



# Quaker Connect Pilot Project:

## *A Sample Two Year Content Plan:*

Each module is designed to last for three months, with some flexibility built in. Monthly enrichment activities will be delivered from Quaker Connect to each participating congregation, to be followed with homework over the month in the local context.

### **I. First Module, Context: Where are we? (A kind of appreciative inquiry, will depend on what they have already done)**

- A. First sprint: (snapshot) Map the neighborhood in several variables
- B. Second sprint: (trends) What has changed and is changing around us?
- C. Third sprint: How do people in our community communicate (terms defined multiple ways)?
- D. Evaluation: What did we learn? What should we stop? What should we keep doing?

### **II. Second Module, Mission: Who are we? Who do we want to be?**

- A. Fourth sprint: Gifts and strengths inventory
- B. Fifth sprint: Who is missing (given our context)
- C. Sixth sprint: Are we ready for change (emotional and cultural)?
- D. Evaluation: What did we learn? What should we stop? What should we keep doing?

### **III. Third Module, Practices: What are we here for?**

- A. Choose a sign of renewal (from a prepared list) to work on (at monthly business meeting, with the whole congregation, in our normal course of work)
- B. Choose a Quaker/Christian/FWCC practice to try to address our chosen sign of renewal
- C. Do the experiment over the three-month period
- D. Evaluation: What worked? What didn't? What should we stop? Or keep doing?
- E. This will be followed by a sabbath month and an apprentices' retreat for reflection (past), refining (future), and recommitting (to each other, to Quaker Connect, to Quakerism)

### **IV. Fourth Module: Second practical experiment**

- A. Same method as third module, choosing a second sign of renewal to work on

### **V. Fifth Module: Second focus on who we are/who do we want to be**

- A. Seventh sprint: What does it mean to us to be Quaker? What does our Yearly Meeting Book of Faith & Practice say about who we are and who we should be?
- B. Eighth sprint: Organizational Debt: What do we not even notice anymore that is holding us back?
- C. Ninth sprint: What is important to us to be known for? Practice articulating our mission and values
- D. Evaluation: What did we learn? What should we stop? What should we keep doing?

### **VI. Sixth Module: Going forward**

- A. Tenth sprint: How can we integrate "change" into "normal"?
- B. Eleventh sprint: How will we take on new apprentices?
- C. Twelfth sprint: How will we be a blessing to others?
- D. Evaluation: What did we learn? What should we stop? What should we keep doing?

## *A laboratory for experimentation*

### **Campaign Goal: \$250,000**

*Quaker Connect will equip congregations to be more clearly who they already are: profoundly Quaker, deeply rooted, visible and relational in their local community.*

Designed through a four month consultation with Dr. C. Wess Daniels and 22 Quaker leaders across the branches of Friends to discern and articulate the best practices for our time.

*"As Friends, we desperately need what FWCC seeks to do. As a Quaker educator, working with students and congregations on these very issues, I believe its very powerful and impactful model of change respects the participatory nature of Quakerism, while allowing for change and renewal needed within local congregations," C. Wess Daniels, Ph.D, William R. Rogers, Director of Friends Center and Quaker Studies, Guilford College*

The purpose of *Quaker Connect* is to reinvigorate the Quaker movement. The Friends community should not only promote the ongoing well-being of Friends within their local meetings and churches, but also engage in issues important to the communities where the Holy Spirit has placed them. Quakerism's broader message—that the direct experience of the Divine, and the healing and transformation of individuals and communities that follows—is available to all peoples and can result in humanity's ability to live more fully, now, in the Kingdom of God.

To build up thriving congregations, Friends need what FWCC is good at—theological, language, and cultural interpretation skills; experimentation, inclusivity, and reconciliation—which we have developed over many years. The Quaker Connect pilot project can help participating congregations to serve more people of color and the growing number of young people who have not yet chosen to join churches. Campaign funds will enable FWCC to create the online training tools and engage Spirit-led coaches and apprentices who will in turn form networks of mutual support across worship traditions, geography, age, and culture in order to innovate in their own congregations and with others in their community.

These strong leaders and learners can benefit from both training and encouragement in experimenting with historically Quaker and Christian practices to help their local meetings and churches connect as members within the living body of Christ and respond to the deep cultural changes that are currently taking place.

*"We labor in vain unless we discover how to ... transport the kindling power" of our work to Friends in their local meetings "where the actual vitality and power and future potency of Quakerism is being settled and determined." Rufus Jones, 1944, "What Will Get Us Ready"*

## Benefits Churches, Meetings, Individuals, and the Community

Participating congregations can benefit from online training tools, practical experiences, and support from an international network of coaches. The local apprentices in the Quaker tradition can in turn form networks of mutual support through peer support and intervisitation with other Quaker congregations in their own yearly meeting and in other yearly meetings to help them flourish.

The apprentices, one to three per congregation, will lead their local group in monthly sprint retrospectives and a quarterly post-mortem evaluation for each module as in-person conversations before moving on to the next step. The Program Manager will facilitate these discussions with the apprentices as a cohort, using the online tools to facilitate them over long distances. The three questions we want congregations to answer at the end of each module are: What have we learned? What should we stop doing? What should we keep doing?

The initial public announcement will be followed by a multimedia campaign and then by personal outreach calls and texts. This three year pilot project is intended to scale up after the initial period, if funding and participation

warrant. This large-scale approach to local experimentation could create broad-based, sustainable, transformative change within the Religious Society of Friends and the wider world that we work every day to enrich.



FWCC online training platform, January 2021

Ministry training, March 2019



“I am eager for FUM congregations to participate in the process of renewal and growth envisioned by the Section of the Americas’ proposed campaign, because it complements our current ministry priorities to cultivate flourishing congregations. FWCC’s convergent model for Quaker renewal by selecting diverse cohorts, equipping apprentices, and providing a systematic process for congregational renewal is consistent with FUM’s ethos of a dynamic fellowship” *Kelly Kellum, General Secretary, Friends United Meeting*

*Quaker Connect* can build a flourishing network of thriving Quaker congregations with a network of strong leaders across the branches of Friends in the Americas. Participating congregations will be able to:

- confidently communicate their values and mission
- use modern communication tools and ancient spiritual practices
- be ethnically, economically, and socially reflective of their local communities
- celebrate their Quaker distinctives

Beyond the two years of the program, the congregations can:

- grow in faithfulness, numbers, and influence
- be visible in their communities and realistically aware of and engaged in and drawing from their communities
- be known for innovative experiments to benefit the world

*Quaker Connect* can recruit Quaker congregations:

- urban and rural
- across the theological spectrum
- willing to change and become more active in their local communities
- African and Latin American Quaker immigrants in the US as well as those of majority culture Friends in each country

*Quaker Connect* will include

- safe-to-fail experiments
- appropriate technology systems
- ongoing evaluation
- extensive communications

<i>Quaker Connect Pilot Project</i>	2024	2025	2026	TOTAL
Program Coordinator & other FWCC staff	\$10,000	\$87,000	\$85,000	\$182,000
Graphic design, videography, interpreters, coaches	\$11,100	\$17,700	\$16,700	\$45,500
Meeting expenses, program materials	\$0	\$6,000	\$3,000	\$9,000
Rent, office supplies, insurance	\$3,200	\$5,450	\$4,850	\$13,500
<b>Total Expense</b>	<b>\$24,300</b>	<b>\$116,150</b>	<b>\$109,550</b>	<b>\$250,000</b>