

Back to the Questions We Started With

At the outset, we posed the question “Yes, but what *is* Philadelphia Yearly Meeting?” And then we said “Oh, and while you’re at it, tell me what PYM does for my monthly meeting and its members.” We hope that this document has successfully addressed both the question and the request. While there are programs and services not mentioned here, a careful review of this document leaves the reader with a reasonably clear photo of the major moving parts of a many-faceted organization.

PYM cares. It cares deeply about its constituent monthly meetings, their members (who are, by virtue of such membership, members of PYM), and the many other Friends communities and groups falling under its broad umbrella.

While PYM’s monthly meetings are the beating heart of our spiritual lives and the soul of our covenant communities, they would be but disconnected islands in the sea without PYM. PYM is both the glue that joins us and the switchboard that connects us. Without PYM, there would be no *Faith and Practice*. Without PYM, there would be no effective cross-fertilization between monthly meetings and no geographically convenient way to experience a wider Quaker fellowship. Without PYM, there would not be the many programs and services that it furnishes to monthly meetings and members. Without PYM, Friends in PYM’s geographic area would have a far diminished footprint — if they had one at all — in the wider Quaker world and in the world of organized religion generally.

PYM is the largest yearly meeting in the United States. Friends throughout the country — indeed, Friends throughout the *world* — look to PYM and its programs as a model for their own organizations. Our ancestors handed us a precious gift: The Religious Society of Friends. If we have a ghost of a chance of perpetuating the Religious Society of Friends for future generations, PYM must not only survive, it must *thrive*.

Some members and monthly meetings have limited participation in PYM or do not avail themselves of many of the programs and benefits that PYM provides. In many cases, these are large, “strong” meetings that do not regularly experience a need for outside support (or do not appreciate the ways that PYM might make them stronger). But many members and monthly meetings *do* actively participate in PYM and avail themselves of the many programs and benefits that PYM provides. For these, involvement in, and engagement with, PYM helps them avoid unconstructive drift, or worse.

For PYM to survive and thrive, and for the Religious Society of Friends to survive and thrive, members and monthly meetings will need to be actively involved in, and participate in the benefits of, PYM and to maintain financial support for its work.