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# **Minutes of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting**

## **53rd Annual Sessions**

### **July 28 – July 31, 2016**

### **Bluffton University, Bluffton, Ohio**

*Thursday Evening*

#### **YM2016-01 Opening Worship & Epistle**

Annual Meeting opened with a period of open worship at the appointed hour. Assistant Clerk Sally Weaver Sommer read the 2016 Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting Epistle, from the first Annual Session of Piedmont Friends Yearly Meeting, at the end of its first year as a Yearly Meeting, held jointly with Piedmont Friends Fellowship.

At the end of their first year as a Yearly Meeting, Friends reported they experienced joy, excitement, and promise as they realized how productive their work together has been in establishing the framework of a Yearly Meeting and building the community that gives it life.

Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups shared their responses to the query, “What has most been on the heart of your Meeting this year?” Out of that rich sharing, they reported “being moved by how this sharing deepened our sense of the larger community. It allowed us to better appreciate and affirm one another in the variety of ministries to which we are called, and reminded us that all of our contributions are part of a larger witness in this world. Like the making of a great quilt, we are each working to complete the work on our own square, while also weaving a covering of love, light and hope for the world around us.”

#### **YM2016-02 Opening Comments**

Clerk Mike Holaday welcomed friends, and shared his enjoyment of the serene environment that holds us and allows us to shed some of the turmoil of the world as we do our business together yet remain mindful of the pain and suffering of far too many in the world. He also reminded us that although we may not be able to eliminate all of the evil, that we are to do our own work and already the evil begins to be repaired.

#### **YM2016-03 Introductions**

Clerk Mike Holaday introduced the Friends sitting at the clerks table: Assistant Clerk Sally Weaver Sommer, and Recording Clerk Nancy Reeves. He then asked the Committee clerks to rise and introduce themselves. Friends are encouraged to join the deliberations of any committee this weekend, except Nominating Committee, Finance Committee, and Executive Committee.

Appreciation was expressed for the work of many who make this weekend possible including: Jon Sommer, site arrangements; Berch Carpenter and John Templin, registration; and Valerie Grossman, bookstore.

We welcomed visitors and first time attenders: Helen Fox, Ann Arbor Monthly Meeting; Ken Lawrence, Broadmead Monthly Meeting; Linda Beaty, Akron Monthly Meeting; Maryann Concannon, Red Cedar Monthly Meeting; Joan Sampieri, Ann Arbor Monthly Meeting; Emily Wirzba, FCNL; Natalie and Wayne Finager, Sandy Spring Monthly Meeting, Elaine Ruscetta, FGC. Rebecca Gretz (Playshop co-presenter) will join us later for the weekend.

#### **YM2016-04 Roll Call**

Akron	4	Athens	14
Ann Arbor	16	Birmingham	12
		Broadmead	23

Cleveland	8	Mid-Ohio Valley	0
Delaware	0	North Columbus	7
Detroit	8	Oberlin	1
Erie Worship Group	1	Pine River Worship Group	0
Grand Rapids	6	Pittsburgh	11
Granville	2	Red Cedar	10
Holland	0	Waysmeet Worship Group	1
Kalamazoo	8	Wooster	6
Kent	0		

#### **YM2016-05 Regular Attenders Absent from this Year's Annual Sessions**

We note the absence of regular attenders who cannot be present with us this year: Joe and Kathy Ossmann, Kalamazoo Monthly Meeting; Max Heirich, Ann Arbor Monthly Meeting; Don and Nancy Nagler, Pine River Monthly Meeting; and Claire Davis, Broadmead Monthly Meeting.

#### **YM2016-06 Naming Committee**

Clerk Mike Holaday announced that he has asked Thomas Taylor and Ann Sprague to serve on the Naming Committee, which nominates individuals to serve on the Nominating Committee. They have agreed to serve. Their appointments were approved by the Executive Committee.

#### **YM2016-07 Epistle Committee**

Friends approved an Epistle Committee to be convened by Assistant Clerk Sally Weaver Sommer and joined by Susan Carpenter, Broadmead Monthly Meeting. These Friends are asked to listen deeply throughout the weekend, to draft an epistle that captures the spirit of our work together, and to bring it for our consideration at our Sunday meeting for worship with attention to business. We will revisit this matter tomorrow, with the expectation that an additional individual will feel led to join the committee.

#### **YM2016-08 Memorials**

Out of a period of open worship, Clerk Mike Holaday, read the memorial minute for Betty Reid Ford, Grand Rapids Monthly Meeting, who died August 6, 2015, shortly after our last annual session; see p. 153 for a copy of the minute.

Friends also named John Savage, North Columbus Monthly Meeting; Lee Pettiford, Kalamazoo and Ann Arbor Monthly Meetings; and William Beal, Athens Monthly Meeting. Rilma Buckman, Broadmead Monthly Meeting, died shortly before our annual sessions last year.

#### *Friday Morning*

#### **YM2016-09 Epistle**

The second session of our Annual Meeting began with a period of open worship at the appointed hour. Assistant Clerk Sally Weaver Sommer read the epistle from the 2016 Annual Sessions of the Illinois Yearly Meeting of Friends. Living their theme, "Nurturing the Seed of Love," this year Friends focused on intentionally creating an intergenerational faith community. They shared stories about their children spending time at the ILYM Campus, their own childhood experiences on the campus, and even of a grandfather's experiences in the same space. They sought, in the words of Lucretia Mott Franklin, to become a yearly meeting where "... there was no generation gap; from the baby in his basket to the teenager in school, each participat[ing] in whatever was offered." They reported a deep excitement about their vision of "an intergenerational faith community linked geographically to place we have loved and owned since 1874." They noted "a sense of trust among one another, a vulnerable willingness to share in a safe place, even for those who are first-timers, both young and old."

#### **YM2016-10 Meeting Worker**

Mathilda Navias, Meeting Worker, reported that she was able to create a long-requested online

registration form for our Annual Sessions. After being under budget for several years, this special one-time project, put her approximately 38 hours over the budgeted 100 hours for the year. More than half of those present indicated using the form to register, and expressed gratitude for the work that went into creating it. A copy of the full report follows:

### **LEYM Worker Report July 2015 – June 2016**

This started as a routine year as LEYM Worker. Much of my time has been spent working on LEYM's web site. Other time was spent maintaining and forwarding messages to several e-mail listservs, responding to e-mails, and other administrative tasks. The time spent on these tasks ran just about the same as last year.

Following Representative Meeting in April, I was asked to create an on-line registration form for Annual Sessions. This has taken up a little less than half of my total time, and put me over budget for the year. Mike Holaday authorized the extra time, which involved frequent consultations with the Yearly Meeting Registrar. After I researched suitable software, the Yearly Meeting purchased Webworksheet, a \$50 utility that works with Excel. A significant portion of my time went into learning how to use the software and learning Excel functions I hadn't used before. I can report that the Webworksheet tech support is superb. Testing various stages of the form took significant time by volunteers, the bulk of it by my husband. My total time for the year was about 138 hours. 100 hours were budgeted, down from 120 the previous several years. For a number of years, my hours have run 1/2 to 3/4 of the budgeted number. It will take a little time to update the registration form each year. The tasks I have performed during the 2015-2016 year are detailed below.

LEYM Website	52 hours (38%)
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- Do annual updates following Annual Meeting
- Post *Bulletins*
- Post news of interest to LEYM Friends
- Create new web page for Indiana Worship Group
- Format & upload minutes (12 1/4 hours)
- Maintenance

Listsers (ExComm, MM Clerks, MM Reps, GPQM) & gmail	14 hours (10%)
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- Annual updates of lists following Annual Meeting
- Forward messages to lists
- Maintain & update
- Maintain gmail accounts for officers

Administration (e-mails, prepare reports, misc.)	16 3/4 hrs (12%)
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Special project: On-line registration for Annual Sessions	55 hours (40%)
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- Research & purchase software (Webworksheet, \$50 one-time fee)
- Create, test, & upload to web site

Total	137 3/4 hours
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Total: 137:44 hours @\$20/hr = \$2,754.67 (detailed hours above are rounded)

Total budgeted for year: \$2,000 for 100 hours of work

### **Anticipated Work in 2016-17**

- Perform the annual updates to LEYM's website based on information from Meetings' and Worship Groups' Annual Statistical Reports
- Maintain the website
- Perform the annual updates to the listservs based on information from Meetings' and Worship Groups' Annual Statistical Reports
- Maintain the listservs

- Implement requests from committees, officers, Meetings, and GPQM for website changes and additions
- Post *Bulletins*
- Post news of interest to LEYM Friends
- Format and post Yearly Meeting minutes, both current and backlog
- Enter into lots of communication via e-mail
- Update the on-line registration form

Mathilda Navias

### **YM2016-11 Policies & Procedures Committee**

Mathilda Navias, Clerk, reported on the work of an ad hoc Policies & Procedures Committee, appointed to suggest additions to our Policies & Procedures Manual. The ad hoc committee was asked to provide a brief introduction to the work of each committee to make it easier for Nominating Committee, and others serving our community as committee members, to do their work. These thumb-nail descriptions provide a brief overview of the work of each committee and will not replace the current, more detailed, list of each committee's tasks.

The changes proposed by the ad hoc committee were approved by the Executive Committee for consideration by the wider community.

Friends approved the additions to the Policy & Procedures Manual, with deletion of the following sentence from the description of the Ministry & Nurture Committee: "It presents an annual query to Meetings and Worship Groups for their use and possible response."

The committee's report follows:

### **LEYM Policies & Procedures**

#### **Ad Hoc Committee Report**

#### **Committee Descriptions**

#### **III. C. Committees**

[Add:]

Committees are appointed by Lake Erie Yearly Meeting to perform functions more easily carried out by a small group than the entire body. Charges to committees are defined by the Yearly Meeting when they are created or when their roles change. Committees may perform specific tasks, think through issues, or bring proposals or recommendations to the full body for consideration and a decision. Committees with budgets may spend them within the guidelines established by the Yearly Meeting. Some committees oversee funds.

Clerks of committees are responsible for convening meetings and keeping them on task and for seeing that appropriate records are kept, that reports are made to the larger body, and that the work is carried out.

*[Existing text on "Standing committees" etc. goes here]*

**Advancement & Outreach Committee** supports Meetings and Worship Groups in attracting and welcoming new members and attenders. It works with Worship Groups ready to become Monthly Meetings and with Meetings wanting to become Worship Groups or be laid down.

#### **Annual Meeting Planning Committees**

**Arrangements & Site Committee** is responsible for all aspects of the Annual Meeting that have to do with the site as well as registration.

**Program Committee** is responsible for planning activities except for conducting business. This includes developing a theme, setting a schedule, and publicizing Annual Meeting to LEYM Friends.

**Youth & Children Committee** nurtures children and teens at Annual Meeting as well as at a fall retreat.

**Earthcare Committee** helps Friends understand and move toward better stewardship of the earth.

**Finance Committee** plans and manages the Yearly Meeting's finances, proposes an annual budget, and advises on the Yearly Meeting's investments.

**High School Teen Retreat Program Committee** holds in concern the spiritual life of LEYM high schoolers. The committee hires, supports, and oversees the work of a paid coordinator of teen retreats.

**Ministry & Nurture Committee** offers Meetings and Worship Groups support as they seek to strengthen and enrich their meetings for worship and the spiritual vitality of Friends. The committee encourages Meetings and Worship Groups to undertake an annual assessment of their spiritual condition. [It presents an annual query to Meetings and Worship Groups for their use and possible response.] The committee oversees LEYM's Spiritual Formation Program and traveling ministers from the Yearly Meeting.

**Nominating Committee** identifies Friends who are competent and willing to carry out the many tasks that enable the Yearly Meeting to act as it is led. It proposes a slate of nominees at Annual Meeting and individual nominations throughout the year as necessary.

**Peace [& Justice] Committee** helps Friends understand matters of peace and work toward a more peaceful world.

**Publications & Archives Committee** oversees printed and web publications of the Yearly Meeting. The committee sends Yearly Meeting materials to a Quaker archive and encourages Meetings to do the same.

Mathilda Navias, Clerk, Jeff Cooper, and Sally Weaver Sommer

## **YM2016-12 Service Project**

Jonah Brownfain presented a report on the 2016 LEYM Service Project, held in advance of our Annual Sessions. Five Friends volunteered with the Habitat for Humanity ReStore, in Lima, Ohio, working to clean, test, and restore recovered furniture and furnishings with the ultimate goal of raising money to build homes. They began each day with silent worship. As the days progressed, they shared food and stories, learned that even larger places like Wal-Mart can do good work by donating school supplies, and built community with each other and with other volunteers at the ReStore. A copy of the report follows:

### **Service Project Report**

We started each day with silent worship in our own way.

Then on the first day we watched a video on procedures and safety precautions for the ReStore.

What is the ReStore? In two words it is: Building Houses

At this store, sections of houses were completed section by section in a room indoors. Making it easier to put up the house wherever it needs to go.

To help build the houses we cleaned the merchandise. This included:

- Chairs
- Lamps
- Light bulbs
- Pots & Pans
- China & other cooking utensils

Then we broke for lunch, which included homegrown:

- Tomatoes
- Lettuce
- Fruit

- Gluten free for me!

We ate a nice dinner here at Bluffton University – and then went straight to bed.

The next day included more cleaning, sweeping & testing electronical products to see if they worked. And that was the most fun, at least for me. After some hours on our feet, we sat and marked school supplies and talked, laughed, and had fun.

The next day we returned and our pile of school supplies was almost gone.

The ReStore gets donations from individuals and many groups. The school supplies were from Walmart – so they do some good work.

The dusting and sweeping and cleaning may not seem important – but it helps Habitat for Humanity build houses.

And that's our work – to help build houses. In this process we bonded as a group by sharing stories & learning about our volunteer friends. We encourage all Yearly Meeting folks to ask us questions about our experiences – and maybe you too will volunteer next year. We are always looking for more Friends.

Please talk to: Me, Jonah Brownfain; Ellerie Brownfain; Peggy Daub; Olwen Pritchard; Sally Weaver Sommer

### **YM2016-13 High School Teen Retreat Committee**

On behalf of the High School Teen Retreat Committee, David Avner reminded us that the committee reported the resignation of Robb Yurisko at our Annual Sessions last year. Robb was willing to accompany LEYM teens to the Quake that Rocked the Midwest one last time, but ultimately none of the LEYM teens were able to attend

All of the teens the committee approached lead very active lives, and none have been able to participate recently. The committee proposes that its size be reduced to a single person, rather than laying it down. This would permit the Yearly Meeting to hold a space for the committee to be revived if new interest arises.

Ellerie Brownfain asked how rising teens who are very interested in continuing the retreats should make their interests known. Cari Burke, former leader of this program, reported that these retreats provide very strong connections to the wider Quaker community, particularly for isolated teens who are not connected to their local meetings, and for those who are not regular attenders at Annual Meeting.

We ask the committee and Cari Burke, if she is willing, to meet during this gathering with the teens who are present to help discern the needs of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting teens.

### **YM2016-14 Introductions**

Sandy Roney-Hays and Sam Hays, Detroit Monthly Meeting, and Helen Fox, Ann Arbor Monthly Meeting, introduced themselves as new attenders this year.

*Friday Afternoon*

### **YM2016-15 Epistle Committee**

Friends approved an Epistle Committee consisting of Sally Weaver Sommer, Assistant Clerk (convener), Susan Carpenter, Broadmead Monthly Meeting, and Jeff Cooper, Ann Arbor Monthly Meeting.

### **YM2016-16 Friends World Committee for Consultation World Plenary**

Jana Norlin presented the report of the 2016 FWCC World Plenary, which met in Pisac, Peru, in January. Four friends from Lake Erie Yearly Meeting gathered with more than 320 Friends, more than 90 of whom were Young Adult Friends. They came from 37 countries representing 77 Yearly Meetings, 8 independent Monthly Meetings, and 2 Worship Groups to explore the theme: "Living the Transformation," a reference to Romans 8:19: "Creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God."

The World Plenary formally incorporated 4 languages, although many more were spoken informally, and a wide variety of spiritual practices, including rich silent worship and diverse styles of music, spiritual expression, and preaching. Jana reported that God provided innovative ways for communication and connections on a spiritual level, including an international, multilingual talent show and intimate “Home Groups,” which met regularly during the gathering and provided a solid foundation for strengthening relationships in the larger community.

We were reminded of the difficulties of being a Friends World Committee for Consultation covering the whole world, in the face of the ongoing political crises that frequently make it challenging and costly for some Friends to attend. This year it was particularly difficult for Friends from the Africa Section to participate. FWCC agreed to exceed its budget by \$29,000 to cover the costs incurred by members whose visas were granted too late for timely purchase of air travel, rather than to proceed without this beloved part of its community. Even so, the Plenary opened by noting, with sadness, the absence of some Friends who were still unable to obtain visas. Jana encouraged Friends who are so led to make donations to help cover these additional costs.

#### Change in Plenary Frequency

Going forward, the FWCC will hold gatherings every 8 to 10 years, rather than every three years as has been the practice in the past. The Section of the Americas will meet next in Pittsburgh on March 23-26, 2017.

#### World Quaker Day

FWCC invites every Quaker Meeting and Church from around the world to celebrate World Quaker Day on October 2, 2016. As the sun rises in each area of the world, we are asked to remember that Quakers are worshipping in every time zone, so that we are united in love when we hold each other in prayer and thanksgiving as our songs of praise resound around the world.

A copy of the report follows, along with a link to the Plenary Epistle.

#### **FWCC World Plenary Report**

From January 19 to 26, 2016, over 320 Friends from 37 countries representing 77 Yearly Meetings, 8 independent Monthly Meetings, and 2 Worship Groups of the Section of the Americas, the Europe and Middle East Section, the Africa Section, and the Asia West Pacific Section gathered in Pisac, Peru, for the FWCC World Plenary Meeting. The attenders included more than 90 Young Adult Friends from many countries. Jana Norlin of Grand Rapids Friends Meeting attended as the LEYM representative. Clémence Mershon, Rosemary Coffey, and Bill Lefler of Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting also attended the Plenary.

The theme was Living the Transformation, relating to Romans 8:19: “Creation waits with eager longing for the revealing of the children of God.”

Early mornings began with Bible study, silent worship, or outdoor worship in nature. Main morning worship sessions for the entire Gathering were led by representatives of each of the four FWCC world Sections, incorporating rich silent worship and diverse styles of music, spiritual expression, and preaching. While English, Spanish, French, and Aymara were the official languages for interpretation, many other languages were spoken as well. God provided innovative ways for communication and connections on a spiritual level. Activities of the Plenary included sessions focused on the business of FWCC, daily Home Group sessions, Formation Groups, presentations, and interest groups. Meal times were especially important for getting to meet each other, as it was suggested that we sit with those whom we did not previously know. Evening workshops on a wide variety of topics enabled Friends from different parts of the world to share experiences and ideas in order to foster knowledge, spiritual growth, and future collaborations. Each evening ended with an epilogue and worship time, except for Saturday evening’s spectacular 7 pm to midnight international multi-lingual talent show.

Smaller Home Groups of about 20 participants met six times during the gathering in order to bring diverse Friends together to discuss queries and form friendships for understanding each other while



coming from diverse backgrounds. Relationships that resulted from such intimacy enhanced making new connections in the larger group.

The entire body of attenders broke into four Consultation Groups that met four times during the Plenary for small and large group interaction. This interactive format provided for more multicultural and intergenerational input on future planning relating to growth within FWCC and the Religious Society of Friends.

The Leadership and Ministry Consultation Group discussed possibilities for a World Gathering of Young Friends and a newly shaped Quaker Youth Pilgrimage. The question was also raised as to whether a mechanism could be developed within FWCC for membership that is not tied to geographical boundaries, as young adults especially find these structures inconsistent with their identity as Friends.

The Living Ministries Communities Consultation Group discovered that God is calling us not to worry about numbers, but to concern ourselves with the life and vitality of our communities. Hundreds of ideas for nurturing and growing that living faith in our worship communities will be distributed at a future time, while FWCC invites Friends to add to the list and share stories of God's work among us.

The Sustainability Consultation Group made the following requests of the FWCC World Office and the Central Executive Committee to:

1. Invest FWCC World Funds ethically.
2. Share Quaker experiences with other faith groups to inspire them into action, especially the World Council of Churches.
3. Seek sustainable ways of connecting Friends worldwide.
4. Facilitate dissemination of training materials on sustainability issues for Quaker leaders, pastors, and teachers.

The FWCC Plenary Meeting also asks all Yearly Meetings to:

1. Initiate at least two concrete actions on sustainability within the next 12 months.
2. Support individuals and groups in their Meetings who feel called to take action on sustainability.
3. Support the work done by Quaker organizations such as the Quaker United Nations Office and the Quaker Council for European Affairs to ensure that international agreements and their implementation support sustainability.

The Sustainability Group asks Friends to share inspiring experiences of living sustainably on the new "sustainability webpage" of the Quakers in the World website: <http://www.quakersintheworld.org/>

The **Equipping FWCC Consultation Group** moved from discussing our experiences of Connecting Friends, Changing Lives and Crossing Cultures, through our visions for FWCC in the future, to practical ways of implementing such visions. Among many suggestions were: smaller gatherings with a particular focus, networking on topics, events for young adult Friends and Quaker Youth, Quakerism 101 in many languages, cross-communication between Sections of FWCC, promoting wider knowledge about FWCC, and more inter-visitation among Friends from local to worldwide levels. Another proposed idea is twinning between Meetings within Sections, between Sections, or between Quaker traditions, to better develop and use existing guidance and good practice.

**Young Adult Friends** met formally three times for their own worship and business sessions. They ask for prayers and suggestions for ways to strengthen links among young people within each Section and across Sections, as they have formed a committee to consider planning another World Gathering of Young Friends.

The New York and Geneva **Quaker United Nations Offices** gave a very informative evening plenary overall presentation about their work relating to Friends' concerns such as climate change and sustainability, refugee and immigrant rights, peace-building, and economic justice.

Mid-Plenary Friday was an excursion day to see local sites, explore the Sacred Valley area, or rest. During the weekend, approximately 60 additional Friends from Peru and Bolivia joined the Gathering.

### **World Office Reports from the Plenary**

The FWCC Central Executive Committee is striving to better inform the broader Quaker community of the CEC's actions and to hear concerns and visions of Friends worldwide, including criteria for FWCC investment. (Clerk: Betsy Cazden, New England YM)

**World Office** General Secretary Gretchen Castle (Philadelphia YM) noted that FWCC serves and supports Yearly Meetings and local Meetings, Churches, and individuals by "Connecting Friends, Crossing Cultures, and Changing Lives." Recent accomplishments include celebrations of two World Quaker Days, an increasingly active World Office Facebook page, and representing Quakers at the world level in ecumenical and interfaith activities with dignity in a manner fully consistent with Friends' ways. Recently, Friends have been brought in from all four Sections to serve on the Quaker United Nations committees.

The **Finance and Budget Committee** reports that, in recent years, income to the World Office from the Section of the Americas has declined, as the Section's own income has declined. More than 50% of total income comes from the Europe and Middle East Section, especially Britain. Projected budgets through 2018 reflect further reductions in expected income from the Section of the Americas. Unless changes in income and/or expenditures are made, the projected budgets would result in a gradual erosion of the General Fund reserves to well below the recommended level. The Plenary approved the proposed budgets, understanding that the Central Executive Committee has authority to revise them as circumstances warrant. The CEC has engaged a fundraising consultant for advice on how to increase resources throughout the organization. In addition to planned costs, an extra \$29,000.00 was spent to purchase last-minute tickets for Friends whose visas arrived very late. Some Sections would have been seriously underrepresented without such travel support. Friends are encouraged to make a special donation to help defray this unanticipated extra cost and to ask their local and yearly meetings to do the same. (Treasurer: Alastair Reid, Britain YM – annual reports available)

Friends considered a new and much simpler **Constitution for the World Office**, which will be available on the World Office website ([www.fwc.world](http://www.fwc.world)). A major concern was the proposed frequency of plenary meetings. While plenary gatherings used to be held every three years (Triennials), due to costs, time consuming preparations, and the effect of carbon footprints on the environment, a change to the constitution was made to hold such gatherings only once every 8 to 10 years.

This would allow for possibly only 2 more World Plenaries before the 100th anniversary of FWCC in 2037. Less frequent meetings will affect older Friends' future participation and institutional memory from plenary to plenary. Friends expressed a fervent hope that full Plenary Meetings can be held more often, hopefully in six to eight years. Meanwhile all Friends are encouraged to actively work on opportunities for inter-visitation, cooperation between Sections, and ways to bring Friends together.

### **Section Reports from the Plenary**

The **Section of the Americas** was delighted to host the World Plenary Meeting in Peru. In 2014 the Section of the Americas collaborated with the Europe and Middle East Section to host the Quaker Youth Pilgrimage in Latin America for the first time. In early 2014, instead of an annual meeting, the Section held four consultations in different locations on the theme, "Let the Living Water Flow," which came out of the World Conference. This brought the FWC experience to a much wider range of Friends, who would not be able to travel to a World Plenary or Section meeting.

The Section of the Americas has developed a new strategic plan titled "Weaving the Tapestry" to guide the Section's activities for the next five years. The text is available on the website in English and Spanish.

(Section Secretary: Robin Mohr, Philadelphia YM; Section Clerk: Benigno Sanchez-Eppler, New England YM)

The **Asia West Pacific Section** held a Section gathering in January 2015, hosted by Hong Kong Meeting. The Section is trying to meet challenges of traveling vast distances and responding communication difficulties, whether in face to face visitations or through electronic communication. The Section's

website is in the process of redesign.

The **Europe and Middle East Section** entire region faces challenges from wars, civil unrest, terrorist attacks, and migration of refugees. The Quaker community is small, but it does substantial work in addressing these issues, while the Section helps Friends mutually uphold each other to work more effectively.

The **Africa Section** report highlighted the emergence of new leadership within the Africa Section, including the first woman Clerk of a Kenyan Yearly Meeting. In 2015 World Quaker Day was celebrated in 14 Yearly Meetings, up from three the previous year. The Section seeks ways for Friends to contribute to peace-building and are especially concerned by the ongoing political crisis in Burundi. The Africa Section is deeply grateful for the support its members received to attend the 2016 World Plenary.

### **LEYM Attenders Participation**

Rosemary Coffey co-facilitated a Home Group of English/Spanish/ French speakers. Bill Lefler employed his computer skills to help with technology needs during the conference. As an un-programmed Friend, Clémence Mershon co-led a Home Group with a programmed Friend from Kenya, using her language skills in English, French, and Spanish to facilitate communication. She also served as an interpreter between French and Spanish in her Consultation Group, as well as using her interpretation skills throughout the Plenary.

In addition to participating as an LEYM Representative, I (Jana Norlin) answered the call to serve as the bilingual co-coordinator of the Pastoral Care Center. I helped plan for the Center by Skype calls with my co-coordinator in England. Arriving early at the Plenary, I helped plan and translate guidelines, make schedules, and train volunteers. I supervised five shifts at the Pastoral Care Center and wore a sash to announce that I was on call for Pastoral Care throughout the entire Plenary. I also informally interpreted between English and Spanish throughout the Plenary at all times and circumstances. Such interpretation facilitated interactive fellowship for strengthening relationships and forming new friendships. Having attended FWCC events for the past 12 consecutive years including the World Conference in Kenya, aided me in bridging cultural differences. Pastoral care for the spectrum of participants ranged from listening, discussing, praying, laugh-ing, helping with health issues, providing resources, and making connections with others, to providing a spiritual ‘safe place’ with tea and cookies. Confusion, tears, joy, revelation, and healing were experienced in the Care Center. I was especially touched by talking with Friends from Russia, who were so happy for spiritual connection, because they feel like “fish out of water” as Friends in their society. As this was my third time to be in Peru, I was better prepared to be of assistance to others before, during, and after the Plenary. Helping others multiplied the blessings that I received in unexpected ways. There are far too many special encounters that I could relate than this report can contain. I am humbly grateful for so much support from Lake Erie Yearly Meeting to have had the honor of increasing my skills through this experience of stewardship to our diverse Quaker family. I can witness that God’s loving Spirit was truly with us.

Looking forward, FWCC invites every Quaker Meeting and Church from around the world to celebrate World Quaker Day on October 2, 2016. As the sun rises in each area of the world, remember that Quakers are worshipping in every time zone, as we are united in love when we hold each other in prayer and thanksgiving as our songs of praise resound around the world.

To read the FWCC World Plenary Epistle, follow this link: <http://fwcc.world/plenary-2016/epistle-from-2016-friends-world-committee-for-consultation-world-plenary-international-representatives-meeting>

### **YM2016-17 Sexual Abuse Prevention Task Force**

Joann Neuroth, Clerk, reported for the Sexual Abuse Task Force, which was created two years ago to consider how best we might help LEYM address sexual misconduct within the youth programs of LEYM. It presented its work at our Annual Sessions last year. At that time we directed the committee to continue its work, and to develop a draft policy for consideration by LEYM.

The Sexual Abuse Task Force worked to define guidelines to create clear safety boundaries and

expectations within which we can nurture a trust that will free both children and adults from worry or wariness about potential abusive behavior and false accusations. These recommendations supplement, not replace, LEYM's current policy directed at reporting.

The recommendations include:

- An annual educational session as preparation for individuals working with the young Friends program
- Reference checks for volunteers from the clerk or designee of the home Monthly Meeting
- Staffing each age group, as far as possible, with a minimum of two individuals who have attended the education session and have references, and
- Having all participants (adults and children) stay within sight of the group at all time.

Special helpers, who do not meet the policy guidelines, may supplement but not replace regular staff and should never be alone with one child.

The Task Force, after consulting with the current child care workers, reports that they are comfortable with the proposed guidelines.

The Task Force has created a one-page summary of the policy, suitable for distribution, to inform the wider community about the policy.

Friends approved the policy, with two modifications: (1) adding that an equivalent Quaker reference check is permitted for Friends who are not connected with a Monthly Meeting, and (2) renaming the policy "Child and Sexual Abuse Prevention Policy."

We ask the Task Force to continue working for another year to create the educational session it proposes, and charge the Executive Committee with developing practical recommendations for implementation, including the specific wording and location to add this to our Policies & Procedures, for our approval at a future meeting. A copy of the proposed policy follows:

### **Proposed Policy on Sexual Abuse Prevention for LEYM**

June 12, 2016

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting intends to provide for our young Friends a recurring community in which opportunities abound for authentic intra- and inter-generational relationships full of spontaneity, warmth, trust, curiosity, reflection, and joy. To do that, we realize we must provide some clear safety boundaries and expectations within which both children and adults can be freed from worry or wariness about potential abusive behavior of any kind and also about being falsely accused. For trust of the kind we envision to flourish, we need to take care to create an environment that eliminates unnecessary risks and dangers. We recognize that no policy can guarantee to eliminate all risk of child abuse. However, we believe that this policy is a reasonable way toward building the community we are seeking.

This policy applies to any time that children are in the organized youth program. Parents or guardians are responsible for their own children during all other hours. The Children's Program Coordinator or other program staff shall clearly advise parents, guardians, and young Friends of the times covered by the organized program.

This policy supplements LEYM's current policy ( LEYM Policies & Procedures, Appendix F. Policy for Reports of Child Abuse Made at Yearly [Annual] Meeting, Adopted June 17, 1995), which addresses how an incident of suspected abuse should be handled and reported.

#### **1. An educational session about this policy will be presented annually as a required preparation for anyone who will be working with the young Friends program.**

Volunteers who work with young Friends shall participate before beginning each year's program in an educational session that matter -of-factly outlines the risk of various kinds of abuse (intentional or otherwise), why these strategies have been designed to mitigate those risks, and the importance of being

able to talk frankly about situations that don't feel right.

Attendees at Yearly Meeting sessions all get a brief explanation of our practices in their orientation materials and an invitation to attend this session. Anyone who is considering answering a call for one-time or last-minute volunteers ("special helper" – see section 3) is strongly encouraged to attend this session.

**RATIONALE:** Done well, such a session can help shift the topics of safety, abuse, and sexuality out of the realm of hushed dread and unspoken fear into the matter-of-fact domain of known risks that can be managed and avoided. Asking people to repeat attendance at this (short) presentation regularly ensures that everyone involved during a given year has the same information from the same source.

**2. Volunteers who work with young Friends must receive a reference from the clerk or designee of their Monthly Meeting.**

- A. If the Monthly Meeting has a process for approving child caregivers or youth workers, the reference may simply state that the volunteer has been approved under that Meeting's process.
- B. Otherwise, the clerk or designee shall answer the following questions:
  - 1. How long has the applicant been an active member/attender of your Meeting?
  - 2. Do you believe your Meeting has a sufficiently close relationship with the applicant that you would know if there was reason to be concerned about his/her working with children?
  - 3. Do you or your Meeting have any knowledge about the applicant that would suggest she/he would be inappropriate as a youth and child care worker?
- C. Those organizing the youth program shall allow sufficient time in planning and recruiting volunteers to assure that references are received and considered before the program begins.

**RATIONALE:** Formally establishing such connections ensures that a relative stranger does not become part of the teaching team merely because it would seem awkward to ask for "credentials" for someone we don't know well. We rely on each Meeting's discernment of whom they trust with their own youth, and on the discernment of youth program organizers as they consider potential volunteers.

**3. As far as possible, at least two volunteers who have completed the preparation described in #1 and #2 above should always be with any group of children under LEYM's care.**

- A. Those planning staffing levels should keep in mind the possibility of emergency situations and other unexpected occurrences, and consider staffing at higher than the absolute minimum level if possible.
- B. Adults who are not approved as child-care volunteers under this policy may be recruited to help for one specific time period or project ("special helpers"). Such persons should supplement – not replace – the approved staff and should never be alone with one child or young person.
- C. We recognize that, on occasion, a situation may occur that leaves only one adult volunteer with a group of children. It is especially important in these situations that Section 4, requiring all adults and children to stay in sight of the group, be adhered to. If feasible, a special helper may be called in to help if only one adult would otherwise be present with the group.

**RATIONALE:** The presence of two sets of caregiver eyes at all times helps ensure not only doubled awareness of what's going on, but also increased availability of listening ears in case a child wants to talk about something that leaves him or her uneasy. It also provides the adults involved with a witness in case of potential accusations of abusive behavior. We believe everyone will be safer with this standard – even if thoughtful judgment leads to occasional brief exceptions.

**4. Everyone involved in LEYM Young Friends' programs – adult volunteers, special helpers, and participating children – should agree to stay within sight of the group at all times.**

This means that no two people are ever alone together behind a closed door. This doesn't preclude in-depth, one-on-one conversations; it just means that they happen in sight of other people. This safety practice should be included among other expectations that are matter-of-factly established and regularly reinforced with participating young Friends. For example:

- a. We play safely and peacefully at all times.
- b. We use kind words to everyone.
- c. We listen to adult directions the first time asked.
- d. We keep hands and feet to ourselves. We check to be sure it's ok before touching someone.
- e. We stay within sight of the rest of the group at all times.
- f. We tell an adult if we are uncomfortable with anything another person says to us or does to us.

**RATIONALE:** agreement the Friends' a public one, thus minimizing opportunities for either adult-with-child or child-with-child abusive behavior. Including the safety practice among other expectations keeps it matter-of-fact, minimizing fear-based warnings.

### *Saturday Morning*

#### **YM2016-18 Epistle**

Assistant Clerk Sally Weaver Sommer read the epistle from the 2016 Annual Sessions of Ireland Yearly Meeting. The implications of the increasingly global meaning of the word neighbor was a theme throughout their gathering, as they reported on participation in the FWCC World Plenary in Peru, considered the question of "Who is my neighbor" in a European context, and reflected on homelessness at home. They encouraged Friends everywhere to engage in "unreasonable optimism," to welcome conflict rather than avoid it, because it offers the potential for compassion, creativity, and innovation, and to work individually and collectively to assist those on the margins of our society and to address the causes of inequality in our communities.

#### **YM2016-19 Welcome and Introductions**

We welcomed Elaine Ruscetta, our FGC visitor. She shared that FGC has come to realize that it needs to plan for a program that is sustained by annual giving, rather than periodic large fund drives. She noted how challenging this year of pruning has been for FGC, and encourages feedback from Yearly Meetings to ensure that their pruning encourages new growth. They are focusing, going forward, on identifying how best to use their resources to further collaboration, growth, and inclusiveness.

Friends raised up ways in which FGC may uniquely serve Friends, including making Quaker books available, connecting teens and young adult friends to each other and other Friends, supporting Friends of Color, encouraging other Friends to grow into challenging white privilege when we encounter it, and supporting the now independent Friends Couples Enrichment program.

#### **YM2016-20 Bookstore**

Valerie Groszmann reported that a focus in the bookstore this year is on fiction, particularly for readers ready for books more advanced than picture books.

#### **YM2016-21 Ministry & Nurture Committee**

Paula Deming reported for the Ministry & Nurture Committee, which includes oversight of the Ministry and Scholarship Fund and the Spiritual Formation program.

This year, the Ministry & Nurture Committee considered a travel minute that was written by one of our Monthly Meetings for a Friend who has been traveling with a concern for sustainability. Work on this matter will continue.

#### **Scholarship Fund**

This year, Ministry & Nurture received no requests for scholarship funds. It encourages Friends who are following a leading that may be aided by scholar-ship funds to bring it to their Monthly Meeting; after

seasoning, the Monthly Meeting may then bring a request for a scholarship to the Ministry & Nurture Committee.

### **Spiritual Formation**

The Spiritual Formation theme last year was "Experiment with Light," focusing on a Quaker-based guided meditation process. A total of 35 Friends participated in either the fall retreat at the Weber Retreat Center in Adrian, Michigan, or the spring retreat hosted by Ann Arbor Monthly Meeting. The experience for participants has been overwhelmingly inspirational and rewarding.

The theme for the coming year is "Spiritual Companions from the Past." The leader for the retreats is Della Stanley-Green, a recorded Friends Minister from Western Yearly Meeting.

The fall retreat will be held September 9-11, 2016, at the Weber Retreat Center in Adrian, Michigan. The spring retreat will be May 5, 2017. The Spiritual Formation Planning Committee will be seeking a Monthly Meeting to host this retreat.

### **State of the Meeting Reports**

Ministry & Nurture received State of the Meeting reports from 17 Monthly Meetings and 2 Worship Groups, an increase of 4 from last year. These reports are included below, and all Friends are encouraged to read them. Strong themes emerged of an increasing awareness of racial injustice, care for the quality of silent worship, and engagement in a variety of service projects.

The 2015 Annual Query was answered by more Meetings and Worship Groups than in any previous year for which statistics are available. Even though the Ministry & Nurture Committee has come to realize that this long-standing tradition is not formally part of its work, it is clear that Meetings still find the practice of answering an annual query a rewarding experience.

The practice will continue for this year, and the committee offers the following query for the coming year:

*All Meetings have a welcoming message, whether they are aware of it or not. What is yours?*

### **Report of the Ministry & Nurture Committee**

The Ministry & Nurture Committee has several charges. First, we administer the Ministry Scholarship Fund. Second, we hold the Spiritual Formation program under our care. Third, we collect and assess the annual State of the Meeting Reports.

We also consider other matters that the Yearly Meeting Clerk asks us to take under our care. This year, we have considered a travel minute that was written by one of our Monthly Meetings for a Friend who has been traveling with a concern for sustainability. This work will continue.

#### **Ministry Scholarship Fund**

This year, we received no requests for funds. We encourage Friends who are following a leading that may be aided by scholarship funds to bring it to their Monthly Meeting; after seasoning, the Monthly Meeting may then bring a request for a scholarship to this committee.

#### **Spiritual Formation**

The theme for the 2015-2016 Spiritual Formation retreats was "Experiment with Light." The theme for the coming year is "Spiritual Companions from the Past: John Woolman, Caroline Stephen, and Howard Thurman," with Della Stanley-Green as leader. The fall retreat will be held September 9-11, 2016, at the Weber Retreat Center in Adrian, Michigan. The spring retreat will be May 5, 2017. Mathilda Navias, clerk of the Spiritual Formation Committee, is now going to share her report. [The report follows below.]

**LEYM Spiritual Formation Program  
Report to LEYM Ministry & Nurture Committee  
July 2016**

2015-2016 Year

The theme for the 2015-2016 retreats was "Experiment with Light." We held a weekend retreat in the fall at the Weber Retreat Center in Adrian, Mich., and a Saturday retreat in the spring hosted by Ann Arbor Friends. The leader was JoAnn Seaver of Philadelphia.

There was a total of 34 participants in all plus the leaders; 26 in the fall, and 16 in the spring. They were from 6 meetings: 5 in Michigan (Ann Arbor, Birmingham, Detroit, Pine River, & Red Cedar), and 1 in Ohio: Broadmead. Last year, we had a total of 35 participants; the previous year we had 26.

In the evaluations for the retreats, Friends wrote:

- It was a great intro to the program and gave me ideas about how to deepen my practice.
- I came to the retreat: For spiritual rest in a safe group.
- What I found most useful about the retreat: The personal connections and worshipful opportunities in a peaceful, beautiful setting.
- What I found most useful about the retreat: The clarification of what I need to attend to as a new chapter of my life opens.
- I feel like I was able to do some deep spiritual work and healing during this retreat. I have insights about how to carry on my healing process, and spiritual insights that I can apply to continue spiritual growth.

2016-2017 Year

The theme for the coming year is "Spiritual Companions from the Past: John Woolman, Caroline Stephen, and Howard Thurman." As we learn from these spiritual companions of previous centuries, we will also learn from one another as we offer and receive the gifts of spiritual companionship. The leader for the retreats is Della Stanley-Green, a recorded minister in Western Yearly Meeting. She led our 2013-14 Spiritual Formation retreats that focused on spiritual disciplines. The fall retreat will be held September 9-11, 2016, at the Weber Retreat Center in Adrian, Michigan. The spring retreat will be held May 5, 2017, hosted by a Monthly Meeting. We encourage members of the Ministry & Nurture Committee to participate in the program. Planning Committee The committee currently consists of Mathilda Navias, clerk (Broadmead), Aran Reinhart (Broadmead), Rebecca Hatton (Ann Arbor), and Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham). We do not have a liaison with the Ministry & Nurture Committee. We would be happy for you to designate one.

Mathilda Navias, Clerk  
Spiritual Formation Planning Committee

The committee has brought flyers and brochures related to the two retreats for Friends attending the Annual Sessions.

**State of the Meeting Reports**

M&N received State of the Meeting reports from 17 Monthly Meetings and two Worship Groups, which is an increase of four over last year. As we read these reports, we noted major themes of awareness of racial injustice, quality of silent worship, and service projects. We encourage Friends to read these reports when they become available in the Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Annual Records. We found the reports rich with creative ideas we want to take back to our own Meetings. You may want to find out how Wooster celebrates alternative Christmas, what Pittsburgh's Pamphlets and Pastries are, how small Meetings reorganize, what Meetings are part of interfaith groups, and how Kalamazoo handles gangs in their Peace Park.



Many Meetings began taking action against racial injustice. For example, Kalamazoo started a study group on the book, *The New Jim Crow*, by Michelle Alexander; Oberlin read Ta Ne-hisi Coates's *Between the World and Me*; Birmingham found after discussions on white privilege that "some hearts are more tender as a result." Meetings also wrote of actions such as meeting with local police, watching relevant films followed by discussion and worship sharing, and work-ing in prisons and with released prisoners.

Meetings reported on both vocal and silent worship. Detroit wrote of "authentic and inspiring vocal ministry"; Broadmead shared a concern that "We often don't have the language to express our inmost thoughts"; and Ann Arbor questions "whether we might be failing our witness to truth by avoiding expressions of strong emotion that are part of the human experience."

Service projects included: Feeding and sewing for the homeless, delivering water to Flint, Michigan, providing financial help for utility bills, fund raising for a school in India and a peace center in Kenya, serving in a soup kitchen, and providing legal counsel for undocumented workers from Central America.

### **Annual Query**

It has come to the attention of Ministry & Nurture that creating an annual query for our Monthly Meetings is a long-standing tradition but not part of our actual job description. Since this tradition began, LEYM has developed a set of queries, which is available on our website or in pamphlet form to any individual or any Meeting. Nevertheless, our Meetings still find the practice of answering an annual query to be a rewarding experience. Many of the responses to the 2015 Annual Query reflected appreciation for the nudge to look at the issue of racism and the invisibility of white privilege.

This year, we have chosen to continue the tradition and offer you the following 2016 Annual Query:

*All Meetings have a welcoming message, whether they are aware of it or not. What is yours?*

### **YM2016-22 Naming Committee**

Thomas Taylor reported for the Naming Committee. He noted that the possibility that the Nominating Committee might be required to be responsible for reference checks made the work of the Naming Committee more challenging.

The Naming Committee recommends adding:

- Ellerie Brownfain, Birmingham Monthly Meeting, to serve through 2019
- Bill Wartens, Birmingham Monthly Meeting, to serve through 2019

They will join the continuing members of the Nominating Committee:

- Janet Dando, Akron Monthly Meeting, serving through 2018
- Linda Mills, Kalamazoo Monthly Meeting, serving through 2018
- Clémence Ravaçon Mershon, Erie Worship Group, Clerk, serving through 2017
- Paul Helbling, Broadmead Monthly Meeting, serving through 2017

Friends approved.

### **YM2016-23 Nominating Committee**

Abbey Pratt-Harrington, Clerk of the Nominating Committee, gave a preliminary report for the committee. A final slate will be presented for our consideration at our Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business on Sunday. The Nominating Committee is particularly interested in identifying an Assistant Clerk and teachers for our Children & Youth programs. Friends who are interested in formal service to LEYM should approach Nominating Committee.

### **YM2016-24 Earthcare Committee**

Russ Adams, Co-Clerk, reported for the Earthcare Committee.

### Sustainability

Russ began by sharing the second paragraph from the Sustainability Consultation Report to the FWCC Plenary, which notes that “our beloved mother Earth ... is sick and in need of our care,” and that “our faith as Quakers is inseparable from our care for the health of the planet.” Russ shared the recommendations of the Consultation that all Yearly Meetings initiate at least two concrete sustainability actions, support individuals and groups in their Meetings led to do sustainability work, and support the sustainability work done by Quaker organizations.

Consistent with this call, the committee recommends that LEYM approve the “Shared Quaker Statement: Facing the Challenge of Climate Change,” a statement adopted by more than 80 Friends’ bodies. The Quaker United Nations Office is curating the endorsements. The statement follows.

### **A Shared Quaker Statement: Facing the Challenge of Climate Change**

*“It would go a long way to caution and direct people in their use of the world, that they were better studied and knowing in the Creation of it. For how could [they] find the confidence to abuse it, while they should see the great Creator stare them in the face, in all and every part of it?”*

William Penn, 1693

As Quakers, we are called to work for the peaceable Kingdom of God on the whole Earth, in right sharing with all peoples. We recognize a moral duty to cherish Creation for future generations.

We call on our leaders to make the radical decisions needed to create a fair, sufficient and effective international climate change agreement.

As Quakers, we understand anthropogenic climate change (climate change due to human activities) to be a symptom of a greater challenge: how to live sustainably and justly on this Earth.

We recognize that the current rise of greenhouse gas emissions is leading to an unprecedented rate of increase in global average surface temperature of extreme detriment to the Earth’s ecosystems and species, including human beings.

We recognize that catastrophic global climate change is not inevitable if we choose to act urgently.

We recognize a personal and collective responsibility to ensure that the poorest and most vulnerable peoples now, and all our future generations, do not suffer as a consequence of our actions. We see this as a call to conscience.

We recognize the connections between climate change and global economic injustice as well as unprecedented levels of consumption, and question assumptions of unlimited material growth on a planet with limited natural resources.

We recognize that most anthropogenic greenhouse gas emissions are created by fossil fuel combustion. We recognize that our increasing population continues to pursue fossil fuel-dependent economic growth. We recognize that the Earth holds more fossil fuel reserves than are safe to burn, and that the vast majority of fossil fuel reserves must remain in the ground if we are to prevent the catastrophic consequences of climate change. We therefore question profoundly the continued investment in, and subsidizing of, fossil fuel extraction.

We seek to nurture a global human society that prioritizes the well-being of people over profit, and lives in right relationship with our Earth; a peaceful world with fulfilling employment, clean air and water, renewable energy, and healthy thriving communities and ecosystems.

As members of this beautiful human family, we seek meaningful commitments from our leaders and ourselves, to address climate change for our shared future, the Earth and all species, and the generations to come. We see this Earth as a stunning gift that supports life. It is our only home. Let us care for it together.

Please contact Lindsey Cook at [lfcook@quino.ch](mailto:lfcook@quino.ch) if you need more information, or wish to add your

Quaker group.

Latest signature update: February 2016

\* \* \* \* \*

In view of the concern that catastrophic climate change may already be inevitable, the committee proposes that we adopt the statement and, in addition, the following minute:

“We agree with the concerns expressed here, but are deeply troubled that catastrophic global climate change is already occurring, requiring far-reaching and transformational action to change our direction.”

Friends asked for time for reflection and discernment about the statement and minute. We will bring the question back to a future Meeting for Worship for action.

#### Planned Parenthood

The Earthcare Committee brought a minute in support of Planned Parenthood for our consideration, namely:

(Based on the 2016 Intermountain Yearly Meeting Minute in Support of Planned Parenthood. Third paragraph is taken from the Durango Colorado Monthly Meeting Minute in Support of Planned Parenthood.)

#### **Minute in Support of Planned Parenthood**

Planned Parenthood has recently come under extreme criticism. Current political efforts to defund Planned Parenthood would be disastrous. It would make it impossible for millions of Americans to obtain preventive services such as cancer screening and family planning.

Reproductive health care is a lawful human right that allows individuals to choose how to control their fertility and improve their health.

Family planning has slowed the growth rate of the human population. With fewer people on the planet there are fewer emitters, and thus fewer emissions. Therefore, family planning has slowed the rate of climate change. Indeed, the most effective and least expensive way to slow climate change is by supporting family planning.

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends recognizes the importance of Planned Parenthood clinics to millions of men and women in the country. We support those clinics throughout the U.S. and recognize the staff members for the important services they provide.

In addition to voicing our support of Planned Parenthood, we ask ourselves as members and attenders to consider taking the following actions:

- Write Letters to the Editor and OpEds supporting reproductive health in general and specifically supporting Planned Parenthood.
- Write to our legislators supporting reproductive health in general and specifically supporting Planned Parenthood.
- Volunteer to escort patients or to help in other needed ways at a Planned Parenthood clinic.
- Donate financial support to local Planned Parenthood clinics.

\* \* \* \* \*

There was strong unity in support of universal access to family planning. Friends expressed a need for additional discernment about naming Planned Parenthood specifically, addressing Planned Parenthood's connection to abortion, expressly identifying the Quaker testimonies that might lead us to make such a statement, identifying humans as “emitters,” the use of binary gender language, and the factual accuracy of some of the assertions in the current proposed minute.

The Earthcare Committee is asked to season this proposal further.

### **Golden Rule Full Sustainability**

Golden rule words from all of the world's faiths seem to call for a full sustainability movement. A successful full sustainability movement could end shortages, soothe passions that urge violence, and, paraphrasing George Fox on slavery, let us do for tomorrow's children as we would be willing to have them or others do to us if we were in their place.

*Saturday Afternoon*

### **YM2016-25 Peace Committee**

Lucia Kalinosky and Helen Fox reported for the Peace Committee.

The Peace Committee reports it engaged in a phone check-in with Monthly Meetings, and had productive conversations with approximately 2/3 of them. The calls were received with enthusiasm, and a significantly larger number were reached than in the prior phone check-ins. Many are engaged in work around racial justice and were particularly grateful for this year's annual LEYM query, which precipitated tough but important conversations they might not otherwise have had.

From these conversations, it became clear that Monthly Meetings might more naturally reach out to the committee for support in their work on racial justice, immigration, and other issues that are inextricably linked with peace, if the committee name included "Justice." It recommends that LEYM change the name of the committee to the Peace & Justice Committee.

Friends approved changing the name. Executive Committee is asked to ensure that the Policies & Procedures Manual is updated to reflect this change.

The committee brings to our attention the issue of racial bias at Friends General Conference. Each year, the Friends of Color hold a retreat in advance of the Gathering. This year, and in prior years, Friends of Color reported not feeling entirely welcome on the site and in Gathering. This year a particular concern was that of being treated poorly by campus security. When Friends of Color were asked to be a presence on the stage at the opening worship, they felt they were asked to be a token to demonstrate the diversity of Friends General Conference while simultaneously, year after year, having their concerns ignored. Friends of Color chose not to attend the opening worship session this year, holding an alternative worship instead. In their absence, Barry Crossno, General Secretary of Friends General Conference, read a statement to the white Quakers at Gathering, written in consultation with Friends of Color, raising concerns about racism. The statement questioned the discernment process by which the site was chosen. The Gathering was located in an all-white town and required a significant drive through rural areas in which many did not feel safe.

The Peace Committee recommends that we support the request by the Friends of FGC/Spiritual and Institutional Accountability Working Group for an institutional audit to identify and recommend ways to correct any structural racism within the organization.

An institutional audit is conducted by a neutral outside professional body that reviews the organization, systemic policies, decision making, culture, implicit bias, and/or patterns of institutional racism. AFSC has recently undergone an institutional audit. With its eyes opened, AFSC found it valuable, but also that the audit recommendations did not go far enough; it will be making changes beyond those identified.

The Peace Committee recommends that we adopt the following minute:

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting supports the request by Friends of FGC/ Spiritual and Institutional Accountability Working Group for an institutional audit of Friends General Conference to identify and provide recommendations to correct any structural racism and/or implicit bias within the organization.

Friends **approved** the minute.

The committee further suggests that LEYM take this opportunity to lead by example. Peace Committee has begun working on how we might actively reflect on our own strengths and limitations in terms of internalized bias, institutional racism, and inclusion of Friends of Color. Please speak to the Peace Committee if you have ideas about how we can become more welcoming and inclusive to Friends of Color. The committee is especially interested in hearing from Friends of Color about their experiences within LEYM. We were reminded of the need to make ourselves aware of our own mixed history, and of the different – often still hidden – experiences of people of color who are not Black. The committee will season all it hears and expects to bring recommendations to us at the 2017 Lake Erie Annual Meeting.

One member and one participant from the Peace Committee were able to attend the Quaker Palestine Israel Network gathering at Pendle Hill this spring, one of whom was supported by travel assistance from LEYM.

### **YM2016-26 Treasurer's Report**

Jeff Cooper, clerk of Finance Committee, reported on behalf of the Treasurer. He noted that LEYM received, and is grateful for, contributions from every Monthly Meeting and one individual during the 2015-16 fiscal year. Our investment funds in Friends Fiduciary Quaker Green Fund declined, but generated dividend income of \$1,065.

During the past fiscal year, our income nearly met the amount budgeted. We spent approximately \$20,252, about \$1,200 less than our total income, even after replenishing the Travel Fund. Our balance going into the 2016-17 fiscal year is \$68,628.72. The report and relevant financial statements follow.

#### **Treasurer's Report, 2016 Annual Meeting**

The financial situation is positive – another fiscal year in which we came out somewhat ahead, without really trying – or even wanting – to do so. With the assistance of Steve Morehouse, I will present the report on four sheets, showing Income, Expenses, Status of Funds, and Accounts. Twenty copies are available for those who want them.

**Sheet 1: Income to the General Fund.** All Meetings contributed, and we thank them. Contributions from Meetings and one individual totaled \$22,821, 1% lower than the \$23,040 we budgeted. The dividends from the Friends Fiduciary Corporation's Quaker Green Fund (\$1,065) were slightly higher than budgeted, so the income for which we have budget lines met (or nearly met) expectations.

We don't attempt to predict changes in portfolio value of our accounts in the Quaker Green Fund, and this year they declined considerably; our larger account, which affects the balance in our General Fund, lost \$2,454. Nonetheless, we still had a total income of \$21,431.50.

**Sheet 2: Expenses from the General Fund.** First let's look at left half of the sheet, where for each budget line we see the amount budgeted, the actual expenses, and the percentage of the budgeted amount spent. The total of expenses is only \$18,524.71, or 76% of what was budgeted.

Especially notable is the Travel line, where we spent only \$1,034, or 26% of the budgeted \$4,000. Too, Publications & Archives spent only \$1,986, or 62% of its budgeted \$3,200. All the numbers with a footnote 2 represent subsidies into funds, which we'll look at on the next sheet.

You may recall that, when we established the Travel fund two years ago, we described it as a cushion, to be drawn on in years when travel expenses are high and replenished when they are low. Last fiscal year we drew it down. This year, with travel expenses so low, we were able to replenish it with an end-of-year adjustment of \$1,727 (shown in Column I). Even with this additional expense of transferring money into a fund, our total expenses are only \$20,252.58, less than our total income by nearly \$1,200.

**Sheet 3: Funds.** The columns here show for each fund a starting balance (for the fiscal year), income, subsidies/transfers, expenses, ending balance, and, finally, in Column J, desirable floors and ceilings for most funds – a recommended range established by Finance Committee (here expressed in thousands of

dollars). The best overall picture of our financial health is shown in Column H, the end-of-year balances. You can see that, with one exception, all funds, including the General Fund, have solid balances. And if you compare columns H and J, you see that most funds are near or above their recommended ceilings.

The “one exception” is the FWCC Travel Fund, which supports travel expenses of our representatives attending periodic inter-national FWCC gatherings. Through a subsidy, we build this fund every year, but, when there is an international gathering, we spend a lot, and that was the case this year. Our expenses for this fund were \$5,700, of which \$4,500 supported two LEYM Friends and \$1,200 helped Friends from less affluent parts of the world attend the gathering. This year we’ll start to rebuild.

**Sheet 4: Accounts.** This sheet shows the accounts where our money is held – roughly half in a bank in Bluffton and half in two accounts with the Friends Fiduciary Corporation. As Mike [Hinshaw] is a conscientious treasurer, the totals in our accounts, \$68,628.72, match the total of the amounts in our various funds to the penny. Note that these also indicate an increase in our resources of \$614 over the year, despite the loss in value of our FFC accounts and the large amount spent on the FWCC gathering in Peru.

**GENERAL FUND INCOME – 2015-2016 Fiscal Year**

<b>Meeting (Giver)</b>	<b>Amount</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Budget</b>
Akron Friends Meeting	220.00	1-Aug	
Ann Arbor Friends Meeting	4,064.00	3-Feb	
Athens Friends Meeting	2,000.00	19-Sep	
Birmingham Friends Meeting	480.00	23-Nov	
Broadmead Friends Meeting	1,088.00	3-Feb	
Cleveland Friends Meeting	1,504.00	11-Apr	
Delaware Friends Meeting	384.00	11-Jan	
Detroit Friends Meeting	672.00	14-Oct	
Grand Rapids Friends Meeting	576.00	3-Feb	
Granville Friends Meeting	900.00	31-Aug	
Holland Friends Meeting	200.00	21-Mar	
Kalamazoo Friends Meeting	1,056.00	1-Mar	
Kent Friends Meeting	697.00	4-Jan	
Mid-Ohio Valley Friends Mtg	182.00	2-Apr	
North Columbus Friends Mtg	800.00	16-Nov	
Oberlin Friends Meeting	784.00	16-Nov	
Pine River Friends Meeting	352.00	3-Feb	
Pittsburgh Friends Meeting	4,480.00	13-May	
Red Cedar Friends Meeting	1,792.00	21-Mar	
Wooster Friends Meeting	480.00	11-Jan	
Individuals	110.28	28-Dec	
<hr/>			
<b>Total Contributions</b>	<b>22,821.28</b>		<b>23,040.00</b>
FFC Dividends, Base Account	1,064.71	30-Jun	1,050.00
FFC change port value, + or -, Base Acc.	(2,454.49)	30-Jun	
<b>TOTAL INCOME</b>	<b>21,431.50</b>		<b>24,090.00</b>

Individual Budget lines, 2015-2016 Budget Year						
ACCOUNT	BUDGET	ACTUAL EXPENSE	EXPENSE % OF BUDGET	Year-End Transfers to funds	Total After Adjusted Expense	In-kind & Restricted Donations
Travel	4,000.00	1,034.10	26%	1,727.87	2,761.97	554.00
Office	50.00	88.00	176%		88.00	
Contract worker	2,000.00	2,249.34	112%		2,249.34	
Finance <sup>1</sup>	50.00	66.90	134%		66.90	
Publications	3,200.00	1,986.37	62%		1,986.37	
Advancement	100.00		0%		0.00	
Ministry & Nurture	100.00		0%		0.00	
Clerk	300.00		0%		0.00	
FGC	4,500.00	4,500.00	100%		4,500.00	
Michigan Friends Center	1,000.00	1,000.00	100%		1,000.00	
Records project	100.00	100.00	100%		100.00	
FWCC Travel Fund <sup>2</sup>	1,500.00	1,500.00	100%		1,500.00	
Youth Activities Fund <sup>2</sup>	1,000.00	1,000.00	100%		1,000.00	
H. S. Teen Retreat Fund <sup>2</sup>	1,600.00		0%		0.00	
Spiritual Formation Fund <sup>2</sup>	800.00	800.00	100%		800.00	
Friends School in Detroit	0.00				0.00	
Olney Friends School	2,000.00	2,000.00	100%		2,000.00	
Consultation Fund <sup>2</sup>	0.00				0.00	
Scholarship Fund for Ministry <sup>1</sup>	500.00	500.00	100%		500.00	
Summer Work Project	1,200.00	1,200.00			1,200.00	
Insurance	500.00	500.00	100%		500.00	
<b>Totals</b>	<b>24,500.00</b>	<b>18,524.71</b>		<b>1,727.87</b>	<b>20,252.58</b>	<b>554.00</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes banking costs

<sup>2</sup> Subsidy from General Fund to other funds

Summary of Funds 2015-2016 Fiscal Year						
Fund Name	Starting Balance	Income or Change	Subsidy from General Fund	Cash Expenses	End Balance	Fund Floors and ceilings (000's)
General Fund <sup>1</sup>	24,706.13	21,431.50		20,252.58	25,885.05	na / 30
Granville Youth Fund <sup>2</sup>	7,257.07	(321.36)		246.43	6,689.28	na / na
Annual Meeting Fund <sup>3</sup>	2,732.17	16,592.02		16,003.30	3,320.89	1 / 3
Youth Activities Fund <sup>45</sup>	6,407.16	821.43	1,000.00	2,162.50	6,066.09	4 / 8
High School Teen retreat Fund <sup>4</sup>	8,074.39				8,074.39	3 / 6
Spiritual Formation Fund <sup>4</sup>	2,327.20	4,650.00	800.00	4,749.58	3,027.62	.5 / 1.5
FWCC Travel Fund <sup>4</sup>	4,739.83		1,500.00	5,700.00	539.83	na / 6
Consultation Fund <sup>4</sup>	3,143.68				3,143.68	.5 / 2
Ministry Scholarship Fund <sup>4</sup>	1,500.00		500.00		2,000.00	na / 2
Summer Work Proj Fund <sup>4</sup>	1,355.00	446.55	1,200.00	619.66	2,381.89	na / 2
Travelling Ministries Fund	3,500.00				3,500.00	na / na
Travel Contingency Fund <sup>46</sup>	2,272.13		1,727.87		4,000.00	2 / 4
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>68,014.76</b>	<b>43,620.14</b>	<b>6,727.87</b>	<b>49,734.05</b>	<b>68,628.72</b>	

<sup>1</sup> Includes line item accounting from Budget plus contributions; also reflects dividends and changes in net portfolio value, FFC base account

<sup>2</sup> Granville Youth Fund is separate FFC account; 'Income or Change' reflects both dividend and change in portfolio value; 'Cash Expense' reflects dividends that have been paid and are then are transferred to Youth Activities Fund

<sup>3</sup> Income includes 861.69 in individual donations

<sup>4</sup> Other funds are managed through accounting and may be subsidized by the corresponding budget lines of the General Fund

<sup>5</sup> Income includes dividends from FFC Granville YF account

<sup>6</sup> Subsidy = Transfer from Travel Budget



## BALANCE SHEET

Location of Assets	CASH ASSETS			Change in Value	
	07/01/15	06/30/16		7/1/2015 - 6/30/2016	
	Beginning	FF Change	End		
	Citizens Nat. Bank, Bluffton, Ohio	29,667.11		32,238.64	2,571.53
	Friends Fiduciary, Base Account	31,090.58		29,700.80	-1,389.78
	> Dividends, Re-Invested		1,064.71		
> Change in Portfolio Value is + or -		-2,454.49			
Friends Fiduciary, Granville YF Account	7,257.07		6,689.28	-567.79	
> Change in Portfolio Value + or -		-567.79			
Subtotal of both FFC accounts	38,347.65	-1,957.57	36,390.08	-1,957.57	
Total Cash Assets	68,014.76	68,628.72		613.96	

Allocation of Assets			
<b>General Fund</b>	24,706.13	25,885.05	1,178.92
<b>Granville Youth Fund</b>	7,257.07	6,689.28	-567.79
<b>Annual Meeting Fund</b>	2,732.17	3,320.89	588.72
<b>Youth Activities Fund</b>	6,407.16	6,066.09	-341.07
<b>High School Teen Retreat Fund</b>	8,074.39	8,074.39	0.00
<b>Spiritual Formation Fund</b>	2,327.20	3,027.62	700.42
<b>FWCC Travel Fund</b>	4,739.83	539.83	-4,200.00
<b>Consultation Fund</b>	3,143.68	3,143.68	0.00
<b>Ministry Scholarship Fund</b>	1,500.00	2,000.00	500.00
<b>Summer. Work Proj Fund</b>	1,355.00	2,381.89	1,026.89
<b>Travelling Ministries Fund</b>	3,500.00	3,500.00	0.00
<b>Travel Contingency Fund</b>	2,272.13	4,000.00	1,727.87
<b>Total All Funds</b>	<b>68,014.76</b>	<b>68,628.72</b>	<b>613.96</b>

**LEYM Budget 2016 - 2017**    **Approved July 30,2016**

**Final**

General Fund Expenses	Act 12-13	FY 2013 -2014		FY 2014-2015		FY 2015-2016		FY 2016-2017	
(* = transfers)	Act 12-13	Bud 13-14	Act 13-14	Budget	Act 14-15	Budget	Act 15-16	Draft Budget	Change from 15-16
Travel	3,972.64	5,000	1546.70	3,000	3000.00	4000	2,762	3,000	-1,000
Office	18.00	50	18.00	50	48.00	50	88	100	50
Contract worker	1,313.29	2,040	938.12	2,040	1638.19	2000	2,249	2,000	0
Finance	229.75	50	40.40	50	11.00	50	67	550	500
Publications	3,371.43	3,200	2030.71	3,000	3083.21	3200	1,986	2,200	-1,000
Advancement	0.00	600	-175.77	600		100	0	100	0
Ministry & Nurture	0.00	300	150.00	300	-324.93	100	0	100	0
Clerk's Fund	27.00	300	0.00	300		300	0	300	0
FGC	4,500.00	4,500	4,500.00	4,500	4,500.00	4500	4,500	6,000	1,500
MFC one-time donation						1000	1,000	0	-1,000
Records project	0.00	200	200.00	100	100.00	100	100	100	0
FWCC Travel*	1,000.00	1,200	1200.00	2,400	2400.00	1500	1,500	1,200	-300
Youth Activity Fund*	1,000.00	1,000	1000.00	1,000	1000.00	1000	1,000	1,000	0
High School Retreat Fund*	4,900.00	6,000	6000.00	6,300	6300.00	1600	0	0	-1,600
Spiritual Formation*	100.00	100	100.00	800	800.00	800	800	300	-500
Friends School in Detroit	4,500.00	4,500	4500.00	4,500	4,500.00	0	0		0
Olney Friends School	600.00	600	600.00	600	600.00	2000	2,000	2,000	0
Consultation Fund*	0.00	0	0.00	0		0	0	0	0
Scholarship Fund for ministry*	1,500.00	1,000	1,000.00	500	500.00	500	500	100	-400
Summer work project				1,200	1200.00	1200	1,200	600	-600
Insurance	500.00	500	500.00	500	500.00	500	500	500	0
Misc. FGC <sup>1</sup> (one time contribution)	-1,212.83	0	-2357.70	0		0	0	1,400	1,400
<b>Total Expense =</b>	<b>26,319.28</b>	<b>31,140</b>	<b>21,790.46</b>	<b>31,740</b>	<b>29,855.47</b>	<b>24500</b>	<b>20,252</b>	<b>21,550</b>	<b>-2,950</b>

Contributions Income	29,543.00	29,000	29,001.00	29,725	29,502.00	23,040	22,821	19,880	-3,160
FFC Dividends Income			738.71	600	955.94	1050	1,065	1,050	0
Other Income		250	4010.91	250		0	0	0	0
<b>Total Income =</b>	<b>29,543.00</b>	<b>29,250</b>	<b>33,750.62</b>	<b>30,575</b>	<b>30,457.94</b>	<b>24,090</b>	<b>23,886</b>	<b>20,930</b>	<b>-3,160</b>

<b>Income - Expenses =</b>	<b>3,223.72</b>	<b>-1,890.00</b>	<b>11,960.16</b>	<b>-1,165</b>	<b>602.47</b>	<b>-410</b>	<b>3,634</b>	<b>-620</b>	<b>-210</b>
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BUDGET UNDERFUNDING. Balance, if needed, comes from General Fund.

Total Contribution / Members=		\$40		\$41		\$32	-\$9	\$28	-\$4
Members=		725		725		720	-5	710	0
Suggested contribution / member=		\$40		\$41		\$32	-\$9	\$28	-\$4

<sup>1</sup> One-time contribution to FGC for institutional audit

## **YM2016-27 Finance Committee**

Jeff Cooper, Clerk, reported for the Finance Committee. He noted small line-item changes to the projected expenses of \$21,800 initially presented at Representative Meeting.

The \$300 decline in the FWCC travel expense line is the net result of a decreasing frequency in FWCC plenaries, and of making an annual contribution to support attendance at FWCC by Friends from less affluent parts of the world. A suggestion was made that the Finance Committee consider equalizing our travel contributions for LEYM and other Friends going forward.

Friends approved sending a \$1,400 check to FGC, earmarked for an institutional audit to identify and provide recommendations to correct any structural racism and/or implicit bias within the organization.

This suggested per-member contribution to LEYM for fiscal year 2016-17 will be \$28.

Friends **approved** the proposed budget, with the changes noted above.

Susan Hartman, Ann Arbor Monthly Meeting, will audit the last two years of financial records of the Yearly Meeting records, an exercise that is undertaken every four years.

## **Finance Committee Report**

### **I. Budget**

At Representative Meeting we presented a budget with total expenses of \$21,800. Since then, we have made small adjustments based on end-of-year figures in the Treasurer's Report and new information. These changes are highlighted in yellow:

Office (up \$50)

Publications (down \$800, based on last year's spending and what we know of plans for this year)

FWCC Travel (down \$300). This was more complex; we subsidize the fund every year, and as the next gathering won't occur for another eight to ten years, we needn't strive to build it up too quickly; on the other hand, we want to add into this line a yearly contribution to support attendance by Friends from less affluent parts of the world (rather than adding a large sum to the budget in the year of the gathering). So we have earmarked this \$1,200 as \$900 toward sending LEYM Friends, and \$300 toward sending Friends from elsewhere. Bear in mind that this figure represents the first year in an eight- to ten-year process; the entire subsidy and its proportions can be adjusted each year as we gain a better idea of the need.

Summer Work Project, down \$600, reflecting low costs this year and the \$2,382 in the supporting fund.

This results in a new total of \$20,150 (down \$1,650). We have re-budgeted income at \$19,510, resulting in a slightly larger deficit of \$640, and relying on a per-member contribution of \$26 (down from \$32 this past year, and down from \$28 proposed at Representative Meeting). This assumes 710 members, down from 720 last year.

Finally, the budget for Travel assumes a per-mile reimbursement rate for driving. Since 2008, this figure has been 35¢ per mile; we are proposing an increased rate of 45¢ per mile.

### **II. Audit of Financial Records.**

It is the responsibility of the Finance Committee to arrange for an audit of Yearly Meeting financial records every four years and when the Treasurer changes. Finance Committee will ask Susan Hartman (Ann Arbor Meeting) to conduct such an audit, covering the period of the last two years. \$500 is included in this year's budget to cover this process. Susan did an audit of our financial records in 2012, and the Finance Committee was extremely pleased with her careful work and clear presentation. This possibility had been discussed with Susan previously, and she is willing to undertake this work.

### **III. Bank Account Signatories.**

Policy states that the Presiding Clerk, Treasurer, and Clerk of the Finance Committee are signatories on our bank account. This has not always been strictly observed, and last summer Sally Weaver Sommer

remained the signatory from the clerks' table when Mike Holaday succeeded her as Presiding Clerk. Having someone who lives in Bluffton, such as Sally, is useful. Moreover, changing a name on the forms is a time-consuming process, involving a long visit to the bank that is difficult to manage for a clerk during Annual Meeting. For expediency's sake, we have agreed to keep the signatories the same for this year, with Mike delegating Sally as a signatory on his behalf. Next year, when there are both a new Presiding Clerk and a new Finance Clerk, we'll need to knuckle under and visit the bank to change the signatories.

### *Sunday Morning*

#### **YM2016-28 Earthcare Committee**

##### Planned Parenthood

Earthcare Committee withdraws its minute on Planned Parenthood, and will season the concern further, in light of the reflections it received yesterday.

##### Shared Quaker Statement on Climate Change

Friends **approved** adopting the "Shared Quaker Statement: Facing the Challenge of Climate Change."

#### **YM2016-29 Advancement & Outreach Committee**

Mathilda Navias reported for the Advancement & Outreach Committee.

Advancement & Outreach recommends that the Advancement & Outreach Committee of the Yearly Meeting handle all formation, laying down, or changing status of Meetings and Worship Groups. This happened when Holland Monthly Meeting was laid down a few years ago and, more recently, when Pine River reverted to the status of a Worship Group. Currently, Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting handles status changes for their quarter and merely reports the changes to the Yearly Meeting. Advancement & Outreach asks Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting to consider adopting this change in process at its next Quarterly Meeting.

The Executive Committee raised a concern that the statement of welcome and inclusion that is currently on our website is outdated and was not formally approved by LEYM. Consistent with the concerns raised during our Annual Sessions, the committee has discerned that it is appropriate to send a letter to all Monthly Meetings asking them to assess their current condition in regard to being welcoming and inclusive, in connection with a wide range of diversity in our community, and to report back to the committee. The committee intends to use these responses to draft a welcoming and inclusive statement for our consideration at a future meeting, to be used on our website and otherwise going forward.

During the coming year, the committee plans to write several articles on outreach for the Bulletin and to provide more support for Worship Groups and smaller meetings by engaging in regular contact throughout the year.

#### **Advancement & Outreach Committee Report**

During our meetings this weekend, members of the A&O Committee have divvied up the Worship Groups and smaller Meetings in the Yearly Meeting. We plan to offer to contact them 2-4 times a year to ask how they are doing and if we can be of help.

We plan to write several articles on outreach for the Bulletin in the coming year.

The Home page of LEYM's web site has a welcoming and inclusive statement that has not been formally approved by the Yearly Meeting. A concern was brought to LEYM's Executive Committee to replace this statement with one seasoned throughout the Yearly Meeting that is more up to date. Executive Committee asked the Advancement & Outreach Committee to work on a draft statement and distribute it to our constituent Monthly Meetings for their consideration. The committee felt it premature to draft such a statement. Instead, we have drafted a letter to Meetings and Worship Groups asking them to assess their

current condition in regard to being welcoming and inclusive to a list of groups of people who are often marginalized in our society, inviting them to add other groups to the list as led.

We ask Meetings to discern where they are doing a good job and where they might make improvements. We ask them to report back to the A&O Committee prior to Representative Meeting in 2017 with a report either on their condition or on where they are in dealing with this question.

Our plan is to use these reports as a starting point in developing a welcoming and inclusion statement that would apply throughout the Yearly Meeting. When approved by the Yearly Meeting, it could be posted on web sites and printed in welcoming literature.

We plan to hold a Sat. meeting in Sept. in Ann Arbor, MI.

Anyone here who is from or knows of a Meeting that would like the committee's support, please talk to a member of the committee.

### **Working on making our Meetings more truly welcoming**

Quakers hold that there is a spark of the Divine in each person, often referred to as "that of God." Most of us have grown up and live in the general American culture, however, which often marginalizes people with certain traits. These currently include:

- Race
- Gender Identity
- Disability
- Class
- Political affiliation
- Sexual orientation
- LGBTQC
- Differently-abled
- Gender
- Religious background

Biases for and against certain people can be deeply ingrained and unconscious. In our efforts to be truly welcoming to all in our Quaker Meetings, a first step is to become conscious of our biases. Another step is to learn from marginalized people how to be welcoming and provide a safe and comfortable place for them.

LEYM asks each of our Meetings and Worship Groups to discern where we seem to be doing a good job and where we might make improvements. Some of our Meetings already have statements on inclusion.

We ask you to consider the people who are often marginalized in our society and report back to the Yearly Meeting on where you find your-selves at this time in regard to how welcoming you currently are to each group listed and others you might add.

We would like to use these reports as a starting point in developing a welcoming statement that applies throughout the Yearly Meeting that can be posted on websites and printed in welcoming literature. There is currently such a statement on the Home page of LEYM's website that is in need of updating (LEYM.org).

Please respond by March 15, 2017, with a report either on your condition or on where you are in dealing with this question.

Send to:

Mathilda Navias

Clerk of LEYM Advancement & Outreach Committee

147 Hall Street

Tiffin, OH 44883

galaxy@woh.rr.com

If you have any questions, please call me at 419 448-0578.

Mathilda Navias  
Clerk, LEYM Advancement & Outreach Committee

### **YM2016-30 Nominating Committee**

Clémence Ravaçon Mershon reported for Nominating Committee.

The Nominating Committee has not yet discerned who should serve Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, beginning in the role of Assistant Clerk, for the next 4 years.

The committee reports that it has identified all eight teachers for the Youth & Children's Program before the close of our work together, for the first time in recent memory.

We were reminded that each Monthly Meeting is invited to appoint a member to the Peace & Justice and the Ministry & Nurture committees.

Friends approved the nominations as presented.

The committee asks that the Executive Committee consider and appoint someone to serve in the role of an Assistant Clerk.

A copy of the Nominating Committee Report appears near the end of this booklet on pp. 181-184.

### **YM2016-31 Youth & Children Epistles**

With delight, we heard the reports and epistles from the elementary school, middle school, and high school programs.

#### **Pre-School Epistle**

We heard the epistle from the 3-5-year-old attenders at our gathering, of whom there were four. They started the week by getting to know each other as a group by transforming into animals. For example, when Greg became a bear and Peter became a butterfly, they drew them on the sidewalks and painted with their hands. They went for a walk, and each of the children was able to climb a rock wall. They spent time with the bigger kids. They learned a lot about taking turns, sharing, and loving each other without judgment.

#### **Elementary School Epistle**

Favorite parts:

- Drawing our feelings while we heard happy words,
- Playing with my friends,
- Going to the game room and playing all the games with my friends,
- Sleeping,
- Swimming at the lake and playing with ice cream – after breakfast and any meal,
- Making chalk designs on the sidewalk,
- Drawing and playing four square, and
- Sitting and talking to each other.

We went to the thrift store and farmer's market, which are set up so people help each other – like John Woolman taught people to help each other stop having slaves.

Andrew Mott  
Amanda Vache Resse  
Douglas Smith  
Emma Mioduszewski  
Elizabeth Clapp  
Ethan Charlot  
Conleth Crotser

## **Middle School Epistle**

Friday It was the first official day of LEYM, and the first thing we wanted to do was go on a hike to the Swinging Bridge, fleeing from mosquitoes. And when we were heading back, we sat on the porch of a farmhouse, with the owner's permission, and read the Parable of the Sower from the Bible (read by Jonah's impersonation of Morgan Freeman), and talked about how it related to seeds of friendship. When we arrived back at the Ramseyer lounge, we taught each other to create "rainbow loom" friendship bracelets, and some people made origami paper cranes and flying carpets. After lunch, as some kids went bowling, some stayed at the lounge to make the bracelets and chat about friendship. At dinner, the middle school group, as always, ate a lot of ice cream, and afterward we listened to the wonderful speech given by Merry Stanford about the possible false assumptions of our view of the world.

Saturday After breakfast on Saturday, we headed towards the Bluffton farmer's market and the thrift store. When we arrived back at the Ramseyer main lounge, we learned about the tragedy of the commons, the situation where people would use up all of owned land resources due to increased greed and competition, represented with a hilarious play. Then Kate Engler helped us prepare for the talent shows with round singing. Lunch followed with more ice cream, and then swimming at the swimming pool in town. We all agreed that the major highlights were the diving boards and the water slide. Dinner was next, and while we were waiting for the talent show to begin, some of us played air hockey and pool. For the talent show the members of the middle school group that were in it sang, danced, and played musical instruments. After the talent show, some of us gathered in our lounge for a sleepover party that included popcorn, Picwits, and sleep.

It is agreed that the friendship flower of LEYM's bloom time lasts for these past 4 days every year.

Jabiri Crowley  
Sophie Hull  
Micah Miller  
Gabe Mott  
Jessie Mott  
Jason Smith

## **Epistle from the Teens of LEYM**

Norma: Thursday

- People arrived
- Hung out & played soccer

Rosa: Friday

- Merged with Middle School group and walked to Swinging Bridge
- Disappointed that someone bought the cabin and water pump (best water)
- Watched and discussed video on John Woolman (which tied into the theme of LEYM)
- Swam at the pool (some left to go to a workshop)
- Watched the plenary o Interesting because we learned how unstable the criminal justice system really was.

Alex: Saturday

- Discussed the plenary for an hour (mainly high rate of incarceration, privilege, and stereotypes)
- Walked to farmer's market, thrift shop, and dollar store (one of our favorite activities to do every year; good time even with no kittens)
- Swam at the lake – "Monarch of the Raft" (some left to go to a workshop)
- Hung out till after midnight Skylar: Saturday evening
- Tried to catch a bug in order to put it outside.
- In the process, the screen fell out the window and the bug did too.
- It was quite an adventure going after the screen and then putting it back in the window where it belonged. Jonah: Sunday

- Woke up, ate breakfast, went to Ramseyer, and wrote this.
- Laughed, had fun, learned a lot about John Woolman, and can't wait until next year!

### **YM2016-32 Youth & Children Committee**

Kate Spry, Clerk, reported for the Youth & Children Committee. She expressed gratitude for the lifeguard this year, and for having a full complement of teachers nominated for next year.

Kate shared the committee's positive thoughts about the work of the Sexual Abuse Prevention Task Force.

The strength of our Youth & Children program lies in the friendships the children develop within our community. Fostering those friendships should be a primary focus of our work. It might be worth exploring whether a variation of the model used for the High School program at the FGC Gathering might better serve that purpose.

We are grateful for all of the work of the committee.

### **YM2016-33 Publications & Archives Committee**

Peggy Daub reported for Publications & Archives Committee.

The work of the committee this year has involved putting out publications, assisting the clerks' table in finalizing minutes, and evaluating how best to deliver our publications.

The theme of the fall Bulletin is "Opening Doors." The deadline for submissions is September 15. Because many people are interested in receiving only electronic copies of the Bulletin, the decreased printing costs will allow the committee to print the smaller run of the Bulletin in color.

Rosemary Coffey, Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting, has agreed to serve as editor of the Annual Records this year. The deadline for submissions is September 1.

In the coming year, the committee's work will involve reviewing what we should send to our archives at the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College.

### **Publications & Archives Committee Report**

Our work this year has involved (1) putting out publications, (2) assisting the clerks' table in finalizing minutes, and (3) evaluating how best to deliver our publications. We are transitioning to increased electronic delivery while making our paper deliveries more accurate. Bill Lefler worked with Meeting Worker Mathilda Navias to contact each Monthly Meeting this year to verify best addresses for sending paper copies of the Bulletin. Those addresses have been updated and Mathilda has added a question on this topic to the statistical information gathered each year from Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups, thus ensuring more regular checking of addresses. Berch and Susan Carpenter have chosen the theme "Opening Doors" for the fall Bulletin. Deadline for submissions is September 15. We are introducing direct email delivery of the Bulletin with the fall issue. About 45% of the people who replied on the registration form for this meeting asked for direct email delivery. The other choices are bulk mail to Monthly Meetings, delivery through U.S. mail directly to you, or down-loading from the web site. The question of which method of delivery you prefer will continue to be asked. Let Berch know your preference, if you haven't already. With more copies being delivered online, the number of printed copies is going down; with the money saved by a smaller print run we are planning to print portions of the fall and winter Bulletins in color to make them identical to their online versions. As announced at Representative Meeting, Rosemary Coffey of Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting has agreed to serve as editor of the Annual Records this year. The deadline for getting material to her is September 1. This coming year we will be reviewing what should be sent to our archives at the Friends Historical Library at Swarthmore College. We have already gathered input from a curator at Swarthmore about the kinds of material that are appropriate to add, and will be canvassing former clerks and clerks of committees to locate potential additions to the archives. We will also contact Monthly Meetings to see if they have been able to institute a program of sending their materials to an archive or if we can offer any assistance.



Peggy Daub, Clerk  
Publications & Archives Committee

#### **YM2016-34 Arrangements & Site Committee**

Jon Sommer reported for the Arrangements & Site Committee.

Gratitude was expressed for the work of our Registrar, Berch Carpenter.

We had 145 attenders at LEYM this year, 25 of whom were in our Youth & Children's Program, and 16 of whom were first time attenders.

We will meet in Bluffton again next year, July 27 - 30, 2017.

#### **YM2016-35 Adult & Family Planning Committee**

Claire Cohen reported for the Adult & Family Planning Committee.

She reports a successful program this year, pending confirmation via the evaluations.

The committee has planned a theme for next year: building young adults and youth in LEYM. To that end, they will survey each Monthly Meeting about youth involvement within each Meeting, and about the potential interest in being involved in the programming for the LEYM Annual Sessions, such as leading workshops. We were reminded that not all youth are affiliated with a Monthly Meeting, and that it would be useful to survey young adults and youth who are not formally connected

#### **YM2016-36 LEYM Epistle**

Sally Weaver Sommer, Susan Carpenter, and Jeff Cooper presented the draft epistle for our consideration.

### **Epistle from Lake Erie Yearly Meeting in Annual Sessions at Bluffton University in Bluffton, Ohio, July 28-31, 2016**

*Wealth is attended with power, by which bargains and proceedings, contrary to universal righteousness, are supported; and hence oppression, carried on with worldly policy and order, clothes itself with the name of justice and becomes like a seed of discord in the soul.*

— John Woolman

*What Would John Woolman Do?* Those gathered for our 53rd Annual Sessions found this question at the top and center of the schedule of events, meetings, and workshops, as if to announce that communion with Wool-man's spirit would bring to our discussions a discerning and loving elder from the mid-eighteenth century.

To the planners who presented us with this question, Woolman's life seems full of relevant advice for Quakers in 2016. Our Program Committee set up workshops to address our deepest concerns: institutional racism, climate change, economic and racial justice, financial stewardship, implicit racial bias in our court system and in ourselves, and the extent to which our monetary system contains the seeds of war and injustice. Beginning with the Woolman quotation cited above, our Plenary Speaker, Natalie Finegar, the Deputy District Public Defender for Baltimore City, chronicled the long series of events and practices that led to the "Baltimore Uprising." She illustrated how systemic racism coupled with wealth and power can lead even well-intentioned people to engage in horrific violence.

In worship sharing we considered queries that Woolman might have asked: *Am I learning how to be aware of my own implicit bias that may interfere with my ability to see that of God in every person? Am I mindful of how my lifestyle and my investments can contribute to the improvement of the human condition, or to the exploitation of others?*

There was little mention of Woolman in our business meetings, yet we must have wondered what he

would do in the face of problems that we confronted there. We approved a policy to minimize child and sexual abuse by creating an environment that eliminates unnecessary risks and dangers. We agreed to support the call for an institutional audit of implicit biases and racial discrimination within Friends General Conference. The Peace & Justice Committee will consider LEYM's need for a similar self-examination. We approved adding our name to the list of signers of the Quaker United Nations Office's statement: "A Shared Quaker Statement: Facing the Challenge of Climate Change."

We celebrated our new on-line registration system with gratitude to our Meeting Worker and our Registrar. We also expressed gratitude to five of our members, who, in a two-day service project at the Habitat for Humanity ReStore in Lima, Ohio, supported recycling and housing for low income families, causes that Woolman surely would have appreciated.

In conversations during meals we mused over what Woolman said to slave-owners or how he might have reacted to issues we grapple with today. We suspect he listened intently, drew people out, suggested prayer. Someone wondered whether he would attend a gay wedding.

Woolman learned from indigenous people, a member of the Earthcare Committee pointed out, about their beliefs in spiritual unity and humans' need to connect with nature to be whole people.

One participant took home our idea of learning from Woolman and came up with a written resolve:

- Listen to people.
- Meet people who are different from me.
- Reach out to "the other" whoever s/he is.
- Focus on needs, not wants.
- Slow down, wait in silence, to say or do things.

Friends **approved**, with our gratitude for the service of the Epistle Committee.

## **YM2016-37 Other Reports Received**

### **Olney Friends School**

July 29, 2016

Dear Friends of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting,

It is my pleasure to inform you of the recent events and achievements happening at Olney Friends School. Of significant importance is that Olney has now been USDA-certified as an organic farm and campus. This complements the ever-growing farm-to-table program that allows the Olney community to grow and consume much of its own food. Olney has also renewed its accreditation through ISACS (Independent Schools Association of the Central States). Implementation of the new project-based curriculum has allowed for a highly individualized curriculum, leading students to take a greater initiative and responsibility for their personal education.

Olney has maintained its commitment to good stewardship of the earth and the environment. Researchers from Yale University are currently using Olney as home base for a study of Ohio water and air quality. Olney hosts an annual "passport to fishing" event, administered by the Ohio Division of Wildlife, designed to teach youth not only fishing techniques, but also safety and environmental health. Olney classes consistently make good use of their 350-acre campus and farm as living laboratories for study. Finally, let us join in celebration that Olney has elected NOT to lease its mineral rights to the oil and gas industries.

On a more personal note, I now have a niece who enrolled at Olney this past year as a sophomore. She is not shy about giving me the "inside scoop." I am happy to say that I am highly encouraged by her account of the current Olney community and education.

Olney is a great community and school. Head of school Ken Hinshaw specifically asked me to stress that he wants Olney to be available to Quaker and Yearly Meeting families, and not to let finances be an obstacle. They will make it work if it is a good fit. They did it for my niece.

As Olney states on its website, “Olney adheres to basic principles or ‘testimonies’ that draw on Quaker tradition and values. Among these testimonies are truthfulness, simplicity, non-violence, and respect for the good in every person.” In today’s world, how many places give teenagers these values?

Truthfulness ... Simplicity ... Non -Violence ... and respect for the good in every person. It is my belief that providing support to Olney is well-aligned with the values of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting. I encourage LEYM to continue its support of Olney.

Respectfully submitted,

Greg Mott