

LEYM Annual Meeting

July 25 – July 28, 2019

Bluffton, Ohio

Minutes and Reports

First Session: 7:30 – 9:00 pm, Thursday, July 25, 2019

YM2019-01 Opening Worship and Epistle from Sierra Cascades Yearly Meeting

Within the quiet of our opening worship, Jo Posti, assistant clerk, read aloud the Epistle of the newly formed Sierra Cascades Yearly Meeting. The letter outlined many feelings of grief and struggle this new yearly meeting has experienced as it separated in travail from Northwest Yearly Meeting; yet it has found in Spirit the capacity to celebrate the grace present in healing and new beginnings.

YM2019-02 Introduction of the Clerks' Table and Roll Call

Nancy Reeves (Cleveland), clerk, introduced the clerks' table: herself; Josephine Posti (Pittsburgh), assistant clerk; and Peter Wood (Red Cedar), recording clerk. She then invited attenders to identify themselves in a roll call.

Akron	1	North Columbus	4
Ann Arbor	17	Oberlin	2
Athens	13	Pine River	0
Birmingham	7	Pittsburgh	9
Broadmead	18	Red Cedar	21
Cleveland	7	Somerset Worship Group	0
Delaware	0	Tustin Worship Group	0
Detroit	4	Waysmeet Worship Group	0
Erie Worship Group	2	Wooster	4
Grand Rapids	2	Other/Unaffiliated	6
Granville	1	Visitors	7
Holland	0	Total	133
Indiana Worship Group	0	Adults 36 and over	101
Kalamazoo	7	Youth and children	25
Kent	0	Young adult Friends	7
Manitou Worship Group	1		
Mid-Ohio Valley	0		

YM2019-03 Welcoming Visitors

We welcomed visitors:

José Santos Woss - FCNL

Anne Marie Taber - Olney Friends School

Jerry Knutson, traveling under the care of Orlando MM

Jo Posti read a travel minute from FCNL regarding José Woss, outlining his background in social justice issues, human rights, and criminal and incarceration reform.

She also read a travel minute from the Orlando Monthly Meeting on behalf of Jerry Knutson, who is traveling widely in a ministry regarding teaching about spirituality, discernment, and prison visitation.

Dolores and Dave Avner (Pittsburgh), Ruth Carey and Jim Crowfoot (Ann Arbor), Helen Hebben (Kalamazoo), Mathilda Navias (Broadmead), Michael and Vanessa Fuson (Granville), and Al Connor (Ann Arbor), longtime attenders of LEYM Annual Sessions, will not be attending these sessions this year.

YM2019-04 Naming Committee Formation and Nominating Committee Update

Thomas Taylor (Ann Arbor) and Sally Weaver Sommer (Broadmead) were suggested as a Naming Committee. Friends approved these names.

Clémence Ravaçon Mershon (Erie WG) of the Nominating Committee outlined vacancies that need to be filled, and further invited attenders to come forward with leadings they might feel to serve.

Wearing another hat, she also appealed to Friends to help find conference centers large enough to host the FWCC Section of the Americas upcoming 2021 Biennial Conference to be held somewhere in the Southeastern U.S.

YM2019-05 Ministry & Nurture Committee Report (no. 1)

Carla Pratt-Harrington (Athens), Committee co-clerk, spoke on behalf of the Spiritual Formation Program's need for people to organize its retreat programs after this year. The Spiritual Formation Program is under the care of Ministry & Nurture, hence is not under the purview of the Nominating Committee. The Spiritual Formation Program is adequately covered for this year.

YM2019-06 Ad Hoc College Scholarship Committee Report: Guidelines for Scholarships and Disbursing Monies

Jo Posti (Pittsburgh) discussed a fund for those who wish to attend Quaker colleges or participate in Quaker service organizations and get financial support. Two items needing attention are timeframes for applications and criteria for application, including membership or junior membership in a monthly meeting. The question is whether regular attenders to a meeting might qualify. The other criterion is that the applicant be interested in attending a Quaker institution or a Quaker organization that offers training or Quaker-related service but requires that the applicant be self-funded. Jo outlined steps that would need to be taken by an applicant.

Discussion ranged over the meaning of membership, which is practiced differently among the member meetings of LEYM, and discernment of who qualifies to apply. This item will come up in a future business session for further refinement.

YM2019-07 Bookstore Procedure

Valerie Groszmann (Kalamazoo), bookstore coordinator, reported that the bookstore needs to be patronized and sales need to increase in order to keep this service viable. Sales need to cover at least the cost of returning unsold books. Attenders' response to this information will determine whether we have a bookstore in the future.

Second Session: 11:00 am – 12:30 pm, Friday, July 26, 2019

YM2019-08 Worship and Epistle from Southeastern Yearly Meeting

Jo Posti read the epistle from Southeastern Yearly Meeting, which included corporate testimony on ecology and care for the oppressed among the incarcerated refugees. "Taking off the masks," the primary theme of the gathering, focused on undoing white supremacy and privilege in a cultural atmosphere of backlash.

YM2019-09 Youth & Children Program Committee Report (no. 1)

Greg Mott (Broadmead) reported that 24 kids are participating in this year's youth program. We expressed gratitude to all those shepherding the youth programs for care being provided our children.

YM2019-10 Epistle Committee

Jo Posti will be joined by Lisa Klopfer (Ann Arbor) and Susan Loucks (Pittsburgh), in writing this year's epistle.

YM2019-11 Publications & Archives Committee Report

Bill Lefler (Pittsburgh) reported on behalf of the Publications & Archives Committee. The printing and distribution cost of the *Annual Records* and *Bulletins* (\$2853) came to less than was budgeted. Forty memorial minutes have been added to the LEYM home page. Swarthmore College continues to preserve records of LEYM. The Fall *Bulletin* deadline for contributions is October 15, 2019.

The full report follows.

Publications & Archives Report to LEYM Annual Meeting 2019

The members of the Publications & Archives Committee this year are Bill Lefler and Bob Roehm, with ex officio members Jeff Cooper and

Peggy Daub, *Bulletin* editors.

The 2018 *Annual Records* was published and distributed on schedule.

The Fall, Winter, and Spring 2018-19 *Bulletins* have been printed and distributed.

The costs of publication and printing these items are:

<i>Annual Records</i> printing	\$1236.03
Printing Fall, Winter, and Spring <i>Bulletins</i>	\$916.40
Mailing cost	\$603.18
Supplies	\$98.38
Total	\$2853.99

These costs are below last year's due to the distribution of some of the *Annual Records* and *Bulletins* at the [November] Executive Committee Meeting. We now distribute 170 bulletins, which is considerably less than four years ago due to electronic distribution. Most are bulk-mailed to monthly meetings, but if you are receiving a *Bulletin* by mail and don't need it anymore, please let us know.

After receiving only positive responses from our monthly meetings, 40 memorial minutes from the last six years have been made available on the LEYM web page; 8 current minutes have been added.

All current Yearly Meeting records have been archived in the Swarthmore College Friends Historical Library. If your monthly meeting or your committee has records it would like to have preserved, please consider this method. The library is currently collecting only hard copy documents but is moving towards digital storage.

Bill Lefler

Clerk, Publications & Archives

YM2019-12 Ad Hoc Committee on *Policies and Procedures* Report (no. 1)

Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor) reported on the updating proposed to *Policies and Procedures*. Mathilda Navias and Jeff have compiled suggestions to further this work. Major proposed changes were printed in the Spring *Bulletin* and were also posted to the LEYM website. There were four categories of change described: a) those needing discernment, b) those recognizing current practice, but not written up yet as policy, c) those approved but not yet appearing in P&P, and d) minor changes in wording.

Jeff brought as examples for current consideration the proposed policy on the proper place for the Spiritual Formation Program, LEYM visitors to other yearly meetings, and the procedure for traveling minutes.

Jeff will be available through the course of these Annual Sessions to receive Friends' comments and suggestions on proposed changes. Proposed final changes will be discussed at a later business session. The full report follows.

Ad Hoc Committee on Updating the *Policies and Procedures* Manual Report to Annual Sessions 2019

A year ago at Annual Meeting, Executive Committee recognized that our *Policies and Procedures* manual needed some updating to reflect changes in addition to new policies minuted at business sessions, most of which had already been added. At Executive Committee's meeting in November, Mathilda Navias and I were asked to compile a list of recommended changes to *Policies and Procedures*. Both of us had served on the ad hoc committee that shepherded the last major revision to *Policies and Procedures* in 2011, and Mathilda had already updated the manual a few times as Meeting worker.

Through the winter months she and I compiled a list of possible changes we were aware of, also inviting Executive Committee members to recommend changes. The project had an alarming tendency to expand, as we not only identified procedures and practices that we now do differently than in 2011, but also wondered whether there were procedures that perhaps we *ought* to do differently.

At Representative Meeting, I reported on our work to-date and distributed a handout listing suggested changes. We received only one response to these, but continued to refine our recommendations. We announced the proposed revisions in the spring *Bulletin*, providing text for those proposals most likely to require discernment, and alerted Friends that both the complete list of changes and the full text of P&P incorporating these changes would be posted on the Yearly Meeting website, which was done in mid-June. Last week both documents (complete list and full text) were emailed to Friends who had registered to attend Annual Meeting. In addition we have provided at this gathering two printed copies of the full text and six printed copies of the list of proposed changes.

In the list, the proposed changes are divided into four categories:

- A) those we believe require discernment by Friends;
- B) those recognizing changes in current practice;
- C) those policies and procedures already approved but not yet included in P&P; and
- D) those involving minor changes in wording or arrangement.

We hope that the proposals in groups B, C, and D won't require much attention, but recognize that there may be reservations about one proposal or another, especially proposals reflecting changes in current practice, where we may have misinterpreted current practice or Friends may feel that current practice has slipped away from what our policy should be.

It is, of course, up to you which proposed changes we want to accept.

YM2019-13 Advancement & Outreach Committee Report

Kathie Hollingshead (Pittsburgh) reported on the use of Facebook displays to attract younger people – information provided on the upstairs tables at these sessions.

Tustin Worship Group wishes to be under the care of a monthly meeting, and Advancement & Outreach is looking to help provide it with this support.

YM2019-14 Finance Committee Report (no. 1)

Mike Hinshaw (Wooster), treasurer, and Joe Mills (Kalamazoo), clerk of Finance, reported on a preliminary budget for the coming fiscal year, outlining notable changes. The total of the proposed budget will come to \$25,775, and may require a per-member increase of \$5, to \$35 per year. The final proposed budget will be brought forward at a future business meeting.

YM2019-15 First-time Attenders

First-time attenders introduced themselves: Cathy Clifford (Red Cedar), Mark Michener (Ann Arbor), Mey Hasbrook (Kalamazoo), and Pamela Moore (Erie Worship Group).

Third Session: 1:45 – 3:15 pm, Friday, July 26, 2019

YM2019-16 Worship and Epistle from Baltimore Yearly Meeting

Jo Posti read the Epistle from Baltimore Yearly Meeting, "Radical Listening: Rooted in Love." It focused on the need to change our habits to engage with those who differ from us, and to listen to the voices of the oppressed, both in our culture and elsewhere in the world. We can become a global partnership, sharing power and influence, being prepared to listen in trust and to allow ourselves to be changed. We are an incomplete organization, seeking to become whole, and we will find this through honoring and understanding our diversities. The epistle highlighted the fruitful work of young Friends in Baltimore Yearly Meeting through the STRIDE program, which reaches out to distressed neighborhoods. As one attender commented, "Things will change as we come to change ourselves."

YM2019-17 Ad Hoc Committee on Harassment Report

Jo Posti reported, bringing forth recommendations which would prepare the Yearly Meeting to deal with harassment should it occur in the context of Yearly Meeting sessions. The recommendations, which apply to adults and have been published on the website and in the *Bulletin*, consider and borrow from the fine work done in other meetings. They define harassment, suggest steps for Friends who feel harassed (or witness harassment) to take, outline a structure for a harassment discernment committee, and lay out next steps to take when harassment has been discerned.

Friends expressed gratitude for the work of this committee and reminded us that such a policy covers or should cover all the varied areas and forms of harassment (e.g., racial harassment), not only sexual harassment. There is a separate policy covering young people, and they are regularly informed about it.

With a few edits, Friends approved the recommendations of this committee. The Harassment Policy follows.

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Harassment Policy

Friends General Conference, in keeping with Friends' historical concerns for equality and justice, is committed to providing environments for staff, volunteers, committee members, and program participants which are free of discrimination and harassment. Demeaning actions, words, jokes or comments based on an individual's gender, sexual orientation, race, ethnicity, age or faith will not be tolerated. We also note that sexual harassment, both overt and subtle, is an illegal form of demeaning and oppressive misconduct which we want to prevent and which, if alleged, we will investigate thoroughly and fairly.

FGC Central Committee, 10/22/95

In spite of some Quakers' participation in the abolition movement to end enslavement in the United States; in spite of some Quakers' commitment to dismantling Jim Crow during the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960's; in spite of some Quakers' visible work to support the Black Lives Matter movement and in spite of all of us feeling horrified when yet another unarmed black or brown person is shot by police, our Meetings remain mostly white and Friends of Color do not necessarily feel safe or welcomed in a Quaker faith community.

Institutional Assessment on Systemic Racism within Friends General Conference, October 2018

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting wants to make its Annual Gathering and other committee meetings, visits, and programs free of harassment. This policy addresses a number of forms of harassment, described below. Our consciousness of the need to prevent and respond to these types of harassment has been heightened by our realization that such behavior does occur at Friends' events.

Sexual harassment is unwanted sexual or gender-based behavior generally involving the exercise of formal or informal power by the perpetrator over the victim. It is a form of misconduct that is demeaning to another person and undermines the integrity of the relationship. It is illegal, and is strictly prohibited within LEYM. Sexual harassment may be verbal (suggestive comments, threats, insults, jokes, sexual propositions), nonverbal (suggestive, insulting or obscene gestures, noises, leering, displaying pornographic material), or physical (touching, brushing body, coercing sexual intercourse, assault).

Other forms of harassment based on race, age, disability, sexual orientation, or gender identity all generally involve the exercise of formal or informal power by the perpetrator over the victim. The key words are "unwanted," "discrimination-based," and "formal or informal power," plus the basis of the behavior in differences in gender, race, age, ability, sexual preferences, or gender identity. While this list includes several characteristics that we are aware often form the basis for harassment, the policy is intended to be broadly interpreted to include harassment based on other similar characteristics.

Harassment is defined both by the feelings of the person who experiences it and by the intentions of the alleged perpetrator. What one person might consider an innocent comment or behavior could actually be experienced as harassment by another person, particularly if the alleged perpetrator persists in the behavior after the implications have been brought to his or her attention.

Does this mean that we must refrain from offering hugs to friends, or making comments about a friend's appearance? No – not if the person welcomes the hug or the comment. But we should be sensitive to the possibility that another might be made uncomfortable by such behavior. If there is any question about how another may feel, ask first (e.g., "May I give you a hug?"). This is simply part of our responsibility as members of a caring community of Friends.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU FEEL HARASSED

1. If you feel harassed by the comments or behavior of another person at an LEYM event, and if you feel able, you can tell that person clearly that you find their behavior objectionable and ask them to stop it. Of course, there are situations in which it is difficult to confront such behavior on the spot. If someone does tell you that they have been offended or embarrassed by something you did, please do not argue about their feelings or how you intended your behavior. You cannot tell someone else how they should feel about something you say or do. Just apologize and be mindful so as not to repeat the objectionable behavior.

2. Reporting incidents of sexual harassment, racial harassment, or harassment based on sexual orientation: LEYM has established a small "Harassment Discernment Committee" (H.D.C.), which includes a group of five people made up of diverse representation, so that people bringing a harassment complaint will feel comfortable. Please see the following section for details on the H.D.C. If you feel unable to confront the person, or find that they repeat the objectionable behavior despite your request to stop it, you may approach this committee with your concern. **Note that you may choose to pursue either an informal or a formal procedure for dealing with the situation.**

3. **If you witness or are told about a situation involving possible harassment:** Try to check it out with the person who appears to be experiencing the harassment; if they feel uncomfortable about the behavior, encourage them to confront it or report it. If it is impossible to talk with the person, or if the person is not prepared to make a report themselves, yet you are convinced that harassment occurred, then a report may be made directly to the H.D.C.

WHAT LEYM'S HARASSMENT DISCERNMENT COMMITTEE WILL DO IN RESPONSE TO A REPORTED INCIDENT OF HARASSMENT

Who is the Harassment Discernment Committee (H.D.C.)?

The H.D.C. is made up of five people of diverse representation (male, female, LGBTQ, persons of color, younger, older). Diversity is crucial to this process, so that the person bringing a harassment complaint will feel both represented and able to trust members of the Committee.

Two members are tied to LEYM positions: one appointed by Ministry & Nurture, and one member of the Executive Committee. These two individuals will proactively recruit the remaining three positions. These positions will be recruited and named during Annual Sessions, for approval during a business session, and will serve for one year. They can be asked if they wish to serve in subsequent years.

H.D.C. members will be identified in all event program information.

1. **Informal procedure:** If you feel embarrassed or offended by another's behavior, you may simply want an opportunity to discuss the experience with another Friend and think together about how to handle it. If so, a member of the Harassment Discernment Committee will be glad to meet with you for a confidential discussion of the incident(s). We welcome you to bring a support person with you during this conversation. If this discussion is sufficiently helpful, and you are able to stop or avoid further objectionable behavior, the H.D.C. will consider your concern to have reached closure and no further steps will be taken unless the committee member determines that the nature of the complaint is serious enough to warrant further action, such as a formal procedure.

2. **Formal procedure:** If you wish a formal investigation and more assistance in dealing with the alleged harassment than that afforded by the informal procedure, you will be asked to submit a written, signed complaint. This complaint may be brief, but it should include name(s) and a description of the objectionable behavior, the context, and your feelings. When such a complaint is received, two members of the H.D.C. will meet with you in confidence, discuss the alleged harassment with you, and then proceed with a thorough investigation of the complaint. As in informal procedures, a support person is welcome. Such investigation will always include, but not necessarily be limited to, a meeting of the investigators with the alleged perpetrator. The H.D.C. reserves the right to make an independent decision to initiate the formal procedure in any case which it deems sufficiently serious to require a formal investigation and the possible consequences as listed below. In this event, both the complainant and the alleged harasser will be notified of such a decision.

3. **The members of the committee will discern the merits and gravity of the complaint and how to handle the situation.** If the H.D.C. team determines that harassment did indeed occur, possible consequences include:

- a) Asking the person perceived to harass to acknowledge and stop the offending behavior;
- b) Requiring this person to stay away from the person who experienced the harassment for the duration of the event,
- c) Engaging in a restorative circle/conversation, if both persons agree,
- d) Requiring the person perceived to harass to leave the event, and/or
- e) Refusing to accept this person at future events.

The discernment team will communicate its decision and the action taken to the individual who submitted the formal complaint and to the full H.D.C. Any decision to exclude a harasser from future events may be appealed by the harasser to the H.D.C. prior to the registration period for a subsequent event.

4. **Complaints will be treated with confidentiality and discretion.**

5. **Every effort will be made to protect persons making bona fide complaints from any kind of retaliatory action.**

ACTING AS FRIENDLY BYSTANDER

A person who has experienced sexual harassment may need to share the distress with someone in whom she or he has confidence and respect. If you are chosen, remember that, however inadequate you feel, the other person trusts and respects you enough to share a matter of concern with you.

The most important gift you can offer is time – time for listening in a supportive and non-judgmental way, allowing space and silence for reflection.

The ideal outcome would be one where the harasser has been helped to accept and understand the outcome of her or his behavior, and has stopped it; the person who has been harassed no longer feels threatened; and both are enabled to remain at peace in the LEYM community.

YM2019-18 Update on FGC Anti-Racism Work

Marvin Barnes (Birmingham) and Carolyn Lejuste (Red Cedar) reported. FGC has been endeavoring to become an anti-racist faith community. There has been a recent institutional assessment on racism in FGC, the results of which were published in October 2018. The recommendations that arose from the report were accepted as a whole. Each decision to be made by FGC is to be in light of the query, “How will this decision square with the anti-racist stance FGC is committed to?” Weekly e-retreats on racism will be held September 22 to October 18, sponsored by FGC, and accessible on the FGC website. They will be supported by a variety of written and broadcast materials, giving participants chances also to interact with others via Zoom technology or phone contacts.

We are encouraged to consider the quality of welcome we afford to Friends of color, or to people of color who are new attenders.

The FGC plenary addressing the report is available online and as a YouTube link.

An “implementation team” has been created to ensure that the assessment recommendations are being attended to. Carolyn will serve on the team for the next two years, along with nine others in an equal balance of people of European descent and people of color, also balancing gender, age, and geographic location. A traveling ministry will be formed to help meetings become aware of what FGC is doing to become an anti-racist community and to help meetings to develop their own capacities to become anti-racist communities.

We are reminded that “people of color” doesn’t refer only to black people.

Members of several meetings described the anti-racist activities in their meetings. Books were recommended.

There were questions on mixed-race participation on the implementation team. Four members are of mixed race. The main attempt is to promote diversity of membership. In respect of decolonization – of the Executive Committee, Marvin is the first person of color to serve as clerk or assistant clerk. Only one person of color has been General Secretary. This needs to be only the start of this decolonization, and steps are being taken to broaden the participation of Friends of color.

Further question or comments or requests for help can go to institutionalassessment@fgc.org.

Fourth Session: 9:45 – 11:45 am, Saturday, July 27, 2019

YM2019-19 Worship and Epistle from New Association of Friends

Jo Posti read aloud the Epistle of the New Association of Friends. In addressing George Fox’s famous question, “What canst thou say?” Friends at this gathering found themselves exploring four themes: first, *drawing inspiration* from our rich heritage; second, *intentionality*, new directions arising from the break from Indiana Yearly Meeting; third, *change*, also resulting from a new structure from the separation from Indiana YM and from our awareness of deep community needs; and finally, *hope* in a future that centers in warm relationships and a trust in God’s leadings.

YM2019-20 AFSC Corporation Meeting Report

Claire Cohen (Pittsburgh) and Bill Warters (Birmingham) reported on the overwhelming but rewarding nature of the AFSC Corporation’s meeting, and the rich resources provided to new attenders. Among the many presentations Claire and Bill described was that of Lamont Hill, this year’s inspiring plenary speaker, who spoke on his work for human rights. Pedro Riaz also spoke on “Love Knows No Borders.” Other presentations addressed the situation in Gaza, the new Jim Crow, looking at

the world from the perspective of those without privilege, and the history of AFSC in supporting those struggling with oppression.

YM2019-21 Peace & Justice Committee Report

Joel Ottenbreit (Detroit), clerk, reported, introducing members of the Committee. Four areas of endeavor were: a) define the purpose and scope of the Committee, b) respond to concerns brought by monthly meetings, c) use the Zoom video platform to promote ongoing peace and justice work, and, finally, d) send out a survey to monthly meetings on their current concerns and work.

Peace & Justice will continue to meet with Earthcare to explore what they have in common and decide whether they should be a unified committee.

There was a suggestion that LEYM purchase a Zoom subscription so that it may be more widely used by LEYM committees. The full report follows.

LEYM Peace & Justice Committee Report for 2019 Annual Sessions

The LEYM Peace & Justice Committee this past year has focused on the following:

- 1) To define the purpose and scope of the Committee.
- 2) To respond to concerns brought forward from monthly meetings.
- 3) To create a viable virtual platform to conduct monthly meetings for the Committee.
- 4) To survey monthly meetings to gain valuable information regarding their interests and activities.

The Purpose and Scope of the Committee

The historic work of the Peace & Justice Committee has been to provide monthly meetings and worship groups with opportunities to present peace and justice concerns or Minutes in order to amplify and share them with the larger body at LEYM. The role of this committee has not been as an activist. The role is to encourage monthly meetings to share and bring issues under advisement. The Committee does not try to educate monthly meetings, but to be a clearinghouse or sounding board for their concerns

A secondary role of the LEYM Peace & Justice Committee is to gain additional knowledge and insights, so these concerns can be explored more fully.

Respond to Concerns from Monthly Meetings

A concern was brought forward from the Athens Monthly Meeting to consider an important revision to FCNL's central document, "The World We Seek." The document asserts that "the biosphere is finite" and recognizes the need for "economic policies that are environmentally sustainable." However, there is currently no shared understanding regarding what sustainable economic system would be required. It embraces many of the Green New Deal's proposals but is silent on the need for financial reform that will be essential for funding the major investments proposed.

It was decided that LEYM's P&J Committee ask meetings to consider recommending to the FCNL Policy Committee that the following steps be taken:

1. Include in the 2019 version of "The World We Seek" the need for reforming the financial system as a necessary step toward a sustainable economic system.
2. Establish a process within FCNL for discerning the kind of policy changes FCNL should promote to advance a transition to a sustainable economic system.

The Committee felt it was important to make resources available to help monthly meetings address these issues. The Committee sent out a communication to the monthly meeting clerks for consideration.

Creating a Virtual Platform to Conduct Monthly Business

The Committee decided that having sessions only at Representative Meeting and Annual Sessions would not be enough to fulfill its purpose and goals. The Committee decided to have monthly virtual meetings using Zoom software. Dates and times were scheduled most months, meetings transpired, and minutes were kept. The overwhelming response from Committee members was that this was a valuable platform for members. It was suggested that other committees and LEYM explore this option.

Survey Regarding Monthly Meetings' Interests and Activities

An online survey was developed by the Peace & Justice Committee along with the Earthcare Committee to assess the interests and activities of monthly meetings/ worship groups within LEYM. Out of the 28 monthly meetings and worship groups, 18 completed the online survey.

The most addressed topic among monthly meetings was the one requested by FCNL to examine the document “The World We Seek” to provide feedback on legislative initiatives. The next three most addressed topics that were discussed within monthly meetings were: racism/white privilege, immigration/sanctuary cities, and climate issues.

A more complete description and analysis of the survey questions and results are provided at the display section of LEYM.

Other Notable Activities

The P&J Committee had a joint discussion at Representative Meeting. This opened discussion on having joint activities and meetings between the Peace & Justice Committee and Earthcare Committee and resulted in the development of a joint display board.

Future Consideration

A stated goal was to provide educational opportunities for members of LEYM’s Peace & Justice Committee that may lead to discussion topics for monthly virtual meetings next year. Due to the success of the joint project with Peace & Justice and Earthcare, there may be additional interest in having a joint committee and meetings in the future.

YM2019-22 Earthcare Committee Report

Mey Hasbrook (Kalamazoo), acting clerk, reported. A local action is to alter food options at these Annual Sessions to respond to needs arising from climate change. The Committee is looking for ways to coordinate with the Peace & Justice Committee. The Sixth Mass Extinction is underway, and the Committee acknowledges the grief inherent in this massive planetary change.

The full report follows.

Earthcare Committee Report – 2019 Annual Sessions

We wish to recognize that through this year's Annual Sessions climate-crisis action – observing a vegetarian meal service as much as possible – we are observing a way to honor our food with respect and reciprocity. As one drop in a deep well of potential change for the health of the planet, the meal service draws upon last year’s efforts by the Arrangements & Site Committee to increase vegetarian food options. Since animal agriculture is known to be a large contributor to climate breakdown, we are encouraged by this direction for Annual Sessions’ food service and are mindful that it is direction worthy of discernment toward an ongoing practice for LEYM.

In carrying out preparations for the commitment made in April by Yearly Meeting to this food service, we published an article for LEYM’s *Bulletin* and provided materials on the Earthcare Resources page of LEYM’s website. We worked with Arrangements & Site Committee to facilitate a menu mindful of the input from the April Representative Meeting. Out of this year’s 133 registrants, most stayed with the new default of vegetarian meals, with 60 selecting meat. Special thanks to monthly meetings that provided displays for meal tables to engage Friends’ attention in this year’s action: Athens, Broadmead, Detroit, and Kalamazoo. Contributions from young Friends included co-creating one of the meal-table displays, directing the compost station at meals, and creating a 3D display located near the compost station.

The Earthcare Committee cooperated with the Peace & Justice Committee for a survey of monthly meetings about Friends’ social concerns and actions along with monthly meetings’ suggestions for Yearly Meeting. We are weighing these results in discerning the Committee’s focus for the coming year. We note that one of the top concerns was “climate breakdown.” In discerning an update toward the Committee’s description and responsibilities, these results are informing our process. Additionally, we are further tending a growing relationship with the Peace & Justice Committee after a rich time jointly shared during these sessions.

In closing our report, we acknowledge our collective grief for the great loss of life across the planet called the sixth mass extinction, an increasing death toll of animal life and plant life due to ongoing harmful actions by humans. We acknowledge that this grief includes climate breakdown’s deadly and damaging impact to human beings. Amid the grief, we uplift the call to love our neighbors as ourselves as a call to love all of Earth in which we are part.

YM2019-23 Quaker Earthcare Witness Report

R.E. Hogan (Athens) reported on its activities. The most significant change happens within the hearts of people who realize their profound connection with all the cosmos. This means that action everywhere, for example, helping African farmers

retain and use their land well, benefits us all. Population and population migration are major concerns. See the website quakerearthcarewitness.org for further information on its current activities and suggestions for action.

An epistle from QEW follows.

"The first peace, which is the most important, is that which comes within the souls of people when they realize their relationship, their oneness with the universe and all its powers, and when they realize at the center of the universe dwells the Great Spirit, and that its center really is everywhere. It is within each of us." — Black Elk

To Friends Everywhere,

Greetings from the Quaker Earthcare Witness Spring Steering Committee Meeting, April 11–14, 2019.

We write from the occupied lands of the Dakota, in St. Paul, Minnesota, where an April blizzard greeted our arrival. Due to the storm, some were unable to attend the meeting and others arrived late, reminding us that climate disruption is a reality that increasingly affects all of us.

Friends from the vibrant local Quaker community graciously welcomed our group of 30 Friends from across the United States into their homes, their worship spaces, and their hearts. We thank Twin Cities Coordinating Committee for their tender care.

Our opening evening worship brought forth a shared sense of "coming home" and recognizing that being faithful means acting without knowing. What we need is right here. Daily worship sharing helped us deepen our personal relationships and our connection with Spirit.

We meet twice yearly to do the business of the organization. Our smaller committees met to discuss finance and development, publications, outreach, spiritual nurturance, and nominating issues. Our working groups focused on projects related to population concerns, work at the United Nations and the diaspora, mini-grants, Unity with Nature, and connecting with Friends Committee on National Legislation.

We sense that we are steadily getting better at what we do: being faithful to our individual leadings and our corporate action, worshipping for business together, raising money to facilitate the work, engaging in conflict and difficult conversations with grace, sharing a Quaker message of eco-spirituality and the urgency of climate disruption, connecting with Friends across the U.S. and Canada, and strengthening ties between branches of Friends.

"Our faith teaches us that what is small and humble is often a profound message." We shared in appreciation for individual ministries of Friends' zero waste work and for the creation of a profoundly beautiful movie about Quaker Earthcare Witness ministry.

We shared much of our weekend with local friends, including two potlucks, one lunch, two evening presentations, a forum, and Sunday worship. Middle-school students from the Friends School of Minnesota shared their documentary about protecting pollinators as part of their work with the Environmental Action Club. The young friends spoke our minds and hearts, as we feel the urgency expressed by the recent report by the International Panel on Climate Change:

"We have to help pick up the world because right now it's not doing so great."

"One of the scariest things for me is that [climate disruption] isn't sometime in the indefinite future—there is a clock and it's ticking."

"I really like social justice issues and being an activist and I really like spending time in nature and I wanted to combine those things."

We were also treated to a bus ride to learn about the history and geography of the area and heard a beautiful testimony from a Friend suffering from brain cancer on the healing power of the Mississippi River as we crossed it.

We asked, "What does transition look like?" with a panel of five Friends who are putting transition principles into their daily lives. On Sunday afternoon, 15 of us visited an urban farm, a Friend's personal garden, and a Friend's zero energy-use house.

By the time we were preparing to leave, much of the snow had melted, and spring was in the air. This was an opportunity for our beloved community to hear, share, and care about each other and the Earth and how to care thoughtfully about "the others" – people who do not share our thoughts, concerns, or understandings.

How do you walk gently on Earth answering that of God in everything, everywhere, in all Life Spirit? How do we live our lives in the spirit of connection with all life? How can we collectively create a community of healing and resolve?

A constant thread throughout our time together was the love of all living things – people, animals, nature, and planet — and each other. How we love is how we live.

The world we seek begins with the relationships we make. We at Quaker Earthcare Witness are grateful for our Friends in St. Paul and Minneapolis and our global community of Friends who keep the Light shining brightly.

In peace and friendship,
Quaker Earthcare Witness Steering Committee, April 2019

YM2019-24 Friends Committee on National Legislation Report

Nancy Taylor (Ann Arbor) reported on FCNL's activities, now in their 76th year. Peace, justice, and environmental sustainability are major areas of work. Background and perspectives are provided to legislative staffs to assist in creation of helpful and effective legislation. She spoke to the value of advocacy teams in local communities to promote contact with local political offices. FCNL's annual meeting, with the theme, "Love Thy Neighbor, No Exceptions," will happen in Washington, DC, on November 14–17, 2019. We welcome our guest, José Woss, as FCNL's visiting representative.

FCNL needs more LEYM representatives.

The full report follows.

Report to LEYM 2019 on the FCNL Annual Meeting (of 2018) and Activities

FCNL was founded in 1943 and celebrated its 75th anniversary last year, so the Annual Meeting in November was marking that with appropriate festivities like cake and great speeches.

During the year the Quaker Welcome Center next to the FCNL office had opened. It's a place for dialogue and the promotion of peace, justice, and environmental sustainability. They have advocacy trainings, a speaker series and workshops, meeting spaces, and Witness Wednesdays.

There are 12 full-time registered FCNL lobbyists, dedicated to advancing the legislative priorities of the organization. They often provide information and background research on specific policies and bills to congressional staff. Lobby training was the initial event of the Quaker Public Policy Institute and Annual Meeting weekend. Participants in QPPI went on 193 lobby visits representing 45 states, and met with 39 members of Congress. Lobbying with FCNL always begins with listening and remaining open to the possibility of transformation.

We spent Thursday and Friday lobbying to protect SNAP, America's most effective anti-hunger program; our efforts were rewarded when the program was saved!

During the Annual Meeting the main speaker was Ruth Flower (formerly on staff), who shared lessons learned from video games, hurricanes, and random conversations. The recipient of the Ed Snyder Award for 2018 was Representative Ro Khanna (CA) for his courageous work to prevent war with North Korea, end U.S. support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen, and strengthen U.S. diplomacy abroad.

An Annual Meeting highlight is always short talks by the Young Fellows, who come from a wide variety of backgrounds to dedicate a year to the vital FCNL work with Congress. We also enjoyed an inspiring talk by Diane Randall, Executive Secretary, and an armchair conversation with Emily Temple, Joe Volk, and Diane.

One particularly good way for us to engage with FCNL is to join an Advocacy Team, where we are trained to be effective and persistent lobbyists with our Senators and Representatives. There are several active Advocacy Teams in our Yearly Meeting – they would welcome your participation. We were fortunate to have José Santos Woss as the FCNL guest at Yearly Meeting; José is the Legislative Manager for Criminal Justice and Election Integrity in the Washington FCNL office and he led two workshops at our Annual Sessions.

The 2019 FCNL QPPI and Annual Meeting will be held in Washington on November 14 –17 with the theme "Love Thy Neighbor (No Exceptions)." Please consider attending; you can find more information and registration forms on the fcnl.org website.

YM2019-25 Nominating Committee Update

Clémence Ravaçon Mershon presented the activities of the Committee. Current needs were described. A final report will be presented at a later business session.

Fifth Session: 1:15 – 3:15 pm, Saturday, July 27, 2019

YM2019-26 Worship and Epistle from Great Plains Yearly Meeting

Jo Posti read aloud the 2018 Epistle from Great Plains Yearly Meeting, a meeting which encompasses the diversity to be found in theological orientations among Friends. A central concern of the meeting was visitation, a ministry which, in their

words, “should be approached from a place of love and with a commitment to deep listening.” Workshops during their gathering focused on listening to the needs of Native Americans and listening to the promptings of God. Attendees left with the sense that God is moving and working through them in their communities, their meetings, and their relationships.

YM2019-27 Acknowledgement of Deceased Friends

Friends who died in the past year were acknowledged: Henry Van Dyke (Ann Arbor), Dorothy Freedman (Pittsburgh), Edith Wilson (Pittsburgh), Nancy Lee (Birmingham), Richard Lee (Red Cedar), Marion Gyr (Manitou Worship Group), Eloise Piper (Pittsburgh), Kirk Roose (Oberlin), Marilyn Gallagher (Oberlin), and Tina Storch (Oberlin).

[See the memorial minutes and obituaries in the *Annual Records*, starting on p. 124.]

YM2019-28 Report from Olney Friends School

Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham) reported that Olney is in “a much better place,” newly directed by Christian Acemah, an Olney graduate. Thirty-five students from a wide diversity of countries started the school year. All 17 new graduates will be attending college. An exciting part of the program will integrate academics with community experience. Financial literacy is a requirement for graduation, a part of the set of tools for practical living.

School finances are now more stable. The new school year expects to open with 35+ students.

Anne Marie Taber, Olney’s Director of Development, described the school atmosphere and mission, and encouraged the support of Friends, either through financial donations or through enrollment of a relative or friend. LEYM’s long support of Olney is much appreciated by the Olney community.

Ellerie’s written report follows.

Report on Olney Friends School

It’s my honor and pleasure to say Olney Friends School is in a better place as a community and financially than it has been for the past two years. A permanent head, Christian Acemah, is a 2001 alumnus. His expertise in working with Boards has strengthened the educational community.

The 2018–2019 year opened with 35 students, including students from the U.S., China, Ethiopia, Vietnam, Rwanda, and Japan. In May, 17 students graduated, and all will be attending four-year colleges.

One of Olney’s strengths is its core humanities curriculum, and to strengthen that a new course has been established to help students integrate academics and their Olney experience. Having a teen myself, I knew the importance of teaching financial literacy to high schoolers. Not all high schools do this, and at Olney it is a requirement for graduation. That is a wonderful thing.

Finances are stable for this year, and I urge you to give to Olney in any way you can.

Respectfully submitted, Ellerie Brownfain

YM2019-29 Ministry and Nurture Committee Report (no. 2)

Carla Pratt-Harrington (Athens), co-clerk, reported, listing the names of Committee members. She spoke of the Committee’s concern for the leadership of the Spiritual Formation Program. Those who have been organizing retreats for years are stepping down, so a replacement is needed for next year. School of the Spirit is willing to provide speakers. If no new leadership appears, other ways of deepening spirituality will be sought.

The Committee brought a recommendation for an endorsement for Mey Hasbrook. Carla read aloud the letter provided by Kalamazoo Friends, endorsing her ministry as she travels outside the Yearly Meeting. LEYM is asked to add its endorsement of this ministry to the letter. Carla spoke to ways in which the Yearly Meeting might support Mey and engage with her in terms of accountability. Mey offered a workshop to the Yearly Meeting which gave attendees a chance to get to know her ministry. It was pointed out that right ordering, according to FGC guidelines, ought to have had approval of the YM for a ministry outside of the YM from the beginning. Furthermore, this endorsement could open the door to some forms of financial support for the ministry.

This report has been received, and consideration of the endorsement is held over to a later business meeting.

Carla summarized the State of the Meeting reports, which are published in full in the *Annual Records* [pp. 79–123].

The query for meetings to consider for the next year is: “The world we live in can leave many of us with broken hearts. We turn to one another in our meetings, in worship, and in friendship. Let us rest in the Light. What are we finding there?”

Aran Reinhart (Broadmead) reported for the Spiritual Formation Program. For 2018–19, “Partaking in a Spiritual Spa” was the theme of the retreat; it gave retreatants a chance to explore several spiritually deepening practices. The next retreat will be held September 6–8 at the Weber Retreat Center in Michigan. The theme will be “Meetings as Spiritual Crucibles and Incubators,” and the retreat will be led by Joann Neuroth. Joann spoke on her aim and approach to this retreat, which explores the calls both individuals and meetings can feel.

The full Ministry & Nurture report follows.

Ministry & Nurture Report, LEYM 2019 Annual Sessions

Members: Ann Sprague, Shelley Kotz, Becky Morehouse, Lisa Klopfer, Flo Friender, and Carla Pratt-Harrington

The Ministry & Nurture Committee has worked on several items this session. We took up a concern for the leadership of the Spiritual Formation Program. This is a group of Friends that meets for a weekend retreat in the fall and a Saturday in the spring to deepen their spirituality. Although this group has been under the care of Ministry & Nurture, it has operated independently for many years, finding its own leadership among those who attend. It is organized for this year. However, those who organized are ready to step down and no one has stepped up yet to organize 2020–2021 retreats. We have discerned to request at Annual Sessions and at the fall retreat to find several who would be willing to take on this task of organizing these retreats. We have been approached by School of the Spirit, which would be willing to provide speakers/activity leaders. If several people do not step into this role, M&N may want to consider re-envisioning how we might serve this need of deepening our spirituality.

We are pleased to bring to you a recommendation to endorse a traveling minute for Mey Hasbrook. Through a series of communications we have arrived at an understanding of her ministry. Ministry & Nurture members met with Mey before Annual Sessions to clarify this leading and found our time with her grounded and valuable. Through her sharing with us parts of her spiritual journey, we believe endorsing her traveling minute is the next step in supporting her in this ministry.

We received 17 State of the Meeting Reports from meetings and worship groups. Several themes stood out:

Some meetings report a balance between deep silent worship and spoken ministry, while others are trying to foster more vocal ministry. Meetings described a number of activities that enhance deepening relationships and shared spiritual life. These include book groups, informal gatherings, potlucks, sharing of spiritual journeys, and special interest groups.

Many meetings mentioned action arising from concerns about racism, immigration, and the environment. One meeting offers sanctuary and others support it in various ways. Working with other faith groups and organizations increases our strength and impact in social justice activity.

Different meetings are coping with challenges due to aging of our membership, requiring more awareness of how we offer and accept help. As the sizes of meetings change, adaptations are needed. Some are reviewing their organizational structures and responding creatively to current situations. Ann Arbor reminded us that “Committees are the loom on which we weave community . . . on which we practice our values and faith.”

Some meetings expressed gratitude about their meeting spaces. Other meetings are grappling with concerns about their meeting locations, needed renovations, maintenance costs, rental instability and seeking a stable home.

Some meetings reported that newcomers feel welcomed, which led them to offer types of Quaker 101 programs. Newcomers and younger attendees bring vitality and joy into many meetings. Nurturing young families and youth is a priority and a challenge in these times.

Friends find themselves supporting wider Quaker organizations, including Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, Friends General Conference, Friends Committee on National Legislation, American Friends Service Committee, and Friend World Committee for Consultation.

To quote Kalamazoo Friends Meeting, our meeting *“remains a vibrant community of dedicated, caring, flawed, and lovely Quakers. Gathering together for worship, study, fellowship, or work strengthens our bonds and renews our spirits. We face the uncertain future not afraid and not alone. Puzzled sometimes and often tired, but willing to try in love, in kindness, in hope and grace. We are finding our way step by prayed step.”*

Our query for the upcoming year is as follows

The world we live in can leave many of us with broken hearts. We turn to one another in our meetings, in worship, and in friendship. Let us rest in the Light. What are we finding there?

YM2019-30 Ad Hoc Policies and Procedures Committee Report (no. 2)

Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor) reported. Of the several changes recommended to *Policies and Procedures*, Jeff began by focusing on a new policy regarding travel minutes. That policy, shown below, includes the definition of a travel minute, the process of obtaining a travel minute, and the accountability procedure to be followed in reporting back to the Yearly Meeting. The policy as stated is approved.

II. E Travel Minute

1. **Description.** A statement of endorsement a meeting may give to a member (or sometimes an attender) who has a concern to visit other meetings and/or groups. It establishes the good standing of the Friend and indicates the affectionate interest of the meeting in the various groups being visited. When travel is to groups beyond Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, it should have the endorsement of the Yearly Meeting as well as the home meeting. This is distinct from a *letter of introduction*, which is written for a Friend who will be visiting other meetings in the course of his or her secular travels, but who is not traveling under a concern.
2. **Process.** To obtain Yearly Meeting endorsement, the local meeting's clerk or the clerk of the meeting's ministry committee should provide the clerk of LEYM's Ministry & Nurture Committee a copy of the meeting's travel minute, along with an explanation of the Friend's concern and the request that the Yearly Meeting endorse it. This request will be taken to the next meeting of the Ministry & Nurture Committee, whose clerk may ask a Friend from the meeting who is familiar with the concern and/or the Friend under concern to meet with them or hold a conversation by phone. If the Committee is clear to recommend that LEYM endorse the travel minute, it will bring that recommendation to the next business session of the Yearly Meeting. If the Yearly Meeting is clear to endorse the travel minute, LEYM's clerk will provide the local meeting with a copy of the travel minute with the Yearly Meeting's endorsement.

It is Friends' practice for the clerk of each group of Friends visited to sign the minute (on the back or on an accompanying piece of paper), including a note about the visit. On returning home, the traveling Friend will give the minute with all of its "endorsements" back to the business meeting/s that issued it and report on the travels.

Sixth Session: 8:45 – 10:30 am, Sunday, July 28, 2019

YM2019-31 Worship and Epistle from Wilmington Yearly Meeting

Jo Posti read aloud the Epistle from the 2018 Wilmington Yearly Meeting. The Epistle described the task that faced them: to love one another as best they could, through blessing the future work for Christ of those who chose or will choose to leave the Yearly Meeting and affirming the bonds of fellowship between those who have chosen to remain. An irreconcilable issue of what constitutes valid marriage had been wrestled with for years, and reluctantly some meetings have finally chosen to disaffiliate from Wilmington Yearly Meeting, a decision not to be taken lightly in light of their conviction that they are called to unity in the Divine. Brotherly love for all attenders was mixed with deep grief at the coming loss of members of meetings choosing to leave. Rebuilding is now the task that lies ahead, now that the years-long conflict has reached this resolution.

YM2019-32 Friends World Committee for Consultation Report

In a charmingly improvised skit presented at the previous evening's talent show, four representatives to FWCC – Sam Milford (Pittsburgh), Jana Norlin (Grand Rapids), Mey Hasbrook (Kalamazoo), and Clémence Ravaçon Mershon (Erie WG) – described the atmosphere of the recent FWCC Section of the Americas gathering and the activities undertaken through FWCC.

YM2019-33 Ministry & Nurture Committee: Travel Minute

Carla Pratt-Harrington (Athens) reported that the request for an addition to a travel minute for Mey Hasbrook had come from Kalamazoo Monthly Meeting. If the endorsement is approved, M&N suggests requiring that a member of LEYM not a member of Kalamazoo Meeting be part of Mey Hasbrook's anchoring committee. The importance of a specific ministry lasting for a specified period of time was raised. With the proviso that this endorsement extends for one year, and that the Yearly Meeting will re-evaluate at the next yearly sessions, the endorsement was approved, with one member, Valerie Groszmann, not in unity.

YM2019-34 Epistle from the Pre-School Group

Christa White (Athens) and Alfred Clapp (Athens), Gigi, and Zeke reported on their playground activities, locating playgrounds in many places around the campus. The report was accompanied by a pictorial slide show of photos of the kids' activities. Their report follows.

When Gigi and Zeke were asked what they wanted to do, Gigi answered without hesitation, "Go to the playground." The goal was set. We were going to "Walk humbly with God."

We got to be part of the big kids' "worship sharing" playground.

Finding different playgrounds is what we did. Like the "green" playground, where there was chalk, big kids to play with, and don't forget the scooters.

We found two inside playgrounds: the Music Park and the pre-school home base, aka Home!!!!

We found three outside playgrounds. This park had big red slides and a big swing for both kids to play on. The rock playground was a lot of fun too! There was a water playground where we explored different ways to splash and walk in the water.

YM2019-35 Epistle from the Elementary Age group

Stephanie, Adriana, Starr, Raina, Andrew, Bradley, Matthew, and Conleth related some of their favorite things about being at the Annual Sessions. Their report also was accompanied by a pictorial slide show of photos of the kids' activities.

An epistle, printed below, outlined the round of activities engaged in by the group, including a look at the theme of "Love Justice and Do Mercy."

Epistle from the Elementary Age Group

The elementary age group had lots of fun. We were very busy enjoying each other's company. We started with collection – all the youth program members gathered together for worship, singing, and playing a get-to-know-you game in which Andrew ended up the King of Hearts. We found ourselves in groups, missing him because he was all by himself until we invited him into a group with us.

- Then our group played our name game.
- Colored pictures.
- Made pipe cleaner sculptures, including a Harry Potter costume.
- Ate snacks.
- Read stories to talk about the weekend theme of "Do justice, love mercy...."
- Tried friendship bracelet-making.
- Took a walk and watched for bugs.
- Floated boats of sticks and leaves in the creek (and got our feet wet – surprise!)
- Talked about the turkey buzzards sailing overhead.
- *Loved* swimming.
- Some of us went bowling (and we all won bowling games because we had fun).
- Some of us visited and loved the children's book museum with paintings from books, a play area, and a slide (the rabbit hole from *Alice in Wonderland*) that went from the second floor winding down to the first.
- Walked a labyrinth.
- Performed in the talent show.
- And ate ice cream all day, every day!

Stephanie Charlot*

Starr Clapp

Raina Lagrou

Matt Vacheresse

Conleth Crotser*

Bradley Clapp

Andrew Mott

Adrianna Clapp

* Official teachers – We all learned from each other!

YM2019-36 Epistle from the Middle School Age group

The group started by agreeing on guidelines, practicing doing love through the gathering by listening to each other respectfully. Their Epistle follows.

Epistle from the Middle School Group

Our group is learning how we can do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with our God.

1. We began our journey this weekend by agreeing on the rules for our group. The most important rule was not to hurt ourselves or others on the inside or outside.
2. We used a talking piece to allow each of us to speak from our experience. Each of us carries a piece of the truth, we need to speak ours and hear others.
3. Our cell phones are needed to stay in touch with those not present. We only need them during our 15-minute snack break and to share music with the group.
4. We learned that loving mercy means showing kindness to each other, encouraging each other to participate fully in our games, truth-sharing, and activities outside of the formal program times.
5. We learned to do justice by recognizing inequalities that can exclude some of us from group activities. We struggled with differences in access to funds for purchasing food and items in our trip to town.
6. We learned to walk humbly with that of God in ourselves and each other by taking turns, speaking and listening to each other's truth.

Jenn Seif*

Jesse Mott

Douglas Smith

Amanda Vacheresse

Yevgeny Dierauer

Willow Lagrou

Ethan Charlot

Elisabeth Clapp

Peter Crowley*

YM2019-37 Epistle from the High School Group

Each in poetry described the round of activities of the group throughout the gathering. Their Epistle follows.

Epistle of the High School Group

Thursday we arrived, prepared for a weekend of fun,
We went to the store, where we all bought a ton.

On the way back we spotted a park,
That said we could play if it wasn't too dark.

We took our time getting back,
Then we played cards, got through a whole stack.

After a while we were sent off to bed,
At least that's what Carl's mom said.

We rolled out of bed with hopes of French toast,
Then after we ate we learned to compost.

We walked to the pump like we've done for years,
But the site that we saw filled us with tears.

The scene was in shambles, the pump was in half,
Then we shook up the bridge and had a good laugh.

After lunch the group was ready to roll,
We hopped in our cars and went to go bowl.

Elizabeth told the story of her sock,
The details of which will leave you in shock.

This year's plenary we felt was commercial,
Though our group's opinions were quite controversial.

We came back to the dorm to play in the grass,
Until we and the kids ran out of gas.

Saturday morning we took a long walk,
We went to the thrift store and bought out their stock.

Then again to the dollar store,
The first time was great, but we still wanted more.

The afternoon hit and it was off to the pool.
We swam for a bit, the water was cool.

The talent show ice cream made us loosen our belts.
We saw some performances that were quite heartfelt.

This took us forever to write.
We stayed up late into the night.

In the high school group we are all each other's friend.
Which is why we were so sad to see this year end.

Sophie Hull
Alexander Charlot
Gabe Mott
Jabiri Crowley
Jonah Brownfain
Rosa Seif
Micah Seif
Carl Dierauer
Jason Smith

YM2019-38 Youth & Children Program Committee Report (no. 2)

Greg Mott (Broadmead) and Kate Enger (Athens) reported. Twenty-five children (both children and grandchildren, some not associated with meetings) were present, including two new children. Greg expressed appreciation for helpers, and talked about the fall youth retreat.

Kate requested input for next year's program.

Heartfelt affirmation was expressed for the ministry for children as led by Greg and Kate at Yearly Meeting sessions.

The full report follows.

Report from the Youth & Children Program

Currently, we are enjoying the company of 25 youth, including 2 who were not in the program last year. Their ages range from 2 ½ years old to 17 years old. Aside from a couple bruised knees, our time together was filled with laughter, companionship, and a whole lot of ice cream. I would like to thank the group leaders, the volunteer drivers, and parents, who helped keep the children moving. A special note of appreciation must be given to Noah Molina, who led group singing, directed yard games, and provided an extra burst of energy for the program.

This year, the LEYM Fall youth retreat will be held at Templd Hills Camp, located in Bellville, Ohio, on September 27–29. Registration forms can be found on the LEYM website or by contacting Diane Mott. The retreat is available for K–12 youth.

YM2019-39 Finance Committee Report (no. 2)

Joe Mills (Kalamazoo), clerk, reported, presenting a final proposed budget. There would be an increase of \$500 for an audit, and an increase in compensation for the office worker and data base manager. The big increase of \$2000 was for scholarships. The total increase in the budget would require a \$5 increase per member contribution, from \$30 to \$35. The budget was approved.

The budget appears below.

Budget for 2019–20

LEYM Draft Budget 2019 - 2020 Approved July 28, 2019											
General Fund Expenses (* = transfers)	FY 2015-2016		FY 2016-2017		FY 2017-2018		Label	FY 2018-19		Proposed '20	
	Budget	Act 15-16	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual		Budget	Actual	Budget	Change
Travel	4000	2,762	3,000	3000	1,024		Travel	2000	2059	2000	0
Office	50	88	100	558	300	228	Office Administration	500	301	1000	500
Contract worker	2000	2,249	2,000	2036	2400	1,250	Yearly Meeting Worker	2400	2215	3000	600
Finance	50	67	500	500	75	0	Database Mgr.	3200	2854	3200	625
Publications	3200	1,986	2,200	2353	2800	2,686	Publications	200	15	200	0
Advancement	100	0	100	0	50	79	Advancement	200	200	200	0
Ministry & Nurture	100	0	100	0	50	0	Ministry & Nurture	50	0	50	0
Clerk's Fund	300	0	300	0	200	0	College, Univ., scholarship	0	0	2000	2000
FGC	4500	4,500	6,000	6000	6000	6,000	FGC	6000	6000	6000	0
MFC one-time donation	1000	1,000	0	0	1000	1,000					
Records project	100	100	100	100	100	100	Swathmore Records project	100	100	100	0
FWCC Travel*	1500	1,500	1,200	1200	1800	1,800	FWCC Travel*	1800	1800	1800	0
Youth Activity Fund*	1000	1,000	1,000	1000	1,000	1,000	Youth Activity Fund*	1000	1000	1000	0
High School Retreat Fund*	1600	0	0	0	0	0	High School Retreat Fund*	0	0	0	0
Spiritual Formation*	800	800	300	0	300	300	Spiritual Formation*	300	300	300	0
Friends School in Detroit	0	0	0	0	0	0	Attend. Conf w/ Quaker Values	1000	-18	1000	0
Olney Friends School	2000	2,000	2,000	2000	2,000	2,000	Olney Friends School	3000	3000	3000	0
Scholarship Fund for ministry*	0	0	0	0	0	0	Consultation Fund*	0	0	0	0
Scholarship Fund for ministry*	500	500	100	0	0	0	Scholarship Fund for ministry*	0	0	0	0
Summer work project	1200	1,200	600	0	200	0	Summer work project	0	0	0	0
Insurance	500	500	500	500	500	500	Insurance	500	500	500	0
Misc. (FGC scholarships)	0	0	1,400	2900	4000	3,545	Misc.				
Total Expense =	24500	20,252	21,550	23047	26275	21,552		22050	20137	26775	3725
Contributions Income	23,040	22,821	19,880	21477	21300	16,531		22600	24064		
FFC Dividends Income	1050	1,055	1,050	1094	1080	1,131		1000	1186		
Other Income	0	0	0	0	0	0		0	0		
Total Income =	24,090	23,885	20,930	22571	22380	1,460		23600	25260		
Income - Expenses =	-410	3,634	-620	-476	-3885	-3,265		1550	5123		
Total Contribution / Members=	\$32		\$28		\$30	\$2					
Members=	720		710		710	0					
Suggested cont. / member=	\$32		\$28		\$30	\$2					
								600	-110	\$35	\$5
								\$30	0	\$35	\$5

YM2019-40 Treasurer's Report

Mike Hinshaw (Wooster), treasurer, reported. Mike outlined his report, encouraging member meetings to consult the LEYM website on the uses that their Meeting contributions are put to.

The report appears below.

Treasurer's Report, p. 1**GENERAL FUND INCOME - 2018/2019 Fiscal Year**

Meeting (Giver)	Amount	Date
Akron Friends Meeting		
Ann Arbor Friends Meeting	3,630.00	26-Jan
Athens Friends Meeting	2,100.00	8-Apr
Birmingham Friends Meeting	510.00	20-Nov
Broadmead Friends Meeting	1,500.00	4-Feb
Cleveland Friends Meeting	1,200.00	20-May
Delaware Friends Meeting	180.00	13-Dec
Detroit Friends Meeting	616.00	31-Jul
Grand Rapids Friends Meeting	570.00	26-Jan
Granville Friends Meeting	765.00	10-Sep
Holland Friends Meeting	200.00	7-Jan
Kalamazoo Friends Meeting	960.00	26-Jan
Kent Friends Meeting	570.00	21-Dec
Mid-Ohio Valley Friends Meeting	108.00	26-Jan
North Columbus Friends Meeting	900.00	24-Sep
Oberlin Friends Meeting	960.00	30-Jun
Pittsburgh Friends Meeting	6,525.00	14-Aug
Red Cedar Friends Meeting	2,220.00	3-Dec
Waysmeet	100.00	7-Jan
Wooster Friends Meeting	450.00	17-Dec
Individuals		
Total Contributions	24,064.00	
FFC Dividends, Base Account	1,195.97	
FFC change port value, + or -, Base Acc.	1,133.22	
TOTAL INCOME	26,393.19	

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ACCOUNT	BUDGET	ACTUAL EXPENSE	EXPENSE % OF BUDGET
Travel	2,000.00	2,069.18	103%
Office	500.00	300.94	60%
Contract worker	2,400.00	2,215.33	92%
Finance ¹	0.00		0%
Publications	3,200.00	2,853.99	89%
Advancement	200.00	14.83	7%
Ministry & Nurture	50.00		0%
College, Univ., scholarship	0.00		
FGC	6,000.00	6,000.00	100%
Records project	100.00	100.00	100%
FWCC Travel ^{2 3}	1,800.00	1,800.00	100%
Youth Activities Fund ²	1,000.00	1,000.00	100%
H. S. Teen Retreat Fund ²	0.00		
Spiritual Formation Fund ²	300.00	300.00	100%
Attend Conf. w/ Quaker Values	1,000.00	(17.50)	-2%
Olney Friends School	3,000.00	3,000.00	100%
Consultation Fund ²	0.00		0%
Scholarship Fnd for Ministry ²	0.00		0%
Service Projects	0.00		0%
Insurance	500.00	500.00	100%
Sub-total	22,050.00	20,136.77	91%
Misc.: Travel Cn'tgy Fund Clos		(3,411.64)	
Totals	22,050.00	16,725.13	76%

¹ Includes banking costs

² Subsidy from General Fund to other Funds

³ Includes FWCC Travel Fund & Contribution

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Summary of Funds 2018-2019 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 ¹	25,678.77	26,393.19		16,725.13	35,346.83	na / 30
Granville Youth Fund ²	7,615.89	477.10		250.38	7,842.61	na / na
Annual Meeting Fund ³	1,944.62	14,721.21		16,579.16	86.67	1 / 3
Youth Activities Fund ^{4,5}	6,995.57	2,115.38		1,756.85	7,354.10	4 / 8
H S Teen retreat Fund ⁴	6,892.64				6,892.64	3 / 6
Spiritual Form. Fund ⁴	2,656.74	3,000.00		2,769.45	2,887.29	.5 / 1.5
FWCC Travel Fund ⁴	2,639.83		900.00		3,539.83	na / 6
FWCC Travel Donation	900.00		900.00	1,800.00	0.00	na / 9
Consultation Fund ⁴	3,143.68				3,143.68	.5 / 2
Ministry Sch'ship Fund ⁴	2,000.00			151.00	1,849.00	na / 2
Summer Work Proj Fund ⁴	2,182.39				2,182.39	na / 2
Travelling Ministries Fund	3,500.00				3,500.00	na / na
Travel Cont'cy Fund ^{4,6}	3,411.64			3,411.64	0.00	2 / 4
TOTAL	69,561.77	46,706.88	1,800.00	43,443.61	74,625.04	

¹ Includes line item accounting from Budget plus contributions;

also reflects dividends and changes in net portfolio value, FFC base account

² 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

³ Income includes -0- in individual donations

⁴ Other funds are managed through accounting and may be subsidized by the corresponding budget lines of the General Fund.

⁵ Income includes dividends from FFC Granville YF account

⁶ This fund closed 9/15/2018

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BALANCE SHEET

Location of Assets	CASH ASSETS		Change in Value
	07/01/18	06/30/19	06/30/19
	Beginning	FF Change End	
Citizens Nat. Bank, Bluffton, Ohio	25,860.55	28,367.91	2,507.36
Friends Fiduciary, Base Account	36,085.33	38,414.52	2,329.19
> Dividends, Re-Invested		1,195.97	
> Change in Portfolio Value is + or -		1,133.22	
Friends Fiduciary, Granville YF Account	7,615.89	7,842.61	226.72
> Change in Portfolio Value + or -		226.72	
Subtotal of both FFC accounts	43,701.22	2,555.91 46,257.13	2,555.91
Total Cash Assets	69,561.77	74,625.04	5,063.27

Allocation of Assets			
General Fund	25,678.77	35,346.83	9,668.06
Granville Youth Fund	7,615.89	7,842.61	226.72
Annual Meeting Fund	1,944.62	86.67	-1,857.95
Youth Activities Fund	6,995.57	7,354.10	358.53
High School Teen Retreat Fund	6,892.64	6,892.64	0.00
Spiritual Formation Fund	2,656.74	2,887.29	230.55
FWCC Travel Fund (incl. Travel & Donation)	3,539.83	3,539.83	0.00
Consultation Fund	3,143.68	3,143.68	0.00
Ministry Scholarship Fund	2,000.00	1,849.00	-151.00
Summer. Work Proj Fund	2,182.39	2,182.39	0.00
Travelling Ministries Fund	3,500.00	3,500.00	0.00
Travel Contingency Fund	3,411.64	0.00	-3,411.64
Total All Funds	69,561.77	74,625.04	5,063.27

YM2019-41 Minute of Gratitude for Mike Hinshaw

Jo Posti read aloud a minute for Mike Hinshaw's work as treasurer over the past seven years, citing aspects of his work on behalf of the Meeting. The minute was approved, and the full text follows.

The Yearly Meeting thanks Mike Hinshaw for his service as Lake Erie Yearly Meeting's treasurer for seven years. His attentive and careful work has helped us to preserve our treasure, even as we've seen our membership decrease, and to think creatively about how our budget reflects our values. During Mike's tenure, way has opened for LEYM to offer Friends General Conference seed money to fund an institutional audit and to develop new line items to support scholarships for LEYM Friends to attend Quaker colleges and conferences. We are grateful to Mike for his precision and his creative solutions to fund initiatives that enhance our faith experience.

YM2019-42 Nominating Committee Report

Clémence Ravaçon Mershon (Erie WG) reported on the vacancies that have been filled. She expressed gratitude that this is a "more complete" report than she has been able to make at times in the past. The Program Committee continues to need people to step forward to participate in this very fun committee. The full slate appears below.

LEYM Officers, Committee Members, & Representatives
Nominating Committee Report 2019

Approved 7-28-2019. *Terms begin and end at rise of Annual Sessions.*

* = Approved by Executive Committee after Annual Sessions.

ExC = serves on LEYM Executive Committee.

Officers

Role	Name & Meeting	Year of Service	End Year
Presiding Clerk <i>ExC</i>	Josephine Posti, Pittsburgh	2	2022
Assistant Clerk <i>ExC</i>	Nancy Reeves, Cleveland	3	2020
Recording Clerk <i>ExC</i>	Peter Wood, Red Cedar	3	2020
Treasurer <i>ExC</i>	Tom Kangas, North Columbus	1	2020

Communications and Other Workers

Bulletin Editors	Peggy Daub & Jeff Cooper, Ann Arbor	3	2020
Database Manager	Maryann Concannon, Red Cedar	1	2020
Meeting Worker	Bill Warters, Birmingham	1	
Bookstore	Valerie Groszmann	18	

Committees

<u>Name & Meeting</u>	<u>Year of Service</u>	<u>End Year</u>
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Advancement & Outreach

of Members: 6 Years of Term: 3

Blair Ellis, Ann Arbor	3	2020
Sheila Johnson, Ann Arbor	3	2020
Ellen Barnes, Birmingham	Clerk <i>ExC</i>	5 2021
Kathie Hollingshead, Pittsburgh	2	2021
Carla Pratt-Harrington, Athens	1	2022
TBD	1	2022

Committees (continued):

<u>Name/Meeting</u>	<u>Year of Service</u>	<u>End Year</u>
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Earthcare

of Members: 6 Others interested welcome.

Years of Term: 3

Mey Hasbrook, Kalamazoo	Clerk <i>ExC</i>	2	2020
R. E. Hogan, Athens		3	2020
Jonah Brownfain, Birmingham		2	2020

Finance

of Members: 3 Years of Term: 3

Joseph Mills, Kalamazoo	Clerk <i>ExC</i>	3	2020
Joann Neuroth, Red Cedar		2	2021
Seth Reichenbach, Unaffiliated		2	2021

Note: Treasurer serves ex officio

High School Teen Retreat (Committee is dormant)

Normally 3 adults with 3-year terms + 2 high schoolers with 2-year terms

Ministry & Nurture

of Members: 6 + 1 Rep. from each monthly meeting encouraged Years of Term: 3

Lisa Klopfer, Ann Arbor		2	2020
Shelley Kotz, Broadmead	Co-Clerk <i>ExC</i>	2	2021
Rebecca Morehouse, Ann Arbor	Co-Clerk <i>ExC</i>	2	2021
Linda Mills, Kalamazoo		1	2022
Sharon Ottenbreit, Detroit		1	2022
David Snyder, Oberlin		1	2022

Nominating

of Members: 6 (appointed by YM through Naming Committee)

Years of Term: 3

Clémence Ravaçon Mershon, Erie WG, Clerk <i>ExC</i>	6	2020
Jo Steigerwald, Cleveland	3	2020
Janet Dando, Akron	5	2021
Mike Holaday, Grand Rapids	2	2021
Ellerie Brownfain, Birmingham	4	2022
Lisa Sinnett, Ann Arbor	1	2022

Committees (continued):

<u>Name/Meeting</u>	<u>Year of Service</u>	<u>End Year</u>
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Peace & Justice

of Members: 6 + 1 Rep. from each monthly meeting encouraged

Years of Term: 3 Others interested welcome.

David Finke, Oberlin		1	2020
Joel Ottenbreit, Detroit	Clerk <i>ExC</i>	3	2020
John Howell, Athens		2	2021
Nancy Taylor, Ann Arbor		2	2021
TBD		1	2022
TBD		1	2022

Publications & Archives

of Members: 4 Years of Term: 3

Bob Roehm, North Columbus		3	2020
TBD		1	2021
Peggy Daub, Ann Arbor	Clerk <i>ExC</i>	1	2022

Rosemary Coffey, Pittsburgh 1 2022
Note: Web Master and Bulletin Editors serve *ex officio*.

Yearly Meeting Planning:

Adult & Family Program

of Members: 6 Years of Term: 3

Claire Cohen, Pittsburgh	7	2020
Susan Hartman, Ann Arbor	3	2020
Thomas Taylor, Ann Arbor Clerk <i>ExC</i>	3	2020
Steve Morehouse, Ann Arbor	2	2021
Aran Reinhart, Broadmead	3	2022
Greg Mott, Broadmead *	1	2022

Arrangements & Site

of Members: 6 Years of Term: 3

Jon Sommer, Broadmead Clerk <i>ExC</i>	16	2020
John Templin, Broadmead	10	2020
Bill Warters, Birmingham	2	2020
Olwen Pritchard, Broadmead	5	2021
Mary Igoe Meyers, Broadmead	4	2022
Sally Weaver Sommer, Broadmead Registrar	4	2022

Committees (continued):

<u>Name/Meeting</u>	<u>Year of Service</u>	<u>End Year</u>
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Youth & Children's Program

of Members: 15 Years of Term: 2

Kate Enger, Athens Clerk <i>ExC</i>	1	2020
Christa White, Athens Assistant Clerk	1	2021
Ellerie Brownfain, Birmingham		
Stephanie Charlot, Red Cedar		
Alfred Clapp III, Athens		
Cathy Clifford, Red Cedar		
Conleth Crotser, Cleveland		
Peter Crowley, Cleveland		
Noah Molina, Athens		
Diane Mott, Broadmead		
Jenn Seif, Grand Rapids		
Diane Mott, Broadmead Fall retreat clerk		
Ellerie Brownfain, Birmingham Fall retreat assistant		

Representatives to Other Quaker Organizations

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Name & Meeting</u>	<u>Year of Service</u>	<u>End Year</u>
AFSC Corp	Claire Cohen, Pittsburgh	5	2020
AFSC Corp	Bill Warters, Birmingham	2	2021
AFSC Corp	Kathleen Helbling	1	2022
AFSC Corp	Paul Helbling	1	2022
FCNL Gen Cmte	TBD	1	2020
FCNL Gen Cmte	David Snyder	5	2021
FCNL Gen Cmte	Nancy Taylor, Ann Arbor	2	2021
FCNL Gen Cmte	Thomas Taylor, Ann Arbor	2	2021
FCNL Gen Cmte	John Howell, Athens	3	2022
FCNL Gen Cmte	TBD	1	2022

Representatives to Other Quaker Organizations (continued)

<u>Organization</u>	<u>Name & Meeting</u>	<u>Year of Service</u>	<u>End Year</u>
FGC Cntl Cmte	Marvin Barnes, Birmingham, Clerk	2	2021
FGC Cntl Cmte	Sally Weaver Sommer, Broadmead	2	2021
FGC Cntl Cmte	Valerie Groszmann, Kalamazoo	1	2021
(LEYM Reps appoint Rep to FGC Executive Committee)			
FWCC	Jana Norlin, Grand Rapids	6	2020
FWCC	Sam Milford, Pittsburgh	4	2022
FWCC	Mey Hasbrook, Kalamazoo	4	2022
FLGBTQC	Nancy Reeves, Cleveland	5	2022
Olney Friends School	Ellerie Brownfain, Birmingham	2	2021
Q Earthcare Witness	Mey Hasbrook, Kalamazoo	1	2022
Wm. Penn House	Greg Mott, Broadmead	2	2021

Visitors to Neighboring Yearly Meetings

<u>Yearly Meeting</u>	<u>Name & Meeting</u>	<u>Year of Service</u>
EFI Eastern Region	TBD	1
Ohio (Conservative)	TBD	1
Ohio Valley (FGC)	TBD	1
Wilmington (FUM)	TBD	1

YM2019-43 Naming Committee Report

Thomas Taylor (Ann Arbor) reported. Lisa Sinnett (Ann Arbor) has agreed to serve on the Nominating Committee, and Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham) will continue to serve. Meeting approved these names.

YM2019-44 Adult & Family Program Committee Report

Claire Cohen (Pittsburgh) submitted a written report on behalf of the Adult & Family Program Committee. The report follows.

ADULT AND FAMILY PROGRAM COMMITTEE REPORT

First, I'd like to thank my fellow committee members, who worked so hard and whom I could not do without: Susan Hartman, Thomas Taylor, Aran Reinhart, and Steve Morehouse.

The theme of this year's Annual Session was "Do Justice, Love Mercy, and Walk Humbly With God: Finding our Calling in Disturbing Times." Our Plenary speaker was Joyce Ajlouny, General Secretary of American Friends Service Committee. We had five workshops scheduled for each day, including two by FCNL. Joyce's Plenary speech on Friday night was followed by an informal breakfast chat on Saturday morning. On both Friday and Saturday mornings, we held Bible study and three worship sharing groups simultaneously, including one worship sharing group outside. An early morning worship session was also offered. This year, we also had a monthly meeting clerks' dinner on Saturday night. Finally, we had our ever-popular Talent Show and Ice Cream Social. This year, we were able to offer watermelon, lactose-free ice cream, and no-sugar-added ice cream.

So far, informal feedback about all aspects of the programming has been positive. We have evaluations for you to fill out, both upstairs at the registration table and on a chair outside the door to Kreisler. Please fill one out before you leave. We really value them and use them to improve the program every year.

Claire Cohen, Committee Clerk

YM2019-45 Minute of Gratitude for Nancy Reeves

Jo Posti read aloud a minute of gratitude for our outgoing presiding clerk:

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting thanks Nancy Reeves for her service as Yearly Meeting clerk during 2018 and 2019 as well as her work as recording clerk in 2015–2017. Nancy has helped guide LEYM through important policy changes such as our recently approved harassment policy and our new scholarship policies, and has helped us to work creatively to support the Meeting worker transition. Nancy's ability to listen deeply to Friends' concerns during business meetings has helped us to discern work thoughtfully and in a spirit of love and tenderness toward each other.

The minute was approved.

YM2019-46 LEYM Epistle

Jo Posti read aloud the LEYM Epistle formulated during the Annual Sessions. Some additions and emendations were recommended and incorporated. The Epistle was approved, with gratitude to the epistle committee composed of Jo Posti, Lisa Klopfer (Ann Arbor), and Susan Loucks (Pittsburgh). The full text appears below.

Submitted by Nancy Reeves, presiding clerk
Peter Wood, recording clerk

Epistle to all Friends Lake Erie Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends July 25–28, 2019 Bluffton University, Bluffton, Ohio

“(We) remain a vibrant community of dedicated, caring, flawed, and lovely Quakers. Gathering together for worship, study, fellowship, or work strengthens our bonds and renews our spirits. We face the uncertain future not afraid and not alone. Puzzled sometimes and often tired, but willing to try in love, in kindness, in hope and grace. We are finding our way step by prayed step.”

~ Kalamazoo Friends Meeting

To Friends Everywhere,

We arrived in Bluffton, Ohio, from college towns like Ann Arbor and Athens, big cities like Pittsburgh and Cleveland, and communities throughout Ohio, Michigan, and Pennsylvania with small worship groups and growing meetings. Bluffton is a place that for many is full of memories of past Yearly Meeting sessions; those who gathered found comfort in the familiar and also engaged energetically with what is new.

The 25 participants in the children's program delighted to be with each other and spent their time singing, crafting, and in active play. Our evening of talent and ice cream brought out surprises and hidden skills among us, including delightful round-singing by the children, original poetry and song, and music from Pete Seeger to J. S. Bach. We heard creative re-interpretations of a Psalm and of Micah 6. Four Friends presented a report on their sojourn at the FWCC Section of the Americas gathering in dramatic form, some of it in Spanish, ending in the group song that summed up their joyful experience of listening and ministering with Evangelical, Conservative, and Unprogrammed Friends: *Demos Gracias al Señor*.

We were led to go deeper in our corporate business. With thoughtful, substantive consideration of inclusion, we approved a new policy to provide guidance to adults who feel they have experienced harassment during our time together and developed a new scholarship fund for LEYM youth who choose to attend a Quaker college or internship experience. The theme of inclusion was also reflected in discussion of FGC's process of becoming an anti-racist organization, and in reports on how individual meetings within LEYM have taken up this work. We were reminded that true anti-racist practice – and, indeed, radical inclusion on a wider scale – must be practiced like preventative dental care. While there is no fixed destination or closure to this work, we had the hopeful sense that, in many cases, we are reporting from a place of new experimentation and implementation – one step along the way.

One example of this experimentation was our intentionality around food choices during Sessions. Broadmead Monthly Meeting, in coordination with LEYM's Earthcare Committee, created signage around the dining hall that educated us on the environmental cost of different food choices, menus were largely vegetarian, and youth served as compost helpers/ educators. Both participants and dining hall staff were enthusiastic about the resulting reduction in waste and impact.

Our plenary speaker, Joyce Ajlouny, American Friends Service Committee's General Secretary, shared information on AFSC's history as well as the ways its work is manifesting in the world, led by people who are impacted by oppression. Their current planning process is illustrating that AFSC fills needs where others do not go. Its work shows ways we can join in their courage to accompany and support those whose voices are silenced, including immigrants, the incarcerated, and – as Joyce shared in stories from her own life – the Palestinian people.

The gaps in our Nominating Committee slate and a dinner with monthly meeting clerks provoked reflection on the core value of LEYM to its members. We know that many members of monthly meetings do not even know of, let alone take advantage of, LEYM resources or opportunities. We have an opportunity to learn more about who we are. What do meetings most need from a larger Quaker body? How does this match, or not match, ways we are currently organized? What new forms and practices might emerge if we identified different objectives? Exploring these possibilities already releases us from guilt and gives access to new energy and enthusiasm.

Repeatedly, in business sessions and in workshops, we heard of the value of connections to each other and to the Earth, meeting-to-meeting, meetings to Quaker organizations, between individuals within meetings, and with the Divine [God]. We turn to each other with more urgency in a world with needs that leave us, at times, hopeless and despairing. We struggle to live with the damage and our complicity, unsure how to balance comfort and challenge in our lives.

In sessions, we heard a request for endorsement of a traveling minute and considered ways we may be best equipped to support people whose call is to travel among Friends and how we support gifts both at the monthly and yearly meeting levels. In various workshops, the theme of moving from inward deepening to interconnection was frequently raised up. We have hope that, with deeper connections, we may learn better how to name our gifts and understand the work that we are uniquely suited to do.

Our hearts have been made lighter and more tender through sharing your epistles, whether you are yearly meetings that are regrouping after rupture or are finding community in diverse expressions of our faith. We are grateful for the opportunity to be in relationship and send prayers that Truth continues to prosper with you all.

Nancy Reeves, Presiding Clerk