

The Shoemaker Fund

The Shared Grant of 2023-2025



A Discussion of Grant Awarded to Byberry Meeting, Upper Dublin Meeting and Abington Quarterly Meeting



Worrisome Trends to Address :

- Recent data from Friends World Committee for Consultation has revealed that between 2010 and 2020 there were 25% fewer Friends Meetings in the United States and 13% decline in membership in the Religious Society of Friends.
 - Data from Philadelphia Yearly Meeting and other Yearly Meetings across the United States show similar trends.
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For the past 20 years, The Thomas and Mary Shoemaker Fund has been experimenting with and seeding efforts to reverse this trend.

By investing millions of dollars in creative and innovative programs and projects to revitalize the Religious Society of Friends, the Shoemaker Trustees have been trying to address this problem and turn around the downward trajectory.

There has been some success, but clearly not enough as the downward spiral continues.



WHAT CAN WE DO???

In the view of the Shoemaker Fund trustees, *Monthly Meetings are the place from which Spiritual Authority, witness, and community engagement spring.*

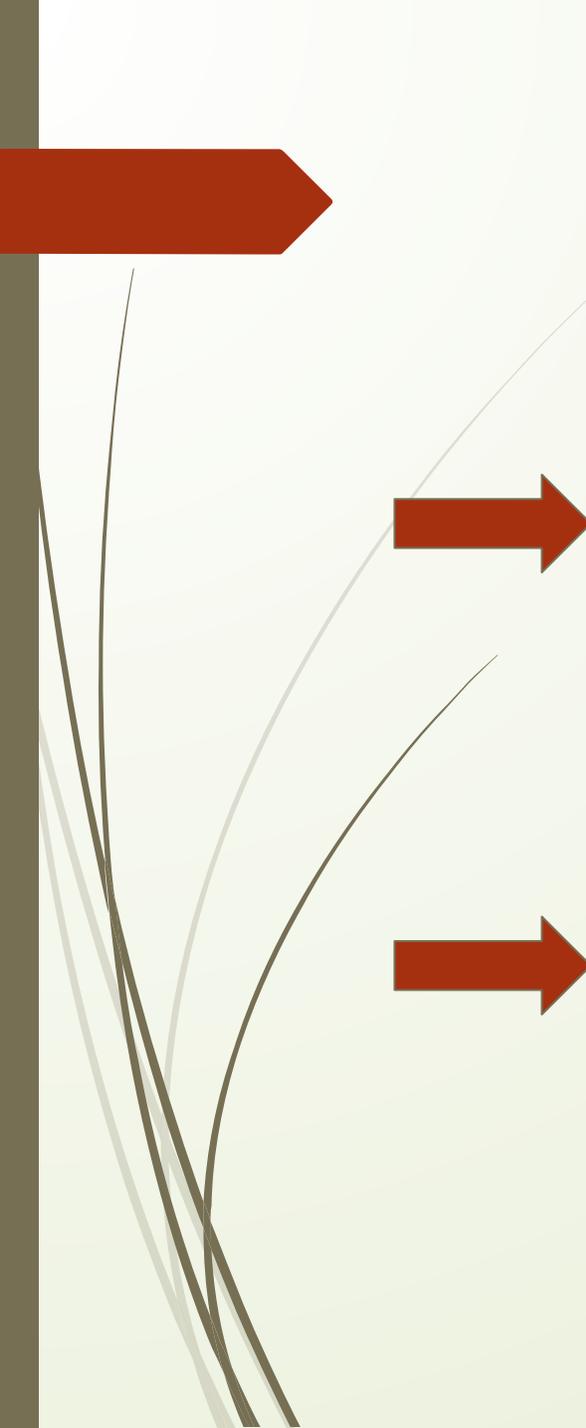
Monthly Meetings are our base. But in almost all yearly meetings in the United States, we have atrophied at that base.

Thus, the Shoemaker Fund has begun to invest in building up Monthly Meetings.



A New Model To Consider: *The Byberry Friends Model*





It is in this context that Byberry Friends Meeting had the good fortune in 2020 of securing a 2-year grant from the Shoemaker fund to create a model to help guide and steer Byberry Friends' efforts to reinvigorate and revitalize their meeting.

That model included hiring a "Community Engagement Coordinator", whose role is to bring people who might be considered "Seekers" into the Meeting.



- The coordinator knows the local community, communicates well with others, understands outreach and supports efforts to grow.
- It is the collective responsibility of the Meetings' members to create a warm and welcoming environment so that those new seekers want to come back.

What were the Results?

Based on the success of this pilot project, The Shoemaker Fund invited Byberry Friends Meeting to submit a second proposal, to not only solidify gains made at Byberry Meeting, but also to develop a scalable growth model for Upper Dublin, and to involve Abington Quarter in efforts to help small and struggling meetings grow.

That Proposal was funded in full over a three year period (2023-2025).

The Funding Breakdown:

\$150,000 to Byberry Friends Meeting to continue activities of revitalization.

Including;

- Providing weekly hospitality
- Strengthening community integration and engagement
- Creating strong communication vehicles, digital tools, website, social media, marketing, etc.
- Launching efforts to utilize Byberry Meeting's history to publicize our historic preservation activities and creating programs to help meet congregation growth goals.

The Funding Breakdown Con't

Upper Dublin Friends Meeting

- \$30,000 to Upper Dublin Friends Meeting to create a strategic plan which enables them to attract new members and attenders, expand recognition in the surrounding community, and develop strong in-reach and outreach programs including religious education.
- First meeting to be held in the evening of February 5, 2024 at Upper Dublin

The Funding Breakdown Con't

Abington Quarterly Meeting

- \$20,000 to Abington Quarterly Meeting to help small and struggling meetings grow.
- Contribute to costs of the Abington Quarter Communications Coordinator.
- Thanks to an analysis by Abington Quarter it was revealed a combination of the Abington Quarter Fund and discretionary cash available amounts to a potential \$340,000 to invest in the growth of small and struggling monthly meetings.
- Use of these funds would require the Quarter to agree to restructure how their funds are held and what they can be used for.

Q & A...

