

## Milwaukee Friends Meeting

# Style Sheet

This style sheet is intended to help us communicate more easily and more clearly in our written communications. These may include interpersonal emails, minutes of meeting for business and committees, our website, and other documents including those intended for the non-Quaker public.

This guide is developed and maintained by the Communications Committee. Please bring the need for changes or additions to the attention of any committee member.

The style sheet is in two parts:

1. The *usage guide* encourages clarity and consistency in our language, so we all understand clearly what each other are talking about. Usages are based largely on the *FGC Quaker Press Style Sheet*, shortened and simplified.
2. The *document guide* explains how to prepare files for incorporation into minutes of meeting for business and for other purposes. A simple Word template file is available separately to assist with formatting. Fonts, margins, hyphenation and footers are preset. Ask a member of the Communications Committee for the template file if you don't already have it.

This document is set in 12-pt Times regular except heads which are 24-pt Times bold.

# Usage Guide

We adopt the following usages to ensure clarity and consistency in our language:

## Specific Word Forms

- For *meetinghouse* we use one word, not capitalized.
- Milwaukee Monthly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends is the full official name of our meeting. Milwaukee Monthly Meeting is the short form for use among Quakers.
- Milwaukee Friends Meeting is our common informal name. Do not use an acronym. For the public, attach *Quakers* in parentheses after the first mention and thereafter refer to Quakers instead of Friends:
  - Milwaukee Friends Meeting (Quakers)
  - Milwaukee Friends (Quaker) meetinghouse
- For the public, it is clearer to refer to us as Quakers rather than Friends.
- Our only clerks are the clerk of meeting, an assistant clerk, and a recording clerk.
- Committees are convened by a convener.
- We send representatives to other bodies, including MICAH, Interfaith Conference and some Quaker organizations.
- Our current clerks, committees, conveners and representatives are listed in the front of our yearly directory.
- *Shareletter* is the name of our occasional publication of spiritual writings, images and reflections. It is always italicized and capitalized as shown here.
- Other names which are sometimes referred to incorrectly:
  - Peacemakers Day Camp (not possessive, no acronym)
  - LifeWays Early Childhood Center (or simply LifeWays, note capitalization)

## Punctuation and Quotes

- A period at the end of a sentence is followed by only one space before the next sentence.
- When referring to a word as a word, use italics not quotation marks.
- Italicize the titles of books, magazines, TV series, books of poetry and similar.
- Enclose normal type within quotation marks for the titles of short pieces within a larger work (e.g., stories, articles, chapters, specific episodes or poems).
- Never use ALL CAPS for anything. For word emphasis, use *italics* or **bold**, and don't overuse them. Underlining is discouraged as it is merely a holdover from typewriter days and negatively affects legibility.
- Commas and period are always placed inside any quotation marks.
- Question marks and exclamation points go inside the quotation marks when they are part of the quoted text, but outside the quotation marks when they punctuate the larger sentence that contains the quotation.
- Tip when quoting: A paraphrase is often better than a quotation, and a short quotation is almost always better than a long one!

## Capitalization, Acronyms and Abbreviations

- Capitalize names of organizations when referring to a specific organization.
- Specific committee names are capitalized, including the word *Committee* when used as part of the full name of the committee. When referring to “the committee” or “a committee,” the word is not capitalized
- *Meeting* is lower case except when referring to Milwaukee Friends Meeting, or at the beginning of a sentence.
- Do not use acronyms for meeting for business or for meeting for worship. Always spell these out. They are not capitalized except at the beginning of a sentence.
- Worship group and worship sharing are not capitalized except at the beginning of a sentence.
- Kenosha-Racine Worship Group is capitalized since it’s the name of a specific organization.
- Spell out full organizational names when they first appear, followed by any acronym in parentheses. Use the acronym alone in subsequent mentions. Examples:
  - Ministry & Counsel Committee (M&C Committee). Always include *Committee* when referring to the M&C Committee.
  - Northern Yearly Meeting (NYM)
  - Friends General Conference (FGC)
- If the name is used only once, there is no need to introduce an acronym. In general, try to avoid the use of acronyms as much as possible.
- Friends is capitalized when used as a noun referring to a member or attendee.
- Members and attendees are not capitalized, and we generally do not distinguish between them.
- Officer and representative titles are not capitalized (e.g., clerk of meeting, convener of the Communications Committee, MICAH representative).
- NYM annual session and interim session are not capitalized.
- FGC Gathering is capitalized and always preceded by *FGC*. It’s never just “the gathering.”
- Capitalize organizational and academic titles when they precede the name of the person, but use lower case otherwise (e.g., King Herod issued a decree, *but* Herod, the king, issued a decree).
- Capitalize words that refer to God (Spirit, Inner Spirit, Light, even Truth) when used as a noun standing for God. A preceding definite article is not capitalized (e.g., the Spirit). However, when referring to a god or gods in general, god is not capitalized.
- Use lower case for all pronouns referring to God and Jesus.
- Bible, Holy Bible, Holy Koran and the holy books of other religions are capitalized, but not biblical or spiritual.
- Capitalize Black, Brown and White when referring to racial/ethnic groups rather than colors. (Red and yellow are not acceptable racial/ethnic terms.) Generally, it’s preferable to use unhyphenated capitalized terms: African American, Asian American, European American, Native American. *People of color* is the currently acceptable umbrella term for non-White/non-European racial/ethnic groups.

- Avoid abbreviations whenever possible. Spell out words including months, days of the week, street addresses, and city and state names.

### **Possessives**

- To make a possessive, always use an apostrophe plus an “s” regardless of the noun’s ending (e.g., George Fox’s regrets, Rufus Jones’s socks).
- When *Friends* modifies a noun (e.g., Friends meeting) treat it as an adjective, not a possessive. In other words: no apostrophe. Tip: If you can replace it with the word *Quaker*, then no apostrophe.

### **Plain Speech**

- In the past, Quakers used the familiar second person (thee, thy, thou, thine) instead of the formal (you, your, yours) in order to avoid class distinctions. Days of the week were referenced by their order (starting with First Day for Sunday) to avoid association with the pagan origins of the day names.
- Today, however, plain speech is discouraged as an anachronistic affectation. Modern English does not distinguish between formal and informal second person.
- Exception: We continue to refer to First Day school for children.
- Never use plain speech when writing for the public.

### **Numbers and Dates**

- Always spell out numbers one through ten.
- For numerals of one thousand or more, use commas between each group of three digits counting from the right (1,000; 1,000,000).
- Use numerals for money and statistical matters.
- Spell out numbers that begin a sentence or, if this is clumsy, rewrite the sentence so it doesn’t begin with a number.
- The lowercase letter “l” should never be used in a number as a substitute for the numeral “1.”
- In text, always spell out dates completely (July 4, 2021), preceded by the day of the week if appropriate, instead of using a numerical representation. There are many inconsistent variations of numerical dates, and none are appropriate in text. Numerical dates (e.g., 07/04/21) can be used in tables, and should be used consistently within the same table.
- When writing dates, omit st, nd, rd, th from the day of the month (e.g., February 9, not February 9th)

### **Pronouns**

- In general, write to minimize the use of gender specific pronouns, the use of which can be sensitive and is evolving
- Although the topic remains controversial grammatically, you may use *they* and *them* as gender neutral singular pronouns when appropriate.

## **Names and Honorifics**

- Strive to use full proper names without honorifics (Mr., Mrs., Dr., Prof., Rev., etc.) when referring to persons, unless omitting the honorific would give offense.
- The first time a person is mentioned use their full name: first name and last name. Future readers may not recognize references to first names only.
- After the first reference with the full name, subsequent references may use either the first name alone or the last name alone. In general, we use first names.
- Be consistent for all people mentioned within the same document.

## **Internet**

- The internet is not capitalized, nor is the world wide web.
- Website is used as one word.
- URLs may be cited as references, but please accompany them with additional information that may help a reader find the material if the website changes or the specific URL is taken down.
- When citing a URL, consider making it a live hyperlink. Word (the word processing program) can be set to do this automatically, or you may highlight the text and use Cmd/Ctrl-k\* to create the link. The link should survive when the document is printed to a PDF file.

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\*Cmd-k on a Macintosh. Ctrl-k on a Windows PC.

# Document Guide

The following guidelines are intended to provide consistency in our documentation, improve readability and legibility, and ease the incorporation of multiple submissions for inclusion in larger documents, such as the minutes of meeting for business.

Documents should be prepared using a word processing program such as Word. Financial spreadsheets may be prepared in a program such as Excel.

Although these specifications may seem like a lot to absorb, they describe the most basic and standard of document formats.

A Word template is available and encouraged for recording minutes and for other document purposes. Fonts, margins, hyphenation and a footer are preset. Ask a member of the Communications Committee for the template file if you don't already have it.

## Document and Page Setup

- Text documents should be set up as US letter size (8.5" x 11") pages. Portrait (vertical) orientation is preferable, but landscape (horizontal) can be used if necessary.
- Spreadsheets may use legal size (8.5" x 14") pages if necessary.
- One-inch page margins are standard on top and sides. The bottom margin may be one inch or, if necessary, no less than 0.75 inch. Do not use margins narrower than these.
- The first page of a document should indicate the committee or other body from which it originated, the topic or purpose which is being addressed, and the name of the author(s).
- Multipage documents should include page numbers in the lower right corner. This can be added automatically using your program's footer capability.
- All documents should be dated, either on the first page or in a header or footer that continues on each page.
- Printed materials should be on white or off-white paper. Colored paper reduces contrast and can make the text difficult to read.

## Text Format

- Use only the Times or Times New Roman font. They are highly legible serif fonts and one or the other is standard on all Windows and Macintosh computers.
- Use the same font throughout the document.
- Set the type size to 12-pt for all body text including subtitles (subheads). Bold your subtitles. Document titles and section headings should be larger, bold and centered.
- In body text, use italics for document references as described above in the Usage Guide under Punctuation. Use italics or bold (sparingly) for word emphasis. In most programs, italics are turned on and off using Cmd/Ctrl-i, and bold is turned on and off using Cmd/Ctrl-b.

- All text should be black. Don't use colored text for emphasis, or unless there is a very strong reason to do so.

### **Paragraph Format**

- Body text and subtitles should be left justified (flush on the left side, ragged on the right). Not fully justified.
- No hyphenation at the end of lines. (In your word processing program, turn off hyphenation under the setting for paragraph formatting.)
- Line spacing should be single.
- One line space between paragraphs, no first line indent.
- One line space before and after subtitles.
- Titles and section heads at the top of pages should be centered.

### **Vertical Lists**

- Use your program's bulleted list feature to create bulleted lists, as in this document. Do not type the bullets manually.
- Use consistent form in each listed item (e.g., same verb tense)
- Start each list item with a capital letter.
- Do not use ending punctuation unless the list items are complete sentences, in which case every item should be a full sentence.
- For a list using numbered items, use your program's numbered list feature to create the list. Do not type the item numbers manually. Otherwise, use the same guidelines as for bulleted lists.

### **Tables**

- If you need to align columns of words or numbers in a table, use the tabs feature of your program. *Never use spaces to indent lines or to align columns.*
- Tabs can be set to left align (most common for words), center align, right align (for whole numbers), and in most programs to align on the decimal point (useful for money).
- Most programs have default tab stops every half inch, but when setting up a table, remove the tab stops you don't need. There should be only one tab between each column of words or numbers.
- Most word processing programs have a table feature that will help you set up and format a table with a specific number of rows and columns. You may use that feature if you are comfortable with it, but a simple tabbed table is easier and has a cleaner appearance.
- If you are unfamiliar with tabs or uncertain how to use them, ask someone to show you so you can take advantage of this important feature.

### **Announcements**

- Messages to be inserted into announcements should be emailed to [announcements@milwaukeequakers.org](mailto:announcements@milwaukeequakers.org).

- Use plain text in messages for announcements. Do not format them in any way.
- The announcements editor will format your message as appropriate and consistent with other messages in the announcements.

### **Meeting for Business**

- Documents intended for inclusion in the minutes of a meeting for business should be sent to the recording clerk in word processing format.
- This allows the recording clerk to make final edits if necessary.
- If you use a word processing program other than Microsoft Word, resave your document in a Word-compatible format, or in rich text format (file suffix .rtf), before you send that to the recording clerk.
- The recording clerk will consolidate all submissions into a single PDF file of the minutes for circulation and archiving.

### **PDF Files**

- Committee meeting minutes and other documents of record (not intended for further editing) should be printed or “saved as” PDF (Portable Document Format) files.
- The PDF files may be uploaded to the meeting’s website for archival reference.