

Recording of Friends Ministers in Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends

Recording Process Overview

The peculiarly Quaker way of thinking about ministers comes into focus when one compares the Friends practice of “recording” with the more common practice of “ordination.” In many Christian denominations, one must first be ordained in order to become a minister. To be ordained, the potential minister must first meet a certain set of requirements or prerequisites. Usually, for example, there is a certain level of education one must attain.

As Friends, we reject the idea that some outward trait or experience could qualify someone to be a minister. Instead, we believe that anyone may be called to serve God and people in public ministry. Rather than setting human-engineered prerequisites, Quakers have chosen simply to observe those who work as ministers. When it becomes clear that a person is indeed doing public ministry that is congruent with the spirit of Friends, then we make an official record of what God seems to be doing. That person is “recorded” as a minister among Friends. (Adapted from <http://www.westhillsfriends.org/QVWminister.html>)

Recording can come from either the local Meeting or the Yearly Meeting. Recording is permanent for the person unless there is cause to rescind it. It would be rescinded by the body that did the original recording.

Recording Process Checklist

Step	Description	Responsibility
Recording Begins Under the Care of the Local Meeting		
Identifying an Empowered Public Ministry	Recording occurs after a person has been faithful to his/her call to public ministry and the fruit of that faithfulness is clear to others. The discerning conversations exploring recording may be initiated by either the candidate or the candidates' spiritual community. The first formal step would be to complete a Recording Questionnaire and ask the Elders for a Meeting for Clearness.*	Candidate and Local Elders
Meeting for Clearness	Elders and the candidate conduct a <i>Meeting for Clearness</i> to consider the appropriateness of this request and hear the candidate's story.	Local Elders and Candidate
Ministry Packet	Candidate completes a <i>Ministry Packet</i> and a background check and submits it to the Elders. For candidates who are led to serve in pastoral care, counseling, educational, or similar ministries, the candidate must comply with the local church's or the Yearly Meeting's policies for protection of children and avoidance of boundary violations.	Candidate, working with a member of the clearness-support group

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Step	Description	Responsibility
Decision	Elders review the <i>Recording Questionnaire</i> , the outcome of the <i>Meeting for Clearness</i> , the <i>Ministry Packet</i> , and the background check. At this point, the Elders decide whether a) to decline proceeding with recording; b) have further conversations and discernment with the candidate; c) issue recording from the local church; or d) to move forward with the recording by Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting	Local Elders
Recorded by Local Meeting	If the candidate and the elders discern that the recording is most appropriate to be issued by the local meeting, the recommendation is brought to Monthly Meeting for approval and the process is completed. Send notification of this recording to the Clerk of the SCYMF Committee for Nurture of Ministry as they will be recognized at the next SCYMF annual session.	Monthly Meeting
Recording by Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends		
Recording by Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting	<p>If it is discerned that there is a desire and usefulness to be recorded by the Yearly Meeting, then the next steps of the process continue with the Sierra-Cascades' Committee for the Nurture of Ministry.</p> <p>The materials from the local Meeting are forwarded on to the Clerk of the Committee for the Nurture of Ministry with a summary statement from the local elders about their discernments during their process.</p>	Committee for the Nurture of Ministry and Candidate
Meeting with Nurture of Ministry Committee	The Committee for the Nurture of Ministry, the Candidate and an accompanier from the local clearness committee meet together to have clarity around the Spirit's Leading. Special attention will be given to the candidate's familiarity and agreement with Quaker process and testimonies and familiarity with Quaker history. In the nature of a Meeting for Clearness, the Committee for the Nurture of Ministry will give attention to resources which can strengthen the candidate's ministry.	Nurture of Ministry Committee, Candidate, and Accompanying local elder
Feedback Period	<p>The committee then initiates a 30-day period in which folks can give feedback to the committee. These may include positive affirmations and testimonials, cautions and concerns, or reports of problematic behavior.</p> <p>The author of the feedback must identify themselves and give contact information to the committee in case further conversation were needed. However, upon request, any identifying details in the content of the messages and the identity of the reporter will be held in strict confidentiality by the committee to be shared with none other than with emergency response professionals in the case of imminent danger or a reportable offense.</p>	Open to all. A notice will be placed in the bulletin with a link to a secure website where feedback can be sent to the Committee for the Nurture of Ministry.

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Step	Description	Responsibility
Sierra-Cascades Decision	At the end of the 30-day period, if there is clearness and joy, the decision to Record the candidate is minuted and sent forward to the next Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting gathering.	Committee for the Nurture of Ministry
Recording by Sierra-Cascades	Nurture of Ministries Committee brings the recording recommendation to the Yearly Meeting. If approved by the Yearly Meeting, then the candidate's recording is held in the minutes.	Committee for the Nurture of Ministry and SCYMF annual sessions
Celebration	The Yearly Meeting hosts a celebration to announce and recognize the recordings of all those Recorded by a local meeting and those Recorded by the Yearly Meeting in the previous year.	Annual Sessions

* For those who are not in a church that is part of SCYMF or are not attending a Friends Church, but would like to be recorded by SCYMF, you will need to gather an Anchor Committee to serve in the roles given to the Elders, Meeting for Clearness, and Monthly Meeting in this document. The Anchor Committee will be responsible to walk with the candidate throughout this process.

Recording Questionnaire

Name _____

Address _____

Phone _____

Email _____

Church _____

Are you a member? _____

Brief description of your public ministry _____

How have you seen God work through your ministry? _____

Questions for which you would like discernment as you consider recording _____

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Meeting for Clearness

The local elders along with the candidate will conduct a meeting for clearness in the manner of Friends. The structure of a meeting for clearness is as follows.

- 1.) Gather a group, ideally 5-8 spiritually mature people, to consider the candidate's recording.
- 2.) In order to maintain some objectivity, the group should include some people who are not particularly invested in the issue or in close relationship with the candidate.
- 3.) Find a place to meet that is free from distractions. Allow plenty of time and space to listen to each other and to the present teacher.
- 4.) Someone is selected to facilitate who will ask clarifying questions, raise issues and concerns, and help to communicate the sense of the meeting.
- 5.) Ask questions gently and tactfully. Affirm each other and listen attentively.
- 6.) It is essential that complete confidentiality be maintained, so that all may share freely.
- 7.) The goal is discernment: corporate clarity about options and direction forward.
- 8.) If clearness is not reached, it may be best to set aside the issue and revisit it at a later time.
- 9.) If clearness is reached, present the process and the outcome of the discernment to the elders.

Ministry Packet

Create a ministry packet that details the following sections:

Name and contact information

Spiritual Journey

Shape of the Call and how the Ministry has unfolded

Education (formal and personal)

with special attention to familiarity and agreement with Quaker process and testimonies and a familiarity with Quaker history

Written Testimonies from persons who have benefited by this ministry

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Process for Recording Transfers:

1) SCYMF intends to receive the

A) existing Recordings/licenses of current NWYM/WARSF ministers; and,

B) ministers who are a part of NWYM/WARSF congregations whose congregations are joining SCYMF but whose recording is held in other Yearly Meetings; and,

C) to reinstate ministers who released their recording because of inconsistency with NWYM Faith and Practice due to a conviction affirming the full participation of LGBTQ+ members in the life of the Meeting.

2) Congregations joining SCYMF will originate the transfer by writing a minute of transfer from either the Elders or the Monthly Meeting.

A) Independent congregations leaving NWYM whose Ministers want their Recording held within SCYMF can originate the transfer by writing a minute of transfer from either the Elders or the Monthly Meeting.

B) Ministers who are active in ministry in NWYM but whose congregations are not transferring to SCYMF can select an anchor committee/clearness committee (which may include leadership of the NWYM congregation) to initiate the minute of transfer.

3) SCYMF will receive these transfer requests and issue Recording certificates/licenses.

4) SCYMF Annual Sessions will host a celebration recognizing the recording of these ministers.

Request for a Minister's License

Upon receiving a request from a local church that is part of SCYMF, the Committee for the Nurture of Ministry will issue a Minister's License. The church should submit basic contact information, the nature of ministry, and their affirmation of the minister/ministry as part of the request. Licensed ministers must be a member of SCYMF and comply with the Yearly Meeting's policies for protection of children and avoidance of boundary violations.

In general, a Minister's License is granted for short term needs or to someone who requires a license before completing the Recording process. All licenses will expire on December 31 or a date determined by the Committee for the Nurture of Ministry. Licenses (including those granted mid-year) will require a repeat request from the local church if the license is to be extended for an additional year.

Committee for the Nurture of Ministry

The Committee for Nurture of Ministries is tasked with the development, recognition and nurture of public ministries for Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends. While the committee fulfills the traditional role of maintaining the processes of recording and licensing of public ministries, it also is the entity that gives particular care and creative attention to the development and nurture of persons called into public ministry. All inquiries should be sent to the clerk at Clerk.NurtureOfMinistry@scymf.org.