



### Clerk’s Message from Joseph Mills

## We are Called to be Righteous and Faithful

Well, Friends, I hope and trust you are doing well. We have entered a New Year after a tumultuous old one. The world is still in turmoil with war, injustice, and poverty. Many of us are upset with the results of the election, feeling numb and a bit lost as to what to do. Yet we need to do something to help heal a broken nation and world. Many of our Meetings seem to be growing a bit currently. Perhaps the world’s turmoil is bringing us new seekers who are looking for answers. We need to welcome and embrace them. May the Light and Spirit guide us in our all important witnessing against what is wrong.

Yet despite the depressing news we hear and read, many unreported acts of kindness and generosity are taking place all the time. No doubt, many of you are contributing to this effort. Remember, we form a most remarkable community with our Yearly Meeting that supports and sustains one another. As was spoken in my own Meeting recently, we are called to be righteous, and called to be faithful, but we are not called to be successful. Continue to keep up your good work whatever you are doing.

Looking forward to seeing many of you at Representative Meeting in Pittsburgh in early March.

## Advancing the Conversation

LEYM's Advancement and Outreach committee has been organizing an online series of conversations this year that provide an opportunity to share and learn from each other around common conundrums of our organizational life. The first program, "Fitting Space to Spirit," featured panelists from Pittsburgh, North Columbus, and Detroit who discussed their experiences in owning a building, renting space, transitioning from one mode to another – and in Detroit's case, building from scratch! We covered the nitty gritty – how do we cover the costs? – as well as bigger questions, like how we feel our space contributes (or doesn't) to our spiritual life. Thanks to the work of our digital communications facilitator, you can watch the

recording <https://youtu.be/Q7sHj6ow-ZY>

The second program – "Hybrid Meetings – How have they Affected Us?" was evidence of continuing evolution, if not revelation. Speakers from Grand Rapids, Ann Arbor, and Oberlin addressed technology, managing hybrid meeting for business, and integrating on-line newcomers. Participants discussed topics that resonated with them in small groups. The first 45 minutes is captured here <https://youtu.be/IkqsFFmklU0>.

What questions that would profit from cross-meeting exploration are live for you? Ideas welcome. Email our co-clerks, [SusanDHartman@gmail.com](mailto:SusanDHartman@gmail.com) and/or [barbaralesage@hotmail.com](mailto:barbaralesage@hotmail.com).

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# Call for Workshops for 2025 Annual Meeting

At this time we'd like to invite interested Friends to consider being part of the 2025 Annual Meeting program by submitting a workshop proposal before February 15th. If you know of someone who might offer a great session, please let them know about the opportunity and encourage them to propose something. Questions can be directed to Adult and Family Program Committee member Greg Mott via [mott@findlay.edu](mailto:mott@findlay.edu)

As you prepare, note that the proposal [submission form](https://leym.org/leym2025cfp/) [https://leym.org/leym2025cfp/] asks for some

## LEYM Query 2025

To all LEYM MM Clerks:

This year's query is:

- "How do I actively get to know my neighbors?"
- "How do we as a Meeting seek opportunities to understand communities unlike ourselves?"

Please send your Meeting's response by **March 1, 2025** to [flo@dougandflo.com](mailto:flo@dougandflo.com).

*Ministry & Nurture Committee,  
Lake Erie Yearly Meeting*

*"[...] be ye more watchful and faithful, and valiant for the truth upon earth unto the end, that you may be found faithful witnesses unto the Name of the Lord in this crooked Generation, [...] and may witness God with you, the Emanuael, the Saviour, God with us; and this is the whole salvation, and there is no other to be expected or witnessed then this, That God dwells in us, and walks in us, according to his Promise..."*

*Edward Burroughs,*

An Epistle to All the Saints Whom God Hath Called, 1657

structured information addressing the following topics:

- Workshop Title
- Preferred Length (90 minutes is the default, shorter is possible)
- Presenter (s) [includes MM affiliation if relevant]
- Workshop Description (brief, descriptive, written for use promoting the workshop)
- Workshop Design and Format (Additional information for the committee)
- Participant Engagement Plans (Friends appreciate interactivity in sessions)
- Technology Needs
- Contact Email

Visit the formal [Call for Workshops page](https://leym.org/leym2025cfp/) [https://leym.org/leym2025cfp/] to find the embedded submission form. Proposals should be submitted by **February 15, 2025** in order to receive full consideration.

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# All Are Invited to Representative Meeting

## Saturday, March 8, 2025

### In Person at Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting and Online

Representative Meeting is about Representation. Join us virtually OR in person for a hybrid meeting on Saturday, March 8. In the morning, there will be opportunities for Friends from ALL LEYM Monthly Meetings to have F2F conversations in groups or committees to talk about monthly or yearly meeting issues. Whether or not you “officially” represent your monthly meeting, you are welcome to participate. While we may not be able to provide a virtual connection for morning small groups, we welcome your participation. Morning Meeting for Worship and afternoon Meeting for Worship with attention to business WILL BE hybrid.

**In-Person Meeting:**

At Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting  
 4836 Ellsworth Ave,  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15213  
 In the North Oakland section near Carnegie Mellon University, Carlow University, University of Pittsburgh. Updated driving instructions will be online in early March.

**Online Meeting:** via Zoom. See the LEYM web-site (<https://leym.org/representative-meeting/>) for details about registration, Zoom links, etc.

**Schedule for Saturday, March 8:**

Registration & simple breakfast.....9:00 AM  
 Meeting for worship.....9:30 AM  
 Greetings & Announcements.....10:00 AM  
 Tour of Pittsburgh Meeting House.....10:15 AM  
 Break.....10:45 AM  
 Presentation of A&O Slide Show.....11:00 PM  
 Lunch.....12:00 PM  
 Committee Meetings/Extended Lunch..... 1:00 PM  
 Meeting for Business..... 1:30 PM  
 Adjournment..... 4:00 PM



**ADVANCE REGISTRATION  
 For Friends Attending in Person**

To be received by Saturday, **February 22<sup>nd</sup>**  
 (\$12 donation gladly accepted for Saturday lunch)

Please mail or email this form to:

Susan Loucks,  
 922 Jancey St.,  
 Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
 susanloucks@gmail.com

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_

Meeting or Worship Group: \_\_\_\_\_

LEYM Committee Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

Number of persons for **SATURDAY LUNCH**

Vegetarians (#) \_\_\_\_\_

Omnivores. (#) \_\_\_\_\_

Dietary Restrictions: \_\_\_\_\_

Overnight Accommodations (please check):

\_\_\_\_\_ I (we) will make our own arrangements.

\_\_\_\_\_ I (we) need hospitality with Friends on:

Friday, March 7 (# people) \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday, March 8 (# people) \_\_\_\_\_

There are hotel options around the nearby universities and hospitals.

# 2025 Annual Meeting in Ashland

We invite you to join us in Ashland, Ohio for this year's annual meeting June 12-15, 2025, where we will explore the theme of **"Mending Our Nets: The Power of Becoming Whole."** This gathering offers a space to reflect on the brokenness we encounter – within ourselves, our communities, and the world – and to consider how we might repair, restore, and reweave the fabric of our lives with intention and grace.

Drawing inspiration from our Quaker heritage, as described by Francis Howgill at Firbank Fell, we will delve into the spiritual and practical work of healing, guided by worship, workshops, and meaningful dialogue. Our plenary presenter will be Pamela Haines from Central Philadelphia Meeting. Pamela is a Quaker writer, activist, earthcare advocate and workshop leader, focused on community building and economic justice. Together, we'll seek to understand how we can be instruments of wholeness in a fractured world. Whether you're a longtime Friend or new to the Quaker way, we welcome you to this opportunity for renewal and connection.

We welcome all ages to come with open hearts and minds as we explore the transformative power of

mending – not just to restore what was, but to create something stronger and more beautiful. Learn more online at [leym.org/annual](http://leym.org/annual)

## About the Location

After three years, we are settling into holding our annual meeting at Ashland University, located in the charming small town of Ashland, Ohio, located about

halfway between Cleveland and Columbus. The campus is compact with easy parking and a centralized space for meeting and socializing. The food is good with a large salad bar which prioritizes local sourcing. Each year we partner with the Ashland Center for Nonviolence, which was founded by the late LEYM Friend John

Stratton. We encourage all members, attenders, and acquaintances of LEYM to join us in exploring our faith and practice, sharing deep worship with time to connect with old Friends and new, **June 12-15, 2025**. Save the date now and look for more information about the full program and registration process in the next issue of the Bulletin and online. In the meantime, encourage Friends and families in your local meeting to attend.

*"the kingdom of heaven did gather us and catch us all, as in a net, and His heavenly power at one time drew many hundreds to land. We came to know a place to stand in and what to wait in; and the Lord appeared daily to us, to our astonishment, amazement and great admiration."*

*Francis Howgill describes the 1652 Firbank Fell Convincement Event*



*2025 Annual Meeting Plenary Preview*

# Mending Our Nets: The Power of Becoming Whole

By Pamela Haines

Martin Luther King speaks of us living together in “an inescapable network of mutuality.” Our well-being, our very existence, depends on the strength of the nets that support us. Yet those nets are not always easily visible, and can become frayed. We call on Spirit for the vision to see them, the wisdom to understand and value their critical role, and the humility and patient loving care necessary for mending.

Nets of awareness and discipline support us spiritually. Where there are holes in our practice; where our compassion falls through a gap; where we lose track of what’s true about ourselves or the world around us; where our connections have become frayed; where we fall through into an abyss of inattention, distraction or addiction, our spiritual nets are in need of mending.

The web of connections that a net provides also undergird our Quaker meetings. Nets support communities everywhere, playing a critical role from inspired classrooms and work teams, to vibrant local economies, to islands of participatory democracy and healthy ecosystems.

Yet our nets are increasingly tattered, with people, shared values, places, whole species falling through widening holes. There are great rents in our social, political and economic fabric, both at home and across the globe. The ability of our shared environmental net to support life itself is under threat. To mend our nets, we first have to value them, then look at the places that are torn. There are losses at all levels to name and to grieve—unhealed from the past, facing us in the present, and looming in the future—yet our secularized culture separates us from the practice of lament.

We have work to connect, to grieve, to mend. Mending anything requires the ability to envision it whole, an understanding of how it’s put together, and the skills, resources and confidence to make the repair. This is true with close relationships, with those we have cast off as other, with those whom we have

not yet been able to claim as our own. It is equally true with our institutions. This is our holy work. As we mend our nets, prayerfully, together, we taste the power of becoming whole.

## About Our Presenter

Pamela Haines, an active member of Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting, currently clerks the Gifts and Leadings Committee and Finance Advisory



Committees. She is a long-time member of the Philadelphia Yearly Meeting Eco-Justice Collaborative, is active in Quaker Earthcare Witness, clerking the Futures Committee, and plays an advisory role with Right Sharing of World Resources and Friends Peace Teams.

Pamela is passionate about the earth, relationships, integrity, paying attention, and repair of all kinds. Winding up her work life supporting the early childhood workforce, she enjoys connections with Northern Ugandans, youth climate activists, childcare teachers, public banking advocates and urban farmers, among others. As a writer, workshop leader and speaker, she loves to demystify the connections between economics and daily life, challenge people to claim their power and act on their values, and call them to wonder and thanks.

Co-author of *Toward a Right relationship with Finance*, she is the author of *Money and Soul*, two Pendle Hill pamphlets, and three volumes of essays for the Quaker Quicks series—*That Clear and Certain Sound*, *Tending Sacred Ground—Respectful Parenting*, and *The Promise of Right Relationship*—and three volumes of poetry. Her blog and podcast can be found at [pamelahaines.substack.com](http://pamelahaines.substack.com).

## Birmingham Friends Meeting

Birmingham Friends Meeting meets in downtown Royal Oak, Michigan. We have a smallish but very engaged and welcoming meeting that enjoys getting involved in good projects. This year we continued to support a member who is active as an Alternatives to Violence Project workshop facilitator in Ionia Correctional Facility and in the community. We also continue to staff a Saturday Soup Kitchen a couple times a year in partnership with a local church. New this year on Business Meeting days we have been collecting large jars of peanut butter which are then taken to a nearby food pantry for distribution. We also enjoy discussing Quaker readings, and during the coming year our Spiritual Formation book group will be reading select articles from Friends Journal. We already financially support Friends Journal, and appreciate that articles are made available at no cost online. This December we had a great time celebrating together at our annual Cookie Potluck and Carol Sing holiday event held at one of our member's homes.

*Bill Warters, BFM Clerk*

## Cleveland Friends Meeting

Our primary focus these last few months has been to listen carefully to how we are being led as a meeting in several areas: our worship format, developing a closer sense of community, our service to the greater Cleveland community, finding a new meeting house,



(Above) Birmingham Friends serve up pasta at Soup Kitchen  
(Below) Birmingham Friends sing together at our holiday event.



and education. We are dispersed over a wide geographical area which affects all of these.

Using worship sharing during our Monthly Business Meeting and at a Called Meeting as well as guidance from M&C, we have decided to gather on First Day 30 minutes early with an experiential focus and greater opportunity for sharing. From this we will move into our regular Worship Service. We will not do this every First Day and we will continue to evaluate.

As individuals, many of us are involved in service work, some of it supported by Meeting funds. The question we are being led to answer is whether the Meeting as a whole is being led to participate in a specific service project. We have had one Called Meeting on this topic and another is scheduled.

After selling our meeting house in 2021, we have rented a space at Covenant Presbyterian Church. It has limited us in some ways especially with First Day School and mid-week gatherings. We

are being led to consider other options for a meeting house. A committee has been set up to do that. Our needs have been listed and guidelines established to look at options.

Our children's First Day School continues with a hired educator as well as parent participation. Currently Bible stories are the focus.

In all of these areas we are conscious of the research on outreach that Barry Crosno has shared with us.

We have had a joyous marriage celebration and are planning a celebration of our 100<sup>th</sup> year as a Meeting later this year.

*Vickey Finger, Cleveland LEYM Representative*

## Kalamazoo Meeting's 70<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration

On September 22, 2024, Kalamazoo Meeting celebrated 70 years of being an acknowledged Friends Meeting. It was linked with Kalamazoo's hosting Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting the day before, which added Friends from other Meetings to our celebration. Despite the rainy weather, it was a joyous occasion.

There were many highlights; memories of past events, celebrations and former members were shared. We greeted Friends we hadn't seen in a while.

We sang Quaker songs, of course, led by Kathy Ossmann. Bill Warters from Birmingham Meeting unofficially represented Lake Erie Yearly Meeting and the wider Quaker Community. We ate wonderful locally sourced food, prepared by members of the Syrian and Afghan families



*Kalamazoo members and friends.*

our Meeting has helped.

We also honored Adda Dilts, the first resident in our Meetinghouse, whose financial contribution from selling her own home helped make the building of our meetinghouse possible. Adda started a 'Lemonade Ministry' with the neighbor children and our adjoining playground is named The Adda Dilts Peace Park.

Many people contributed to make this occasion come about: the Committees for Anniversary Planning, Hospitality, and Building and Grounds in particular.

*Flo Friender, Kalamazoo Meeting*

## Wooster Friends Meeting

Inspired by the celebration of George Fox's 400<sup>th</sup> birthday, the Wooster Friends Meeting has re-established its practice of holding discussions after Meeting for Worship. This practice had fallen away with the changed patterns of convening necessitated by the pandemic. Two of our members had been participating in the online weekly Quaker Study Group hosted by the Cleveland Meeting. That group has been reading George Fox's *Journal*, so there was ample material for a couple of discussions about George Fox's beliefs and ministry.

With the general appreciation of these discussions, we decided to be intentional about scheduling additional discussions. We have decided to leave the topics wide open to begin. So, our first discussion of the new year will be about the life of Nelson Gant, a freedman who was helped by Ohio Friends to build his free life in our state. This discussion will be led by an individual in Meeting who has researched Gant's life story. Another presentation and discussion will be based on the history of Early Ohio Quakers, created from materials by an Indiana historian. We have also set a couple discussions of the book, *The Gatherings*, which describes the collaboration of indigenous people and Friends in Maine about 30 years ago to re-imagine relationships between their two groups. Another Friend has offered to lead a discussion about Rufus Jones.

As we find ourselves stimulated by this return to scheduled discussions, more offers of topics will arise. And, of course, George Fox offers unending possibilities for challenging us to examine and experience our own current spirituality and practices.

*Dottie Stratton, Clerk*

# Available LEYM Funds for Meetings & Friends

Over the years, LEYM has set aside funds for purposes intended to invest in our spiritual growth, both as individuals and as a Yearly Meeting. Finance committee wants to make sure people are aware of various financial aid opportunities available to help Friends in various circumstances. Brief summaries are provided below, along with contact info about whom to connect with to access them.

## YEARLY MEETING BUSINESS

If you travel for YM business or to represent us at meetings of Friends' organizations, reimbursable costs include registration, transportation and lodging. Friends are expected to cover their own food costs. A representative or committee member may be reimbursed for unusual travel expenses incurred on behalf of the Yearly Meeting if the Presiding Clerk provides written approval in advance.

## SPIRITUAL FORMATION RETREATS.

Friends wanting help to cover the cost of a Spiritual Formation retreat are asked to first request help from their Monthly Meeting, then let the registrar for the Spiritual Formation Program know if they need additional help. Funds come from the Spiritual Formation Program monies. We want no-one to miss the program for financial reasons.

## MINISTRY SCHOLARSHIPS

Funds are available from the Ministry Scholarships Fund to help support Monthly Meetings that wish to send a member or attender of their Meeting to a seminar, institute, or workshop for education or training related to ministry among Friends, such as the School of the Spirit, the Earlham School of Religion, or a clerking workshop. Two requirements are: 1) that the request comes from the Monthly Meeting rather than the individual, and 2) that the Monthly Meeting also provides financial support to the individual. Apply to the clerk of LEYM's Ministry & Nurture Committee

## SCHOLARSHIP FUNDS FOR ATTENDING QUAKER COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

LEYM is committed to supporting young adult Friends who choose to attend Quaker colleges and universities for their undergraduate education, and for

individuals who will be participating in a post-secondary internship or fellowship for a Quaker organization. LEYM has designated funds that can be used to support students who meet all of the following criteria:

- Applicant participates in the life of a Monthly Meeting or Worship Group that is a member of LEYM.
- Applicant is attending a member institution of the Friends Association for Higher Education as a degree-seeking student or is participating in a post-secondary internship or fellowship for a Quaker organization such as Quaker Voluntary Service, Friends Committee on National Legislation, American Friends Service Committee, Quaker United Nations Office, or Quaker Experiential Service and Training.
- Applicant will be a student or intern/fellow during the school year following disbursement.

For consideration, applicants must send the LEYM Treasurer a support letter from the Monthly Meeting, and proof of registration at a qualifying institution. All eligible applicants will be considered, with available funds being evenly divided among them. Applicants may apply for each year of enrollment or internship. The maximum scholarship per recipient per year is \$2000. Materials can be sent to: Tom Kangas, Treasurer, 3641 Weston Place, Columbus, OH 43214 or emailed to LEYMTreasurer@gmail.com.

**Deadline to apply is March 1.**

## TRAVEL TO CONFERENCES REFLECTING QUAKER VALUES

LEYM budgeted \$500 in this fiscal year that's available to assist Friends to attend conferences that reflect Quaker values. Conferences reflecting Quaker values can be conferences developed by or sponsored by Quaker groups or conferences whose purposes are closely aligned with Quaker testimonies, such as peace, equality, integrity, and simplicity. These funds are not meant to support travel to regularly occurring Quaker meetings such as the FGC Gathering or Yearly Meeting sessions, since other scholarships are available for those events. They should be used for one-time or rarely occurring events, workshops, or conferences.

*Continued next page*



# Last Youth Retreat at Templed Hills

The Retreat was held at Templed Hills Camp in Bellville, Ohio, from September 27th through 29th, 2024. We were small in number, but great in spirit. The weather was very cooperative, meaning it only rained a little.

We spent time outdoors: walking, running, exploring, identifying flowers and fairy dwellings. We all enjoyed God's natural beauty. When indoors, we colored, talked, read stories, played board games and ate. Food has always been an integral part of our retreats – from apples to oranges, to cheeses and chips, hot cocoa and cookies.

A treat was a prayer walk that one of our older youth designed for the retreat. The walk took folks to different stations where thoughtful questions were asked and then on to the next stop. We all had fun. On our final evening, we always have a campfire with s'mores. Many of the adults said it was too wet and the fire would not catch. But the youth made it happen! We had a roaring fire with many s'mores and songs. It was fun filled evening. This LEYM tradition has been going on for at least 20 years. This was a good way to say goodbye to Templed Hills Camp, which is closing. We are grateful to the camp for hosting years of our youth retreats that many of

*Continued from previous page*

## ATTENDANCE AT EARLHAM SCHOOL OF RELIGION.

On request, LEYM's Ministry & Nurture Committee can recommend an LEYM Friend for a Cooper Scholarship at Earlham School of Religion (ESR). ESR is part of Earlham College in Richmond, Indiana. It is a Quaker theological school offering master's level study. ESR offers full-tuition Cooper Scholar Awards. Priority is given to Quaker students who have been identified as promising leaders and ministers by their monthly and yearly meetings. Complete information is available from ESR.

our adults who have children themselves attended when they were younger.



On our final morning, Sunday, after a yummy breakfast, we had worship sharing. We shared on our appreciation of the weekend and life.

Stay tuned in future LEYM *Bulletins* for information for next year's fall retreat, always held on the final weekend in September.

## Friends General Conference (FGC) Update

*The following was submitted by Brad Shaw and Ellerie Brownfain, LEYM Representatives to FGC.*

Friends General Conference Central Committee meets annually in October. As the governing body of FGC, Central Committee includes FGC staff and volunteers appointed by member yearly meetings and independently affiliated monthly meetings. FGC held its 2024 meeting at the Mother Boniface Spirituality Center in Philadelphia, with Marvin Barnes, Presiding Clerk, and Barry Crossno as FGC General Secretary.

Reports including a summary of the 2024 FGC Gathering "Rooted in Story." This in-person event was held on the historic campus of Haverford College in Haverford, Pennsylvania, from June 30 to July 6, 2024. New York and Philadelphia Friends established the school in 1833, grounded in Quaker values. Today it is a highly respected college with just under 1,500 students. Not without its challenges, the Gathering drew 1,045 Friends and seekers, offering rich experiences for all ages.

Looking ahead, Thistle Hofvendahl and Ben Hofvendahl will co-clerk an Online Gathering scheduled for February 1-9, 2025. The theme is "A Spring Whose Waters Never Fail." A 2025 YAY (young adults and youth) Gathering will be held from

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# FWCC World Plenary 2024 in Johannesburg

## Report by Ellerie Brownfain

The Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) World Plenary Meeting convened in Johannesburg, South Africa, in August for 7 days, bringing together over 250 Friends from 53 countries, with an equal number participating virtually through "Hub" groups. The plenary's theme "Ubuntu," meaning "I am, because we are," guided all aspects of the gathering. Through the daily schedule, the spirit of Ubuntu wound its path through workshops, worship (programmed and unprogrammed), free time and meals. All were seamlessly knitted together. When led by the spirit, we danced in the aisles, sang songs, held hands, cried and prayed together. Language translation was not needed for these experiences!

### Testimony and Transformation

Dudzile Mtshazo, a South African Friend, shared her journey to Quakerism during apartheid. At a White Friends Meeting, she experienced unprecedented equality through sharing tea from the same cups as whites – in defiance of segregation norms. "I walked from the spiritual drought of a busy and hurried life into the sea of silence." The Friends Meeting treated her with a respect and love that she deserved and she found her spiritual home. Her words had a profound effect on me. I felt I was experiencing Dudu's journey, walking and sharing the divine love of Christ. Her story led me to many questions about how we greet our guests and returning visitors to our Monthly and Yearly Meetings.

### Global Witness and Ministry

Friends worldwide shared powerful testimonies: Ukrainian Friends continuing peace work amid conflict; Kenyan Friends supporting youth affected by domestic violence; the havoc of climate changes radically impacting Friends and our world. Individual Friends shared numerous ministries demonstrating Quaker testimonies in action. These important issues were discussed in the three thematic streams/strands: Ubuntu, Care for Creation, and Healing and Repairing Relationships in the light of Historic and

## Report by Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon

In preparation for FWCC's August 2024 World Plenary Meeting, I participated in some of the virtual world-wide May-July Ubuntu discussions. Then, thanks to the first-ever hybrid world assemblage of Quakers in August, I joined a number of worldwide Friends online to interact with Plenary activities.

Despite varying time zones, we attended "virtual home groups" to discuss queries, cultural practices, beliefs and traditions in several languages. During my early morning (while Plenary Meeting Friends dined), I felt warmly welcomed by Europe and Middle East

Section Friends from Great Britain and Ireland to Ukraine in our home group, primarily in English. Participating virtually began to approximate the opportunity to be present, during my waking hours, to experience the feeling of Ubuntu.

The Plenary's theme: "Living in the Spirit of Ubuntu (Zulu "I am, because you/we are.")": responding with hope to God's call to care for creation and one-another" connected us in so many ways. Strongly echoing the 'Golden Rule' (Love your neighbor as yourself), the word *ubuntu* refers to the deeply-held belief, morality and custom, that every person is worthy of being recognized, respected and heard, and that we as human beings are all interdependent. It implies a collective responsibility to ensure that ALL members of the community have the means of subsistence and learning and participation. It further extends to care for the environment, since people are part of the same divinely given creation that is an interdependent whole.

The spirit of Ubuntu resounded throughout the addresses of Quaker and non-Quaker plenary speakers alike, during mindfully guided business sessions, within the 3 simultaneous focus "strands/threads" (workshop-like discussions spread throughout the week), and in the myriad small encounters on site and on screen. As virtual visitors, we even experienced world-wide Quaker sites while



South Africa Yearly Meeting is hosting the 2024 World Plenary, the global gathering of Friends. This is part of a study guide for the event theme.

## LIVING THE SPIRIT OF UBUNTU

### Responding with hope to God's call to cherish creation and one another

Ubuntu resonates with the Quaker belief that we are all equal. Our duty to care for one another was expressed by Isaac Pennington in 1667, "Our life is love, and peace, and tenderness; and bearing one with another, and forgiving one another, and not laying accusations one against another; but praying one for another, and helping one another up with a tender hand".

#### What is ubuntu?

The term ubuntu refers to the deeply held belief, morality and custom, that every person is worthy of being recognised, respected and heard, and that we as human beings are all interdependent.



#### Responsibility to Creation



Ubuntu further extends to care for the environment, since people are part of the same God-given creation, that is an, interdependent whole.



#### ubuntu in Africa



Ubuntu is found as a daily practice in many African societies, though terms, languages and nuances may differ. The effect of ubuntu is to maintain cohesion, balance, openness, peace, compassion and dignity in a community. It restrains self-serving and materialism. It ensures strangers are welcome.



The priority for humanity expressed as ubuntu is an ancient wisdom. It has been asserted in more recent times in the process of liberation from colonialism and apartheid. Christian anti-apartheid leader Desmond Tutu explained ubuntu with the words, "My humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up, in yours."

A number of Biblical passages have been found to be relevant to the concept of ubuntu, including 1 Corinthians 12:14-27 ("now the body is not made up of one part but many... If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it").



#### Responsibility to Others

Ubuntu also implies a collective responsibility to ensure that all members of the community have the means of subsistence and learning, of participation in communal decision-making and rites of passage. Elders have a responsibility to resolve conflicts.



Ubuntu is now being taken up in law in South Africa, Uganda and Lesotho. The four principles of ubuntu can be considered as community, interdependence, solidarity and dignity.



In seeking to apply ubuntu, Southern African Friends are looking to engage in activities concerning a universal basic income grant, clean energy production, food security, alternatives to violence, and overcoming/forgiving past atrocities. The Spirit of ubuntu lives!" (Epistle, from SAYM Gathering 2023).

Friends World Committee for Consultation

### Ellerie Brownfain Report continued...

Continuing Injustices. For me, the most heartfelt way I can express my experience is the Tapestry document. I strongly encourage all friends to read this piece.

[https://www.fwccemes.org/file\\_download/530/WPM-2024-tapestry-and-prayer\\_KiSwahili-Espanol-English.pdf](https://www.fwccemes.org/file_download/530/WPM-2024-tapestry-and-prayer_KiSwahili-Espanol-English.pdf)

### Looking Forward

The gathering affirmed global Quakerism's vitality while raising questions about welcome, inclusion, climate, equity, and addressing both historical and contemporary injustices. Opportunities for meaningful service remain abundant across the FWCC's four sections.

These questions have led me into discussions about what I and our Monthly and Yearly Meetings can actively do to create a better future for our world and strengthen the ties within the Society of Friends.

<https://fwcc.world/epistle-of-world-plenary-meeting/>

### Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon Report continued...

on-site attendees spent a day visiting local South African sites.

The FWCC Section of the Americas' poster (including the many aspects of Ubuntu noted above) helped me share my virtual experience with my Pittsburgh MM Spiritual Formation group post-plenary. That poster is a continuing reminder of my work to live in the spirit of Ubuntu.

## Green Pastures QM Mid-Winter Gathering

### March 15, Online

We tentatively plan to have a discussion of the work of the American Friends Service Committee in Michigan. All Friends welcome.

<https://umich.zoom.us/j/7346151800?omn=98715599599>



**February 15** - Deadline for Annual Meeting Workshop Proposals. (See Page 3)

**March 1** - Deadline for Meeting responses to LEYM 2025 Query. (See Page 3)

**March 8** - LEYM Representatives Meeting at Pittsburgh MM. (Hybrid meeting - See Page 10)

**March 15** - Deadline for submissions to Spring Issue of the *Bulletin*.

**March 15** - Mid-Winter Meeting of Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting, via Zoom, for a discussion of the work of AFSC in Michigan.

**May 15** - Deadline for submission of “State of the Meeting Reports.”

**June 1** - Monthly Meeting “Statistical Reports” due.

**June 12 -15** - LEYM Annual Meeting at Ashland University. (See Page 4)

**July 30** - Due date for submissions to the 2025 *Annual Records*.

## 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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#### **Publications & Archives**

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#### **Youth & Children’s Program**

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#### **FGC Update, continued from Page 9**

July 2-6, 2025, at Colombiere Conference Center in Clarkston, Michigan.

Barry Crossno, reporting as General Secretary, outlined FGC’s financial picture and means to increase visibility and outreach with emphasis on the Ministry on Racism and Spiritual Formation. Through an ambitious agenda and thoughtful discernment, Central Committee approved a fiscal year 2025 budget in the context of a 5-year budget framework, a preliminary plan to make outreach an FGC priority, and the establishing of a working group for the implementation of an FGC evaluation process. In addition, the FGC Governance Working Group provided an Interim Report. This Working Group “holds the work of exploring and recommending systemic and structural changes to the organization of FGC, its governance, volunteerism, staff, and program systems, so that the governance structure provides a solid, transparent foundation that empowers and enables the organization to better grow and to transform into an actively anti-racist faith community.”

*“Ours the faith which does not ask to see the harvest of its sowing; ours the joy that sings in the dark places of the earth because even they are filled with the glory of God.”*

*Elfrida Vipont Foulds (1902-1992)*