

Membership in Smithfield Friends Meeting

If you've been attending worship with us for a while, perhaps you're wondering if you might have a spiritual home here. Could it be time for you to consider membership as the next step?

If so, then-----

Get Better Acquainted With Us.

1. Membership in the Religious Society of Friends is always through a particular Monthly Meeting. Friends have many beliefs in common, but each Meeting has its own distinct character. Before applying for membership, you are encouraged to explore Friends' practices and beliefs through reading and discussion, and to learn about Smithfield Friends through regular attendance for a significant period of time--several months at least.
2. Familiarize yourself with Quaker business procedures by coming as often as possible to Meeting for Worship with a Concern for Business.
3. Read a variety of Quaker writings. Ministry & Counsel Committee will provide you with a copy of *Faith and Practice of New England Yearly Meeting*. Inform yourself about Friends' basic beliefs, history, Testi-

monies, and work in the world. (See suggested reading list at end, but don't feel you have to read everything)

4. The pastor or any member of Ministry and Counsel will be happy to answer your questions. And feel free to approach any of the other members with questions about their experience of being part of our Meeting.

Get Involved.

5. Join a Committee. Except for Ministry and Counsel, and the Nominating Committee, committee membership is open to both members and attenders. Because so much of the work of the Meeting is done by committees, membership on a committee is an important expectation of membership in the Meeting.
6. Your financial support is also very important--we don't ask for tithes or pass the collection plate, but we still have to support our ministries, pay our pastor, and maintain our historic building. We rely on the help of members and attenders.
7. Join in our community activities--volunteer to be a part of worship through doing readings or sharing skills such as music or art; attend special gatherings such as our monthly potlucks; work with our children; take

one of the classes we offer from time to time.

8. Become familiar with the wider Quaker community by participating in Quarterly or Yearly Meeting activities. You may wish to look through one of the Yearly Meeting Minute Books.

The Final Steps.

9. When you decide you are ready to apply for membership, write a letter of intent to the Clerk of the Meeting, explaining what has led you to this decision. This letter will then be brought to the Committee on Ministry and Counsel, and a Clearness Committee will be appointed to meet with you.
10. The Clearness Committee will set a convenient time to meet with you and discuss your spiritual beliefs, your understanding of the faith and practice of the Society of Friends, and the expectations of membership. They will also try to answer any questions or respond to any concerns you may have. It may take more than one meeting to work with you in exploring your readiness for membership.

11. The Clearness Committee will then recommend acceptance or delay to Ministry and Counsel for their review. If they concur in a recommendation of acceptance, this will then be reviewed at Meeting for Business, where a final decision is made.
12. When the application is accepted, be prepared for your enthusiastic welcome to membership in Smithfield Friends Meeting!

Suggested Readings

The following publications are available in our library:

Overviews:

- Leonard Kenworthy, *Quakerism: A Study Guide on the Religious Society of Friends*
- Howard Brinton, *Guide to Quaker Practice* (primary focus on unprogrammed worship)

History:

- Barbour and Frost, *The Quakers*

Spirituality:

- John Punshon, *Encounters With Silence*
- Will Taber, *Four Doors to Quaker Worship* (Pendle Hill Pamphlet)
- Various Pendle Hill Pamphlets--A wide variety is available
- Richard Foster, *Prayer*

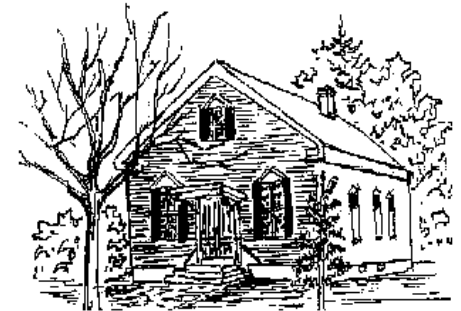
Testimonies, Social Issues, and Other Practices:

- L. Kenworthy, *Friends Face the World*
- *Living With Oneself and Others*-- booklet published in 2001 by New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM) Ministry and Counsel Committee
- Lloyd Lee Wilson, *Essays on the Quaker Vision of Gospel Order*
- R. Foster, *Freedom of Simplicity*
- *Minutes of New England Yearly Meeting of Friends*, any year (records the work of NEYM as it actually functions in annual sessions)

Great Quaker Classics:

- John Woolman, *Journal*
- D. Steere (Editor), *Quaker Spirituality: Selected Writings*

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