End of Life Working Group

Annual report – 2025

This year, the ministry offered through our book, *A Tender Time: Quaker Voices on the End of Life*, touched many readers and Meetings in far reaching and empowering ways. We recognize the large number of BYM Friends, and the wider Quaker community, who are retired. Pendle Hill reports that 86% percentage of their audience is over 55 years old, and 69% of their on-line users are over 65.

Our book serves the pastoral needs for these older Friends, filling a growing void that expands as more of us grow into older years. Frequent unsolicited emails and notes arrive with grateful comments on how helpful the book has been as readers experience both terminal diagnoses and losses of loved ones. Some have commented on the breath of its usefulness as they navigate their own aging processes. After reading parts of the book, several Friends have reported they were encouraged to open difficult conversations with their families. Others have shared how they have had spiritual openings. Many have reported comfort and peacefulness since recognizing how normal their experiences are.

Meetings all over this country have initiated groups to read, support, and/or study these topics together, using *A Tender Time* as a resource. End of life issues no longer isolate when there is a way to share experiences common to older years. The book is connecting more of us to each other, building community, and bringing peace.

Over 1600 copies of *A Tender Time* have now been sold or distributed. The digital copy book of *A Tender Time* became available in May 2025. This allows for Kindle editions and for Amazon and other bookstores to handle sales, making international distribution easier and cheaper.

Sales have generated a net revenue of over $11,000 as of March 31, 2025. With future digital and on-line sales, we are confident the book will be an ongoing revenue stream.

As our work has percolated through the Quaker world and beyond, members of the working group individually continue to offer pastoral care to aging and declining Friends, mostly within our own families and Meeting communities. We know that the work of supporting end of life journeys will always be needed. At the same time, we ourselves are busy getting older and shifting with our own changing needs.

At Annual Sessions 2024, our 3 overflowing workshops invited open explorations and deep conversations among those in attendance. Pendle Hill hosted three seminars in the Fall 2024 and a First Monday lecture in January 2025. A diverse and international audience of over 200 Friends and families were reached through these programs.

Annual Sessions 2025 will include a workshop focused on encouraging faithfulness at the end of life, using many of the book’s resources and inviting additional Friends to pick up this ministry in their own meetings.

In May, 2025 we gathered to review our year, future mission, and personal commitments.  Some among us suggested our work was completed when the book came out, others commented about how great the need still is.

We recognized the Working Group itself is in an inactive, or dormant, time. This is acceptable for now – we intend to stay inactive and allow more fallow time. We plan to meet again in November to test for further Spirit-led movement within our group. The working group accepted the resignation of Patti Nesbitt as clerk. As yet, no other Friend has been led to clerk going forward.

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.) We all carry this ministry in our hearts and will continue to be available as Way opens.

Patti Nesbitt, former clerk

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July 7, 2025