

New York Quarterly Meeting Cemetery Handbook:

USE OF THE NYQM CEMETERY IN BROOKLYN'S PROSPECT PARK and INFORMATION ON PREPARATION FOR DEATH

revised in June 2025

“...Nothing has carried me up into the life of God, or done more to open out the infinite meaning of love, than the fact that love can span this break of separation, can pass beyond the visible and hold right on across the chasm.”

Rufus Jones

“And this is the Comfort of the Good,
That the Grave cannot hold them,
And that they live as soon as they die.
For Death is no more
Than a turning of us over from time to eternity.
Death, then, being the way and condition of life,
We cannot love to live,
If we cannot bear to die.
They that love beyond the World cannot be separated by it.
Death cannot kill what never dies.
Nor can Spirits ever be divided
That love and live in the same Divine Principle,
The Root and Record of their Friendship.
If Absence be not Death, neither is theirs.”

William Penn, Some Fruits of Solitude, 1693

Map of NYQM Cemetery in Brooklyn's Prospect Park

Google Map link - <https://maps.app.goo.gl/jTyj3an31PnhHiVy6>



List of Important Contact Information

- New York Quarterly Meeting
(212)777-8866, office@nycquakers.org
- New York Quarterly Meeting Cemetery Committee
cemetery@nycquakers.org - (929)352-5482
- Greenwich Village Funeral Home* -
<https://greenwichvillagefuneralhome.com> - (212)674-8055
- Greenwood Heights Funeral and Cremation* -
<https://www.nycgreenfunerals.com/> - (718)768-1212
- Fitting Tribute Funeral Services*
<https://www.fittingtributefunerals.com/> - (718)338-8080
- Supreme Memorials
<https://www.Supremememorials.com> - (718) 788-6697

Long Island Sand Blast (for memorial stone) 516-795-7447

*offers green burial

Overview: Why this handbook and who prepared it

This handbook has been prepared by the Cemetery Committee of the New York Quarterly Meeting, to help Friends have access to our beautiful cemetery, and to organize their thoughts and plan for the many decisions that must be made regarding end-of-life issues. In this booklet you will find not only information regarding the cemetery, but also many other topics that require attention.

Friends may also request services from New York Yearly Meeting's ARCH (Aging Resources Consultation and Help) regarding supportive services for older adults. <https://nyym.org/content/arch>

Table of Contents (click a chapter to jump to that page)

Map of NYQM Cemetery in Brooklyn's Prospect Park.....	2
List of Important Contact Information.....	3
Overview: Why this handbook and who prepared it.....	3
PART A: ABOUT THE CEMETERY.....	6
History of the NYQM Cemetery.....	6
Access to the cemetery.....	7

NYQM Cemetery Committee.....	7
PART B: IF DEATH IS IMMINENT OR HAS OCCURRED:.....	7
Who is Eligible for Burial?.....	7
In Case of Death.....	7
Health Department Paperwork.....	8
Funeral Directors.....	8
Selection of Sites.....	9
Documents and Payments Required for Burial - visit this cost planning worksheet.	9
Cemetery Contributions.....	9
Decisions regarding burial or other options.....	9
Ecological considerations.....	9
Headstones.....	10
Memorial Stone.....	10
Pet Burial.....	10
Memorial Meeting.....	10
Financial Matters.....	10
PART C. PRE-PLANNING OF END-OF-LIFE ISSUES.....	11
Pre-planning of end-of-life issues is strongly advised for all age groups.....	11
Documents to be prepared:.....	11
1) Will.....	11
2) If there are children, naming a guardian and a trustee of assets.....	11
3) Power of Attorney.....	12
4) Health Care Proxy.....	12
5) Living Will.....	13
6) DNR (do not resuscitate).....	13
7) Organization of documents.....	13
8) Revocable Living Trust?.....	13
9) Gifting.....	14
PART D: SPIRITUAL, PERSONAL, AND FAMILY ISSUES.....	14
Health care decisions, control of pain, and hospice.....	14
Dealing with Family Members.....	14
Special situations:.....	15
Children.....	15
Sudden or violent death.....	15
Speaking with families.....	15
After a death:.....	16
Disposing of personal effects.....	16
Asking for, receiving and giving help.....	16
Research Inquiries.....	16



PART A: ABOUT THE CEMETERY

History of the NYQM Cemetery

Situated on one of the highest points in Brooklyn, the Quaker Burial Ground began in 1849 (before Prospect Park was created) when nine acres of undeveloped farmland were purchased from four non-Quaker landowners. The cemetery is located on what was the border between the city of Brooklyn and the town of Flatbush. In the next several years, additional land was purchased, resulting in roughly 12 acres, although the original size may have been larger.



Access to the cemetery

Access to Friends Cemetery can be arranged by contacting the Quarterly Meeting Office at (212)777-8866 or office@nycquakers.org.

Or by calling the NYQM Cemetery Committee telephone (646)580-9147 or emailing cemetery@nycquakers.org.

NYQM Cemetery Committee

Members of the NYQM Cemetery Committee can be of assistance with many of the routine tasks with which a family may be presented. These include planning a visit to the cemetery, choosing a burial plot, helping to decide details of burial, choosing clothing, helping to contact a funeral director or the Quarterly Meeting, or just providing companionship at a difficult time.

NYQM Cemetery Committee members as of June 2025:

1. Bryan Oettel, Clerk, (Morningside)
2. John Major, (Brooklyn)
3. Jessica Fleischer-Black, (Brooklyn)
4. Suzanne Stout, (15th Street)
5. Susan Hannigan, (Morningside)
6. Eric Jenkins-Sahlin, (Brooklyn)
7. Co-oped member, Mary Grimes (15th Street)

PART B: IF DEATH IS IMMINENT OR HAS OCCURRED:

Who is Eligible for Burial?

Members and former members of New York Quarterly Meeting (NYQM) - including 15th Street, Brooklyn, Manhattan, Morningside, and Staten Island - their spouses, life partners, children and their spouses, and grandchildren are eligible for burial or the scattering of ashes. On rare occasions, others may be buried with Cemetery Committee approval. Pets are eligible too.

Health Department Paperwork

The funeral director provides the burial certificate required by the Department of Health when the body is taken to the cemetery for a full body burial. If there is a cremation, they will provide a cremation certificate. These documents are collected by the cemetery staff and forwarded to the Quarterly Meeting Office where they are kept with the Meeting records. The funeral director can also provide the family with extra copies of the death certificate, usually for a fee of about \$15.00 each. To settle the estate, a copy will be required for each bank and brokerage account, safe deposit box, social security, pension, and others. Copies will be provided

quickly at the time of death but later requests can take weeks to months. ***We suggest you order 15 copies.***

Funeral Directors

The funeral director is chosen by the family or other responsible individual acting as the family's agent. Funeral directors are subject to both federal and state law. They must allow you to pick and choose the services you wish, and they must accept caskets or urns purchased elsewhere. In New York, only a funeral director can transport a body and prepare the paperwork. For more information, visit the following sites:

Good At Goodbyes - <https://goodatgoodbyes.com/>

New York State Funeral Directors Association (NYSFDA) - <https://nysfda.org/consumer-resources>

Friends are encouraged to make a decision about which funeral home they wish to use well in advance of the time of death. The funeral home staff will prepare the body and hold it until arrangements for burial or cremation are made. Their fees will depend on the type of service provided and are paid by the family. Friends may select any funeral director. Funeral directors who are familiar with our tradition of simplicity, and who have been used by Friends are:

- Greenwich Village Funeral Home
- Greenwood Heights Funeral and Cremation
- Fitting Tribute Funeral Services
- Riverside Memorial Chapel

Their contact information is listed at the beginning of this booklet. Friends are free to use any funeral director they choose but may encounter unfamiliarity with and resistance to Friends' practices.

Selection of Sites

Friends are encouraged to make arrangements to visit the cemetery and select a gravesite far in advance of illness or death. Messages can be left on the NYQM Office or Cemetery Committee telephone line (see above).

The mourning period immediately after a death can be a very difficult time to make decisions. Prior reservation of a gravesite greatly simplifies all burials, especially when the weather is inclement. If a family has chosen cremation, burial of ashes may be done at any time.

****Documents and Payments Required for Burial**
- visit [this cost planning worksheet](#).**

Cemetery Contributions

The cemetery is a resource which requires continuing care and concern. In order to protect it for ourselves and future generations, Friends who use the cemetery may wish to contribute to the Quarterly Meeting and specify that the contribution should be used for the cemetery.

Decisions regarding burial or other options

Friends take no position for or against burial vs. cremation. After cremation, remains can be buried or scattered. When remains are scattered, the name of a member can be added to the common memorial stone in Friends Cemetery even if the remains are scattered elsewhere.

Friends take no position on organ donations - please discuss your wishes ahead of time with your family.

Ecological considerations

Friends support conservation of the earth's resources. The meeting maintains our cemetery as a place that supports native plants and wildlife without the use of fertilizers and chemicals. The use of embalming fluid contributes to ground pollution both through run-off from the mortuary, and also at the cemetery. Embalming also creates an added expense and is required only if the body is to be transported to another state. Caskets and urns sometimes contain glues and plastics. A biodegradable casket or urn reduces the release of synthetic pollutants. Cremation uses less space and materials for burial but requires fossil fuel. Many modern cremation facilities have installed air-scrubbing units to reduce airborne pollutants. Whatever the choice of burial, Friends have an opportunity to affirm their support of the earth and its creatures. Funeral homes supporting green burial are indicated at the beginning of this document. Additional information is available at www.greenburialcouncil.org

The cemetery does not permit the use of metal caskets.

Headstones

In recent years there has been a series of consolidations of various monument companies. We recommend Supreme Memorials in Brooklyn, an independent company. If you wish to work with another company, they should be advised that gravestones selected for use in the Friends Cemetery should adhere to our tradition of simplicity. Existing stones are a good guide. Please consult with a member of the Cemetery Committee for guidance if the marker selected is different in size or design from existing stones. <https://www.supremememorials.com/>

In keeping with testimony regarding simplicity, please keep in mind that headstones should be understated and contain only name, birth and death dates, with one line of text if desired.

Memorial Stone

The cemetery has a memorial stone available for the inscription of names and dates of birth and death for Friends who wish to have their ashes scattered but whose families wish to have a physical focus for remembrance.

Pet Burial

The burial of a pet weighing less than 25 pounds or the scattering of ashes of a pet belonging to a member is permitted in an area designated by the cemetery committee. Arrangements for digging the grave are the responsibility of the owner. The owner will be asked to make a \$75 contribution to New York Quarterly Meeting.

Memorial Meeting

Friends usually have a memorial Meeting when a member dies. This Meeting is often several weeks after the death. Memorial Meetings should be scheduled when family and F(f)riends can attend, but postponing this event for months can create a void in the life of the immediate family. If it is expected that people who are unfamiliar with Friends practice will attend, you may wish to provide them with a short guide to what they can expect at a Friends worship service. A member of the Cemetery Committee or your Meeting's Ministry and Counsel can assist you with the planning of the Memorial Meeting.

Financial Matters

End of life costs can be considerable, even when factoring in that a site in the Quaker Cemetery is considerably less expensive than what is charged by other cemeteries within New York City.

Other costs include payment to a funeral director, a crematory (often included in the funeral director's payment), grave-digger's fee, purchase of death certificates (we recommend that you buy at least 15), flowers, coffee hour after a memorial Meeting and a headstone. Costs can be reduced by donating the body to a hospital or school, or by scattering ashes.

Families are also often surprised by after-death costs such as unpaid credit card bills, taxes, and hospital bills. It may also be necessary to arrange for payments such as mortgages or rentals, or expenses incident on maintaining an empty residence. Often there are court costs although good pre-planning should minimize these.

PART C. PRE-PLANNING OF END-OF-LIFE ISSUES

Pre-planning of end-of-life issues is strongly advised for all age groups

As issues may arise in the event of sudden, catastrophic accidents or illnesses, there are financial, legal, and family advantages to pre-planning. Death finds most of us inexperienced and many of us unprepared. Having one's affairs in order enables us to spend more time with loved ones at the end of life and is a thoughtful and much appreciated gift to them. Many funeral homes will pre-plan your end-of-life needs and accept advance payment.

Documents to be prepared:

1) Will

A will is a document in which you direct who will inherit your property and who will serve as legal guardian for your dependent children. If you do not have a will, your assets will be disposed of and your children's care will be assigned according to State law. Friends are urged to execute a will that can be simple or complex depending on your circumstances.

A properly executed will can involve a variety of strategies, including trusts, to streamline the transfer of your assets to your heirs and beneficiaries. Coupled with financial planning during life, taxes can be minimized and it is often possible to protect savings against costs of end-of-life care. A will is especially important if you own real estate. This is an area where good legal advice can save a great deal in the long run.

Many parents worry about being "fair" to their children. There is no formula for fairness. Children may need different treatment for various reasons: their own personal wealth, their involvement in caretaking, the presence of unpaid loans to or by the deceased, or other reasons. If you do not intend to distribute your assets equally to your children, it can be helpful to explain your reasoning, being sensitive and mindful of their future relationship.

Many non-profit organizations have planned giving programs. After signing over title to assets, usually securities, the organization makes regular payments to the donor for a specified period of time, often the life of the donor. The donor benefits by being able to claim a charitable deduction and avoiding capital gains taxes on the assets. Because such arrangements involve some complexities, the input of an independent financial advisor is recommended. Quaker organizations with planned giving programs include American Friends Service Committee, Friends General Conference, Friends United Meeting, and—various Friends schools

2) If there are children, naming a guardian and a trustee of assets

Every family with minor children should name a guardian, who will care for the children if both parents are dead or unable to care for them, and an individual to be responsible for money and property that is to be used for the children's welfare. These can be the same person(s) but do not have to be. These individuals should be named in your will and are an important reason for all adults with dependents to make a will even if they are young and in good health. If you do not name these individuals, the State of New York will make the decision for you.

3) Power of Attorney

A power of attorney is a document that authorizes another person to manage your finances when you are no longer able to do so. Having a valid power of attorney can add greatly to your comfort while you are still alive, but too ill to manage your own affairs, by facilitating expenditures for your comfort and well-being. This is another area where the advice of an attorney is advisable. A power of attorney can be broad or limited, temporary or permanent, according to your needs but should be no broader than your circumstances and needs dictate.

4) Health Care Proxy

A health care proxy is a document that allows you to name the person (your proxy) who will make decisions about your health care if you are unable to make your own decisions. For care in New York, a health care proxy is advisable as long as you have someone whom you trust to make decisions for you. Your proxy can evaluate your health situation whatever the problem,

can question your physician, and can adapt your care according to your previously stated wishes. Your proxy can both consent to and refuse care on your behalf.

In New York State, creating a health care proxy document does not require the assistance of a lawyer and does not have to be notarized, although you must sign it in the presence of two witnesses. Hospitals and ARCH have the forms available, and the form can be downloaded at <https://www.health.ny.gov/publications/1430.pdf>. On the New York State form you should specify that your proxy knows your wishes concerning artificial feeding and hydration, otherwise your proxy will not be permitted to make decisions about intravenous or tube feedings.

Give careful thought to your choice of the person you wish to carry out the duties of a proxy. Some family members may consider it a heavy emotional burden. ALWAYS discuss your wishes with your proxy and your next of kin. The discussion should include your feelings about treatment that is curative versus treatment that is palliative. Palliative treatment will not eliminate the disease. Some types of palliative care will prolong life; some types will improve the quality of life, for example, by treating nausea or pain. Because your proxy will be responsible for making the decisions that they believe you would have made if you were able, your proxy should know your wishes about long term care, and your feelings about home and hospice care. You should give a copy of the original health care proxy document to your proxy and keep the original. Copies should also be given to all physicians and health care institutions involved in your care. A copy is valid at any health care facility. If you decide in the future that you wish to make a change in your health care proxy document, write on the original that it has been superseded, and then execute a new health care proxy.

Some states, including California, Texas, and 15 others, require documents to be filled out using their state-specific forms. If you plan to spend a good deal of time in another state, you should inquire about that state's law. Most hospitals will do their best to carry out the reasonable and well documented wishes of a person who has executed documents in good faith in another state, although the process may be more convoluted, take more time, and the outcome is not guaranteed.

If you live alone, you should carry the name of your proxy with your personal identification. Some cell phones allow you to list an emergency contact, and you may wish to list your proxy in your contact list. ARCH provides a document for display on your refrigerator. In the event of an accident or emergency, your care will proceed more smoothly and friends and family can be notified without delay.

5) Living Will

A living will is a document in which you describe the specific care you want or do not want to have. Often, its primary purpose is to describe the conditions under which care should be withheld, but it can also list treatments that you desire.

A living will has serious limitations. No living will can anticipate every possible health problem that you might have. More importantly, a living will can never be absolutely specific and so is subject to interpretation: for example, what does 'unlikely' mean in the phrase 'unlikely to recover', what does 'terminal' mean in terms of absolute time, and so on. New York recognizes living wills, but your proxy is not required to show it to your physician if you are being cared for in New York. In fact it may be advantageous for your proxy *not* to submit your living will to your health provider or even mention that you have one, since sometimes living wills only serve to cause confusion. .

The requirements of other states differ. A number of states do not recognize health care proxies. Therefore, if you become ill away from home, a living will may be the only document

that the local hospital will accept. A living will is better than nothing, and so it is best to have both documents unless you are certain that you will never leave the State of New York.

6) DNR (do not resuscitate)

This document is a directive to health care providers (doctors, nurses, and ambulance workers) that if your heart should stop beating, you do not wish to have any measures taken to restart it. You can request DNR status for yourself or your health care proxy or family can request it for you if you cannot participate in this decision. The document is witnessed and signed by two physicians. It is often executed in a hospital, in situations where death is imminent or where individuals are unaware of their surroundings and are not expected to recover. Hospitals and health care workers are mandated to provide all other types of treatment except for resuscitation in the event of the absence of a heartbeat. Since resuscitation attempts at the end of life are characterized by considerable commotion and are rarely successful, DNR status is suitable for individuals who are terminally ill and who wish to die peacefully.

7) Organization of documents

Documents should be kept in a safe but accessible location. The location of all of the documents listed above plus insurance policies, veteran's documents, social security, pension benefits, and NYQM cemetery site number. You should review your documents periodically and especially if there is a change in your situation – for example, birth, marriage, or death in the family, or change in the status of any individual you have chosen to be responsible for your assets, your health, or your children.

PART D: SPIRITUAL, PERSONAL, AND FAMILY ISSUES

Friends should review the pertinent sections in Faith and Practice, and are advised to keep our testimony of simplicity regarding funerals and funeral services. Friends are encouraged to approach a member of their meeting's Ministry & Counsel in regard to spiritual matters.

Health care decisions, control of pain, and hospice

A decision of whether to undergo a new treatment or surgery at the end of life is never easy, as risks are often high. Physicians are not all equal in their ability to provide sensitive care to dying patients and their families; some have difficulty in explaining the discomforts involved in treatments that will only extend life, or they may minimize the potential benefits. You should mention to your physician that you have a health care proxy or a living will. If the doctor is not comfortable with the terms you have provided, consider transferring your care to another physician.

Every patient has the right to treatment for pain. Many of the more powerful pain medications have great potential for causing addiction and additional restrictions have recently been placed on their use. The resulting paperwork can cause delays in obtaining medication. These medications can also have distressing side effects. There are physicians who specialize in

pain management. Ask for a referral if you are still experiencing difficulties with any aspect of your pain medication.

Hospice care can be entered when the person is expected to live no longer than 6 months, and control of symptoms is the main concern. Hospice care can be given at home or at a nursing home. A hospice agency provides care for the terminal illness. You will still need a caregiver (family or paid) to provide the bulk of your care, when you are too weak to care for yourself. If a person continues to live at home, special services including equipment, and medications are made available. Hospice can also provide support for family caregivers.

Hospitals often have palliative care consults, pastoral care representatives and patient advocates who can be a valuable source of practical information and support. Many hospitals also have ethics committees that can assist you in resolving conflicts over end-of-life care.

A death doula — also known as an end-of-life doula, end-of-life coach, death midwife or death coach — assists a dying person and their loved ones before, during and after death. An end-of-life doula provides emotional and physical support, education about the dying process, preparation for what's to come and guidance while you're grieving.

<https://health.clevelandclinic.org/life-coach>

End-of-life doulas aren't licensed to provide any medical assistance, but they may advocate for the dying person's wishes and needs while working together with healthcare providers.

Our member, Susan Hannigan (certified death doula) can provide more information - syhannigan@gmail.com

Dealing with Family Members

Even when everyone knows about a serious illness, families often avoid talking about it. Family members believe that the dying person can't handle such a discussion and the dying person believes that the family can't handle it. When this subject is off-limits everyone, including the dying person, feels isolated. All should make it clear that death is something that can be mentioned when necessary. Children are very intuitive and will suspect a problem, so they too should be given age-appropriate information

Serious illness puts a great stress on family relationships. A dying person may be depressed or have personality changes that can be treated. Caretakers may be exhausted or feel un-appreciated. Ask your physician for assistance with such problems, and/or request a support committee from your Meeting. Sometimes a referral for respite care (the temporary admission of a seriously ill person to a facility to allow for caretakers to get away for a short break) can be of enormous help.

Special situations:

Children

The serious illness or death of a child is a devastating blow to any family. Many pediatric hospitals have support groups for parents and caretakers. They can be very helpful in answering questions on how to handle the care of a sick or dying child and the other children in the family, as well as in giving emotional support. Dying children may want to give directions to parents regarding the disposal of their toys and other possessions.

Sudden or violent death

A sudden death deprives a family of the chance to say good-bye and tell the dying person how much they are loved. In such circumstances, the family may have difficulty accepting the finality of death and have a prolonged grieving period.

The authorities must notify the Medical Examiner in every unattended or sudden death and they have to make the decision to release the body. The family may have to deal with the judicial system if a crime has been committed. There are support groups for families of crime victims run by Safe Horizons and others.

Speaking with families

Many people are uncomfortable in the presence of death and sometimes say things that are not helpful, such as cutting off a mourner who wants to talk, or urging the mourner to resume their usual routine before they are ready.

What can we say that is positive and helpful? First, be there, and simply listen. Try to enable the mourner to speak of their loss. Simple ways to invite the person to speak of the one they have lost and want to remember include recalling experiences you had together, looking at photographs and memorabilia, or listening to recordings.

Remembering happy moments and times shared with the deceased is comforting for the mourner. If you cannot imagine what to say to a person who is in mourning, a simple “I’m sorry”, accompanied by a physical touching on the hand or arm, or a hug if that is more comfortable, is supportive and helpful.

After a death:

Disposing of personal effects

The disposal of family treasures often causes hard feelings that persist for years. If the deceased person has not designated who shall inherit heirlooms and children or other heirs seem to be in a conflict, great sensitivity is needed. It is essential that all family members are left with the sense that fairness has prevailed. An uninvolved mediator can sometimes bring a family to unity on such issues.

Asking for, receiving and giving help

There is no standard schedule for how long a bereaved person should be in mourning. However, family and F(f)riends should be alert to intervene if a mourner is unable to carry out basic life activities such as consuming healthy food, bathing, wearing clean clothing, or answering the telephone two to four weeks after a death.

Coping with loss in the family can be overwhelming. Meetings can help by including members who have experienced loss in the life of the meeting, and by being sensitive to their needs. Members who have experienced a loss should not hesitate to ask for help. By the same token, meetings should make an effort to reach out to recently bereaved members whose grief may make it difficult to express their feelings. If your initial offer was declined, try again. People’s ability to accept help changes over time. Especially in a large meeting, no one should assume that others are taking on this responsibility. Help can include specific things, such as

shopping, help around the home, or an invitation to participate in a short trip or community event, or it can take the form of a telephone call or a conversation at the social hour. Spiritually, all Friends who have sustained a loss need to be held in the Light.