



343rd Fall Continuing Sessions of PYM meeting the morning of Saturday, November 11th, 2023 held at Arch Street Meetinghouse and online via Zoom

The meeting began with worship.

Introductions. Clerk Melissa Rycroft opened the session and introduced herself and rising clerk Nikki Mosgrove, the recording clerks, Sally McQuail and Jim Herr and General Secretary Christie Duncan-Tessmer. Elders Bethann Morgan, George Rubin, Yelena Forrester, Ed Solenberger, Bob Dockhorn. Pastoral Care, Edy Nolan, George Salloom, Meg Barney, Carter Nash. Ushers, Kimani and Wendy.

Melissa Rycroft spoke about this hybrid Meeting; reminding Friends to be patient with folks who struggle with technology. On Zoom, you can chat to the tech host and the rising clerk. Please wait to be recognized if you wish to speak, both in person and on Zoom. Closed caption is turned on.

Meeting Reports.

Administrative council member John Marquette presented George Schaefer as the nominee to serve as clerk for the nominating council. Friends approved.

George Schaefer, clerk of Nominating Council, presented nominees to serve as representatives to FCNL (Friends Council on National Legislation) Friends approved.

FGC (Friends General Conference) nominees were approved.

FWCC (Friends World Committee for consultation) nominees were approved to serve as representatives.

Pennsylvania Council of Churches representative was approved.

Releases and completed terms were approved with gratitude.

The corrected Nominating report will be attached to these minutes.

The Implementation Path was presented by the General Secretary,

Christie Duncan-Tessmer: Where We Are: Christie shared highlights of the current implementation focus of the strategic directions we approved in 2014. The five strategic directions are: Connecting, belonging, witnessing, communicating and functioning,

Some examples of each are:

Connecting: Threads are the things that run through all of our meetings. Worship and Care, religious education, outreach, governance and stewardship. What can Friends do to welcome people to come into our meeting? Trust circles to get to know one another.

Belonging. Broadening and Deepening relationships. Help our whole yearly meeting move forward by listening to the spirit move among us. We seek to be meaningful to all age groups together. PYM supported meetings with technology.

Witnessing. Look for what we are led to do all together, as a spiritual community. Addresses racism and witnessing climate change. Create trust circles to help mitigate conflict. Share on Equity & Inclusion at the beginning of committee meetings. Move toward being carbon neutral in our monthly meetings.

Communicating. How the structure of PYM works together, sharing stories.

Functioning. Councils do the work of PYM, making sure that we are looking forward and have all the support we need to implement this structure.

Minutes were read, corrected and approved.

After a brief break, with urging from our clerk who appreciated the joyful noise in the room, we returned to consider the future of our implementation plan. This strategic plan helps us to carry out what God calls us to, continuously. These directions are for all of us. And the question becomes, how do we know we are doing this?

Now we want to know how to engage everyone and where we are going. Christie Duncan-Tessmer gave us some suggestions for each of the five directions.

We then broke into small groups for each of these directions. Each group had worksheets to consider and engage for 25 minutes. At the end of that time, none of us was ready to quit.

We took time for some announcements. Sean Connolly, executive director of the Arch Street Meeting House Preservation Trust, told us about updates being made to the Arch Street Meeting House exhibits. These were last updated in 1976. There will be a survey for members of PYM to provide input for this. Salvador Orellana, deputy general secretary of PYM, gave us a personal recollection to tell us how climate change directly affected him. He told us about the Playbook for Climate Action, and printed copies were distributed. Frank Barch told us that Friends General Conference Gathering, June 30-July 6, will be at Haverford College. Representing Sessions Coordinating Committee, Frank told us that we have a brief PYM annual session following the Gathering. There will be a slightly longer Continuing Sessions in Spring and Fall next year to make up for time lost with the shorter summer sessions. The overall time for meeting for business will remain the same in 2024.

Deb Hejl, one of 9 representatives to Friends Committee on National Legislation, gave us a report on the accomplishments of FCNL in its 80th year. She showed us a policy book that is

used to guide activities. Examples include peace building, violence interruption in cities, and currently urging a cease fire in Gaza. She urges us to have our Meetings choose priorities for FCNL for 2024. Deb told us the Legislative Policy Collaborative has been laid down. In response to a question, she told us FCNL asked Monthly Meetings to help set a policy on reproductive rights and abortion. There were 400 responses to this request and the policy will be provided at the annual meeting next week.

Clerk led us in a consideration of our ministry of lobbying. She told us about five things on which she heard agreement including a belief in the value of lobbying, and that no one should say they are lobbying for the yearly meeting, though the yearly meeting should not tell anyone or any meetings how to lobby or tell what to lobby for. There also were questions about the authority of the Administrative Council, and how much lobbying is acceptable for the yearly meeting. Clerk showed us an infographic to understand the policy about lobbying on behalf of PYM. A Friend asked that members of three collaboratives discuss the challenges expressed in the policy. A Friend told us he feels the PYM policy has not been understood. A Friend from the Legislative Policy Collaborative told us they have, in fact, understood the policy, but disagreed with it. Clerk proposed to call a meeting of people who hold this concern and to come back to Spring Continuing Sessions with their progress. This was approved. Clerk asked that those who want to be involved email her. There was also a document distributed by a Friend, which will also be available by email.

Minutes were read, corrected and approved.

The meeting concluded with worship.

Respectfully submitted,
Jim Herr, recording clerk
Sally McQuail, recording clerk



Nominating Council Report

Nominating Council Members (For informational purposes)

Name	Monthly Meeting	Quarter	
Ron Inskeep	Gwynedd	Abington	Quarter Representative
Terry Christensen	Newtown	Bucks	Quarter Representative
		Burlington	Quarter Representative
John Christman	Lancaster	Caln	Quarter Representative
		Chester	Quarter Representative
		Concord	Quarter Representative
		Haddonfield	Quarter Representative
		Haverford	Quarter Representative
Jeff Rosenthal	Central Philadelphia	Philadelphia	Quarter Representative
Carleton Crispin	Woodbury	Salem	Quarter Representative
		Southern	Quarter Representative
		Upper Susquehanna	Quarter Representative
		Western	Quarter Representative
			At Large
Suzanne Day	Westfield	Haddonfield	At Large
Nancy Robbins	Third Haven	Southern	At Large
Meg Barney	Providence	Chester	At Large
George Schaefer	Abington	Abington	At Large
Jim Waddington	Salem	Salem	At Large
John Marquette	Lehigh Valley	Bucks	At Large

Note: The complete current roster of Nominating Council is provided on the first page of this report for informational purposes. At-large members of Nominating are appointed by the Administrative Council; Quarter Representative members are appointed at their quarterly meetings.

Appointments

Elders			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Susan Eliot	Chester	Chester	2026 (1)
Anthony Stover	Germantown	Philadelphia	2026 (1)
Terri Whiteford	Downingtown	Caln	2026 (1)

Representatives to FCNL			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Judith Inskeep	Gwynedd	Abington	2026 (1)
Bill Cozzens	Germantown	Philadelphia	2026 (2)
Stefanie Morgan	Trenton	Burlington	2026 (3)
Lynn Oberfield	Providence	Chester	2026 (3)
Joe Laird	Downingtown	Caln	2026 (2)

Representatives to FGC			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Keith Barch	Schuylkill	Caln	2026 (2)
Anthony Stover	Germantown	Philadelphia	2026 (2)

Representatives to FWCC			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Joan Broadfield	Chester	Chester	2026 (2)
Jack Waltz	Mount Holly	Burlington	2026 (2)

Representatives to PA Council of Churches			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Carter Nash	Harrisburg	Caln	2026

Releases and Completed Terms

Elders			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
.O	Central Philadelphia	Philadelphia	2026 (3)

Representatives to FWCC			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Christy Randazzo	Haddonfield	Haddonfield	2023 (1)

Nominating Council (For informational purposes only)			
NAME	MONTHLY MEETING	QUARTERLY MEETING	TERM END
Tacie Trull	Salem	Salem	2024 (1)
Jeanne Elberfeld	Reading	Caln	2026 (1)
Michael Lane	Westfield	Haddonfield	2024 (1)
Alice Maxfield	Wrightstown	Bucks	2024 (1)



Administrative Council Report: Nomination for clerk of Nominating Council

The Administrative Council is responsible for bringing forward a name for clerk of Nominating Council. We are pleased that George Schaefer has responded with warmth and enthusiasm to our invitation to serve.

George is a member of Abington Monthly Meeting and Abington Quarterly Meeting. He has been actively involved in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting for decades in a range of capacities including as the clerk of the committee on homelessness in the 1980s, clerk of his monthly meeting, and as staff for ten years with responsibilities for pastoral care and aging. George retired from staff nearly two years ago and so is eligible to serve in PYM governance (former staff must wait one year before serving in an appointed position in PYM). George has a deep understanding of Quaker faith and practice, of recognizing individual's gifts and of leadership in the manner of Friends. In addition, he knows many people in our community.

We recommend that George Schaefer serve as clerk of Nominating Council.



Items of agreement and unclarity regarding the Advocacy Policy

There was a called threshing session on October 5th on the advocacy policy. While there were some intense feelings expressed, there were a good number of things that Friends seem to agree on.

Including:

1. Quakers should lobby and are encouraged to include their Quaker identity in their lobbying efforts. They should also tell others to lobby.
2. No individual or group should speak on behalf of the yearly meeting.
3. The yearly meeting, as a respected body that includes many meetings and individuals, has a responsibility to speak to elected officials about the Truth we hold and to advocate for their taking steps toward that Truth.
4. If the yearly meeting discerns that God is calling on the yearly meeting to lobby for a specific bill, and approves the decision to do so, we will be faithful to that discernment.
5. The yearly meeting does not have authority over monthly and quarterly meetings. In addition, were a monthly meeting to face IRS consequences as a result of lobbying, those consequences would not affect other monthly meetings or the yearly meeting. Therefore, the yearly meeting governance may provide advice and caution but is not in a position to tell meetings what to do about lobbying.

There were also a number of questions for which Friends do not have a shared understanding of the answers. Including:

1. What is the authority and responsibility of the administrative council?
2. What are the parameters regarding when communications of a group within the yearly meeting count as speaking for themselves and when they count as speaking for the institution of which it is a part?
3. What are the limitations of using PYM communication channels for advocacy and lobbying?
4. How much lobbying is acceptable?
 - a. What is PYM's tax status as a nonprofit church, how is that different from another nonprofit and what does that mean about PYM groups' allowance for lobbying?
5. What is FCNL and its members allowed to do in PYM and its meetings?

NOTE: Items 3, 4a and 5 are referred to in the documentation of the Advocacy Policy.

A Plan for Implementation of the Strategic Directions

Background: The three councils reviewed a draft Implementation Plan at their September council retreat. There were positive responses, some suggestions, and a few stops. The suggestions and stops were related to *how* we move forward rather than to the paths themselves. One small group was concerned that the Direction area they were reviewing did not include a path related to encouraging interconnection between meetings; however that was, happily, covered in another Direction area.

As a result of the work at the retreat and feedback from council members at their October retreat, a new draft has been constructed that is quite simple and straight-forward.

Next steps: The PYM body, the councils and the staff can simultaneously engage in implementing our five strategic direction areas. We plan to move forward with three parallel streams of approach at the same time. Each of the three streams will make its own decisions for itself. The discernment and decisions of one stream may provide seasoning for other streams, but not instruction.

1. One stream is the **PYM body**. The presiding clerk will engage the body in responding to and seasoning the paths to provide direction for our yearly meeting. This process is expected to be stretch over several yearly meeting Sessions and will include outreach to monthly and quarterly meetings. This process meets multiple needs. It:
 - a) Engages all Friends and meetings in the work and ministry of PYM.
 - b) Responds to Friends' desire to be more actively engaged in the business and purpose of the yearly meeting.
 - c) Increases our opportunity to listen faithfully to God's direction for us as there is more involvement

This stream is guided by the presiding clerk.

2. One stream is the **PYM staff**. The staff will use the current destinations to formulate SMARTIE outcomes for the paths that will guide their work. SMARTIE outcomes are Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Timebound, Inclusive and Equitable.

This stream is guided by the General Secretary.

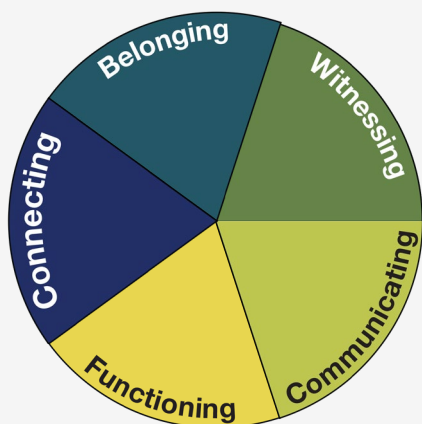
3. One stream is **PYM Governance**. The councils will use the Destinations to guide their work and agendas and the direction they provide to their committees.

This stream is guided by the council clerks and the councils themselves.

Strategic Directions



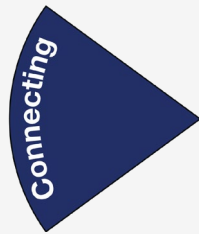
PYM's Directions



In 2014 the yearly meeting approved seven strategic directions which have guided our ministry. The directions merge nicely together to form five direction areas which are reviewed in this document. The text on each slide is the approved text of the directions. The italicized paragraphs below the slides is the approved description for the directions



PYM's Directions



Connect Friends and meetings
to one another so that we may
experience vibrant, Spirit-led
faith community.

Connect Friends
through effective
communications and technology.

Individuals and meetings will give time, gifts and experience in service, and in turn receive new insight, grounding and friendships, directly and indirectly enriching their meetings and their own spiritual lives.

We will connect Friends across the geography of PYM and with Friends from the wider world, in order to carry our concerns together. We will do this in a manner that allows everyone, without traveling, to participate in the life of the community



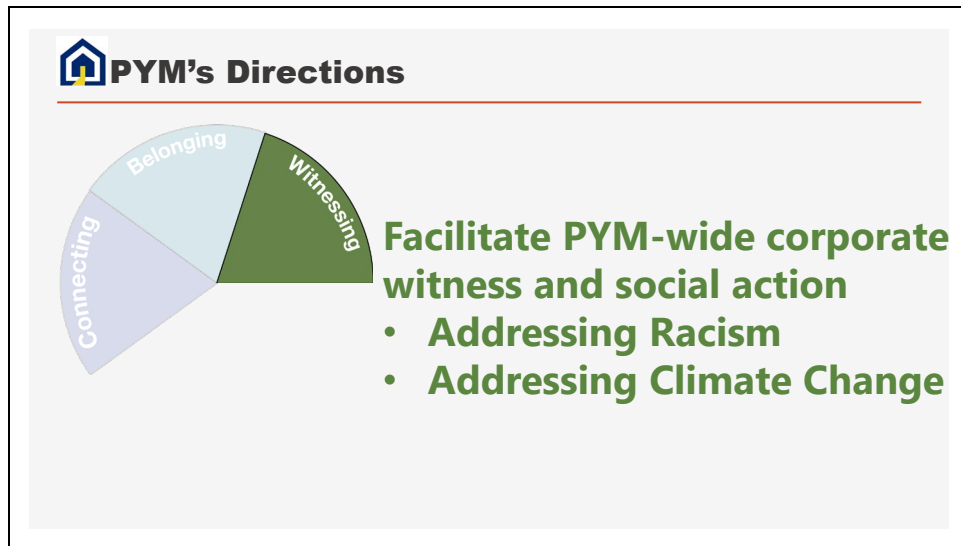


Broaden Engagement & Deepen Relationship

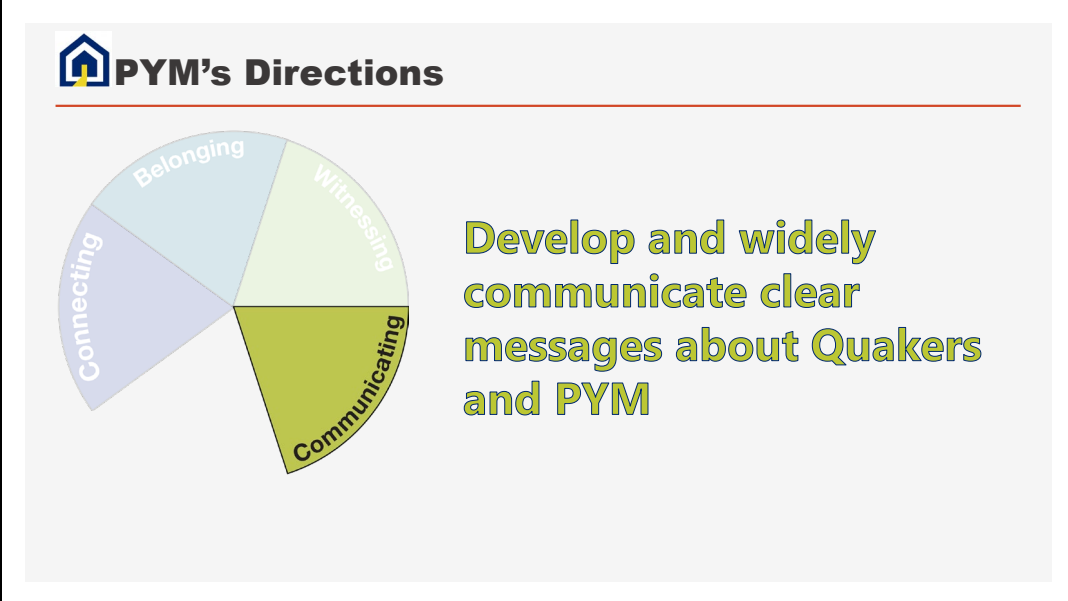
Ensure our communities are welcoming & safe for all people

Because we are all interconnected, we seek to increase a sense of belonging to an extended family of Friends. To be effective and whole, we need each other. Our personal experience of being a Friend is deepened by worshipping, discerning business, and sharing community beyond our home meetings. Friends of all ages, locations, and interests will have ways of entering the community and will feel glad they've participated.

We will look courageously into the roots of inequity in our culture, be willing to see and feel the pain it can cause and choose to do whatever is necessary to take risks and to change. We will dismantle imposed barriers in our yearly and monthly meeting structures and activities, which impede our experience of God within our communities and within ourselves. We seek to make the congregations inside of our meetinghouses reflect the beauty and diversity of the world outside of them.



As seekers of Truth, we expect to be called to action. Together, as a PYM community, we will witness to the Light, contributing to transformational work in the world. We will encourage and support one another in taking risks together, as we make an impact on our society. We will enhance our effectiveness by focusing our corporate action on fewer, clearer goals.

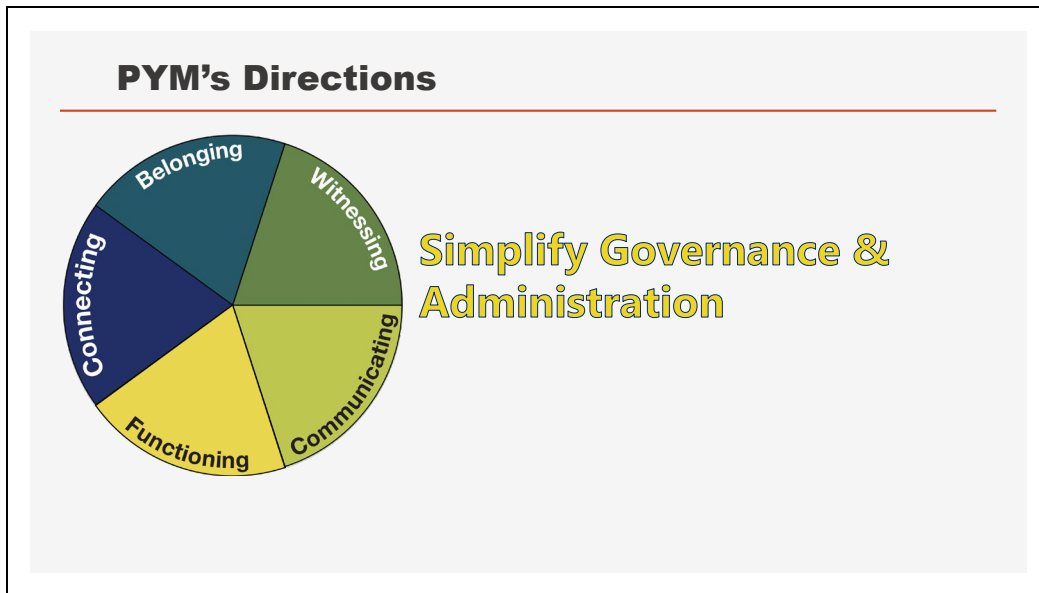


PYM's Directions

Develop and widely communicate clear messages about Quakers and PYM

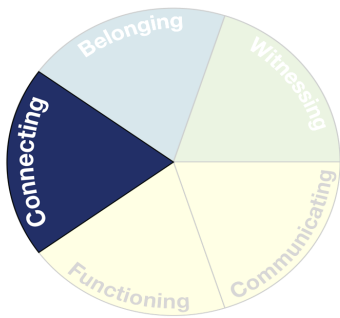
The graphic features a pie chart divided into four segments: 'Connecting' (purple), 'Belonging' (light blue), 'Witnessing' (light green), and 'Communicating' (olive green). The 'Communicating' segment is highlighted in a darker shade. To the right of the chart, the text 'Develop and widely communicate clear messages about Quakers and PYM' is written in a bold, green font.

We will send boldly into the world the message of our distinctive Quaker faith and practice, so that we are known not only for our historic witness but also for our present action, encouraging others to join us, and so that all may be inspired.



We will use our finite resources of volunteer time and energy to focus primarily on God's work and to sustain our extended community. This process will simplify our structure and processes, clarify roles, responsibilities, authority, and accountability, and reduce the number of things we do. Thus, we will create new opportunities for access and participation, open to anyone with the skills, experience, and will serve, regardless of time and travel limitations.

Implementation Path

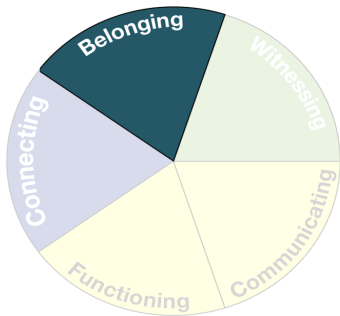


CONNECTING DIRECTION:

Connect Friends and Meetings

Where we're going next:

- Build up the connections Toolbox
- Increase meetings' connections with one another

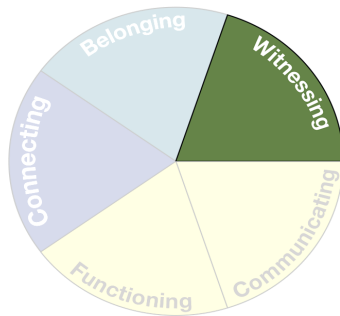


BELONGING DIRECTION:

Deepen relationship while ensuring our community is welcoming and safe for all seekers

Where we're going next:

- Increase our capacity for conflict transformation
- Make our meetings accessible in all ways to all seekers on this path

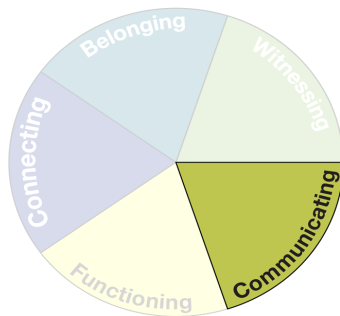


WITNESSING DIRECTION:

Address Racism and Climate Change

Where we're going next:

- Develop benchmark indicators of effectiveness
- Have fearless conversations about race

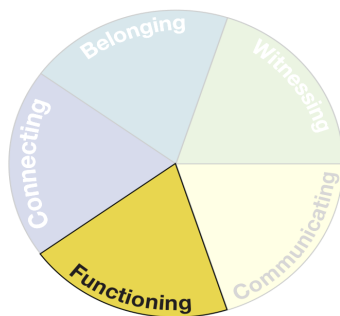


COMMUNICATING DIRECTION:

Say who we are

Where we're going next:

- Make sure everyone can explain PYM
- Publicly express our experience of Truth on issues of justice

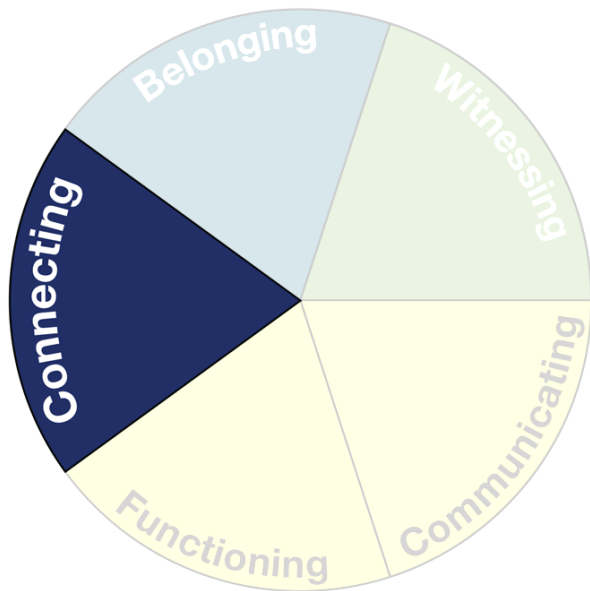


FUNCTIONING DIRECTION:

Simplify Governance and Administration

Where we're going next:

- Get clear about meeting and council roles in PYM
- Provide deeper orientation about our community structures



DIRECTION: CONNECTING

Connect friends and meetings

Where we're going next:

(1) Build up the connections toolbox

We require an array of ways to connect meetings because Friends and meetings have different needs and different preferred ways of interacting. Providing many ways increases the likelihood that any single Friend or meeting will find and use one that speaks to their condition. Also, different types of connections between people are best made in different ways.

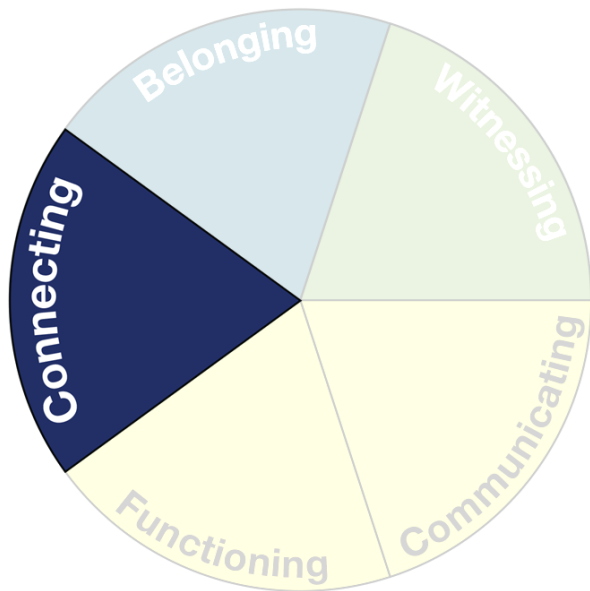
Examples of going in this direction:

- Develop a set of tools for councils to use to consistently be able to listen to what is important in meetings.
- (add your own here....)

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DIRECTION: CONNECTING

Connect friends and meetings

Where we're going next:

(2) Increase meetings' connections to one another

Meetings have their own personalities, strengths and needs. Because they are part of a network of meetings, Friends can come to know God, justice and spiritual care (for example) in ways that inspire and/or challenge them. They are able to learn from each other, find solutions to problems, celebrate joys, bear witness and bear grief, that they wouldn't have the opportunity to all by themselves.

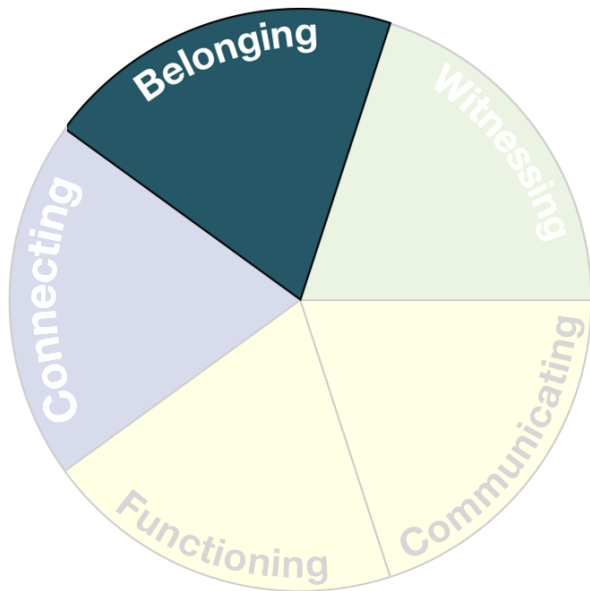
Examples of going in this direction:

- The members of a meeting committee travels to another meeting to visit and have a combined meeting.
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DIRECTION: BELONGING

Deepen relationships while ensuring our community is welcoming and safe for all seekers

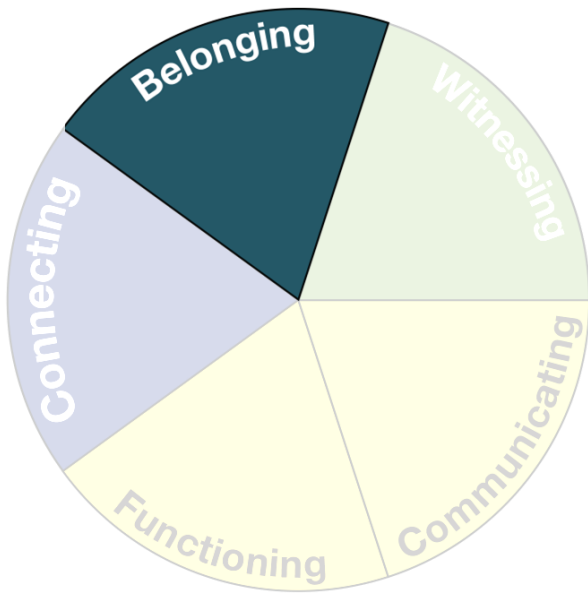
Where we're going next:

- (1) Increase our capacity for conflict transformation

Sometimes our centuries of history and our decades of knowing one another result in a deep familiarity that we prefer not to disrupt or that becomes the definition of Quakerism to us. Sometimes our experience of the Light within ourselves is so different from another's experience that it's hard to trust we are rooted in the same place of faith. Knowing how to transform conflict gives us confidence in a shared skillset for managing the conflict that comes from difference among us.

Examples of going in this direction:

- The Trust Circle program developed by the Ministry & Care Committee.
- (add your own here....)
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DIRECTION: BELONGING

Deepen relationships while ensuring our community is welcoming and safe for all seekers

Where we're going next:

- (2) Make our meetings accessible in all ways to all seekers on this path

The way we organize our community, activity, resources, and communications also is the way we allow and invite access to them. Our traditions are based on an inherited way of organizing - that often is informed by the way of the world and the dominant culture. As such, the way we do things can be unintentionally more accessible to some people and less accessible to others. This path encourages us to organize our community so there is clear access for all people.

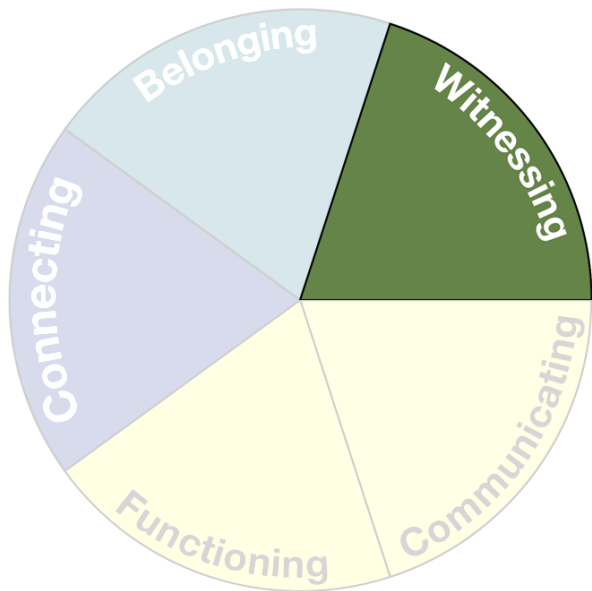
Examples of going in this direction:

- Resources and experiences for multigenerational worship
- (add your own here....)

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WITNESSING DIRECTION

Address racism and climate change

Where we're going next:

- (1) Develop benchmark indicators of effectiveness

Because of the way we manage our yearly meeting-wide witnesses in which the responsibility is held by every meeting, household and Friend, there is not a single committee whose report of their activity indicates what the yearly meeting has done. Additionally, because the problems and violations are so deep, taking steps in these ministries can feel hopeless. This path helps us remain accountable and brings us together to address our ministries in the company of one another.

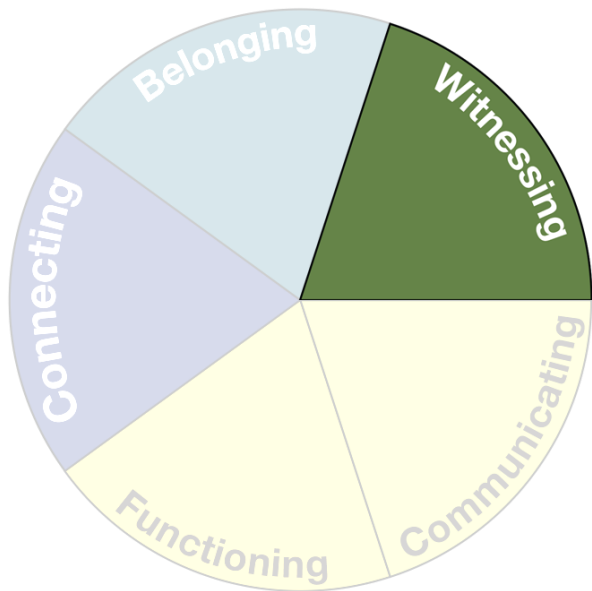
Examples of going in this direction:

- Collect possible benchmarks from meeting recommendations
- (add your own here....)

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DIRECTION: WITNESSING

Address racism and climate change

Where we're going next:

(2) Have fearless conversations about race

We live in a systemically racist culture that preserves power and resources for the benefit of those who already have power and resources. Undoing that culture requires an ability to talk about it with one another while staying in relationship even when it is extremely difficult. This Destination provides a way to help us gain the insight and skill to do so and the support to make mistakes along the way.

Examples of going in this direction:

- Develop a toolbox for how to keep conversations about race real and safe.
- (add your own here....)

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DIRECTION: COMMUNICATING

Say who we are

Where we're going next:

(1) Make sure everyone can explain PYM

To communicate clear messages to the world about Friends, we need to be able to articulate those messages to ourselves. This path helps us understand the structure of our community, how it is itself an expression of the Quaker faith, and how it feeds us.

Examples of going in this direction:

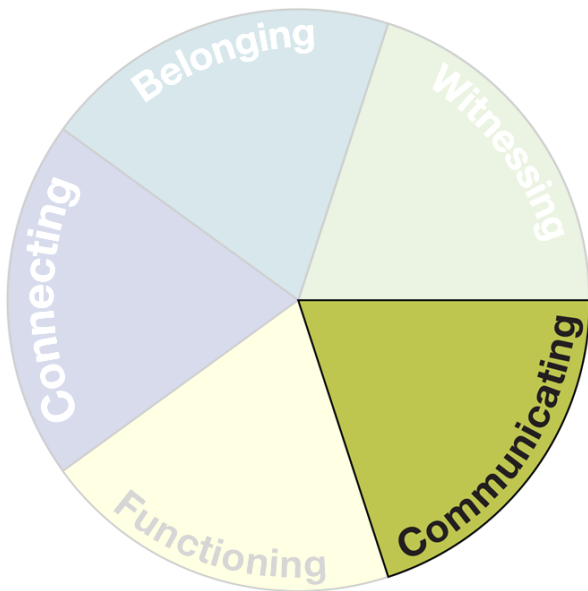
Publish a "view book" which explains PYM and the way in which meetings and individuals can see where their role is.

- (add your own here....)

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DIRECTION: COMMUNICATING

Say who we are

Where we're going next:

(2) Publicly express our experience of Truth on issues of justice

Speaking Truth about justice concerns is a key way Friends express their faith. When Friends speak as a community we are individually supported and the message is both amplified and carries more weight. Shared parameters and support for public communications helps keep us accountable and supports our effective faith in action. This path asks us to advocate for justice in a way that speaks to our faith and the full, diverse community of the yearly meeting.

Examples of going in this direction:

- Develop media contacts.
- (add your own here....)
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DIRECTION: COMMUNICATING

Say who we are

Where we're going next:

(3) Deepen individuals' ability to articulate Quaker practices of worship and decision-making

These practices are the foundation of our faith. Our ability to practice them well and to invite others to understand them requires that we continually deepen our understanding of them. This Destination provides a firm ground to support strong practices for all Friends.

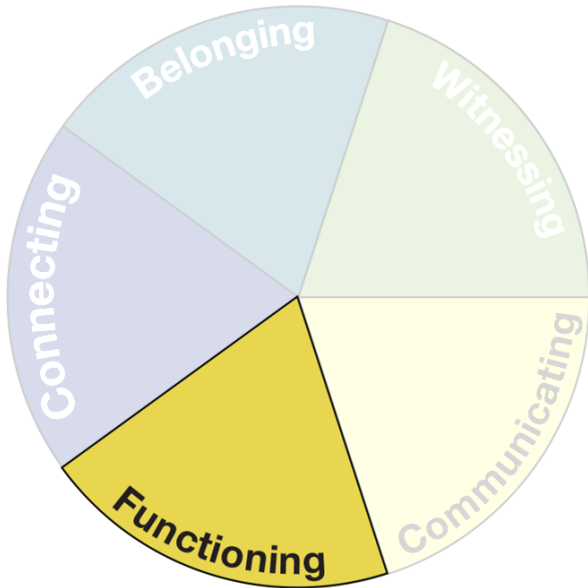
Examples of going in this direction:

- Collect and share meetings' resources on worship and decision-making in the manner of Friends.
- (add your own here....)

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FUNCTIONING DIRECTION

Simplify Governance and Administration

Where we're going next:

(1) Get clear about meeting and council roles in PYM

Our governance structure can work at its most effective level when it is creating the container and providing the resources for Friends and meetings to live in spiritual community together. Creating that container depends on Friends engaging in the yearly meeting and on the governance structure being responsive to the movement of Spirit within the yearly meeting. This Destination supports a healthy and dynamic interaction between the governance and the community.

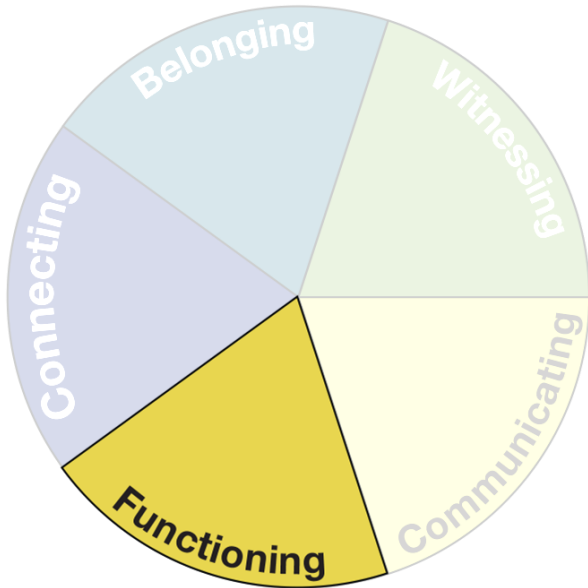
Examples of going in this direction:

- Develop a set of tools for councils to use to consistently be able to listen to what is important in meetings
- (add your own here....)

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FUNCTIONING DIRECTION

Simplify Governance and Administration

Where we're going next:

(2) Provide deeper orientation about our community structure

Our governance structure can work at its most effective level when it is creating the container and providing the resources for Friends and meetings to live in spiritual community together. Creating that container depends on Friends engaging in the yearly meeting and on the governance structure being responsive to the movement of Spirit within the yearly meeting. This Destination supports a healthy and dynamic interaction between the governance and the community.

Examples of going in this direction:

- Publish a web-based, video orientation about the purpose of councils and role of council members that is available to all.
- (add your own here....)

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