**Representative Meeting**

**April 2, 2022**

**Virtual Meeting via Zoom**

Clerks’ table: Susan Loucks (Pittsburgh), clerk; Jo Posti (Pittsburgh), assistant clerk; Kate Enger (Athens), recording clerk.

**Roll call:**

Akron 1

Ann Arbor 6

Athens 3

Birmingham 4

Broadmead 7

Detroit 3

Erie WG 1

Grand Rapids 3

Granville 1

Kalamazoo 5

North Columbus 3

Oberlin 2

Pittsburgh 3

Red Cedar 2

Wooster 3

**Total 47**

**9:30 Worship and Worship Sharing**

**10:00 Gathering**

**RM2022-01 Epistle from Northern Yearly Meeting**

The assistant clerk, Jo Posti, read an epistle from Northern Yearly Meeting’s 2021 Annual Sessions. Our Northern Friends shared their anti-racist efforts. Despite the challenges of gathering virtually, they enjoyed activities to build relationships, support spiritual growth, and celebrate the children in their meeting.

**RM2022-02 Ministry & Nurture Committee**

Becky Morehouse (Ann Arbor) and Shelley Kotz (Broadmead) reported. The committee has been listening for Spirit to guide them in nurturing the monthly meetings and helping them discern the roles that monthly meetings can take in the Yearly Meeting as a whole. Conflict within meetings has been an area in which the committee has offered support and care to monthly meetings. Resources for managing conflict and information about traveling ministry are available on the LEYM website. Clerks’ Chats have led to clarity on how to support and serve the Yearly Meeting and the monthly meetings. The full written report is attached.

**RM2022-03** **Ad Hoc Technology Committee and Website**

Bill Warters (Birmingham) reported on the work and his own efforts to make helpful technology available for Friends in the Yearly Meeting. He walked us through changes and additions to the website. Monthly meetings have been connecting through Clerks’ Chats, spiritual retreats, and interest groups. A Technology Advisory Committee has been formed to help guide the YM in developing and utilizing strategies to organize data and to stay connected. Plans for the virtual 2022 Annual Meeting are progressing well. Bill suggests starting a Geek Chat to share notes on how we can better connect through technology. We are also looking at how to use technology to reach out to people interested in attending meetings for worship. Thank you to Bill for creating a clear, professional and helpful website for our Yearly Meeting. Bill’s full slideshow and information will be distributed. The slides can be accessed at this link:

<https://leym.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/LEYMRepMeetingTechUpdateSlides-web.pdf>

**RM2022-04 Interest Groups for Earthcare and Peace & Justice**

Joann Neuroth (Red Cedar) reported on the activity of interest groups focused on earthcare and peace & justice. Last year, Friends carried out a year-long pilot program to experiment with participation in interest groups in place of the traditional committees. The results of this experiment suggest that Friends appreciated and engaged with the interest groups, so they have continued to meet. The interest groups have welcomed speakers to help increase our understanding and mobilize actions that we can take to address these important issues. Friends interested in participating in the interest groups can find information on the LEYM website. Presently, volunteers are organizing interest groups. If we want them to continue, we need to address a plan for who will take on the responsibility of organizing one or both interest groups.

**RM2022-05 Ad Hoc Venue Committee**

Sally Weaver Sommer (Broadmead) presented an update on the work of the Ad Hoc Venue Committee, charged with exploring options for our 2023 Annual Meeting. They have been incorporating the work of the Ad Hoc Visioning Committee and collaborating with other committees to make our Annual Meeting faithful to Quaker practice, open to Friends from other traditions, community-building, and fun. The committee has been identifying potential obstacles and challenges as well as flexible ways to preserve valued traditions while growing and enhancing the experience of our Annual Meeting. Intergenerational activities have been a focus, along with utilizing online and hybrid options. The committee members are Sally Weaver Sommer, Jon Sommer (Broadmead), Diane Mott (Broadmead), Bill Warters (Birmingham), Briana Charlot (Red Cedar), and Sam Milford (Pittsburgh).

Committee members have made a list of potential sites and have visited the one that seemed the most promising: Ashland University. The visit was promising enough that they plan to return to explore it further. Jon and Sally have more detailed information on Ashland for Friends to review if they wish.

The committee is also looking at changing the date to the third weekend in June. Business sessions may be distributed throughout the year rather than concentrated at Annual Meeting.

Future themes could be selected to encourage activities that Friends could focus on during the Annual Meeting, such as the development of elements of our own *Faith and Practice*.

**RM2022-06 Follow Up to work of Ad Hoc Visioning Committee**

Susan Loucks, presiding clerk, presented an update on our application of the ideas that came out of the Visioning Committee. They created a suggested plan for how committees can take responsibility for putting new ideas into practice. Discussion also included possible additions to YM staff, as well as making it easier for Friends to join with a committee for a shorter time, or to share their time and talents by working on specific tasks.

**RM2022-07** **Adult & Family Program Committee**

Susan Hartman (Ann Arbor) shared an update from the Adult & Family Program Committee. They are carefully integrating the work of the Visioning Committee. The plenary speaker at Annual Meeting will be Christian Acemah, the Head of Olney Friends School, and the theme will be “Many Roots, One Tree.” Workshop planning is progressing well, and the committee is seeking another workshop, ideally on the topic of the future of Quakerism. The Fun Night may be different this year, and the committee is open to ideas about how Friends can sing, play, or otherwise enjoy fellowship. Intergenerational activities that allow us to get to know one another better will be further explored, and Friends are encouraged to send ideas. The committee is also looking at how we can create a symbolic artwork together that shows our monthly meetings as many roots that unite in one tree. Friends are encouraged to send ideas for that activity to the committee, as well as ideas for welcoming newcomers ([susandhartman@gmail.com](mailto:susandhartman@gmail.com)).

**RM2022-08 Teens & Children Programming**

Christa White (Athens) and Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham) presented plans for the teens and children programming for the Annual Meeting this year. There will be programming, including access to moderated times on a Minecraft server. They are reaching out to monthly meetings to find out which young Friends plan to attend and what they would be interesting in doing together. Please pass the word and encourage youth to participate. If you are willing to help with any of the activities, please contact Christa and Ellerie ([christawhite1016@gmail.com](mailto:christawhite1016@gmail.com), [ellerieb@gmail.com](mailto:ellerieb@gmail.com)).

**RM2022-09** **Breakout Sessions**

Friends each chose to attend two breakout sessions about FCNL (Friends Committee on National Legislation), Olney Friends School, AFSC (American Friends Service Committee), and FWCC (Friends World Committee for Consultation). In each session, Friends knowledgeable about the organization presented information and answered questions. Reports from each organization will be appended.

**RM2022-10 Finance Committee**

Tom Kangas (North Columbus), treasurer, and Joann Neuroth (Red Cedar) presented a financial report and provided information on next year’s budget as it currently stands. It will be updated, presented, and discussed again during Annual Sessions. The full report is appended. The budget is intentionally designed to run at a deficit in order to bring our surplus down to the recommended ceiling level.

The Finance Committee recommends that we financially support the Detroit Monthly Meeting as they build a new meetinghouse and provide a valued, continued presence in Detroit. We were reminded to think in terms of equity, rather than equality.

The scholarship for young Friends who wish to attend a Quaker school may be given to a young Friend who may attend Earlham. The committee awaits his decision about whether he will attend Earlham.

Friends with questions, ideas, or requests should contact Tom ([poika2@hotmail.com](mailto:poika2@hotmail.com)) or Joann ([jneuroth@gmail.com](mailto:jneuroth@gmail.com)).

**RM2022-11** **Annual Review of *Policies and Procedures***

The clerk brought up the question about who should shoulder the responsibility for annual review of *Policies and Procedures* for any inconsistencies. Executive Committee has decided Publications & Archives Committee would take on this review.

**RM2022–12** **Minutes of Concern**

The clerk presented a refresher regarding our current procedures for how minutes of concern come to Annual Sessions. Minutes of individual or corporate concern can come through a monthly meeting to the clerk or to a committee within the Yearly Meeting. Advance information will ideally be made available to Friends, so we have complete information and are prepared to focus on discernment rather than introducing ideas for the first time during the Annual Sessions. If a monthly meeting has an issue it wishes to discuss with other meetings, it is encouraged to reach out to Bill Warters (digital communications facilitator) or our clerk. (See LEYM *Policies and Procedures,* II. D, “Bringing Leadings and Concerns to the Yearly Meeting”).

**RM2022-13 Creating a** ***Faith and Practice***

The clerk initiated a discussion of beginning a process that could lead to the creation of a *Faith and Practice*. We broke into small groups and were asked to consider together: “What statement of shared belief or practice would best serve us and our witness in our region? What would be a right-sized piece for this year? What other preparation or engagement would we need from our meetings before July to be ready to take this on together?” These questions follow a recommendation made by the Visioning Committee. Small group participants discussed this question briefly. When we returned to the larger group, Friends expressed some confusion, concern about the term “statement of shared belief,” and a desire for more time to consider this process.

**Appended Reports**

**Report from LEYM Ministry & Nurture** (Submitted by Becky Morehouse and Shelley Kotz)

Ministry & Nurture Committee currently has 5 members and 1 faithful Meeting representative who have been meeting monthly via Zoom.

The opportunity to meet virtually has made it possible to get know each other well and we look forward to our fruitful time together. Meeting more frequently than was possible when Friends had to travel, has enabled us to better carry through on responsibilities and new initiatives.

We have continued offering Clerks’ Chats every other month with an attendance of 9–12. Many clerks join us every time along with 2–3 new Friends. Our guest hosts are experienced clerks who ensure that each participant’s concerns and questions are heard and addressed. Hosts and fellow M&N members offer suggestions of resources beyond the valuable sharing of all the clerks there. Our next Clerks’ Chat is on Saturday, April 9, from 10:00–11:30 AM. We are grateful for Bill Warters’ assistance in sending out invitations and reminders, and in setting up the Zoom platform.

We have compiled a summary of the 2021 annual Query responses (see separate attachment) and were gratified to know how strongly the 2 questions this year affected many Monthly Meetings. Responses indicated some deep sharing of how Spirit is experienced by individuals and what the Meeting’s role is in nourishing that.

We are adding items to the resources page of the LEYM website for use by individuals and Monthly Meetings and we encourage Friends to make use of them.

**M&N Committee Report on 2021 Query Responses**

*Queries: In what ways do I experience a sense of spirit in my life? What is the role of the meeting in nourishing depth of spirit among us?*

Despite the constraints of the ongoing pandemic and difficulty with gathering in person for discussions about the queries, meetings responded strongly to the queries. All but one meeting and a few of the worship groups sent responses.

The first query, “In what ways do I experience a sense of spirit in my life?”in particular seemed to resonate with Friends drawing almost as many and varied responses as there are Friends. One meeting said that, “It was difficult to find dominant themes this year because each person’s reflections were heartfelt and unique.”

However, there are some general statements that can be made. Many reported members finding spirit in nature, in beauty in all its ways of being expressed, and in connection and love. The sense of spirit is interestingly, but often, found in troubled times when our needs and awareness are heightened. Many found spirit in social justice work, helping others, or being part of a unified task especially when working with other Meeting members. Other sources given were: creativity, early morning hours, and gratitude practice. Friends acknowledged, although expressed in different ways, that personal or daily practice enhances the likelihood of experiencing the spirit and is needed for preparation for Meeting for worship.

The role of meeting nourishing depth of spirit is especially valued for creating a sacred place and time that provides blessed quiet in a noisy world. One meeting described Meeting for Worship as holy. The shared experience of being with others in a gathered meeting is very important to Friends and enhances the experience of spirit. Many meetings long for intimacy felt by in-person Worship. Quakers are grateful to have had Zoom during this troubled time but long to be together with Friends.

**Olney Friends School Report** (Submitted by Ellerie Brownfain)

Olney Friends School started the 2021–2022 school year with 26 students enrolled and added three more by the second semester. They have come from Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee, as well as Afghanistan, China, Ethiopia, Germany, Malawi, South Korea, South Africa, Spain, and Uganda. They have also welcomed two new teachers and dorm staff, a cook, and a kitchen manager who has revitalized our farm-to table program. The board of trustees has also expanded from 12 to 14 members!

Olney made it all the way to the return from winter break before the first cases of COVID-19 occurred. They immediately resumed masking, and the half-dozen students who had been exposed to the virus have now recovered or completed their quarantines.

The virtual guest speaker program inspired by the pandemic has continued this year, with diverse alumni and other guests sharing experiences in a variety of fields including politics, psychology, literature, and the biology of vaccines. Future speakers this year include a career counselor and artist who runs a small business, a senior manager at Disney’s Theatrical Group, and the senior VP of Animal Care and Conservation at the Columbus Zoo. Alumni, friends of school, and prospective student families are welcome to attend via Zoom: for announcements and invitations, visit [www.olneyfriends.org](http://www.olneyfriends.org/), follow on social media, or sign up for Olney’s emails.

 Olney’s transdisciplinary curriculum continues to develop in agricultural science, introduced in 2019; students have been harvesting crops and processing them for storage and use in the kitchen. In the greenhouse, they are improving the aquaponics setup, pruning lemon and fig trees, and expanding table beds for winter planting. In addition to core subjects, they offer electives that this year include digital filmmaking, finding your artistic voice, creative writing, instrumental music, and more.

In other news, the battered driveway was repaired last summer, and if you've ever been on that driveway, you know it truly needed that fix. That funding came from the generosity of reunion classes. To go along with the new driveway, the school plans to acquire a newer Prius whenever the used car market settles down. At halfway through the fiscal and academic year, they are also halfway to the $300,000 Annual Fund goal. Olney is grateful to Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Friends for financial, moral, and recruiting support. Please consider donating to Olney to help it reach its goal for the Annual Fund. And, of course, you can find much more about Olney on their website, [olneyfriends.org](https://www.olneyfriends.org/). And as a great treat to us, the Head of the School, Christian Acemah, will be our plenary speaker at this year’s Annual Sessions and hold an interest group on Olney . . . answering questions much better than myself and giving a workshop with the aim of Youth attending.

**AFSC Liaison Report** (Submitted by Bill Warters)

The American Friends Service Committee (AFSC) promotes a world free of violence, inequality, and oppression. Lake Erie Yearly Meeting nominates up to four representatives to serve 3-year terms on the AFSC Corporation, a Quaker oversight body supporting AFSC’s work with representatives from across the Quaker spectrum. Current LEYM representatives, nominated for 3-year terms, include Bill Warters (2019–present), Kathleen Helbling (2020–present) and Paul Helbling (2020–present). We have one open slot for a 3-year term starting in 2023, if an interested Friend wished to serve.

AFSC successfully developed an updated strategic plan for the period of 2020–2030. It was the end result of a broad and deep consultation and provides valuable direction that builds on the historic strengths of the organization while positioning it well for the future. As part of the planning process, a statement of values was developed that resonates with many Friends:

- We respect the equality, worth, and dignity of all people and regard no one as our enemy.

- We seek right relationship with all life on a sustainable Earth.

- We accept that our understanding of truth is incomplete and seek ever deeper insights from lived experience.

- We trust the Spirit to guide discernment of our collective actions.

- We assert the transforming power of love and active nonviolence as a force for justice and reconciliation.

Most recently, AFSC has been exploring a restructuring of their organization, perhaps moving away from an emphasis on the current Regional System, to one more centered around key themes that cut across programs. The stated goal is to enable the organization to be more fully able to enact the strategic plan.

A wide-ranging series of internal consultations has not settled internal and now public controversy over potential reorganization plans. In December of 2021, critical public statements from a number of staff and concerned Friends were published in the Western Friend online site in an article entitled “AFSC Is at a Perilous Crossroads.” AFSC leadership team responded with their own post with clarifications and additional information.

AFSC staff member Lucy Duncan, a Friend known to many in LEYM due to her role doing outreach to Quaker Meetings, was one of the authors of the critical piece. She was subsequently put on leave and then released from her job for not following internal communication policies. She is grieving the termination using internal processes provided by AFSC’s union and leadership. AFSC is treating the matter as a personnel issue and is not making public comments about it.

The April 8–10 2022 Corporation Business Meeting will address some of the issues noted above and will provide opportunities for input from Yearly Meeting representatives.

**FCNL Report** (Submitted by John Howell and John Deikis)

Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) is the Quaker lobby organization in Washington, D.C. Its work is guided by the contents of the booklet, “The World We Seek,” which is revised periodically – most recently in 2019. Its work is also guided by input from Friends around the country through its biennial priorities process.

FCNL’s lobbying work falls under four general categories.

1) We seek **a world free of war and the threat of war**.

2) We seek **a society with equity and justice for all.**

3) We seek **a community where every person’s potential may be fulfilled.**

4) We seek **an earth restored.**

Recent emphases include the following efforts.

**1)** [**When “Doing Something” for Ukraine Means Making Things Worse**](https://www.fcnl.org/updates/2022-03/when-doing-something-ukraine-means-making-things-worse)**, by Diana Ohlbaum, March 18, 2022.** There are voices in Washington urging direct involvement of the U.S. in the war; leaders need to hear voices urging restraint, as Friends can provide. Other FCNL emphases include repeal of the Authorization for the Use of Military Force (AUMF) and cessation of military support for the Saudi-led war in Yemen.

2) **Freedom to Vote: John R. Lewis Act** – passed in the House; failed in the Senate; **reauthorization of the Violence Against Women Act** – passed as part of the omnibus spending bill, it restores tribal criminal jurisdiction over non-natives in tribal lands and increases funding for the Bureau of Indian Affairs to support tribal climate resilience.

3) Urging Congress to make permanent the important expansions to the **Earned Income Tax Credit and the Child Tax Credit** to address the tragedy of America’s children caught in poverty.

4) Lobbied for the bipartisan **Infrastructure Innovation and Jobs Act**, which became law in November 2021, containing significant funding to remove pollution from the water and soil, take down highways built through minority communities, and expand public transit options. Now urging adoption of the [**Climate initiatives in the Build Back Better Act**](https://www.fcnl.org/updates/2022-01/build-back-betters-clean-energy-incentives-could-transform-our-economy-and)**,** which include funding for air pollution monitoring, grants for green community and workforce development, and tax incentives to expand consumer access to renewable energy.

What previously was called the William Penn House is now part of FCNL and has been renamed, **Friends Place on Capitol Hill**. With its renovation complete, it has event space and accommodates overnight guests and groups to participate in FCNL’s advocacy work in Washington.

In November of last year, a large contingent of Quakers gathered on Zoom for the annual **Quaker Public Policy Institute** to be trained in FCNL’s lobbying approach and to meet with their senators and representatives in more than 200 lobbying "visits" which FCNL had set up.

**Spring Lobby Weekend**, March 12–15, brought over 400 advocates, mostly young people, to Washington to lobby for **immigration reform**, specifically a path to citizenship for the undocumented.

Bridget Moix is the new General Secretary of FCNL. In following Diane Randall, Bridget becomes the second woman in this critical leadership role within FCNL.

The spirit and vigor of the FCNL witness comes:

– in part from its Quaker roots – how we, as Quakers, support and guide FCNL’s work rising out of our belief that there is that of God in every person and that all creation has worth and dignity

– in part from its embrace of inclusion and diversity – with people of color, young people and women playing prominent roles in FCNL’s leadership, and

– in part from its engagement of people across the country through its Advocacy Teams program. 126 Advocacy Teams, involving about 1500 people across the nation, establish relationships with their representatives through local contacts supporting Quaker positions on legislative issues. In the LEYM area four teams are at work in Ohio and eight teams in Michigan.

Lobbying is in part the art of the possible, seeking to shape existing legislative proposals in Congress, such as a little more funding here and a little less there, and seeking to shape policies arising out of the Executive Branch. FCNL works within a political system dominated by money. Some of us have been urging FCNL to consider fundamental aspects of our nation’s financial system that will have to be addressed in order to achieve a world free of war, a society with equity and justice for all, communities where all persons' potentials may be fulfilled, and an earth restored.

**FWCC Report**

Many LEYM Friends participated in the March 12, 2022, FWCC Section of the Americas Meeting with the theme of  "Hope & Resilience; Drawing Strength from our Quaker Faith.” Members of the Section Executive Committee acted as elders during each session, holding the meeting in the Light. Surprisingly, the one-day meeting (covering 5 time zones) combined many of the elements of a usual 4-day in-person Section Meeting.

We began with interactive meet-and-greet exercises within 3 different small breakout groups to answer a query or prompt. What a pleasure to include the Section staff!

Bolivian Friends led us through Devotions, which included a hymn and Bible reading.

The mid-day Regional connections gave us a chance to meet other Friends from our Lower Great Lakes Region, which includes Central Canada, Lake Erie YM, Ohio YM, and Wilmington YM. We set as a goal to have some kind of 2022 Regional Gathering.

After a quick lunch break, we gathered for meeting for worship for business, during which we heard greetings from worldwide Friends organizations, reports from the Section Clerk, Treasurer, and Finance Committee, as well as plans for Consultations and Intervisitation. We approved a budget and a Nominating Slate. Finally, with great joy, we welcomed the announcement of the March 23–26, 2023, IN-PERSON Section Meeting at Haw River State Park, Greensboro, North Carolina.

Valerie Anderson, a Philadelphia YM social worker and educator, led a Bible study about hope and resilience, particularly viewed from the support of children, using affirmation statements.

Late afternoon blended worship (semi-programmed) highlighted musical talents of Guatemalan Friends and the message of “People who hope, break things” (Luke 5:17–26.) from Mike Huber of Sierra Cascades YM, one of the newest YMs of FWCC.

After a break for a quick evening snack, many Friends finished the day with Fellowship and Reflection in small breakout groups, mirroring the morning’s activities and led by the same talented North Carolina young adult Friends. These intimate groups helped bridge miles and times zones, joining Friends from all over the hemisphere.

From January to March, FWCC also co-sponsored (with Beacon Hill and Salvadoran Friends) 3 monthly bi-lingual "Walking with the Bible” sessions.

FWCC has also been helping to facilitate Meeting for Worship with Ukraine and Moscow.

Friends from North America and Latin America felt joined in feeling hope and resilience as they prepare with other Friends for World Quaker Day, October 2, 2022, with the theme of Becoming the Quakers the World Needs.

**Draft Budget for 2022–23**

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