

End of Life Working Group
Annual report – 2022

Our working group offered a very well-attended virtual forum in October 2021 titled “How We Die,” presented by geriatrician Terence McCormally of Herndon Meeting. It helped to demythologize the process of dying. Terence provided much material usually not shared with patients and families about the clinical and institutional realities of dying in this country. The program was exceeded all expectations, judging from the number of participants who stayed for the entire 2.5+ hour program. The video recording can be accessed directly at:
https://www.bym-rsf.org/file_download/inline/597a281f-35dc-4df2-ab44-04e831832bfd

The primary focus for the working group this year has been the substantial revision of the Langley Hill 2018 booklet on planning for the end of our lives. The new book addresses pastoral care and practical support that Meetings and individual Friends can offer one another throughout chronic illness, terminal disease, and after death. The book also addresses legal issues for Friends in all 5 jurisdictions within BYM. It is a collaborative process being led by a Friendly professional editor, who is assuring we produce a very solid and readable presentation of Quaker voices on the end of our lives. It is expected to be out by the end of 2022.

At Annual Sessions 2022, we are sponsoring 2 workshops; one with a young adult Friend, and the other with a Friend in her 90s sharing about the value of good communications as her beloved husband died.

There is a pervasive and deep need for Friends to discuss, share and heal from past experiences surrounding death. By facing such issues directly, many have felt freed to be more proactive as they plan for a better ending for themselves and their loved ones. We have begun to define how we can take our work to individual Meetings and support more individuals throughout the YM.

The working group is a solid group of nine dedicated members. We have discerned that being under the care of Ministry and Pastoral Care is a natural fit for our collective leadings and work. As a result, we have officially requested a switch of oversight from our current affiliation with Peace and Social Concerns to Ministry and Pastoral Care.

Respectfully submitted,
Patti Nesbitt, clerk
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