

LEYM Lightning

Fall, 2023

*Being a speedy digital-only substitute for the typically-produced Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Bulletin in the happily-temporary leadership gap. Huzzah for **Christopher Farrand from Cleveland Monthly Meeting** who will be taking on production starting in the next issue*! ¹*



Speaking of leadership gaps, here's a word from your clerk...who has something on her mind that is bigger than this admittedly large piece of fruit.

On Beyond Nominating

If your Meeting has experienced a committee roster that looks decidedly snaggle-toothed, or wondered what you would do if nobody filled a critical role – you're in good company. Volunteer-led organizations, in- and outside of religion, are finding it difficult to staff historic committee structures, and it seems

every conversation I have in cross-Yearly Meeting circles involves some talk of restructuring. We want to live in abundance, not constantly feeling insufficient or burning ourselves out – but how do we make it work when it comes to our slates?

There are no silver bullets, but there are approaches worth considering.

Focus on Tasks, Not Roles: Earlier this year, Emily Provance – the Public Friend who graced us with a keynote and workshops at Annual Meeting – presented a series of online workshops on different aspects of Quaker organizational life (if you missed them, slides and recordings from these presentations are available for viewing [here](#)). One of them addressed committee restructuring, and included this point. If you're looking for a treasurer, you may be imagining someone who can manage the financial software, educate people and field questions at Meeting for Business, and maintain a relationship with your lender. If you don't have someone who can accept that entire package and de-coupled necessary tasks, you could perhaps still meet your needs with one person to handle data entry and someone else to cover all people-facing tasks.

¹ Submissions can be sent to him at BulletinLEYM@gmail.com

If our typical approach to roles is metaphorically like wearing a hat, this approach is like holding a hand of cards. It de-emphasizes identity (nobody is too personally invested in what it means to be “the clerk” or “the webmaster”) and encourages all of us to understand everything that is making our organization function. It can help people to take on new little pieces of things that challenge them and promotes flexibility and cross-training, and therefore organizational resiliency.

Prioritize Energy over Committee: We lose out on some people's gifts because we're overly rigid about how they can be expressed. Committees have an important role to play, and always will – they are places where, ideally, we model Quaker process, as well as build community. However, if someone can offer six months as opposed to a year, or if they're never available in the evening, is there a way they can still contribute? I spoke with a woman from a monthly meeting that had created more individual volunteer roles. Instead of a committee deliberating together on the adult religious education line-up, one person was the keeper of the sign-up clipboard and individuals or groups were encouraged to take a date. It allowed freed up time from the group that had been responsible, and created a clearer and more straightforward path for those with energy and ideas.

Temper Labor with Grace: We only need to look at our own lives to know it's possible to promise more, out of all the best intentions, than we can deliver – and the unhealthy consequences of living constantly overstretched. What kind of tenderness can you offer each other in the realization that you may be promising yourselves more than is currently possible for your organization? If this is where you find yourselves, make space for all the emotions that come with these decisions, and care for the people with those emotions. It's hard and isolating to hold a vision for your community and realize it's not shared – or at least not shared with enough priority to change behavior or muster resources. It's hard to face change that feels like diminishment. At the same time, it's possible for us to make community a place where we can hold that grief, and find spiritual refreshment in realism.

We're thinking about these questions in our Yearly Meeting, too. Are there places where we are overpromising on old commitments, when we could be releasing it for the promise of something new? Are there energy and gifts might we be missing out on with our current committee structures? What roles – clerk and bulletin editor spring to mind – might we unpack, for a new approach?

I'd love to know your thoughts! I'm reachable, as ever, at leymclerk@gmail.com

Quakers, Quilling Quality, and Quenched Quarreling *(or: Quakers create a beautiful picture in support of nonviolence)*

Friends in attendance at the LEYM Annual Meeting (June 2023 in Ashland, Ohio) learned the art form of quilling, which involves rolling and shaping narrow strips of paper and arranging them into creative designs. Their individual work was arranged into a beautiful “tree of community,” which was framed and presented to the Ashland Center for Nonviolence (ACN) in

appreciation for the Center's work and for its welcoming open house during the Annual Meeting.

Accepting the gift in this photo are Beth Buttil and Craig Hovey, the ACN staff. Others in the photo are members of the ACN steering committee.



LEYM's Advancement and Outreach Committee Presents:

QUAKERISM 101

A Collaborative Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Experience

A new way to learn and teach about Quakers, Quakerism, and deepening faith practice

This fully online experience will feature presentations, discussions and activities about Quakers and our faith and practices. Using a format pioneered by North Columbus (OH) Friends Meeting, those with past Quakerism 101 experience can expect this to feel familiar, yet different and new.

The first two sessions will be hosted by North Columbus Friends. Other Monthly Meetings/Worship Groups are invited to lead one of the 2024 sessions, making this a collaborative and cooperative experiment across the LEYM community.

Topics

- What is Quakerism? (Tuesday, Oct 17th)
- What is Vocal Ministry in a Meeting for Worship? (Tuesday, Nov 14th)
- January - May topics and dates to be determined

Who

Anyone from newcomers to seasoned Friends, ages teen and up

When

- Monthly, October 2023 – May 2024 (skipping December)
- From 7:00-8:30pm Eastern Time online (Zoom)

Where

On Zoom! <https://tinyurl.com/quaker101>

Link also available on LEYM.org

Questions? Email Joe Mills: millrae@juno.com and use "Quakerism 101" in the subject line

In Case You Missed It

Date and Theme Set for LEYM 2024

Save **June 13-16 2024** and plan to join us again at Ashland University in Ohio for Annual Meeting! Our theme for 2024 will be "**Friends Together: Outpourings of the Spirit.**"

LEYM, DIYwS&L!

(that's LEYM, Do It Yourself with Support and Love...)

It's been terrific to see MM's open programming (movie showings, discussions) to other meetings. Let us know if you have any wins or challenges so we can support cross-pollination better. If you want to share an event with the larger LEYM network and get it on the LEYM calendar, check out the Event Planning page at <https://leym.org/events/> and use the form provided.

If you feel there is appetite for affinity-group style meetings, ranging from knitters to First Day School leadership, please let me know, so we can try and get the ball rolling. One idea suggested was parents of trans children. If you're interested in any of these, or others - *send your thoughts to leymclerk@gmail.com*

News from Member Meetings:

- **Athens:** A September Forum provided an opportunity to brainstorm ideas for their vision of their meeting in the future in service, peace and justice, adult and children's programming.
- **Pittsburgh:** Pittsburgh Friends held a Fall Gathering onsite for more than 50 adults and children with the theme "Earth Care, Self Care". In addition to the program,

participants shared lunch, dinner, and - at the end of the day - talents ranging from poetry and piano-playing to roller skate dancing.

- **Detroit:** As of 9/1/23, Detroit Meeting has raised nearly \$594,000 towards its goal of \$850,000 for renovation of its new meetinghouse!

💕 **Thanks to Kent MM for being the first to send their contribution to the YM this year** 💕

News from Further Afield:

Did you miss the [Black Quaker Project](#) film showings this year? Some of them are still available on other sources. Check out the link for more information.

From Southeastern YM: Online Laughter Yoga Join Joel Cook (Treasure Coast Worship Group / Palm Beach Monthly Meeting) every **Wednesday at 5:40 pm**. (Come at 5:30 for some music and dancing!) No Joke! Sense of humor not required. Laughter Yoga is the unique concept that anyone can laugh for no reason. The most fun you'll have getting a good workout. One click login:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/700674976?pwd=UWFsVW5ST2cybXJXdFQydHQRVlEwQT09>

Meeting ID: 700 674 976 Password: 011053

From Western Friend: **Which Way Worship?** a discussion about Hybrid Worship. Saturday October 21, 4pm Eastern. In this semi-structured conversation, Friends from different monthly meetings will meet in small groups to exchange ideas and experiences:

- What seem to be the most intractable difficulties that hybrid worship has brought to your meeting?
- What creative solutions have helped resolve conflicts over the use of videoconferencing in your meeting?

More information and registration [HERE](#).

The font chosen for this document is called Ubuntu, because, you know.