



Yearly Meetinghouse, McNabb, Illinois

Illinois Yearly Meeting *of the Religious Society of Friends*

Consisting of 21 Quaker Meetings and Worship Groups
in Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Missouri, and Wisconsin

To Friends Everywhere,

This year marks the 150th anniversary of Illinois Yearly Meeting. We convened for this historic meeting from June 18-22, 2025, on our rural campus in customary Midwestern heat. Our organizing theme was Honoring the Past, Living the Present, Envisioning the Future. In honoring the past, we examined our history. How do we learn from the past? To facilitate our examination, we used a book chronicling our history that was written by a member. We learned that a lot of the struggles our meeting faced in the past parallel the struggles we face as a meeting today. The joys and the consequences of where we stood then both nourish us and call us to connect with greater integrity our reflections to our actions.

The experience of different generations in Illinois Yearly Meeting demonstrate remarkable similarity. In hearing from generations past and from those who have grown up in the yearly meeting, we note common threads of belonging and safety, nourishment and refuge.

In living the present, we felt repeatedly a desire to be more public as Quakers. Quakerism was born in turmoil and offers practices that meet the moment. What are the best ways that we can be a home and refuge for seekers in tumultuous times? While Quakers across the country have noted declining numbers, our annual sessions had a bump in attendance. Some of our monthly meetings are also welcoming newcomers.

In envisioning the future, we found many opportunities to cross-pollinate practices among meetings. We see a future in which Friends collaborate with more groups, overcoming our differences. We hope to move toward a future informed by a better understanding of our past.

We rejoiced in our celebration of our 150th anniversary, complete with cake and melted ice cream. We look forward to more milestones for Illinois Yearly Meeting in the years and work ahead.

We close with gratitude to those who went before us and encouragement to those who read this.

Illinois Yearly Meeting, Sixth Month 22, 2025