

## **2022 At-Large Membership in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting**

Friends who are active and engaged participants in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting may choose to apply for at-large membership. Applicants for at-large membership are not restricted to the geographical boundaries of PYM, but should view PYM and its constituent parts as their primary spiritual home.

### **Application Process**

Individuals who wish to apply for at-large membership in Philadelphia Yearly Meeting are encouraged to submit a letter of application to the clerk of the Ministry & Care Committee.

The letter should include the following:

- A statement of the applicant's understanding of the Religious Society of Friends, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, and an understanding of how at-large membership meets their spiritual needs.
- A description of how the applicant has been active and involved in the Quaker activities in yearly, quarterly, and/or monthly meetings.
- A plan for worship in the manner of Friends over the next year.
  - Worship may include monthly meetings, quarterly meetings, yearly meetings, Pendle Hill, or another body with regular or irregular worship.
- A plan for religious education over the next year.
  - Religious education may include workshops, retreats, or religious education classes from any one of the many organizations that offer these opportunities, including but not limited to, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Pendle Hill, Friends General Conference, a quarterly meeting event, or a monthly meeting event.
- The names of three or more friends who are willing to act individually or collectively to support the applicant in their spiritual journey. If the applicant does not have three friends who are willing to act in this capacity, then the letter should include a request for assistance in creating a support committee.
- A commitment to remain in communication with PYM, including updated contact information and requests for support or assistance as needed.
- An annual update to the appropriate committee with an evaluation of what's working, what's not working, and recommendations for any necessary changes in the at-large membership process.

Friends have the option of asking a group to write a letter of support for their application. That group could be a committee, a quarter, a worship group, Young Adult Friends, or another Quaker organization the applicant is in community with.

When the clerk receives the letter of application, the clerk will ask Ministry & Care to arrange a clearness committee for the applicant.

- The clearness committee will spend time in worship, visitation, and discernment with the applicant as outlined in [Faith & Practice](#).
- The clearness committee will prayerfully and faithfully consider the application for at large membership.
- If the applicant wants to maintain membership in another religious body, the clearness committee and the applicant should discuss that desire relevant to the guidance included in Faith and Practice:  
“Should an applicant for membership in a monthly meeting wish to maintain membership in or affiliation with another religious body, the clearness committee established to review the application for membership will explore with sensitivity the reasons that underlie this desire.”
- If the committee is clear that the applicant should be welcomed into at-large membership, the committee will recommend to Ministry and Care (or the clerk, if necessary) that the Yearly Meeting welcome the applicant into membership.
- Quaker Life Council will share the names of new at-large with Philadelphia Yearly Meeting.

Individuals who complete the clearness process are welcomed into membership. At-large members are eligible to serve on PYM councils and committees, as PYM officers, as representatives to external organizations, or to receive grants.

### **At Large Membership Responsibilities**

Friends who are welcomed into At Large Membership are members of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting as outlined in [Faith & Practice](#). Friends are encouraged to read the referenced text, in particular with regard to the obligations and opportunities for the member and the meeting, each to the other. Members have the responsibilities and opportunities available to other members of the Religious Society of Friends, just as the Yearly Meeting has responsibilities to the individual member.

### **Monthly, Quarterly, and Yearly Meeting Membership**

Individuals are encouraged to discern if their needs are best met by membership in a monthly meeting, at-large in a quarterly meeting, or at-large in the yearly meeting. Conversely, Quarters are encouraged to consider if they have the capacity and interest to support at-large membership. Some Friends have expressed that their spiritual home and community lies with their Quarter and subsequently, they prefer to be members of their Quarter. Membership is one way to be a Quaker, but not the only way.

## Resources

Membership:

<https://www.pym.org/faith-and-practice/faith-reflected-organization/friends-meetings/membership/>

Procedures for Membership:

<https://www.pym.org/faith-and-practice/guidelines-and-procedures/procedures-for-membership/>

**Clearness Committee:** A clearness committee helps someone resolve a specific question, such as membership, marriage, or another identifiable issue. A clearness committee has a short term relationship with the individual, meeting only a few times.

**Support Committee:** A support, care, or anchor committee provides long term assistance to an individual who has a ministry or concern. A support committee has an ongoing relationship with an individual that may endure for years.

Learn more about [clearness committees and support committees](#) from PYM Faith & Practice.