

WORKSHOPS Offered at LEYM 2023, June 16 and 17 in Ashland, OH

See leym.org/annual for annual meeting details



Workshop Session 1 (Friday, June 16, 3:30-5:00pm)

Navigating Nonviolence: Faith and Practice. A collaboration between LEYM Friends and the Ashland Center for Nonviolence (ACN), housed on the Ashland University campus. Moderator: Dottie Stratton, Wooster Friends Meeting. Panelists: Bill Warters, Birmingham Friends Meeting; Pam Melick, Detroit Friends Meeting; Craig Hovey, Executive Director Ashland Center for Nonviolence; Karen Liddy, pastor of Peace Lutheran Church in Ashland; Kevan Franklin, senior pastor of Trinity United Church of Christ in Wooster.

This workshop extends the theme of “navigating anew” to the inclination to approach life’s conflicts with a commitment to nonviolent solutions. The round-table discussion will explore the ways that faith provides a foundation, guidance, and support for personal action. By including participants from various denominations, the discussion can become a conversation that explores the vibrant differences, as well as the commonalities that are shared. Panelists will share their experiences of faith and practice, including areas of life and work in which they have endeavored to use or teach nonviolence.

Participants will join the discussion of questions of nonviolence in faith and practice such as nonviolent responses and actions; the relationship between faith and nonviolence; incongruities between beliefs and actions; and personal experiences of being called to nonviolent action.

ReGrounding Spiritual Community – Becoming a More Deeply “Faithful Meeting.” Joann Neuroth, Red Cedar Monthly Meeting; Carolyn LeJuste, Red Cedar Monthly Meeting; Mary Linda McKinney, School of the Spirit.

Re-establishing our routines and structures post-pandemic offers an opportunity to “navigate anew” by reflecting and choosing who and how we want to be together rather than just returning to “business as usual.” In 2022, Red Cedar opted to take advantage of a new School of the Spirit program offering, “Faithful Meetings,” to commit as a community to a year of spiritual deepening during 2023. The discernment process involved in deciding to participate was itself an exercise in hearing each other’s hopes, fears and assumptions. Working out the logistics has sometimes surprised us with the opportunity to listen differently to each other when we bump into difference. Setting aside large- and small-group time over nine months for shared learning and listening leads us further into ‘knowing and being known in that which is eternal.’ We will invite Red Cedar participants to share their ups and downs with the process, and Mary Linda McKinney, the School of the Spirit facilitator for the program, to describe the opportunities available to other meetings and answer questions.

The Poetry of Helen Morgan Brooks through the Eyes of Silent Worship. Paul Helbling, Broadmead Monthly Meeting.

This workshop is “Navigating Anew” by the fact that this format has not been tried before in Meeting for Silent Worship with a large group. Five poems have been chosen, which will be read aloud by pre-selected readers during the course of the worship. The first reader will read a poem out of the silent worship. Participants may speak from the silence on what the poem spoke to them. When the reader of each subsequent poem feels that the prior ministry is concluded, they will read the next poem and the process of silent worship will begin again. There will be a short period of discussion and feedback at the end of the worship session.

Workshop Session 2 (Saturday, June 17, 10:30-12:00)

Finding ways to Support Peace in the Middle East. Hassan El-Tayyab, Friends Committee for National Legislation, Legislative Director for Middle East Policy.

What do Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Marjorie Taylor Greene, the Koch Brothers, and the Raging Grannies all have in common? They all support the

Yemen War Powers Resolution! Join us to reflect on how you can be a part of building diverse coalitions and finding new ways to navigate toward Middle East peace.

In this session, you will learn and co-create new ways to support peace in the Middle East with Hassan El-Tayyab, FCNL legislative director for Middle East policy. Accounting for the larger regional context, Hassan will cover updates on FCNL's peace advocacy in Yemen and Israel/Palestine, highlighting connections between conflicts in the area and opportunities for advocates to make a difference. The session will include time for Q&A, small and large group discussion, and collective action.

The Power of Enough.

Jacqueline Stillwell, Right Sharing of World Resources.

What is essential? How much is enough? How is my use of time, energy, and “things” in right balance to free me to do God’s work, and to contribute to right order in our world? Through personal reflection, discussion and worship sharing we will explore queries to discover our power of enough. Right Sharing of World Resources facilitates educational opportunities to learn about right relationship and right sharing, and provides grants to groups of women in Africa, India and Central America to launch micro-enterprise businesses that empower them to provide basic needs for their families.

The Arts and Spirituality: Spiritual Journey Visualized Through Collage.

April Vanlonden, Valley Mills Monthly Meeting, Western Yearly Meeting

As Friends, we share a history of eschewing the symbolic and entering into a holy space of silence where we as a community encounter and engage with the Divine. At the same time, our Society is filled with those who are gifted in creating what we know as Art, art in a variety of ways. For those of us not so gifted, we can and do create the artistic in our daily endeavors and utilize the art of those gifted as we mature in our own individual and collective spiritual pathways. In this workshop, participants will create their own collage based upon spiritual prompts or queries and each will be given ways to interpret their collages. Collages and insights will be shared by those willing to do so. This is a relatively simple practice that can be easily replicated by the participants in their home meetings and gatherings of spiritual communities.

The Four Stages of Community; before, during and “after” Covid

Ruth Cutcher, Durango Monthly Meeting, Quaker Voluntary Service

Braided into the QVS experience is a deep understanding of M. Scott Peck’s Stages of Community. Peck notes that groups of individuals experience predictable patterns of behavior when transitioning from a group of strangers into a community of trusted beloveds. These stages are pseudo-community, chaos, emptiness, and community.

In this workshop, we will explore each stage of the process and then discuss how our communities were transformed by the challenges of 2020-present. We have never lived through a pandemic before and are in uncharted territory as we regather in 2023. QVS works with young adults who have been engaged virtually for many years. As an organization that has in-person community-building at its center, we are navigating anew as we reconnect with communities of young adults and move forward in our work. For many, community-building skills moved to new formats (through online activities) or/and atrophied. We have an opportunity to consider anew the ways that we have been challenged in community in the past as well as how we want to choose to show up in community now.

Workshop Session 3 (Saturday, June 17, 3:30-5:00pm)

Building a Culture of Multi-Age Inclusion. Emily Provance, Fifteenth Street Monthly Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting.

"Why aren't there more young people here?" It's a common question among Friends, and there are real answers. In this workshop, we'll talk about how the culture of meetings often makes it harder for young people to participate fully and feel included. This won't be a conversation about building better children's programs or crafting activities for young adults. It will be about looking at the ways in which the meeting, as a whole, goes about things.

What's truly amazing is that many of the changes we might make for young people actually make Quaker meetings more accessible for nearly everyone. We'll have time for a survey of topics. Then, the group will decide which topics to explore in-depth with interactive activities. If you're interested in a preview of the content, you can read about it here:

<https://quakeremily.wordpress.com/age-inclusion/>

Keeping Quakerism Alive: Distilling the Essence of Quakerism to Share with Newcomers. Joann Neuroth, Red Cedar Monthly Meeting; Barbara LeSage, North Columbus Monthly Meeting; Cassie Cammann, Ann Arbor Monthly Meeting.

When people are drawn to Quakerism and wonder who we are and what it would mean to join with us, we often sidestep the question, speaking only of our personal experience or sending them to historical authorities. During this workshop we'll explore a way to navigate this challenge anew: by getting clearer about sharing Quaker essentials ourselves, as individuals and as Meetings, and by having an experiential practice into which we can invite newcomers to discover their own answers. Spiritual Companion Groups support and witness each other's practice of these concrete Quaker essentials: 1) Listening with deep regard and intention to Inner Guidance, and 2) Supporting each other in living a life that aligns outward behavior with that Inner Guidance. We will discuss and experiment with both how this shared practice can strengthen Meetings by giving us a common touchstone of what it means to be Quaker, and also how it prepares us differently to offer it to others.

Lending and Borrowing: Personal Ethics and Social Policy. John Howell, Athens Monthly Meeting.

We all lend and borrow. Borrowing and lending require trust and they can build trust. They are part of the glue that holds societies together. Most lending is not done for profit. Lending for profit, usury, was long forbidden in the three major religions of Abrahamic origin. Why was that? Do those reasons have any relevance for today, either for our personal decisions or for social policy? Why was the prohibition against usury abandoned? Today we are navigating a world of credit and debt. Lending for profit is taken for granted. What are the consequences of that in our personal lives and in society at large?

A presentation will look at some history of usury. It will look at our current global money system and see how lending for profit is built into it. It will consider consequences and peek into some alternatives, centralized and decentralized, to imagine how we might navigate anew. In open discussion we will share our understandings of the money system and our own senses of moral guidelines in lending and borrowing. How might these influence our economic lives together as Friends?

Ready to Think Anew About the Death Penalty – and Act to Abolish It?

Leah Holden, Akron Monthly Meeting with support from Jennifer Pryor, Ohioans to Stop Executions (OTSE)

The death penalty is contrary to Quakers' testimonies of nonviolence, equality and affirmation of that of God in every person. Except for those living in Michigan, LEYM Friends live in states that assert the right to kill prisoners in the name of their citizens. In Ohio, 134 people are on death row – the sixth largest number among states – thirty of whom have been assigned execution dates, despite the governor's unofficial moratorium on executions. Pennsylvania holds 128 people on death row; Indiana has eight. Michigan does not have the death penalty.

What can we do to end this brutal, discriminatory and ineffective practice? In this session we will review the history of the death penalty and explain current efforts to abolish it. Bipartisan bills abolishing Ohio's death penalty will be introduced in the current legislative session. Jennifer Pryor, representing Ohioans to Stop Executions (OTSE), will offer Friends information and opportunities to work toward abolition. We hope that Friends from all parts of the LEYM region will consider whether they are led to work toward abolition on the state or national level.