NOTE TO FRIENDS: This document is a proposed revision of pages 125-128 of the 1993 NPYM *Faith and Practice*. Comments on these definitions and suggestions for additional terms to define will be very welcome; please contact the Committee on the Discipline.

### Glossary

Words in a definition that are listed elsewhere in the Glossary are *italicized*. “Yearly meeting” refers to North Pacific Yearly Meeting unless otherwise indicated.

**Advices** – Statements of the basic faith, principles, and ideals held to be essential to the life and witness of Friends. See also *queries*.

**Affirm** – To declare a commitment to telling the truth; used in legal contexts by Friends who decline to take an oath for reasons of conscience.

**AFSC** – American Friends Service Committee.

**After the manner of Friends** – Following the practices of Friends.

**Anchor committee** – A *support committee* that guides and nurtures Friends in ministry that may require frequent travel away from their meeting.

**Annual Session** – The *yearly meeting’s* annual gathering for worship, business, and fellowship.

**As way opens** – To act after waiting for divine guidance and as circumstances in the world allow, without hasty judgment or action.

**Attender** – One who attends and participates in meeting activities but does not have formal membership in the *Religious Society of Friends*.

**Birthright member** – Someone born of Quaker parents who is recorded at birth on the membership rolls of a meeting. North Pacific Yearly Meeting does not practice birthright membership. All recorded memberships are by convincement. See also *convinced Friend*.

**Book of discipline** – The document that describes a *yearly meeting’s* beliefs and practices. North Pacific Yearly Meeting’s *Faith and Practice* is a book of discipline.

**Break meeting** – To close the *meeting for worship*. A designated Friend shakes hands with those nearby, and the others present shake hands with their neighbors. See also *rise of meeting*.

**Business meeting** – see *meeting for business*.

**Called meeting** – A special meeting called by the *clerk* to address a particular concern or item of business. A *meeting for worship* for marriage or a memorial meeting is also a called meeting.

**Care committee** – A committee convened to support a Friend during a major life transition.
Care of the meeting – Exercised by a designated Friend who holds the meeting for worship in prayer and typically initiates the rise of meeting by shaking hands with nearby Friends. The Friend with care of the meeting may also attend to physical arrangements and greet people as they arrive.

Centering down – The means by which Friends in meeting for worship open their hearts and minds to the Divine Presence.

Central Friends – In NPYM, meeting participants of middle-school age.

Certificate – Used to document marriage, transfer of membership, or traveling ministry.

Christocentric Friends – Quakers whose faith is centered in the Christ.

Clearness – Confidence that an action is consistent with divine will.

Clearness committee – A committee appointed to assist a person or the meeting to clarify thinking about a decision such as membership, marriage, or a personal concern.

Clerk – (1) The person who facilitates meeting or committee business. See also presiding clerk. (2) To facilitate such business.

Close meeting – See break meeting

Committee – Meetings operate largely through committees, which usually report to the meeting for business.

Concern – An interest deeply rooted in the Holy Spirit; one that can move both the individual and a meeting to action.

Conscientious objection – A principled refusal to participate in certain social or political practices; commonly applied to the refusal to undertake military service.

Consensus – A secular term used to describe unanimous agreement that is reached by a group without a vote after consideration of an issue. In meeting for business Friends seek unity in the Spirit or the sense of the meeting instead of consensus.

Conservative Friends – Quakers who maintain traditional Friends testimonies and meet in waiting worship (unprogrammed), usually with a strong Christian basis. Not a political description.

Continuing Revelation – Friends deeply held belief that God speaks to people directly today.

Convener – (1) Member of a committee, usually the first person listed, who is asked to call the first meeting together. (2) The contact person for a worship group.

Convinced Friend – A person led to become a Friend by the Inward Light after careful study, thought, and inward seeking. In North Pacific Yearly Meeting all membership is by convincement.

Coordinating Committee – Confers about concerns of the yearly meeting and its committees.

Corporate – Refers to the physical and spiritual body of a Friends meeting.

Correspondent – (1) the convener or contact person in a worship group. (2) An informal liaison with another Quaker organization.

Covered meeting – See gathered meeting.

Discernment – The process of finding the right course of action through spiritual perception and thoughtful consideration.
**Discipline** – The book describing the faith and practice of the Religious Society of Friends. Each yearly meeting may draw together the collective wisdom of its community, including queries and guidelines to support individual and corporate faithful living; reference can also be made to those of other yearly meetings. The term also refers to discipleship.

**EFI** – Evangelical Friends International.

**Elder** – (as a verb) (1) To encourage diffident or timid Friends to share their gifts with a meeting. (2) To question an individual’s speech or behavior that may be disruptive to the meeting.

**Endorse a travel minute** – To add a note about the visit of a traveling Friend to the travel minute which the Friend presents from her or his home meeting. Travel minutes are usually endorsed by the clerk of each meeting or group the Friend visits.

**Epistle** – (1) A formal letter sent by each yearly meeting to all Friends everywhere, stating the condition and experience of the yearly meeting. (2) A letter of serious import sent by an individual or group to Friends.

**Evangelical Friends** – Quakers in the pastoral tradition who are especially concerned with church growth and Christian mission.

**Executive Committee** – The NPYM body made up of the presiding clerk, rising clerk, Coordinating Committee clerk, Ministry & Oversight Committee clerk, treasurer, and Coordinating Committee associate clerk. Other Friends organizations may have a similar committee.

**Exercise** – A season of profound exploration of a concern. When there is no clarity, a minute of exercise provides the context for resuming discussion at a later point.

**Expectant worship** – Also called waiting worship. See wait upon the Lord.

**Facing benches** – Historically, the seats in the front of the meeting room on which recorded ministers and elders sat, facing the body of the meeting. North Pacific Yearly Meeting does not record ministers and generally arranges the meetinghouse seating in a circle or square with no facing bench distinction.

**Faith and Practice** – See book of discipline.

**FAP** (pronounced “fapp”) – Friendly Adult Presence. An adult who has been approved to assist with a Central Friends or Junior Friends event.

**FCNL** – Friends Committee on National Legislation.

**FCWPP** (pronounced “FICK-wipp”) – Friends Committee on Washington Public Policy.

**FGC** – Friends General Conference.

**First Day** – Sunday, the first day of the week.

**First-day school** – Religious education provided on Sunday, usually for children.

**FPT** – Friends Peace Teams.

**Friend** – (1) A recorded member of the Religious Society of Friends. Membership is held in a monthly meeting. (2) May also be used more broadly to refer to both members and attenders.

**Friend speaks my mind** – A way to voice agreement with another person who speaks to an item of business during meeting for business. Usually expressed as “that Friend speaks my mind.”

*Friends Journal* – An independent monthly magazine commonly associated with *unprogrammed meetings*.

**Friends meeting** – See *monthly meeting*.

**FUM** – Friends United Meeting.

**FWCC** – Friends World Committee for Consultation.

**Gathered meeting** – An occasion when *meeting of worship* attains a perceptible sense of Divine Presence which touches the hearts of worshipers and unites them in a common experience of holy fellowship.

**Good order of Friends** (or simply **good order**) – The procedures for Friends business that facilitate corporate activities as they seek to discern and carry out God’s will. See also *right ordering*.

**Holding in the Light** – A Quaker version of prayer that offers either a concern about an individual or a situation to God’s love and guidance.

**Home meeting** – (1) Periodic *meetings for worship* that take place in a home; they may become the seed for the formation of a *worship group*. (2) The *monthly meeting* where a Friend holds membership.

**Independent Friends** – Quakers in a yearly meeting in the U.S. not affiliated with FGC, FUM, or EFI (currently, Pacific Yearly Meeting and North Pacific Yearly Meeting).

**Inward Light** – The presence of God within each person. It differs from conscience or the sense of obligation to do right, although both conscience and the Inward Light are known within. The “Inward Light” is also called the “Inner Light,” the “Light Within,” the “Christ Within,” the “Light of Christ,” or the “Holy Spirit.”

**Isolated Friend** – A Friend who lives at a great distance from a *monthly meeting* or *worship group*.

**Junior Friend** – In NPYM, meeting participants of high-school age, 9th through 12th grade.

**Junior member** – In some *monthly meetings*, youth under age 16 who have been recorded on the membership rolls upon the written request by their parents or guardians.

**Labor with** – To struggle faithfully with a concern or a difficulty over time, working toward a resolution.

**Lay down** – To terminate a committee or activity when its work is completed or no longer felt possible or necessary.

**Leading** – An inner conviction that impels one to follow a certain course under a sense of divine guidance. A Friend may submit a leading to the meeting for testing by corporate wisdom.

**Letter of introduction** – A letter that a Friend traveling socially or for personal reasons may request from his or her *monthly meeting* to affirm his or her association with Friends.

**Liberal Friends** – Quakers who meet in *unprogrammed waiting worship* but are not part of the Conservative branch of Friends. Not a political description.

**Liberate** – To set concerned and qualified persons free for religious service such as traveling among Friends. This may include the meeting’s assuming the responsibilities of the released Friend in his or her absence.
Meeting for business – The meeting at which Friends attend to corporate business, sometimes called “meeting for worship with a concern for (or attention to) business.”

Meeting for healing – A gathering of Friends to hold in the Light the physical, spiritual, and/or psychological brokenness of the participants.

Meeting for worship – A gathering of Friends for unprogrammed worship held in silence, at established times, and closed by shaking hands. See also silent worship and waiting worship.

Meetinghouse – The building where Friends meet to worship.

Membership – A corporate recognition of a person’s unity with Friends faith and practice, which is recorded in the minutes of a monthly meeting.

Memorial minute – A brief account of a recently deceased Friend’s life, with particular emphasis on his or her spiritual life and activities among Friends.

MGOf (pronounced “muh-GOFF”) – Montana Gathering of Friends, one of the quarterly meetings in NPYM. It also acts as a monthly meeting.

Mind the Light – To pay attention to the Inward Light.

Ministry – (1) A gift of the Spirit which refers both to vocal ministry in meeting for worship and to gifts for pastoral care and service. (2) The work of offering those gifts to others.

Minute – A statement of an item of business approved by those present at a given meeting for business. When unity is reached, recorded, and approved, it is said to be “minuted.”

Minute of exercise – A statement of where a meeting stands on a question when there is no clarity about the way forward.

Minute of Travel – See travel minute.

Minutes – The formal records of business conducted by a meeting, committee, or Friends organization.

Monthly meeting – A congregation of Friends who meet regularly for worship and to conduct corporate business, customarily once a month. Usually recognized by a quarterly meeting.

Moved to speak – The conviction of being led by God to break the silence of the meeting for worship with a verbal message, hence also “speaking out of the silence.”

NPYM – North Pacific Yearly Meeting.

Opening – A spiritually affirmed recognition of an opportunity to move forward toward a goal or out of a difficulty; an insight or inspiration from the Divine.

Outreach – Presentation of Quaker beliefs and practices to others, invitations to attend Friends functions, and similar activities directed to the community outside the meeting.

Overseers – Members of the Committee on Oversight. Because ‘oversight’ has other meanings and is associated with slavery, many contemporary Friends use alternative terms such as Pastoral Care Committee or Care & Counsel Committee.

Pacifist – A person who renounces war, seeks to resolve conflicts peacefully, and works to reduce the conditions that lead to violence or war.

Pastoral Care Committee – The committee which has particular care for the membership and corporate life of the meeting.
Pastoral Friends – Quakers in meetings that call Friends with spiritual gifts to minister to them; see also programmed meeting.

Plain dress – The simple and unadorned garments worn by some Friends.

Plain speech – Historically, Friends used “thee,” “thy,” and “thine” to address others and did not use titles, as an expression of equality. Friends also replaced the pagan-derived names of months and days with numbers, such as First Month for January and First Day for Sunday. Contemporary Friends still avoid using titles such as Mr., Mrs., or Dr. (unless referring to someone who is a medical doctor) and instead address or refer to a person by their first or full name.

Plenary session (or simply plenary) – A meeting of the whole body, such as at Annual Session.

PNQM – Pacific Northwest Quarterly Meeting, one of the quarterly meetings in NPYM.

Popcorn meeting – A meeting for worship in which many people pop up and speak, one after another, leaving insufficient time to consider what has been said.

Preparative meeting – (1) A body of Friends preparing to become a monthly meeting under the care and guidance of an established monthly meeting. (2) Originally, and still in some places, one of a group of local meetings that meet for worship and to “prepare” business to be brought before their monthly meeting.

Presiding clerk – The person primarily responsible for facilitating a meeting for business. Often simply referred to as the clerk, especially at the monthly meeting level.

Programmed meeting – A Quaker church service, usually led by a pastor, with a pre-arranged program including sermon, music, an offering, etc. In some programmed meetings periods of silence and meditation are provided during which Friends feel free to speak from the body of the meeting.

Public Friend – A Friend who represents Quaker principles to the wider world.

QEW – Quaker Earthcare Witness.

Quaker – Unofficial name of a member of the Religious Society of Friends; originally a derogatory term.

Quaker process – Practices typically used by Quakers to make corporate decisions, such as taking the sense of the meeting and writing minutes, as well as typical ways the meeting community functions, such as the reliance on committees and clerks.

Quarterly meeting – A regional gathering of members of constituent monthly meetings; two or more quarterly meetings typically constitute a yearly meeting. Formerly, these groups met four times a year.

Queries – The questions which, in conjunction with the advices, enable individuals and meetings to examine themselves in relation to the standard of conduct which the Society of Friends has established for itself.

QVS – Quaker Voluntary Service.

Recorder – The person who maintains statistical information about memberships, marriages, births, and deaths in the meeting. (Not the same as recording clerk.)

Recording clerk – The person who writes the minutes of a meeting for business or other Friends decision-making body. The recording clerk is an assistant to the presiding clerk who is ultimately responsible for creating minutes for the approval of the meeting or other Friends body. (Not the same as recorder.)
Recording ministers – The practice in some yearly meetings of listing members recognized as having the gift of ministry. North Pacific Yearly Meeting does not record ministers.

Released Friend – A Friend with a concern who is relieved from holding meeting offices and serving on committees. In many other yearly meetings, Released Friends are provided financial support in order to pursue a pastoral ministry within the local meeting.


Right ordering – Proceeding according to those Friends procedures that seek to discern and carry out God’s will. See also good order.

Rise of meeting – The time a meeting for worship ends. See also break meeting.

Rising clerk – An incoming clerk.

Rising concern – A concern raised with increasing frequency or urgency in a body of Friends.

RSWR – Right Sharing of World Resources.

Run ahead of one’s Guide – To go beyond the measure of Light one has been given.

Season – To take the time necessary to seek clarity rather than moving hastily to resolve a concern or issue. The process resembles seasoning firewood more than seasoning food.

Seasoned Friend – An experienced Friend to whom others look for guidance and clarity. See also weighty Friend.

Sense of the meeting – A collective understanding emerging from a meeting for business, gathered and articulated by the clerk for the approval of the meeting. See also unity.

Set off – To establish a new body, such as when a monthly meeting forms a new worship group; for example, to set off a worship group.

Silent grace – A short interval of silent worship and thanksgiving before a meal.

Silent worship – Worship in which Friends gather in silence, out of which individuals may speak as led by the Spirit. See also meeting for worship and waiting worship.


Sojourning member – A Friend temporarily residing in the area of another monthly meeting, formally recognized by that meeting as a participating member.

Speak to one’s condition – To be touched at the deepest level, whether by a message directly from God, or through the words or actions of another person.

Stand aside – To declare oneself to be not in unity with a meeting for business decision. The Friend who stands aside does not seek to block the proceeding and has a responsibility to support and carry forward the decision of the meeting. That person may ask to have the lack of agreement minuted.

Stand in the way – To declare oneself to be unable to unite with a proposed meeting for business minute. This declaration causes the meeting to examine the issue more fully. If the meeting subsequently reaches unity, the Friend who is unable to unite with the decision may ask to have the lack of agreement minuted.

Standing in the Light – A state of being guided by the Inward Light.
State of the Society – A report of the condition of a *monthly meeting* sent annually to the *quarterly meeting* and from the quarterly meeting to the *yearly meeting*.

Stop in the mind – Uneasiness about a proposed course of action.

Support committee – A committee for nurture and care that meets regularly with a Friend filling a responsible position.

Tender – Vulnerable to the Spirit; may be expressed by gentleness, consideration, lovingkindness, sympathy, and care.

Testimony – (1) An outward expression or demonstration of faith which serves as a guide for action. Core testimonies include integrity, simplicity, equality, community, peace and earth care. (2) Public statement or witness grounded in Friends beliefs.

That of God in everyone – A divine principle or seed in each person. The expression derives from George Fox’s call “to walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.” See also *Inward Light*.

Threshing session – A meeting held to discuss a controversial issue. At such a meeting all points of view are heard, but no decision made.

Travel minute – A letter of endorsement a meeting gives to one of its members who is traveling under the weight of a concern. For travel outside the *yearly meeting*, the yearly meeting endorses the minute.

Truth – Friends understanding of right action as discerned under divine Guidance.

Under the care – When an activity, program, or event has a meeting taking responsibility for it, it is under the care of that meeting. A marriage, a *worship group*, or a school can be “under the care” of a *monthly meeting*.

Unity – A recognition of the truth emerging from a group’s corporate search and yielding to the Holy Spirit in its decision-making. See also *sense of the meeting, stand aside, stand in the way*.

Universalist Friends – Quakers who hold that there is spiritual truth to be found at the base of all religious traditions.

Unprogrammed meeting – A *meeting for worship* without pastor or prearranged program. Gathered Friends sit in silence, waiting upon God and leadings of the Spirit which may give rise to vocal messages to share with the meeting.

Visitation – Travel to homes, meetings, and other Friends groups for outreach and spiritual nurture.

Visiting Committee – (1) A *monthly meeting* committee that calls upon a Friend or family that has requested to transfer membership to a new monthly meeting. (2) A *quarterly meeting* committee that visits a local group seeking to become a monthly meeting.

Vocal ministry – A message, prayer, or song shared during *meeting for worship*.

Wait upon the Lord – To actively seek and attend to God’s will in *meeting for worship* or other gatherings of Friends.

Waiting worship – (also called expectant worship) See *unprogrammed meeting*.

Weighty Friend – Member who is recognized as having special experience and wisdom important to Friends. See also *seasoned Friend*.
**Western Friend** – A Quaker magazine published for Intermountain, North Pacific, and Pacific Yearly Meetings by the *Friends Bulletin Corporation*.

**Witness** – A Friend who testifies to or shows evidence of religious beliefs and convictions. Witness also refers to the words or actions of that person.

**Worldly** – Refers to non-spiritual values or concerns. Historically, “worldly” meant non-Quaker values and behavior.

**Worship group** – A group convened to worship regularly *after the manner of Friends*, usually *under the care of a monthly meeting*.

**Worship sharing** – An opportunity, usually in a small group, to reflect deeply on a topic or a set of *queries*, to build community with others, and to feel the movement of the Spirit within the group; neither a conversation or a discussion.

**WQM** – Willamette Quarterly Meeting, one of the *quarterly meetings* in NPYM.

**Yearly meeting** – An association of *monthly meetings*, often encompassing several regional *quarterly meetings*, that convenes annually for worship, business, and fellowship.

**Young Adult Friend** – In NPYM, meeting participants of post-high-school age, 18 to about 35 years old.