

## **THE YEARLY MEETING, INTERIM BUSINESS MEETING, AND YEARLY MEETING COMMITTEES, AND REPRESENTATIVES**

*The thing is this: that if you had (once a year) a Yearly Meeting . . . for Friends to see one another, and know how the affairs of truth prosper, and how Friends do grow in the truth of God, to the comfort and joy of one another in it . . . all things (by the truth and power of God) may be kept in peace and love, all dwelling in the wisdom of God.*

**George Fox, 1681**

*The intent and holy design of our annual assemblies, in their first constitution, were for a great and weighty oversight and Christian care of the affairs of the churches pertaining to our holy profession and Christian communion; that good order, true love, unity and concord may be faithfully followed and maintained among all of us.*

**London Yearly Meeting, 1718**

*To follow the highest purpose always involves the setting aside of many things which in themselves are good, whether by the individuals or by the Yearly Meeting as a whole. To find the purpose of God in a gathering such as this involves bringing together of every one of our differing points of view to that place where they may be united in the power of God. If in our hearts as individuals we maintain barriers between ourselves and other Friends, we cannot be finders; and if we maintain such barriers between ourselves and our fellow men we shall not find our part in working out God's will in the world.*

*It has been the experience of this Yearly Meeting in the past to know that Friends have met in division and uncertainty, and that then guidance has come, and the light has been given to us, and we have become finders of God's purpose. This gives us ground for confidence. We shall not be held back by the magnitude of the questions which are to come before us, nor by a sense of our own unworthiness.*

**London Yearly Meeting, 1936**

## **The Yearly Meeting**

A yearly meeting is formed by monthly meetings in a region so that a larger group can undertake matters of common concern and mutual support, can communicate with each other, and can act as a unit. The yearly meeting ties all of us to the wider Quaker fellowship. In meeting for worship with a concern for business and other forums, Friends come together in annual and interim sessions for the assessment of the life of the Society of Friends, the conduct of business, spiritual refreshment and commitment, and the renewal of the ties of friendship. The yearly meeting nurtures and cares for the constituent monthly meetings, preparative meetings, and worship groups, assisting in the development of their concerns and providing inspiration and encouragement.

Members and attenders of the monthly meetings and worship groups meet together once a year at Southeastern Yearly Meeting (SEYM) Annual Gathering, which during business sessions takes up matters that have come up in the past year, new activities or problems that may arise at yearly meeting, and concerns that may require a decision at a subsequent yearly meeting. Before the next annual gathering there will be two sessions of interim business meeting that will continue to work on the business of yearly meeting, three sessions of yearly meeting committee meetings, four executive committee meetings, and a half yearly meeting for fellowship.

The SEYM Annual Gathering, traditionally held over Easter weekend, consists of meeting for business, committee meetings, workshops, groups of people getting together to talk about concerns, worship-sharing sessions, meetings for worship, the Walton Lecture, and times for Friendly fellowship. Interim business meeting is devoted to meeting for worship, committee meetings, meeting for business, and visiting time for Friends. On Sunday of the winter interim business meeting weekend, the Michener Lecture and workshops are held. Half yearly meeting, traditionally held over Thanksgiving weekend, is a time for intergenerational fellowship with an environmental focus and an opportunity for fun together.

The annual gathering may change in format or emphasis from year to year. It is an occasion for sharing information and concerns from individual members, constituent meetings, yearly meeting committees, and other Friends groups or organizations in sympathy with Friends. The gathering also receives messages in the form of epistles, letters communicating the sense of the Spirit, from other yearly meetings. It is customary to reply with an epistle approved near the close of the gathering.

The yearly meeting annual gathering is open to all participants of the constituent monthly meetings, preparative meetings, and worship groups. Members of other yearly meetings and other Friends organizations are invited to send representatives or observers to the gathering and to provide information about their organizations. Members and attenders in SEYM's constituent monthly meetings are as much a part of yearly meeting as of their own meeting and are as responsible for the well-being of the yearly meeting in addition to their home meeting.

It is helpful if all monthly meetings, preparative meetings, and worship groups send members to the annual gathering to assure a large pool of wisdom and insight at each business session, to carry the weight of the concerns and Light in their home monthly meeting to annual sessions, and to provide full and careful reports of these sessions to their home meetings. Decisions are made, under divine guidance, by all present.

Continuity of attendance is expected and is helpful for seasoned judgment and for satisfactory communication between the interim business meeting or yearly meeting and monthly meetings and their members. Information and understanding constantly flow into and out of the interim or yearly meetings so that policies and decisions may be made with broad discernment and may be widely understood and implemented.

Insight, concern, and information are received in a worshipful spirit and often evoke deeply felt responses. The yearly meeting may be led to unite in an expression of concern or in a decision for specific action. Since such expressions or actions speak for the entire membership of the yearly meeting, Friends are asked to review carefully in advance any concerns or proposals that are to come before the annual gathering meeting for business and either attend yearly meeting or ensure that their meeting's representatives understand their concerns or proposals and can share them effectively.

The meeting for business of yearly meeting may have before it many actions to consider, but each year one of the weightiest concerns is the budget. Budgetary proposals are given wide circulation well in advance of the SEYM Annual Gathering, with ample opportunity for comment from the meetings. The discussion of the budget is most useful when it explores the spiritual and testimonial implications of budgetary decisions and elicits and weighs ideas that will influence future budgets.

Friends gather in meeting for worship with concern for business at yearly meeting and interim business meetings not as instructed delegates but as individuals guided by the Spirit at that time and place. In so gathering, members may experience the tensions that may be created by discernment among the dictates of individual conscience, the sense of their home meeting, and the best interests of the whole. Implicit is Friends' understanding that we seek to discern the leadings of God throughout our sessions.

## **Yearly Meeting Clerks and Officers**

### **Clerk of Yearly Meeting and Clerk of Interim Business Meeting**

In its annual sessions, the yearly meeting nominates and appoints a presiding clerk for yearly meeting and a different presiding clerk for interim business meeting. Both of these clerks are present at yearly meeting business sessions and interim business meetings. The other clerks and officers serve both yearly meeting and interim business meeting. Only members of constituent monthly meetings of the yearly meeting are nominated to serve in these positions. The clerk of yearly meeting presides at yearly meeting annual business sessions, is responsible for the agenda, and is the spokesperson for SEYM. The clerk of interim business meeting presides at the fall and winter interim business meeting sessions and is responsible for those agendas.

The presiding clerk of either the yearly meeting or the interim business meeting receives information from committees, officers, staff, and individuals on suggested agenda items. Then the clerk writes the agenda. The clerk guides the meeting for worship with a concern for business, calling for worship, asking for Friends to speak, expressing the sense of the meeting when unity has been reached, guiding Friends through the process of finding the exact wording for a minute, making space for more contributions, guiding discussion to a close, directing a committee to take up the matter, and ending the meeting with worship. Finally, the clerk has to insure that the decisions of the meeting for business are carried out.

The presiding clerk of yearly meeting appoints a committee of three Friends at the beginning of yearly meeting sessions to write an epistle for the yearly meeting to be approved and sent out to other yearly meetings at the end of the gathering. The clerk also appoints, at the beginning of the annual sessions, someone to send a report of the yearly meeting sessions to be published in Friends publications.

## **Assistant Clerk**

The assistant clerk is present at the clerks' table at yearly meeting and interim business meeting and provides assistance as needed. The assistant clerk takes over in the temporary absence, or stepping aside, of the clerk. In addition, the assistant clerk is responsible for allocating the yearly meeting's budgeted travel funds among the yearly meeting representatives to Quaker organizations and provides support to the representatives.

## **Recording Clerk**

The recording clerk of the yearly meeting and interim business meetings writes the numbered minutes and reads them to the meeting for approval. The recording clerk also ensures that the narrative minutes contain all needed information and gives them to the administrative secretary for publication. The presiding clerk and the recording clerk are together responsible for the accuracy of the minutes, and both sign the minutes.

## **Treasurer**

The treasurer is responsible for the integrity of the financial records of the yearly meeting and oversees all the financial transactions of yearly meeting funds that are not invested through the trustees. It is the treasurer's responsibility to see that the expenditures are in accordance with the budget or to see that changes from the budget are approved by the yearly meeting. The treasurer presents an annual report of the income and expenses in the previous fiscal year (ending May 31<sup>st</sup>) at the fall interim business meeting and an interim report at yearly meeting, winter interim business meeting, and as requested by the presiding clerks. The actual bookkeeping, writing of checks, and making of deposits are done by the administrative secretary. The treasurer answers questions and guides Friends in understanding the fiscal status of the yearly meeting.

## **Membership Recorder**

The membership recorder keeps the membership records of the yearly meeting in a database, updating the database each year with information from the monthly meetings. From this database, the recorder produces a new Directory of SEYM annually. The membership recorder also uses the database to prepare a statistics sheet each year showing the number of members and attenders in each monthly meeting, preparative meeting and worship group and in the yearly meeting. These statistics are sent annually to Friends General Conference and, when requested, to the Friends World Committee for Consultation for inclusion in worldwide Quaker statistics.

## **Young Friends (Teens) Clerk(s) and Young Friends (Teens) Recording Clerk**

The young Friends (teens) presiding clerk(s) and the young Friends (teens) recording clerk carry out their responsibilities in the junior yearly meeting's meeting for business during the annual sessions and make an appropriate report to the yearly meeting at the end of the annual gathering. They participate in interim business meeting and are members of the executive committee.

## **Young Adult Quakers Clerk(s) and Young Adult Quakers Recording Clerk**

The young adult Quakers presiding clerk(s) and young adult Quakers recording clerk carry out their responsibilities in the young adult Quakers yearly meeting's meeting for business during the annual sessions and make an appropriate report to the yearly meeting at the end of the annual gathering. They participate in interim business meeting and are members of the executive committee.

In the *Southeastern Yearly Meeting Operational Handbook, Procedures, and Job Descriptions*, there are more detailed descriptions of the responsibilities of the clerks and officers as well as of

committees, representatives to Quaker organizations, trustees, and the administrative secretary. The *SEYM Operational Handbook* also describes the specific procedures of yearly meeting sessions and the interim business meetings.

## Yearly Meeting Responsibilities

The yearly meeting alone has authority to establish or change *Faith and Practice* or to issue statements of faith of the yearly meeting. Proposals for new sections or for revisions of existing sections of *Faith and Practice* may be initiated in any monthly meeting, in the interim business meeting, or in the yearly meeting and will be referred to the faith and practice committee. The approval of *Faith and Practice* comes from discernment and unity reached by the body of yearly meeting in plenary session after prolonged study and discernment by monthly meetings and individuals.

The yearly meeting publishes “Documents In Advance” (DIA) for the annual gathering and the fall and winter interim business meetings, which include the agenda for the meeting and other reports to be considered. The yearly meeting receives reports of the spiritual state of the meeting from monthly meetings, preparative meetings, and worship groups, publishing them in the DIA for yearly meeting annual gathering. The yearly meeting approves minutes from interim business meetings and executive committee meetings. The yearly meeting publishes *Queries and Advices*, the yearly meeting newsletter, and pamphlets from the annual Michener and Walton Lectures. In addition, the yearly meeting reports its proceedings, maintains contact with other yearly meetings and Friends organizations, and provides for due consideration of epistles and minutes of other yearly meetings.

The yearly meeting facilitates communication among its constituents and centralized record-keeping for them. The yearly meeting keeps a database with the records of the members and attenders of the monthly meetings, preparative meetings, worship groups, and other groups of Friends in the region. Membership



data is regularly updated and published annually as the *Directory of Southeastern Yearly Meeting*.

The yearly meeting approves the formation of worship groups and preparative meetings and the establishment of monthly meetings. Usually, a nearby monthly meeting nurtures a worship group or preparative meeting and helps with its transition to a monthly meeting. When no monthly meeting is available, yearly meeting may take a worship group or preparative meeting under its care. The yearly meeting nurtures and cares for the constituent monthly meetings, preparative meetings, and worship groups, assisting in the development of their concerns and providing inspiration and stimulation. Much of the work of the yearly meeting is carried forward by its committees, which report to yearly meeting and to interim business meetings.

## **Funding the Yearly Meeting**

The yearly meeting derives its operating funds from the contributions of its constituent meetings and individual members and such other monies as may be obtained from other sources such as the trustees funds and publication sales. Each meeting's share of the operating budget is determined by the number of members and attenders in the meeting as a percentage of the number of members and attenders in the whole yearly meeting. Individual members are also asked to contribute as they feel led.

## **Yearly Meeting Process Between Annual Sessions:**

### **Interim Business Meeting: Functions and Responsibilities**

Interim business meeting (IBM) acts for Southeastern Yearly Meeting when the yearly meeting is not in session and ensures that the work and witness of the yearly meeting are carried forward in the spirit of the preceding yearly meeting. Interim

business meeting reports to yearly meeting at the annual business sessions. All the action minutes of the interim business meeting are approved or not approved at the annual sessions of yearly meeting. Both fall and winter sessions of interim business meeting are attended by SEYM clerks and officers (as listed above), SEYM committee members, monthly meeting representatives, and all other SEYM Friends and others interested in the proceedings.

The yearly meeting has delegated the following duties to interim business meeting in the time between yearly meeting sessions:

- Accepting responsibility for those concerns specifically referred by the preceding yearly meeting.
- Providing general oversight and coordination of the work of the committees of the yearly meeting and of other groups of Friends acting under leading with yearly meeting approval.
- Representing the yearly meeting and appearing on its behalf whenever required by the cause of truth, public welfare, or the interest and reputation of the Society of Friends.
- Providing for widespread consultation and discussion on matters of major import to the Society of Friends.
- Providing advice and assistance to monthly meetings, preparative meetings, and worship groups upon their request, in the administration of property and trust funds or in dealing with difficult situations.
- Providing advice and assistance for any persons or constituent group suffering because of adherence to Friends' testimonies.
- Receiving and endorsing minutes of Friends traveling in the ministry or under other circumstances related to Friends' concerns.

The IBM provides an opportunity/process for Friends to consider yearly meeting business as it develops throughout the year. In this way, Friends are made familiar with and can discuss business which will be brought for approval at the yearly business sessions. Preliminary discussion at IBM of matters to be brought before the yearly meeting can help the yearly meeting come to agreement in the annual yearly meeting business sessions. The clerk of interim business meeting may call special interim sessions as needed.

When need arises, interim business meeting may also ask the clerk of yearly meeting to call special sessions of the yearly meeting. When vacancies occur among the officers of the yearly meeting, interim business meeting makes interim appointments.

Interim business meeting may not make any changes in *Faith and Practice*, issue any statement of faith, or act upon any matters specifically reserved for the yearly meeting. It should advise the yearly meeting when a revision to the text of Faith and Practice is indicated.

Any significant change in duties or function of interim business meeting is the sole responsibility of the yearly meeting in annual sessions.

## **Queries for Participants of Yearly Meeting and Interim Business Meeting**

- As part of Southeastern Yearly Meeting in a worshipping community, am I faithful to the responsibility of seeking God's will in carrying out the business of our yearly meeting? Do our practices provide us with spiritual refreshment? In what ways do I contribute to this spiritual refreshment?
- Am I faithful in sharing the decisions reached by yearly/interim business meeting with my monthly meeting, including all information appropriate to the understanding of those decisions? Do I share reports and information about events?

- Do I participate in a way that helps the clerk accomplish the agenda of the meeting?
- Am I careful not to speak too easily or too often, careful to discern whether my speaking is rightly ordered?
- Am I careful to listen to the Spirit as it is reflected in the contributions of others as well as within myself?
- If I am not in agreement with the discussion, do I strive to present alternatives in a way that both helps others understand my concerns and maintains the spirit of worship?
- Do I assist the clerk by remaining focused on the agenda item under discussion? Do I hold the clerk in the Light, especially when there are tensions in the decision-making process?

## **Committees of the Yearly Meeting**

Southeastern Yearly Meeting is empowered to appoint, fund, and require regular reports from committees and working groups. The yearly meeting oversees and lays down standing committees and may name and/or lay down ad hoc committees and working groups. It also appoints or provides for the appointment of the various committees' members. Ad hoc committees may also be named at interim business meetings and at executive committee meetings as need arises.

Such bodies have as their principal purpose providing support and leadership in the following:

- The education and care of our members. This includes such functions as religious education, publications, and provision of services to the various age groups that make up our yearly meeting.
- The clarification and carrying out of our testimonies and concerns both at home and in the wider world. The

particular committees and working groups that are established to implement these testimonies may change in emphasis or focus in response to the difficulties and challenges of the world we share with others. They constitute our ongoing effort to bring about a more just and peaceful world.

- The provision of services needed by our monthly meetings, preparative meetings, and worship groups, especially in communication, maintenance of current membership lists, finance, and management of property.

Generally, only members of a constituent monthly meeting are appointed to the nominating committee, the worship and ministry committee, the finance committee, and the faith and practice committee. Any change in the makeup or function of these committees is the sole responsibility of the yearly meeting annual business session.

Committee clerks and members are nominated by the nominating committee with the exception of the epistle committee, which is named by the clerk of yearly meeting at the yearly meeting sessions. Committees meet at each interim business meeting, at yearly meeting annual gathering, and otherwise as needed. Clerks and committee members serve three-year terms. Committee meetings are normally open to anyone who desires to attend.

## **The Executive Committee**

The clerk of the executive committee is the interim business meeting clerk, who presides at the committee meetings and writes the agenda. Other members of the executive committee are the yearly meeting clerk, assistant clerk, recording clerk, treasurer, membership recorder, clerk of the archives committee, clerk of the committee for earthcare, clerk of the committee for ministry on racism, clerk of the faith and practice committee, clerk of the finance committee, the clerk of the half yearly meeting committee,

clerk of the nominating committee, clerk of the peace and social concerns committee, clerk of the publications committee, clerk of the religious education committee, clerk of the worship and ministry committee, clerk of the yearly meeting gathering committee, clerk of the youth committee, clerk(s) of the young Friends (teens), clerk(s) of the young adult Quakers, and clerk of the trustees. The administrative secretary is an ex officio member of the committee. The executive committee meets four times a year, just before each interim business meeting, at the beginning of yearly meeting annual gathering, and at some time in the summer. The committee acts for the interim business meeting between sessions. The executive committee may be the place for the first discussion of concerns/problems with which the yearly meeting has to ultimately seek discernment and minute any needed action.

Employees of SEYM are hired by the executive committee and are under the committee's direction. The committee provides guidance and loving care to the yearly meeting staff and performs duties as a personnel committee as are specified by the *Southeastern Yearly Meeting Operational Handbook, Procedures, and Job Descriptions*.

## **Archives Committee**

The archives committee collects and preserves the records of Southeastern Yearly Meeting, which are then stored at the yearly meeting's designated repository. The committee also asks monthly meetings to store their archives with the yearly meeting archives.

## **Committee for Earthcare**

The committee for earthcare is called to help Friends understand our roles as good stewards of the Earth today so as to ensure a healthful environment for our children's future.

## **Committee for Ministry on Racism**

The committee for ministry on racism seeks to help Friends

as they develop their racial and ethnic awareness, increase their diversity, and strive to address the impact of the institution of racism on our society.

## **Faith and Practice Committee**

The faith and practice committee is responsible for keeping the Southeastern Yearly Meeting *Faith and Practice* up-to-date as a document useful to the monthly meetings, preparative meetings, worship groups, and the yearly meeting. It is also responsible for reviewing the updating of the *Southeastern Yearly Meeting Operational Handbook, Procedures, and Job Descriptions* and for other responsibilities given to it by the yearly meeting. *Faith and Practice* is a record of the applied faith of the yearly meeting; it is changed to reflect the current practice of the yearly meeting and the monthly meetings.

The committee prepares drafts of proposed new sections or revises sections of *Faith and Practice* and sends them to the monthly meetings for their careful consideration and comments. The comments are returned to the faith and practice committee, and the text is revised. The revised text is threshed (a type of Friendly discussion) at the next yearly meeting annual gathering. Then the committee revises the text again and sends it to clerks, contacts, and officers in the yearly meeting. When the text seems to be acceptable to Friends, the faith and practice committee asks for approval of the section at the next year's yearly meeting business sessions. If the section is not approved, the committee continues its work in a similar manner. When a section is approved, it becomes part of SEYM's current faith and practice and is included in the *Faith and Practice* book, as well as uploaded to the [seym.org](http://seym.org) website.

## **Finance Committee**

The finance committee prepares the proposed general fund budget for the yearly meeting each year. The committee makes the proposed budget available to the monthly meetings at winter interim business meeting or in "Documents in Advance" sufficiently

far in advance of the yearly meeting annual sessions to allow meetings to comment and suggest changes. The clerk of the finance committee presents the proposed budget, including any changes, to the yearly meeting annual sessions for approval. The finance committee may also send an appeal to individual members to help fund the budget.

## **Half Yearly Meeting Committee**

The half yearly meeting committee secures a reservation at an appropriate site with a deposit and provides food for the half yearly meeting gathering on Thanksgiving weekend. The participants pay the cost. The clerk of the committee and the administrative secretary send out a notice about the half yearly meeting gathering. The registrar of the yearly meeting and half yearly meeting gatherings receives registration by mail or online. The clerk of the committee provides a financial report to the secretary and treasurer that becomes part of the yearly meeting's financial report.

## **Nominating Committee**

The nominating committee is made up of Friends from every part of the yearly meeting. The nominating committee nominates Friends to serve as SEYM's clerks, officers, and trustees; as clerks and members of committees; and as representatives to other Quaker bodies. This committee distributes nominations among as many Friends and monthly meetings as possible. After these Friends have indicated their willingness to serve, their names are submitted for approval to the yearly meeting or to interim business meeting, whichever is appropriate. The clerks and officers usually serve a term of three years. A second term of three years is possible.

## **Peace and Social Concerns Committee**

The peace and social concerns committee works on peace and justice issues in the world and brings suggested actions to the



yearly meeting. This committee addresses concerns of wider scope than individual monthly meetings can accomplish. It strengthens the social consciousness of our monthly meetings, preparative meetings, worship groups, and individual Friends.

### **Publications Committee**

The publications committee gathers news and photographs and publishes the yearly meeting newsletter periodically. The committee is responsible for the annual publication of the Michener and Walton Lectures.

### **Religious Education Committee**

The religious education committee aids monthly meetings in developing their religious education programs.

### **Worship and Ministry Committee**

The worship and ministry committee helps to strengthen the spiritual life of our monthly meetings, worship groups, and individual Friends. It is responsible for the worship-sharing groups at the yearly meeting gathering and developing the spiritual topic queries, which are the focus for the worship-sharing groups. It also arranges intervisitation to monthly meetings and worship groups and makes contacts with isolated Friends.

The worship and ministry committee selects the Michener Lecturer, attends to the lecturer's needs in conjunction with the lecture, and makes and oversees all physical arrangements (location, luncheon food, audio taping, and so forth). The worship and ministry committee is also responsible for the finances of the Michener Lecture and provides a financial report to the treasurer.

### **Yearly Meeting Gathering Committee**

The yearly meeting gathering committee is responsible for planning and coordinating the annual gathering. It is this

committee's responsibility to choose a theme and to bring a speaker for the Walton Lecture, who customarily conducts two or more workshops on the theme as well. The committee schedules the adult program and the youth program and organizes the workshops and interest groups.

The committee and the administrative secretary send out the program and registration information for the annual gathering. The registrar of the yearly meeting gathering receives registration by mail or online. The committee welcomes Friends to the gathering and provides them with needed information.

The clerk of the gathering committee, with the assistance of the administrative secretary, reviews proposed contracts, arranges that deposits be paid, works closely with the registrar so that reservations are submitted as required by the host site in a timely manner, and makes a budget for the annual sessions. After the gathering, the committee provides the treasurer with a financial report of the gathering that becomes part of the financial report of the yearly meeting.

## **Youth Committee**

The youth committee plans, supervises, and facilitates youth activities throughout the year. It provides input and assistance for youth at yearly meeting functions (YM, IBMs, HYM), acts as youth coordinator at the yearly meeting gathering, and provides materials for the SEYM newsletter.

## **Ad Hoc Committees**

### **Child Abuse Prevention Committee**

The child abuse prevention committee reviews the Florida Department of Law Enforcement reports and makes a determination regarding an applicant's approval as a registered SEYM

youth program worker. For security purposes, this ad hoc committee is appointed by and serves under the auspices of the executive committee.

## **Epistle Committee**

The epistle committee is appointed by the yearly meeting presiding clerk early in the yearly meeting sessions. During the yearly meeting, the committee prepares the outgoing epistle, a letter communicating the sense of the spirit of the gathering, which is approved at the last business session and later sent out to other yearly meetings.

## **Meeting for Sufferings**

The meeting for sufferings is a committee which is activated whenever there is a Friend in SEYM who, while under a leading as a witness to the world, faces the possibility of suffering or loss of civil liberties as a result of the leading. Funds in support of the Friend are collected and distributed as needed. Letter writing, visitation, and other forms of support are offered as appropriate.

## **Naming Committee**

The naming committee is a regionally diverse group of Friends appointed by the executive committee to nominate the members of the nominating committee. The committee is appointed whenever there is a vacancy on the nominating committee and serves until it makes its report at the next yearly meeting business session after which it is laid down.

## **Appointees**

### **ProNica Board**

The ProNica Board serves in an advisory capacity to ProNica. ProNica grew out of a concern of St. Petersburg Monthly

Meeting and later was taken under the care of SEYM. In 2004 it became an independent organization, though retaining a five-member advisory board made up in part by three Friends nominated and approved by SEYM at yearly meeting. ProNica is a not-for-profit Friendly corporation that supplies funds, equipment, and information on community and economic development, sustainable agriculture, health, and education, creating practical opportunities to promote Quaker testimonies through friendships and partnerships that aid and empower the people of Nicaragua.

## **Consultants**

Two groups of consultants, information technology consultants and publications consultants, have been appointed by the administrative secretary to aid in discernment. The information technology consultants provide information on new computer programs, hardware, and policy as needed. The publications consultants help with discernment on publishing submitted manuscripts and on web content.

## **Yearly Meeting Representatives to Wider Quaker and Religious Fellowships**

Southeastern Yearly Meeting provides Friends with additional opportunities for giving expression to their faith by service to the yearly meeting in ways other than that of the clerks and committees listed above. The following are the organizations that SEYM participates in through its representatives.

SEYM has been affiliated with Friends General Conference (FGC) since 1972. FGC was originally formed in 1900 by seven yearly meetings. There are now more than fourteen yearly meetings and Friends associations, whose members predominately worship in the unprogrammed tradition of Friends. (There are a few pastoral meetings in New England and New York Yearly Meetings.) FGC serves yearly and monthly meetings, and their members and attenders, by providing resources and opportunities for spiritual

growth and community building and by helping to empower Friends and their meetings to live their faith. The FGC Annual Gathering of Friends, held each summer in a different part of North America, offers an important opportunity to experience some of these services and discover additional FGC programs.

FGC's governing body consists of Friends appointed by affiliated yearly meetings and regional Friends associations, plus additional co-opted members. The work of Friends General Conference is carried out by a number of program and administrative committees, plus staff. Program committees undertake such concerns as advancement and outreach, ministry and nurture, religious education, conference planning, and a meetinghouse loan fund. FGC publishes books and pamphlets and distributes a wide variety of publications of interest to Friends through its bookstore. SEYM sends three representatives every year to the FGC Central Committee Meeting. The representatives are also asked to serve on at least one of the program committees of FGC.

The Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC), through visitation and periodic gatherings, offers opportunities for religious fellowship among Friends throughout the world. It sponsors the Wider Quaker Fellowship, a support group for Friends and interested others who live at a distance from a local meeting. It also sponsors, in conjunction with the American Friends Service Committee and Friends Service Council of Britain Yearly Meeting, the Quaker United Nations Office (QUNO), in two locations: New York and Geneva. SEYM sends three representatives every year to the FWCC Section of the Americas Meeting. In addition, SEYM appoints two representatives to keep the yearly meeting informed regarding UN activities and QUNO (NY office) concerns.

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) was founded in 1917. Its first mission was the relief of suffering during and after World War I. Since then, AFSC has developed programs in the United States and around the world intended to encourage improved understanding among different national and ethnic groups, to enable indigenous populations to improve their living conditions, and to relieve suffering caused by economic and social

dislocation as well as by war. SEYM sends two representatives every year to the AFSC Corporation Meeting. In addition, SEYM sends two representatives every year to the AFSC Southeast Region Meetings (SERO) and two representatives to the AFSC/SERO Emergency and Material Assistance Program (EMAP) whenever it is activated by AFSC.

The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) was formed in 1943 to coordinate and enhance the efforts of Friends to lobby for their concerns with the executive and legislative branches of the US government. With the support of FCNL, many Quakers in SEYM participate in direct lobbying of their senators and representatives. SEYM sends five representatives every year to the FCNL annual meeting.

Quaker Earthcare Witness (QEW) began at the Friends General Conference Gathering at Oberlin College in 1987 as a response to a need among Friends there to “give forceful witness to the holiness of creation.” QEW offers spiritual and material support to Friends in North America who have a growing concern for the needs of the Earth. SEYM sends two representatives each year to Quaker Earthcare Witness meetings.

SEYM sends two representatives to Friends Peace Team meetings and one representative each year to Friends for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer Concerns (FLGBTQC) meetings. SEYM also appoints a representative to keep the yearly meeting informed regarding Pendle Hill programs.

Friends also participate in ecumenical bodies. SEYM is represented at the World Council of Churches through the Christian and Interfaith Relations Committee of Friends General Conference. In addition, SEYM maintains a relationship with the Florida Council of Churches with two representatives to that body.

## **Observers**

Friends of Southeastern Yearly Meeting were once affiliated (1972-2010) with Friends United Meeting (FUM). In 2010,

SEYM withdrew its affiliation and has since appointed an observer to FUM, who attends annually a general board meeting and reports back to SEYM. FUM, founded in 1902, is a cooperative program of twenty-seven plus Friends yearly meetings in Canada, Cuba, Jamaica, Kenya, Uganda, and the United States. FUM's priorities are evangelism, leadership training, global partnership, and communication. In addition, FUM publishes books and pamphlets of interest to Friends through its bookstore. Friends United Meeting is a movement of Christian Quakers. It is their joy to share the love of God and the transforming power of the Holy Spirit with all people.

## **Employees**

The yearly meeting currently employs one staff person, an administrative secretary who is hired by the executive committee and paid by funds from the budget. The role of administrative secretary is vital to the operations of the yearly meeting. The administrative secretary is the communication manager for the yearly meeting. He/she is responsible for the production and distribution of yearly meeting documents (pamphlets, brochures, minutes, documents in advance, and others), keeps the yearly meeting financial records including checkbook accounting (collects and deposits donations, writes checks), and provides financial records to the trustees, finance committee, and treasurer. The administrative secretary is responsible for creating and maintaining the yearly meeting website.

## **Trustees**

The trustees of Southeastern Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends hold title to and have management rights to yearly meeting property. The trustees are endowed with the responsibility of raising and managing endowment and investment funds on behalf of SEYM.

The six trustees are members of the yearly meeting and are from diverse areas of Southeastern Yearly Meeting; two are

nominated each year for three-year terms. The clerk is chosen by the current trustees and serves for three years. The yearly meeting treasurer is an *ex officio* member of the trustees. The group meets at least three times yearly: at each interim business meeting and at yearly meeting gathering. The clerk of yearly meeting or the clerk of interim business meeting may call the trustees into special session.

The trustees are responsible for investing trust and reserve funds and any additional funds as directed by the yearly meeting and are also responsible for the real property of the yearly meeting. They are entrusted with the responsibility of investing in organizations in keeping with the testimonies of Friends and the express wishes of donors.

The trustees may initiate new fund accounts and may close old accounts. The clerk of trustees makes an annual report about Southeastern Yearly Meeting's reserves and investments at the fall interim business meeting and a current status report at the winter interim business meeting and the yearly meeting business sessions. He/she explains what the reserves of the yearly meeting are, what income they are producing, and what programs they are supporting. The administrative secretary is responsible for the trustees' book-keeping data entry and may assist in fundraising if time is available. The clerk of the trustees keeps copies of the investment records. The trustees make a recommendation to the yearly meeting about accepting the conditions specified by the donors of gifts.