

## 2018 MEMBERSHIP COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT

Members: Rob Farr, co-clerk, Judy Hubbard, co-clerk, Marcia Reecer, Gray Handley, Joe, Izzo, Janet Dinsmore

While the duties of the Membership Committee remain largely the same —interviewing individuals who apply for membership to Friends Meeting of Washington and presenting recommendations to the Meeting for Business—Committee members continue to be inspired by the moving letters from and discussions we have with applicants. The variety of paths applicants have taken to bring them to us is a continual source of wonder and appreciation.

This past year, the Meeting was enriched by the following new members:

- Nicole Else-Quest
- Chris Wickham
- Leonard Eoussa
- Greg Robb
- Mary Melchior along with Associate Members Preston Bernard Melchior-Fisher, Gregory Montfort Melchior-Fisher and Charles Xavier Melchior-Fisher
- Monique Russell along with Associate Member Luca Romero Russell
- Rashid Darden
- Jesse Finkel and Associate Member Jacob Benjamin Finkel

We are currently looking forward to meeting several new individuals who have requested membership. It has been an unusually rich period. Unfortunately, since we didn't receive answers from 19 over-25 year-old Associate Members whom we contacted to see if they wished to become full members, we had had to remove their names from FMW's membership rolls. We would welcome them back, of course, and otherwise hope they find spiritual homes in new communities.

The Committee revised its application form adding coverage of sojourner status and transfers. Gender categories now include "Other" and the form specifies the need for an accompanying letter while providing guidance on content. We added a checkoff for Inquirers' Class attendance and a line seeking an email address. Applicants can choose whether they wish to add their children as Associate Members or decline. We also changed the title to "Requests for Membership." Debby Churchman was asked to reproduce and use the new version for all future "requesters."

Among appeals from other FMW groups to which we responded was a request to review a task force report on Assessing Racial Inclusion and Justice. We did so and asked Marcia Reecer, a task force member, to forward recommendations regarding readings for FMW members and consideration of an interfaith forum at which Quaker practices would be explained. Member Joe Izzo mentioned plans to serve as a Quaker chaplain at Howard University when he retires.

Another appeal regarded the creation of Baby Welcoming Certificates and special Meetings for Worship following the birth of a child. The Committee supported the idea noting that the certificate would not, however, confer Associate Membership unless the parent was a member and requested it. We await further direction from the Marriage and Family Relations Committee or Ministry and Worship Committee.

The Committee continues to be grateful to Debby Churchman for her insights and work in following up new memberships and membership requests. Attached are questions we explore, among others, during the clearness interview process with new applicants. It is an enriching experience.

Submitted by Rob Farr and Judy Hubbard, co-clerks, Membership Committee

***Suggestions to Committees Interviewing Applicants for Membership—Philadelphia Yearly Meeting of Friends***

1. *Does he believe that God endows every human being with a measure of God's own divine spirit, which if followed, will lead into all Truth?*
  2. *Does she understand that Quakerism is rooted in Christianity?*
  3. *To what extent is he familiar with and sympathetic to the historic testimonies of the Society of Friends, such as non-participation in war, simplicity of living, and human brotherhood?*
  4. *Has she any reservation regarding testimonies or other matters included in the queries?*
  5. *Does he impress you as a person of integrity?*
  6. *To what extent does she feel herself already a part of the Meeting fellowship distinct from formal membership?*
  7. *To what extent do members acquainted with the applicant feel he is in spirit a member?*
  8. *Does she feel that the Meeting for Worship strengthens her spiritual life?*
  9. *Does he understand his responsibility for regular attendance at Meeting for Worship, for supporting the concerns of the Meeting, and for sharing in its work, as well as for supporting it financially? Does he realize his responsibilities for attending Meetings for Business, including the sessions of quarterly and yearly meetings?*
  10. *Is she familiar with and understanding of the method of the Meeting for Business?*
  11. *To what extent is he familiar with the wider family of Friends beyond the local meeting?*
  12. *If she has up to this time been a church member, why does she wish to change? If she previously had no membership in any church, why does she wish to join Friends?*
  13. *What is the attitude of other members of his family toward his joining?*
  14. *Does she realize that she is asking to join a group which does not accept the final authority of any person or creed but which individually and collectively trusts to the continuing revelation of Light and Truth?*
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