

## Quarterly Meetings

The Quarterly Meeting is designed to bring together for inspiration and counsel a larger group and to consider more varied interests than any single meeting embraces... Its most helpful function should be to aid and encourage the Monthly Meetings composing it to greater interest and service, and to give its members an increasing vision of the truth. It should be diligent in seeking opportunities to gather together groups which may be organized into meetings and should always be ready to help Monthly Meetings whenever they ask for advice or assistance.

*1927 Uniform Discipline of Friends General Conference, p. 111*

*A quarterly meeting* is a regional body of Friends, comprising more than one monthly meeting and forming part of a larger yearly meeting. By tradition, quarterly meetings hold their business sessions four times each year, but it has been found useful in some cases to maintain a less frequent schedule, particularly if the quarterly meeting covers a wide geographic area or includes few meetings of sufficient size regularly to host its sessions.

Quarterly meetings serve several purposes. First, it is in the quarterly meeting that monthly meetings report in detail the recent condition of their meeting communities, with an opportunity for the gathered Friends to respond, offer advice or assistance if needed, and take inspiration or new ideas when presented. At least once each year, representatives of each monthly meeting in the quarterly read aloud their monthly meeting's State of Society report in the quarterly meeting's business session. Time should be left after each meeting's report for Friends to speak as they feel led in response. For information on the composition of these reports, see 'State of Society reports', pp. xx-xx.

Because the quarterly meeting is the venue in which monthly meetings present these reports, and the body which regularly considers them with members of the monthly meeting present and participating, the quarterly meeting also serves as an important source of support, guidance, and assistance to local meetings, including those experiencing difficulty. Meetings which find themselves in need of assistance are urged to bring such matters to their quarterly meetings. Help is also available from the Illinois Yearly Meeting Ministry and Advancement Committee, and from the Illinois Yearly Meeting Field Secretary.

Quarterly meetings also serve as the appropriate bodies to decide issues which affect Friends on a region-wide basis, and to coordinate the efforts of local meetings when such coordination is called for. Projects which are too large or too general for a single monthly meeting to take on may more naturally be assumed by the quarterly meeting. In petitioning the state or addressing issues of public concern, the voice of the quarterly meeting will usually bear more weight than that of a monthly meeting.

1 Quarterly meetings also serve to bring together Friends from different local meetings and  
2 promote a broader sense of community among Friends. Quarterly meetings may hold  
3 retreats, workshops, or social events, either in conjunction with their business sessions or  
4 separately, to build up connections among their local meetings. Meetings with few  
5 children may especially find that quarterly meetings and other regional gatherings  
6 provide a valuable opportunity for young Friends to find companionship and a sense of  
7 Quaker community.

8  
9 Quarterly meetings also serve as a valuable forum for the preliminary consideration of  
10 business to be brought before the yearly meeting. Monthly meetings with proposals to  
11 put before the yearly meeting are urged to bring such matters first to their quarterly  
12 meeting (if there is one), unless the next session of the yearly meeting falls before the  
13 next session of the quarterly meeting, and the matter is too urgent to delay. The quarterly  
14 meeting may also bring business to the yearly meeting which originated in the quarterly  
15 meeting itself, rather than any of its monthly meetings.

16  
17 Finally, quarterly meetings have specific responsibilities in the setting up and laying  
18 down of meetings. In particular, a quarterly meeting may set up or lay down a  
19 preparative meeting on the advice of the monthly meeting of which the preparative  
20 meeting is to be a part; see 'Preparative Meetings', pp. xx–xx. In addition, proposals to  
21 set up or lay down a monthly meeting are normally approved by the quarterly meeting (if  
22 any) of which the monthly meeting is a part, before forwarding to the yearly meeting for  
23 final approval; see 'Setting up, laying down, and reaffiliation of monthly meetings', pp.  
24 xx–xx.

25  
26 Each quarterly meeting appoints a clerk, who also serves as representative to the  
27 Continuing Committee of Illinois Yearly Meeting. Quarterly meetings may also appoint  
28 a treasurer, recording clerk, and such other committees and offices as seem useful.  
29 Quarterly meetings must keep accurate records of their business and finances, and  
30 archive them properly; see 'Archivist', pp. xx–xx.

31  
32 Decisions of the quarterly meeting are made by the Friends gathered in the quarterly  
33 meeting business sessions, and do not require the approval or ratification of the monthly  
34 meetings which compose the quarterly meeting, though such approval may be sought in  
35 cases where the quarterly meeting deems it helpful to do so. Quarterly meetings must  
36 respect the local autonomy of their constituent meetings, and may not override their  
37 decisions or direct their affairs in purely internal matters.

#### 38 39 *Setting up and laying down quarterly meetings*

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41 To set up a new quarterly meeting, approval must first be secured from each of the  
42 monthly meetings which are to become a part of it. Any monthly meetings which already  
43 form part of a quarterly meeting are advised to seek the approval of their existing  
44 quarterly meeting as well. Monthly meetings are advised against belonging to more than  
45 one quarterly meeting simultaneously. After the approval of all monthly meetings and  
46 their quarterly meetings has been obtained, the proposal is forwarded either to Illinois

1 Yearly Meeting, or to the Continuing Committee. Whichever group receives the request  
2 appoints a clearness committee, or may request the Ministry and Advancement  
3 Committee to appoint a clearness committee. The clearness committee visits with the  
4 local meetings which are to be part of the proposed quarterly meeting to explore their  
5 readiness for this step. The following queries may be helpful in this process:  
6

- 7 • Sample queries here

8  
9 The committee may also meet with Friends outside the proposed quarterly meeting, to  
10 gauge the impact the establishment of the new meeting might have on existing quarterly  
11 meetings, and on the yearly meeting as a whole. The committee reports to Illinois Yearly  
12 Meeting; the new quarterly meeting is established when the yearly meeting minutes its  
13 approval in its annual business sessions. After minuting establishment, the yearly  
14 meeting (typically through its Ministry and Advancement Committee) appoints a  
15 committee of welcome to attend the opening session of the new quarterly and provide  
16 assistance or advice as it begins to conduct business.  
17

18 If a quarterly meeting is unable, over an extended period, to fulfill the functions and  
19 meet the responsibilities normally expected of a quarterly meeting, it is appropriate to  
20 lay it down. Normally, this is accomplished by minute of the yearly meeting, though in  
21 principle a quarterly meeting may also lay itself down. In either case, it is strongly urged  
22 that the approval of all functioning monthly meetings which form part of the quarterly be  
23 obtained before the quarterly meeting is officially laid down. If the quarterly meeting  
24 lays itself down, it should inform the yearly meeting promptly of this decision.  
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26 Whichever body lays down the quarterly meeting appoints a committee to assist with the  
27 arrangements, or may ask the yearly meeting's Ministry and Advancement Committee to  
28 appoint such a committee. This committee should see to it that provision is made for the  
29 archival of the meeting's records in a manner and location which keeps them accessible  
30 to Illinois Yearly Meeting. Deposit in the University of Illinois Library is recommended  
31 for this purpose. If the quarterly meeting has a treasury and other property, the  
32 committee should see that these are disposed of in an appropriate fashion, such as  
33 transferring them to the yearly meeting, dividing them among the monthly meetings, or  
34 donating them to some other Friends or charitable organization. The advice of Friends  
35 who were involved in the quarterly meeting should be a major consideration in deciding  
36 how property is disposed of.  
37

38 It is recommended that any functioning monthly meetings which had been part of the  
39 laid-down quarterly meeting be attached to some other quarterly meeting. Any such  
40 reaffiliation should be noted in the minutes of Illinois Yearly Meeting as well as those of  
41 the new quarterly meeting. Monthly meetings which had formed part of the quarterly but  
42 which are no longer functioning are best laid down at the same time as the quarterly  
43 meeting; see "Laying down a monthly meeting," pp. xx-xx.  
44

45 *Monthly meetings which do not belong to a quarterly meeting*  
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1 Originally, Illinois Yearly Meeting was organized so that all monthly meetings belonged  
2 to a quarterly meeting. The quarterly meetings formed a systematic intervening level  
3 between the monthly meetings and the yearly meeting: business, communications and  
4 finances passed between the monthly meetings and the yearly meeting through the  
5 quarterly meetings, which also played an important role in such matters as nominating  
6 the clerk of the yearly meeting and appointing the equivalent of the Continuing  
7 Committee.

8  
9 For historical reasons, Illinois Yearly Meeting now includes a number of monthly  
10 meetings which are not part of a quarterly meeting. Such meetings may find that some  
11 of the functions of a quarterly meeting are well-served by Metropolitan Chicago General  
12 Meeting or other regional gatherings. However, business which is strictly internal to  
13 Illinois Yearly Meeting is not generally considered at such meetings.

14  
15 Specifically, regional gatherings which are not quarterly meetings of Illinois Yearly  
16 Meeting may not set up or lay down a preparative meeting as part of Illinois Yearly  
17 Meeting. Nor does Illinois Yearly Meeting require that the approval of such gatherings  
18 be secured before a monthly meeting or quarterly meeting is set up or laid down as part  
19 of Illinois Yearly Meeting. Proposals for setting up or laying down meetings which are  
20 part of Illinois Yearly Meeting but not part of a quarterly meeting are directed to the  
21 Continuing Committee or to the yearly meeting; see ‘Setting up, laying down and  
22 reaffiliation of monthly meetings’, pp. xx-xx; ‘Preparative meetings’, pp. xx-xx; and  
23 ‘Setting up and laying down quarterly meetings’, pp. xx-xx.

24  
25 Metropolitan Chicago General Meeting opened in 1970 “to continue the associational  
26 relationship formerly practiced by Chicago and Fox Valley Quarterly Meetings,” two  
27 previously existing quarterly meetings which had been part of Western Yearly Meeting  
28 and Illinois Yearly Meeting, respectively. For some years previously, these two quarterly  
29 meetings had met in joint and concurrent sessions, conducting business pertaining to  
30 both yearly meetings, although not all the monthly meetings in these quarterlies were  
31 jointly affiliated.

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33 It is clear from the records surrounding the establishment of Metropolitan Chicago  
34 General Meeting that it was formed with the intention of a “de-emphasizing of business  
35 except as the business of Friends is their concern with the social health of the World.”  
36 Accordingly, it is not expected that Metropolitan Chicago General Meeting will deal  
37 with internal business of Illinois Yearly Meeting. Nonetheless, Metropolitan Chicago  
38 General Meeting approved the following statement shortly after its establishment:

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40 It is the practice of Chicago General Meeting to co-operate fully with both  
41 Western and Illinois Yearly Meetings in providing a channel for whatever reports  
42 are requested, and incorporating in the agenda of its Meetings for Business  
43 whatever communications or concerns either Yearly Meeting wishes to call to the  
44 attention of Friends in the General Meeting. This represents a continuation of the  
45 practice in the former association of the Chicago and Fox Valley Quarterly  
46 Meetings.

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2 The clerk of Metropolitan Chicago General Meeting serves as representative to the  
3 Continuing Committee of Illinois Yearly Meeting, just as the clerk of a quarterly meeting  
4 does. Traditionally, Metropolitan Chicago General Meeting has also heard readings of  
5 monthly meeting State of Society reports at its sessions, in similar fashion to a quarterly  
6 meeting.