

make these apparent and assure an appropriate outcome.

**Quaker:** Originally, a derogatory term applied to Friends because their excitement of spirit when led to speak in a meeting for worship was sometimes expressed in a shaking or quaking motion. Now this term is simply an alternative designation for a member of the Religious Society of Friends.

**Quaker Process:** A catch-all expression often used to describe the various and collective techniques by which Quakers make decisions and go about their other business. Quaker process can include discernment, threshing, worship-sharing, sense of the Meeting, and other methodological terms described in this glossary. These constituent aspects have in common a commitment to obedience to the leading of the Spirit.

**Quaker Values:** A term used loosely to refer to Quaker social testimonies (see Testimony), and the spiritual commitments underlying those testimonies. Use of the term “Quaker values” is potentially problematic, because it implies that Quakers share a specific set of uniform or fixed positions on various values-based social and political issues. That is not the case. Rather, Quakers share a belief in the universality of the Divine and a commitment to particular spirit-led processes, which yield different leadings and commitments, depending on the time, place, and context.

**Quarterly Meeting:** A regional gathering of members of constituent monthly meetings, traditionally on four occasions each year. Some quarterly meetings also oversee the operations of institutions.

**Queries:** A set of questions, based on Friends practices and testimonies, which are considered by Meetings and individuals as a way of both guiding and examining individual and corporate lives and actions. As such, they are a means of self examination. Queries to be considered regularly are included in *Faith & Practice*; others may be formulated by a committee or Meeting that seeks to clarify for itself an issue it needs to address.

**Recorder:** The person appointed by a Meeting to maintain statistics on the members and attenders of that meeting.

**Recording Clerk:** The person appointed to take minutes at regular and called meetings for business of a Meeting or other Friends body.

**Rightly Led:** Characterized by alignment with and obedience to the leading of the Holy Spirit, as discerned by the Meeting or the group empowered with authority in a particular matter.

**Rightly Ordered:** Congruent and consistent with the established protocols, norms, and decision-making practices of the Meeting or the group empowered with authority in a particular matter.

**Sense of the Meeting:** A discerned judgment or awareness by the clerk of a meeting for business—or the clerk of a particular committee, group, etc.—that the group has reached essential unity on some issue or concern. It is the clerk’s role to articulate that the

group has reached a particular place of decision or shared understanding, and to test whether this sense of the meeting is in accord with the group’s faithful obedience to the leading of the Spirit.

**Silence/Silent Worship:** Expectant, living silence, not merely the absence of noise. The quietude of Friends meeting for worship—and other periods of observant worship—embodies the special quiet of listeners, the special perception of seekers, the special alertness of those who wait. The silence invites the sharing of messages which arise from a stirring of the Spirit.

**Standing Aside:** An action taken by an individual who has genuine reservations about a particular decision, but who also recognizes that the decision is clearly supported by the weight of the Meeting. The action of standing aside allows the Meeting to reach unity.

**Testimony:** A guiding principle of conduct that bears witness to the presence of God in the world and in our lives. Though there is no official list of such testimonies, Friends have traditionally identified peace and nonviolence, equality, simplicity, stewardship, community, and integrity as their practical principles.

**Threshing Session:** A gathering of Friends to consider in depth a controversial issue but in a way that is free from the necessity of reaching a decision.

**Under the Care of:** Describes an activity, program, or event for which a Meeting takes responsibility and to which it gives oversight. A marriage, a preparative meeting, and a school might all be said to be under the care of a monthly meeting.

**Under the Weight of:** Giving high priority to an issue arising from a deep feeling of concern. Said of an individual or Meeting that is struggling to reach an appropriate decision about such an item of business.

**Unity:** The spiritual oneness and harmony whose realization is a primary objective of a meeting for worship or a meeting for business.

**Vocal Ministry:** The sharing of a message or prayer during a meeting for worship.

**Weighty Friend:** An informal term for a Friend who is respected for spiritual depth, wisdom, and long service to the Religious Society of Friends.

**Worship Sharing:** A group practice in which participants share personal and spiritual experiences, thoughts, and feelings, often in response to a prearranged theme or questions, and in a manner that acknowledges the presence of God, and in which there is no criticism or direct response to what another says.

**Yearly Meeting:** Those Friends from a geographically extended area who gather in annual session to worship and conduct business together. This term is also used to denote the total membership of the constituent monthly meetings of a designated yearly meeting.

PHILADELPHIA YEARLY MEETING  
1515 Cherry Street, Philadelphia, PA 19102

# Quaker Manual of Style and Glossary

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Philadelphia  
Yearly  
Meeting  
Religious  
Society  
of Friends

This brief primer is written to help clarify the peculiarities of Quaker jargon, style, and capitalization.

## STYLE GUIDELINES

### Capitalization

In issues of capitalization at this point of time, Philadelphia-area Quakers are as plain as you can get. If a word is not a proper name, does not begin a sentence, represent God, or describe an official committee, you can usually count on the word being in lower case.

### Examples of words within a sentence:

meeting for worship  
meetings for worship  
meeting for worship and business  
meeting community  
meetinghouse

### Examples of organizational or institutional nomenclature:

Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends  
Philadelphia Yearly Meeting or PYM  
Society of Friends  
Interim Meeting  
Abington Quarterly Meeting  
Chester Friends Meeting  
Committee on Worship and Ministry  
Care and Counsel

### Examples of nicknames, or foreshortened names:

yearly meeting  
yearly meeting Committee on Worship and Ministry  
quarterly meetings  
monthly meeting

### Meeting idiosyncrasy:

For clarity's sake, when the word meeting stands alone and is used to denote the corporate body of a monthly meeting, the m is capitalized.

For example:

A report was sent to her Meeting.

### Meetinghouse idiosyncrasy:

The word meetinghouse is one word, not capitalized, unless it is part of a name of a building such as Arch Street Meeting House or Burlington Meeting House.

### Organizational titles of people:

member  
attender  
clerk

### Quakers use an upper case first letter to define the specific religious group or member:

Friend(s)  
Quaker(s)  
Friends meeting

**Do not use an apostrophe after the word Friends within titles. Do not use an apostrophe when Friends describes a noun:**

Plymouth Meeting Friends School  
She attends a Friends school.  
He lives Friends values.

**When referring to behavior inspired by God, use a lower case first letter such as:**

divine guidance  
divine will  
divine leadings

**Quakers use capitalization to show respect for God when using alternate forms such as:**

Divine	the Christ Within
Guide	the Divine Principle
Light Within	the Inner Light
Inward Light	the Spirit of Truth
Spirit	the Truth

The guidelines listed above reflect the style decisions of the editors of the 1997 version of *Faith & Practice*.

## GLOSSARY

Below is a short list of words which have special meaning in the context of Quakerism. A more complete list can be found in the 1997 and 2003 editions of *Faith & Practice*.

**Affirmation:** A legal declaration provided for Friends and others who conscientiously refuse to take (or swear) judicial oaths.

**Breaking Meeting:** The act of bringing a meeting for worship to a close by shaking hands. Usually, an individual has been designated to initiate this process.

**Centering/Centering Down:** The initial stage of worship when Friends clear their minds and settle down to achieve a spiritual focus.

**Clerk:** The person responsible for the administration of a Friends body and sensitive to the guidance of the Spirit in the conduct of the business of that body. This includes preparation, leadership, and follow up of meetings for business.

**Concern:** A quickening sense of the need to do something about a situation or issue in response to what is felt to be a direct intimation of God's will.

**Convinced Friend:** A person, after having an inward experience of connection with Quakerism and a Quaker spiritual perspective, decides that the Religious Society of Friends provides the most promising home for spiritual enlightenment and growth, and who becomes a member of a monthly meeting. Historically distinguished from a "birthright Friend," i.e., a person born into a Quaker family.

**Discernment:** An individual and/or group process by which clarity of purpose or understanding is achieved, proceeding from a spiritual awareness or realization. Discernment is not a form of decision-making, per se, but rather a precursor to decision-making that rests

upon a willingness to patiently listen for divine leading, in oneself and in others.

**First Day School:** Designation for the Sunday religious education program provided by a monthly meeting for children and adults.

**Gathered Meeting:** A meeting for worship or for business in which those present feel deeply united in the divine presence.

**Hold in the Light:** To desire that divine guidance and healing will be present to an individual who is in distress or faces a difficult situation; also, to give prayerful consideration to an idea.

**Inner Light/Inward Light/The Light Within:** Terms which represent for Friends the direct, unmediated experience of the Divine. Some other equivalent terms often found in Quaker writings are: the Spirit, the Spirit of Truth, the Divine Principle, the Seed, the Guide, the Christ Within, the Inward Teacher, that of God in every person.

**Interim Meeting:** In Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, a broadly representative body that meets to conduct the business of the yearly meeting between its annual sessions. (Formerly called Representative Meeting.)

**Laying Down:** A decision to discontinue a committee when its work is complete; occasionally, a decision to discontinue a Meeting or an organization when it is no longer viable.

**Laying Over:** To postpone the discussion of an issue or the presentation of a report from one meeting for business to another.

**Leading:** A sense of being called by God to undertake a specific course of action. A leading often arises from a concern.

**Lift Up:** To emphasize or make explicit a particular point or concern.

**Meeting for Worship:** A gathering of individuals in quiet waiting upon the enlightening and empowering presence of the Divine; the central focus of the corporate life of the Religious Society of Friends.

**Meeting for Worship for Business:** A meeting for worship during which the corporate business of the meeting is conducted—often referred to as meeting for business.

**Monthly Meeting:** 1] A congregation of Friends who meet regularly for worship and to conduct corporate business. 2] A monthly gathering of such a body for worship and business.

**Overseers:** Overseers and Committee of Overseers are terms that have fallen out of favor because they revive memories of slavery. People responsible for pastoral care are now considered to be members of a committee which performs that function—these groups are frequently called Care and Counsel or Oversight and Pastoral Care.

**Passing Meeting:** Acceptance by a monthly meeting of a written request, usually for membership or for marriage under its care.

**Proceed as the Way Opens:** To undertake a service or course of action without prior clarity about all the details but with confidence that divine guidance will