



Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious
Society of Friends (Quakers)

Preparing for Yearly Meeting

Compiled for Yearly Meeting,
Friends House, London, and online
27–30 May 2022



Preparing for Yearly Meeting

Welcome

Yearly Meeting is a meeting for learning, inspiration and strength for our witness. It searches our spiritual depths and refreshes our spiritual lives. Ultimately, it calls us to explore 'what does Love require of us?'

At this time, Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee recognises the need to address three big questions:

Faith: How do we experience worship, community and witness?

Community: How can we build Quaker communities that respond to challenges and put faith into action?

Action: How can we transform thinking and action in Quaker communities and wider society?

We recognise that some Friends feel centred in local and area meetings, but distanced from the yearly meeting and its commitments, work and discernment. To what extent are we worshipping and working together? How do we draw closer, as one loving community? These concerns are not new, but have been thrown into sharp relief by the challenges of the pandemic.

At Yearly Meeting 2022 we will, as ever, consider where we are being led. What is God calling us to do now, at this time and in this community? If we engage in discernment together, in faithful and disciplined worship, will our community be enriched and restored? Will we be led to do what God is asking of us?

We feel deeply unsettled, but also hopeful. We acknowledge the tensions and seek to go forward together. We seek both comfort and fellowship, and transformation.

At this Yearly Meeting let us look with fresh eyes at how to build Quaker communities that can respond to challenges and enable us to put our faith into action.

Proceedings

A number of documents will help us meet with hearts and minds prepared. Collectively, these are the 'Proceedings of the Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers) in Britain 2022'.

The full set comprises:

1. *Preparing for Yearly Meeting*, including community guidelines and spiritual preparation
2. *Yearly Meeting agenda & notes*, including etiquette for online meetings
3. *Testimonies*, including index of epistles
4. *Trustees' annual report*, including financial statements for the year ended December 2021
5. *Patterns of membership*, including the 2021 tabular statement
6. *Minutes*, which are distributed after the conclusion of Yearly Meeting.

All documents will be available online at www.quaker.org.uk/ym. Many Friends will read the documents online and have access to the web links included in the documents. Each document is in a printer-friendly PDF format, and we ask Friends to print their own copies or to seek assistance from someone in their meeting. To minimise costs and environmental impact we will only be printing a limited number of copies. These will be prioritised for those attending in person or with accessibility needs.

If you require accessible documents, please request these when booking for Yearly Meeting. If these do not meet your accessibility needs, or the needs of someone you know, please email ym@quaker.org.uk.

All *Quaker faith & practice* references are to the fifth edition, which can be found online at www.quaker.org.uk/qfp.

You can read about Yearly Meeting in **chapter 6** of *Quaker faith & practice*. Alternatively, contact the Yearly Meeting Office on 020 7663 1040 or at ym@quaker.org.uk, or go to www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

Our community agreement

Quaker practice at Yearly Meeting

“Respect the wide diversity among us in our lives and relationships. Refrain from making prejudiced judgments about the life journeys of others. Do you foster the spirit of mutual understanding and forgiveness which our discipleship asks of us? Remember that each one of us is unique, precious, a child of God.”

Advices & queries 22

Yearly Meeting aims to be a spiritually enriching experience, where Friends build a loving and inclusive community. It is important for us all to consider what impact our behaviour and words might have on others. During the pandemic many of us have been through a difficult time. We may be out of practice at listening and speaking to one another with care. Quakers are not immune to the bad behaviour that seems to occur more often online than in person. We need to maintain our discipline of coming together to “know God’s will for the gathered group”, despite the challenges of meeting remotely.

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee asks you to share responsibility for creating a safe and loving community by upholding Quaker discipline at this Yearly Meeting.

Throughout Yearly Meeting and beforehand, whether meeting online or in person:

- Follow the guidance on safeguarding and online security provided for events.
- When talking or writing to other participants about the Yearly Meeting topics please take care over how you communicate. Use inclusive language and behaviour to avoid hurt. Pause before communicating (especially online) and carefully consider whether you might be about to say something you would later regret.
- Be mindful of how important or sensitive the subject may be when discussing views and beliefs you or others may hold. Respect the experiences and opinions of others, even if they differ from your own. Be open to change.
- Do not lobby clerks, introducers, staff or other

servants of the meeting regarding the agenda (see *Quaker faith & practice* **3.04**). Do not assume that Friends who are closely involved will always be available to discuss a topic with you; people might need time off from the discernment between Yearly Meeting sessions.

- Do not claim to speak on behalf of others when expressing your own view.

In Yearly Meeting and preparatory sessions:

- Follow the general counsel on church affairs set out in *Quaker faith & practice* **3.01–3.07**.
- Yearly Meeting sessions are meetings for worship, so give your full attention to the matter before the meeting. Do not carry on a parallel discussion on social media, just as you would not chat to neighbours during a face-to-face session.

Interactions between Friends can result in pain and distress (online or in person). This may arise from unconscious patterns of behaviour, or it may be deliberate.

Behaviour such as bullying, harassment or verbal abuse is not acceptable and will not be tolerated. If you experience or witness unacceptable behaviour by anyone in our community, for the well-being of everyone concerned, please let an elder or a member of the Pastoral Care Team know.

Yearly Meeting Clerks and Elders may decide, exceptionally, to block access to the event for anyone who does not abide by these guidelines.

Spiritual preparation

Faith, community and action

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God – this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God’s will is – his good, pleasing and perfect will.”

Romans 12:1–2; *New International Bible* (UK)

The theme of Yearly Meeting 2022 is ‘Faith, community and action’. The following resources are suggested for reading and reflection in preparation for Yearly Meeting. You may wish to read and consider these on your own, or use them as a starting point to share in meetings/study sessions with other Friends.

When looking at the following resources, you might want to think about:

- What is precious to you, and why?
- How has your Quaker community responded to challenges, including the pandemic?
- How welcoming and inclusive are Quaker communities?
- How can Quaker communities support and inspire us to put our faith into action?

Resources

Quaker faith & practice, fifth edition: [chapter 10, 1–24](#); [chapter 20](#); [chapter 23](#).

Alistair Fuller’s blog ‘Connection, belonging and meaning in lockdown’, online at www.quaker.org.uk/connection-lockdown.

‘Being Friends Together’ – reflecting on and developing community: <https://together.woodbrooke.org.uk>, particularly ‘Community, Welcome, Warmth and Wholeness’: <https://together.woodbrooke.org.uk/resource.php?r=CI>.

‘Flawed Quaker Heroes’ by Kathleen Bell, published in *Friends Journal*, 01/01/22: available online at www.friendsjournal.org/flawed-quaker-heroes.

‘Reconsidering Reparations’ by Olufemi Taiwo, lecture published on YouTube at <https://youtu.be/ISItaGQsHrU>. Posted on 18/10/21.

Twitter stream of ‘Zoom Quaker Quest’, published 2021 and 2022. Available online at <https://twitter.com/zoomquakerquest>.

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee has chosen resources in various formats to promote inclusion. Not all Friends will engage with all of these resources, but we hope everyone will find something to help them prepare for discernment at Yearly Meeting in session.

There will be opportunities to attend learning and preparatory sessions online in the week running up to Yearly Meeting (see on [page 5](#) for details). Some of these events might refer to material found in the resource list above; however, it is not essential to have read and studied this material before attending a preparatory session or a Yearly Meeting session. All Friends are welcome.

Attending Yearly Meeting

Yearly Meeting will take place over the weekend of Friday 27 May to Monday 30 May 2022. Held at Friends House, London, and online, the event will include Yearly Meeting in session, worship and the Swarthmore Lecture.

Before Yearly Meeting

From Saturday 21 May to Thursday 26 May there will be an opportunity to attend programmed events in advance of Yearly Meeting. There will be a number of preparatory sessions on the theme of Yearly Meeting, as well as 'faith in action' events, consisting of meetings of Quaker Recognised Bodies and Quaker central committees. The Groups Fair is likely to be held online on Saturday 21 May.

All preparatory events will take place online, and it is essential that you book your place at Yearly Meeting in order to gain access to this programme. Please book online at www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

Other opportunities will include Woodbrooke sessions on 'How does Yearly Meeting work?' and 'Supporting online discernment'. Those attending Yearly Meeting for the first time, or for the first time online, are strongly encouraged to attend.

Events relating to the Yearly Meeting theme, 'Faith, community and action', are planned for evenings in the week running up to Yearly Meeting. Friends are encouraged to attend, as these will help us to join in discernment at Yearly Meeting with hearts and minds prepared.

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee is currently finalising the timetable, so please look out for the latest information on events and time slots at www.quaker.org.uk/ym. Once you have booked to attend Yearly Meeting (in person or online), further details will be made available.

Attending in person and online

We intend to make the best possible use of The Light auditorium at Friends House, London, but please bear in mind that the changing nature of the pandemic could mean that last-minute changes have to be made to the programme. Every effort will be made to accommodate Friends who wish to attend in person.

Clerks would love to welcome Friends from every area meeting at Yearly Meeting in person as well as online. Families are warmly encouraged, as are young people. If your child is attending the Children & Families programme for 0–11s, then a responsible adult must also be present for them at Friends House.

In the main sessions, which will be clerked from The Light, everyone online will be part of the meeting, alongside those at Friends House; everyone will be equally able to indicate that they wish to be called to give ministry.

Friends joining online will be able to take part in Yearly Meeting sessions and join in morning and evening worship. There will be a live link to the Swarthmore Lecture on the Saturday evening.

All preparatory sessions and meetings leading up to Yearly Meeting will be online only. However, all sessions over the weekend of Yearly Meeting will be online and in-person. In any event, you must book in order to attend. After registering, you will be able to book individual sessions online from home; full details will be provided.

For both in-person and online attendance, registration opens on Thursday 10 February on the Quakers in Britain website: go to www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

All Together Worship

On the Sunday morning of Yearly Meeting a huge meeting for worship will take place across Britain in homes, meeting places and at Friends House. Children and young people, and their families, will be in attendance for the early part of the meeting, when some prepared ministry is likely to be shared.

As well as individual Friends joining online from home, local and area meetings are invited to participate via a live link. Clerks hope to welcome Friends of all ages, in their meeting houses, so that we can all worship together as a loving, inclusive and all-age Society. Details on how meetings can register to take part in the All Together Worship will be published on the YM website and circulated to all meetings.

Children attending at Friends House will sit with their families and, after a period of worship all together, be invited to leave. This is likely to be mirrored in meetings across Britain. A prepared activity that can be used in a separate children’s meeting will be made available, for use at home or in your local meeting – as well as within the children’s programme at Yearly Meeting.

‘Tech-free’ attendance is also encouraged, i.e. Friends in their own homes sharing in the worship in spirit.

This activity will be linked to the Yearly Meeting theme. Further information will be shared with Friends as soon as possible, so please look out for further details at www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

Swarthmore Lecture

The 2022 Swarthmore Lecture will be given by Helen Minnis. As a scientist and Quaker, Helen will address issues of white privilege within the Quaker movement and scientific community. Her lecture will be part of the ongoing conversation among Quakers in Britain and beyond about what it means to become an anti-racist church.

Helen is an elder at Glasgow Meeting and Professor of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry at the University of Glasgow. She has contributed to Britain Yearly Meeting’s consideration of power, privilege and anti-racism, including speaking at Yearly Meeting Gathering 2021, West Scotland Area Meeting and Northern Young Friends’ Summer Shindig in 2020.

The lecture will take place at Friends House, London, on the evening of Saturday 28 May. Friends attending Yearly Meeting online will be able to access the event via a live stream.

To find out more, go to www.woodbrooke.org.uk/swarthmore.

Summary timetable

Saturday 21 May to Monday 30 May											Yearly Meeting 2022 timetable: available sessions and activities
S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M		
											Welcome, familiarisation and orientation
											Lectures, groups fair
											Faith in action events
											Theme-related preparation
											All Together Worship
											Children and Families (ages 0–11)
											Youth, Children and Families (ages 11–15)
											YM sessions (including Young Adults and 15–18s)

What's on offer for children, young people and young adults?

Youth, Children & Families programmes

These programmes are an integral part of Yearly Meeting. They enable children and young people to engage with Yearly Meeting in a variety of age-appropriate ways, encouraging their faith formation and spiritual development and helping them to experience transformation beyond the event. They also help to integrate them with the Quaker community. These events will be in person. There will also be some online opportunities, including activities for families.

All under-18s attending Yearly Meeting need to be booked onto their age-appropriate programme by a parent or guardian. For those aged 0 to 15, places will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis and must be booked in advance, by the deadline, as we can only accommodate a limited number of children and young people.

The Children's Programme can be booked by individual session while the Young People's Programme, which is a residential weekend, needs to be booked as a whole. Bookings for both programmes close on 18 March.

Junior Yearly Meeting this year will be held from 9 to 12 April. Information has been sent to area meetings. Over the weekend of Yearly Meeting, Accompanying is available for 15- to 18-year-olds to meet up socially at Yearly Meeting and attend Yearly Meeting in session. Bookings open in February and close on 6 May.

Full details can be found at www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

Young Adults at Yearly Meeting

Sessions throughout Yearly Meeting for 18- to 35-year-olds offer a way to be part of Yearly Meeting and to be in a smaller community. This gives those participating the chance to prepare for and reflect on their own experience of Yearly Meeting.

Booking information

Can I come?

Yes! Everyone in our Quaker community is welcome, whether in membership or not. We hope this document will help you prepare for Yearly Meeting. But if you've never been before, and you're still not sure what to expect or how to prepare, ask a 'seasoned' Friend from your worshipping community to help you understand it.

What do I need to do?

Register! From 10 February, you can do this online at www.quaker.org.uk/ym. There is no charge to attend Yearly Meeting. But whether you're attending in person or online, registration is essential so that suitable preparations can be made.

You can find more information and follow updates online:

- at www.quaker.org.uk/ym
- on Facebook at www.facebook.com/bymevent
- or on Twitter [@bymevent](https://twitter.com/bymevent) (#YM2022).

What do I do if I have access needs?

We want anyone who wants to come to Yearly Meeting to be able to do so. Please tell us if you have access needs so that we can make necessary arrangements.

Consider whether there is anyone else attending who may be able to support you. You should first speak to Friends in your meeting to see what help they can provide. If they cannot help, the Pastoral Care Group will do its best to support you, but there may be a limit to what can be done.

You can let us know your access needs when you book. You can also email access@quaker.org.uk or call the Yearly Meeting Office on 020 7663 1040. Visit www.quaker.org.uk/ym/help to find out more about our accessibility measures.

How can I help?

Yearly Meeting wouldn't be as rich without help from Friends attending. There is a role for everyone, no matter your experience. You could volunteer to support pastoral care, be a doorkeeper or microphone steward, or serve on Yearly Meeting Nominating Group. All help is greatly appreciated. You will be invited to complete the volunteer offer of service form once you have submitted your booking.

How can I find more information?

The best place to start is the [Yearly Meeting website](http://www.quaker.org.uk/ym), where you will find the answer to most commonly asked questions. And we will update the website as more information becomes available. If you can't find the answer to your question, email the Yearly Meeting Office at ym@quaker.org.uk or call 020 7663 1040.

Please note that due to the public health situation, many staff are working from home to support Quaker faith and witness. We may take longer than normal to respond and we thank you for your patience.

Quakers share a way of life, not a set of beliefs. Quaker unity is based on shared understanding and a shared practice of silent worship – a communal stillness.

Quakers seek to experience God directly – internally, in relationships with others, and with the world. Local meetings for worship are open to all who wish to attend.

Quakers try to live with honesty and integrity. This means speaking truth to all, including people in positions of power. The Quaker commitment to peace arises from the conviction that love is at the heart of existence and that all human beings are unique and equal.

This leads Quakers to put faith into action by working locally and globally to change the systems that cause injustice and violent conflict.

Accessible versions of this document are available. Please contact the publications manager at publications@quaker.org.uk or call 020 7663 1162.

Britain Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends (Quakers)
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Friends House, 173 Euston Road, London, NW1 2BJ

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