

Preparing for Yearly Meeting

Compiled for Yearly Meeting,
Friends House, London and online
1–4 May 2026

Yearly Meeting of Quakers in Britain



Preparing for Yearly Meeting

Welcome

Yearly Meeting will meet from 1–4 May 2026 in Friends House and online. Everyone in our Quaker community is welcome to join, whether a member or not. There will be programmes for children and young people. Some meetings will take place prior to Yearly Meeting. See below.

This Yearly Meeting

The change to our pattern of Yearly Meeting sessions means that following our May sessions, we will gather again, for one day each time, on 18 July (in Manchester and online) and 21 November (in Friends House and online). We hope that this change, along with the choice of online or onsite attendance, will make our shared worship and discernment more inclusive and accessible for as many Friends as possible.

During our sessions in May we will consider the following questions, discerned by Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee:

In a divided world,

- what unites us as a Spirit-led community? How do we foster acceptance and belonging?
- as a Spirit-led community, how can we handle conflict well in a way that builds connections, nurtures community and finds common ground, overcoming divisiveness and polarisation?

How to prepare

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee encourages individuals, Quaker meetings and other Quaker groups to prepare for Yearly Meeting. Let us use this Yearly Meeting as an opportunity to strengthen our community.

We hope this document will help you prepare for Yearly Meeting. If you are unsure what to expect or how to prepare, ask a Friend from your meeting or worshipping community to help you.

Documents

The following documents will help you get ready for Yearly Meeting:

- *Preparing for Yearly Meeting* – this document
- *Agenda and notes* – includes information about sessions and what Yearly Meeting will be considering (to be published in February)
- *Testimonies* – to the Grace of God as shown in the lives of deceased Friends
- *Britain Yearly Meeting Trustees' annual report & financial statements* – for the year ended 31 December 2025
- *Patterns of membership*, including the Tabular Statement – information about the number of Quakers in Britain

Unless otherwise stated, these documents will be published in April. You will be able to find them on the Yearly Meeting website: www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

The Yearly Meeting minutes will be published on the website after the event.

If you need accessible versions, you can request them when registering or by emailing ym@quaker.org.uk.

Printed copies are available for those with access needs. This includes those who can't use smartphones, tablets or e-readers during the event. Please request these only if necessary. This helps us reduce costs and environmental impact.

Attending at Friends House and online

You can join Yearly Meeting at Friends House in London, or online – whatever works best for you. Everyone is welcome, including families and young people.

Yearly Meeting sessions will be clerked from Friends House and spoken ministry will be taken from Friends onsite and online.

Friends joining online can attend all Yearly Meeting sessions, and morning and evening worship.

If you are planning to attend Yearly Meeting online, consider gathering with a few other Friends in your area, and joining Yearly Meeting together using one computer. Some people find this helps them to settle and feel connected in a blended meeting. Other people prefer to join in a room on their own.

Whichever you choose, every person planning to join Yearly Meeting, in a group, alone, online or in Friends House, must register separately for Yearly Meeting.

What's on offer...

Before Yearly Meeting

Online preparation sessions will take place between 13 and 17 April. These are to help prepare our hearts and minds for the discernment at Yearly Meeting.

From 20 to 26 March Quaker Recognised Bodies and Yearly Meeting central committees and programmes will offer a wide range of online meetings.

For these and all sessions listed below you can book to attend through the Yearly Meeting planner (available from February 2026 for those who have registered for Yearly Meeting).

Orientation

Woodbrooke will host online orientation sessions leading up to Yearly Meeting as follows:

All about Yearly Meeting – doing discernment and creating community

This session is for everyone, whether you have been to Yearly Meeting before or are completely new to it – and whether you will be attending online or at Friends House.

The session will explore how joining in community and discernment with hundreds of Quakers can be exciting, but also different from local and area meeting. We will look at the basis of spirit-led discernment; how this works at our blended Yearly Meeting in particular, and how to come with hearts and minds prepared but not made up. We will also explore what else is happening at Yearly Meeting and how to get the most from the gathering. There will be a chance to ask any questions that you might have – there is no such thing as a silly question!

- Monday 13 April, 19:30–20:45 (online)
- Friday 1 May, 17:00–18:15 (blended event, online and in Friends House)

Orientation material from this session will also be recorded and available on

the Yearly Meeting website at www.quaker.org.uk/ym/programme.

Preparation sessions

These online sessions are offered to help Friends prepare for discernment at Yearly Meeting.

What unites us as a Spirit-led community? How do we foster acceptance and belonging?

- Tuesday 14 April, 19:30–20:45 (online)

A seasoned and a newer Friend will talk about being part of a Spirit-led community and what it means to them. They will explore the impact this has on their lives. There will be an opportunity for questions, and for participants to share their own experiences in breakout groups.

Updates on our Quaker constitution

- Wednesday 15 April, 19:30–20:30 (online)

As we prepare to lay down Meeting for Sufferings and hold Yearly Meeting sessions more often, we need to update some of our most important constitutional documents: *Quaker faith & practice* and the Britain Yearly Meeting Governing Document. If you want to learn more about the proposed changes and about how our Quaker constitution works then come along to this session. Draft text will be sent out with *Agenda & notes* so come with questions and comments to share.

How do we let the Spirit guide us to peaceful resolution of the conflicts within our Quaker meetings and our communities?

- Thursday 16 April, 19:30–20:45 (online)

We will hear stories from Friends who have been part of resolving conflicts within their Quaker meetings and communities. We will explore where the Spirit can lead in these all-too-familiar situations and how we can learn from others' experiences. We hope that this will help Friends to come to Yearly

Meeting viewing conflict as something that can lead to new and positive growth, if we listen with love and follow where the Spirit leads.

During Yearly Meeting

In addition to Yearly Meeting sessions, the Groups Fair will be held in Friends House only. This will be a chance to learn about the work of Quaker Recognised Bodies (Saturday and Sunday lunchtimes) and the work of the staff and committees of Quakers in Britain (Sunday lunchtime only). The Swarthmore Lecture will take place on Saturday evening and the Salter Lecture will take place on Sunday evening. Both lectures will be available in Friends House and online.

An all-age community hub will provide a calm place for anyone attending Yearly Meeting in Friends House to take a break from other activities. A place to meet old friends and to make new friends, to talk informally and to take part in relaxing craft and other activities such as quilting and macrame, jigsaws and puzzles. There will be child friendly activities. Also in Friends House there will be a quiet room for anyone wishing to sit or lie down quietly.

For young adults: Young Adults @ Yearly Meeting

During the Yearly Meeting weekend, there will be a community space for 18- to 35-year-olds attending Yearly Meeting. It's an opportunity to connect with each other, prepare for and reflect on Yearly Meeting. More details will be available nearer the time of the event at www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

For children and young people

These programmes are an integral part of Yearly Meeting. They allow Friends in these age groups to connect with Yearly Meeting in age-appropriate ways. This supports their faith and spiritual growth. It also helps them to experience transformation beyond the event and helps make them feel part of the wider Quaker community.

All under-18s attending Yearly Meeting need to be registered by a parent or

guardian. Please book in advance by the deadlines as places are limited.

0 to 11-year-olds: Children's programme at Yearly Meeting

- Friday 1–Monday 4 May at Friends House

This programme can be booked by individual session and does not include accommodation. Bookings for the Children's Programme close on Tuesday 7 April, to give volunteers time to prepare. To attend the Children's Programme (ages 0–11), a responsible adult should be close by. Please note that Britain Yearly Meeting cannot take responsibility for children outside of the programmed sessions.

11- to 15-year-olds: Young People @ Yearly Meeting

- Friday 1–Monday 4 May

This programme is residential and takes place at the Rock UK Frontier Centre in Northamptonshire. The participants will rejoin the event at Friends House in London for the final day.

The booking deadline for Young People @ Yearly Meeting is Sunday 1 March.

15- to 18-year-olds: Junior Yearly Meeting

- Friday 3–Tuesday 7 April at the Pioneer Centre near Kidderminster.

Please note that Junior Yearly Meeting is NOT at the same time as Yearly Meeting. For older teens wishing to participate in Yearly Meeting, there is an accompaniment programme.

There are two deadlines for Junior Yearly Meeting (JYM). The first deadline is Monday 12 January 2026, for nominations and open place applications (for individuals not being nominated). The second deadline is Monday 26 January 2026 for the parent/guardian to confirm that the young person would like to come to JYM by completing a consent and information form.

Full details can be found at www.quaker.org.uk/ym and at www.quaker.org.

[uk/events/junior-yearly-meeting-2026](https://www.britainyearlymeeting.org.uk/events/junior-yearly-meeting-2026).

15- to 17-year-olds: Accompaniment at Yearly Meeting

This programme will offer a supportive environment to enable older teens to take part in Yearly Meeting at the pace and depth that suits them. This is NOT a residential programme and Britain Yearly Meeting cannot take responsibility for participants outside of attended sessions. Parents and carers will need to make appropriate arrangements to enable participants to attend. This may include transport, accommodation and food, as well as supervision by an appropriate adult, overnight (21:00–09:00).

The booking deadline for older teens wishing to join the accompaniment programme is Tuesday 7 April.

Changes to Yearly Meeting

Before and during Yearly Meeting there will be chances to find out more about the changes that are happening with Yearly Meeting in 2026.

Yearly Meeting, July 2026 and beyond

- Wednesday 25 March, 19:30–20:30 (online)

In this session we will share updates and plans for Yearly Meeting in July 2026 and beyond. If you are keen to get involved, unsure what is happening, wondering why things are changing, or just have a general interest in what is being planned then come along to find out more.

There will also be an online drop-in session on Sunday 3 May 17:45–18:45 where you can share any thoughts or ask any questions about how Yearly Meeting is changing.

If you are in Friends House then look out for a stand at the Quakers in Britain fair and an informative display in the library.

Our community agreement

Quaker practice at Yearly Meeting

Respect the wide diversity among us in our lives and relationships. Refrain from making prejudiced judgments about the life journeys of others. Do you foster the spirit of mutual understanding and forgiveness which our discipleship asks of us? Remember that each one of us is unique, precious, a child of God.

Advices & queries 22

Yearly Meeting aims to be a spiritually enriching experience, where Friends build a loving and inclusive community. It is important for us all to consider what impact our behaviour and words might have on others. We need to continue to practise listening and speaking to one another with care. Quakers are not immune to the bad behaviour that seems to occur more often online than in person. We need to maintain our discipline of coming together to “know God’s will for the gathered group”, despite the challenges of meeting remotely.

Yearly Meeting Agenda Committee asks you to share responsibility for creating a safe and loving community by upholding Quaker discipline at this Yearly Meeting.

Throughout Yearly Meeting and beforehand, whether meeting online or in Friends House:

- Follow the guidance on safeguarding and online security provided for events.
- When talking or writing to other participants about the Yearly Meeting topics please take care over how you communicate. Use inclusive language and behaviour to avoid hurt. Pause before communicating (especially online) and carefully consider whether you might be about to say something you would later regret.

- Be mindful of how important or sensitive the subject may be when discussing views and beliefs you or others may hold. Respect the experiences and opinions of others, even if they differ from your own. Be open to change.
- Do not lobby clerks, introducers, staff or other servants of the meeting regarding the agenda (see *Quaker faith & practice* 3.04). Do not assume that Friends who are closely involved will always be available to discuss a topic with you; people might need time off from the discernment between Yearly Meeting sessions.
- Do not claim to speak on behalf of others when expressing your own view.

In Yearly Meeting and preparatory sessions:

- Follow the general counsel on church affairs set out in *Quaker faith & practice* 3.01–3.07. Friends are encouraged to speak clearly and briefly and stand to speak if comfortable and able to do so. Our experience is that Friends online may not sense as quickly as those in Friends House that their ministry has been heard. Clerks may say when a Friend has ministered at sufficient length and it is time to make space for others' contributions, so that a wide range of voices can be heard. If this message is not received it may occasionally be necessary to disconnect an online contribution.
- Yearly Meeting sessions are meetings for worship, so please do give them your full attention rather than 'multitasking'. For instance, engaging in parallel discussion on social media would be as inappropriate as chatting to someone else in the room.

Interactions between Friends (online or in Friends House) can result in pain and distress. Be mindful of your own words and actions, and careful that you do not cause inadvertent hurt.

Behaviours such as discrimination, bullying, harassment or verbal abuse are not acceptable and will not be tolerated. If you experience or witness

unacceptable behaviour by anyone in our community, for the well-being of everyone concerned, please let an elder or a member of the Pastoral Care Team know. For more information, please see our policies and procedures on bullying and harassment.

Yearly Meeting clerks and elders may decide, exceptionally, to exclude from the event anyone who does not abide by these guidelines.

Preparation Resources

The following resources are to help you to prepare for Yearly Meeting. You can do this individually and in your Quaker meeting or community before Yearly Meeting.

Courses:

Between January and April 2026 Woodbrooke is running several sessions and courses related to these topics that will help Friends to prepare for Yearly Meeting. For full information and to book your place, please see www.woodbrooke.org.uk/ym26.

How can we develop our Spirit-led connection at the heart and at the edges of our communities?

This session invites us to explore how we can develop the Spirit-led connections that hold us together, both within our meetings and at the edges of our communities. We will consider how the Spirit brings us together across our differences, how we can talk more openly about God/Spirit/Divine, and how we can better share this with newcomers and those exploring Quaker faith.

In preparing for Yearly Meeting, you might wish to reflect on your own connection with God/Spirit/Divine. How do you experience this relationship? How do you express it, and can you share about it in your meeting, with both long-standing Friends and newcomers alike? What helps you feel connected to others in the Spirit? What gets in the way? How might we create spaces in our meetings where people feel free to speak about faith and their experience in ways that deepen understanding and connection?

Resources and Materials

Read

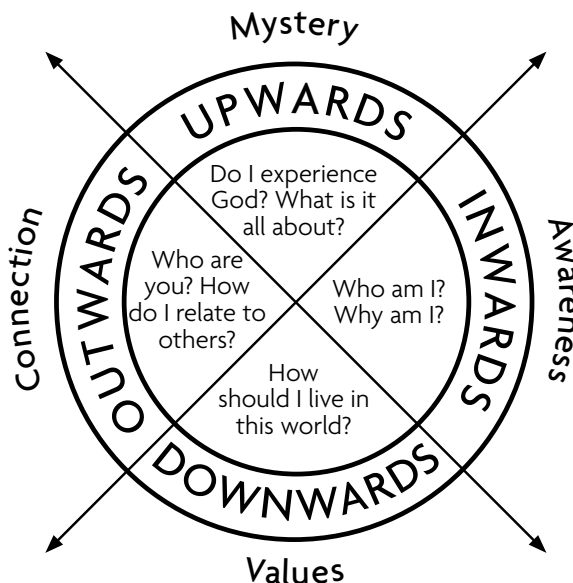
- *The goodness of the world* by Craig Barnett:
<https://quakerrenewal.substack.com/p/the-goodness-of-the-world>

- Helen Rowlands, *God, words and us: Quakers in conversation about religious difference*. (2017) Quaker Books. Activities from pages 84-86 (available from www.quaker.org.uk/ym/documents). The book is available to buy from the [Quaker Bookshop](#) (print £8, ebook £3.50).
- Mark Russ, *The spirit of freedom: Quaker shaped Christian theology*. (2024) Christian Alternative. Chapters 3 and 4. Available from [Quaker Bookshop](#) (print £8.99).

Reflect

Reflect on each of the questions in the diagram. What might you say for yourself? Where would you like to explore more with others?’

Source: John Lee (2007). *Spiritual development: a first step for youth workers and young people*. Quaker Life



Watch

- *Quaker worship* – video from Quakers in Britain (3m 28s) www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXCnxQ9dmMY
- *Adeiladu heddwch* – building peace through the power of conversations – video from Crynwyr Cymru Quakers in Wales featuring young Quakers in Wales and the borders (9m 19s) www.youtube.com/watch?v=JsO84WB9RLY
- *An introduction to Watford Quakers*. These videos give ideas of what one meeting said some years ago. What would your Quaker community say now? www.watfordquakers.org.uk/videos

How do we let the Spirit guide us to peaceful resolution of the conflicts within our Quaker meetings and our communities?

Britain Yearly Meeting is going through significant changes; Area Meetings are amalgamating, Quaker property is being sold. Our church government is adapting to changing circumstances and we will soon have a new book of discipline.

Our communities are facing new challenges alongside ongoing conflicts. As the world changes, our sense of security changes and we seek comfort and solutions.

Conflict is not new to the Religious Society of Friends. Early Friends experienced civil wars, persecution and imprisonment. Internal disputes have occurred within Friends from the earliest history; yet the community still exists and if God needs us, we will remain.

If we are to be led by the Spirit then *Quaker faith and practice* 12.16 encourages us to review our spiritual life. What does Love require of us? How do we listen and uphold in the Light those with whom we disagree, and those who are different from us? Do we recognise the grief and fear of change? Do we recognise the energy of the Spirit leading our transformation? Do we love enough to let go?

Ways to prepare

Watch

- Swarthmore Lecture 2021, *Kinder ground: creating space for truth* by Thomas Penny (1h 5m) www.youtube.com/watch?v=lei27xKLG9k also available to read (see 'read' section below)

Read

- *Quaker faith and practice* 2.87; 2.90; 10.21; 12.16
- *Engaging with conflict and challenging hate: a toolkit for action* (2025)

Quakers in Britain. www.quaker.org.uk/documents/toolkit-for-action-engaging-with-conflict-challenging-hate

- Thomas Penny, *Kinder ground: creating space for truth* [Swarthmore Lecture] (2021) Available from the [Quaker Bookshop](#) (print £10, ebook £4). Also available as a video (see 'watch' above)
- Media coverage of Westminster Meeting House police raid, Quakers in Britain www.quaker.org.uk/news-and-events/news/media-coverage-of-westminster-meeting-house-police-raid

Discussion suggestion

Think of a time that you came to meeting with a firm conviction or an issue you wanted to 'resolve' but, when in meeting, for worship or for business, that conviction changed. How did you feel when that change happened? Did you test it, and if so, how? Did your mind stay changed after you left the stillness? Was a way forward clear, and how did you follow it?

Activity suggestion

Working together as a meeting, using plasticine, Lego, or other building materials, build something beautiful together.

As you build, ask questions: How do you decide what to build? Do you follow one person's idea, or plan something together as a group first? What happens when you disagree about the next step? What happens when you agree about the next step, but then, when you take it, it doesn't work as you had hoped? How do you decide when to stop building?

Booking information

Book for Yearly Meeting!

Yearly Meeting is free to attend, but whether attending in person or online, you must book in advance.

- Booking opens **Monday 12 January** at www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

We need about a week to process your booking, so:

- to join special interest meetings book by **Thursday 12 March**
- to join preparation sessions book by **Monday 6 April**
- the final booking deadline: **Friday 24 April**

These dates apply to booking to attend Yearly Meeting in May.

Annual booking for Yearly Meeting

From May 2026 Yearly Meeting sessions will be held up to four times a year (February, May, July and November). You will only need to register once to attend any Yearly Meeting session in 2026. If you register to attend in May, for subsequent sessions (18 July and 21 November), you will be able to book to attend by selecting the appropriate session in the Yearly Meeting Planner (Sched).

Booking for Yearly Meeting on 18 July opens **Saturday 2 May 2026**.

Children and young people

For further details, see page 7. Book at www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

Children's programme at Yearly Meeting (0 to 11-year-olds): booking is open from **Monday 12 January to Tuesday 7 April**, to give volunteers time to prepare.

Young People at Yearly Meeting (11- to 15-year-olds): booking is open from **Monday 12 January to Sunday 1 March**.

Junior Yearly Meeting (15- to 18-year-olds): booking is already open. The deadline for nominations and open place applications is **Monday 12 January**. Full details can be found at www.quaker.org.uk/events/junior-yearly-meeting-2026.

Accompaniment at Yearly Meeting (15- to 17-year-olds): booking is open from **Monday 12 January to Tuesday 7 April**, to give volunteers time to prepare.

How to find out what's on

Yearly Meeting (YM) can be very busy. The best way to stay informed is by using the YM Planner, which lists everything taking place. It will be available online from February.

Where to stay

Accommodation is not provided. If you need accommodation you need to arrange this yourself. Visit the Help section of the Yearly Meeting website for suggestions: www.quaker.org.uk/ym/help.

Financial support

You should not be put off coming to Yearly Meeting because you can't afford associated costs. If you need help, ask your local Quaker meeting or group. If they can't offer sufficient support, ask for help from the Yearly Meeting bursary fund: www.quaker.org.uk/ymbursary.

Access needs

Please let us know your access needs when you book. If you need help with access, consider whether there is anyone else attending who may be able to support you. You should first speak to Friends in your Quaker meeting or other Quaker group to see what help they can provide. If they cannot help, the Pastoral Support Team and staff will work with you to provide support where possible.

For information, email access@quaker.org.uk or call 020 7663 1040.

Volunteering

Help make Yearly Meeting happen by volunteering. All help is greatly appreciated. Yearly Meeting needs doorkeepers, microphone stewards, pastoral support and welcome Friends, community hub helpers, children's session helpers and more. Volunteering isn't just for experienced Friends. Guidance/training will be given for all roles. Please consider volunteering, even if this will be your first time at Yearly Meeting. Visit the 'Get involved' page at www.quaker.org.uk/ym.

Further information

The best place to start is www.quaker.org.uk/ym, where you will find the answer to commonly asked questions. We will update the website as more information becomes available. If you can't find the answer to your question, email the Yearly Meeting Office at ym@quaker.org.uk or call 020 7663 1040.

Or join the conversation on Facebook at www.facebook.com/groups/quakerspace.

Quakers share a way of life, not a set of beliefs. Quaker unity is based on shared understanding and a shared practice of silent worship – a communal stillness.

Quakers seek to experience God directly – internally, in relationships with others, and with the world. Local meetings for worship are open to all who wish to attend.

Quakers try to live with honesty and integrity. This means speaking truth to all, including people in positions of power. The Quaker commitment to peace arises from the conviction that love is at the heart of existence and that all human beings are unique and equal.

This leads Quakers to put faith into action by working locally and globally to change the systems that cause injustice and violent conflict.

Accessible versions of this document are available.

Please contact the publications manager at publications@quaker.org.uk or call 020 7663 1162

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