

Practice

I. The Yearly Meeting

The Yearly Meeting is composed of the entire membership of the constituent monthly meetings, preparative meetings and worship groups. The yearly meeting exists primarily to provide a larger group to undertake matters of common concern and to form policy that cannot be accomplished by the smaller bodies. It is a meeting for the transaction of business and can engage in any activity or foster any work which the membership considers appropriate, including provision of funds and supervision of common projects.

The local monthly meeting is the basic body within the Religious Society of Friends and the body in which membership resides. All monthly meeting, preparative meetings (those actively seeking monthly meeting status) and worship groups are urged to have representatives at the yearly meeting sessions and representative meetings. All members have the privilege and responsibility to attend all sessions of the yearly meeting and to participate in the deliberations.

Isolated Friends in the southeast and members of other yearly meetings are also encouraged to attend yearling meeting sessions.

Among its functions the yearly meeting receives Reports of the State of the Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups, issues Queries and Advices, reports its proceedings, and maintains contact with other yearly meetings and Friends organizations. It alone has authority to establish or change the book of discipline, *Faith and Practice*, and/or issue statements of faith of the yearly meeting.

The yearly meeting exercises general oversight and care of constituent monthly meetings, preparative meetings and worship groups aiding in the development of their concerns and providing inspiration and stimulation. Much of the work is carried forward

by yearly meeting committees which report to the yearly meeting. Southeastern Yearly meeting provides for the due consideration of epistles and minutes of other yearly meeting.

A. Officers

The officers of yearly meeting: yearly meeting clerk, assistant clerk, recording clerk, and treasurer are nominated and approved for a three year term. The terms of office of the officers begin at the close of the yearly meeting annual sessions after their nomination is approved. It is however, the responsibility of the outgoing clerk and of the other outgoing officers to carry out the immediate actions authorized by the yearly meeting.

1. Clerk

The duties of the Clerk of the yearly meeting are: to preside at the sessions of the yearly meeting; to prepare the agenda for these sessions; to carry out actions authorized by the Yearly meeting at those sessions or to delegate such actions to the proper persons; to receive correspondence addressed to the yearly meeting and to answer it or send it to the Assistant clerk, a committee clerk, or to the Representative Meeting for appropriate action; to be one of the representatives of the yearly meeting in the Representative Meeting. The Clerk is assisted by an Assistant clerk and a recording Clerk.

2. Assistant Clerk

The assistant clerk has such duties as may be delegated by the clerk, and takes over the duties of the clerk in the absence of the clerk. The assistant clerk oversees the disbursement of travel funds to the yearly meeting representatives to other Quaker organizations.

3. Recording Clerk

The recording clerk, with the yearly meeting clerk, is responsible for preparing accurate minutes of the proceedings of the yearly

meeting sessions. The recording clerk and the representative meeting clerk are responsible for the minutes of representative meeting and the minutes of the Executive Committee sessions.

4. Treasurer

The treasurer is responsible for the integrity of the financial records of the yearly meeting and oversees all the financial transactions of the yearly meeting. It is his/her responsibility to see that the expenditures are in accordance with the budget or that changes from the budget are approved by the yearly meeting or representative meeting. The actual bookkeeping, writing of checks, and making of deposits are done by the secretary. The treasurer presents an annual report of the income and expenses in the previous fiscal year at the October representative meeting.

B. Trustees

The Incorporated Trustees of Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends is incorporated under the laws of the State of Florida. Under its bylaws, title to and management of yearly Meeting property, trusts, and funds are vested in six Trustees appointed by the yearly meeting for three-year terms. These assets are administered and expended according to the direction of the yearly meeting and under conditions prescribed by the donors.

The six Trustees are from diverse areas of Southeastern Yearly Meeting, two are nominated each year for three-year terms. A clerk is nominated each three years. The yearly meeting Treasurer is a member of the Trustees. The group meets at least three times yearly, at each representative meeting and at yearly meeting or upon special call of the clerk of yearly meeting or the clerk of representative meeting.

Trustees are charged with managing the yearly meeting trust and reserve funds and make an annual accounting of these funds at

yearly meeting sessions. All papers relevant to investment and handling of the transactions are kept by the secretary. Copies of these papers are kept by the clerk of the committee. The trustees are responsible for investing trust and reserve funds and are responsible for real property of the yearly meeting in keeping with the testimonies of Friends and the express wishes of donors. The trustees make a recommendation to the yearly meeting about accepting the conditions specified by the donors of large gifts.

C. Executive Committee

The clerk of the Executive Committee is the representative meeting clerk who presides at the committee meetings and writes the agenda. Other members of the executive Committee are: yearly meeting clerk, assistant clerk, recording clerk, treasurer, clerk of the Worship and Ministry Committee, clerk of the nominating committee, clerk of the Finance Committee, and clerk of the Trustees. The administrative secretary is an ex officio member of the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee meets just before each representative meeting, at the beginning of yearly meeting sessions, and sometime in the summer. The committee acts for the representative meeting between sessions. The Executive Committee is the place for the first discussion of problems the yearly meeting has to deal with. The committee provides guidance and loving care to the yearly meeting staff.

D. Staff

The Administrative Secretary is hired by the Executive Committee and paid by funds from the budget and interest from the Secretary's Salary Fund held in the Friends Fiduciary Corporation. The administrative secretary is the communication point for the yearly meeting, both internal and external. The administrative secretary is responsible for the production and distribution of

yearly meeting documents and keeps the yearly meeting financial records including checkbook accounting (collects and deposits donations/checks, writes checks) and provides financial records to trustees, finance committee and treasurer. The administrative secretary sits on the Executive committee as an ex officio member.

E. Committees

Clerks and committee members are appointed by the Nominating Committee with the exception of the Epistle Committee which is named by the yearly meeting clerk at the yearly meeting sessions. Committees meet at each Representative Meeting and at Yearly Meeting.

Archives Committee

The Archives committee collects and preserves records of Southeastern Yearly Meeting which are then stored at the University of Florida. The committee also asks monthly meetings to store their archives with the yearly meeting archives.

Cuban Quaker Project Committee

The Cuban Quaker Project Committee oversees communications, financial assistance to Cuba Friends Meetings.

Epistle Committee

The Epistle Committee is appointed by the yearly meeting clerk at yearly meeting sessions. During the yearly meeting gathering the committee prepares the outgoing epistle from the sessions, which is approved at the last business session and sent out to other yearly meetings.

Faith and Practice Committee

All duties and responsibilities appearing in Faith and Practice grow out of the guidance and experience of the members and committees as they carry out their functions. When practices function well over a period of time, the Faith and Practice is

revised or supplemented. This assists those who are studying the experience of others.

This committee is responsible for keeping the Southeastern yearly Meeting Faith and Practice up to date as a document useful to the monthly meetings and worship groups. It is also responsible for any other duties directed to it by the yearly meeting or the Representative Meeting.

The committee prepares drafts of proposed new sections, or revises sections of the *Faith and Practice* and sends them to the monthly meetings for comments. A text, revised by the committee with the comments of the monthly meetings in mind, is threshed at yearly meeting. A new text is written by the committee taking into account the suggestions made at the threshing session. The text is revised again by the committee and sent out to monthly meetings for comment. If this text seems to have general agreement, the text is taken to the yearly meeting sessions for approval. If the section is not approved, the committee continues its work in a similar manner.

Finance Committee

This committee prepares the budget for the yearly meeting each year. The budget is sent out to the monthly meetings before the end of the calendar year. The clerk of this committee presents the proposed budget to the Executive Committee at its meeting before the January representative meeting and to representative meeting at the January session. The budget, as approved by representative meeting is presented by the clerk of the Finance Committee to yearly meeting for approval.

The Finance Committee is also responsible for asking monthly meetings and individuals to fund the budget. The clerk using the numbers of members and attenders in each meeting divides the meetings contribution to the budget among the monthly meetings in proportion to the size of the meeting. The clerk may

also send an appeal to individual members to help fund the budget.

Half Yearly Meeting Committee

Half Yearly Meeting Committee secures a reservation at a camp, including a deposit, and provides food for the half yearly meeting on Thanksgiving Weekend. The participants pay the costs. The clerk of the committee and the yearly meeting secretary send out a notice about the half yearly gathering. The clerk of the committee provides a financial report to the secretary and treasurer, which becomes part of the yearly meeting's annual financial report.

Membership Recorder

The membership recorder keeps the membership records of the yearly meeting in a data base with the data sent in by the monthly meetings. The membership Recorder revises the data base of the Directory each year. From this data base the secretary produces a Directory each year. The secretary uses the data base to prepare a statistics sheet each year showing the number of members and attenders in each monthly meeting and in the yearly meeting.

Newsletter Editor

The Newsletter Editor gathers the news and prepares the Southeastern Yearly Meeting Newsletter.

Nominating Committee

The Nominating Committee nominates Friends to serve as officers and trustees, as clerks and members of committees, and as representatives to other Quaker bodies. This committee distributes nominations among as many Friends and monthly meetings as possible. After these Friends have indicated their willingness to serve, their names are submitted to the yearly meeting for approval, or are submitted to representative meeting for approval.

Peace and Social Concerns Committee

The Peace and Social Concerns Committee works on peace and justice in the world and brings such issues to the yearly meeting. This committee facilitates carrying out concerns of scope wider than the individual monthly meetings can accomplish. It strengthens the social consciousness of our monthly meetings, worship groups, and individual Friends.

ProNica Committee

The ProNica Committee oversees work in Nicaragua to aid and empower the common people of Nicaragua.

Religious Education Committee

This committee aids monthly meetings in developing their religious education program.

Website Committee

The website committee is responsible for creating, maintaining, and overseeing the yearly meeting website, *www.seym.org*.

Worship and Ministry Committee

The function of the Worship and Ministry Committee is to strengthen the spiritual growth of our monthly meetings, worship groups, and individual Friends. The committee is responsible for the worship sharing groups at yearly meeting gathering and the topic, which is a focus for the worship sharing groups. It is responsible for arranging visitation to monthly meetings and worship groups, and for contacts with isolated Friends.

The Worship and Ministry Committee is responsible for deciding whom to invite to be the Michener Lecturer and taking care of the lecturer's needs in conjunction with the lecture including paying the honorarium. Orlando and Winter Park meetings usually provide lunch at the Orlando Meetinghouse on the Sunday of the Lecture with Friends making a contribution to cover the cost of the lunch.

Yearly Meeting Gathering Committee

This committee is responsible for coordinating the annual sessions of the yearly meeting. It is this committee's responsibility to choose a theme and to bring a speaker for the Walton Lecture. This speaker conducts two workshops on the theme as well. The committee organizes the many workshops, the interest groups, and the youth program and plans a schedule for the adult program and the youth program.

The committee and the yearly meeting secretary send out the program and registration for yearly meeting gathering. The clerk of the committee receives registration by mail or by on-line registration in advance. The committee welcomes Friends to the gathering and gives them the information they need.

The clerk of the committee deals with the administration of the camp, including a reservation and deposit for the next year, makes a budget for the annual sessions, and provides the treasurer with a financial report of the gathering which becomes part of the financial report of the yearly meeting.

Youth Committee

The Youth Committee plans, supervises, and facilitates youth activities throughout the year, provides input and assistance for youth at yearly meeting gatherings and provides materials as requested for the newsletter.

II. The Representative Meeting

The representative meeting carries out the work of the yearly meeting between sessions. It consists of at least one representative from each monthly meeting and each worship group; larger monthly meetings are encouraged to appoint at least two representatives. Other Friends of the yearly meeting are encouraged to attend representative meeting and thus become part of it. The officers of

the yearly meeting and the clerks of committees are members of representative meeting.

The representative meeting acts for the yearly meeting when the latter is not in session. It may not issue statements of faith. It has authority to call special sessions of the yearly meeting. Representative meeting meets the first Saturday in October and in January the Saturday before Martin Luther King Day.

A. Officers

Representative Meeting Clerk

The clerk of representative meeting is nominated by the Nominating Committee of yearly meeting and approved by yearly meeting. The clerk presides at representative meeting sessions, prepares the agenda for these sessions with the help of the Executive Committee as needed. The clerk arranges for the meeting of yearly meeting committees in the morning before the representative meeting session in the afternoon. The clerk carries out the actions authorized by representative meeting. The clerk presents the action minutes of representative meeting at yearly meeting session for approval by that body.

Assistant Clerk

The assistant clerk of yearly meeting serves in the same capacity in representative meeting.

Recording Clerk

The recording clerk of yearly meeting serves in the same capacity in representative meeting.

B. Other Duties of Representative Meeting

1. Representing the yearly meeting and appearing on its behalf whenever the cause of truth, public welfare, or the interests or reputation of the Religious Society of Friends may require:

2. Giving advice and assistance to any individuals suffering because of maintaining Friends' testimonies
3. Advising and assisting Meetings, upon their request, in the administration of property and trust funds, with the assistance of the Yearly meeting Trustees.
4. Appointing any officer of the yearly meeting in case of a vacancy that occurs between sessions.

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III. The Monthly Meeting

The monthly meeting is the basic unit of the Religious Society of Friends and the body in which membership resides. The monthly meeting oversees the life of the Meeting for Worship and the Meeting for Business, and encourages members and attenders to live their lives under Divine Guidance. The monthly meeting receives and approves the membership of individuals; appoints committees and individuals for concerns; oversees marriages and memorial services; extends spiritual care and material aid to members and attenders; and responds in a spirit of love to members and attenders who depart from Friends' testimonies. The monthly meeting has the authority to record ministers.