



NEW ENGLAND
YEARLY MEETING
OF FRIENDS
QUAKERS

March 30, 2019

Dear Friends,

I hope this finds you well.

My name is Honor Woodrow, and I am writing to you in my role serving as clerk of New England Yearly Meeting's Ministry and Counsel Committee, to share a tool that I hope will be helpful to you and your meeting in preparation for a particular item of business before us at Annual Sessions this August.

As you may or may not know one of the things that is before New England Yearly Meeting this summer is a re-examination of a policy which, in response to significant concerns around a particular portion of the personnel policy of Friends United Meeting (FUM)—a global association of more than 30 yearly meetings, including New England Yearly Meeting—allows meetings in New England to withhold a portion of their contribution to New England Yearly Meeting that would be directed to FUM. New England Yearly Meeting's policy was originally approved in 2009 as a “temporary measure” and in 2014 the Yearly Meeting minuted its commitment to return to consideration of withholding in August of 2019.

As part of the preparation for this upcoming discernment about New England Yearly Meeting's policy on withholding, Ministry and Counsel has accepted the charge of “[s]eeking out a few Friends to have loving and probing conversations across the Yearly Meeting, to gain some insight into the attitudes and concerns of Friends with respect to FUM and the personnel policy, and the continued usefulness—or not—of the Yearly Meeting policy to be reviewed in 2019” (minute 2019-5-03.iii).

As part of this work M&C discerned that we should:

- Collect and make available materials explaining the issues and how the NEYM withholding policy works.
- Invite meetings to participate in listening sessions.

To that end I am sharing [this video presentation](#) (in the form of a Prezi), which I hope offers enough information that Friends feel able to at least understand what is coming before us for discernment. My hope is that the information in this presentation is useful in helping Friends know what has been, and to see clearly what is, so we can better engage in the work of discerning what is next.

If your meeting would like to host a listening session in the month of April for Friends in your region please contact me at **mc-clerk@neym.org** to see when the Friends who have been asked to travel are available.

Given the physical, logistical, financial, and environmental cost of traveling we also want to offer a way for Friends to share via e-mail. If after engaging with this presentation you have something that you believe would be helpful for Ministry and Counsel to consider at our meeting in May related to the withholding policy you can send an email to **mc-input@neym.org**.

*If you have questions about how to access the content or are have technological challenges please let me know by emailing **mc-clerk@neym.org** and I will do my best to answer your question, or connect you with someone who can.*

I hope that we have been faithful to our charge, and while I know that we can't possibly arrange to hear everyone in only a month's time, I trust that with God's help we will hear what needs to be shared, and that in the months to come our hearts and minds will be sufficiently prepared for the work ahead of us.

Thank you to all of the Friends who have participated in the work of helping this presentation come to be, and to all of you who engage with this work with an open heart and open mind. May we all grow in our ability to listen together for how Spirit is leading us in this, and all aspects of our lives.

Be well Friends,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Honor Woodrow", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Honor Woodrow

Framingham (MA) Friends Meeting

Clerk, New England Yearly Meeting Ministry and Counsel