



# PENDLE HILL

A Quaker Study, Retreat, and Conference Center

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March 12, 2021

Susan W. Hoskins, Executive Director  
Friends Foundation for the Aging  
P.O. Box 1081  
Langhorne, PA 19047

Dear Susan,

Pendle Hill respectfully submits this grant request to the Friends Foundation for the Aging, requesting \$40,000 toward our initiative to make Quakerism more inclusive to older adults through creating and implementing best practices for online programs.

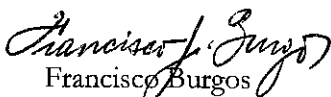
Pendle Hill has long been a place where older adults find vitality and purpose through spiritual retreat and connecting with meaningful justice work where they can make real impact. Throughout the pandemic, we have been at the forefront of providing older adults with experiential learning opportunities that draw inspiration from Friends' values. Our daily online meeting for worship has been an essential space for older adult Friends and seekers to find community. Through our collaboration with Woodbrooke Study Centre in England, we plan to draw from the collective wisdom of Friends' meetings to promote the evolution of online programs into more equitable spaces for older adults.

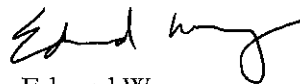
We are grateful for this opportunity to approach Friends Foundation for the Aging, and we are enthusiastic about continuing our shared commitment to providing innovative programs that improve the lives of older adults.

If you have any questions about our application, please contact Edward Wang at [ewang@pendlehill.org](mailto:ewang@pendlehill.org) or 609-651-6117.

Thank you in advance for your collective time and consideration of this request.

With Peace,

  
Francisco Burgos  
Executive Director

  
Edward Wang  
Grant Writer

## **Executive Summary**

Older adults have struggled during the COVID-19 pandemic with loneliness, isolation, and a lack of spiritual resources. Pendle Hill is requesting \$40,000 from Friends Foundation for the Aging to support our initiative to make Quakerism more accessible to older adults through creating and implementing best practices for online programs. Along with a workshop in which Friends will gather to discuss approaches for blended and online programs, we will provide older adults with an inclusive ecosystem with workshops for the arts, spirituality, racial justice, and other topics. As Quaker meetings move toward combining in-person and online interaction, this grant would enable Pendle Hill to position itself as a knowledge hub for Friends about improving online programs.

## **Brief Statement of the Organization’s History and Competence**

Founded in 1930, Pendle Hill is a Quaker center, welcoming to all, for Spirit-led learning and community. We reach over 7,000 people a year through on-campus and online programs. Pendle Hill has longstanding experience with supporting the spiritual lives of older adults. We value diversity of perspective in our hiring and board recruitment practices: 23% of our board and 21% of our staff—including our Executive Director and Assistant Board Clerk—identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, or people of color). Moreover, our long-term work addresses systemic racial and economic justice issues through workshops and lectures, including ones exclusively for people of color.

## **Project Details**

### **1. Problem, Evidence of Needs, and Community Being Served**

The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated new approaches to providing spiritual resources for older adults. The problem of older adults’ isolation contributing to poor mental health is well documented. In June 2020, more than half of adults between 50 and 80 (56%) reported feeling isolated from others, compared with 27% in 2018.<sup>1</sup> The poll found that loneliness and limited social contact during the pandemic were strongly associated with depression and decreased mental health. Studies have also shown that for older adults, one’s level of spiritual well-being is strongly correlated with predicting psychological well-being and even physical symptoms.<sup>2</sup>

Pendle Hill’s response to the pandemic in bringing online daily worship to the Barn, while “experimental” at first, has since proven to be both effective and timely. As of March 2021, we regularly have over 150 online worshippers every morning, many of them older adults. Many have told us that Pendle Hill’s diligence in presenting this offering has provided them with vital spiritual sustenance during the pandemic.

During the pandemic, the community that we serve has only broadened due to our flexibility in providing online offerings. Geographically distant Friends and seekers or those otherwise unable to get to our physical campus—a high percentage of them being older adults—have commented that they now find it easier to participate in our programs. We now reach older adults on the West Coast and in the Midwest as well as all along the East Coast, and even internationally. Several of our recent programs, including our Workshop for Women Writers of Color, Reclaiming My Authentic Self, and Healing Ancestral Trauma, either require that participants identify as BIPOC or are specifically designed to benefit marginalized communities.

### **2. Our Action**

Pendle Hill is proposing an initiative consisting of eight online programs and workshops aimed at serving older adults within Quaker communities. The centerpiece of our initiative that will support and inform our other programs is a collaborative workshop with Woodbrooke Study Centre in Birmingham, England that will take place from June 11–13, 2021. This program will explore the questions that various Quaker Monthly Meetings have about

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<sup>1</sup> University of Michigan National Poll on Healthy Aging, June 2020.

<sup>2</sup> Lawler-Row, Kathleen and Jeff Elliott, “The Role of Religious Activity and Spirituality in the Health and Well-Being of Older Adults.” *Journal of Health Psychology*, 7 January 2009.

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blended and online worship, share best practices that have been gleaned from Pendle Hill and Woodbrooke's learnings, and give participants the opportunity to learn how to best support the needs of their respective meetings. We plan to address issues of equity and inclusion to ensure that online participants feel equally as included in-person participants in future blended and online programs.

We expect that lessons obtained from the Woodbrooke collaboration will be informative and wide-ranging to the Religious Society of Friends. Specifically, the knowledge shared will benefit Quaker monthly meetings and older adults across the country—and even internationally.

The other online workshops and programs in our initiative are listed below:

- An educational speaker series in collaboration with Barclay Press, the publisher of the *Illuminate* Friends Bible study series, which will take place on six Monday evenings between June 14 and August 23, 2021. Study materials will be provided, and the series will provide insight into three of the Pauline epistles: Ephesians, Philippians, and Colossians, and how they relate to our modern lives. A variety of Quaker thinkers will offer perspectives on what the verses mean to them.
- “Fierce Biblical Women Speak Power Today,” an online workshop discussing gender and justice with Melissa Bennett that will take place on five Sundays between April 11 and May 9. Participants will learn about rarely discussed women in the Hebrew and Christian Bible who use their strength to challenge systems and claim justice. Through collage, journaling, sharing, and listening, they will relate these stories of women to the fierce women of their own lives, opening space for these women to empower them today.
- “Healing the Disconnect,” a workshop with well-known Quaker studies author and teacher Marcelle Martin, scheduled for May 3, 2021. Participants will use short experiential practices to help each other confront the root of their challenges. Through collective discernment as well as other interpersonal and group practices, they will learn how to help others heal and move society toward a hopeful future.
- “Creative Prayer,” a workshop with Jesse White that will expand participants’ comfort zones in developing their own artistic and spiritual practices, which will run on three Tuesdays between June 1–15, 2021. Jesse works as an art therapist and directs Pigeon Arts, a cathartic art-making organization in Philadelphia.
- “Clearness Committee,” a workshop on spiritual discernment used by Quakers that has proven helpful to many others, led by retreat leader, leadership coach, and author Valerie Brown, planned for Fall 2021. Brown is the author of the pamphlet *Coming to Light*, which explains the process of the Quaker clearness committee, and how it can lead to spiritual development and formation.
- Two planned workshops on Racial Justice, one of which will discuss affirmative steps to repair historic injustices done to African Americans, both of which will take place before summer 2022.

### 3. What other organizations will you partner with on this project?

Collaboration is central to our proposal. Our June workshop on blended and online worship is planned in collaboration with Woodbrooke Study Centre, an international Quaker research and learning center in Birmingham, England, and will provide guidance to Quaker meetings and older adult Friends not only in the U.S. and U.K., but also internationally. As international centers for Quaker spirituality and research, Pendle Hill and Woodbrooke are uniquely positioned to support meetings in engaging the questions brought about by blended worship.

In addition, we believe that the discussion generated between Quaker monthly meetings during our workshop will provide valuable suggestions that will inform and shape the rest of our initiative. Finally, our Bible study speaker series in collaboration with Barclay Press this summer will bring in 12-14 contributors for discussion and dialogue. We expect to reach a large community of older adult Friends on both the East and West Coasts.

**4. What outputs (measurable, specific) do you expect?**

We expect at least **60%** of program participants to be older adults (65+) and an average of **“positive” or “very positive”** responses from older adult program participants on program quality. In addition, we expect to reach **25%** of older adult program participants from areas outside New England and the Mid-Atlantic states. For the Woodbrooke program, we expect to register **35 participants**, representing at least **12** different Quaker meetings.

These measurable goals are reasonable, given our past record. In 2020, 62% of online program participants from a sample of our surveys were 65 and older. For several programs, the percentage of older adults was even higher. For example, 73% of participants in our recent “Aiming for Justice” workshop were over 65, and 24% were over 75. “Chanting” and “The Creative World of Beethoven” both had over 90% of participants that were over 65.

**5. What outcomes do you expect? What change will occur; what impact will it have?**

We expect two main outcomes through our initiative: (1) older adults will have increased access to spiritual and educational programs, and (2) we will develop and disseminate technology best practices to support online and blended programs. Our theory of change is that the best practices developed during our Woodbrooke program will provide compounding benefits not only for our own online programs, but for the broader Religious Society of Friends through our communication with Quaker monthly meetings.

We envision a future in which even after the pandemic ends and in-person activities resume, many older adults will continue to attend worship online, participate in online spiritual and educational programs, and find much-needed community in online spaces. We expect that older adults will find our online programs to be accessible, engaging, and spiritually nourishing. Pendle Hill has already received the following positive feedback in evaluations from older adult participants, many of whom are hoping we will expand online offerings:

“...I couldn't have joined this program if it hadn't been on Zoom. I hope you will continue offering Zoom programs when the pandemic ends. It opens up to a lot more people.” —The Creative World of Beethoven with Karl Middleman, December 2020

“Please do not discontinue remote offerings once the pandemic is over. I could never attend a retreat at Pendle Hill during the Christmas holidays from the Pacific Northwest.” —What Love Requires with Valerie Brown, December 2020

“I liked the gentleness. I probably liked doing it on Zoom better than I would have in person ... Sometimes I'm too introverted to get into heavy body exchanges with people I don't know.” —What Love Requires with Valerie Brown, December 2020

Pendle Hill does not see online programs as superseding in-person programs, but rather as a necessary complement. In 2020, 73% of adults over 65 used the Internet, up from 14% in 2000. Studies conducted during the pandemic have found that online meeting groups, especially those involving creative arts and group sharing, can alleviate older adults' loneliness and significantly improve their mental health.<sup>3</sup> To this end, the online programs described above will encourage interactivity and creativity, and provide numerous psychological benefits for older adult participants. Moreover, our staff and workshop facilitators will take special care to prioritize the needs of older adults in providing program support. We will make every effort to ensure that our programs are empowering, impactful, and preserve the dignity of older adults.

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<sup>3</sup> Zubatsky, M., Berg-Weger, M., & Morley, J. (2020). Using Telehealth Groups to Combat Loneliness in Older Adults Through COVID-19. *Journal of the American Geriatrics Society*, 68(8), 1678–1679.

**6. How will you measure outputs and outcomes, both quantitative and qualitative?**

Pendle Hill continuously evaluates programming through a rigorous methodology that includes comprehensive participant evaluations for each workshop or program. We will make sure there is time allotted during workshops for participants to complete evaluations, to ensure maximum participation and accurate data-gathering.

To ascertain the impact of our initiative on older adults, we will measure the number of older adults attending our online programs and assess feedback that we receive from older adults on the program's format, accessibility, and degree to which it meets their spiritual and educational needs. We will also measure the number of first-time participants, the geographic diversity of participants, and number of online participants who would find it difficult to attend an in-person program. In addition, for the Woodbrooke program, we will assess change through expanded and/or improved access to online and blended worship for workshop participants' respective Quaker meetings.

**7. How will you sustain the project after the grant period?**

Pendle Hill will make use of diverse fundraising strategies and revenue streams to sustain our project after the grant period. With registration fees, an annual fund campaign, major-gifts program, and a portfolio of foundation grants, Pendle Hill is well-positioned to be financially sustainable for the long term.

**8. How will your results be shared and replicated?**

Pendle Hill views the online program initiative as widely beneficial to the Religious Society of Friends. Just as we made our own best practices for setting up online worship available on the Friends World Committee for Consultation website, the findings from our Woodbrooke collaboration will be made available to a wide network of Friends meetings and will likely influence and be replicated by other online and blended offerings. In addition, we plan to publish updates about programs in our monthly newsletter. Finally, comprehensive data from participant evaluations will be provided in our report to the Friends Foundation for the Aging and other funders.

**9. How does this project fit with Friends Foundation values?**

Pendle Hill's values and mission are well-aligned with those of the Friends Foundation for the Aging. Our programs are based on the Quaker testimonies of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality, and stewardship, and this is reflected both in our physical campus and the content and design of our offerings.

- (1) **Service to Diverse Populations.** We serve diverse populations through programs designed to bring about racial justice, a high percentage of workshop facilitators who are participants of color, and workshops that specifically designed for participants from marginalized groups.
- (2) **Potential to Create Change.** The constraints of the pandemic and growing use of the Internet among older adults have shifted established patterns for program delivery. As studies have shown, online programs have become an increasingly effective method to create community and prevent loneliness and depression among older adults. With our commitment to discerning best practices for online and blended programs, our proposal seeks to drastically improve current understandings of online program engagement and equity. Pendle Hill is also constantly seeking to improve processes that are ineffective through methods such as participant evaluation and program redesign.
- (3) **Leveraging of Resources.** Pendle Hill strives to diversify revenue streams and collects multiple sources of funding from program fees, foundations, major gifts, and our annual fund.
- (4) **Collaboration.** Collaboration is at the heart of our proposal and is central to what Pendle Hill does. Aside from partnering with Woodbrooke, Barclay Press, and many Quaker monthly meetings in our initiative, Pendle Hill has strong partnerships with many organizations. Several recent collaborations include the American Friends Service Committee, Philadelphia Yearly Meeting, Friends General Conference, Center for Courage and Renewal, Heart to Heart, Community Environmental Legal Defense Fund, Friends World Committee for Consultation, Friends Journal, New England Yearly Meeting, Baltimore Yearly Meeting, and many others.

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- (5) **Engagement of Employees and Participants.** Pendle Hill’s education model is based on an experiential learning model centered around participant engagement. As a Quaker organization, Pendle Hill engages staff in a variety of ways in our decision-making processes.
- (6) **Continuing Engagement of Friends Foundation for the Aging.** We feel it is important to be in continued partnership and conversation with foundations. As such, Pendle Hill plans to send regular updates on programs, as well as a comprehensive final report with our evaluation data.
- (7) **Integration of Services.** We believe it is crucial to take an integrative, holistic approach to the needs of older adults. As such, spiritual and intellectual development are highly prioritized in our proposal. By connecting older adults with meaningful justice work and spiritual sustenance, we aim to empower participants.

**10. Attach project budget and timeline, including other sources of support and budget narrative.**

**Timeline:**

- “Fierce Biblical Women Speak Power Today”: April 11–May 9, 2021
- “Healing the Disconnect”: May 3, 2021
- “Creative Prayer”: June 1–15, 2021
- Woodbrooke collaboration: June 11–13, 2021
- Barclay Press collaboration: June 14–August 23, 2021
- “Clearness Committee”: Fall 2021 (exact dates to be determined)
- Two workshops on Racial Justice: One is scheduled for February 2022; the other before summer 2022 (exact dates to be determined)

**Budget:**

<b>EXPENSES</b>	
Honoraria for workshop leaders / facilitators	\$10,500
Scholarships and program subsidies	\$13,000
Outreach and advertising (ads in <i>Friends Journal</i> , plus direct mailing)	\$6,400
Direct staff support	\$24,950
IT, registrar, and indirect support	\$6,400
Miscellaneous materials, including two laptops and tech equipment	\$3,000
<i>Administrative overhead</i>	\$12,850
<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$77,100</b>

<b>INCOME</b>	
Registration fees (estimated)	\$19,100
<b>Friends Foundation for the Aging (this application)</b>	<b>\$40,000</b>
Bible Association of Friends in America (confirmed)	\$5,000
Pendle Hill	\$13,000
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>\$77,100</b>

The budget for this program draws revenue from several sources including registration fees, confirmed funding from the Bible Association of Friends in America, as well as Pendle Hill’s own subsidy for scholarships. Expenses will support scholarships for those in need of financial support, materials, advertising, and IT, as well as staff support and honoraria for workshop facilitators to support their ministry. Total expenses are \$77,100 to produce these eight programs.