

**LAKE ERIE YEARLY MEETING
MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING JUNE 12-15, 2025**

Sessions were held in a blended (hybrid) format with many participants in person at Ashland University, Ashland, Ohio, and a few online.

Clerks' table: Joe Mills (Kalamazoo), Clerk; Jack Smith (Red Cedar), Assistant Clerk; Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor), Recording Clerk

SESSION 1: Thursday, June 12, 2025, 7:30pm – 9:00pm

YM 2025-01 Opening and Reading of Epistle

Clerk Joe Mills welcomed the group of Friends gathered at Ashland University in Ashland, Ohio for the 63rd Annual Meeting of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting on Thursday, June 12, 2025. Friends settled into restorative worship at 7:30 pm.

From the silence, Assistant Clerk Jack Smith read an epistle from the FWCC World Plenary held near Johannesburg, South Africa, in August 2024. Some 500 Friends from 53 countries and 95 Yearly Meetings gathered in person and online to consider the theme “Living the Spirit of Ubuntu: Responding with Hope to God’s Call to Cherish Creation and One Another.” They found that the Zulu word *Ubuntu*, meaning “I am because we are,” helped Friends go beyond their individual selves to see the power and work of the Holy Spirit among them. They expanded their understanding and appreciation for who they are, recognizing a shared founder (George Fox) and yet a multitude of differences, while also seeing shared Friendship, deep commitment to peace and justice, love of the earth, and love of God. They bridged geographical and language differences with an inclusive spirit. A group of 46 Young Adult Friends came together for four days before the gathering and formed a world committee of eight Young Adult Friends from all FWCC sections. Friends at the larger gathering talked and talked, seeking to discern Spirit-led ways forward from different perspectives. They ask for God’s blessing on the spaces between them as they go forward repeating “We are still here. We are one,” and seeking a better world for all creation.

[full text: https://fwcc.world/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/WPM-2024-epistle_KiSwahili-Espanol-English.pdf]

YM 2025-02 Welcome and holding the sessions in Light

The Clerk appreciated Friends’ efforts to gather together tonight. He thanked two Friends who volunteered to hold this session in Light. Other Friends will continue this practice as our sessions proceed.

YM 2025-03 Site Committee: Bill Warters (Birmingham) reported.

Bill welcomed Friends back to Ashland. As Digital Communications Facilitator he explained that he will be sending out a brief, newsy email each evening describing events of the next day. He invited Friends to use the mobile app for our Annual Meeting and explained how to use the campus Wi-Fi.

Bill shared a snapshot of who is attending here (as of Tuesday), noting a surge in Young Adult Friends and a good distribution of ages overall. There is also a good geographical distribution of attenders from across our Yearly Meeting. Our lunchtimes will include “topic

lunches” on Fridays and Saturdays, when Friends are invited to gather at tables to consider specific topics. Colored dots on our nametags designate another way to gather, this time at breakfast, in random groups to chat. Many Friends have donated money and volunteered their efforts to help make our meeting a success.

This year there is a special opportunity Saturday afternoon to participate in a peace vigil or walk a short distance to join in the town’s “No Kings” rally protesting authoritarianism. Materials are being provided for Friends to make signs to take to these public demonstrations of our beliefs. There will also be a simultaneous Meeting for Worship in our meeting space for Friends to hold these efforts in Light and Love.

YM 2025-04 Program Committee: Clémence Ravaçon Mershon (Erie Worship Group) reported.

Last September the Program Committee began their search for a theme and speaker without having any idea of what would happen in the national election and what the tenor of the country would be this June. In spiritual discernment they personally felt the loss of Friends and diminishing abilities, coming up with the theme: “Mending Our Nets: The Power of Becoming Whole.” When they invited Pamela Haines to consider being our plenary speaker, she shared a vision of a five-step process: 1) Valuing our nets, 2) Noticing the holes, 3) Grieving the losses, 4) Connecting with the community, and 5) Mending the nets.

YM 2025-05 Youth and Children Program: Diane Mott (Broadmead) reported.

Thirteen children and youth from six families are attending this year, showing a steady regrowth in the program, although not yet back to the pre-pandemic levels. Each morning, they will begin with “morning collection,” followed by different activities for the younger children and older youth. She asked for volunteer drivers to help transport our younger children on Saturday.

YM 2025-06 Roll Call

The Recording Clerk read through the list of Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups within the Yearly Meeting and Friends stood when their meetings were named. Official numbers from each meeting are listed below based on registration figures:

Akron	1	Kent	0
Ann Arbor	11	Mid-Ohio Valley	0
Athens	9	North Columbus	7
Birmingham	6	Oberlin	4
Broadmead	12	Pittsburgh	11
Cleveland	4	Red Cedar	12
Delaware	1	Wooster	4
Detroit	8	Erie Worship Group	1
Grand Rapids	1	LEYM (No Meeting)	11
Granville	0	Other	8
Holland	0		
Kalamazoo	7		

The Clerk welcomed first-time attenders and asked them to introduce themselves. Included were Friends Gerard Wenson and Andrew Wenson (Birmingham), Mary Kay Pozo and Mateo Pozo (Pittsburgh), Kelsey Middlemiss, Chelsea Middlemiss, and Gideon Middlemiss (Red Cedar),

Bryant Stuckey and Mari Isaac Madison (Detroit), and Emilia Marcyk-Taylor and Chandlee Marcyk-Taylor (Red Cedar).

We also welcomed visitors to Yearly Meeting in attendance, including Jackson Napier (Berea, Kentucky), Doug Gwyn (Clear Creek Meeting, Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting), Chuck Esser and Pamela Haines (Central Philadelphia Monthly Meeting), Nathan Kleban (Right Sharing of World Resources, Iowa Yearly Meeting), Bee Wang (Community Friends Meeting, Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting), Windy Cooler (Sandy Springs Monthly Meeting, Baltimore Yearly Meeting), and Marvin Barnes (Detroit, FGC visitor).

YM 2025-07 Remembering Friends who were not able to attend this year

Friends named Rosemary Coffey (Pittsburgh); Geoff & Inge Brieger (Birmingham), Susan McEwan (Birmingham), Paul Helbling (Broadmead), and Vaughan Peebles (Wabash, Indiana). Paulette Meier (Community Friends Meeting), our plenary speaker last year, sent her regards.

YM 2025-08 Naming Committee: Rebecca Morehouse (Ann Arbor) and Claire Cohen (Pittsburgh) reported.

The Clerk explained that, as an expedient, Friends Claire Cohen, Rebecca Morehouse, and Rick Adams (North Columbus) were approved in advance of this meeting by Executive Committee to serve as a Naming Committee. They will discern Friends to serve on our Nominating Committee. The Yearly Meeting **confirmed** approval of these Friends to serve.

Rebecca and Claire reported that after previously contacting 20 Friends who were not able to serve, in the last few days they have found several people who do feel led to serve. They expect to bring us a report later this week.

YM 2025-09 Harassment Discernment Committee

The Yearly Meeting **approved** the following Friends to serve on the Harassment Discernment Committee: Bill Wartens (Birmingham), Carolyn Lejuste (Red Cedar), and Aran Reinhart (Broadmead).

YM 2025-10 Epistle Committee

The Meeting **approved** the following Friends to serve on the Epistle Committee: Jack Smith (Red Cedar), Alexa Kay (Pittsburgh), Susan Loucks (Pittsburgh), and Jonah Brownfain (Broadmead).

YM 2025-11 Memorial minutes

Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor) read Memorial Minutes for Alan Connor and Anne Ogren, both of Ann Arbor Meeting. The full text of both will be included in the *LEYM Annual Records* and on the LEYM website.

YM 2025-12 Announcements

Greg Mott (Broadmead) invited Friends to join in a brief time of closing or collection in worship this evening and other evenings of Annual Meeting.

SESSION 2: Friday, June 13, 2025, 10:30am – 12:00pm

YM 2025-13 The Clerk invited Friends to worship. From the centering worship, Jack Smith read an epistle from Friends of New England Yearly Meeting, who met in Castleton, Vermont , and online in August 2024, their 364th Annual Meeting. Friends at that meeting grieved the turmoil in the world and acknowledged their own participation in many of the world's crises, such as climate change, political polarization, and white supremacy. They have experienced conflict themselves and see a need to strengthen their response to conflict. They tried to understand ways in which they enact patterns of oppression even as they learned more about how their predecessors in the Yearly Meeting were deeply, directly, and intimately involved in the creation and sustenance of Native American boarding schools. And yet, they affirmed the joy and consolation of their community in the Spirit, were reminded of their blessings, and long to become perfect in love.

[full epistle: <https://fwcc.world/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/New-England-YM-2024.pdf>]

YM 2025-14 Additional First Time Attenders

Susan McEwan (Birmingham) and Susan Waltz (Red Cedar), both attending online, introduced themselves.

YM 2025-15 Advancement & Outreach Committee: Susan Hartman (Ann Arbor) reported. The work of the Committee is to let Monthly Meetings know what the Yearly Meeting can offer them and to listen to the needs and concerns of the constituent Meetings. This year, they presented three online panels on concerns shared by many meetings. The topics were property and space concerns, hybrid meetings, and families with children. Look for recordings of the sessions on our website (LEYM.org). They welcome feedback and suggestions of panel topics for the coming year.

The Committee enjoyed reading the State of the Meeting reports from our Meetings, which inspired an activity of asking each Monthly Meeting to create a puzzle piece describing their uniqueness. The pieces are on display here, so that people can guess which Meeting is represented by which description. They also created a slide show presentation about the Yearly Meeting and shared it with Monthly Meetings to encourage better attendance at our Annual Meeting. They appreciated being able to use the Traveling Ministry Fund (as approved at Representative Meeting) to support these visits by their Committee members. (The full report is below.)

A Friend asked whether the Committee is planning intervisitation with other Yearly Meetings, explaining that seeing other ways people do things is broadening to our understanding of Quakerism. Susan said they would consider this.

YM 2025-16 Publications & Archives Committee: Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor) reported. Christopher Farrand (Cleveland) will continue to be editor of the *LEYM Bulletin* and Elise Yoder (Pittsburgh) editor of the *LEYM Annual Records* in the coming year. Last year, as an experiment, a version of the *Annual Records* (minus personal information) was made available on the website. There seems to have been little use of it, but the Committee would be interested in hearing reactions. The Committee has responsibility for keeping our *Policies and Procedures* manual up to date by reflecting changes in policy or procedures approved here or at

Representative Meeting. With two long-time members of the Committee reaching the end of their terms this year, additional Friends are needed to serve. (The full report is below.)

YM 2025-17 Ministry & Nurture Committee: Flo Friender (Kalamazoo) reported.

The Committee has met monthly by Zoom through this year. They collected responses to the annual query from several meetings and so far have 15 State of the Meeting reports. Summaries of these reports have been prepared. They also hosted “clerks’ chats” in which Monthly Meeting Clerks can talk with each other. Dennis Gregg will serve as Co-Clerk of the Committee in the coming year.

(The Committee’s summaries of responses to the annual query and of state of the meeting reports are below, as is a report from the Spiritual Formation Group Planning Committee.)

YM 2025-18 Peace & Justice Committee: Claire Cohen (Pittsburgh) reported.

After a hiatus, the Committee became active again during last year’s Annual Meeting. Members include Claire Cohen, Don Buckingham (North Columbus), Paul Helbling (Broadmead), Mary Finney (North Columbus), and Phil Volk (Ann Arbor). They have taken on as their main work supporting peace and justice work being done by committees within Monthly Meetings. They surveyed Monthly Meetings about their work and then presented a two-part webinar called “Stimulating Do-able Peace and Justice Work in our Monthly Meetings. The Committee also forwarded email notices about events and news of peace making at the national level.

Claire said that the peace vigil Saturday midday will be at the fountain across from our meeting site. The vigil seems especially important in response to Israel beginning to bomb Iran during our Annual Meeting. Friends are invited to the No Kings Rally sponsored by the Ashland community. Friends are also invited to ask their U.S. Senators to support Senate Bill 761 to set up a Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding Schools. More members are needed to continue this Committee’s important work. (The full report is below.)

YM 2025-19 Friendly Reminder of Why Minutes Matter.

Susan Loucks (Pittsburgh) spoke on the importance of listening carefully to minutes read back to the body and asking, “Is this true?” and “Is this what happened?” This practice is an important part of our discernment and bears witness to truth.

YM 2025-20 Nominating Committee: Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon (Erie Worship Group) reported.

Clémence outlined the positions the Committee is working to fill and the appointments it will be bringing for approval later in this meeting.

YM 2025-21 Committee Sharing Session

The Clerk invited Friends to go to designated areas of the room to talk with committee clerks and to learn more about their committee’s work.

SESSION 3: Friday, June 13, 2025, 1:15pm – 3:15pm

YM 2025-22 From settling worship, Jack Smith read the Epistle from Britain Yearly Meeting, which met at Friends House, Frontier Centre, Northamptonshire, and online in May 2025. About 1,000 Friends of all ages met with a special focus on Friends’ historic peace testimony and what

it means today, asking “What is your message of peace for the world?” and “What brings you a sense of inner peace?” They noted that this is an anxious time for the world and feel challenged to accept the radical peacemaker in themselves and others, as well as exploring how they can address violence and conflict in their communities. They spent much time together praying for the situation in Gaza and were moved to speak out. As promptings of love and truth in their heart pushed them to step up, they tried to do so in a spirit of adventure and joy while retaining tenderness to pursue radical peacemaking. At the end of their meeting, many in London stood in silent worship as witnesses to world peace and inner peace.

[full text: <https://www.quaker.org.uk/documents/yearly-meeting-2025-epistle>]

YM 2025-23 Announcement from Valerie Groszmann (Kalamazoo).

Valerie, manager of our bookstore at this meeting, noted that Friends are invited to insert a slip of paper with their name in books to indicate which they wish to buy. People who will attend the Spiritual Formation Retreat in the fall can talk to Valerie about ordering books they can pick up then.

YM 2025-24 Treasurer’s Report: Tom Kangas (North Columbus) reported.

LEYM Treasurer Tom Kangas said that the finances of the Yearly Meeting are in good shape overall. Our revenues for the year have been as expected. Expenses for the year thus far (ending June 30) are about 86% of the amount budgeted. Final data on the income and expenses of our Annual Meeting are incomplete but will be shared in the Fall *LEYM Bulletin*. It is possible some of the subsidy meant for the Annual Meeting Fund will not be needed.

After many years of not finding use for our Traveling Ministries Fund, at our Representative Meeting in March 2025 we approved its use by the Advancement & Outreach Committee for their work in visiting constituent Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups. That intervisitation has begun. (The full report and financial statement are below.)

YM 2025-25 Finance Committee, Draft Budget: Joanne Neuroth (Red Cedar) reported.

Joanne Neuroth, Clerk of the Finance Committee, presented a draft budget for our consideration. The draft budget includes an increase of about 2.5% in the hourly pay rate for both the Digital Communications Facilitator and the Database Manager. The hours projected to be worked by the Database Manager are reduced because the database system is stable and does not need development this year. Slight increases in our donations to Olney Friends School and Friends General Conference are suggested. There is a line reserved as a contingency to help North Columbus in their acquisition of a new meetinghouse if they are able to move forward this year. Additions to the FWCC travel fund for our representatives are not needed, but we will contribute to the FWCC Donation Fund as we usually do.

When the Committee recommended that the Consultation Fund be laid down at last year’s Annual Meeting, there was a request to wait a year to see if a need for the fund arose. No need has been identified. The Committee proposes that the amount in the fund (\$3,144) be returned to the general fund. The assessment we suggest to our Monthly Meetings would remain at \$42 per member in the coming year.

Marvin Barnes (Detroit) brought to the attention of Friends that House Bill 9495 could potentially take away non-profit status for religious organizations affiliated with groups not in agreement with government policy. He suggested we start planning for this. (The full report is below.)

YM 2025-26 Finance Committee, Change in Reimbursement Policy: Joann Neuroth (Red Cedar) reported.

The Committee proposes that LEYM change its policy in reimbursement for travel so that the cost of food paid to the event organizer may be reimbursed. This is based on how difficult it is to separate food charges from other charges when Friends travel on our behalf. The change would make it much easier for both our representatives and our Treasurer. Friends **approved** this change in our policy for travel reimbursement, so that reimbursement for food costs when Friends travel for LEYM is no longer disallowed. (Proposed changes to the *LEYM Policies and Procedures* are below but were not considered at this meeting.)

YM 2025-27 Changing the LEYM Database Records: Joe Mills and Susan Loucks reported. Clerk Joe Mills said that our current policy is to gather and retain lists of everyone in the Yearly Meeting community. Our Database Manager is responsible for this. The following change is proposed:

The Yearly Meeting will no longer collect and update the names and contact information of all members and attenders of its constituent Monthly Meetings. It will continue to provide names and contact information in its database for people who 1) have a role in a Monthly Meeting or the Yearly Meeting or 2) attended the previous year's Annual Meeting. The Yearly Meeting will keep a list of the names of all members of a Monthly Meeting at the request of such Meeting. Also keeping a list of number of members and former members of meetings, as well as weddings in the case of Meetings.

Susan Loucks (Pittsburgh), Database Manager, explained that we have been collecting the information but have not used it to publish a Directory of all members of our meeting communities since 2009. We want to keep lists of all people who have appointed roles in the Monthly Meetings, those with roles in the Yearly Meeting, and those who attended the latest Annual Meeting, all of which go into the Directory published in the *LEYM Annual Records*. Susan clarified that we are proposing to omit information that has been added to the database but is not published anywhere; the *Annual Records* Directory would not be affected.

A Friend asked how we contact our meeting communities. Susan responded that our practice for some time has been to send many things to Monthly Meeting Clerks and the Meetings' LEYM representatives, asking them to distribute material to the community, rather than doing so directly to individuals. A few Friends asked us to consider whether this information is important for future historians. A Friend pointed out that Meetings who wish to have the names of all their Meeting community kept in the LEYM database can still request that. A Friend said that the question of how we communicate with individuals throughout the Yearly Meeting could be reconsidered. A Friend asked if this change would affect how we include younger Friends or negatively affect the work of our Nominating Committee. Is the time needed to collect and enter the information for more people worth it, or can we do more to encourage and recruit by directly talking to people? Friends were not in unity with this proposal. The Clerk asked the Publications & Archives Committee, working with the Database Manager, to season it further.

YM 2025-28 Digital Communications Facilitator: Bill Warters (Birmingham) reported. Bill Warters, Digital Communications Facilitator, invited Friends to join the group who receive emails whenever the LEYM webpage is updated. This year he rejuvenated the LEYM Facebook page and continued using our YouTube account, moving away from Twitter/X posts. Large

portions of Bill's time go to 1) supporting the Annual Meeting (including development and improvement of online registration and providing Zoom accessibility for some events) and 2) updating the website. Bill said our website continues to be a strong resource and use in May 2025 reached 5,000 unique visitors for the month. He thanked Jeff Cooper of the Publications & Archives Committee for his assistance in setting up a new page of full-text and/or video recordings of past LEYM Plenary talks. (The full report is below.)

YM 2025-29 Friends Peace Teams: Cassie Cammann (Ann Arbor) reported.

Peace workers from Friends Peace Teams (FPT) are working in countries in which there is active combat, including Myanmar (Burma), Israel-Palestine, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Ukraine. They are helping refugees from Sudan and other countries with repressive regimes or who have suffered from war, conflict, and internal violence. The organization is also working on itself in order to operate in a decolonized manner. The Friends Peace Team's work is done almost completely with volunteer effort, and they would welcome other Friends to join. (The full report is below.)

YM 2025-30 Report from Detroit Friends Meeting.

A video was shown detailing the progress Detroit Friends Meeting has made in renovating their new Meetinghouse and describing work still to be done. [Link to video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8b0oPgbUMsY>]

SESSION 4: Saturday, June 14, 2025, 1:15pm – 3:15pm

YM 2025-31 Witnessing to peace.

Friends were invited to spend the first part of this business session joining one or more of the opportunities available to witness to our peace testimony. Some Friends created a vigil for peace on a sidewalk outside our meeting site on the campus of Ashland University. Some marched to the center of the town of Ashland to participate in the "No Kings Rally" there. A third group stayed in worship at our site to hold in the Light these witness activities and others like them taking place across the country today in response to the display of militarism in Washington, DC, the sudden onset of war between Israel and Iran, the political suppression of free expression, the ongoing denial of rights and abrupt deportation of immigrants, and new government policies that deter efforts to slow climate change and increase the risks of hunger and lack of medical care in our communities.

YM 2025-32 Beginning at about 2:00 pm Friends returning from the vigil and rally joined Friends already in worship at our site. From the silence, Jack Smith read an epistle from Baltimore Yearly Meeting, which met in July 2024. In a retreat led by Francisco Burgos, Friends were asked to notice when Spirit was challenging them and to recognize a collective call to be loving within the world. Their youth program was vital and the adults who sang in a campus chapel found renewal there. The Indigenous Affairs Committee has begun a reparations effort focusing on the harm done to the Pawnee Nation through BYM-supported Quaker boarding schools that deprived children of their language and culture and tore families apart. The group recognized this as a first step in a difficult process. They heard a report from Rania Maayeh on the conditions in Ramallah Friends School and recent horrors experienced in the

West Bank and Gaza and produced a minute on the Middle East that was subsequently seasoned by the full Yearly Meeting.

YM 2025-33 Memorial Minutes

Carol Meyer-Niedzwiecki (Kalamazoo) read a Memorial Minute for Doug Howe, and Valerie Groszmann (Kalamazoo) read one for Patrick Reardon, both of the Kalamazoo Meeting community. The full texts will be included in the *LEYM Annual Records* and on the LEYM website.

YM 2025-34 Travelling minute

Clerk Joe Mills read a travelling minute from Sandy Springs Meeting (Maryland) carried by Windy Cooler, who is a visitor at this Annual Meeting. We welcome her sojourn with us.

YM 2025-35 Reports from LEYM Representatives to other organizations.

- Marvin Barnes (Detroit) currently serves as Clerk of the **Friends General Conference**. He described many less-noticed FGC programs including their Young Adult & Youth Ministries, the Ministry on Racism, the Spiritual Deepening Program, and QuakerPress Publishing. The FGC Meetinghouse Fund has been discontinued through lack of use. They are in the process of finalizing a reorganization with a smaller Executive body. They are concerned with a dwindling number of volunteers and youth participating. An FGC Gathering of young adults/youth will take place in Clarkston, Michigan in July 2025. (The full report is below.)
- Bill Warters (Birmingham) is a representative from LEYM to the **American Friends Service Committee** (AFSC). AFSC completed a reorganization effort that has resulted in good cross-pollination of programs across offices and geographic location. They are preparing to face possible political reprisals that may come because of their work. After years of effort, they recently succeeded in getting their staff safely out of Afghanistan. They have staff in Gaza who are doing heroic work and frequently experience distress and danger. They cooperate on programs with QUNO (Quaker United Nations Organization.) Bill has heard staff say they believe that “AFSC was built for times like these” in that they can support their staff through difficult times, and they have well-established relationships throughout the world. (The full report is below.)
- Jack Smith urged Friends to consider joining the **Apartheid-Free Community** sponsored by AFSC and made up of faith partners who have pledged to support the dismantlement of apartheid in Gaza.
- Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon reported on **Friends World Committee on Consultation** (FWCC), a worldwide organization of Quakers and Friends. They completed a capital campaign in 2024. Within the Section of the Americas, they have updated a bi-lingual glossary of Quaker terms in English and Spanish to support their work. FWCC recently began Quaker Connect, a program of support for Quaker Meetings and Friends Churches in a geographic area. The next Section of the Americas’ meeting will be in Plainfield, Indiana. Tom Kangas added that Jonah Brownfain of our Yearly Meeting will serve on a board of Young Adult Friends that formed during the FWCC World Plenary in South Africa last year. (Report from the 2024 World Plenary is below.)
- Jana Norlin (Grand Rapids) reported on the participation of Latin America Friends at the **FWCC Section of the Americas** meeting in Phoenix in March 2025. Friends from Latin

America were more fully present in all aspects of this section meeting, including presentations, committee reports, leadership of sessions, attending and participating online, and attending a pre-gathering of Young Adults. Jana served on a team of Friends holding bilingual Friends in Light as they faced the challenging task of interpreting the words of speakers with a spiritual sense. The bi-lingual glossary is a much-appreciated accomplishment. (The full report is below.)

SESSION 5: Sunday, June 15, 2025, 8:45am – 9:30am

YM 2025-36 From the settling worship, Jack Smith read an epistle from Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting's June 2024 sessions on the campus of Earlham College and online. Their gathering's theme of "Joy" was reflected in many kinds of activities and in their State of the Society report, which was filled with more optimism than was seen for a few years, expressing a sense of spiritual renewal and community revitalization. They created the position of Social Action Coordinator. One of their plenary speakers, Rev. Rhetta Morgan, urged people to encounter their "joyfire" but also encouraged Friends to learn to wail, as it is a powerful tool for healing. [Full text: <https://fwcc.world/wp-content/uploads/2021/10/OVYM-Annual-Sessions-Epistle-2024.pdf>]

YM 2025-37 Announcement: Valerie Groszmann (Kalamazoo) reported. Valerie announced that some books that had been displayed in the bookstore (four copies of Pamela Haines's book, *That Clear and Certain Sound*) could not now be found and asked Friends to return them.

YM 2025-38 Memorial minutes

Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor) read brief summaries of the lives of Catherine McClary, Ruth Zweifler, and Robin Warner, all of Ann Arbor Meeting. Shelley Kotz read a draft memorial minute for Judy Greenberg of Broadmead Meeting. The full memorial minutes will be included in the *LEYM Annual Records* and on the LEYM website

YM 2025-39 Youth & Children Program

The youth and children, with their teachers and helpers, joined us to report. Thirteen youth attended this Annual Meeting. They listed their favorite things at Annual Meeting, including riding the carousel, being together, going to the Imagination Station and Activate (where they were challenged to solve problems), the older children spending time with the younger children, finger crocheting, and lots of time to play, have conversations, and build relationships. They invited Friends to view a visual display that serves as their epistle.

YM 2025-40 Epistle Committee: Susan Loucks (Pittsburgh) reported.

The Epistle Committee, consisting of Jack Smith, Alexa Kay, Susan Loucks, and Jonah Brownfain, presented an epistle for the 2025 Annual Meeting of LEYM. The epistle was **approved** by Friends with gratitude, especially for its moving words about addressing conflict.

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Epistle

Sixth Month 12–15, 2025

Beloved Friends everywhere: Grace to you and peace from God.

One hundred seventeen Friends from Meetings and Worship Groups in Michigan, Ohio, and western Pennsylvania returned with joyful anticipation to the campus of Ashland University in Ashland, Ohio, for our sixty-third Annual Meeting. Here for our third year, this location feels ever more like home. In-person attendees settled quickly into our daily routine, as our location again provided great support for our business, workshops, worship, and evening activities. New practices helped on-line attendees connect with greater ease for business and plenary sessions.

With the painful separation of the COVID years behind us, Friends were very thankful for this precious time to gather, renew long-standing connections, and welcome newcomers. We showcased a display of “puzzle pieces,” each created by a constituent Meeting or Worship Group, that described some of the characteristics we bring to the Yearly Meeting as a whole. All ages—from youth to adult programming—experienced immediate abundance of Light; togetherness was love beyond imagination. These connections carried qualities of grace, and yet we are thankful for the intentionality needed to lay a groundwork of safety and acceptance. We are dedicated to continuing to build and extend that culture in addition to relishing its fruits.

In many ways, a sense of abundance blossomed among us. We were enriched by the presence and Spirit-led activity of an increased number of children and older young Friends, and one newborn who provided frequent, and welcome, ministry. Our business was completed without significant difficulty or challenge. Our finances remain stable and adequate for our work. Our newly re-formed Peace and Justice Committee reported an active year of work and plans for the next year. Friends responded to calls for Yearly Meeting service for the coming year; cared for our newborn during business and plenary sessions; were generous with donations and gifts of service during our gathering (carrying trays in the dining hall and writing summaries of workshops, for instance); and gracefully adjusted to a bit of rain and minor changes to our schedule.

We gathered around the theme of “Mending our Nets: The Power of Becoming Whole.” Friends, we entangle our lives with others. In so doing, we become a robust whole, like knots of cord becoming a net. This form lets us gather joys and collect sorrows, knowing that none is meant to be dealt with alone.

We considered how we respond to the tears in our nets. How can we transform conflicts in our relationships? How can we become whole in the face of death in our community? In our plenary session, Pamela Haines acknowledged the impulse to throw out the broken and buy its replacement. Though replacement is possible for the material at the human-scale, we are called to a mending ethos. Repair is often the only choice—there is no replacement for our Earth or our social net. We have little loving choice but to mend what has frayed. We can darn heels and tie ourselves anew to others in a loving net. It is our mutual responsibility. Mending society relationship-by-relationship is establishing God's Kingdom—it is creation caring for itself. Pamela reminded us not to think only of large-scale rips in our social net, but to tend to mending in our daily actions and choices and our relationships with family, friends, and not-yet-friends. But mending of nets must begin with grieving what has been lost, while also celebrating those sections that remain vital and supportive.

Along with love and connection for each other, we carried constant awareness of the deep gravity of this historical moment—the unprecedented and accelerating erosion of democratic, environmental, and social norms and protections in the United States. We are heartbroken when we consider the consequences of these trends for ourselves and future generations. During our meeting, the crisis provided an opportunity for public witness. Many Friends peacefully expressed our objections at a Quaker vigil on the campus, the local branch of a national “No Kings” rally against autocratic rule, and in worship to hold those who participated in the Light. Our Bible Study sessions reminded us that early Friends also wrestled with despair when they saw the promise of God’s kingdom on earth fade into political chaos and human oppression. These Friends learned to look for blessing and spiritual strength “at home” or within themselves, regardless of external trends.

We carry wounds and experiences that diminish our confidence in responding as Quakers to these crises. We are primed with stories of ways our Meetings have not been able to navigate conflict and places where our personal connections have broken and failed us, even with people we knew, loved, and trusted. At the same time, workshops and movies illustrated powerfully how people such as ourselves can model courage and use existing tools to create peace and social change. We hold both this fear and this potential, as well as hard-won personal lessons that guide us towards wholeness: fully experiencing our grief to release old expectations, learning we can love people whose thoughts or behaviors we see as wrong.

We have been recalled to a greater obedience that frees us from worldly obedience—not obedience to scarcity mindsets, individualism, and fear. We can summon personal and collective power to address the world, and claim the irrevocable power to live richly in connection, and to love each other well.

Friends, we left this Meeting refreshed and renewed for the Spirit-led work, small and not-so-small, in the coming year, grateful that we will return to Ashland again. We know that you are addressing many of the same challenges that grip us. As your nets rend and fray, we pray that you will share openly your grief, that you will be called to mend, and that you will rejoice in your propensity to be woven into wholeness.

*Written for the sake of that Spirit who has moved through
The Epistle Committee:
Jack Smith, Jonah Brownfain, Susan Loucks, & Alexa Kay*

*Signed
Joe Mills, Clerk*

YM 2025-41 Finance Committee: Joanne Neuroth (Red Cedar) and Tom Kangas (North Columbus) reported.

The proposed LEYM budget for 2025-26 was brought back for further consideration unchanged apart from a small correction that did not change any totals. Tom Kangas offered an explanation for the membership number (639) listed in the budget, saying it is not real, but an approximation derived from the amounts of the contributions Monthly Meetings gave, divided by \$42 per person. Friends approved the LEYM budget for 2025-26 as presented by the Committee. (The approved budget is below.)

YM 2025-42 Naming Committee: Rebecca Morehouse (Ann Arbor) and Claire Cohen (Pittsburgh) reported.

The Naming Committee, consisting of Rebecca Morehouse, Claire Cohen, and Rick Adams, brought three names to serve on the LEYM Nominating Committee: Joe Mills (Kalamazoo), Bernard Miller (Detroit), and Charles Thompson (Detroit). They also brought the names of Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon (Erie) and Mary Igoe Meyer (Broadmead) to serve as Co-Clerks of the Nominating Committee. Friends **approved** these recommendations.

YM 2025-43 Nominating Committee. Stephanie Charlot (Red Cedar) reported.

Serving on the Nominating Committee this year were Stephanie Charlot, Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon, Mary Igoe Meyer, and Mike Hinshaw (Wooster). The Committee brought a proposed slate of officers, representatives, and committee members for 2025–26. Of special note is the position of Assistant Clerk: the Committee has not filled that position but instead suggests that the Executive Committee perform tasks usually undertaken by the Assistant Clerk. This will allow the regular four-year rotation of Assistant Clerk to Clerk and back to Assistant Clerk to be back on track beginning next year. The Committee is paying close attention to adding new members on committees where experienced Friends will soon be leaving.

Friends **approved** the Nominating slate with some minor corrections, as offered. (The full report is below.)

YM 2025-44 Announcements

Carolyn Lejuste of Arrangements & Site reported that our final figures show that 117 people attended our Annual Meeting in person. An analysis of the ages of attendees shows that a majority of us are over 60 but we are slowly getting younger. We will gather again in Ashland on June 18–21, 2026. She described details of check-out procedures. The Committee appreciates evaluations and welcomes suggestions.

Joe Mills announced that Green Pasture will host its usual outdoor worship and picnic in Quaker Park, Battle Creek, Michigan, on Sunday, August 3, 2025.

John Howell (Athens) called our attention to the continuing good work of the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). Michael Fuson of our Yearly Meeting is currently serving as Clerk of FCNL. (A report is available below.)

Friends expressed appreciation to Joe Mills for his service as Clerk this year.

Christopher Farrand announced that the Cleveland Meeting is celebrating its 100th anniversary this year and will host a celebration on Sept 6–7, 2025.

YM 2025-45 Lake Erie Yearly Meeting hereby minutes its great appreciation to the staff at Ashland University for the warm hospitality, good working relationships, and nimble responsiveness we have enjoyed at our Annual Meeting this year.

The 2025 sessions of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting closed in waiting worship.

REPORTS PRESENTED:

Advancement & Outreach Committee
Publications & Archives Committee
Peace & Justice Committee
Treasurer's Report
Finance Committee Report on Draft Budget
Finance Committee Draft Changes to Policy & Procedures
Digital Communications Facilitator Report
Financial Statement
Budget for 2025-26
Nominating Slate

ADDITIONAL REPORTS:

Ministry & Nurture Committee
 Summary of responses to annual query
 Summary of state of the meeting reports
 Spiritual Formation Program Report
Report from Representative to AFSC
Report from Representative to FCNL
Report from Representative to FGC
Report from Representative to Friends Peace Teams
Report from Representative to FWCC World Plenary 2024
Report from Representative to FWCC Section of the Americas
Report from Representative to Olney Friends School

Report from the Advancement & Outreach Committee

The Advancement & Outreach Committee has had a full year, with all six members actively involved in the Committee and its activities. We reviewed and expanded our vision for the Committee, considering both “advancement” and “outreach” as we coordinated with the Ministry and Nurture Committee to help Monthly Meetings connect with each other and share resources and provided resources to folks in Monthly Meetings.

Highlights:

Panel Discussions to share resources and information among Monthly Meetings

- We presented 3 workshops during the year, in a changed format from the 2023–2024 presentations. Each workshop addressed a different topic through a panel of Friends from three different Monthly Meetings, coordinated by a member of the Committee. The new format provided time for participants to raise questions and items for discussion. Topics this year were 1) *Fitting Space to Spirit: Challenges of where we worship* (challenges, successes, concerns, whether we own, rent, buy, build, or share space) [Fitting Space to Spirit Video](#); 2) *Hybrid Meetings: How have they affected us?* [Hybrid Meeting Video](#); and 3) *Families with Children in our Family of Friends* [Families with Children Video](#). These events were recorded, and the videos are available through the above links or on the LEYM website.
- Looking at the two different formats and focus from the past two years, the Committee welcomes and is seeking feedback and ideas for what might most be needed or wanted for the upcoming year by our Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups.

Intervisitation and connection between Meetings and Worship Groups and the Yearly Meeting

Again this year, after consultation with the Ministry & Nurture Committee, we read all the State of the Meeting Reports from Monthly Meetings. We found many of these included not just lists of activities completed, but reflections and sharing about what was important to them, and how their community found joy and value in deepening their spiritual life and strengthening community and trust. Our excitement in reading these reports eventually led to the idea of asking Meetings to share a small sample of their state of the Meeting through constructing “puzzle pieces” illustrating their uniqueness. The intention is to put these puzzle pieces on display at the LEYM Annual Meeting for all to see and interact with, in the hope of offering an additional venue for sharing in the richness and ideas of our Monthly Meetings. We also communicated with those meetings that did not have State of the Meeting reports printed in the Annual Records and gave summary reports from those meetings at the Representative Meeting in March.

Our discussion of intervisitation led us to focus this year on broadening understanding and knowledge about the Yearly Meeting among Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups, while also finding out from them what resources they might need from LEYM. We prepared a slide show, highlighting the various aspects of LEYM. Several Committee members visited Monthly Meetings in person or by Zoom to share the slides and discuss the Meetings’ relationships. The slide show was presented nine times after its initial showing at Representative Meeting. Six of these presentations included an intervisitation presence, while the others were given by Friends to their own Meetings. In March, Representative Meeting approved a proposal brought by Advancement & Outreach and Ministry & Nurture Committees, allowing money from the Traveling Ministry Fund to be used to support this intervisitation.

Website Review

We have started a review of the Advancement & Outreach materials on the LEYM website but have not yet completed that work.

Submitted by the Advancement & Outreach Committee

Stephanie Charlot (Red Cedar), Valerie Groszman (Kalamazoo), Susan Hartman, Co-Clerk (Ann Arbor), Barbara LeSage, Co-Clerk (North Columbus), Mary Iggoe Meyers (Broadmead)

Publications & Archives Committee Report

Jeff Cooper, Clerk, Publications & Archives

Christopher Farrand continues to create and distribute handsome, readable, useful, and accurate issues of the LEYM Bulletin, for which we are grateful.

One of P&A's responsibilities is to write summaries of the workshops at Annual Meeting. Recently, we learned that one of our members, Rosemary Coffey, is unable to attend this year. I put out an appeal, inviting Friends to volunteer to report on one to three workshops. Within six hours, I heard from enough Friends to cover all the workshops. Thank you, Friends!

Elise Yoder (Pittsburgh) has agreed to edit LEYM Annual Records again this year – her fifth volume and, she says, her last. We are thankful for her thoughtful editing.

Last year we tried an experiment and posted a digital version of Annual Records on the LEYM website, deleting the directory section and seeking to remove any other personal contact information, apart from that of Friends serving as the contact person for their Meeting. Our hope was to provide greater accessibility while also cutting back on the number of copies we print and send to Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups. Our Meeting worker tells us that ten different Friends have visited the website version in the first seven months. So far, we've received little comment on the existence of the online version or reduction in numbers of printed copies distributed. Hearing from you would help us decide whether to continue this experiment. Memorial Minutes and Obituaries are printed in the Annual Records, in addition to being read aloud at Annual Sessions. If you know of memorial minutes or obituaries that should appear in AR but are not read here, please send them to me.

Another Committee responsibility is keeping our Policies and Procedures manual up to date, reflecting changes in policy/procedure as approved by the Meeting. I take most of the responsibility for the updates and sending each revised version to Bill Wartens for posting on the website. Finance Committee has been particularly active in proposing or modifying Yearly Meeting policy, and treasurer Tom Kangas is fastidious about suggesting how these changes might be presented in Policies and Procedures, sometimes in more than one place.

Sadly, Rosemary Coffey and Peggy Daub are rotating off the Committee, each having served for six years, in addition to some years previously. Peggy clerked the Committee for four years before becoming Recording Clerk of LEYM. Rosemary is a truly remarkable proofreader and has expressed a willingness to continue proofreading Committee publications, as needed. We shall miss them but know that Nominating Committee is working to find new members of the Committee.

Peace & Justice Committee Report

After a long hiatus the P&J Committee became active again at the 2024 Annual Meeting. The initial members were Claire Cohen (Pittsburgh), Don Buckingham (North Columbus), and Paul Helbling (Broadmead). Shortly afterwards, Mary Finney (North Columbus) and halfway through Phil Volk (Ann Arbor) became regular attenders and at the March Representatives Meeting, their service was formally acknowledged. We have met monthly by Zoom throughout the year.

We started out with reviewing the charge of the P&J Committee. After that we decided that our role is not so much to be just another P&J Committee but mainly to facilitate and support the functioning of P&J Committees and the peace work of MMs and worship groups under LEYM.

So, we attempted to survey all Meetings and Worship Groups in LEYM about their peace and social justice work and the functioning of their Peace and Justice Committees. We only got a 30% response. From that response, a number of issues were raised. Based on the issues raised, we developed and held a two-part webinar works called “Stimulating Do-able Peace and Justice Work in our Monthly Meetings,” which we held in April. The turnout was small, about 15 to 20 people; but the feedback from attendees was that the workshop was thought-provoking and inspiring. Both sessions were recorded and should be on the LEYM website for future reference for members of other Peace and Justice Committees and Meetings and Worship Groups without P&J Committees.

Other actions we did were:

- Sending notification to MMs and WGs of Friends Peace Teams events and encourage participation*
- Sending notifications about World Peace Day in October and World Human Rights Day in December*
- Followed the Sanctuary Suits against the government*
- Last minute events: Peace Vigil tomorrow, No Kings Demonstration Downtown Ashland, and asking the body to support Senate Bill 761 to set up a Truth and Healing Commission on Indian Boarding Schools.*

Finally, Don Buckingham is coming off the Committee and Paul Helbling is in a period of bereavement. We will definitely be inviting more volunteers to serve to keep the Committee active.

LEYM Treasurer’s Report: Preliminary financial results for fiscal year ending June 30, 2025

General Fund

- Revenue**
 - a. All Monthly Meetings save one have paid annual contribution*
 - b. We’ll get another \$1K of dividend income from Friends Fiduciary investments later this month (i.e., in June)*
 - c. Revenue for the year is where we expected it would be*
- Expenses**
 - a. Contract Workers**
 - i. Database Manager has billed for actual work performed through October 2024*
 - ii. Digital Communications Facilitator has billed for actual work performed through May 2025*
 - iii. However, for both of these roles, I have estimated amounts to be billed for work through year end and have layered on these amounts so that this report shows forecasted total for the year*
 - b. Transfers between funds**
 - i. show here as being done for the year*
 - ii. one potential change: if the Annual Meeting Fund doesn’t end up needing this much, then this \$5K subsidy in the Actual column could be decreased*
 - c. Variances—comparing actual to budget**
 - i. There are no unfavorable variances*

- ii. *In total, actual expenses are 86% of total amount budgeted*

Balance Sheet

- *Shows where our money is kept and related details*
- *1/5 in a bank, 4/5 invested in a fund managed by Friends Fiduciary Corporation*
- *Friends Fiduciary*
 - a. *This page shows the change in market value of this investment*
 - b. *Changes in market value from Dec 31 forward will be reflected here, too*
 - c. *As of 4/30, the Quaker Growth & Income Fund was down 0.94% YTD*
- *Note ending balance of \$82K; we're now going to look at that \$80K from a different angle*

Funds Summary page

General Fund

- *Note that the total of all LEYM funds is \$82K and that the General Fund is just one of many*
- *Each of the components of current year activity has been discussed (e.g., inc, exp, FFC, xfers)*
- *This page puts all those components together and forecasts that at year-end the General Fund will have essentially no net change from beginning to ending of the year*

Annual Meeting Fund

- *We see the \$5K subsidy from here*
- *Expense includes advance payments of roughly 90% of total amount owed Ashland Univ*
- *But income and expense data are incomplete*
- *Decided not to try to guess the final net cost of Annual Meeting; that will be reported in the Fall Bulletin*

Travel Fund

- *There were expenditures related to*
 - a. *a representative attending FGC Central Comm meeting*
 - b. *a grant toward travel expenses for a Canadian AYF Retreat*
 - c. *a representative attending an AFSC meeting, and*
 - d. *a representative's conference registration for FWCC Section of the Americas*

Youth Activities Fund

- *Activity shown here pertains to the youth and families retreat in Sept 2024*

Spiritual Formation Fund

- *Activity shown here pertains to retreat activities in Fall 2024 and Spring 2025*

Traveling Ministries Fund

- *At Representative Meeting in March 2025, Friends heard a proposal from Advancement & Outreach and Ministry & Nurture Committees to use this fund for meeting intervisitation to talk about LEYM and Annual Meeting and to listen to how each group sees itself in relation to the regional Quaker fellowship. Friends recognized this as a form of travelling ministry and approved using the Traveling Ministries Fund to support this work.*
- *To date \$137 has been paid for the traveling expenses of two Friends*
- *Hooray to us for finding a way to use these funds and to begin to do so*

FWCC Travel Fund

- *Expenditure was for one representative to attend the World Plenary in August 2024*
- *Note that after a \$2K expenditure, this fund ended the year with a \$5K balance; Finance Comm will touch on this fact in its budget discussion*

Treasurer's Summary: *LEYM's finances are in good shape.*

Finance Committee, Proposal for Draft Budget

Assumptions included in this draft budget include:

Expenses

- The Change column reflects some increases, some decreases for budget line items
- Contractors
 - a) Hourly rate for both increased by \$0.75 each (roughly 2.5%)
 - b) Hours adjusted downward for Database Manager
- Potential contribution to North Columbus Friends Meeting to support its purchase of a meetinghouse
 - a) Amount is same as has previously been given to Pittsburgh and Detroit

Transfers

- Regarding the two FWCC Travel Funds, this budget proposes:
 - a) to add funds only to the FWCC Travel Donation Fund
 - b) not add anything to the FWCC Representative Travel Fund
- Regarding the Consultation fund, this budget proposes
 - a) laying down the Consultation Fund with balance being returned to the General Fund
 - b) Background from minutes of Annual Sessions June 2024: “Friends approved keeping the Consultation Fund for 2024-25 and, if it is not needed during that time, laying it down in the next budget. If the fund is laid down, the balance will be returned to the General Fund.”

Revenue

- Proposing no change in the “per member” amount requested from Monthly Meetings (staying at \$42).

Finance Committee: Draft Changes to Policy & Procedures

Portions of LEYM Policies & Procedures that concern the Travel Fund

IV. OPERATIONS

A. Financial Support and Fiscal Policy

3. Expense Reporting and Reimbursement

b. Travel Fund

- i. Yearly Meeting officers and representatives to Friends’ organizations may receive reimbursement for travel expenses for business on behalf of the Yearly Meeting and for attendance at meetings of Friends’ organizations. A committee member may be reimbursed for unusual expenses incurred on behalf of the Yearly Meeting if the presiding clerk provides written approval in advance. A copy of the Travel Expense Reporting Form appears in Appendix E.
- ii. Reimbursable costs include registration, transportation, ~~and~~ lodging, **and food for the registrant during the event.**
- iii. If a Friend drives and requests reimbursement, the amount is calculated on a per-mile basis.
 - (a) The current reimbursement rate, approved in June 2024, is 21 ¢ per mile. Any change to this rate is part of the budgeting process proposed by Finance Committee and requiring approval by the Yearly Meeting.
 - (b) The incremental portion of mileage reimbursement above the 14 cents per mile standard charitable mileage expense rate is includable in the taxable income of the volunteer.
- ~~iv. Friends are expected to cover their own food costs.~~
- v. With regard to lodging:

- (a) When possible, Friends are asked to arrange lodging with Friends in the area of travel.
- (b) If conference-offered lodging is available and the traveler chooses to stay at a higher-cost location, LEYM will reimburse up to the conference-offered lodging cost.
- vi. However, the intent of the Yearly Meeting is that no one be excluded from representing Lake Erie Yearly Meeting because of limited financial resources; thus, individuals may request reimbursement for additional travel-related expenses or take them as a tax-deductible contribution to the Yearly Meeting.
- vii. For special travel needs of Friends within the Yearly Meeting relating to Quaker work, the presiding clerk, the treasurer, and the clerk of the Finance Committee will consult with one another, and the presiding clerk will respond. Other officers, other committee clerks, and other members of the Finance Committee may be consulted as needed.

APPENDICES

Appendix D. Scholarships and Financial Assistance

1. For Adults

a. Yearly Meeting business. Yearly Meeting officers and appointed representatives to Friends' organizations may receive reimbursement for travel expenses for business on behalf of the Yearly Meeting and for attendance at meetings of Friends' organizations. The principal travel cost to be reimbursed is the transportation itself. Friends are expected ~~to cover their own food costs and~~, whenever possible, to arrange lodging with Friends. However, the intent of the Yearly Meeting is that no one be excluded from representing LEYM because of limited financial resources; thus, individuals may request reimbursement for additional travel-related expenses or take them as a tax-deductible contribution to the Yearly Meeting.

An LEYM committee member may be reimbursed for unusual expenses incurred on behalf of the Yearly Meeting by obtaining written approval from the Yearly Meeting clerk in advance.

Friends wishing reimbursement should use the Travel Expense Reporting Form, which appears in Appendix E of this manual and on LEYM's website. The filled-in form and ~~attached~~ receipts should ~~be mailed or given~~ sent to the treasurer.

Yearly Meeting officers, representatives, and committee members who do not request reimbursement are still asked to submit to the treasurer reports of out-of-pocket and in-kind expenses such as travel, ~~long distance telephone charges~~, and postage, so that the cost of conducting Yearly Meeting business may be accurately known.

Appendix E. Travel Expense Form

LAKE ERIE YEARLY MEETING TRAVEL EXPENSE FORM

Name and address: _____

For any item that is a donation in kind to LEYM, please check the Donation box.

1. Purpose of travel (e.g., meeting attended) _____

2. Dates of travel _____

3. Auto transportation

From _____ to _____ miles at 21 cents = \$ _____ Donation I

From _____ to _____ miles at 21 cents = \$ _____ Donation I

Note: the incremental portions of mileage reimbursements above the 14 cents per mile standard charitable mileage expense rate are includable in the taxable income of the volunteer.

4. Plane fare, other public transportation, and/or highway tolls. Submit copies of plane tickets or other major items.

Itemize below:

_____ \$ _____ Donation I

_____ \$ _____ Donation I

_____ \$ _____ Donation I

5. Other travel-related expenses **(e.g., registration, lodging, and food for the registrant during the event)**. ~~It is the policy of LEYM that Friends provide their own meals and find their own overnight accommodations, hopefully with Friends, leaving only the cost of travel itself to be covered by LEYM. However, if such~~ **If** cost-free accommodations cannot be found, and Friends feel that they require assistance in covering such costs in order to serve as LEYM representatives, the costs incurred are to be itemized below for reimbursement. Please include copies of receipts ~~of major expenses such as overnight accommodations.~~

_____ \$ _____ Donation I

_____ \$ _____ Donation I

_____ \$ _____ Donation I

Total to be reimbursed \$ _____

Total donation in kind \$ _____

Send to: Tom Kangas, 3641 Weston Pl., Columbus, OH 43214 or email to

LEYMTreasurer@gmail.com

Digital Communications Facilitator 2024–25 Report

The Digital Communications Facilitator (DCF) for LEYM serves to maintain our online presence and help Friends across LEYM connect with each other via the website (leym.org), email listservs, webinars, and Zoom meetings. The DCF also plays a central role in preparing for, coordinating, and helping to host our Annual Meeting, including hosting the Zoom portions of the program. Some online events in the past year that the DCF helped promote and support included our regular Clerks' Chats, a new series from the Peace & Justice Committee supporting effective P&J Committee work at the Meeting level, and another webinar series from Advancement & Outreach, this year focused on a range of topics of interest to Monthly Meetings including Fitting Space to Spirit, Hybrid Meetings, and supporting Families with Children. After moving away from posting on Twitter (now called X) as a place to share on social media, this year we rejuvenated our LEYM Facebook page, and we have begun posting more regularly there. Look at the top right of our homepage for links to our Facebook (<https://www.facebook.com/LEYMQuakers/>) and our YouTube account (<https://www.youtube.com/@lakeerievearlymeeting>), which hosts recordings of many past events. We have been using a time-tracking app set to record down to the 10-minute interval, making it easy to track quick website updates and other small tasks that accumulate over time. Most committee meetings that the DCF attended in a dual (volunteer and attending in my role as DCF) capacity were not included for billing. Time billed from June 1, 2024 – June 1, 2025, was just under 160 hours, distributed as follows

Annual Sessions Prep: 73 hours

Online Database: 8 hours

Research & Reporting: 3 hours

Website updates: 48 hours

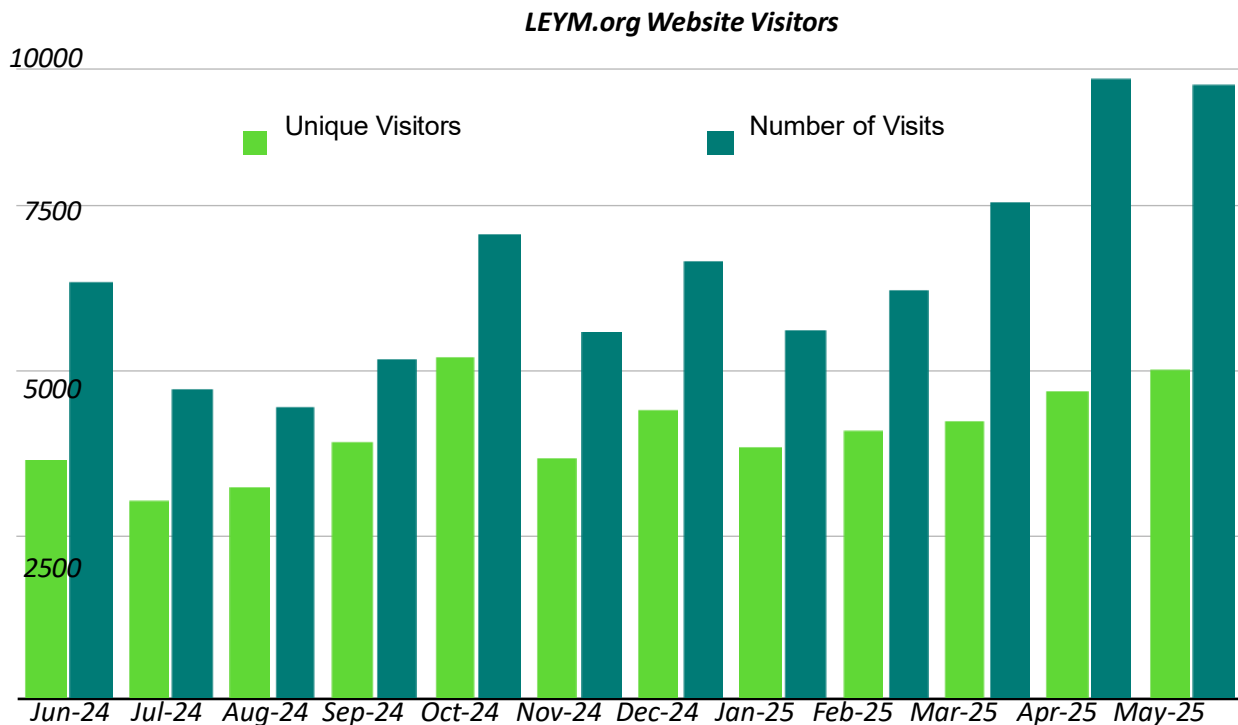
Zoom-related: 16 hours

Correspondence: 6 hours

Managing Email Accounts/Group Messages/Social: 6 hours

Much of the DCF's time is devoted to preparing for and supporting Annual Meeting, and for the 2025 gathering we have again worked with the online service known as RegFox. The system has been working well, enabling the online registration of 120 participants as of this writing. Last year we experienced some challenges getting approval from our payment processor due to the unique nature of religious organizations' status as nonprofits, but this year we have transitioned to a new payment processor that has approved our status as a nonprofit. Thanks go to Tom Kangas for staying with this process to completion.

Our website continues to provide valuable and accessible information for LEYM Friends and others from afar. Here are the visitor statistics for June 2024 through the end of May 2025.



Some new website additions this year included the posting of a web version of the Annual Records (scrubbed of personal data - see <https://leym.org/annual-records/>), and the development of a page providing access to the full-text and/or video recordings of past LEYM Plenary speakers. See <https://leym.org/plenary-talks-interviews-at-leym-annual-meeting/>. Thanks to Jeff Cooper from Publications and Archives for his assistance on these items. Also in the works is an updated annotated collection of Quaker Resources from around the web, which will replace a more antiquated table of items that proved very hard to maintain.

It has been an honor to be able to serve Lake Erie Yearly Meeting for another year in this capacity. While my time is more precious since I became Clerk of Birmingham Friends Meeting in September of 2024, I still look forward to continuing in the role for the coming year.

Respectfully submitted by Bill Warters (Birmingham Friends Meeting)

LEYM General Fund Income

As of 6/11/2025

For the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year (12 months ending June 30, 2025)

Contribution From	Amount	Deposit Date			
Akron Monthly Meeting	250	12/16/2024			
Ann Arbor Monthly Meeting	5,142	1/31/2025			
Athens Monthly Meeting	2,000	11/17/2024			
Birmingham Monthly Meeting	546	10/1 & 10/13/24			
Broadmead Monthly Meeting	1,500	1/31/2025			
Cleveland Monthly Meeting	1,680	3/6/2025			
Delaware Monthly Meeting					
Detroit Monthly Meeting	924	1/27/2025			
Grand Rapids Monthly Meeting	462	1/17/2025			
Granville Monthly Meeting	1,000	1/17/2025			
Holland Monthly Meeting	400	1/5/2025			
Kalamazoo Monthly Meeting	1,134	1/22 & 2/28/25			
Kent Monthly Meeting	714	1/17/2025			
Mid-Ohio Valley Monthly Meeting	180	1/24/2025			
North Columbus Monthly Meeting	1,260	12/9/2024			
Oberlin Monthly Meeting	1,100	1/31/2025			
Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting	4,956	2/7/2025			
Red Cedar Monthly Meeting	3,066	1/5/2025			
Wooster Monthly Meeting	504	1/31/2025			
Subtotal - contributing MM or WG	26,818		<i>Expected, per budget</i>	<i>Actual as a % of Budget</i>	<i>Variance, favorable (unfavorable)</i>
			26,250	102%	568
Individuals - via check	5				
Individuals - via FFC online	50				
Individuals - via RegFox	27				
Interest income from Savings Acct	43				
Total Cash Contribution Income	26,944		In-kind	Total contribution income	
			+	-	26,944
FFC Dividend Income (Base Acct only)	1,044				
Total Income	27,988	(cash income, excluding in-kind)			

LEYM General Fund Expenses - with comparison to Budget

For the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year (12 months ending June 30, 2025)

Account	Actual Expense through 6/11/2025	Budget (annual)	Actual expense as a % of Budget	Variance, budget-to- actual, favorable (unfavorable)
Operations				
Contract Worker: Database Manager	1,083.50	3,575	30%	2,492
Contract Worker: Digital Comm Facil'r	5,258.00	5,775	91%	517
Insurance	613.00	650	94%	37
Office/administration	542.44	1,100	49%	558
Committees				
Advancement & Outreach	-	100	0%	100
Ministry & Nurture	-	100	0%	100
Publications	3,239.63	3,500	93%	260
Members				
Attend conference w/ Quaker values	-	500	0%	500
Organizations				
Friends General Conference	6,200.00	6,200	100%	-
Olney Friends School	3,100.00	3,100	100%	-
Swarthmore records project	150.00	150	100%	-
Subtotal cash expenditures	20,187	24,750	82%	4,563
Transfers from General Fund to other Funds				
Annual Meeting Fund	5,000.00	5,000	100%	-
Travel Fund	1,500.00	1,500	100%	-
FWCC Travel Fund & Donation	1,800.00	1,800	100%	-
Consultation Fund	-	-		
Transfers to General Fund from other Funds				
Consultation Fund	-	-		-
Subtotal Transfers	8,300.00	8,300		-
Totals - General Fund Expenses	28,486.57	33,050	86%	4,563

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting – Financial Position

For the 2024-2025 Fiscal Year (12 months ending June 30, 2025)

Location of monetary assets

The Citizens National Bank of Bluffton, OH

Checking Account

4,206.54

Change in
balance
during the
fiscal year

2,724.74

Ending
Balance as of
6/11/2025

6,931.28

Savings Account

17,711.70

(7,956.74)

9,754.96

Subtotal of both CNB accounts

21,918.24

(5,232.00)

16,686.24

Friends Fiduciary Corporation, Philadelphia, PA *

General (Base) Account

54,876.98

1,369.21

56,246.19

Activity • Dividends Paid (and reinvested)

1,044.09

includes: • Change in Portfolio Value, + or -

325.12

Granville Youth Fund Account

9,357.66

59.91

9,417.57

Activity • Dividends Paid

178.27

includes: • Change in Portfolio Value + or -

59.91

• Dividends disbursed by FFC to LEYM, recorded to Youth Activ Fund

(178.27)

Subtotal of both FFC accounts

64,234.64

1,429.12

65,663.76

Total monetary assets

86,152.88

(3,802.88)

82,350.00

Notation: Prepaid Expenses

Kirkmont Ctr deposit for Youth & Family retreat, Oct 2025

100.00

-

100.00

Weber Ctr deposit for Spiritual Formation retreat, Sep 2025

150.00

-

150.00

250.00

-

250.00

* Note> All of the funds with Friends Fiduciary Corporation are invested in FFC's Quaker Growth & Income Fund (QGIF).

The Quaker Growth & Income Fund is a diversified, co-mingled fund with allocations to equities, fixed income and real estate investment trusts (REITs). Its primary objective is to provide stable current income and long-term growth consistent with protecting principal investments against inflation over time. The fund adheres to Friends Fiduciary's Quaker-values investment guidelines and participates in our shareholder advocacy work. It is intended for investors with an investment horizon of five years or longer. The Fund has a standard income distribution policy based on the fund's total return.

Source> friendsfiduciary.org, 06/30/2024

HOLDINGS BY ASSET CLASS

Global and International Equity

Equity

24.3%

Small and Mid Cap Equity

17.9%

Large Cap Equity

30.4%

Fixed Income (Domestic, Global, Short-Term, plus Cash)

72.6%

Fixed Income

22.7%

22.7%

REITS

4.7%

4.7%

	Total	% of Beg Bal
Div Pd	1,222	2%
△Value	385	1%
	1,607	3%

LEYM Summary of Funds for the Fiscal Year 2024-2025

Fund Name	Beginning Balance as of 7/1/2024		Friends Fiduciary account activity ¹	Transfers between funds	Cash Income	Cash Expense	Subtotal: activity for current fiscal year		Ending Balance as of 6/11/2025	Suggested floor/ceiling amounts for each fund	Last activity prior to FY24-25
Funds held in (i) Base account with Friends Fiduciary Corp and (ii) Citizens National Bank											
General Fund ²	36,402.84		1,369.21	(8,300.00)	26,943.72	(20,186.57)	(173.64)		36,229.20	na	35,000
Annual Meeting Fund	2,954.99			5,000.00	16,789.31	(22,760.84)	(971.53)		1,983.46	1,000	3,000
Travel Fund	2,745.25			1,500.00	-	(1,558.66)	(58.66)		2,686.59	2,000	4,000
Youth Activities Fund ⁴	5,807.90			1,053.27	345.00	(875.00)	523.27		6,331.17	4,000	8,000
Quaker Coll/Svc Schol Fund	4,000.00			-	-	-	-		4,000.00	2,000	4,000
HS Teen Retreat Fund	4,000.00			-	-	-	-		4,000.00	3,000	4,000
Ministry Scholarship Fund	1,649.00					-	-		1,649.00	na	2,000
Spiritual Formation Fund	2,769.34			300.00	6,396.77	(8,138.12)	(1,441.35)		1,327.99	500	2,000
Consultation Fund	3,143.68			-	-	-	-		3,143.68	500	2,000
Traveling Ministries Fund	3,500.00			-	-	(136.88)	(136.88)		3,363.12	na	na
Work Projects Fund	2,182.39						-		2,182.39	na	2,000
FWCC Travel Fund	6,714.83			900.00	-	(2,229.00)	(1,329.00)		5,385.83	na	9,000
FWCC Travel Donation	-			900.00		-	900.00		900.00	na	9,000
Funds held in separate account with Friends Fiduciary Corp											
Granville Youth Fund ³	9,357.66		238.18	(178.27)			59.91		9,417.57	na	na
Funds held by others - see Statement of Financial Position											
Prepaid Expense	925.00		-	(1,175.00)	-		(1,175.00)		(250.00)	na	na
TOTAL	86,152.88		1,607.39	-	50,474.80	(55,885.07)	(3,802.88)		82,350.00		

NOTES> Funds other than the General Fund are managed through accounting and may be subsidized from the General Fund.

¹ Friends Fiduciary Corp (FFC) activity includes dividends and net change portfolio value due to market conditions. See Balance Sheet for detail.

² FFC General (Base) Account activity is included here in LEYM's General Fund.

³ Granville Friends Youth Fund is a separate FFC account. FFC activity shown on this line reflects only that fund's change in portfolio value.

⁴ FFC dollars transferred to this line represent dividends paid to the Granville Friends Youth Fund during current fiscal year and credited to YAF.

⁵ Established in FY13-14 by a donation toward LEYM's Traveling Ministry Program, this fund has had no activity from inception to date.

History						LEYM Budgets		*Budget approved 06/15/2024	***Prelim budget, not approved	
FY 2021-22		FY 2022-23		FY 2023-24				**Actual as of 6/11/2025	FY 2024-25	FY 2025-26
Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	General Fund Expenses			*Budget	**Actual
2,500	2,898	3,900	2,828	4,320	1,838	General	Contractor: Database Manager		3,575	1,084
5,100	5,570	6,200	4,996	6,500	4,756		Contractor: Digital Comm Facil'r		5,775	5,258
500	597	650	597	650	597		Insurance		650	613
1,500	677	1,500	1,035	1,200	557		Administration		1,100	542
500	-	500	-	100	-					
100	-	100	-	100	-	Committees	Advancement & Outreach		100	-
3,200	3,393	3,500	2,876	3,500	2,722		Ministry & Nurture		100	-
1,000	-	600	-	600	-		Publications		3,500	3,240
6,500	6,500	6,500	6,500	6,000	6,000	Members	Attend conf w/ Quaker values		500	-
3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,000	3,000					
150	150	150	150	150	150	Organizations	Friends General Conference		6,200	6,200
1,000	1,000	-					Olney Friends School		3,100	3,100
-	-	10,000	6,100	5,000	3,200		Swarthmore Records Project		150	150
1,200	1,200	-	-	1,000	1,000		Potential NCFM mtghse contrib			
1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	-	-	Transfers: from General Fund to... or (to General Fund from)...	Annual Meeting subsidy		5,000	5,000
1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800		Travel Fund		1,500	1,500
-	-	-	-	-	-		Quaker Coll/Svc Sch'ship Fund		-	-
-	-	-	-	-	(2,893)		FWCC Travel Fund (& Donation)		1,800	1,800
29,550	28,285	39,900	31,382	33,920	22,728	Total Expenses and Transfers =			33,050	28,487
17,875	18,780	26,005	25,390	27,510	26,863	General Fund Income				
1,000	1,728	1,500	1,916	1,500	2,038	Contributions Income			26,250	26,944
18,875	20,508	27,505	27,306	29,010	28,901	FFC Div Inc (Base Acct only)			2,000	1,044
						Total Income =			28,250	27,988
(10,675)	(7,777)	(12,395)	(4,076)	(4,910)	6,173	Income - (Expenses and Transfers) =			(4,800)	(499)
(8,859)		2,815		3,679		FFC chg in portfolio value (Base)			325	
(8,859)		2,815		3,679		Subtotal Other Changes in General Fund =			325	
(16,636)		(1,261)		9,852		Total Change in General Fund =			(174)	
715		743		655		# members used to produce above estimate =			625	
\$25		\$35		\$42		Suggested contribution per member =			\$42	
\$ 0.16		\$ 0.22		\$ 0.22		Travel reimbursement, with limits, rate per mile =			\$ 0.21	
								0%		0%
									639	
									\$42	
									\$ 0.21	

LEYM Officers, Committee Members, & Representatives
FINAL Proposed Slate for approval, June 15, 2025

Officers

<u>Role</u>	<u>Name & Meeting</u>	<u>Year of Service</u>	<u>End Year</u>
Presiding Clerk <i>ExC</i>	Jack Smith, Red Cedar	2 (1 as PC)	2028
Assistant Clerk <i>ExC</i>	Executive Committee	1	2026
Recording Clerk <i>ExC</i>	Peggy Daub, Ann Arbor	3	2026
Treasurer <i>ExC</i>	Tom Kangas, North Columbus	7	2026

Communications and Other Workers

Bulletin Editor	Christopher Farrand, Cleveland	3	2026
Annual Records Editor (appointed by Publications & Archives)	Elise Yoder, Pittsburgh	5	2025 (thru Oct)
Meeting Workers (contracted by presiding clerk)			
Database Manager	Susan Loucks, Pittsburgh	2	2026
Digital Comms Facilitator	Bill Warters, Birmingham	7	2026
Bookstore	Valerie Groszmann, Kalamazoo	22	2026

COMMITTEES (3-yr terms unless otherwise noted)

Advancement & Outreach

Suggested # of Members: 6

Susan Hartman, Ann Arbor, Co-Clerk <i>ExC</i>	3	2026
Barbara LeSage, North Columbus, Co-Clerk <i>ExC</i>	3	2026
Stephanie Charlot, Red Cedar	3	2026
Susan Loucks, Pittsburgh	2	2027
Valerie Groszmann, Kalamazoo	2	2027
Cassie Cammann, Ann Arbor	1	2028

Earthcare This committee is dormant. No nominations were made.

Finance

of Members: 3

Joann Neuroth, Red Cedar, Co-Clerk <i>ExC</i>	8	2027
Ellen Barnes, Birmingham, Co-Clerk <i>ExC</i>	5	2027
Aran Reinhart, Broadmead	4	2028
Mary Igoe Meyers, Broadmead	1	2028

Treasurer serves *ex officio*.

Ministry & Nurture

Suggested # of Members: 6 + 1 rep. from each monthly meeting

Flo Friender, Kalamazoo, Co-Clerk <i>ExC</i>	4	2028
Dennis Gregg, Ann Arbor, Co-Clerk <i>ExC</i>	2	2028
Ellerie Brownfain, Birmingham	4	2028
Christopher Farrand, Cleveland	2	2027
Linda Yoder Szilagye, Broadmead (confirmed by Exec. Comm.)	1	2028

Nominating

Suggested # of Members: 6, appointed by YM through Naming Committee.

Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon, Erie WG, Co-Clerk <i>ExC</i>	2	2027
Mary Igoe Meyers, Broadmead, Co-Clerk <i>ExC</i>	2	2027
Mike Hinshaw, Wooster	3	2026
Joe Mills, Kalamazoo	1	2028
Bernard Miller, Detroit	1	2028
Charles Thompson, Detroit	1	2028

Peace & Justice

Suggested # of Members: 6

Claire Cohen, Pittsburgh, Clerk <i>ExC</i>	2	2027
**Phil Volk, Ann Arbor	1	2028

Publications & Archives

Suggested # of Members: 4

Jeff Cooper, Ann Arbor, Clerk <i>ExC</i>	3	2026
Bob Roehm, North Columbus	9	2027
Elise Yoder, Pittsburgh	1	2028
Emilia Marcyk-Taylor, Red Cedar	1	2028
Abbey Pratt-Harrington, Athens	1	2028
Bulletin Editor serves <i>ex officio</i> .		

Note: The Annual Planning Committee consists of the following three committees:

Adult & Family Program

Suggested # of Members: 6

Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon, Erie WG, Clerk <i>ExC</i>	4	2028
Greg Mott, Broadmead	4	2028
Valerie Groszmann, Kalamazoo	3	2026
Ellerie Brownfain, Birmingham	2	2026
Wink Covintree, Birmingham	2	2027
Nancy Taylor, Ann Arbor	1	2028

Arrangements & Site

Suggested # of Members: 6

Carolyn Lejuste Red Cedar, Clerk <i>ExC</i>	3	2026
Bill Warters, Birmingham	7	2027
Mike Hinshaw, Wooster	4	2028
Sally Weaver Sommer, Broadmead	10	2028
Janet Dando, Akron	3	2026
Jayson Smith, Detroit	1	2028

Youth & Children Program # of Members: 12-16 Years of Term: 2 (Clerk only)

Diane Mott, Broadmead, Clerk ExC	3	2026
Erika Smith, Detroit, Asst. Clerk	4	2026
Ellerie Brownfain, Birmingham		
Jonah Brownfain, Birmingham		
Cristin Graham, Detroit		
Carla Pratt-Harrington, Athens		
Olwen Pritchard, Broadmead		
Greg Mott, Broadmead		

REPS TO OTHER QUAKER ORGANIZATIONS

Year of Service

End Year

AFSC Corporation

Chelsea Middlemiss, Red Cedar	2	2027
**Phil Volk, Ann Arbor	1	2028

FCNL General Committee (3-year terms, limited to two consecutive terms)

John Deikis, Ann Arbor	6	2026
Wink Covintree, Birmingham	3	2026
Michael Fuson, Granville	3	2026

FGC Central Committee (3-year terms, limited to two consecutive terms)

(LEYM Reps appoint Rep to FGC Executive Committee)

Ellerie Brownfain, Birmingham	4	2028
Brad Shaw, Red Cedar	4	2028

FWCC (3-year terms)

Ellerie Brownfain, Birmingham	5	2027
Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon, Erie WG	5	2027
Jana Norlin, Grand Rapids	2	2027
Mike Hinshaw, Wooster	2	2027

FLGBTQC

No nomination was made.

Olney Friends School

Greg Mott, Broadmead	1	2028
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Quaker Earthcare Witness

Richard Tucker, Ann Arbor	4	2028
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Friends Peace Teams

Cassie Cammann, Ann Arbor	1	2028
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** Deceased July 2025

ADDITIONAL REPORTS

Ministry & Nurture Committee: 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.

- 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 organizations 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 organizations 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.

Review of LEYM State of the Meeting Reports 2024-2025

LEYM Ministry & Nurture Committee

(Reviewed: Ann Arbor, Athens, Birmingham, Broadmead, Cleveland, Delaware, Grand Rapids, Granville, Kalamazoo, Kent, Mid-Ohio Valley, Oberlin, Red Cedar, Pittsburgh, Wooster)

Membership Situation

Most Meetings appeared to feel that their membership relations were strong. A few of the larger Meetings noted some new attenders and increased numbers of visitors. A number of smaller Meetings mentioned that while they get a steady stream of visitors and short-term attenders, they are not holding on to them. One Meeting felt it was growing (Athens). Other Meetings felt that membership was steady. Smaller Meetings, however, felt the strain on activities due to the small number of Friends and attenders. Several smaller meetings now hold their Meeting for Business every other month (Birmingham, Granville) and one Meeting (Wooster) now holds business meeting quarterly. One Meeting is down to one recorded Friend among those attending and does not hold meetings for worship in the summer months (Delaware). A number of Meetings expressed a concern for increased visibility.

Meeting Location Situation

The situation of Meeting facilities varies. Ann Arbor, Athens, Kalamazoo, Red Cedar, Pittsburgh have their own Meetinghouses. Birmingham, Cleveland, Delaware, Grand Rapids, Granville, Mid-Ohio Valley, North Columbus, Wooster rent space. Grand Rapids will be losing its rented space in June and needs to find a new location. Cleveland is actively looking for a new Meetinghouse of its own. Broadmead meets in two locations. It mentioned that when both Toledo and Bluffton Worship Groups are able to worship together in person, their worship is deeper.

Worship

Most Meetings hold hybrid worship, although the quality of the technology may vary. Several Meetings (Wooster and Bluffton) hold two in-person meetings and two Zoom meetings for worship a month. Red Cedar holds two meetings for worship each week – an earlier one exclusively in-person and a later hybrid one.

The amount of vocal ministry varies, with most Meetings being fairly silent, although Friends in these Meetings are generally comfortable with the silence. Two Meetings (Birmingham, Ann Arbor) have held discussions on the quality of vocal ministry.

One Meeting has had friction over hybrid worship and has held several called meetings to discuss the issue.

Fellowship Activities

Meetings hold a broad range of fellowship activities. Fellowship activities include:

- Potlucks (Ann Arbor, Athens, Kalamazoo)
- Birthday celebrations (Athens)
- Men's Breakfast meetings (Kalamazoo)
- Women's Gatherings (Kalamazoo and Ann Arbor)
- Quaker 8s (Athens)
- Quaker Teas (Cleveland)
- Shared meals once a month (Kent)
- Singing before Meeting for Worship (Athens, Ann Arbor, Kent)
- Picnics (Cleveland,)
- Anniversary celebrations (Kalamazoo, Broadmead). Cleveland is planning to hold a 100th Anniversary event in September.
- Social Evenings (Ann Arbor).
- Hiking/walking and other group outings (Pittsburgh, Ann Arbor).

Spiritual Strengthening

Several Meetings use worship sharing (Athens, Cleveland) on a regular basis. Ann Arbor uses worship sharing as part of planned discussions outside of worship.

Cleveland has held six pre-Meeting Deepening into Worship sessions of a half-hour on techniques to center down. Several Meetings hold regular Bible Study (Cleveland, Ann Arbor).

A number of Meetings are reflecting on who and what the Meeting is. Kalamazoo has a "Visioning Committee" to look forward to the future needs of the Meeting. Ann Arbor has held a number of sessions to explore what it means to be part of a Quaker spiritual community, as well as sessions on Eldering, Vocal Ministry, One's relationship with Spirit, One's relationship with the Meeting Community, and one's Relationship with the outer world. Kent held a retreat in February on the role of individual conscience on the Meeting and the Meeting's role on individual conscience.

A large number of members of Red Cedar MM participated in last year's LEYM Spiritual Formation retreat and more have participated in the Meeting's small group discussions. Ann Arbor holds spiritual companionship groups and spiritual formation. Few Meetings mentioned religious education, except to say that they needed more (Delaware).

Educational Activities

A number of Meetings hold discussions on topics of interest (Wooster, Kalamazoo, Ann Arbor).

Several have had guest speakers (Kalamazoo, Cleveland, Ann Arbor). Cleveland, Ann Arbor, and Oberlin have regular reading and discussion groups. Cleveland's meets weekly along with members of Wooster and have just spent the past 16 months reading George Fox's Journal.

Social and Community Action

A number of Meetings are active to some degree or another working with various outside organizations (Mid-Ohio, Kalamazoo, Ann Arbor, Kent). One Meeting (Athens) contributes 10% of its annual budget to help community organizations. Cleveland contributes the interest from its investments to various local organizations in which Friends participate. A number of Meetings work with AFSC and FCNL.

A number of Meetings provide community meals (Birmingham) several times year. Others provide meals monthly (Cleveland). Kent volunteers help out weekly at social services kitchen. Ann Arbor offers its Meetinghouse as a day shelter for two weeks once a year and an overnight shelter for one week in the year.

One Meeting has recently revived its Social Action Committee (Birmingham). Several Meetings are active in environmental issues (Kalamazoo, Mid-Ohio, Ann Arbor). Ann Arbor is also involved in a wide range of other peace and social action issues. Ann Arbor and Red Cedar are also actively committed to reparations. One Meeting (Cleveland) is trying to identify a project that the Meeting as a whole can participate in in order to build fellowship and to be more visible in the community. Kent contributes to World Central Kitchen and to AFSC work aiding those in need in Gaza and as a result of the hurricane in North Carolina.

One smaller Meeting (Granville) writes Letters to the Editor and sends minutes to other Meetings. Birmingham recently sent Valentines cards to elected officials.

Red Cedar reports becoming more active in several national and international Quaker organizations. Through AFSC's Apartheid-Free pledge, Red Cedar Friends have worked in partnership with another congregation on a Palestinian Interfaith Network. Red Cedar has also continued to be actively involved in FCNL's Advocacy Teams.

Kent provided an education grant to a doctoral student from Niger. Red Cedar seeks to use its Meetinghouse purposefully, sharing it with various community service and support organizations and with another faith community.

Children

Few Meetings mentioned children in their reports. Birmingham's First Day School is inactive, and Cleveland's is small. Athens mentions paying for childcare, but it is not clear whether they have a FDS. Pittsburgh has a concern about identifying enough FDS teachers and is considering paying for a teacher to work with volunteer teachers. Cleveland has a paid teacher and childcare person working with volunteers. Ann Arbor has also hired a person to support the Committee. Ann Arbor and Red Cedar have indicated growth in the number of children attending FDS.

Finances

One Meeting (Red Cedar) has faced budget shortfalls, which has led to discussions about giving patterns.

Concerns

A recurring concern among smaller Meetings, especially, is the need for more visibility in order to stop the decline in attendance and to actually increase the number of active attenders. Small Meetings find it difficult to maintain committees and even when there are formally set up committees these are often too small to maintain much activity. There is also a concern for attracting more younger people and families. Several Meetings also expressed a concern with finding people to fill necessary Meeting positions, especially those of Clerk and Assistant Clerk and committee clerks. All Meetings are concerned about finding ways to address the political and social conditions in the country as Quakers.

Spiritual Formation Program Report, June 2025

The LEYM spiritual formation program has been growing in terms of the number of participants in our retreats and in local groups. We are aware of local groups in eight of our Monthly Meetings. These groups are using a variety of structures to provide spiritual support for each other.

Traditionally, the spiritual formation year has begun with a retreat in the fall and ended with a retreat in the spring. In between the two retreats, local groups meet regularly to support each other in their spiritual life, often focusing on spiritual practices. Recently, we added a three-hour January online session providing an opportunity for a mid-year check-in.

The theme of the fall 2024 retreat was mysticism. Don McCormick facilitated the retreat with Ellerie Brownfain as his companion. Thirty-six people from nine Monthly Meetings attended the retreat held at Weber Center in Adrian, Michigan. During the retreat we considered basic concepts of mysticism, theistic and unitive mysticism, and mystical experiences in Quakerism. We ended the retreat by considering the creation of a vision of the role of mysticism in the future of Quakerism. The activities of the retreat included large and small group activities.

We followed our tradition of giving time Saturday evening for meeting in local groups to plan for the coming year. The book table provided resources for local groups to consider in their year-long spiritual formation sessions.

On January 25, twenty-seven of these Friends joined together on Zoom for a three-hour retreat in which we shared information about our local groups and participated in two different breakout groups. In the first we described what being part of the spiritual formation program does for us in our daily lives. In the second, we considered the following queries: *Is there spiritual work that you are specifically focused on? In what areas and in what ways is the group nurturing and supporting you? In addition, participants shared how they have intentionally explored mysticism in new ways since the fall retreat. In our closing session, participants shared that they had deep spiritual experiences in their small groups.*

We ended the year on May 3 when twenty-two Friends joined together for the spring retreat hosted by Broadmead Friends at the Victory Center in Toledo. During the retreat Don helped us explore, through a set of queries, how we experience mysticism as individuals and in community. All participants were invited to stay for Sunday morning worship with Broadmead Friends followed by a potluck hosted by the Meeting. Sunday afternoon, Don led a workshop on writing one's spiritual autobiography.

Friends attending the spring retreat were led to set a regular meeting time to continue to explore mysticism and mystical experiences and to support each other in the journey. Friends will meet on the third Thursday of July, October, January and April from 7:00 - 8:30. The Zoom link can be found in the LEYM calendar found at leym.org.

Planning for the next year always begins before the current year ends. We are delighted to report that our facilitator for the 2025-2026 year will be Michael Wajda. The theme for the year's retreat will be "Where Next on My (Spiritual) Journey?" The fall retreat will be held September 12-14 at the Weber Center. Attached is a copy of the brochure giving details of the retreat. Hard copy brochures can be found at our table in the display area. Please take brochures with you to share with others in your Monthly Meeting.

Members of the Spiritual Formation Committee are Ellerie Brownfain, Valerie Groszmann, Barbara LeSage, Olwen Pritchard, and Sally Weaver Sommer. We are looking for new Committee members. If you are interested in serving on the Planning Committee, please contact one of our current members.

AFSC Representative Report to Yearly Meeting, Submitted by Bill Warters (Birmingham), May 2025

I have served as an LEYM Representative to the AFSC Corporation since 2019, and have entered my final year of my second 3-year term in the position. In this report I provide some reflections on the state of AFSC and some highlights from this year's Annual Corporation Meeting held April 24-26, 2025, at Friends Center in Philadelphia. Also in attendance from LEYM was Chelsea Middlemiss (Red Cedar) who has just joined the AFSC Corporation representing LEYM this year and John Deikis (Ann Arbor) and Claire Cohen (Pittsburgh), serving as at-large members.

Overall, AFSC seems to be in good shape, having made its way through an extended and sometimes challenging strategic planning process to a point where it appears to now be well-positioned to respond to the current crisis created by the second Trump administration, particularly as it impacts humanitarian relief work, diversity and equity work, immigration, supporters of peace in Gaza, and the role of non-profits more generally. A recurring theme was AFSC was built for times like these... The 2025 Epistle from AFSC can be reviewed online: <https://afsc.org/sites/default/files/2025-05/2025-afsc-epistle-final-1.pdf>. Quaker Meetings interested in getting more involved with AFSC are invited to visit the Friends Engage page to get started: <https://afsc.org/friends-engage>

Financially, AFSC is on solid ground, with notable new donor growth in funds earmarked for support in specific areas of need (Gaza, Immigration Rights, etc.) and level or slightly declining donations from long-time supporters to the general fund. In response to the change in the Federal administration and all the policy challenges ahead, early this year the AFSC Board released \$750,000 in an emergency response fund to enable various AFSC programs to nimbly respond to new risks and challenges. AFSC is also watching for the anticipated release of an executive order that may ask the IRS to revoke the tax-exempt status of certain nonprofits, either by name or through their areas of focus. AFSC believes these actions represent intimidation tactics and an attack on free speech. In the name of safety and security, physical and digital risk assessments are

being carried out across the U.S. and International programs to better secure AFSC staff and program participants. It is a stressful time for frontline staff and across the leadership team. Crisis counseling is available for AFSC staff and their families as part of the AFSC benefits package, and staff are encouraged to make use of it.

2025 Annual Meeting of the Corporation

The **Annual Meeting** had the theme *Healing Through Justice: Our Collective Journey* and, in addition to the business sessions, it featured a number of powerful events highlighting AFSC's work around healing and justice. The Thursday evening plenary featured Susan Abulhawa, a Palestinian author made famous by her debut novel *Mornings in Jenin*, translated into 30 languages, with over a million copies sold. She was born to refugees of the Six-Day War of 1967, when her family's land was seized and Israel captured what remained of Palestine. She shared painful details about the atrocities happening in Gaza, as well as some of the broader history of injustice in the region. The talk was frank, not holding back on the issue of United States complicity in the tragedy, and was a call to conscience for Friends in the audience.

On Friday a panel presentation highlighted the way that AFSC is positioned to work at many levels simultaneously, with the panel exploring AFSC Responses to new federal policy on detention and deportation. The session included a look at impactful on the groundwork done by the local AFSC office in New Jersey, as well as across the United States with Know Your Rights trainings, and internationally in cooperation with the Quaker UN Program and the international peacemaking hub AFSC is part of.

On Friday evening, participants traveled to the Eastern State Penitentiary (a museum) where we had a tour, then dinner inside the prison, followed by programmed worship led by Francisco Burgos, executive Director of Pendle Hill. Eastern State Penitentiary was once the world's first true "penitentiary," a prison designed by Quakers to inspire penitence, or true regret, in the hearts of prisoners through experimental approaches to prisoner rehabilitation, such as solitary confinement. It was a remarkably powerful experience and a call for criminal justice reform in the United States.

The report from AFSC General Secretary Joyce Ajlouny was also quite moving, especially given that Joyce is a Palestinian and AFSC has staff inside Gaza that are at risk every day. Friends in attendance gathered in spirit to pray for the support of our staff, and Light and Love was felt strongly in the room. We learned about many notable actions by AFSC across a wide spectrum of areas of concern, such as pro-immigrant billboards in Colorado, New Jersey, New Hampshire and San Diego, successful work in North Carolina preventing evictions and promoting housing security, a big win to keep clean water affordable for Atlanta area poor, Third Tuesday activism trainings, and more.

On Saturday evening, a special program was organized entitled *Courage to Resist: Commemorating 50 Years Since Vietnam* that featured many AFSC alumni and a special display of materials from the AFSC Archives. The event featured a conversation with Claudia Krich, who with her husband, Keith Brinton, was co-director of the AFSC Quang Ngai program from March 1973 until July 1975. Drawing on her new book *Those Who Stayed* Krich offered a personal firsthand account of the collapse of the South Vietnamese government and the beginning of the new Provisional Revolutionary Government. Her vivid descriptions of those days emerged primarily from readings from her journal, which captured the uncertainty, fear, and excitement as the North Vietnamese soldiers arrived.

Workshops Highlighting AFSC Work

As part of the Annual Meeting, attendees were able to choose to attend several workshops, some of which were also offered online via Zoom.

Me+We = Stalwart Solidarity: Prudence Crandall, Sarah Harris, & audacious allyship-- then and now, exploring the transformative power of audacious allyship, using the historic

relationship between Quaker activist Prudence Crandall and her student, Sarah Harris, hosted by the St. Louis Peacebuilding Program.

From the Inside Out: AFSC Strategies Towards Abolition by the New York/New Jersey Healing Justice program exploring the Prison Watch Program and the youth-centered Liberation Academy and Liberation Summer Camp

Sowing the Seeds of Justice with the AFSC Peace by Piece New Orleans program using farming and urban gardening to build food sovereignty and security and support community organizing.

Ending Life and Long Sentences in Michigan with the Michigan Criminal Justice program exploring the work to end the state's over-reliance on excessive punishment.

Peace Games Simulation hosted by the Quaker UN Office put participants into country-based teams exploring regional issues in Northeast Asia, and the unique challenges and opportunities of negotiating and peacemaking in the twenty-first century.

Some AFSC highlights from the year just past include:

- In June 2024, after three years' effort, AFSC was able to support former AFSC Afghanistan staff and their families to relocate, given the danger they faced in their home country.
- A pilot Reparative Justice grant program completed its first year, extending \$5,000 grants to each of six community groups in the US focused on support for indigenous and African-American people, in local areas where AFSC works.
- Completion of negotiations with the five US staff unions representing AFSC staff and signing the final collective bargaining agreements in February.
- AFSC aligned with an international campaign targeting Vanguard's environmental practices being led by Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT), with a public endorsement released on Earth Day. Details at <https://eqat.org/campaign/>
- Migration Justice staff in the US are offering Know Your Rights training for immigrants. As enforcement actions become increasingly severe, these sessions have helped thousands of educators and students, employers and workers, faith congregations, social service providers, health care workers and others to prepare for interactions with ICE or Border Patrol agents – and to share their training in the community. From January through March 2025, Just Migration Programs at the US Mexico Border, Colorado, Oregon and Florida conducted 75 Know Your Rights presentations, reaching over 2,250 people.
- This April, Joyce Ajlouny connected with the Nobel Women's Initiative (NWI) in Palestine and Jordan, visiting local women activists and supporters alongside Nobel Peace laureates Jody Williams, Dr. Shirin Ebadi, and Tawakkol Karman.
- Along with other members of the Washington Interfaith Staff Community, AFSC is sponsoring a series of Faithful Witness Wednesdays with Christian, Jewish and secular organizations gathering on Capitol Hill to call on Congress to show the moral courage to resist and reverse autocratic repression.
- AFSC also joined the steering committee of the upcoming 10% for All campaign, launching May 23rd which calls for global reductions in military budgets and reinvestment in peacebuilding. <https://10percentforall.org>
- Youth programming at an international level has been revitalized. A key milestone was the co-created relaunch of the AFSC Youth Network with 120+ youth members from 13 countries, and 26 country focal points engaged. Internally, AFSC conducted five foundational youth work training workshops, involving nearly all youth-engaged staff.

- Quaker Engagement team produced yard signs in support of immigrant justice work, which AFSC is inviting Quaker Meetings to display in front of their Meetinghouses; so far more than 100 free signs have been shipped in response to requests.
- *Lifelines: Aid workers in Gaza* is a new short film that provides a window into the lives and work of aid workers in Gaza in late 2024. The film follows Firas and Serena – two staff members from the American Friends Service Committee – as they provide humanitarian relief to Palestinians in Gaza who have been displaced due to relentless attacks from the Israeli military. Despite being displaced themselves and losing dozens of family members and loved ones, AFSC staff in Gaza have provided lifesaving aid to over 1.5 million internally displaced people. See it online here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qGxVZrnOU2I>

Five Recommended Ways to Engage with AFSC

1. JOIN AFSC'S MEETING FOR WORSHIP.

Every week, AFSC hosts a virtual Meeting for Worship for Friends from across the globe. Embracing the practice of Quaker unprogrammed worship, we gather to bring our attention to witnessing injustice in our world and bolstering our solidarity with people facing oppression. Come join AFSC to explore and experience the spiritual dimensions of activism and social justice. Join AFSC staff and Friends for worship: afsc.org/meeting-worship

2. ENGAGE IN PUBLIC WITNESS FOR MIGRATION JUSTICE.

Everyone deserves a chance to build a good life, regardless of where they were born or when and how they migrate. But right now, migrants are often subjected to harm and suffering. In the spirit of public witness, AFSC has yard signs with the message "QUAKERS WELCOME MIGRANTS WITH DIGNITY". Support migrant communities by requesting a sign for your Meeting to display: afsc.org/migration-signs

3. HOST AN AFSC SPEAKER IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

Around the world, AFSC staff are respected for their knowledge and commitment to addressing root causes of war and injustice. Whether you want to hear about an issue you're already passionate about or learn more about the work of AFSC, staff are excited to share their experiences and analysis with Friends. Learn more about AFSC's work by hosting an event: afsc.org/host-event

4. BECOME AN APARTHEID-FREE COMMUNITY.

For decades, the Palestinian people have faced Israeli occupation and systematic human rights abuses that constitute apartheid. AFSC is working with Quaker Meetings, other faith groups, and communities of conscience to cut all ties with Israeli apartheid and build an apartheid-free world. Join our movement by writing a minute to identify your Meeting or church as an Apartheid-Free Community: apartheid-free.org

5. BECOME AN AFSC LIAISON AND ENGAGE IN SPIRIT-LED ACTIVISM.

Friends liaisons help organize Quaker communities to advocate for peace and justice at the grassroots level. Become a liaison and receive regular updates from AFSC to share with Friends in your community -- and mobilize them to action. Sign up to build peace with justice in your community: afsc.org/liaison

FCNL report to LEYM, 2025

John Howell

Micah McCall of FCNL expected to be with us this weekend but was unable to do so. As LEYM representative to FCNL, I offer this brief report.

The 2024 Annual Meeting of FCNL took place 11 days following the 2024 election. A question on people's minds was "What would the election results mean for FCNL's work?" Just as our Quaker

testimonies remain, FCNL's priorities remain unchanged, but FCNL would find itself shifting tactically toward minimizing losses on issues relating to social support systems, environmental protection, and equal rights for all. FCNL continues to nurture respectful relations with Congressional offices to maintain communication channels across political divides. FCNL remains a steadfast and effective voice for Friends on Capitol Hill, continuing to mobilize the voices of Friends through its advocacy teams - made up of 1500 Quakers in 48 states around the country.

Regarding the current budget bill, FCNL asks all of us to contact our Senators to reject the slashing of Medicaid, of food assistance, of critical clean energy investments, the restriction of access to Child Tax Credit, and the extension of trillions of dollars of tax reductions to the wealthy. FCNL continues to provide dynamic learning and leadership opportunities for young people. During the Spring Lobby Weekend in March of this year 300 of them lobbied Congress about the budget bill. The current Clerk of the General Committee is Michael Fuson, a member of our LEYM family from the Granville Meeting. The former Clerk, Bridget Moix, is now serving as Executive Secretary. Strong and effective leadership continues at FCNL. Even as new activism tactics may be called for at this critical time, the patient and persistent presence that FCNL brings to Capitol Hill, with the messages of "War is not the Answer" and "Love They Neighbors – No Exceptions," needs our continued support.

Friends General Conference Annual Report 2024 to 2025

Marvin Barnes

Friends General Conference (FGC) is an association of 16 affiliated Yearly Meetings and 12 Monthly Meetings that chose to affiliate to FGC directly. Representatives from each Yearly and Monthly Meeting form the board of FGC, which is called "Central Committee". Lake Erie Yearly Meeting currently has four representatives serving on this Committee.

The vision statement of Friends General Conference is:

We envision a vital and growing Religious Society of Friends — a faith that deepens spiritually, welcomes newcomers, builds supportive and inclusive community, and provides loving service and witness in the world.

Through Friends General Conference, we see Quakers led by the Spirit joining together in ministry to offer services that help Friends, Meetings, and seekers explore, deepen, connect, serve and witness within the context of our living faith.

Representatives serving on Central Committee provide service by populating the administrative and program committees which continue the works of FGC. Friends General Conference programs help Friends to nurture the spiritual life of Meeting communities; transform relationships within Meetings; enrich worship; learn together; welcome newcomers; and improve practice of Quaker processes. Programs include Young Adult & Youth Ministries; Ministry on Racism; The Gathering; Spiritual Deepening Program (including Spiritual Deepening eRetreats); QuakerPress Publishing; Quaker Communications; and Christian and Interfaith Relations

This year, Friends took another step beyond the pandemic to Gathering in-person. The Gathering in 2024 drew over 1,000 Friends to Haverford College. Haverford College is a liberal arts college in Haverford, Pennsylvania, founded in 1833 by members of the Religious Society of Friends. FGC successfully completed its 2025 Online Gathering "A Spring Whose Waters Never Fail." The 2026 FGC in-person Gathering will be held July 7-12, 2026, at the University of Vermont in Burlington, VT.

FGC is launching a new Outreach & Visibility Committee to support FGC's staff-led invitational outreach initiatives and communications efforts. Invitational outreach is a direct and public invitation to non-Quakers to experience Quaker spiritual practice in community with Quakers.

Invitational outreach events always include transparent pathways to learn more about Quaker Spiritual practices, to attend worship in the future, and to further experience Quakers and Quaker Spirituality.

In changing times, FGC led a Quaker response to pressing concerns regarding U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This work is on-going.

Detroit Friends Meeting hosted FGC's Spring Executive Committee the last weekend in April, 2025 at their new Meetinghouse. All participants enjoyed themselves and were uplifted by gracious hospitality.

Friends General Conference, FGC, Young Adult & Youth Ministries (YAY) Gathering taking place July 2-6, 2025, in Clarkston, Michigan. This intergenerational event centers children, youth, and young adults (ages 0-35) and registration is open. This gathering focuses on play, connection, spiritual practice, and learning with family members and volunteers of all ages.

The Ministry on Racism continues hosting weekly virtual Meeting for Worship for white Friends confronting racism and white supremacy, as well as worship spaces for Friends of Color.

FGC continues developing anti-racist practices through resources like "Anti-Racist Clerking Advices" and the Quaker Coalition for Uprooting Racism programs.

Friends General Conference is actively balancing tradition with transformation, maintaining core Quaker values while addressing contemporary social justice issues. The organization provides opportunities for

- Specialized programming for Youth, Young Adult friends and Friends of all ages.*
- Expanding anti-racism initiatives as core spiritual work.*
- Providing virtual and in-person community options.*
- Publishing diverse voices within the Quaker tradition.*

Friends Peace Teams (FPT) Representatives 2025 report to LEYM

Cassie Cammann

This has been an active year for our peace workers in active combat countries in Myanmar-Burma, Israel-Palestine, Democratic Republic of Congo, and Ukraine, serving refugees from Sudan, and in repressive regimes in other countries or who have suffered from war, conflict, and internal violence.

Val Live Oak says: "I think the most engaging part of the current work of Friends Peace Teams is the effort to operate in a decolonized manner. I believe that we need to develop strong, long-term, ongoing, and trusting relationships with partners around the world to see where our privilege is being expressed so that we can seek ways of letting it go.

"It is, I think, an outgrowth of both the Quaker testimony of equality and the Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP). The inequalities of concentrating power and wealth in the North, and consistent exploitation of resources and people in the Global South, call out for changes that our current technological wonders of communication can facilitate. At the same time, our relationships still need to be made more clear and honest to foster true equality."

As FPT is working to De-Colonize itself. We are developing a North American Team doing FPT style Peace Work. We are still 99% volunteers and we offer anyone, ESPECIALLY QUAKERS, an opportunity to join us in working to support Justice and Peace wherever it is needed.

We are currently developing: PEACE LIBRARIES, AVP (Alternatives to Violence Project) WORKSHOPS, TRAUMA RESILIENCE WORKSHOPS, EFFORTS TO SUPPORT ECONOMIC JUSTICE, and many workshops through "Toward Right Relationships with Native People."

PLEASE Tell your Meeting about the work of Friends Peace Teams. Everyone is invited to join in this work. We thank you if you are already supporting FPT, and invite all Meetings to add us to your

donations list. Don Buckingham and Cassie Cammann thank you for the Yearly Meeting's continued financial support of Friends Peace Teams. We ask you to engage with us and read our [FPT April 2025 Epistle](https://friendspeaceteams.org/peaceways/) (<https://friendspeaceteams.org/peaceways/>)

Peace is possible!

FWCC World Plenary 2024 Report

Ellerie Brownfain, LEYM FWCC Representative

The Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) World Plenary Meeting convened in Vanderbijlpark near Johannesburg, South Africa. From August 5th through 12th, 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 winded 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! This was the first ever hybrid, in person and virtual, World Plenary Meeting. It was hosted by Southern Africa Yearly Meeting.

Theme and Focus

The central theme was "Living the spirit of Ubuntu: Responding with hope to God's call to cherish creation and one another." Ubuntu, a Zulu word, 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."

The meeting was structured around three interconnected thematic streams:

1. *Ubuntu and Community: Exploring interconnectedness and mutual responsibility.*
2. *Care for Creation: Addressing environmental concerns and sustainability.*
3. *Healing and Repairing Relationships: Confronting historic injustices and continuing injustice.*

Testimony and Transformation

Duduzile 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 — a 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 Meeting.

Global Witness and Ministry

Friends worldwide shared powerful testimonies: Ukrainian Friends continuing peace work amid conflict, Kenyan Friends supporting youth affected by domestic violence, and the havoc that climate changes are radically impacting Friends. Individual Friends shared numerous ministries demonstrating Quaker principles in action. These Important issues were discussed in the three thematic streams/strands: Ubuntu, Climate, Historical Injustices. For me, the most heartfelt way I can express my experience is the Tapestry document. I encourage all friends to read this piece.

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 cultural and international boundaries.

Key Takeaways and Outcomes

- 1. Unity in Diversity: Despite their multitude of differences, participants celebrated that they share not only their Quaker founders but also deep Friendship, an openness to new Biblical interpretations, their structures and processes, their deep commitment to peace, justice, love of the Earth, and their love of God.*
- 2. Young Adult Friends: Met together at a pre-gathering before the conference. They shared their learnings, wonderings and gifts with the wider community during the plenary. FWCC has a commitment to help develop and strengthen the Young Adult worldwide Friends Community.*
- 3. Strategic Directions: Strategic Directions for FWCC's future were established.*
- 4. Confession and Commitment on Environmental Action: Regarding creation care, Friends acknowledged: "We confess that we have fallen short of our commitments in the Kabarak and Pisac calls, at the triennials, held at those locations, for ecojustice." And are called to reflect on what action is needed for true sustainability.*
- 5. Call to Transformative Action: The epistle emphasized being "seized with the urgent need to do transformative work in the world" While also being "called by that still small voice to pause, to listen deeply to one another and to creation."*
- 6. Inclusivity and Technology Integration: The hybrid format proved successful in creating the most inclusive event ever held by the FWCC. Demonstrating how technology can help bridge geographical and cultural divides within the global Quaker community.*
- 7. Commitment to "Recognize, Repent, Redeem and Restore": The gathering emphasized the collective ability to "recognize, repent, redeem and restore" and to work together in beautiful and transformative ways, particularly in addressing historical injustices.*
- 8. Documentation of Outcomes: The meeting produced several key documents:*
 - An official epistle shared worldwide.*
 - A Weaving document and a Prayer document.*
 - A "tapestry" document capturing emerging concerns.*

The meeting concluded with a renewed sense of global Quaker unity and a call for both local community focus and collective global action, emphasizing that through God's grace and the spirit of Ubuntu, the Quaker community remains committed to being agents of positive transformation in the world. These questions have led me into discussions about what I, 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.

FWCC SECTION MEETING REPORT (-HELD MARCH 20-23, 2025):

LATIN AMERICAN FRIENDS' PARTICIPATION

Jana Norlin LEYM FWCC Representative

This year more Quakers from Latin America attended the FWCC/CMCA Conference in person than ever before. Two of FWCC's Section of the Americas goals are to be continually more diversely inclusive and foster balanced participation in representation and program development throughout the Section. Latin American Friends traveled from Bolivia, Mexico, Guatemala, El Salvador, Costa Rica, Peru, and from where they are living in the United States to focus on the theme "Building the Future as Way Opens". Their intention was to grow in their knowledge of Quakerism and make strong connections for future collaborations with other Friends.

Some of them arrived in Phoenix early and gathered before the main conference began because they had key responsibilities in leadership positions and/or important committee responsibilities. It was exciting that others came early to participate in the first ever FWCC Young Adult Pre-Conference Gathering, which was coordinated by Myron Guachalla of Bolivia. While some attendees had previously attended FWCC events, it was wonderful to have many first-time attenders from Latin America, especially more young adults. Many returning and first time Latin American Friends also attended by Zoom. Simultaneous or consecutive interpretation was always offered for full participation when Spanish and English-speaking participants were present at the same time. Latin American Quakers from different countries used Spanish as their unifying language although that is a second language for some. At times, Spanish was used exclusively during Latin American Friends closed COAL sessions, which helped to facilitate important communications within limited time restrictions.

Friends from the represented Latin American countries participated more fully in all aspects of this Section Meeting than ever before. They led whole group worship sessions, co-coordinated sessions of business meetings, presented committee reports, offered workshops, served on the Pastoral Care team and generally participated in all capacities of the initial planning through the realization of the events of the entire conference. Ana Gabriela of Mexico was one of two plenary speakers who shared about how scripture personally touches her life. It was a blessing to have many contributions from Latin American Friends in different locations attending by Zoom as well. The knowledge, gifts and talents contributed by the different representations of languages, cultures and spiritual practices of Latin American Quakers enriched Friends' experiences through unique blessings that sometimes-offered new insights never considered before. Throughout the days spent together, concerns and exciting strategies for building their faith communities were shared that generated deep discussions. The convenience of Latin American Friends using WhatsApp will facilitate more virtual visitation, consultation and collaboration for "building the future as Way opens" throughout the Section.

*As with many of the previous Section Meetings I have attended, I used my Spanish skills to support interpretation informally in small group sessions, at meals and facilitating communication between individuals throughout the conference. At each of the whole group sessions, I sat with the Interpretation Team holding bilingual Friends in God's Light for the challenging task of interpreting with a spiritual sense of the message of the speaker. Before the conference, as part of the interpretation group, I attended an international workshop session to improve the 31-year-old Spanish/English Quaker bilingual glossary. A beta version of the new Spanish/English digital glossary of terms was premiered at the Meeting. A YouTube video named "Digital Glossary and Interpretation Project from Section Meeting 2025" * was posted on June 3, 2025, announcing that the interactive digital glossary will be available soon.***

As a follow up to closer relationships strengthened by the Section Meeting, on May 31 and June 1st, 2025, El Salvador Friends hosted an in-person Representatives retreat for COAL Consultation – Central America, Cuba and Mexico entitled "Understanding Anxiety and Depression in Christian Life". They explored real life challenges within Quaker perspectives and enjoyed getting to know each other better through fun fellowship activities.

I have participated in weekly connections online with Latin American Friends throughout the last five years since the pandemic brought us closer together by Zoom. I am more encouraged since attending the 2025 Section Meeting that God has great plans for uniting our Section as a spiritually thriving family with a future of mutually nurturing each other.

***YouTube: Digital Glossary and Interpretation Project from Section Meeting 2025 Jun 3, 2025*
Quakers speak over 70 languages in 85 countries worldwide. The Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) Section of the Americas has been dedicated to conducting its business in a bilingual Spanish-English fashion for over forty years. This long-standing tradition has fostered meaningful exchanges among various branches of Quakerism throughout the entire Section. As a result, there is an increasing need for improved communication across languages. To address this need, we are developing an interactive digital and printable Glossary of Quaker Terms in all spoken languages. This glossary will be widely available and easily accessible from any electronic communication device, assisting interpreters who serve Friends and Friends traveling to meet Friends in different countries. Another vital component of this project is the ongoing training for our interpreters. This training ensures that our interpreters are well-equipped to facilitate effective communication across different languages in our Section supporting and strengthening the diverse Quaker community.

Olney Friends School Report academic year 2024 – 2025

Ellerie Brownfain, LEYM Representative

Olney Friends School just celebrated their 187th commencement with seven students graduating. Student's this year came from Ecuador, China, Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, Zimbabwe as well as United States. The school had 27 students which made for a close-knit community. In the fall the school renewed its accreditation with the Independent School Association of the Central States, ISACS. This rigorous accreditation lasts for seven years. It affirms the school's long history and dedication to education and a vibrant Quaker community.

Some highlights of this year:

- The Olney kitchen partnered with the cook and teacher Elizabeth's business, Canning Zen, to host a poultry canning class. They also baked large quantities of pumpkin bread for the Barnesville pumpkin festival.*
- In October at our public birding event, 26 bird species were spotted including the Eastern Screech Owl and Towhee. Ninth graders hosted a Thanksgiving dinner with foods from their homelands. Some students earned community service hours by volunteering at the Underground Railroad Museum located near the school.*
- In February the junior class visited Washington DC for their humanities in life after Olney classes. They visited museums, cultural sites and universities.*
- In March, the ninth grade class visited Grave Creek Mound Archaeological Complex in Moundsville, West Virginia. They've learned about the Natives who were forcibly removed and saw artifacts of what was left behind. With the arrival of spring came Meeting for Worship with poetry and later the annual poetry slam.*

The staff at Olney looks ahead to take a break and then ready themselves for a fantastic fall semester. Approximately 27 students are expected to enroll in the fall term.

Please let your friends and family know about this wonderful institution. And if you can give any monetary aid the school is quite grateful.