

Responses to 2024/25 LEYM Query

Responses to the LEYM Annual Query were received from nine Meetings: Akron, Ann Arbor, Birmingham, Broadmead, Cleveland, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Granville, and Holland.

The Annual Query consisted of two parts:

1. *How do I actively get to know my neighbors?*
2. *How do we as a Meeting seek opportunities of interaction with communities unlike ourselves?*

The responses from most Meetings came in largely as the reflections arising from individual Friends during worship-sharing rather than as a reflection on the query by the entire Meeting.

Summary of Responses to 2024/24 LEYM Query

1. *How actively do I get to know my neighbors?*

The responses came back in two basic views of neighborliness: (1) casual, and (2) active. The first response reflecting the casual ways one gets to know one's neighbors and the second the ways in which one actively tries to get to know one's neighbors.

(1) The most common response was that walking in the neighborhood, especially with a dog, was a good way to meet one's neighbors and initiate conversation.

(2) Active ways to get to know one's neighbors included:

- Looking out for each other, such as helping with yard work, lending lawn and garden equipment, providing rides for neighbors.
- Getting to know one's neighbors requires spending time with them. This can take the form of participating together in local community organisations or activities.
- Holding open houses.

2. *How do we as a Meeting seek opportunities of interaction with communities unlike ourselves?*

Implicit in this query is the question, "Who is my neighbor?" Communities are by their nature insular and it is easy to maintain one's isolation within one's community. It requires a willingness to make one's self vulnerable in order to

reach out to another community. It also requires listening and patience. Building relationships takes time. It is a series of small steps from which trust and understanding arise. Some Meetings look to get to know others through work with other organisations on issues of common interest, such as activities around peace, immigration rights or prison and bail reform or in activities through AFSC or FCNL. A number of Meetings reach out into other communities by providing hot meals or food pantries. A number of Meetings indicated that the communities in which they are located are not very diverse. Most Meeting did not address the question of ways to interact with others who did not share or might even hold incompatible views and concerns. One Meeting suggested that to reach out to other communities first required us to be clear about our own identity as a Quaker community and suggested that Friends might spend more time exploring Quaker history, faith and practice.