

# Quaker Decision Making Process

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Quakerism 101 session, 2/25/24

State College Friends Meeting

# Today's Agenda

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- Quaker Decision Process
- “Sense of the Meeting” (Quaker Decision Outcome)
- “Standing Aside”



# Today's Agenda

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- Quaker Decision Process
  - Process
  - Assumptions
  - Requirements
- “Sense of the Meeting” (Quaker Decision Outcome)
- “Standing Aside”

# Quaker Decision Process

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- Listening process
  - Listen to each other; Listen to the “energy” of the group
- Non-adversarial process
  - Not taking sides; Not advocate one’s views
- Discovery process
  - What is right for the group as a whole
- Clerk
  - Facilitates the group’s finding the sense of the meeting.

# Quaker Decision Process: Assumptions

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- Shared community
  - All members embrace the values of the community
- Trust
  - Trust that process will lead to a decision that is good for the community
- Wisdom of the group
  - Wisdom of the group is greater than wisdom of any particular individuals



# Quaker Decision Process: Requirements

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- Openness to others; Being teachable;
- Respect for others and the process; Speak candidly and “release”;
- Willingness to change mind; Separating personal preferences from what is good for the group;
- Honor group energy; Understanding that process takes time and patience;
- Willingness to “stand aside”

# Today's Agenda

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- *Quaker Decision Process*
- “Sense of the Meeting” (Quaker Decision Outcome)
- *“Standing Aside”*

# “Sense of the Meeting”

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- A shared awareness of those present about what is good for the group as a whole.
- Unity about the sense of the meeting, not about the matter at hand.
- One can be in unity with the sense of the meeting and not personally agree with the decision.
- Musical chord as an analogy: Different notes in harmony, not all the same note



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- Quaker Decision Process
- “Sense of the Meeting” (Quaker Decision Outcome)
- “Standing Aside”

# “Standing Aside”

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- When a member does not feel in unity with the sense of the meeting, they may “stand aside”
- Standing aside = accept group’s decision; not undermine it later
- Group decides whether or not to move forward when someone stands aside; Concerns belong to the group, not to the person
- “Standing in the way” is not part of the process. It is the absence of unity that stands in the way.

Thank You!

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Questions?