

End of Life Working Group
Annual report – 2024

The End of Life Working Group's book *A Tender Time: Quaker Voices on the End of Life* was published by BYM in June 2024. It is the culmination of years of work revising and greatly expanding the 2018 Langley Hill booklet on death and dying. With guidance and editorial support from EOLWG, Patti Nesbitt (Sandy Spring) and Kristin Zimet (Hopewell Centre) compiled a unique collection of Quaker voices, both historical and contemporary. An open-hearted primer from a Quaker perspective, the book explores many practical, legal, emotional, and spiritual aspects of the end of life. Writing this book has been a collaborative and spirit led process that has touched the hearts of all involved.

The authors reviewed *Faith and Practices* from at least eight yearly meetings and interviewed countless Friends across three continents. Poignant examples of Friends aging and dying well, without fear, give testimonies of multiple ways that Love guides us through to the end. Several reviewers mentioned they wish they had this earlier for their own family. It was called “comprehensive in its breadth and probing in its depth,” and “optimistic and upbeat.” A pastoral care professor at Earlham School of Religion suggested the book was “not just for Quakers: it is spiritually wise, clinically sound, and exceedingly pragmatic.”

Our book has been distributed to all monthly meetings in BYM, all yearly meetings, and all Quaker retirement communities in this country. Grants from the Friends Foundation on Aging have allowed a larger print run to reach this wide audience. Additional copies are available for sale from Pendle Hill, FGC QuakerBooks, and common commercial outlets.

At Annual Sessions 2023, our 3 workshops stimulated First Day programs at Sandy Spring and Charlottesville. Both meetings created their own EOL care groups that have been said to be life-changing for participants. A sampler workshop was offered at FGC Gathering July 2024.

Annual Sessions 2024 will include a book event and a workshop focused on encouraging wide use of the book's resources and inviting additional Friends to pick up this ministry in their own meetings. We are discerning our next way forward – is it time to lay down the WG since the book has completed its major goal, or is there something else we are called to do?

Pendle Hill has scheduled three seminars in the Fall 2024 around the book's topics and a First Monday lecture in January 2025. More activities are requested by various meetings throughout the yearly meeting and beyond.

The working group includes Lisa Allen (Midlothian), Patricia LaNoue (Stony Run), Patti Nesbitt (Sandy Spring), Bob Rhudy (Patapsco), Frances Schutz (Charlottesville), Eileen Stanzione (Patapsco), John Surr (Charlottesville), and Kristin Zimet (Hopewell Centre.) Several of us carry this ministry in our hearts and will continue to be available as way opens.

Patti Nesbitt, clerk
End of Life Working Group

Note: This is written as if it were late July 2024.