



Clerk’s Message from Joseph Mills

The Beloved Community

With a new Clerk’s Bulletin message, the first thing I would like to say on my new clerkship for Lake Erie Yearly Meeting is that Susan Loucks is going to be a hard act to follow, so I will not even try. I sincerely appreciate and am most thankful for the many remarks of support from Friends in my taking on the new clerkship position for our Yearly Meeting. Such thoughts are most meaningful.

I think we all felt a special moving of the Spirit at our annual meeting last June. I heard many remarks and personally felt a strong special sense of inner connectedness among all of us. That is the true value of a spiritual community. Singing both informally and as led by our plenary presenter, Paulette Meier, was warm and inspiring. Our young people’s program continues to rebound. The visit of our youth to the reformatory/prison

museum in Mansfield was so enriching, showing the wide spectrum of ups and downs of our penal system. It is also great that the Yearly Meeting’s Peace and Justice Committee is back up and meeting.

A high spirit of our gathering this time was captured in our 400th celebration of the birthday of George Fox. I am sure the early Friends in Fox’s day shared a special spiritual gladness and excitement that transpired when they got together much as we did this year at Annual Meeting.

Again I want to thank all Friends who attended and the many who volunteered to give us a most successful occasion. May the high Spirit of this year’s Annual Meeting linger with and nourish us as we plan for a more vibrant gathering in 2025.



In This Issue

- *Epistle from FWCC World Plenary, 2*
- *Annual Epistle of LEYM, 3*
- *Highlights of Annual Meeting, 4*
- *What is God calling LEYM to do? 5*
- *Olney Friends School Report, 6*
- *LEYM Financial Report, 7*
- *Cleveland Meeting Activities, 8*
- *Meeting Shorts, 9*
- *Report from the Revived Peace & Justice Committee*

Epistle of the World Plenary Meeting 2024

Johannesburg, South Africa

The following was submitted by Ellerie Brownfain, LEYM Representative to the FWCC World Plenary.

15 August 2024

Last week, around 500 Quakers from 53 countries gathered in business, worship and fellowship at the World Plenary Meeting in Johannesburg and online.

Participants enjoyed 75 sessions (and well over a hundred including those held in local hubs that joined

online). In one of the final sessions, discernment from the three thematic streams—ubuntu, care for creation, and healing and repairing relationships in light of historic and continuing injustice—was woven carefully together, leading

to the epistle below.

Friends around the world are encouraged to read the epistle below at their Friends meeting or church on World Quaker Day, 6 October:

To all Friends everywhere,

We send loving greetings from the Friends World Committee for Consultation World Plenary, held August 5 to 12, 2024 online and in Vanderbijlpark near Johannesburg, South Africa, on the banks of the river variously known as the IHai!arib, Lekwa, iLikwa and the Vaal. We are truly ‘down by the riverside’ as we lay down our burdens and lift them up to God.

500 Friends have gathered at the river’s edge and online, coming from 53 countries and representing 95 Yearly Meetings, worship groups and Quaker organisations. Half of them joined the gathering online, individually and organised in 50 hubs all over the world, a first for a World Plenary Meeting. With joy we reflect on how great it has been to have the contributions from online Friends in the room. For those of us online, it was a joy to be included and to experience the togetherness. Sadly, some Friends were prevented from joining us. We regret their absence and hold them in the Light.

Our theme is ‘Living the Spirit of Ubuntu: Responding with Hope to God’s Call to Cherish Creation and One Another’. Ubuntu is a Zulu word that speaks to the power and ceaseless work of the Holy Spirit between us, enabling us to go beyond our individual selves and grasp that ‘I am because we are’.

In this joyous gathering, we have expanded our understanding and appreciation for who we – as Quakers – really are. What a gift. Despite our multitude of differences, we have celebrated that we share not only our Quaker founders – happy 400th birthday, George Fox! – but also deep Friendship, an openness to new Biblical interpretations, our structures and processes, our deep commitment to peace and justice, our love of the Earth, and our love of God.

Eager that all gathered Friends may participate as fully as possible, we have bridged geographical distance and differences in language with technology, patient interpreters, and God’s grace. We are

Continued on Page 11

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Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Annual Session Epistle

June 13 - 16, 2024

To Friends everywhere, who have received a faith and a relationship with Spirit as precious as ours:
Greetings from Lake Erie Yearly Meeting (LEYM).

On 6th Mo. 13, 2024, 116 Friends of Michigan, Ohio, and Western Pennsylvania, along with visitors from other states, gathered in Ashland, Ohio, for our Annual Meeting. First, we acknowledged our present: new and returning Friends broke bread together and, in conversation, caught each other up on our own monthly meetings, personal lives, and news of absent Friends. From the beginning, the intentional planning of the Program Committee encouraged us to go beyond our familiar social circles.

Second, we acknowledged our past: we once again found ourselves on the campus of Ashland University, whose facilities provided a comfortable setting for Friends to learn together, commune with one another, and listen for Spirit's will. We also appreciated that we were by no means the first to benefit from this place, recognizing the Kaskaskia people, this region's first inhabitants.

We learned from our Plenary presenter, Friend and singer Paulette Meier, how to practice an outpouring of Spirit, this year's theme, through plainsong and chants. Her practice of setting Spirit-imbued quotes from early Friends to a cappella chants had practical origins: when set to melodies, she found the task of remembering these words much easier. But, her practice soon grew into a meditative process itself. We experienced that, gathered in song, Friends' minds are in touch with their bodies; our spirits are bound to one another; and we feel connected to the wisdom of earlier Friends.

One of the many chants we were invited to sing in her plenary and subsequent workshop was excerpted from George Fox's Epistle #19:

Keep within. And when they say, Look here or look there is Christ, go not forth, for Christ is within you. And those who try to draw your minds away from the teaching inside you, are opposed to Christ. For the measure's and the light of God is within, and the pearl is within you, though hidden. (1652)

Friends, we began each session of our worship with attention to business with an Epistle from Yearly Meetings the world over. Your words of news and of well-wishes inspired us as we looked within ourselves, asking how we can be a host to an outpouring of spirit.

We established a tradition of setting aside time to ask Spirit for LEYM's purpose in the next year. Admittedly, that's a big ask. But, through some structured sharing, we could discern the weightiest issues on our collective hearts. Our concerns were diverse: for example, growing meetings expressed difficulty integrating new seekers into our practices of worship. Other meetings haven't seen much growth but were heartened that their community felt truly gathered.

Our session was graced by an abundance of volunteers, whose work caring for children, moving furniture, assisting in the dining hall, and countless other functions made this experience available to all Friends, across the spectra of age, ability, and experience.

Eleven young Friends attended. The older group visited the Ohio Reformatory museum, and our youngest Friends asked how we yield an outpouring of spirit from nature (and played together at every available moment). The compassion of our youth programming and childcare volunteers was palpable.

Friends, Lake Erie is energized. Our format and sense of purpose has been transformed by the Friends who do the Yearly Meeting's work, especially our outgoing Clerk. After our final night, celebrating the 400th birthday of George Fox, we hunger for more. We are filled with Spirit. And, we want you to feel its outpouring from our hearts.

Written for the sake of that Spirit who has moved through the Epistle Committee:
Flo Friender, Wink Covintree, & Alexa Lake

Submitted, Susan Loucks, Presiding Clerk

Highlights of LEYM Annual Meeting

Ashland University, June 13 - June 16, 2024

This year's Annual Meeting, held at Ashland College from 13 June to 16 June, brought together 116 Friends, including 17 first-time attenders, from 14 monthly meetings and one worship group as well as visitors from Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting, New York Yearly Meeting and Iowa Yearly Meeting (Conservative). Twelve young Friends (under age 18) also attended.

During Annual Meeting we conducted the Yearly Meeting's business. We experienced the depth of the early Quaker message through the chants shared with



us by our plenary speaker Paulette Meier. We participated in ten workshops on a number of topics. We shared meals and informal discussion together. We celebrated George Fox's 400th birthday and viewed a copy of a first edition of his *Journal*. We heard the reading of Memorials to departed Friends Adele Looney (Akron), Linda Brandenburg (Cleveland) and Phil Balderston, John Holliger and Evelyn Kirkhart (Wooster) as well as Lois Gilbert (Ann Arbor). We heard readings of Epistles from Meetings around the world. We returned home refreshed and renewed.

Thanks to the work of Nominating Committee, we approved a new Clerk of LEYM, Joseph Mills, with gratitude to outgoing Clerk Susan Loucks for her diligent work over the past years and her able shepherding of Annual Session. We also welcomed a

new Assistant Clerk, Jack Smith. We were also pleased that Friends stepped forward and we again have a Peace & Justice Committee. We approved new clerks of committees and committee members with thanks to all outgoing clerks and committee members for their past work.

We heard Treasurer Tom Kangas's report that LEYM continues to be financially healthy. Friends approved the budget for 2024-2025. We considered recommendations from Finance Committee concerning several inactive funds. Friends approved reducing the ceiling of the High School Teen Retreat Program Fund and transferring the balance into the General Fund. Friends approved maintaining the Consultation Fund for the fiscal 2024-2025 year and, if it is not used, to lay it down and transfer the funds into the General Fund. The Advancement & Outreach and Ministry & Nurture committees were asked to consider how the Traveling Ministries Fund could be used. We approved proposed amendments to policy and procedures for reimbursing travel expenses.

We approved a proposal from Publications & Archives Committee to publish, in addition to the printed version of the *LEYM Annual Record*, a revised pdf version of *LEYM Annual Record* for 2024 on the LEYM website. The revised pdf version would exclude personal information covered by LEYM's privacy policy, including children's names.

We approved amending *Policies & Procedures* to change the required number of members serving on



any given committee to a “suggested” number. If the number of members on a committee falls to three or fewer, the Executive Committee would be charged to examine the viability of the committee. Also times for committees to meet have been removed except for Youth & Children.

We heard reports on Friends Peace Teams from Don Buckingham (North Columbus), on AFSC from Bill Warters (Birmingham), on FNCL from John Howell (Athens), and on FWCC from Clémence Ravaçon Mershon (Erie).

We reflected on the query “What is God calling LEYM to do this next year?” Friends were invited to share one- or two-word phrases to characterize their monthly meeting and to name themes and trends from what they heard. Friends were then asked how LEYM

committees can respond to the current realities and needs in the various meetings (see below for details).

We also heard short reports from various Friends and guests about organizations and programs they are involved in, including the Bolivian Quaker Education Fund, “339 Manumissions and Beyond Project,” Quaker Religious Education Collaboration, working for Peace in Gaza/Israel, Right Sharing of World Resources, and the Quaker Institute for the Future.

The young Friends attending Yearly Meeting were involved in various activities. These included a visit to the Mansfield Correctional Institution.

Thanks go out to the Arrangement & Site Committee and to all those Friends helping make this Annual Meeting a success.

“What is God calling LEYM to do this next year?”

What is LEYM called to do in the next year??

- It may not matter so much what we do but what is God calling us to be.
- To create a place where Monthly Meetings and their people can feel welcome and explore, see people they don't see every day, go deeper, rest with each other, and support each other.
- To reach out to the world from a spiritually grounded space.
- To be a connector, a conduit; to continue this discernment and discussion using our fabulous technology to bring meetings together.
- To explain Yearly Meeting functions to our membership.
- To share the news that Quakers exist.

One or two word phrases to characterize your Meeting

- Aging but vital.
- Concern about inadvertent racism.
- Curious newcomers with spiritual hunger.
- Welcoming and very close knit.
- Querying, seeking, and growing.
- Increasingly divers.
- Open to change.

- Group of individuals, versus group in community.
- Composting with new life (or light?).
- Still not unified over use of technology.
- Property rich, cash poor.
- Delightfully resilient.
- Love to listen deeply to each other.
- Hungry for social justice.
- Searching to use our abundant financial resources in ways that are appropriate with our values.
- Growing and burgeoning with seekers.
- Trying to figure out our path.
- Wishing we had children.
- Growing in diversity.
- Branching out with peace and social justice.
- A deepening silence in worship.
- High on numbers of new seekers and children, Low on numbers of experienced Friends.
- Less energy for caring for building (aging), but getting new people and hopeful.

Themes and trends from the phrases shared above

- Many meetings are not where they want to be.
- Increased numbers of newcomers and attenders.
- Questions of sustainability (too many seekers and new attenders?).
- Fighting the good fight.
- Fearing change.

What is God calling...continued

- Exploring ways into peace and justice work.
- Deepening of silence and listening to each other.
- Diversity awareness/aware of lack of diversity and wanting to do something (Additional trends observed by Executive Committee).
- Baby steps in making LEYM-wide activities available online (Quakerism 101, clerks chats).
- Growth in energy toward AVP, Spiritual Formation, away from interest groups a la Earthcare and P&J.
- Many meetings are seeing growth and many have challenges in integration of technology.
- Continuing exploration of what it means to be hybrid.
- Continuing questions of property/space, a place of physical movement.

What LEYM committees could do to respond to the current reality:

- Support avenues of discernment for Monthly Meetings.
- How the questions raised relate to our committee structure.
- Committees can look at their original description/why they were created, and broaden to change.
- Setting up mechanisms for intervisitation or communication about things we are wrestling with.
- Quakerism 101 was helpful and maybe additional education in clerking or how committees work could be useful.
- Using ways to bring together newcomers, seekers online in Q 101 or otherwise.
- Could be support for program in which Friends would do inner seeking – e.g., how to be more welcoming to newcomers, etc.
- YM might help with developing skills in group spiritual discernment, online.
- Include a YAF whenever possible, to hear them and allow them to become leaders.
- ADDED: noted large number of people who met together to talk about P&J and Earthcare this morning – these committees are dormant, but they can be started up with little ado if there is energy to do so.

Olney Friends School Report 2023-2024

We have 30 students enrolled. We're always looking for more students to join us during the year.

The school year began as usual, with orientation, but this year was unique with more new students than returning ones. The Junior class, for example, gained six new students from South Africa and Uganda. This made orientation even more important, and our returning faculty and students made sure to welcome the new students and families to Olney.

Electives included “Your Voice,” a class to build public speaking skills, and “Race, Power, and Privilege,” both taught by Christian Acemah '01; “Ornithology,” Jessica Wiandt’s (Hon.) year-long elective to create a census and guidebook of Olney birds; “Art in Nature,” in which Amy Witt (Hon.) helped students find artistic inspiration from our beautiful campus; and “All School Sing Band” with Devin Clouse, another year-long elective that grows more popular as the year passes.

On the Academic side, students have been hard at work with their required and elective classes. The Ninth Graders have all acclimated to Olney and have had an exciting adventure studying Humanities. They explored ancient Sumeria and learned to write their names in hieroglyphics. They then taught the community to write their names in this ancient language.

From ancient Sumeria the Ninth Graders moved to a different continent, studying Native Americans in the Ohio Valley. This class concluded with a visit to the Moundsville Archaeological Complex. A highlight of the visit was holding a Meeting for Worship on top of the mound. The Ninth and Tenth Graders also studied comparative philosophies of ancient China and the Middle Ages. All the students study Blacksmithing (a transdisciplinary unit with Chemistry). The Sophomores used their knowledge of the Middle Ages and blacksmithing for a project to create a medieval shield. This is the second year of the transdisciplinary unit with Blacksmithing, Chemistry and the Humanities. The teachers focused on blacksmithing throughout antiquity (Ninth Graders) and the Medieval period (Tenth Graders). The

Continued next page

Chemistry teacher, who is experienced in blacksmithing, conducted learning at the forge and going deeper into the chemistry of it with the Sophomores. This year, students each made an S-hook, useful for hanging things as well as decoration.

Juniors had the busiest schedule, with two sciences (Physics and Agricultural Science), Health, and Quakerism.

This fall, the Seniors received a visit from Ohio University, visited Marietta College and Washington and Jefferson College with the Juniors, and attended

the Wheeling Area Chamber of Commerce College Fair. Some Seniors have already received letters of acceptance. In Humanities, the Seniors read *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen. They hosted a speed dating event where students played a character from the book. (I wonder if Mr. Darcy dated Elizabeth Bennett as written in the book?) When not working on their college applications and essays, Juniors and Seniors spent time exploring career opportunities and visiting colleges. The Wheeling YWCA was awarded a grant to take students from the Ohio Valley, where Olney is located, to visit historically black colleges and

Continued on Page 9

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting

Financial Report for 2024 Annual Meeting - June 13 - 16, 2024

Income

Registrations fees net of discounts and scholarships	22,878
RegFox (online registration system) fees paid by registrants who paid online	(808)
Donations	2,100
Net earnings from book table	198

Total Income 24,368

Expenses

Ashland University conference charges	24,690
Includes: \$5K venue rental, \$9K lodging, and \$11K meals	
Honoraria for plenary speaker and workshop presenters	1,200
Youth and Children program (supplies, activities, t-shirts)	889
Incidental expenses	243
Gratuity to Detroit Monthly Meeting for payment processing	100

Total Expenses 27,122

Net Income <Deficit> prior to subsidy from General Fund (2,754)

Original subsidy from LEYM General Fund	5,000	
Return of excess subsidy to LEYM General Fund	(1,800)	
Net subsidy	3,200	3,200

Net Income <Deficit> from Annual Meeting activities 446

Annual Meeting Fund - Balance as of June 30, 2023 (surplus)	2,509
Net Income <Deficit> from Annual Meeting Activities June 2024	446
Annual Meeting Fund - Balance as of June 30, 2024 (surplus)	<u><u>2,955</u></u>

Cleveland Meeting Activities

Cleveland Meeting is again searching for a new home. Since the sale of Cleveland's old meeting house in 2021, we have been renting space from a local church. Initially we settled in well. The worship room is a good size. However, the space for our children is not very conducive to creating an appropriate environment for our six children ranging in ages from 2 through 9. We are at the very beginning of the process of looking for a new location with the idea of purchasing a building.

In March, the First Day School organized a Party to mark George Fox's 400th Birthday. Our two oldest children, who had been studying the lives of George Fox and Margaret Fell, made a historical presentation to the Meeting about their lives. The children also led us in singing the 'George Fox Song.' Adult Friends were asked to come to meeting as their favorite Quaker and we were joined by John Woolman, Lucretia Mott, John Cadbury (who handed out chocolate eggs), Maria Mitchell, the astronomer, and even an apparition of 'Marty Grundy' among others. We had a specially made cake and refreshments and a pleasant time together.

The Meeting is planning a picnic for 8 September and has invited other area



Friends meetings to participate as well as a pentecostal church with whom we have been in fellowship over the past five years.

Members of the Meeting continue to prepare hot meals at two area churches. The Fifth Monday Meal committee has been preparing hot meals for over 20 years at Antioch Baptist Church. Another committee has been preparing and serving hot meals monthly at Greater New Canaan Ministries for the past three years.



Illustration by Cleveland Friend Brian Baker

A number of Friends have been working with homeless organizations. One Friend has been actively working for many years with prison ministry and the reintegration of released prisoners. Another Friend has been working on bail reform. A called meeting is set for 29 September for the Meeting to examine how it is called to act in the world.

Our Quaker Studies group meets weekly to read and discuss George Fox's *Journal*. We have been grateful to have been joined by members of Wooster Meeting. Meetings are held via Zoom.

The Meeting has been experiencing some growth in the past few years, with a number of regular and active attenders. We have also benefited from the recent transfers or sojourning of a number of Friends from other meetings. We are looking forward to holding a marriage this Fall under the Meeting's care.

George Fox & Margaret Fell Address Cleveland Meeting





MEETING SHORTS

Broadmead Meeting has begun supporting a group of women in Guatemala through Right Sharing of World Resources. Broadmead will be holding its Fall Retreat from October 4-6. (See Page 12 for details).

Red Cedar Meeting has been actively learning how to become an anti-racist community. The Meeting has made a financial commitment through a community group working on reparations. Red Cedar has also participated in the School of the Spirit's Faithful Meetings Project.

North Columbus Meeting has left their meeting house of 70 years and are now renting space that is more accessible. They will be selling their meeting house. The Meeting has seen a significant growth over the past few years.

Ann Arbor Meeting is working to align its budget with its values. They have set money aside for reparations and have donated to the Nisenan Tribe who are looking to acquire the property which has been owned by Camp Woolman in California. Ann Arbor has also been encouraging participation by Young Adult Friends by hosting and preparing dinners for them. The Meeting paid the travel costs

for a young person to attend a gathering of Friends Peace Teams in Java, Indonesia.

Grand Rapids Meeting has been recording individual spiritual journeys so that others can view them in the future.

Athens Meeting reports that the number of children in their Meeting has increased from two to twelve.

Akron Meeting has been writing and distributing minutes on the Jayland Walker police shooting and on the death penalty in Ohio. The Meeting has also supported the erection of a statue honoring Sojourner Truth in Akron.

Olney ... continued from Page 7

universities in Atlanta, Georgia. Six juniors visited colleges in Atlanta. They stayed overnight in Charlotte, North Carolina, and visited the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African American Arts and Culture. Mr. Gantt was an architect and politician from North Carolina. In 1983, he made history as the first elected black mayor of Charlotte, North Carolina.

Ohio had many perfect places to experience the April 8th total solar eclipse. Students traveled to Chardon, Ohio, which is East of Cleveland, for the Annual Spring outing. During the outing they viewed the eclipse. At Alumni gatherings years from now, that will be a talked about event.

From the financial side, we have recently been awarded grants of \$12,885.00 for air filtration and purification equipment and \$5,000 for environmental stewardship with the farm. Donations and student referrals are always welcome!

The 186th commencement exercises took place on Saturday, May 25th. The annual alumni meeting was held the night before commencement. Six students graduated and hopefully they will be back next year to attend their first Friday evening meeting as alumni.

Respectfully submitted,
Ellerie Brownfain

Report on the Revived Peace and Justice Committee

At LEYM's last Annual Conference, the Peace and Justice Committee was revived, with Claire Cohen (Pittsburgh MM) as the convener. Other members of the committee are Don Buckingham (North Columbus MM), Paul Helbling (Broadmead), and Mary S. Finney and Cassie Cammann (Ann Arbor MM). We have a number of other Friends who have expressed an interest in being involved and supportive in the committee's work.

The first thing we decided to do was review the history and charge of the committee in order to understand both how it came to be laid down and how to ensure the success of its revival. Now we are in the middle of surveying all Monthly Meetings (MM) and Worship Groups (WG) in LEYM to determine how they are doing their peace and justice work, how many have actual Peace and Justice Committees (or equivalents), learn about their successes and obstacles to doing peace and justice work and see what they would like this committee to work on. Although we have contacted all MMs and WGs, only a handful have responded so far. Hopefully, this article will encourage more response.

Finally, we want to suggest that all MMs and WGs think of doing something for the International Day of Peace on September 21, even if it is just to hold a moment of silence. We are also thinking of doing work with Peace Teams.



Sing and rejoice, ye children of the day and of the light; for the Lord is at work in this thick night of darkness that may be felt. And truth doth flourish as the rose, and the lilies do grow among the thorns, and the plants atop of the hills. And upon them the lambs do skip and play. And never heed the tempests nor the storms, floods nor rains, for the seed Christ is over all, and doth reign.

And so be of good faith and valiant for the truth; for the truth can live in the jails. And fear not the loss of fleece, for it will grow again; and follow the lamb, if it be under the beast's horns, or under the beast's heels; for the lamb shall have the victory over them all.

And so all live in the seed Christ, your way, that never fell; and you do see over all the ways of Adam's and Eve's sons and daughters in the fall. And in the seed Christ, your way, you have life and peace; and there you do see over all the ways of Adam in the fall, in which there is no peace.

So in the seed Christ stand and dwell, in whom you have life and peace; the life that was with the Father before the world began.

G.F. - 9th month, 1663.

Correspondence Received

LEYM Attendance

I love attending Quaker Yearly Meetings having been carried in a basket from birth. At 81 I've now attended numerous Yearly Meetings. In 2005, I became Administrator for Southeastern YM for 13 years. I enjoyed publishing, maintaining archives, and supporting Clerks.

In April 2012, I was chosen to attend the 6th World Conference of Friends in Kenya and later entertained a Kenyan woman in the States who wanted to attend Yearly Meetings.

One meets many interesting people and to this day I maintain some contacts being tapped on shoulder at our recent LEYM by Olney schoolmates and LEYM Treasurer schoolmate of my oldest daughter.

The Lectures inform and challenge us. The food is tasty, conversations interesting during informal times. I value the gentle contacts and awareness of our peaceful values beyond our own Meetings for Worship.

Lyn Cope

FWCC World Plenary...continued from Page 2

thankful. In the inclusive spirit of Ubuntu, we have all – and particularly English speakers – been challenged to speak slowly and clearly enough for our interpreters to do their work. We have all been challenged to find a Spirit-led balance between speaking and listening, between action and contemplation, between doing and simply being.

Prior to this gathering, 46 of the Young Adult Friends among us came together for four days of shared experience, conversation, reflection, laughter, worship, and song. Living in community, Young Adult Friends explored, held, and danced with commonalities and differences. In an exciting development, a world committee of eight Young Adult Friends from all FWCC sections was formed. This reflects a joyful commitment to keep nurturing the newfound sense of community. Aware of the magnitude of the responsibility, Young Adult Friends call on all of us for support and trust.

We were warmly and joyously welcomed by our hosts from Southern Africa Yearly Meeting and the Africa Section of FWCC. A local Friend shared with us the South African greeting ‘sawubona’, which means ‘I see you and not only you, but all who have made you who you are’. She also spoke of how coming to Quakers helped her to believe in life beyond racist segregation. Excursions both virtual and local enriched our programme. Field trips to the Cradle of Humankind and the Apartheid Museum grounded the gathering in the context of our host country’s own painful and turbulent journey. We have been inspired by the Spirit-filled resilience of our hosts, emerging from the struggles of the past and present steadfastly to affirm that through God’s grace, **we are still here. We are one.**

Together, we have worshipped, prayed, sung, been warmed by the sun, chilled by the evening frost, and, of course, we talked — and talked — and talked some more. We have sought to discern Spirit-led ways forward to honour our commitment to our three interconnected themes: care of creation, the healing of relationships in the light of historic and ongoing injustice, and nurturing Ubuntu. Our emerging concerns have been captured and woven together in a tapestry document.

We are seized with the urgent need to do transformative work in the world. We are also called by that still small

voice to pause, to listen deeply to one another and to creation. Jeremiah 29: 11-14 says: ‘For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope.’ God is with us. **We are here. We are one.**

We have been challenged, and many of us are called to join collective, global Quaker action to live out our concerns — to be, as George Fox said — “valiant for Truth”. Others among us focus on local community. We are learning to expand our compassion for who we are, just as we find ourselves in all our brokenness and our beauty.

The variance in our perspectives, some large, some small, have become more apparent, at times painfully so. We have been able, with God’s blessing, to resolve some tension through compassionate conversation, while some was simply held in our midst. We are not discouraged.

Our past and present reminds us of our capacity to be faithful, courageous changemakers. With radical hope, we trust in our collective ability to “recognise, repent, redeem and restore” and to work together in beautiful and transformative ways. 2 Corinthians 5:17 says: Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! We know that through Jesus’ invitation to new life, ‘All things are made new.’ God has no hands but ours, no feet but ours, no lips but ours, so we keep imagining a better world. I am because you are. I am because we are. I see you. We belong to each other. **We are still here. We are one.**

George Fox’s radical insistence on bringing the Kingdom of God to all aspects of our lives, invited what he called ‘the new creation’. Are we ready for what is to come? Are we prepared to do what is required of us to birth the new creation? How does our living Ubuntu change the world?

As we return to our homes, with renewed love for our international Quaker family, may God bless the spaces between us as we seek a better world for all creation.

Let the new creation come.

In God’s love, with radical hope,

Simon C. Lamb, Clerk, FWCC, on behalf of all who were part of our World Plenary Meeting



September 6 to 8: LEYM Spiritual Formation Retreat at Weber Center, Adrian, Michigan
September 8: Cleveland Friends Worship & Picnic, Euclid Creek Metropark, 11:00 am to 2:30 pm
September 14: LEYM Executive Committee Meeting, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm
September 16: Walking in the World as a Friend, 7:15 pm to 9:00 pm. (Zoom)
September 27 to 29: Youth Retreat at Temples Hills
October 4: Broadmead MM Friends Fall Retreat at St Francis Spirituality Center, Tiffin, Ohio
October 21: Walking in the World as a Friend, 7:15 pm to 9:00 pm. (Zoom)

For more details, check the Calendar page at <https://leym.org/calendar/>



**Announcing: Broadmead Monthly Meeting Friends Fall Retreat
 October 4th - 6th 2024**

Achieving Community and Covenant at Broadmead Meeting

Topics Include:

- How do we prepare for Meeting?
- What is our understanding of covenant community?
- How do we share our spiritual gifts?
- How do you know when you are called to vocal ministry?

At: St. Francis Spirituality Center
 200 St Francis Ave., Tiffin, Ohio
 Contact Olwen Pritchard at (419) 358-2954
 Or email: pritchardolwen@outlook.com

LEYM Committee Clerks 2024-2025

(Further contact information available in the Annual Records and on the LEYM website)

Adult & Family Program

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Building a Just and Lasting Peace:

Perspectives & Experiences of Palestinian Quakers

September 5, 7-8:30 PM

Quakersforpeace@gmail.com