons thoroughly familiar with Friends' principles and beliefs and with the ways of organizing and conducting the work of this Meeting; they are usually members of the Society of Friends. The Nominating Committee proposes in April for approval at the May Meeting for Business the names of officers, conveners and members of standing committees, and representatives to Quaker organizations.

#### Officers

Clerk	Treasurer
Assistant Clerk	Assistant Treasurer
Recording Clerk	Recorder
Assistant Recording Clerk	

#### Standing committees

##### *The Caring Community*

Clearness and Care  
 Outreach  
 Hospitality  
 Newsletter  
 Fall Gathering  
 Counseling  
 Funeral

##### *Education and Service*

Ministry  
 First Day School  
 Child Care  
 Peace and Social Concerns  
 Draft Counseling  
 Quaker Community Fund  
 Library

##### *Organization and Meeting House*

Finance  
 Personnel and Building Use  
 Nominating  
 Archives  
 House

##### *Ad hoc committees*

Clearness, Marriage  
 Preparative Meetings

#### Representatives

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting  
 American Friends Service Committee  
 Friends Committee on National Legislation  
 East End Cooperative Ministry  
 Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network

## Officers of the Meeting

### Clerk

The Clerk presides at Meeting for Business and sees that its decisions are carried out. The Clerk facilitates the progress of Meeting for Business in an orderly fashion after the manner of Friends. The Clerk represents the Meeting in making public statements on behalf of the Meeting.

Ordinarily, the Clerk closes Meeting for Worship and is responsible for announcements at that time.

The Clerk sees to it that officers and committee conveners are aware of their duties. In order to coordinate the Meeting's work, the Clerk holds a meeting of all officers and conveners at least once a year. The Clerk prepares an annual report on the state of the Meeting, which is forwarded to the Yearly Meeting.

In 2005 a system of Co-clerks was initiated. It is anticipated that each Co-clerk will serve a two-year term after being Assistant Clerk for one year. This rotation provides experience and support for incoming clerks.

### Assistant Clerk

The Assistant Clerk acts for the Clerk when the latter is unable to serve and is available to advise and help the Clerk as needed. The Assistant Clerk serves *ex officio* as a member of the Personnel and Building Use Committee.

### Recording Clerk

The Recording Clerk keeps the minutes of the Meeting for Business and may handle correspondence and otherwise assist the Clerk.

In 2005 a system of Recording Co-clerks was initiated. Ordinarily, the rotation of Recording Co-clerks and Assistant Recording Clerk follows the same pattern as that of Co-clerks and Assistant Clerk.

### Assistant Recording Clerk

In the absence of the Recording Clerk, the Assistant Recording Clerk performs the appropriate duties.

### Recorder

The Recorder keeps the records of the membership of the Meeting accurate and up-to-date. This includes details of births, deaths, marriages, new adult and junior memberships, and transfers of membership into and out of the Meeting. At the annual Meeting for Business, the Recorder gives a written report on membership statistics, including a summary of any changes during the past year. Continuity in the office of recorder is desirable.

### Treasurer

The Treasurer manages the Meeting funds and keeps an accurate record of receipts and disbursements, presenting a monthly report at each Meeting for Business and an annual report in September. As a member of the Finance Committee, the Treasurer helps to prepare the annual budget.

Continuity in the office of treasurer is desirable. It is advisable that an incoming Treasurer serve as Assistant Treasurer before taking office.

### Assistant Treasurer

The Assistant Treasurer assists the Treasurer and, in the absence of the Treasurer, is authorized to sign checks.

### Standing Committees

#### *The Caring Community*

#### Clearness and Care Committee

The Clearness and Care Committee seeks to build a community in which all members and attenders find acceptance, loving care, and opportunity for service. It seeks to establish among members and attenders the friendship that makes possible informed caring for the welfare of individuals and families. It is sensitive to signs of need or of distress.

The Committee ensures that newcomers are welcomed and takes note of absences due to illness or other reasons. It gives friendly attention to those who may be losing interest and maintains occasional contact with Friends who have left the community. It is responsible for the orderly

conduct of weddings under the care of the Meeting and appoints a marriage committee in consultation with the couple. It welcomes new babies, may be available for assistance in parenting, and makes sure that young people nearing the age of eighteen are in touch with the Meeting's draft counselors. It acts in all personal matters with tact and discretion, maintaining confidentiality and respect for the individual's privacy. It is aware of its own limitations and is ready to refer people in difficulty to persons with professional competence.

The Committee promotes community through activities, visitation, and social gatherings, with special care to seek out newcomers and those in need of friendship. It suggests ways in which people may be drawn into Meeting activities and committees.

The Committee is responsible to the Meeting for following proper procedures concerning applications for adult or junior membership. It also can recommend the dropping of members.

In response to a request for membership the Clearness and Care Committee appoints a committee of three or four members of the Meeting to meet with the applicant. It reports to the Meeting for Business the names of the persons appointed, and submits the names for inclusion in the Newsletter. It sees to it that the Friends on the membership committee are familiar with the section in Faith and Practice on Membership, so that when the committee makes its recommendation to the Clearness and Care Committee, both the applicant and the committee members are satisfied that a friendly and thorough process has taken place. Although it is acceptable for the membership committee to deliberate without the applicant present, it is desirable for the committee and the applicant to reach a decision together. The membership committee reports to the Clearness and Care Committee, which in turn reports its recommendation to the Meeting for Business.

When members add a child to their family or when a family with children joins the Meeting, the Committee informs them that junior membership is available. To enroll a child, the parents complete a junior membership form. When junior members reach the age of sixteen, the Recorder sends them a letter encouraging them to become adult members, if they are ready. They should be informed that this decision can be made at any time

before they reach the age of twenty-five. If they request adult membership, they are encouraged to ask for a membership committee. When junior members reach the age of twenty-four, the Recorder writes to them indicating that one year remains in which they can confirm their membership as adults, since junior memberships terminate at age twenty-five.

The Recorder is a member *ex officio* of the Committee in order to facilitate the easy flow of information on membership records. The Committee is also responsible for setting policy on the maintenance, publication, and use of any Meeting directory or list of attenders and members.

#### Outreach Committee

The Outreach Committee provides information to seekers, potential members, and the general public in order to promote understanding of the Religious Society of Friends and of Pittsburgh Meeting. By sharing our spiritual values with others, the Committee bears public witness to our belief that there is that of God in every human being. While the witness of our personal lives will always be central, such witness is also made through special meetings, talks, leaflets, advertisements, letters, posters, and the like. The Committee sees to it that the bulletin boards in the Meeting House reflect the Society of Friends and are kept orderly and current.

The Committee also reaches out to Friends who live in our wider region. It invites scattered Friends to participate in the life of the Pittsburgh Meeting to the extent possible, and it organizes occasional gatherings in convenient locations, bringing these Friends together with members of the Meeting. It also encourages and facilitates intervisitation between meetings in our area.

#### Hospitality Committee

The Hospitality Committee is responsible for refreshments after Meeting for Worship. During the summer months this ordinarily means a light lunch on the patio; during the rest of the year, refreshments are served in the parlor. The Committee may also be asked to assist with food and hospitality at other Meeting events such as the annual Christmas

celebration or potluck suppers. It is ordinarily not responsible for wedding receptions.

The Committee's specific duties are: to recruit, schedule, instruct, and, when necessary, assist the people needed each Sunday to prepare and serve the refreshments and leave the kitchen and serving areas in clean and orderly condition, and to provide the necessary supplies.

#### Newsletter Committee

The Newsletter Committee prepares the monthly Newsletter and sees to its distribution, preferably on the Sunday following the Meeting for Business. The Newsletter includes a calendar of coming events, news from the Meeting for Business, and other items of interest to the Meeting.

#### Fall Gathering Committee

The Fall Gathering Committee is responsible for planning and conducting the Meeting's annual weekend event, including reserving the site, planning and carrying out the program for adults and children, and registering participants.

#### Counseling Committee

The Counseling Committee consists of mental health professionals in the Meeting who agree to be available for consultation. Members of the Committee offer consultation and referral services to anyone in the Meeting. No fee is involved, and confidentiality is maintained.

#### Funeral Committee

The Funeral Committee consists of seasoned Friends who, at the time of a death, can respond to the needs and wishes of the family and friends of the deceased. The Committee may, if requested, advise and assist in arranging a Memorial Meeting for Worship. It also may share responsibility with clergy of other faiths for conducting a service for non-members. The Committee seeks to support family and friends in time of bereavement in whatever way is helpful. On behalf of the Meeting, the Funeral Committee deals with matters relating to the gravesites owned by the Meeting in Homewood Cemetery.

*Education and Service*

## Ministry Committee

It is the function of the Ministry Committee to foster and strengthen the spiritual life of the Meeting. The Committee is concerned for the quality of the Meeting for Worship, which depends upon the devotion and preparation of each individual. Thus it is the Committee's responsibility to provide opportunities for the inner growth of all persons in the Meeting toward faithfulness to the Light Within. The Committee assists members, especially young people and new members, to grow in their understanding of the principles and practices of Friends. It may, with discretion and humility, offer spiritual counsel when needed. At times tactful advice may be given concerning inappropriate speaking in Meeting for Worship.

The Committee arranges for the adult classes of the Meeting. It may set up retreats or special meetings and make use of devotional and other literature to increase spiritual depth and sensitivity within the Meeting. It is charged with stimulating interest in Friends' literature and periodicals, and it is responsible for maintaining the supply and display of pamphlets and free leaflets on the literature rack.

## First Day School Committee

The First Day School Committee is concerned with the spiritual growth of the children in the Meeting as well as their religious education. The Committee brings the children and their concerns into the life of the Meeting. It works with parents, children, and others in conducting a program of religious education for children and youth. This program seeks to develop an appreciation of our religious heritage, of Friends' history and principles, of the ideals of other faiths, and of the relation of religious values to everyday life. The Committee proposes the curriculum, guides the teachers, and purchases books and materials.

The Committee arranges an annual picnic at the beginning or end of the school year; and it produces a children's program for the Meeting's celebration of Christmas. It may also act as consultants to the persons arranging the children's program for the annual Fall Gathering.

### Child Care Committee

The Child Care Committee coordinates child care for Meeting events that take place after Meeting for Worship, such as Adult Class, discussion of queries, or Meeting for Business. During the summer months, the Committee also provides care for the younger children during Meeting for Worship. The members of the Committee may take turns providing such child care, or they may find other caregivers, paid or volunteer, from within or outside the Meeting.

### Peace and Social Concerns Committee

The function of the Peace and Social Concerns Committee is to help the Meeting to understand and implement Friends' testimonies and principles as they bear upon public issues. After studying an issue, it may bring information and recommendations for action to the Meeting. It may, with the Meeting's approval, act in the name of the Meeting on specific matters.

The Committee may assign areas of concern to subcommittees, which may be formed or laid down as appropriate. In recent years these have included Community Concerns, the Environment, and International Affairs Subcommittees.

### Draft Counseling Committee

The Draft Counseling Committee consists of trained military and draft counselors and other interested Friends. The counselors are available to give information and support to Friends and others who have questions of conscience concerning military service, the draft, and related issues. The Committee keeps track of pertinent legislation, maintains files for conscientious objectors, and stocks literature for distribution.

### Quaker Community Fund Committee

The Meeting has under its care a fund created through the sale of several properties in Point Breeze that were acquired with contributions from Meeting members. This fund was donated to the Meeting with the stipulation that it be used for programs of the Meeting.

The Committee has two tasks: to prepare for approval by Meeting for Business guidelines and procedures for the disbursement of funds, and to

make recommendations to Meeting for Business for expenditures from the Fund.

Members of the Committee, whose names are proposed by the Nominating Committee, include at least one person also serving on the Finance Committee. Because of the nature of the Committee's responsibilities, continuity of membership is desirable.

#### Library Committee

The Library Committee is responsible for purchasing books, periodicals, and pamphlets for the Meeting library in accordance with the wishes of the Meeting. The Committee maintains the collection, arranges for the cataloging, administers the loan system, and keeps the library room and the shelves in good order. It promotes the use of the library by special exhibits, by reviews in the Newsletter, or by other appropriate means.

#### *Organization and Meeting House*

#### Finance Committee

The Finance Committee is responsible for preparing the annual budget and providing guidance for the Meeting in its financial affairs. The Treasurer and Assistant Treasurer are members *ex officio*.

The Committee meets as needed to consider financial matters and develops recommendations on concerns referred to it by the Monthly Meeting. At the September Meeting for Business, the Finance Committee presents for action the proposed annual budget, incorporating committee requests. Since experience and continuity are valuable for the Finance Committee, its membership does not change much from year to year.

#### Personnel and Building Use Committee

In recent years the Meeting has employed a House Manager and an Assistant House Manager. The Personnel and Building Use Committee serves as liaison between these and other employees and the Meeting. It also assists the Managers in making decisions about building use.

The Committee assesses the need for positions with compensation; develops and proposes personnel policy and terms and conditions of employment including housing, if applicable; prepares job descriptions;

and interviews and recommends applicants for employment.

The Committee consists of the Assistant Clerk *ex officio*; one member each of the Finance and House Committees, selected by those committees; and one member-at-large who is proposed by the Nominating Committee. (Ordinarily, employees of the Meeting do not serve on the Personnel, Finance, or Nominating Committees.) Except for the Assistant Clerk, each member normally serves a three-year term in order to provide continuity. The terms should be staggered so that no more than two new persons join the Committee in any one year. The Committee chooses its own convener. When appropriate, the Committee also deals with reassignment of responsibilities, reorganization of employment, and termination. All recommendations of the Personnel Committee are subject to approval by the Meeting for Business.

The concerns of employees or of Meeting members that pertain to employment are channeled through the Personnel and Building Use Committee. Members of this Committee evaluate the performance of all employees on an annual basis, ordinarily two months before the expiration of each employee's contract. The Committee makes a complete report of the evaluations to the Clerk and presents a summary report to Meeting for Business. (Adopted March 1995)

#### Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee proposes in April, for consideration at the annual meeting in May, the names of officers, committee conveners, and members of committees who have consented, subject to Meeting approval, to serve for the coming year. During the process of selecting nominees the Committee may consult members of the Meeting for advice or suggestions. The Committee is mindful of the Meeting's practice of rotating people serving as officers or on committees, taking into account their capabilities and commitment and the Meeting's need for continuity.

The procedure for acting on the report of the Nominating Committee is the same as for arriving at the sense of the Meeting on any other subject.

The Nominating Committee serves throughout the year to fill vacancies as they occur or to nominate new members or attenders of the Meeting to appropriate committees. Ordinarily only members of the Society of Friends

serve on the Nominating Committee. Members serve for a term of three years; one third are selected each year.

A Naming Committee of two members plus the Clerk *ex officio* is named in March by the Meeting for Business to propose in April new members for the Nominating Committee. The Clerk convenes this committee.

#### Archives Committee

The Archives Committee appraises, collects, organizes, describes, makes available, and preserves records of enduring value to the Meeting including minutes of Meeting for Business, the annual Directory, and the monthly Newsletter. It also gathers less formal records that reflect the life of the Meeting.

#### House Committee

The House Committee is responsible for maintaining the appearance and working order of the Meeting House and care of the grounds. To carry out this responsibility it may negotiate contracts.

The Committee sets the fees to be charged for use of the Meeting House by outside groups and establishes the type of use permitted, both of these subject to Meeting approval. The Committee makes decisions on applications for use of the Meeting House. When it has questions concerning the appropriateness of a particular activity, it presents the matter for decision to the Meeting for Business.

The Committee and the House Managers cooperate to assure proper use of the Meeting House and grounds. This includes screening applicants, making reservations, instructing in proper use, monitoring use and cleanup, restoring to proper condition, and billing.

The Committee is responsible for implementing security measures. It is also responsible for supervising the custodial care of the Meeting House and for maintaining the house in clean and orderly condition. It purchases cleaning and other supplies. The House Committee supervises the work of employees charged solely with house cleaning. However, the Personnel and Building Use Committee formulates job descriptions, makes recommendations to the Finance Committee regarding wages, and draws up contracts.

The convener of the House Committee usually serves as Vice President for Maintenance of the Corporation.

#### Ad Hoc Committees

##### Clearness

When a member or attender of the Meeting has a concern, a problem, or a difficult decision to make, he or she may ask the Meeting to appoint a clearness committee for assistance. The request may be made confidentially to the Clearness and Care Committee or to the Clerk of the Meeting. The individual concerned may wish to suggest some of the people to serve on the clearness committee. This committee meets with the individual to help that person to reach clearness about the concern or problem. Given the task of the committee, the members should be spiritually grounded, able to work with each other and the person making the request, and capable of asking hard questions in a loving and caring way. Membership and Marriage committees are special cases of clearness committees.

The exact approach a particular committee takes to reach clearness cannot be prescribed. However, certain guidelines can be laid out. The committee needs to discuss with the person making the request the nature of the problem or concern, and together they explore what options are available, what resources are needed, and what consequences could be expected from following any of the options. The meetings are held in a spirit of love, care, and worship. All involved need to understand that the process of reaching clearness is a shared one between the individual and the committee; the committee cannot impose clearness on the individual. (In the case of a request for membership or marriage, the decision should be a mutual one.) Unless it is otherwise agreed, confidentiality must be ensured: anything shared in a clearness committee must remain within the committee. A clearness committee may meet only once or may continue over a period of time, depending on the circumstances. It is also possible that the committee may be laid down without the individual's having reached clearness, if it is agreed that further meetings would not be helpful.

## Marriage

Friends intending marriage under the care of the Meeting should state their intention in a letter to the Clerk. The Meeting ordinarily expects a period of three months or more between receiving the request and the desired day of marriage.

If the couple wish to have their marriage recognized by the Commonwealth, they need to procure from the County Marriage License Bureau the special form of license which does not require the signature of a minister or other official, and in addition comply with other legal requirements.

At the Meeting for Business to which the intention of marriage is presented, the Clerk will ask the Clearness and Care Committee to appoint a Marriage Committee of three or more Friends to inquire into the couple's clearness and readiness for marriage. Ordinarily at least one member of this appointed Committee is a member of the Clearness and Care Committee. Upon receipt of a favorable report from the Marriage Committee, including a clearness report from any other Meeting to which one or both of the couple may belong, the Clearness and Care Committee makes its recommendation to the Meeting for Business. If the Meeting gives approval, the marriage may proceed at a special Meeting for Worship. In order to facilitate the conduct of the wedding, the Marriage Committee may at this point be augmented by other Friends, including persons suggested by the couple. The Committee sees to it that the marriage is accomplished after the manner of Friends and with simplicity and dignity; that all desired legal requirements are met; that a certificate is properly drawn and ready for signatures; and that the accomplishment of the marriage is duly reported to the Meeting for Business.<sup>5</sup>

If only one of the couple, or neither, is a member of the Society of Friends, but they unite in making application for a marriage to take place under the care of the Meeting, the Meeting may authorize this to be done, after a favorable report from the Clearness and Care Committee, as in the case of members.

At the appointed time on the day of the wedding, the couple enter the

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<sup>5</sup> The Meeting has approved and conducted both the celebration of union and the marriage of a couple of the same sex, following the above procedures, although a number of Friends opposed the use of the word "marriage."

meeting room and sit side by side facing assembled friends. The Meeting for Worship begins. An experienced Friend may make an introductory statement on the nature of a wedding ceremony after the manner of Friends, and the reverent silence resumes. The couple, who should be thoroughly familiar with the words of the promise they have agreed upon, rise after an appropriate period of silence. Taking one another by the hand, they each in turn affirm their commitment to the other in the words of their promise.<sup>6</sup> After these declarations have been made, the couple sign the certificate, which is then read aloud by a person appointed for this purpose.<sup>7</sup>

The Meeting for Worship then continues in silence during, which time worshipers may share messages appropriate to the occasion. The meeting is closed when an appointed Friend shakes a neighbor's hand. This Friend then requests all persons present to sign the certificate as witnesses to the marriage. It is fitting that social events in connection with the wedding be conducted with moderation and simplicity.

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<sup>6</sup> A traditional form of the marriage promise is the following: "In the presence of God and these our friends, I take thee ....., to be my wife/husband, promising with divine assistance to be unto thee a loving and faithful wife/husband as long as we both shall live."

<sup>7</sup> A historic wording of the certificate is the following:  
 "Whereas A.B., of ....., son of C.B., of ....., and H., his wife, and D.E., of ....., daughter of F.E., of ....., and K., his wife, having declared their intentions of marriage with each other to Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, according to the good order used among them (insert, if applicable: "and having the consent of parent" or "guardians"), their proposed marriage was allowed by the meeting.

Now these are to certify to whom it may concern, that for the accomplishment of their intentions, this ..... day of the ..... month, in the year of our Lord ....., they, the said A.B. and D.E. appeared in a public meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, held at ....., and A.B., taking D.E. by the hand, did on this solemn occasion declare that he took her to be his wife, promising, with divine assistance, to be unto her a loving and faithful husband so long as they both should live; and then, in the same assembly, D.E. did in like manner declare that she took him, A.B., to be her husband, promising, with divine assistance, to be unto him a loving and faithful wife so long as they both should live. And in further confirmation thereof, they, the said A.B. and D.E. (she, according to the custom of marriage, adopting the surname of her husband) did then and there to these presents set their hands.

(A.B.) .....

(D.B.) .....

And we, having been present at the solemnization of the said marriage, did, as witness thereto, set our hands."

Members of the marriage committee customarily maintain an ongoing caring relationship with the couple to support them as they grow in love and unity. If there are difficulties, they are available to support each partner individually and to assist both of them in finding clearness.

### Preparative Meetings

Friends in western Pennsylvania who live too far from Pittsburgh Meeting to participate on a regular basis may form a worship group in their area. Such a group may make a request to become a Preparative Meeting under the care of Pittsburgh Meeting. In Lake Erie Yearly Meeting the term suggests that they are preparing to become an independent Monthly Meeting.

After evaluation and approval of the request by Meeting for Business, the Clerk may appoint an *ad hoc* committee of members of the Meeting. The Committee's tasks may include supporting the outlying group of Friends, worshipping with them, bringing their concerns to the Advancement Committee of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, and nurturing the development of the Preparative Meeting. If such a committee is appointed, it reports periodically to Meeting for Business; if not, the Preparative Meeting reports directly. Attenders of the Preparative Meeting who wish to become members of the Society of Friends may request membership in Pittsburgh Meeting.

When the Preparative Meeting has either achieved Monthly Meeting status or been laid down, the *ad hoc* committee is laid down.

### Representatives

The Meeting appoints representatives to certain organizations:

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Representatives attend the meetings of the LEYM Representative Committee in order to take to it the concerns of the Monthly Meeting and to bring back the decisions and concerns of Yearly Meeting. On significant questions of policy or corporate action by LEYM, the representatives first determine the sense of their Monthly Meeting.

American Friends Service Committee Representatives communicate the concerns of the Meeting to the Service Committee and the needs and activities of the Service Committee to the Meeting.

Friends Committee on National Legislation Representatives attend the annual meeting of FCNL, bring its concerns and activities to the attention

of the Meeting, and stimulate the Meeting to appropriate action.

East End Cooperative Ministry Representatives attend the meetings of that organization, bring its concerns and activities to the attention of the Meeting, and stimulate the Meeting to appropriate action.

Pittsburgh Interfaith Impact Network Representatives attend the meetings of that organization, participate in its work, and bring its concerns to the attention of the Meeting.

Representatives to other organizations may be appointed as the need arises.

## CALENDAR

This is the Calendar in practice in 2007. Regular activities may vary in summer months.

Regular Events

Every Sunday	Meeting for Worship 9:00 and 10:30 am
First Sunday of the month	Bible Study 12:15 pm
Second Sunday of the month	Meeting for Worship for Business 12:15
Third Sunday of the month	Adult Class

Periodic Events

March Business Meeting	Naming Committee named from the floor to propose two members to serve on new Nominating Committee
April Business Meeting	Naming Committee proposes members to serve on new Nominating Committee; current Nominating Committee makes preliminary report
May Business Meeting*	Annual Meeting: committee reports, Nominating Committee final report, Corporation Annual Meeting
First Sunday in June	First Day School Recognition Day, potluck picnic
August Business Meeting	Committees submit proposed budgets to Finance Committee
September 1 - August 31	Fiscal Year
September Business Meeting	Treasurer's annual report; Finance Committee presents new budget for approval
September	Meeting's Fall Gathering

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\*After the May Meeting for Business, new officers and committees assume their responsibilities.

## QUAKER ORGANIZATIONS

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting was formed in 1963 out of the Lake Erie Association. It includes 20 monthly meetings in Ohio, West Virginia, Michigan, and western Pennsylvania, with Pittsburgh Friends Meeting the largest. Members of these Monthly Meetings come together for a long weekend in June for business and fellowship.

Friends General Conference, organized in 1900, consists of 14 Yearly Meetings and regional groups in North America, including Lake Erie Yearly Meeting. Its monthly meetings usually have unprogrammed worship. Every year FGC holds a week-long Gathering of Friends for worship, study, and fellowship. It publishes books and maintains a Quaker Bookstore, 800-066-4556 or [www.quakerbooks.org](http://www.quakerbooks.org).

Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas, formed in 1938, has offices in Philadelphia and Mexico City. Other Sections are Africa, Asia-West Pacific, and European & Middle East. Each section has a wide-ranging program of conferences and publications. All sections are represented at triennial meetings to facilitate understanding and work among Friends.

Wider Quaker Fellowship is a loose fellowship of individuals who want to be related to Quaker activities but may also be members of other religious groups. It distributes Quaker-oriented literature three times a year in English and once a year in Spanish to persons in over 80 countries.

American Friends Service Committee, founded in 1917, is the social service arm of the Quakers, which grew out of relief efforts in World War I. AFSC sponsors diverse programs dealing with peace and social justice both in the U.S. and abroad. It supports people struggling for human rights and helps refugees and others to help themselves.

Friends Committee on National Legislation, formed in 1943, is the Washington, DC, lobbying arm of the Quakers. A monthly newsletter reports on legislative issues on which the Committee is working. Testimony is given before congressional committees regarding concerns such as health care, campaign finance reform, Native American issues, and international conflict resolution.

Pendle Hill is a residential Quaker center for study and contemplation near Philadelphia. Founded in 1930, it offers resources and the time for integrated spiritual, intellectual, and personal learning. It offers each year three ten-week terms of courses and publishes pamphlets and books. It also sponsors weekend and week-long workshops and summer conferences and maintains a Quaker bookstore.

Quaker Information Center can give more information about any of the above or other Quaker groups. Address: 15th and Cherry Streets, Philadelphia, PA 19102. Hours: 9-5 Monday through Friday. Phone: (215) 241-7024.

## SUGGESTED READING

The following selection of classic and recent publications is useful for those in search of writings on Friends' beliefs, practices, and history. Many of these are in our Meeting Library. Those with an asterisk are especially recommended for newcomers to Quakerism.

All publications may be purchased at:  
 Friends General Conference Bookstore  
 1216 Arch St., 2B, Philadelphia. PA 19107

For phone orders call 800-966-4556; or order online at  
[www.quakerbooks.org](http://www.quakerbooks.org)

## Books

*American Quakers Today*. Edwin B. Bronner, ed. Philadelphia: Friends World Committee for Consultation, 1972. Each chapter is written by a representative of a different national group of Friends about that group, including Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting, Evangelical Friends, Conservative Friends, and Independent Friends. Out of print, but in our Meeting Library.

Brinton, Howard. *Friends for 350 Years*. Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill, newly revised 2002. Historical approach to essentials of Quakerism by a liberal Friend.

\*Brinton, Howard. *Guide to Quaker Practice*. Pendle Hill Pamphlet. 1955. Useful for attenders and new members.

Cooper, Wilmer A. *A Living Faith: A Historical Study of Quaker Beliefs*. Richmond, IN: Friends United Press, 1990. A moderate, comprehensive approach, the product of a course in Basic Quaker Beliefs offered at the Earlham School of Religion.

*Finding Friends Around the World*. London: Friends World Committee for Consultation, 2000. A brief statement about each yearly meeting and inter-yearly meeting within Africa, Americas, Asia-West Pacific, and Europe-Middle East. Included is a worldwide list of Quaker periodicals and statistics of membership for all Quakers.

*2002 Friends Directory of Meetings, Churches and Worship Groups in the Section of the Americas & Resource Guide*. Philadelphia: Friends World Committee for Consultation, Section of the Americas. Also lists Friends schools in the United States and Canada. Addresses and phone numbers included.

\**Friends Face the World: Continuing and Current Quaker Concerns*. Leonard Kenworthy, ed. Philadelphia: Friends General Conference, 1987. Twenty chapters on social and ethical concerns include the following topics: sexuality, families, prisons, environment, simplicity, peace and justice, and Friends' lack of ethnic and racial diversity. The authors include representatives of all five national groups of Quakers in our country.

*Journal and Major Essays of John Woolman*. Philipps Moulton, ed. Friends United Press, 1989. Writings of an influential American Quaker leader who lived simply and worked for the abolition of slavery.

*Journal of George Fox*. John Nickalls, ed. Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1997. Traces Fox's development as a spiritual leader and the turbulent rise of the Religious Society of Friends.

\*Kenworthy, Leonard. *Quakerism; A Study Guide on the Religious Society of Friends*. 1981. Readable, comprehensive survey of history, beliefs, and practices of Quakers, with questions for discussion.

*Nine Contemporary Quaker Women Speak*. Leonard Kenworthy, ed. Brief contributions from different viewpoints, including Margaret Bacon, Elise Boulding, Elizabeth Vining, Rachel Dubois, and Elizabeth Watson.

North Pacific Yearly Meeting. *Faith and Practice*. Corvallis, OR, 1986. Liberal, detailed statement in contemporary language.

Peck, George T. *What is Quakerism? A Primer*. Pendle Hill Pamphlet. 1988. Useful introduction to Quakerism.

*Quaker Classics in Brief*. Wallingford, PA: Pendle Hill, 1978. Abridged versions of William Penn's *No Cross No Crown*, *Barclay in Brief*, and *The Inward Journey of Isaac Pennington*. Good introduction to influential early Quakers.

Sheeran, Michael J. *Beyond Majority Rule; Voteless Decisions in the Religious Society of Friends*. Philadelphia: Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, 1983. A Jesuit priest examines Quaker decision-making in depth.

\*Steere, Douglas V. *On Speaking Out of the Silence; Vocal Ministry in the Unprogrammed Meeting for Worship*. Helpful guidance on vocal ministry for meetings and individuals.

#### Periodicals

*Friendly Woman*. A quarterly journal for exchange of ideas, feelings, hopes, and experiences by and among Quaker women. Editorial responsibilities for publication rotate every two years. For 2002 and 2003, publishers are a group from Arlington Monthly Meeting (Baltimore Yearly Meeting), convened by Deborah Haines and Rebecca Haines-Rosenberg of Alexandria Friends Meeting. It can be ordered from *Friendly Woman*, 2794 Fort Scott Drive, Arlington, VA 22202, or by e-mail from ddrhr@msn.com

\**Friends Journal*. 1501 Cherry St., Philadelphia, PA 19102. A monthly publication on Quaker life and thought, mainly by and for liberal Friends from meetings with worship based on silence. A range of views on various topics from worship to social justice.