

## Organization of the Society

*It is earnestly recommended that, as Friends tend to the affairs of our Society, we bear in mind always that we are about God's work. We should endeavor humbly and reverently to conduct ourselves and our meetings in the wisdom and peaceable spirit of Jesus, with dignity, forbearance, honesty, and, above all, love.*

*Source unknown, as quoted in  
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice (1978), p. 175*

## Where and How Decisions Are Made

In the beginning, the Religious Society of Friends mistrusted church hierarchies, believing that the path to the Divine is inward for each individual and worshiping group. Friends have kept the power of decision in religious matters as close as possible to the primary worship group and the individual. The monthly meeting, accordingly, has a freedom of action and responsibility in matters of membership not given to the yearly or regional meetings, with some exceptions. On the other hand, there are some matters on which a degree of uniformity among neighboring monthly meetings is essential to the good order of the Society.

By virtue of membership in a monthly meeting, Friends also become members of a regional and a yearly meeting. All members have the privilege and responsibility to participate in decision making within each body. All members are welcomed and encouraged to attend their regional and yearly meetings.

Within its own area of responsibility, each body is autonomous. Friends attend regional or yearly meetings not as instructed delegates of their monthly meetings but as their representatives. They join others in worship and in decision making that responds to the movements of the Spirit at that time and place.

## Reporting, Oversight, and Guidance

Monthly, regional, and yearly meetings prepare and disseminate various reports, either to each other or to Friends everywhere. In Intermountain Yearly Meeting, each monthly meeting prepares an annual state of the society report, for presentation to the regional meeting and subsequently the yearly meeting. The purpose of these reports is to enable monthly meetings, regional meetings, and the yearly meeting to offer support, guidance, or oversight to monthly meetings as needed.

## The Monthly Meeting

*I was moved to recommend the setting up of Monthly Meetings throughout the nation. And the Lord opened to me what I must do...*

*George Fox, Journal (1667)*

The meeting for worship is the heart of the monthly meeting and the Society of Friends. It is in this corporate fellowship that Friends experience the most profound realities of life: birth and death, marriage and family, community of Spirit, and concern for other people. A meeting in the Quaker sense is a gathering of people whose intention is to encounter God. So far as this divine/human interaction takes place, there is order, unity, and power. Should this connection break down, Friends wait and pray that “way may open” once more; the good order of Friends is based on this conception of a meeting. Meetings for worship are held at established times—usually once a week but also more often as occasion arises.

The name *monthly meeting* reflects the practice of coming together for meeting for worship for business once each month. The term *monthly meeting* has two meanings. Primarily, it refers to the fundamental unit of the Society of Friends; it also applies to the occasion for conducting business, which usually occurs once a month.

## Organization and Responsibility

The purpose of organization is to provide orderly and effective means for handling corporate business essential to the meeting's functioning with a maximum of freedom, participation, and responsibility. A meeting for business takes place in the same expectant waiting for the Spirit's guidance as does a meeting for worship. Friends' manner of conducting business is an expression of our faith that the Light, which is in

all, when heeded, draws all into unity in our common affairs. It is an expression of our commitment to follow that Light.

A monthly meeting has many functions: it receives, records, and terminates memberships; provides spiritual and material aid to those in its fellowship; oversees marriages; gives care at the time of death; and counsels with members in troubled circumstances. It collects and administers funds for its maintenance and work, and it may hold property of a fiduciary nature as well as titles to real property. Meetings witness to Friends' testimonies and relate to other Quaker organizations as well as groups who share common concerns.

Organization evolves with a meeting's needs. Early in its history, a small meeting may be able to act as a committee of the whole. As it gains strength and experience, it may be appropriate to select persons and committees to carry out specific responsibilities. As long as an organizational structure proves useful, it is not changed unless there is good reason to do so; if a structure no longer serves a vital function, it is laid down. If a meeting holds title to real property, it may be advisable for that meeting to incorporate.

## ***Officers***

The organization of monthly meetings within Intermountain Yearly Meeting can vary, sometimes in the name of an office or committee, but also in some cases by function. Ministry in word and act, responsibility for the good order and material needs of the meeting, visitation, authenticity of the testimonies—all these are the responsibilities of persons in the meeting as they are guided by the Light. For practical reasons, monthly meetings appoint individuals to serve as officers and to carry out specific functions, including presiding over meetings, keeping records of business meetings and membership, maintaining stewardship of property and funds, and nurturing the community. They are appointed for defined terms of service using the nomination process described below. The names for the offices may vary, but it is important that responsibility for all necessary functions be assumed by willing and capable individuals. Larger meetings may appoint a number of officers to share the work of their meetings. The most commonly appointed officers include a clerk, a recording clerk, a treasurer, and a clerk of the Committee on Ministry and Oversight or Ministry and Counsel.

A good officer is one who, while assuming a particular responsibility, is committed to the leading of the Spirit in discerning what needs to be done and who seeks to engage the resources of the meeting, matching people to the task.

The clerk (also called *presiding clerk*) presides at meetings for business, gathers the sense of the meeting, formulates the minutes of the proceedings, speaks for the meeting when so directed, and carries out the instructions of the meeting to accomplish its business. Some larger meetings also appoint an *assistant clerk* or *associate clerk* to help with these functions. Although sometimes a faithful attender, the clerk is most often a member of the meeting, one who has the confidence and respect of the membership and the capability of serving the meeting with warmth and spiritual sensitivity. An effective clerk listens receptively, comprehends readily, evaluates rightly, and states clearly and concisely the sense of the meeting regarding a business item or concern. The clerk may ask any experienced Friend to preside in his or her absence.

Most meetings appoint a *recording clerk* to make faithful, concise, and accurate records of the minutes of action, as discerned and stated by the presiding clerk. It is the recording clerk who puts the meeting's insights and minutes into written words, but it is the clerk who bears ultimate responsibility for the completeness and accuracy of the minutes. The meeting may also appoint a *recorder* to prepare the census report as required by the yearly meeting; to file in the appropriate archives the minutes and reports collected by the recording clerk; and to maintain the records of births, marriages, and deaths, and the formal records of membership. In smaller meetings, these matters may be undertaken by the recording clerk. Some meetings appoint an *assistant recording clerk*, *recorder/archivist*, *librarian/archivist*, *correspondence clerk*, *records clerk*, or *minute clerk* to handle these duties.

Maintaining and disbursing the meeting's funds and giving regular reports to the meeting are the responsibility of the *treasurer*. Some meetings choose to incorporate when they begin to hold property in order to have some of the protections provided by the state in which they are incorporated. When drawing up such a charter and by-laws, special attention needs to be paid to the relationships between the officers of the meeting and its corporation. It is convenient to designate the treasurer of the meeting also as treasurer of the corporation. It is well that the meeting's accounts be reviewed occasionally by a financial professional or by a few persons appointed by the meeting.

## ***Committees of the Meeting***

Committees constitute an effective means of facilitating the monthly meeting's business because much of the work can be done more appropriately in small groups than in the meeting for business or by individuals. Each meeting decides which committees are necessary to carry out its concerns and business. Most meetings find a *Ministry and Oversight*<sup>11</sup> (or *Ministry and Counsel*) Committee essential; *Ministry and Oversight* is responsible for the spiritual health of the meeting and maintaining a general purview of the right ordering of the affairs of the meeting. Other common committees include *Nominating*, *Peace and Social Order* (or *Peace and Social Concerns*), *Finance*, *Religious Education*, *Property*, and *Hospitality*. Although the names of committees vary among meetings, it is important that the functions of each committee be clear to all within the meeting. *Ad hoc committees* are sometimes useful for addressing particular projects or concerns. A committee no longer serving a purpose is laid down by the meeting for business.

Committees conduct business in the same manner as the monthly meeting does, waiting on the Spirit for direction in their work and unity in their decisions. It is important that committee clerks and members of committees attend meeting for business regularly to ensure regular communication of information and smooth coordination between the committee and the meeting. A written charge to each committee clarifies what is expected of it and of its clerk as well as the limits of authority delegated to it. Such clarity and communication promotes an atmosphere of trust, allowing meetings, their officers, clerks, and committees to fulfill their respective tasks without wasteful duplication or frustration.

Committee members should be selected according to their abilities and concerns. Meetings customarily appoint an experienced and capable member of the Religious Society of Friends to clerk the Ministry and Oversight (or similar) Committee, and each meeting determines the necessary qualifications for its committee members and clerks. Because committee work enables Friends to engage in the life of the meeting, it provides familiarity with Friends' faith and business practices, especially our decision-making process. Service on a committee also offers Friends an opportunity to use their particular gifts and to deepen friendships among the members.

Committees serve the monthly meeting not only by carrying on their usual functions but also by doing background work for the monthly meeting for business—examining particular matters in depth, identifying issues, gathering useful information, and preparing seasoned recommendations. When this work is done well, the monthly meeting session is able to focus quickly on the matter at hand. It is important that committees keep minutes of their meetings and that they report regularly to the monthly meeting. In bringing a matter before the meeting for business, it is important that the committee describe concisely the work it has done in support of its recommendation and offer, where appropriate, a draft of a possible minute. Mutual trust between the meeting and a committee as well as faith in the power of Truth over all will help achieve the proper balance between the discernment of a committee and that of the monthly meeting. All actions of committees in the name of the meeting are subject to approval by the monthly meeting.

## **Nominating Committee**

*Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of service, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of working, but it is the same God who inspires them all in every one. To each is given the manifestation of the Spirit for the common good. To one is given through the Spirit the utterance of wisdom and to another acts of compassion; according to the same Spirit, some will receive the gift of teaching in the children's program, to others the gift of building maintenance or hospitality; the same Spirit to another gives the clerking of a committee, and yet to others, even the registration of those coming to yearly meeting....*

*Adapted from I Corinthians, 12:4-7 RSV*

The *Nominating Committee* is representative of the meeting and familiar with its members and attenders. Usually, a small ad hoc committee (sometimes called the *Naming Committee*) nominates individuals to serve on the Nominating Committee. Those serving need to be discerning in judgment and tactful in manner and at the same time be forward-looking in considering for service younger Friends and newer members and encouraging those who may underestimate their own potential. The responsibility of this committee cannot be too strongly stressed.

Nominating committees are concerned with how the gifts of members and attenders may best serve the meeting's needs for clerks, committee members, and other responsible positions. The committee seeks the best-qualified persons from among the whole membership, the younger and newer as well as the older and more experienced. The Nominating Committee considers the qualities appropriate to each appointment

as well as how the members of a given committee will function together. It is important that the desire to fill all vacancies not distract the committee from its task of discerning the right person for a particular job.

It is well to the extent practicable to rotate meeting responsibilities or jobs among Friends to enable individuals to practice different approaches and to offer different gifts. It is equally important to recognize when a Friend is serving beyond his or her capacity and experience. The Nominating Committee is also charged with discerning the right time to ask a particular Friend to take up or to lay down a particular task. The committee explains clearly the term and scope of each appointment to those Friends asked to accept nomination as well as the need for the nomination to be brought to the monthly meeting for approval. Sometimes a Friend may request a clearness committee to help him or her reach clearness about accepting a position. In some larger meetings, the Committee on Ministry and Oversight serves as a clearness committee for the Nominating Committee. Nominating Committees should not feel unduly concerned to fill vacancies that remain after the committee has exercised its use of spiritual discernment.

Nominating Committees do not appoint. Nominations are made by the committee, not by individual members of the committee. Generally nominations are laid over for one month to enable both nominees and members of the meeting to express to the committee any concerns they may have about the nominations while carefully recognizing that of God in each person. If after thoughtful consideration unity is not reached, the committee attempts to find another person to fill the position. With any appointment, the meeting, having been fully involved in approving the nominations, extends loving support to those who take on a position.

Sometimes, following thoughtful consultation with the Ministry and Oversight Committee (or its equivalent), a need arises for bringing an appointment to a close before the end of a term or a Friend may request release from service. Loving tenderness is essential in considering reasons for early release and in finding another person. Nominating Committees should not hesitate to bring problems back to the monthly meeting for guidance and practical help.

The Nominating Committee may also from time to time ask the Ministry and Oversight committee to consider whether a committee should be laid down and to forward its recommendation to the meeting for business.

## **Ministry and Oversight / Ministry and Worship Committee**

In some meetings, the functions of the Ministry and Oversight Committee (under various names) are the charge of one committee, and in others, because of the many responsibilities, these functions are divided between two committees—Worship and Ministry focusing on the spiritual well being of the meeting as a whole, and Oversight and Counsel focusing on the care of individual Friends. The committee ideally consists of members of varied ages, genders, and gifts who are faithful in worship and sensitive to the life of the spirit—Friends both young and old looked to as spiritual elders and as having experience, empathy, good judgment, and discretion.

**Care for the Meeting for Worship.** The first responsibility of the Ministry and Oversight (or, where divided into two committees, Ministry and Worship) Committee's members is to deepen their own spiritual lives and their preparation for worship. When they are grounded in the Spirit, committee members are reminded that they are but vessels of the Light among many other vessels. Then they can better trust that the power of God may work through all persons in the meeting and beyond. Committee members' concern for the meeting throughout the week, their prompt arrival at and reverence for meeting for worship, and their faithfulness to the guidance of the Spirit are ways they can deepen the quality of worship.

Committee members try to discern promising gifts among Friends as well as to guide in a loving manner those who speak unacceptably in meeting for worship (such as those who speak too often or for too long). They endeavor to open the way for those who are timid and inexperienced in vocal ministry and to encourage all Friends to listen with tenderness. In trying to be helpful, they do not assume superior wisdom but rather trust that all are sharing in the search for guidance.

**Care for the Meeting for Business.** The responsibilities of the Ministry and Oversight Committee (or, where divided into two committees, Ministry and Worship) include nurturing business sessions of the monthly meeting. The importance of the presence of committee members at meeting for business cannot be overemphasized. The committee considers prayerfully how to contribute to the meeting's discernment of Truth and works with the presiding clerk to develop his or her skills in fostering a worshipful and faithful business meeting.

**Care for Individual Lives.** Ministry and Oversight Committee (or, where divided into two committees, Oversight and Counsel) attends to the spiritual lives of those in the meeting by helping discern

and develop varied gifts for ministry and service as well as encouraging vocal ministry; teaching; counseling; aesthetic, social, and practical modes of expression; and regular spiritual disciplines. The committee may support individual spiritual growth by circulating appropriate literature in addition to arranging for study groups, retreats, and worship-sharing groups. Members are personally concerned with the spiritual and physical welfare of each member of the meeting. They encourage visitation and fellowship within the meeting and try to ensure that those who are ill, troubled, or in need receive visits, spiritual help, and practical assistance as may be needed.

This committee considers requests for initiation, transfer, or withdrawal of membership; requests from persons who wish to be married under the care of the meeting; and requests for clearness committees to address individual concerns. It offers spiritual care and practical assistance at the time of death in a family. It tries to be of help in reconciling differences among people in the meeting. It endeavors to respond to inquiries about Friends and welcomes newcomers and attenders, including making clear to them ways of participating in meeting fellowship or joining the meeting as a member. It encourages Friends to attend regional and yearly meeting sessions and other gatherings of Friends, and provides information about possible financial assistance for this purpose. It keeps in touch with committees with related concerns and may form subcommittees charged with specific responsibilities (e.g., marriage clearness or a fund for special needs)

The Ministry and Oversight Committee (or two committees) should report its activities and concerns regularly to the monthly meeting. In consultation with the meeting community, this committee oversees the preparation of an annual State of the Meeting Report<sup>[2]</sup> to the regional and yearly meetings, for they and the clerk share oversight of other committees of the meeting, with a special concern for good order.

Sometimes a problem facing an individual is too complex for the meeting to handle. When this arises, the Ministry and Oversight Committee may turn to regional or yearly meeting Ministry and Oversight Committees for assistance. In some cases, professional help needs to be sought. Committee members need to have knowledge of available professional resources. Even when it is clear that professional help is needed, the meeting may still offer such practical assistance as meals, childcare, or transportation.

## **Peace and Social Order Committee**

That the *Peace and Social Order Committee* (variously named *Peace and Social Concerns*, *Social Action*, *Peace and Justice*, *Faith in Action*, and so on) is one of the first committees formed in many monthly meetings bears witness to the commitment of Friends to make their lives speak their faith. This committee may plan and carry out service projects as activities of the meeting, recommend particular action on issues of interest to Friends, encourage members to participate in the work for social change as part of larger groups or independently according to individual leadings, support Friends in forwarding a concern to the regional or yearly meeting, and contribute services or money to help free a member of the meeting to pursue a social action as a “released Friend.” This committee also may provide valuable help in seasoning concerns of an individual or group that prompt social action or service, testing concerns, and recommending courses of action.

## **Finance Committee**

Monthly meetings must have income to pay for rent or maintenance of space, communication, outreach, insurance, educational materials, and other expenses. The treasurer, with advice from Ministry and Oversight or a separate Finance Committee, oversees funds. The procedures for securing income are generally unobtrusive. It is not uncommon for the Finance Committee to send an annual letter to members and attenders describing the meeting’s broad budgetary picture and suggesting common practice in giving to the meeting. Such a letter typically explains that contributions may be less for some and more for others, depending on personal circumstances. One of the responsibilities of membership is the financial support of the meeting and other Friends organizations.

Other duties of the Finance Committee are to oversee the maintenance of orderly accounts and expenditure procedures, and to advise the monthly meeting on the financial aspects of its affairs. In meetings without a Finance Committee, the treasurer may carry these responsibilities. In larger meetings, it may be worthwhile to hire a professional accountant and to appoint an assistant to the treasurer.

## **Other Committees**

As a meeting grows, it will be necessary to add other committees to do the work described above and to meet other needs that arise. Some of the other committees currently identified within Intermountain Yearly Meeting are:

- Religious Education (both for children and for adults)
- Building and Grounds
- Board of Trustees/Corporation Board of Directors
- Hospitality
- Long-Range Planning
- Outreach
- Fellowship
- Right Sharing
- Library
- Membership Guidance
- Communications
- Bereavement
- Scholarship

## Regional Meetings

As mentioned above, membership in the Religious Society of Friends by individuals is obtained through the monthly meeting. Such membership also constitutes membership in the regional meeting and the yearly meeting with which the monthly meeting is affiliated. Currently, there are four smaller bodies within Intermountain Yearly Meeting: Arizona Half-Yearly Meeting, Colorado Regional Meeting, New Mexico Regional Meeting, and Utah Friends Fellowship.

The monthly meetings and worship groups were the creators of Intermountain Yearly Meeting and have direct access in communicating their concerns to the yearly meeting. Each regional meeting was also separately created by, and may be laid down by, its participating monthly meetings and worship groups without application to the yearly meeting. A monthly meeting may elect to obtain broader seasoning of its concerns by applying to its regional meeting and requesting that it consider such concerns before forwarding them to the yearly meeting as appropriately decided in the regional meeting. The organization and appointments of the regional meetings generally follow those of the monthly meeting.

The yearly meeting uses the regional meetings because they are convenient, efficient sources of information about shared views. The yearly meeting and the monthly meeting must be prepared to alter their relations with a regional meeting should it change its mode of operation, including becoming inactive.

A regional meeting is a cooperative association of two or more monthly meetings in a particular geographical area and is composed of all the members of its constituent monthly meetings, preparative meetings, and worship groups as well as interested persons within its area who are isolated from any established Friends group.

A regional meeting may be established upon yearly meeting approval of a request from two or more monthly meetings or a request from a regional meeting that wishes to be divided into two such meetings. A regional meeting also may be set up upon the initiative of the yearly meeting. In any such instance, the yearly meeting appoints a committee to assist in the organization and receives the recommendation of that committee before recognizing the regional meeting. Where geographical expanses or other circumstances warrant, the formation of associations or gatherings other than regional meetings may prove helpful.

To carry out its responsibilities, a regional meeting meets regularly, appoints necessary officers and committees,<sup>[3]</sup> and conducts its business in the usual manner of Friends. It collects and administers funds as needed. It may appoint an Interim, Planning or Continuing Committee to help plan its sessions and to act for it between sessions, within agreed-upon limits. Information regarding the appointment of yearly meeting positions by the regional meeting is found in the "Guide to Operations of Intermountain Yearly Meeting."

Each regional meeting prepares an annual budget, which is presented to business sessions of the regional meeting once a year. Customarily, the budget is based on an annual assessment contributed by each of its constituent monthly meetings of a per-capita amount based on the number of adult members reported by the monthly meeting in its most recent census. The per capita assessment rate is considered and approved by the regional meeting in its annual sessions as part of the review of the budget. Out of these funds, the regional meeting pays for items agreed upon as necessary to its operations. The adult members include both resident and nonresident members. Members sojourning by minute to other monthly meetings

are counted by their home monthly meeting. Members of other monthly meetings and attenders are not included.

In Intermountain Yearly Meeting, regional meetings usually hold sessions biannually. Traditionally among Friends, a regional meeting which met twice a year was called a "half-yearly meeting." In this yearly meeting, some regional meetings call themselves "half-yearly meetings or Friends fellowships. For simplicity in reference within the purpose of this document, the term *regional meeting* will be used inclusively.

The purpose of a regional meeting is to strengthen the life and fellowship of monthly meetings and other Friends groups in the area and to provide a link in transmitting business and other information to and from Intermountain Yearly Meeting. Regional meetings contribute to the growth of the spiritual life and fellowship of its constituent monthly meetings and other Friends groups, including children and young Friends, in various ways. The sessions of the regional meeting provide religious fellowship, a wider variety of ministry during worship than individual meetings usually experience, and programs that address the deeper interests of the Religious Society of Friends. Outside its regular sessions, the regional meeting may develop programs for its young people, arrange for retreats and other gatherings, and encourage and coordinate inter-meeting visitation.

A regional meeting can also provide a forum for considering and acting upon concerns from individuals and meetings and forwarding approved minutes to the Steering Committee or annual session of the yearly meeting. It also may provide services or address issues that pertain to all Friends but for which there may not be sufficient concern or energy in any one individual meeting. A regional meeting is concerned for the condition of its constituent groups, strengthening and supporting them. It is responsible for the nurture of new gatherings of Friends, and when the time comes, it reports their establishment as monthly meetings to the yearly meeting. The regional meeting would also be the appropriate body to consider a request from the members of a monthly meeting that their meeting be laid down or united with another meeting.

## The Yearly Meeting

### Introduction

Intermountain Yearly Meeting was created by monthly meetings and worship groups then in Pacific Yearly Meeting and nearby. The regional meetings were created separately by their constituent monthly meetings. Both the yearly meeting and the regional meetings exist at the pleasure of the monthly meetings and their worship groups. Intermountain Yearly Meeting and North Pacific Yearly Meeting were set off from Pacific Yearly Meeting in 1974 and 1975, respectively. These three western unprogrammed meetings are known as independent yearly meetings because they are not affiliated with an umbrella group such as Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting, or Evangelical Friends International. Intermountain Yearly Meeting has come to be organized and administered in ways that reflect the status of the monthly meeting as the fundamental organizational unit and the source of unity in all decisions. Annual sessions are structured so as to minimize business and emphasize spiritual fellowship among Friends and others in attendance.

### Affiliations

Intermountain Yearly Meeting is a member of Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) and actively affiliates with the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) and the American Friends Service Committee (AFSC). The yearly meeting becomes a member of or affiliated with another Friends organization only after several monthly meetings have become active in the affairs of that organization and bring to the yearly meeting a request for membership or affiliation.

### Membership

Members of the yearly meeting's monthly meetings are also members of the regional meeting, the yearly meeting, those Friends organizations of which the yearly meeting is a member, and the Religious Society of Friends worldwide. Members are responsible for the decisions and actions of their yearly meeting. Rather than exercising these responsibilities through the monthly meeting holding their memberships, worship groups and preparative meetings in Intermountain Yearly Meeting do so directly with the yearly meeting.

Responsibilities of a worship group for yearly meeting affairs continue as they become a preparative meeting or a monthly meeting.

## Annual Meeting

The annual gathering of Intermountain Yearly Meeting is a spiritually enriching occasion as Friends seek guidance from the Light Within and share their diverse insights and concerns for service in the larger world. This gathering is held at a time and place determined by the yearly meeting on the recommendation of the Continuing Committee, which has responsibility for overseeing all details of the planning. Yearly meeting attenders consider ways in which spiritual guidance, truth, witness, and friendship have been expressed over the past year and how these expressions may be extended in greater measure to those who come to us as seekers. The annual business sessions of Intermountain Yearly Meeting are held during the annual gathering. During these plenary sessions, the work of the appointees, committees, and officers of the yearly meeting are reported. The yearly meeting clerk, with the assistance of the Continuing Committee, develops the agenda for the annual business meetings. Between annual gatherings, the Continuing Committee and the Executive Committee carry on the work of the yearly meeting, based on guidance provided at the annual business sessions and in accordance with the "Guide to Operations of Intermountain Yearly Meeting."

## Relationships of Monthly Meetings, Preparative Meetings, and Worship Groups with the Yearly Meeting

Monthly meetings, preparative meetings, and worship groups are directly affiliated with Intermountain Yearly Meeting upon the acceptance of their written request.

A new monthly meeting, preparative meeting, or worship group may be established with the assistance and oversight usually of the nearest existing monthly meeting of Intermountain Yearly Meeting. The regional meeting may assist the applying meeting or group in determining the appropriate monthly meeting for this purpose. A worship group or preparative meeting may transfer from the care of one monthly meeting to another using the same procedures as for an individual transferring membership. Should a worship group or a preparative meeting be laid down, any residual responsibilities and real or fiduciary property and records are transferred to the Monthly Meeting having its care or to one or more other monthly meetings, as may be agreed with the responsible monthly meeting. Similarly, should a monthly meeting be laid down, the disposition of its remaining responsibilities and any property, real or fiduciary, becomes the responsibility of the regional meeting unless it is inactive, in which case they would go to the yearly meeting.

Monthly Meetings affiliated with another yearly meeting may also become associated with Intermountain Yearly Meeting upon acceptance of a written request. Meetings should clear such action with their yearly meeting before requesting such association. Mexico City Monthly Meeting of Pacific Yearly Meeting has been associated with Intermountain Yearly Meeting since Intermountain Yearly Meeting's beginnings.

The yearly meeting provides guidance and discipline in faith and practice for its monthly and regional meetings and worship groups regarding their affairs and relationships with the yearly meeting and with Friends everywhere. In all matters, such guidance is descriptive and not prescriptive. The yearly meeting endeavors to maintain inclusive practices and procedures, always knowing that the monthly meeting is the fundamental unit in the affairs of the Religious Society of Friends.

## Financial Support of the Yearly Meeting

Assisted by the treasurer, Intermountain Yearly Meeting's Finance Committee prepares two budgets: one for the annual gathering, which is self-supporting through a registration fee and the other for the general operations of the yearly meeting, which are supported by an assessment on the monthly meetings based on the number of adult members according to the latest census. These budgets are reviewed and approved by the Yearly Meeting and again at its winter meeting, by the Continuing Committee.

The annual gathering budget provides adequate child care, an inspirational program for young and adult Friends, and a smooth but simple administration.

The general operating budget supports travel and related expenses of

- yearly meeting officers to attend meetings of the Executive and Continuing Committees
- members of the Faith and Practice Committee

- representatives appointed by the yearly meeting to FWCC, FCNL, and AFSC
- representatives appointed to meet with the Brinton Memorial Visitor Committee during the annual sessions of Pacific Yearly Meeting
- representatives attending meetings of the Friends Peace Teams Committee and meetings of the corporation board of *Friends Bulletin*.

Travel expenses to meetings of yearly meeting committees are the responsibility of the meeting or group making the appointment, except in cases where Intermountain Yearly Meeting makes other arrangements.

Rather than including support of FWCC, FCNL, and AFSC in the yearly meeting's budget, Intermountain Yearly Meeting calls on its monthly meetings and worship groups to contribute directly to these organizations. This helps avoid the need to increase the annual assessment. Similarly, it leaves to the monthly meetings decisions about allocating from their budgets financial and nonfinancial resources to other worthy groups that might otherwise approach the yearly meeting for support.

Intermountain Yearly Meeting's annual assessment is a contribution from each of its affiliated monthly meetings of a per capita amount based on the number of adult members reported by the monthly meeting in its most recent census. The count of adult members includes both resident members and nonresident members whose memberships are held by the monthly meeting. Sojourning members are included in their home meeting's count. Attenders are not included in the assessment. This method of calculating the assessment is designed to be an even-handed way of arriving at each monthly meeting's share of budget responsibility. The per-capita assessment rate, as recommended by the Finance and Continuing Committees, is considered and approved by the yearly meeting in its annual sessions as part of the review of the budget.

In addition to the assessment, contributions may be made directly to the treasurer of Intermountain Yearly Meeting by meetings, groups, and individuals at any time.

## Bringing Concerns before the Yearly Meeting for Consideration

There are four ways a concern may come before Intermountain Yearly Meeting's business sessions for consideration: by placement on the agenda by the Clerk; by minute from a monthly or regional meeting; by minute from a yearly meeting committee; or from the floor when recognized by the clerk. All formal communications to the yearly meeting regarding matters of substance are in the form of minutes adopted by meetings or groups.

The clerk and the Continuing Committee, in their planning process, develop an agenda including matters that need to be addressed at the annual business session. It is expected that other concerns that may come before the yearly meeting be considered and approved previously by a monthly or regional meeting or the committee responsible for the concern. Such concerns should be described in a written minute delivered to the yearly meeting clerk in a timely fashion. The clerk, in consultation with Continuing Committee, then places the concern on the agenda.

In considering concerns brought before them by their members, monthly meetings should exercise care that their own discernment is adequate and that, if forwarding the matter to another meeting, they are not evading their own responsibility for reaching unity. This may involve consideration at more than one sitting of monthly meeting for business. In cases where urgent action is not called for, it might also be wise for a monthly meeting to seek the counsel of its regional meeting before forwarding a concern to Continuing Committee or the yearly meeting clerk. It is also recommended that the resources, implications, and actions involved in carrying out the concern be clarified early in the consideration process.

Committees of the yearly meeting may bring minutes either to the clerk or directly to the floor of the annual business sessions. Intermountain Yearly Meeting committees are advised that they also should exercise care that their own consideration has been adequate and that their members have reached unity before bringing the matter to yearly meeting. The clerk and the Continuing Committee may place on the agenda all such matters that reach them in a timely fashion.

The yearly meeting clerk may entertain a minute or concern from the floor of a plenary session. Before such a concern is laid before the plenary session for its consideration, the clerk usually consults with the clerk of the Continuing Committee about the impact or unintended consequences that potentially could arise from the resulting action. The concern may be acted upon or may be referred for study and consideration at another annual gathering.

## The Role of the Guide to Operations

Prior to developing a Faith and Practice, the yearly meeting created “The Guide to Operations of Intermountain Yearly Meeting,” which contains detailed information about the functions of yearly meeting committees, roles and responsibilities of officers, terms of service, nominating procedures, and other matters. The Guide also covers qualifications of Friends who serve the yearly meeting, detailed procedures for the nomination and appointment of officers and committee members, and how travel to committee functions is to be paid for. The Guide is considered a manual of procedures rather than a statement of faith and practice. The Guide and special applications of its topics may be found on the Web at [www.imym.org](http://www.imym.org).

## Discernment of Clearness for Service to the Yearly Meeting

Regarding discernment of clearness to serve the yearly meeting in various capacities, Intermountain Yearly Meeting follows this process for nominations:

Members of the Nominating Committee are responsible for approaching Friends concerning possible service to the yearly meeting. They make clear the duties involved in the position and explain the nominating process. A written job description (from “The Guide to Operations of Intermountain Yearly Meeting”) is given to the prospective nominee. When two (or more) persons are to work together closely on an assignment, they should be consulted about the proposed arrangement. It is made clear that the yearly meeting as constituted in its annual sessions, not the Nominating Committee, makes appointments.

**Note:** The Continuing Committee can act for the yearly meeting when the latter is not in session as described in the Guide. This makes it possible to make appointments at the Continuing Committee’s mid-winter meeting when necessary.

Prior to accepting a yearly meeting nomination, nominees are expected to request a clearness committee from their monthly meeting, preparative meeting, or worship group to assist them in discerning the answers to the following queries:

1. How does the position relate to the nominee’s spiritual leading into service? What spiritual support might the nominee need from his or her meeting?
2. Given the duties of the job and the nominee’s personal attributes and abilities, is there a good match? How does it fit the nominee’s gifts? Does it offer the nominee potential for personal growth?
3. What circumstances might affect the nominee’s ability to serve? What are the nominee’s commitments within and without his or her meeting? Will these commitments interfere with the nominee’s ability to carry out the proposed service to the yearly meeting?
4. What assistance from his or her meeting will the nominee need to perform the duties of the job? For example, will the nominee’s meeting need to host committee gatherings? Does the nominee have duties within his or her meeting that will need to be laid down or assumed by others? Might the nominee need help from his or her meeting to meet childcare or other domestic responsibilities if travel is involved in the committee work?

## Committees of Intermountain Yearly Meeting

The functions and appointment procedures regarding the following Intermountain Yearly Meeting committees are established and described in “The Guide to Operations of Intermountain Yearly Meeting” (see [www.imym.org](http://www.imym.org)). However, the yearly meeting may create or lay down committees as it sees fit. As of this printing, the committees are as follows:

- Executive Committee
- Continuing Committee
- Nominating Committee
- Finance Committee
- Watching Committee
- Operations Committee
- Ministry and Counsel Committee
- Long-Range Planning Committee (inactive)
- Intermountain Yearly Meeting Faith and Practice Committee
- Committee for Oversight of IMYM/AFSC Joint Service Projects
- Committee to Revise the Guide

Committee on American Friends Service Committee  
Committee on Friends Committee on National Legislation  
Committee on Friends World Committee for Consultation  
Committee on Migrant and Border Concerns (no longer a committee, but still meeting as an informal group)

## Officers and Appointees of Intermountain Yearly Meeting

The roles and responsibilities of following officers and appointees of the yearly meeting are also described in “The Guide to Operations of Intermountain Yearly Meeting.” The yearly meeting may create other offices and appointments as it sees fit to enable smooth administration.

Clerk

Recording clerk of Intermountain Yearly Meeting

Continuing Committee clerk

Recording clerk of the Continuing Committee

Registrar

Treasurer

Clerk of the Finance Committee

Clerk of the Nominating Committee

Historian-recorder

Clerk of the Faith and Practice Committee

Convener of worship sharing

Convener of interest groups

Coordinator of children's yearly meeting

Clerk of the Watching Committee

Coordinator of Senior Young Friends program

Coordinator of Junior Young Friends program

Coordinator of operations

Book sales support coordinator

Clerk of the Ministry and Counsel Committee

Advocate for Friends with different abilities/kitchen liaison (may be split into two jobs as needed)

Brinton Visitor Committee representative from Intermountain Yearly Meeting

Members (3) of the corporation board for *Friends Bulletin*

Representative to Friends Peace Teams Project

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<sup>[1]</sup> The term *oversight* can also refer to the management of property, but here it is used in the context of pastoral care and counseling.

<sup>[2]</sup> See Appendix 5 for a description of and advices on the State of the Meeting Report

<sup>[3]</sup> Specific procedures vary among Regional Meetings. Regional Meetings' manuals of procedures or handbooks should be consulted.