

Eldering Subcommittee of PYM Ministry and Oversight Job Description

Approved April 2018

Purpose

To support PYM in such a way that YM gatherings are well-grounded.

Aims

To plan and facilitate:

1. Spiritual accompaniment at YM gatherings for Friends with demanding YM positions;
2. Support the ministry brought to the gathering by keynote speaker(s)
3. Holding of space at all sessions of worship that are under the care of the PYM Ministry and Oversight Committee;
4. Education and growth opportunities for Friends who may have gifts in eldering; and,
5. Opportunities for sharing and learning about the role of Eldering within the PYM community.

Definitions

Eldering, as we are using the term here, involves two primary aspects:

1. Spiritual accompaniment of Friends in 'public' and demanding roles (such as the Presiding Clerk, Assistant Clerk, Treasurer, Youth Programs Coordinator, Clerks of PYM Committees, keynote speaker etc.) before, during and after PYM gatherings.
2. 'Holding of space,' or praying, for the gathering and helping to ground or center worship in particular. For example, a Friend who was asked to 'hold space' for a particular session would arrive early to settle into worship and stay in worship during the session, holding the group and the gathering in the Light. Weeks and even months prior to the start of the gathering Friends taking on this role would pray for and hold the gathering in their hearts.

The role of Eldering Coordinator involves, but is not limited to,:

- Convening a meeting each day during the gathering to bring those taking on the role of Eldering (at that gathering) together for debriefing and mutual support;
- Be available to support Eldering throughout the gathering, should those who are Eldering require it; and
- Liaise between those taking on the role of Eldering at the gathering and the Eldering Subcommittee, Ministry and Oversight Clerk(s) and the Presiding Clerk.

Tasks

The work of the Eldering Subcommittee includes planning for, and implementing, Eldering roles and relationships at significant PYM gatherings, particularly Annual Session. Where possible, the Subcommittee may consider how to enable Eldering also at Representative Committee.

Important tasks of the Subcommittee:

- Identify Eldering needs for the gathering, including the PYM Officers and Clerks who may benefit from being offered accompaniment.
- Identify appropriately skilled persons who can take on the roles of Eldering.
- Work to offer accompaniment within the capacity (quantity and skill) and “spiritual match” of those willing to serve to those who want support.
- Nominate at least one Eldering Coordinator for each gathering.
- Provide training and support for Eldering, where required, preferably before each gathering.
- Plan and lead (or find leaders for) educational programs to spread understanding of the Eldering process and encourage Friends to participate in “holding” our Meetings for Worship and providing Eldering accompaniment as well as being the person accompanied.
- Identify Friends who have healing ministries (including mental, physical and spiritual) who would be willing to provide support should the need arise at gatherings.
- Work with the Presiding Clerk to create a safe spiritual container at Yearly Meeting and other gatherings. This may include hosting, or supporting, an experiential exercise at the start of the gathering to support in building respectful relationships and spiritual deepening.
- Consider offering other opportunities for contemplation at Annual Session such as singing, holding a Meeting for Healing and extended worship.

Membership and Implementation

Members of the Subcommittee may also participate in Eldering, or as the Eldering coordinator, at PYM Gatherings but it is not a requirement for membership. M&O will primarily seek Friends to serve on this Subcommittee who are either experienced in the practice of Eldering either through providing Eldering or having been accompanied while undertaking ministry.