

**Annual PIEDMONT FRIENDS YEARLY MEETING  
POLICIES AND PROCEDURES HANDBOOK**

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**ADDENDA**

**VISION STATEMENT AND CORE ELEMENTS** (Adopted 14 Third Month 2015)

**PFF/PFYM RELATIONSHIP** (Adopted 14 Third Month 2015)

- Preamble
- Piedmont Friends Fellowship
- Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting
- Relationship to FGC and Other Organizations

**DEFINITIONS AND GLOSSARY** TBD

**RECOMMENDED READING** TBD

**NOTES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

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

-- The Epistle from the Elders at Balby, 1656

This is an evolving document. It is anticipated that appropriate additions and changes will be made as PFYM matures.

We find that Lake Erie Yearly Meeting's *Policies and Procedures Manual* is aligned with the Vision Statement and Core Elements of PFYM in its clarity, simplicity of style, and organization, and have adapted significant portions of their wording with their permission and with appropriate changes, omissions, and additions. Please consider any errors ours, not theirs. We have also benefited from the *Faith & Practices* of other yearly meetings and are grateful for the labors of Friends who have preceded PFYM.

## INTRODUCTION

*We did conclude among ourselves to settle a meeting, to see one another's faces, and open our hearts one to another in the Truth of God once a year, as formerly it used to be.*

*-- Yearly Meeting in London, 1668*

While this document describes the basic organizational structure of Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting, we acknowledge that the practical should never swallow up the spiritual; that our relationship to the historical trajectory of Friends grounds our work; that we can celebrate our formation only with tenderness to other Friends whether in worship groups, monthly meetings, or yearly meetings as we seek to welcome and benefit from the inclusion of those who are led to join us in openness, spiritual experience, and responsibility.

### **PIEDMONT FRIENDS YEARLY MEETING (PFYM)**

Excerpted from PFYM's first epistle sending "Greetings to Friends Everywhere":

*In a spirit of joy and anticipation, and after years of discernment, Piedmont Friends Fellowship was led to take under its care the formation of a new yearly meeting. Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting (PFYM) emerged as a result of this nurture and we held our first Annual Session on Saturday afternoon, March 14th, 2015. PFYM intends to act as a 21st century yearly meeting well grounded in Quaker tradition and history.*

*--Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting Annual Session, March 14, 2015*

### **PFYM Annual Sessions**

All members and attenders of constituent meetings are encouraged to attend and participate in Annual Sessions. Monthly and preparative meetings are asked to appoint up to three representatives to Annual Sessions, at least one of whom to be present at each business session, to assure broad participation and reporting back to constituent meetings. Worship groups that are under the care of a constituent meeting or that are independent may, as they are led, appoint representatives to Annual Sessions. A representative comes with knowledge about his or her meeting and its concerns, but is not bound by instructions. Representatives need to be open to the leadings of the Spirit, just as they would be in any Quaker business meeting.

PFYM at Annual Sessions will (Actions and Authority Reserved to Annual Sessions):

1. Approve a slate of officers to be presented by the Nominating Committee and approve the recommendation of the Naming Committee for the next Nominating Committee.
2. Approve membership of monthly meetings or worship groups in PFYM.
3. Approve the laying down of monthly meetings

4. Receive minutes from monthly meetings or worship groups affiliating with PFYM.
5. Consider reports and recommendations from Interim Meeting, Executive Committee, or standing committees
6. Hear and receive reports, as appropriate, including from the wider body of Friends
7. Consider minutes of concern forwarded to Annual Sessions by Interim Meeting, Executive Committee, standing committees, or monthly meetings. To expedite matters, written notice of a concern is asked to be given to the presiding clerk well in advance of Annual Sessions.
8. Receive, write, and send epistle
9. Approve additions or changes to PFYM policies and procedures
10. Establish and lay down standing committees
11. Assign tasks to Interim Meeting
12. Make provision for participation in the work of wider Friends' organizations
13. Approve dates, times, and location for future PFYM Annual Sessions in consultation with PFF

## **OFFICERS**

Officers of PFYM will be members of constituent monthly meetings or worship groups and have experience relevant to the position. Considerations in the selection process are experience relevant to the responsibilities of the position; service to Quakers whether at the committee, monthly meeting, or yearly meeting level or to wider Quaker organizations; and sufficient time to devote to the responsibilities of the position. Terms of office begin at the rise of Annual Sessions and are completed at the rise of Annual Sessions of the final year of the term.

### **Presiding Clerk**

The Presiding Clerk serves for two years, preceded and followed by one-year terms as Assisting Clerk. The Presiding Clerk has the following responsibilities:

1. Preside as clerk at Annual Sessions, Interim Meetings, and Executive Committee Meetings.
2. Work in consultation and coordination with other officers of PFYM and PFF.
3. Undertake, or appoint individuals to undertake, responsibilities that are not specified here, but provide for the smooth functioning of PFYM.
4. Receive concerns from monthly meetings and communicate those concerns to other PFYM constituent meetings before business sessions.
5. Serve *ex officio* on any committees of PFYM.
6. Represent PFYM to the public in consultation with PFYM, Interim Meeting, and others as good order dictates.

7. In consultation with members of PFYM, present for approval nominees for a Naming Committee that will nominate the Nominating Committee.
8. In consultation with Nominating Committee, name members to *ad hoc* committees.

### **Assisting Clerk**

The Assisting Clerk serves a one-year term, followed by a two-year term as Presiding Clerk, and then another one-year term as Assisting Clerk. The Assisting Clerk has the following responsibilities:

1. Perform the functions of the Presiding Clerk in his or her absence.
2. Assist the Presiding Clerk with consultation and assignments as requested by the Presiding Clerk.
3. Convene and work with the Epistle Committee.
4. Serve on Executive Committee.

### **Recording Clerk**

The Recording Clerk serves a three-year term and has the following responsibilities:

1. Record and keep minutes of all meetings for worship with attention to business of PFYM, Interim Meeting, and Executive Committee.
2. Serve on Executive Committee.
3. Serve *ex officio* as a member of the Communications and Website Committee.

### **Treasurer (none)**

Initially, PFYM finances will not be separate from those of PFF. Therefore, no treasurer is needed separate from PFF.

## **STANDING COMMITTEES**

Clerks of standing committees will serve three-year terms and may serve one additional term.

### **Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee will consist of the Presiding, Assisting, and Recording Clerks, the clerks of standing committees and others as appropriate. The Executive Committee will:

1. Receive reports from monthly meetings.
2. Set agendas for Annual Sessions.

3. Review and distribute epistles received from other yearly meetings.
4. Confer with, consult with, and advise the Presiding Clerk.
5. In consultation with PFF, set the dates and times of Annual Sessions and Interim Meetings.

### **Communications and Website Committee**

The Communications and Website Committee will:

1. Communicate to Quaker organizations and to the broader non-Quaker world as requested.
2. Facilitate sharing information on events, news, programs, joys, and concerns among PFYM monthly meetings.
3. Contribute to information on and maintenance of appropriate electronic media (e.g., PFF/PFYM website).
4. Maintain an archive of PFYM documents and records.

### **Nominating Committee**

The Nominating Committee will consist of five members recommended by the Naming Committee (see section on Presiding Clerk), representative of the constituent monthly meetings and worship groups of PFYM, and able to serve three-year terms (renewable for one additional term).

Initially, two members will serve for three years, two for two years, and one for one year so that individuals on the Nominating Committee will serve staggered terms.

The Nominating Committee will:

1. Prepare a slate of nominees for PFYM officers, representatives of PFYM to Quaker organizations, and clerks and members of standing committees, to be approved in Annual Sessions.
2. Seek recommendations from monthly meetings, encouraging breadth of representation.
3. Identify nominees for vacancies to be approved by Interim Meeting as required.
4. Coordinate with PFF Nominating Committee in naming representatives to FGC.

## **INTERIM MEETING**

The relationship between the PFYM Annual Sessions and PFYM Interim Meeting is reciprocal. PFYM Interim Meeting will continue the work of the Yearly Meeting between Annual Sessions, address issues needing a timely response, and consider and season matters for the next Annual Sessions. PFYM, in Annual Sessions, can assign tasks to Interim Meeting; Interim Meeting can prepare recommendations to present to PFYM Annual Sessions.

## **Composition of Interim Meeting**

1. Interim Meeting will consist of the officers of PFYM, clerks of PFYM standing committees, clerks of PFYM-appointed working groups, and representatives of constituent monthly meetings and worship groups.
2. Interim Meeting will convene three times each year and may in addition hold meetings as necessary when called by Executive Committee.
3. Individuals to coordinate with PFF Representative Meeting will be jointly determined with PFF.
4. All members and attenders within PFF monthly meetings and worship groups are welcome to participate as led.

## **Representatives to Interim Meeting**

1. Constituent PFYM monthly meetings and worship groups will each appoint up to three representatives to Interim Meeting. When possible, at least one of these representatives will not also be a Yearly Meeting officer.
2. Representatives will serve three-year terms and may be reappointed at the discretion of their monthly meeting or worship group. Staggered terms are recommended.
3. Representatives will attend Interim Meeting sessions as scheduled by the Executive Committee.
4. Representatives to Interim Meeting are asked to be present at annual sessions to support continuity of the work and facilitate clear communication to constituent meetings.
5. Representatives will serve on PFYM committees and working groups.

## **RESPONSIBILITIES AND RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN YEARLY AND MONTHLY MEETINGS**

These traditional definitions are intended to provide guidance as PFYM discerns terminology and forms specific to its needs.

### **Constituency**

Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting, affiliated with Friends General Conference, is made up of all members of its constituent monthly meetings. Membership in PFYM is open by application to any PFF monthly meeting or worship group in the piedmont area of North Carolina and adjoining areas of Virginia and South Carolina.

### **Monthly Meetings**

1. The Yearly Meeting is made up of monthly meetings, the fundamental unit of the Religious Society of Friends. A monthly meeting receives and records members and

takes them under its spiritual care. The authority to take action regarding membership and marriages lies with the monthly meeting. The monthly meeting holds regular meetings for worship and meetings for worship with attention to business, oversees weddings and provides for the nurture of marriages, assists members at times of death, collects funds required to carry on the work of the meeting, and provides for the holding of titles to property and the administration of trust funds. In addition, the monthly meeting may undertake any action and assume any function consistent with Quaker principles and not specifically the responsibility of another meeting.

2. Monthly meetings are encouraged to use a “faith and practice” as a guide for orderly procedure. Ordinarily, a monthly meeting uses its yearly meeting’s *Faith and Practice*. As PFYM does not currently have one, a monthly meeting, unless it has its own guide, could select one or more approved by another yearly or monthly meeting for guidance regarding Quaker process and procedures.
3. Monthly meetings supply a State of the Meeting Report and a Statistical Report annually in a timely manner to the Yearly Meeting.
4. Monthly meetings are not precluded from membership in other yearly meetings.

### **Preparative Meetings**

1. A preparative meeting is a meeting under the care of a monthly meeting. Preparative meetings may, if they so wish, have their own officers, budget, and program. Membership is held in the parent monthly meeting until such time as the preparative meeting requests and receives monthly meeting status from the Yearly Meeting. At that time membership is transferred to the new monthly meeting.
2. A preparative meeting cannot conduct marriages on its own but must arrange for them to be under the care of the parent monthly meeting.
3. Since membership is in the monthly meeting, the monthly meeting counts those Friends in the preparative meeting on its own rolls for purposes of reporting to the Yearly Meeting.

### **Worship Groups**

1. A group of people meeting regularly to worship after the manner of Friends but generally not to conduct business is called a worship group. Usually, one or two people take responsibility for convening the group; they are called conveners rather than clerks. A worship group may begin as an autonomous group that may or may not have much contact with other Friends, or it may be started under the care of a monthly meeting. A

monthly meeting that has a worship group under its care counts the worship group participants on its own rolls for purpose of reporting to the Yearly Meeting.

2. A worship group is not able to grant membership in the Religious Society of Friends or carry out other functions reserved for monthly meetings, such as conducting a marriage.
3. PFYM encourages autonomous worship groups within PFYM's geographic area to come under the care of a monthly meeting. The Yearly Meeting offers its assistance to monthly meetings in assuming care of a worship group.

### **Process to Move to Monthly Meeting Status**

1. Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting encourages preparative meetings of PFYM constituent monthly meetings to explore the possibility of forming a monthly meeting and joining PFYM. The parent monthly meeting assists the preparative meeting in the process of clearness discernment and preparing a minute to the Yearly Meeting for recognition. Yearly Meeting will assist the preparative meeting with the process of moving to monthly meeting status if the circumstance is such that there is no sponsoring monthly meeting or the meeting is not yet affiliated with PFF.
2. Monthly Meetings are expected to:
  - a. hold regular meetings for worship
  - b. hold regular meetings for business
  - c. have an organization with officers including clerk, recording, clerk, and treasurer.

### **Changes in Monthly Meeting Status**

1. When a monthly meeting is considering possible changes such as disbanding or merging with another meeting, the situation will be brought to the attention of the presiding clerk of the Yearly Meeting.
2. The purpose of this notification is to obtain assistance in considering alternatives. Consultation also can help with technical questions concerning individual memberships, disposition of records, finances, property, incorporation, and so forth.
3. The Yearly Meeting will record any change of status.

### **Process for New Meetings Which Are Unaffiliated with PFF**

1. If a monthly meeting asks to affiliate with PFYM, PFYM would verify that they are prepared to also affiliate with PFF.

2. A monthly meeting or worship group not already affiliated with PFF would request affiliation through a letter to the clerks of both PFF and PFYM who will confer about the appointment of a joint clearness committee. The clearness committee will meet with the monthly meeting and have worship with them, provide orientation to the PFYM documents including the vision statement, core elements, and PFF/PFYM relationship, and provide an
3. opportunity for inquiry and response. The clearness committee will report back to both PFF and PFYM. If the report is favorable, the meeting will be asked to provide a minute of intention to affiliate that will be brought to annual sessions of both PFF and PFYM.

### **Preparation and Seasoning of Business**

*Love was the first motion, and thence a concern arose . . . and when, by reason of much wet weather, travelling was more difficult than usual at that season, I looked upon it as a more favorable opportunity to season my mind . . . As mine eye was to the great Father of Mercies, humbly desiring to learn his will concerning me, I was made quiet and content.*

*--John Woolman*

As the above quotation from John Woolman suggests, we do not undertake action lightly. There is a good order to the sequence of a concern arising (from love), seasoning, seeking "his will," and presenting the leading to individual Friends, to an appropriate committee, to a monthly meeting for worship with a concern for business, to wider circles as deemed appropriate to the leading, and eventually to PFYM.

### **Acting on Leadings and Concerns**

#### **1. Individual Leading**

*Description:* An individual senses a leading to act in some way that calls for endorsement by the Yearly Meeting. This may be visiting and ministering among Friends beyond the Yearly Meeting, withholding income taxes for reasons of conscience, or some other Spirit-led activity.

*Process:*

- a. The individual first brings the leading to his or her monthly meeting for discernment. If the monthly meeting senses that it is Spirit-led and in right order, it writes a minute to that effect.
- b. If the monthly meeting feels that the endorsement of the Yearly Meeting is appropriate, it communicates with the presiding clerk, explaining the background and providing a copy of the minute and the reasons why it should come before the Yearly Meeting. The presiding clerk may refer this to the ministry and counsel committee or another committee for further discernment.

- c. If that committee recommends that it come before the full Yearly Meeting, the clerk adds it to the agenda of the next business sessions, inviting the Friend with the leading to attend.

## ***2. Corporate Concern***

*Description:* This is a concern about the right action of Yearly Meeting Friends. It may be a felt need to act on a peace or social justice issue or clarify where PFYM Friends stand on a social, religious, or political issue, or some other Spirit-led pricking of conscience. Corporate concerns may arise from individuals or a committee within a monthly meeting, a monthly meeting itself, or a Yearly Meeting committee.

*Process:*

- a. An individual or monthly meeting committee should bring a concern first to the monthly meeting for discernment. If the monthly meeting unites with the concern, it writes a minute to that effect and proceeds with it as a concern of the monthly meeting.
- b. If a monthly meeting has a concern that it wishes to share with other monthly meetings, it should make that concern known widely throughout the Yearly Meeting by circulating a minute and background material, arranging gatherings, or other means. Friends need to have the opportunity to be fully informed on a matter and have time for discernment within their local meetings before a concern is addressed at the Yearly Meeting level. A monthly meeting may ask other meetings to take up the matter and report their sense of it to the Yearly Meeting. In some cases it is appropriate for a Yearly Meeting committee to take up the matter. If and when the presiding clerk discerns that Friends have sufficiently processed the matter, it may be placed on the agenda of the next business sessions.
- c. When a concern arises within a Yearly Meeting committee, the committee should consider whether the matter is sufficiently understood among Friends generally that it might come directly to the floor of a Yearly Meeting business session, or whether some effort must be made to help Friends become informed and have a chance to season the matter within their local meetings. The committee should consult with the presiding clerk and heed the clerk's discernment on this.

*Timely notification:* Notice that a body plans to bring a concern to business sessions should be given to the presiding clerk in writing well in advance of the meeting for worship with attention to business.

If, after appropriate consideration before and at the meeting for worship with attention to business, the presiding clerk discerns a Spirit-led sense of the meeting to endorse a leading or act on the concern, he or she asks if the meeting approves such action. If the meeting does approve, a minute is written clearly reflecting that endorsement or action. If the meeting is not in unity but the clerk nonetheless discerns strong support for the proposed endorsement or concern, she or he opens the way for further seeking and refinement; this may take the form of returning the concern to a committee for revision before bringing the matter back to the meeting at a later

session. Interim Meeting is considered an appropriate body to help season both individual and corporate concerns before bringing them to Annual Sessions.

Consideration of the following topics and questions may be helpful in the process of discernment:

1. Whether the response to a concern is meant to be undertaken by an individual or by a larger Quaker body.
2. Resolution of conflict between allowing for the seasoning process to progress and the need for timely response to an event or pending action.
3. Availability of resources sufficient to accomplish the desired action: resources may be personal, financial, spiritual, or corporate.
4. What level of response can realistically be accomplished; how can that level be raised to meet an agreed-upon need?
5. Is the time-frame of the proposed project brief or lengthy?
6. Is the project a one-time event or will it be an ongoing undertaking?
7. What body or group will approve, support, evaluate, lay-down, etc. the work?
8. Who will be the spokesperson(s) for the project?
9. What information supports (or not) the project; what information needs to be explored?
10. Are there other Quaker or non-Quaker organizations with which the project would benefit from coordination? What do we bring that others do not?
11. Is additional seasoning desirable before action is agreed upon?
12. What are the details of the proposed action or project? A written document is helpful in exploring ideas, identifying options, and confirming choices, as well as allowing Friends to prepare for discussion beforehand.
13. Would a "threshing session" be useful in allowing the spirit to manifest in a setting which does not require immediate approval?
14. Where? Is the proposal one that will be implemented or will have effects locally? Regionally? Nationally? Internationally?
15. Why? What is the "motion" that led to this proposal? Background of a personal or group activity, history, process, insight, is useful in understanding how an appropriate response can be generated.
16. Remaining mindful that "moving mountains" may seem impossible, but that with faith, etc. Consider whether we are "steadfast, unmovable, and always abounding in the work of the Lord" (1 Corinthians 15:58).

We recognize that a true calling will manifest itself as such and attract to itself individuals sufficient to carry out whatever action is needed to fulfill the leading.

## **GOOD ORDER IN MEETING FOR WORSHIP WITH ATTENTION TO BUSINESS**

*Is our meeting for worship with attention to business held in the spirit of a meeting for worship in which we seek divine guidance?*

*Are meeting decisions directed by prayerful consideration of all aspects of an issue and are difficult problems considered carefully with patient search for truth, unhurried by the pressures of time?*

This guidance for Yearly Meeting sessions can also be applicable to Interim Meeting and monthly meetings.

All Friends are asked to come prepared to listen to Spirit and each other with open hearts and minds, to be open to hearing different voices including those with deep understanding and those who feel strongly about the matter at hand, to listen deeply and to be willing to wait to learn how Spirit is leading the body.

The Presiding Clerk serves as a servant leader, gives time to careful and collaborative preparation of the agenda and distributes in advance if possible, helps the body maintain a worshipful spirit, helps set the pace for the meeting, discerns and names the sense of the meeting or asks others to do so, is careful about expressing personal opinions or steps aside to do so, follows up on tasks that are assigned to others and takes responsibility for items that are referred to Interim Meeting or held over.

The Recording Clerk prepares the minutes to reflect the sense of the meeting on decisions or directions with enough detail to provide context for those reading the minutes at a later time, asks for help from the body in preparing a minute as needed, and reads the minutes during the course of the meeting.

The following are guidelines for meeting for worship with attention to business (*Source: Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Policies and Procedures, 2011*):

1. When you need to speak, ask the clerk to be recognized by raising your hand.
2. To affirm something someone has said, simply nod or use the phrase “This Friend speaks my mind”. Please do not ask to be recognized so that you may express the same thought in other words.
3. When you speak, please stand, speak to the clerks’ table, and keep your comments to the point.
4. Friends will not generally be recognized to speak on any given issue more than once, except to acknowledge a personal change of perspective during the meeting.
5. When the recording clerk is developing a minute, sit in worship and hold him/her in the Light (prayer). Please refrain from conversation with your neighbor.
6. When a person speaks receive the words as you receive vocal ministry – with an open heart and calm mind.

## DATA PROTECTION AND PRIVACY

In the 21st century, there is valid concern over the risks inherent to the availability of personal information. Electronic media amplify the risks which have always existed. PFYM and its constituents are advised to be mindful of these risks and of the variation in individual willingness to make information such as e-mail address, cell-phone number, etc. available.

Overall, PFYM suggests erring on the side of caution in protecting data and maintaining privacy while acknowledging that absolute security is impossible to guarantee. Our vision of openness and transparency does not require release of information beyond what an individual may be willing to share within the boundaries of the monthly meeting or worship group.

It is the individual's responsibility to alert those maintaining records of any special requests for discretion. It is our responsibility to make every effort to assure that information is used solely to facilitate communication among F/friends, not for commercial, political, or other institutional purposes, nor to be shared with other organizations without prior approval.

In coordination with PFF, PFYM will implement the following precepts. It is also recommended that monthly meetings and worship groups devise and implement similar policies.

1. No information on anyone under 18 will be included in data published in any form without parental approval.
2. No contact information will be published on the web without the consent of the individual (see exception "c" below).
3. Accepting service as a Yearly Meeting officer will constitute *de facto* consent. Contact information will usually consist of phone number and e-mail address, not an individual's physical address.
4. Photographs of F/friends of all ages may be used on the PFYM website. However, names will not be associated with such photos, and photos will be removed at the request of any individual in the photo. Photos should be copywritten, and no photo may be copied for use on social media. Those managing websites should be made aware of any circumstances requiring special care.

## **PROCEDURE TO ESTABLISH AND APPROVE CHANGES TO HANDBOOK**

From time to time, as needed, the PFYM Executive Committee may appoint an *Ad Hoc* Policies and Procedures Handbook Committee to receive and review revisions, additions, or corrections to the PFYM Handbook.

Requests or suggestions for changes may be made by PFYM, its officers, standing committees, monthly meetings, and worship groups. The appointed Ad hoc Policies and Procedures Handbook Committee will prepare a set of recommendations for Interim Meeting's consideration. Recommended changes will be circulated in advance of the Annual Sessions during which approval will be sought. In the interest of accuracy and clarity, the Ad hoc committee may copy edit the Handbook to correct spelling and grammar, and to assure accuracy and consistency.

Changes to the Handbook for the purpose of accuracy can be made on an ongoing basis. Executive Committee will bring such items to Interim Meeting for review and approval. Approved changes will be referred to the Communications & Website Committee for incorporating into the Handbook that is posted on the PFF/YM website and is considered to be most current version of the Handbook.

Annually, PFYM standing committees and officers will review the Handbook for accuracy. Suggestions for improvement will be submitted in writing to the Ad Hoc Handbook Committee or to Executive Committee if no Handbook Committee has been named.

Three questions used by SAYMA to guide review by standing committees and officers may be helpful:

1. Is the current operational description of your work up-to-date and accurate as you understand it?
2. What is outdated? Is there missing information?
3. Do changes or recommendations need to be brought to Yearly Meeting?

This recommended procedure for changes to the PFYM Handbook will go into effect after the draft PFYM Handbook has been approved at an Annual Session of PFYM. Until then, the current *ad hoc* Policies and Procedures Handbook Working Group will continue to carry the work.

## **ADDENDA FOLLOW**

Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting  
**VISION STATEMENT AND CORE ELEMENTS**

**Purpose/Summary**

The Vision Statement and Core Elements are intended to clarify the guiding principles of the new Yearly Meeting and its affiliated monthly meetings and worship groups. This document launches us on a new spiritual adventure. We seek to be guided by spirit, through continuing study and prayer, to broaden our understanding of Quaker history and principles; to deepen our experience of Quaker worship, faith, and practice; to foster a loving and inclusive fellowship; to provide opportunity to connect with the wider Quaker community; and to strengthen our service and witness in the broader world.

**Vision Statement**

As a Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends, we seek to foster a loving community of affiliated monthly meetings and worship groups by increasing and strengthening connections among members, attenders, and seekers and with other Friends' organizations. Our primary goals are to nurture monthly meetings and worship groups by supporting spiritual growth and to witness to our collective truth in the wider world.

**Core Elements**

*SPIRIT – The Yearly Meeting is led by the inward experience of the spirit regardless of the metaphor or descriptive language that is used to express it.*

Quakerism began in the 17th century as a Christian movement; Friends often referred to spirit as “Christ within” or “the inward light.” While Christian expressions of spirit continue to be central for many Friends, in the 21st century other Friends feel led to describe their experiences in a variety of ways. Being led by the spirit means that we strive to cultivate that sense that moves us to interact with each other in a loving way, that guides our decisions with openness to change and seeking a larger truth. We worship with an expectation of being “in the spirit,” which allows us personally and corporately to recognize both higher truths and connectedness. Cultivation of spirit compels us to work in the world with compassion and care for all of creation.

*QUAKER PRACTICE – The Yearly Meeting's practice is guided by the spirit, based on historical traditions and continuing revelation tested through corporate discernment.*

Quaker faith and practice has identifiable though not dogmatic characteristics. A long-standing tenet of the Quaker faith is that the revelation of truth has not been completed in the past and that new understandings arise. Discernment of clarity and truth is arrived at through worship and is based on a tradition of testimonies and queries and on living this faith as an outward expression of the inward experience. Our decision-making practice is characterized by discernment through listening, waiting for way to open, openness to multiple solutions, and fearless attention to truth as revealed in the present in order to arrive at a sense of the meeting.

*INCLUSIVENESS – Recognizing that inclusiveness enriches our spiritual lives, the Yearly Meeting welcomes and affirms individuals, monthly meetings, and worship groups from a wide variety of social and theological backgrounds and experiences.*

Rather than prescribing any creed, the Yearly Meeting encourages individuals to become part of the corporate experience of Quaker faith and practice. The authenticity of the experience is based on inclusiveness, which in the 21st century, welcomes individuals and families from a wide range of religious traditions and practices and is affirming of diverse genders, ethnicities, racial identification, sexual orientations, ages, and beliefs. The Yearly Meeting is composed of monthly meetings with various modes of Quaker worship, understanding that there are multiple legitimate ways to seek and experience the spirit.

*COMMUNITY & WITNESS – The Yearly Meeting fosters community within and between monthly meetings and worship groups, strengthens relationships with other Quaker organizations, and witnesses our truth to the wider world.*

The Yearly Meeting intends to create a community that honors all who seek both individual and corporate spiritual truth; where there is a supportive environment for individuals and monthly meetings and worship groups to take on challenges; where we follow in the footsteps of George Fox as we “walk cheerfully over the world, answering that of God in every one.” The community provides the support that allows individuals to test leadings and to witness to the wider world. Belonging to the Yearly Meeting strengthens monthly meetings and worship groups in local, regional, national, and international recognition both within and outside the Quaker community. The Yearly Meeting also provides individuals opportunity for service and for witness through strengthened engagement with issues of concern.

*STRUCTURE –The Yearly Meeting has a simple and sufficient structure to serve the evolving vision of the Yearly Meeting constituents.*

The Yearly Meeting's establishment arises from the need of monthly meetings and worship groups for the benefits provided by a broader organization. The monthly meetings and worship groups are the source of both the people needed to do the work, and the group that determines what work needs to be done in support of Quaker practice. Its structure is designed to serve the needs of constituent monthly meetings and worship groups in growth and engagement with other Friends' organizations. The Yearly Meeting actively invites all to participate in decision-making and action, remaining flexible and acknowledging that all individuals carry truth and a responsibility for discerning and speaking their truth.

*TRANSPARENCY & OPENNESS – Both in practice and in appearance, the Yearly Meeting will demonstrate transparency and openness.*

The Yearly Meeting serves the needs of the monthly meetings effectively when all are made aware of the activities and actions of the Yearly Meeting and when activities and actions are undertaken in response to needs of the monthly meetings and worship groups. The Yearly Meeting facilitates open communication in a variety of modes and styles, being mindful that individuals differ in technological abilities and inclination, and learning styles, as well as familiarity with Friends' acronyms. While the Yearly Meeting encourages the use of various media for communication, it also recognizes that personal and corporate relationships are strengthened by face-to-face gatherings.

## **PFF & PFYM ORGANIZATIONAL RELATIONSHIP**

(Rev 2/28/15 per PFYM Representatives)

### **PREAMBLE**

A strong tradition of Quaker annual meetings is that the business sessions be integrated with formal worship and be held in the context of a community gathering. Such a gathering provides the opportunity to participate in uplifting experiences which strengthen the religious community. In these ways, Piedmont Friends Fellowship (PFF) has been operating like a yearly meeting for more than 45 years.

A fundamental assumption in the formation of Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting (PFYM) is that Piedmont Friends Fellowship will continue to organize its two annual retreats, each with formal worship and an uplifting social component, and that PFF meetings opting to participate in PFYM would not duplicate these efforts. PFYM meetings would only add specifically chosen yearly meeting functions. The retreat program, social activities, children's and youth programs, meals, housing, and perhaps other desired items traditional to yearly meetings could be coordinated between the two bodies and executed by either or both.

The overall concept is that Piedmont Friends Fellowship and Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting, while structurally constituted as independent organizations, will continue to act as one body (PFF) with regard to the functions already handled by PFF. As independent bodies, this relationship can be changed in the future as needed.

### **PIEDMONT FRIENDS FELLOWSHIP (PFF)**

All current programming, membership and member responsibilities will continue just as they have been accomplished in PFF for forty-five years. These activities are:

#### a) Program, Services, and Appointments

1. Fall one-day retreat for adults
2. Spring Annual Meeting and program retreat for adults and children
3. A youth program operating throughout the year
4. Other ad-hoc or on-going programs of Quaker witness or service as desired
5. Financial support for Friends of member meetings who need help in attending Quaker events
6. Maintenance of a website and/or social media cooperatively with PFYM. The website shall be titled in both names to helpfully indicate by its structure the relationship between PFF and PFYM as independent but related organizations.
7. Appointing representatives to outside organizations as needed (e.g. FGC)
8. Other services as agreed to by the PFF representatives.

## b) Membership & Responsibilities

1. Membership in PFF is open by application to any Quaker meeting or worship group in the Piedmont area and adjacent areas of North Carolina, Virginia and South Carolina.
2. Appoint representatives (up to 3) to serve on the PFF Representative Body and to stand for service as officers as necessary
3. Assist in the planning and execution of the retreats and annual meetings, with each meeting contributing as they are able
4. Contribute financially as asked and as able to support ongoing programs and services as determined by the PFF Representative Body

## **PIEDMONT FRIENDS YEARLY MEETING (PFYM)**

a) Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting will be a separate entity from Piedmont Friends Fellowship, and will be made up of member monthly meetings and organized worship groups who are members of PFF.

## b) Program, Services, and Appointments

1. Maintenance of a website and/or social media cooperatively with PFF. The website shall be titled in both names to helpfully indicate by its structure the relationship between PFF and PFYM as independent but related organizations.
2. Appointing representatives to outside organizations as discerned (e.g. FWCC) and in cooperation with PFF for FGC representatives.
3. Other services or on-going programs as decided by PFYM.

## c) Membership & Responsibilities

1. Membership in PFYM is open by application to any PFF monthly meeting or worship group in the Piedmont area of North Carolina and adjoining areas of Virginia and South Carolina.
2. Appoint representatives (up to 3) to the PFYM Interim Meeting and to stand for service as officers and PFYM representatives to other bodies as necessary. Meetings/worship groups may choose to appoint the same people to serve as representatives to both PFF and PFYM.
3. Contribute financially if asked by PFYM, as able and needed to support the ongoing yearly meeting services.
4. Program Planning. Spring retreat, fall workshops, and year-round youth programming will continue to be provided through Piedmont Friends Fellowship. PFYM member meetings acting in their capacity as PFF members, are expected, as in the past, to continue to participate in the planning and conduct of these programs.

## **RELATIONSHIP TO FRIENDS GENERAL CONFERENCE AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS**

- a) FGC is willing to accept any arrangement for representation that PFF and PFYM reasonably propose. Beginning in 2015 and for as long as mutually agreeable, the nominating committees for PFF and PFYM will coordinate representation from the membership such that both organizations are appropriately represented at FCG.
  
- b) FGC asks that its member yearly meetings, fellowships and monthly meetings make a good faith effort to provide financial support to FGC as they are able. FGC also asks to be provided with the individual names and addresses of Friends who are members and attenders of member meetings so that FGC can directly inform individual Friends and promote its various services and opportunities. FGC generally makes an annual appeal for support by mail to all members and will send emails out (perhaps averaging one per month) to those who choose to receive them. PFF meetings will make good faith efforts to provide such information after satisfying themselves as to any security, privacy, or other concerns.
  
- c) Other Quaker organizations, such as Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) and Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) name only yearly meetings as their members. Consequently, Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting will have the opportunity to name representatives to these bodies.