

# Glossary

*Italics* indicate a term defined elsewhere in the glossary. “Yearly meeting” refers to North Pacific Yearly Meeting unless otherwise indicated.

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

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

**AFSC** – American Friends Service Committee. [www.afsc.org](http://www.afsc.org)

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

**Anchor committee** – A *support committee* for a Friend traveling or laboring in the *ministry* which helps them stay spiritually grounded.

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

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

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

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

**Book of discipline** – See *discipline*.

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

**Business meeting** – See *meeting for business*.

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

**Care committee** – A committee convened to support a Friend during a major life transition.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Close meeting** – See *break meeting*.

**Committee** – Meetings operate largely through smaller groups committed to a particular focus or task, these groups usually report to the *meeting for business*.

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

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

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

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

**Continuing revelation** – Friends’ deeply held belief that God speaks to people directly today.

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

**Convergent Friends** – An inclusive coming-together of Friends from many strands of Quakerism, seeking a deeper understanding of our heritage and an authentic life in the Kingdom of God on earth.

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

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

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

**Correspondent** – (1) the *convener* or contact person in a *worship group*. (2) Someone who serves as an informal liaison with another Quaker organization.

**Covered meeting** – See *gathered meeting*.

**Discernment** – The process of finding the right course of action through spiritual perception and thoughtful consideration.

**Discipline** – The document describing the faith and practice of the *Religious Society of Friends*. Each *yearly meeting* may draw together the collective wisdom of its community, including *queries* and guidelines to support individual and corporate faithful living. NPYM’s *Faith and Practice* is a discipline in this sense of the word.

**EFI** – Evangelical Friends International. [www.evangelicalfriends.org](http://www.evangelicalfriends.org)

**Elder** – (as a noun) A Friend (of any age) with a gift of caring for the *worship* and spiritual life of the meeting and individuals. (as a verb) (1) To encourage diffident or timid Friends to share their gifts with a meeting. (2) To question an individual’s speech or behavior that may be disruptive to the meeting.

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

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

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

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

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

**Expectant worship** – See *worship*.

**Facing benches** – Historically, the seats in the front of the meeting room on which recorded ministers and *elders* sat, facing the body of the meeting. NPYM Friends generally arrange their meeting-room seating in a circle or square with no facing bench distinction.

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

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

**FCNL** – Friends Committee on National Legislation. [www.fcnl.org](http://www.fcnl.org)

**FCWPP** (pronounced “FICK-wipp”) – Friends Committee on Washington Public Policy. Former name of Quaker Voice on Washington Public Policy. [www.fcwpp.org](http://www.fcwpp.org)

**FGC** – Friends General Conference. [www.fgcquaker.org](http://www.fgcquaker.org)

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

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

**FPT** – Friends Peace Teams. [www.friendspeacetams.org](http://www.friendspeacetams.org)

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

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

**Friends Bulletin Corporation** – Publishes *Western Friend*, a Quaker periodical for Friends within Intermountain, North Pacific, and Pacific Yearly Meetings.

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

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

**FUM** – Friends United Meeting. [www.fum.org](http://www.fum.org)

**FWCC** – Friends World Committee for Consultation. [www.fwcc.world](http://www.fwcc.world)

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Isolated Friend** – See *remote Friend*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Liberate** – To set concerned and qualified persons free for religious service such as traveling among Friends. This may include the meeting’s assuming the responsibilities of the *released Friend* in their absence.

**Meeting for business** – The meeting at which Friends attend to *corporate* business, sometimes called “*meeting for worship* with a concern for (or attention to) business.”

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

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

**Meetinghouse** – The building where Friends meet to *worship*.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Minute of travel** – See *travel minute*.

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

**Monthly meeting** – A congregation of Friends who meet regularly for *worship*, usually weekly, and to conduct *corporate* business, traditionally once a month.

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

**NPYM** – North Pacific Yearly Meeting. [www.npym.org](http://www.npym.org)

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

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

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

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

**Pastoral Care Committee** – The committee which has particular care for the *membership* and *corporate* life of the meeting.

**Pastoral Friends** – Quakers in meetings that call Friends with spiritual gifts to minister to them; see also *programmed meeting*.

**Plain dress** – The simple, unadorned garments worn by most Friends until the late nineteenth century and still worn by some today.

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

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

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

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

**Preparative meeting** – In NPYM, a body of Friends preparing to become a *monthly meeting* under the care and guidance of an established monthly meeting.

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

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

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

**QEW** – Quaker Earthcare Witness. [www.quakerearthcare.org](http://www.quakerearthcare.org)

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

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

**Quaker Voice** – Quaker Voice on Washington Public Policy. [www.fewpp.org](http://www.fewpp.org)

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

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

**QVS** – Quaker Voluntary Service. [www.quakervoluntaryservice.org](http://www.quakervoluntaryservice.org)

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

**Recording clerk** – The person who writes the *minutes* of a *meeting for business* or other Friends decision-making body. The recording clerk is an assistant to the *presiding clerk* who is ultimately responsible for creating minutes for the approval of the meeting or other Friends body. (Not the same as *recorder*.)

**Recording ministers** – The practice in some *yearly meetings* of listing members recognized as having the gift of ministry. North Pacific Yearly Meeting does not record ministers.

**Released Friend** – A Friend with a concern who is relieved from holding meeting offices and serving on committees. In some cases, released Friends are provided financial support in order to pursue a leading or ministry.

**Religious Society of Friends** – The formal name for Quakers. Sometimes shortened to Society of Friends.

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

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

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

**Rising clerk** – An incoming *clerk*.

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

**RSWR** – Right Sharing of World Resources. [www.rswr.org](http://www.rswr.org)

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Society of Friends** – See *Religious Society of Friends*.

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

**Speak to one's condition** – Something that "speaks to someone's condition" touches them at the deepest spiritual level, whether by a message directly from God, or through the words or actions of another person.

**Speaking out of the silence** – See *moved to speak* and *vocal ministry*.

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

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

**Standing in the Light** – A state of being guided by the *Inward Light*.

**State of Society report** – A report of the condition of a *monthly meeting* sent annually to the *quarterly meeting* and from the quarterly meeting to the *yearly meeting*. Sometimes called “State of the Society report” or “State of the Meeting report.”

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Wait upon the Lord** – See *worship*.

**Waiting worship** – See *unprogrammed meeting* and *worship*.

**Weighty Friend** – Member who is recognized as having special experience and wisdom important to Friends. See also *seasoned Friend*.

**Western Friend** – A Quaker magazine published for Intermountain, North Pacific, and Pacific Yearly Meetings by the *Friends Bulletin Corporation*. <https://westernfriend.org/>

**Witness** – (as a verb) To testify to or show evidence of religious beliefs and convictions. (as a noun) The person or group testifying, or their words or actions.

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

**Worship** – (as a verb) To actively seek and attend to God’s will in *meeting for worship* or other gatherings of Friends. (as a noun) The act of gathering for this purpose. Sometimes called expectant worship, silent worship, waiting worship, or waiting upon the Lord.

**Worship discussion** – An opportunity, usually in a small group, to reflect deeply on a topic. It differs from *worship sharing* in that Friends may speak more than once and may respond directly to what others have said. Participants maintain a spirit of worship and return to silence after each person speaks.

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

**Worship sharing** – An opportunity, usually in a small group, to reflect deeply on a topic or a set of *queries*, to build community with others, and to feel the movement of the Spirit within the group; neither a conversation nor a discussion. See also *worship discussion*.

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

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

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