

Annual Records 2025

Lake Erie
Yearly Meeting
of the Religious Society of Friends



Online Version

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Lake Erie Yearly Meeting 2025–2026

Officers

Presiding Clerk:	Jack Smith LEYMclerk@gmail.com
Assistant Clerk:	Executive Committee, acting LEYMAssistantClerk@gmail.com
Recording Clerk:	Peggy Daub LEYMRecordingClerk@gmail.com
Treasurer:	Tom Kangas LEYMtreasurer@gmail.com

Communications

LEYM <i>Bulletin</i> Editor:	Christopher Farrand BulletinLEYM@gmail.com
Digital Communications Facilitator:	Bill Warters LEYMworker@gmail.com
Database Manager:	Susan Loucks susan@sloucks.com
<i>Annual Records 2025</i> Editor:	Elise Yoder eliseyoder@yahoo.com

Others

Registrar:	Sally Weaver Sommer LEYMregistrar@gmail.com
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Address for LEYM

c/o Office Manager
Ann Arbor Friends Meeting
1420 Hill Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Website: leym.org

LEYM Committee Clerks

Advancement & Outreach: Susan Hartman,
susandhartman@gmail.com, and Barbara LeSage,
barbaralesage@hotmail.com

Annual Meeting Planning Committees

Adult & Family Program: Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon,
andre14@earthlink.net

Arrangements & Site: Carolyn Lejuste, clejuste@gmail.com

Youth & Children Program: Diane Mott, mottfam45@gmail.com
and Erika Smith, trass@usa.net

Finance: Joann Neuroth, jneuroth@gmail.com, and Ellen Barnes,
ellen@thebarnesfamily187.com

Ministry & Nurture: Flo Friender, flo@dougandflo.com, and Dennis
Gregg, dennisgregg@gmail.com

Nominating: Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon, andre14@earthlink.net,
and Mary Igoe Meyers, migoemeyers@gmail.com

Peace & Justice: Claire Cohen, cmcmd80@gmail.com

Publications & Archives: Jeff Cooper, cooperdaub@hotmail.com

LEYM Calendar for 2026

Due date for submissions for <i>Winter Bulletin</i>	January 15
Responses to LEYM Query	February 1
Send to Flo Friender (flo@dougandflo.com) and Dennis Gregg (dennisgregg@gmail.com)	
Due date for submissions for <i>Spring Bulletin</i>	March 15
Representative Meeting: Hybrid at a location tbd	March 28
Due date for State of the Meeting Reports	May 15
Send to Flo Friender (flo@dougandflo.com) and Dennis Gregg (dennisgregg@gmail.com)	
Due date for Statistical Reports	June 1
Send to Susan Loucks (susan@sloucks.net)	
Annual Meeting: Ashland University	June 18-21
Due date for submissions for <i>Annual Records 2026</i>	July 30

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting

Minutes of Representative Meeting

March 8, 2025

Clerks' Table: Joe Mills (Kalamazoo), clerk; Jack Smith (Red Cedar), assistant clerk; Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor), recording clerk

Clerk Joe Mills welcomed the group of Friends gathered in person at Pittsburgh Friends Meeting and via Zoom for the 2025 Representative Meeting of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting. 14 online, 19 in the room.

Note: Below, brief reports are included within the relevant minute. Longer reports are placed after all the minutes, starting page 40.

RM 2025-01 Opening and Reading of Epistle

Friends settled into waiting worship at 1:35 pm.

Jack Smith (Red Cedar), assistant clerk, read an epistle from Tim Gee, General Secretary of FWCC, sent in February 2025. They are grieving the recent death of their clerk, Simon Lamb (Ireland Yearly Meeting), and welcoming a new clerk, Esther Mombo (Highland Yearly Meeting). The year's theme for World Quaker Day in October will be "Love Your Neighbor." They noted the many forces urging us to hate our neighbor. The world needs our messages of equality, integrity, and peace. May our measures of Light be enough to find our way in the world. (The full text is at: <https://fwcc.world/2025-letter-to-meetings/>)

RM 2025-02 Roll Call (information from registration and attendance)

Ann Arbor	3	Kalamazoo	4
Athens	1	North Columbus	3
Birmingham	3	Pittsburgh	6
Broadmead	5	Red Cedar	3
Cleveland	1	Wooster	2
Grand Rapids	1	<u>Erie WG</u>	<u>1</u>
		Total:	33

REPRESENTATIVE MEETING

There was no representation present from the following monthly meetings: Akron, Delaware, Detroit, Granville, Holland, Kent, and Mid-Ohio Valley, and Oberlin.

RM 2025-03 Reports from around the Yearly Meeting

Brief Reports from monthly meetings were given as follows:

- Bill Warters reported that Birmingham Meeting used handmade Valentine cards made by Wink Covintree to send messages of gratitude to elected officials who are standing up for democracy.
- Sally Weaver Sommer reported that Broadmead Meeting is celebrating 50 years this year. In the fall, there was an event with people invited back to join the celebration of their Meeting. On May 3, Paul Tinkerhess (Ann Arbor) will present a concert as a special event. This is the same weekend on which the Spiritual Formation Program will have its closing event of the year in Toledo.
- Vickey Finger reported that Cleveland Meeting will celebrate its 100th anniversary on Easter Sunday.
- Joe Mills reported that Kalamazoo Meeting has received requests from a few other congregations to bring their youth groups to visit so that they can experience a Quaker meeting.
- Susan Hartman reported that Ann Arbor Meeting received two requests for marriage under their care this year, a sign that there are more young adults participating in our meetings. Vickey Finger reported that Cleveland also celebrated a marriage this year.
- Susan Hartman and Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor) reported that Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting will hold its Midwinter Gathering by Zoom on Saturday, March 15, when there will be a program on incarceration in Michigan, and especially the work of the Michigan AFSC office. There will also be a time for young adult friends to talk about possible plans to get together.

- Susan Loucks said how happy Pittsburgh Meeting is to be hosting Representative Meeting and reported that they too will soon celebrate a marriage under the care of the Meeting.
- Barbara LeSage reported that North Columbus Meeting has added a box of fidget tools, available to anyone to help them focus during meeting for worship.

RM 2025-04 Report and request from Jack Smith (Red Cedar), assistant clerk

Jack Smith reported that he plans to intersperse selections from State of the Meeting reports from within LEYM with the reading of epistles at the start of our business sessions. He hopes Friends will hear and be led to follow up with others about our shared challenges and opportunities. Friends were invited to comment now or to send him thoughts by email (jsmith@msu.edu).

In discussion, a Friend expressed a desire for retaining the quality of epistles in expressing how other Quakers have felt Spirit move as distinct from a time for sharing news. That difference was recognized. A passage from the *LEYM Policies and Procedures* was shared that describes the purpose of the epistles as keeping us mindful of Quakers around the world. Another Friend requested that we also share epistles of various kinds that are not international in scope.

Friends **approved** the proposal that the assistant clerk read items before our business meetings that include passages from State of the Meeting reports as well as epistles from other groups. The full report follows:

Assistant Clerk's report: In my role as assistant clerk, in addition to reading (or arranging to be read) some epistles from other international Quaker organizations and Yearly Meetings at our Annual Meeting, I also intend to mix in some selections from our own Monthly Meetings' State of Meeting Reports. My hope in doing this is that Friends will hear about and be led to follow up with others about shared challenges and opportunities. I intend to review the 2025 State

REPRESENTATIVE MEETING

of Meeting Reports, due in May, and make thoughtful choices about what segments to read.

My sense is that this is somewhat of a change in LEYM practice, and I want Friends gathered to hear my intention and rationale in advance. I hope Friends will see some promise in the idea, and, if some want to respond, there would be time to hear them. Friends can also write to me separately with reactions and suggestions; my e-mail address (jsmith@msu.edu) is in the Fall and Winter Bulletins.

RM 2025-05 Advancement & Outreach Committee: Susan Hartman (Ann Arbor) reported.

a. Susan Hartman described a plan developed by the Advancement & Outreach Committee and the Ministry & Nurture Committee to visit Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups in LEYM. They would give priority to the Meetings that are very small or have not participated in LEYM recently. Visits will be in person or electronically. They will share news of LEYM and listen for how the Committee might support and care for each group.

In order to support this activity, the Committee proposes that the Traveling Ministries Fund be used to reimburse Friends for expenses that arise in carrying it forward. The full report follows. In discussion, Friends were reminded that this fund has never been used and is restricted to supporting traveling ministry. At our last Annual Sessions, the Finance Committee asked the Ministry & Nurture Committee to suggest ways in which the fund could be used. What we are hearing today is a proposed activity that is seen as a way of accomplishing traveling ministry. If the proposal is approved, the Ministry & Nurture Committee asked for additional guidance about how the funds should be allocated. Friends encouraged the Committee to use the fund. If it is depleted, more money might be found.

Friends **recognized** intervisitation as a form of travelling ministry and **approved** using the Traveling Ministries Fund for the purpose of intervisitation within LEYM as proposed by the

Advancement & Outreach and Ministry & Nurture Committees. Allocations from the fund are left in the care of the Ministry & Nurture Committee, and they were asked to develop a process so that Friends can readily make requests and report back.

b. Barbara LeSage (North Columbus) and Susan Hartman (Ann Arbor) reported that the Committee reached out to Meetings who did not submit State of the Meeting reports to LEYM last year to find out how they were doing. Reports from Mid-Ohio Valley Meeting and Granville Meeting for 2024 were received. Susan emphasized how enriching the Committee members found the reading of State of the Meeting reports to be.

The full Committee report follows:

Advancement & Outreach report: Members of the Advancement & Outreach Committee, in coordination with the Ministry & Nurture Committee, propose to visit Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups in person or electronically. We will prioritize groups that have not sent a State of the Meeting report in the current year, have not been at Annual Meeting sessions, or are a very small group. This work is part of our charge as a committee.

The purpose of our visitation ministry is to share news of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Annual Meeting sessions and other work and to listen to how each group sees itself in relation to the regional Quaker fellowship. We will be listening for ways to support the groups as they share their own outreach concerns and any issues they have with welcoming new attenders. We will also be listening for pastoral care issues that could be aided by Ministry & Nurture members.

We propose that travel costs and other expenses of these visits be covered by the Traveling Ministries Fund. We believe that this intervisitation is a form of ministry, and is consistent with the intent of the fund.

Description of the fund from *Policies and Procedures*, Appendix

D. 1. g:

Traveling Ministries Fund: This fund supports the travel costs of LEYM Friends whose travel in the ministry has been recognized by their

REPRESENTATIVE MEETING

monthly meeting and LEYM through a travel minute. It is administered by the Ministry & Nurture Committee.

RM 2025-06 Treasurer's Report: Tom Kangas (North Columbus), treasurer, reported.

Tom Kangas (North Columbus) noted that overall, the finances of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting are in good shape. Revenue from contributions from Monthly Meetings as of this week was 97% of the anticipated total. Although he expected a 33% increase in cost for using the facilities at Ashland University for our Annual Meeting, that increase was not reflected in a recent invoice he received. The Arrangements & Site Committee will find out more. Budgeted expenses so far this year included the work of two contract employees, publications activity, and support for travel to FGC Central Committee. Activity on funds for the Fall Youth Retreat and the Spiritual Formation program were as expected. The text and numerical reports follow:

Treasurer's Report: Preliminary financial results for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2025 as of 03/06/2025

General Fund

Revenue

- a. All monthly meetings save one have paid annual contribution
- b. Revenue from monthly meetings is 97% of the anticipated total

Expenses

- a. Database manager—has billed for work done through Oct 2024
- b. Digital communications facilitator—has billed for work done through Jan 2025
- c. Publications—remaining expenditures are for the Spring Bulletin
- d. Favorable Variances—if all budgeted amounts were spent by year end, that would be \$10K of expenses, but budgeted amounts may be conservative

Fund Summary

- a. Friends Fiduciary
 1. Will get another \$1K of dividends before year end

2. Changes in market value from Dec 31 forward will be reflected here, too
- b. Transfers between funds are mostly done for the year unless there is a return of unused subsidy from the Annual Meeting Fund

Annual Meeting Fund

- We've made advance payments of 50% of total cost to Ashland University
- The original quote from Ashland had a 33% increase in venue rental fees, but on the most recent invoice those fees returned to same level as they were for June 2024

Travel Fund

- Expenditure was for one representative to attend FGC Central Comm meeting in Oct 2024 (includes registration, mileage, room, but not board)

Youth Activities Fund

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

Spiritual Formation Fund

- Activity shown here pertains to the retreat in Sept 2024

FWCC Travel Fund

- Expenditure was for one representative to attend the World Plenary in August 2024

Balance Sheet

- Shows where our money is kept and related details

Overall, LEYM's finances are in good shape. Comprehensive reports are given below on pages 9-10.

RM 2025-07 Draft Budget for 2025–26: Tom Kangas reported.

A draft budget for fiscal year 2025–26 was shared. The hourly rate for our two contracted workers is proposed to rise by about 2.5%, and there are moderate increases in several other line items. It shows funding for the FWCC Travel Donation Fund, but not for sending our own representatives, as the fund is still well-supplied. This budget suggests a \$43 contribution per

member (up by \$1), with an overall expected deficit of about \$2,000.

Draft Budget for FY2025-2026

Assumptions included in this draft budget:

- Hourly rate for two contractors is increased by \$0.75 each (roughly 2.5%)
- Moderate increase for several line items reflected in the “Change” column
- FWCC Travel
 - Rep Travel Fund has a balance of \$5,385 after \$2,229 expended for 2024 World Plenary
 - This budget proposes to add no funds to the Representative Travel Fund
 - This budget proposes to fund only the FWCC Travel Donation Fund
- This draft would suggest a \$43 contribution per member (up by \$1, or 2% from FY2024–2025)
- This draft would expect a \$2K deficit for the General Fund for FY2025–2026.

The draft budget is given on page 57.

RM 2025-08 Finance Committee: Joann Neuroth (Red Cedar) reported.

Joann Neuroth shared that an audit of the LEYM financial records through June 30, 2024, was completed by Terry Grant (Red Cedar). Joann shared the auditor’s very complimentary statement on the work of our treasurer, Tom Kangas. We are grateful for his work.

Joann shared information on a proposal the Committee plans to bring to Annual Sessions in the summer. Reimbursement for food has not been supported thus far through our Travel Fund. It has become complicated and time consuming to untangle the costs of food from other costs of registration and travel. The Committee will propose that we begin to reimburse for food as well as other costs of travel. This will mean additional expense. (Finance report continued on page 11.)

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LEYM General Fund Income

As of 3/6/2025

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	Expected, per budget	Actual as a % of Budget	Variance, favorable (unfavorable)
Subtotal - contributing MM or WG	26,818		27,510	97%	(692)
Individuals - via check	5				
Individuals - via FFC online	50				
Individuals - via RegFox	27				
Interest income from Savings Acct	34				
Total Cash Contribution Income	26,935		In-kind +	Total contribution income - 26,935	
FFC Dividend Income (Base Acct only)	1,044				
Total Income	27,979	(cash income, excluding in-kind)			

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LEYM General Fund Expenses - with comparison to Budget

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

Account	Actual Expense through 3/6/2025	Budget (annual)	Actual expense as a % of Budget	Variance, budget-to- actual, favorable (unfavorable)	Non-cash, in-kind donations through 3/6/2025	Total Expense, including in- kind, through 3/6/2025
Operations						
Contract Worker: Database Manager	533.50	3,575	15%	3,042	-	534
Contract Worker: Digital Comm Facil'r	1,303.50	5,775	23%	4,472	-	1,304
Insurance	613.00	650	94%	37	-	613
Office/administration	307.44	1,100	28%	793	-	307
Committees						
Advancement & Outreach	-	100	0%	100	-	-
Ministry & Nurture	-	100	0%	100	-	-
Publications	2,637.95	3,500	75%	862	-	2,638
Members						
Attend conference w/ Quaker values	-	500	0%	500	-	-
Organizations						
Friends General Conference	6,200.00	6,200	100%	-	-	6,200
Olney Friends School	3,100.00	3,100	100%	-	-	3,100
Swarthmore records project	150.00	150	100%	-	-	150
Subtotal cash expenditures	14,845	24,750	60%	9,905	-	14,845
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%	-	-	-
Subtotal Transfers	8,300.00	8,300		-		
Totals - General Fund Expenses	23,145.39	33,050	70%	9,905		

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 3/6/2025	Floor / Ceiling Suggested floor/ceiling amounts for each fund
Funds held in (i) Base account with Friends Fiduciary Corp and (ii) Citizens National Bank								
General Fund ²	36,402.84	2,599.73	(8,300.00)	26,934.53	(14,845.39)	6,388.87	42,791.71	na 35,000
Annual Meeting Fund	2,954.99		5,000.00	-	(11,840.00)	(6,840.00)	(3,885.01)	1,000 3,000
Travel Fund	2,745.25		1,500.00	-	(919.23)	580.77	3,326.02	2,000 4,000
Youth Activities Fund ⁴	5,807.90		953.27	345.00	(775.00)	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	6,252.77	(7,095.32)	(542.55)	2,226.79	500 2,000
Consultation Fund	3,143.68		-	-	-	-	3,143.68	500 2,000
Traveling Ministries Fund	3,500.00		-	-	-	-	3,500.00	na 2,000
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 ⁵	9,357.66	444.21	(178.27)	-	-	265.94	9,623.60	na na
Funds held by others - see Statement of Financial Position								
Prepaid Expense	925.00	-	(1,075.00)	-	-	(1,075.00)	(150.00)	na na
TOTAL	86,152.88	3,043.94	-	33,532.30	(37,703.94)	(1,127.70)	85,025.18	

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.

Note that this is in addition to other travel expenses that were added to what can be covered last year. (Details and necessary changes to *Policies and Procedures* appear in the minutes for the Annual Sessions, starting on page 48.)

RM 2025-09 Ministry & Nurture Committee: Flo Friender (Kalamazoo) reported.

So far, the Committee has received reports from 12 Meetings on their consideration of the LEYM Annual Query. The Committee continues to support “Clerks’ Chats” among Monthly Meeting clerks and others. The next one will be on March 20. They are assembling information on how one can attend our various Monthly Meetings that are hybrid and plan to share it to encourage Friends to visit one another’s Meetings. The full report follows.

Ministry & Nurture Committee report: Ministry & Nurture has faithfully met monthly by Zoom since August of 2024. Members are Dennis Gregg (Ann Arbor), Christopher Farrand (Cleveland), Kathleen Helbling (Broadmead), Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham), Tom Blackwell (Ann Arbor), Recording Clerk, and Flo Friender (Kalamazoo), Clerk.

From the 18 Meetings we expect to hear from, we have, to this date, received responses from 12 Meetings to the 2024–2025 Annual Query.

We supported a Clerks’ Chat on January 23, attended by 15 people, and have scheduled another on March 20, 2025 at 7:00 pm. One need not be a clerk to attend this meeting and/or bring concerns from their Meeting.

We are assembling information on hybrid meetings to allow Friends to virtually visit other Meetings, and are working with Advancement & Outreach to coordinate Meeting visitations to smaller Meetings and Worship Groups. We want to know if Meetings are interested in being visited.

Sally Weaver Sommer (Broadmead) reported on the Spiritual Formation Program. Serving with Sally on that program’s planning committee are Barbara LeSage (North Columbus),

REPRESENTATIVE MEETING

Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham), Valerie Groszmann (Kalamazoo), and Olwen Pritchard (Broadmead). The retreat in the fall was led by Don McCormick, with the spring retreat scheduled for May 3. There was a mid-year check-in session in January. Next year's speaker will be Michael Wajda. More information will follow.

RM 2025-10 Publications & Archives Committee: Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor) reported.

Jeff was asked to say a few words about updates to *LEYM Policies and Procedures*, a publication that describes how we do our work (or “the Practice” without “the Faith”). The Publications & Archives Committee has responsibility for keeping *Policies and Procedures* up to date, based on decisions made by the Yearly Meeting. Jeff has taken on this work and updates P&P a few times a year. Then he asks Bill Wartens to load the new version on the website. Changes are usually quite small and so the new versions are not publicized. If anyone sees a problem with P&P, please let Jeff know.

The Committee has responsibility for reporting on workshops at Annual Meeting in the *Annual Records*. This year there are 13 workshops and only 4 members of the Committee. Volunteers to help are welcome.

RM 2025-11 Peace & Justice Committee: Claire Cohen (Pittsburgh) reported.

The Committee surveyed all the monthly meetings in LEYM to ask them about their local peace committees. Based on information acquired from the answers to the survey, they have planned a three-part seminar that will help guide meetings in how peace committees are formed and how they function. The seminars will be recorded and preserved on our website. The first seminar will be presented Sunday, April 6.

The Committee is tracking the progress of a lawsuit brought by FGC and other faith organizations that aims to prevent ICE from

entering houses of worship. (An earlier and similar suit was brought by several Yearly Meetings.) A preliminary hearing will be held March 14, at which time it is hoped the judge will issue an injunction preventing ICE from carrying out searches in our Meeting spaces. Because we are a constituent part of FGC, all of our Meetings and Worship Groups would be covered by decisions made in this case. It could take a long time to be fully resolved in court.

In discussion, a Friend added that FGC's suit is in conjunction with some 20 other religious bodies. Friends suggested that Monthly Meetings might wish to discern and write a statement on this issue for the intrinsic value of going through this process together. A Friend asked whether the Committee is interacting with the Alternatives to Violence Project, and Claire responded that they have been encouraging meetings to consider AVP as part of their activity. There are two Friends who are attending committee meetings without being appointed as members. The Nominating Committee will pursue the question of whether they wish to be appointed. A Friend asked the Committee to consider if there are minutes of conscience that could be seasoned and brought to Annual Sessions.

Peace & Justice Committee report:

- We started out with 3 members: Claire Cohen, Don Buckingham, and Paul Helbling. Later, Phil Volk and Mary Finney joined.
- The first thing we did was to do a survey of Meetings and Worship Groups in LEYM to see how many have, have had, or want to have Peace and Justice (or Peace and Social Concerns) committees. The survey included questions on the quality of functioning of the committees. We sent the survey to the clerks. After a few attempts at contact, we got a roughly 30% response and went with that.
- We also decided to send notifications to all Meetings, through their clerks, of International Peace Day and International Human Rights Day yearly, so that Meetings might plan events around them, if they wish.

REPRESENTATIVE MEETING

- From reviewing the surveys we got back, it was clear there are a lot of issues around the functioning of Peace and Justice committees, such as having difficulty forming one at all, difficulty recruiting members, difficulty agreeing on what to work on, difficulty finding resources, etc. So, we decided to do a seminar series to be recorded and kept on the LEYM website for Meetings as a resource for Meeting Peace and Justice Committees. We ended up with a two- to three-part seminar. (Included is the agenda for the first session of the seminar, which we plan to hold on Sunday, April 6, from 1 to 3 PM. The second session will focus more on problems. The Format will be similar. The Third one will probably be sometime in September and will have speakers from AFSC and FCNL discussing resources.)
- In January of 2025, a group of Quaker Meetings filed suit against the Department of Homeland Security over their policy ending restrictions of ICE arrests in “sensitive locations” such as houses of worship. On February 11, FGC filed a suit on behalf of all its component parts, so that other Yearly and Monthly Meetings need not file. There will be a preliminary hearing in D.C. on March 14. FGC is hoping that the judge will issue an injunction against ICE while waiting for the trial. Because the government is being inundated with lawsuits right now, it could take up to several months for the trial to occur. An injunction has been issued in the first suit brought by Philadelphia YM, Baltimore YM, and NEYM.

RM 2025-12 Adult & Family Program Committee: Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon (Erie Worship Group) reported.

Clémence presented several of the highlights that we can look forward to at our Annual Meeting in Ashland this summer. These include 13 workshops, Plenary Speaker Pamela Haines, and Bible Study led by Doug Gwyn. Diane Mott is writing a report on the Youth Program for the *LEYM Bulletin* to encourage families to attend. The full report follows.

Adult & Family Program report: On Friday morning, LEYM is welcome to visit with the staff at the Ashland Center for Non Violence. On Friday and Saturday mornings, we will offer Worship Sharing followed

by Bible Study, led by Doug Gwyn. Also on Saturday morning, Paul Helbling will facilitate a time of extended worship concurrent with Worship Sharing and Bible Study. During the 3 Workshop sessions, Friday afternoon, Saturday morning, and Saturday afternoon, there will be 13 workshops to choose from. Plenary Speaker Pamela Haines and her partner, Chuck Esser, will be presenting two different workshops. The Saturday evening program is currently under the careful collaboration of two committees: Advancement & Outreach and Adult & Family Program. More details encouraging Monthly Meeting participation will be forthcoming.

RM 2025-13 Arrangements & Site Committee: Carolyn Lejuste (Red Cedar) reported.

The Committee is preparing information about registration for the next *LEYM Bulletin*. Carolyn will be working directly with staff at Ashland University in the coming weeks. Online registration will once again be offered.

RM 2025-14 Youth & Children Program Committee

Diane Mott (Broadmead) was unable to attend, but reported to the clerk that there has been some progress in securing a new space for the Fall Youth Retreat, but it has not yet been finalized.

RM 2025-15 Nominating Committee: Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon (Erie Worship Group) reported.

The Committee has begun talking to people about their service and is discerning the needs of the Yearly Meeting. At present they see the most pressing needs as an assistant clerk and additional people to serve on the Publications & Archives Committee.

RM 2025-16 Database Manager: Susan Loucks (Pittsburgh) reported.

Susan Loucks, our new database manager, has found the work to be relatively straightforward so far. She has questions about the purpose of the database that should be addressed at some time: what should be in the database? – Is it all the members of all the Meetings, or just the information we put in the *Annual Records* each year? A Friend suggested that a group could be formed to

REPRESENTATIVE MEETING

help discern this question with Susan. Joe Mills (Kalamazoo) is interested in serving on such an ad hoc committee, and Bill Warters (Birmingham) is also interested. As clerk, Joe will name an ad hoc committee.

Finally, we minuted with gratitude the care and hospitality Pittsburgh Meeting offered us, and closed in worship.

LEYM Annual Meeting Minutes and Reports 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 Wartens (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.

ANNUAL MEETING

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

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 [redacted] (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 Warters (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 inter-visitation 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, pp. 42–43.)

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 appear on pp. 58–64 , the report from the Spiritual Formation Group Planning Committee on pp. 64–66.)

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 Doable 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, pp. 43–44.)

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, pp. 45–47 and 54–56.)

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, pp. 47 and 57.)

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. It will also keep a list of number of members and former members of meetings, as well as weddings in the care 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, pp. 51–53.)

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 Teams' work is done almost completely with volunteer effort, and they would welcome other Friends to join. (The full report is below, pp. 76–77.)

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 Traveling 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, pp. 74–76.)
- 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, pp. 66–73.)

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. (Separate report by Ellerie Brownfain on the 2024 World Plenary is below, pp. 77–80.)
- 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, pp. 80–83.)

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-024.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 online 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 the 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 re-called 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, p. 57.)

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, pp. 210–213.)

YM 2025-44 Announcements

Carolyn Lejuste, of the Arrangements & Site Committee, 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 Pastures 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, pp. 73–74.)

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 During the Sessions (see below):

- 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

Additional Reports (included below but not presented):

- Ministry & Nurture Committee
- Summary of responses to annual query
- Summary of state of the meeting reports

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- 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

Reports Presented During the Sessions

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 & 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 three 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,

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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 Igoe Meyers (Broadmead)

Publications & Archives Committee

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 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 Warters 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

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 Representative 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 took 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

- 1) All Monthly Meetings save one have paid their annual contribution
- 2) We'll get another \$1K of dividend income from Friends Fiduciary investments later this month (i.e., in June)
- 3) Revenue for the year is where we expected it would be

Expenses

- 1) Contract Workers
 - a) The database manager has billed for actual work performed through October 2024
 - b) The digital communications facilitator has billed for actual work performed through May 2025
 - c) 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
- 2) Transfers between funds
 - a) Shown here as being done for the year
 - b) 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
- 3) Variances—comparing actual to budget
 - a) There are no unfavorable variances
 - b) 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.

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Friends Fiduciary

- 1) This page shows the change in market value of this investment
- 2) Changes in market value from Dec 31 forward will be reflected here, too
- 3) As of April 30, 2025, the Quaker Growth & Income Fund was down 0.94% YTD

Note the ending balance of \$82K; we're now going to look at that \$80K from a different angle.

Funds Summary page

General Fund

- 1) Note that the total of all LEYM funds is \$82K and that the General Fund is just one of many
- 2) Each of the components of current year activity has been discussed (e.g., income, expense, FFC, transfers)
- 3) 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

- 1) We see the \$5K subsidy from here
- 2) Expense includes advance payments of roughly 90% of total amount owed Ashland University
- 3) But income and expense data are incomplete
- 4) 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

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

Spiritual Formation Fund

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

Traveling Ministries Fund

- 1) 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.
- 2) To date \$137 has been paid for the traveling expenses of two Friends
- 3) Hooray to us for finding a way to use these funds and to begin to do so

FWCC Travel Fund

- 1) Expenditure was for one representative to attend the World Plenary in August 2024
- 2) 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. (See detailed financial information on pp. 54–56 .)

Finance Committee, Proposal for Draft Budget for 2025–26

See the draft budget on page 57. Assumptions included in this draft budget include:

Expenses

- 1) The Change column reflects some increases, some decreases for budget line items
- 2) Contractors
 - i) Hourly rate for both increased by \$0.75 each (roughly 2.5%)
 - ii) Hours adjusted downward for database manager

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- 3) 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

- 1) Regarding the two FWCC Travel Funds, this budget proposes:
 - a) To add funds only to the FWCC Travel Donation Fund
 - b) To not add anything to the FWCC Representative Travel Fund
- 2) 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

- 1) 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 are given below with changes indicated.

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 [added]**.
 - 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.~~
 - iv. 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.
 - v. 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.
 - vi. 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

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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 ☐

From _____ to _____ miles at 21 cents = \$ ____ Donation ☐

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 ☐
 _____ \$ _____ Donation ☐
 _____ \$ _____ Donation ☐

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 ☐
 _____ \$ _____ Donation ☐
 _____ \$ _____ Donation ☐

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 Report 2024–25

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.

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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, which hosts recordings of many past events (<https://www.youtube.com/@lakeerieyearlymeeting>).

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

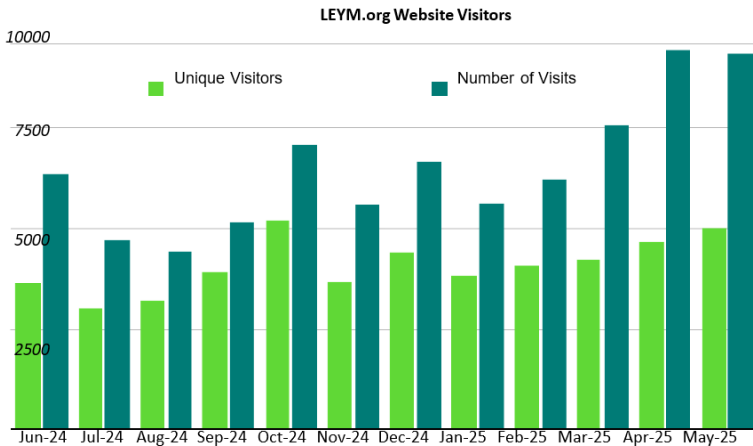
Zoom-related: 16 hours

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 [Full Text EY d2edjcf.docx](#)), and the development of a page providing access to the full-text and/or video recordings of past LEYM Plenary speakers. See [Full Text EY d2edjcf.docx](#). Thanks to Jeff Cooper from Publications & 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

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

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		Expected, per budget	Actual as a % of Budget	Variance, favorable (unfavorable)
			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

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Lake Erie Yearly Meeting – Financial Position

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

	Beginning Balance as of 7/1/2024	Change in balance during the fiscal year	Ending Balance as of 6/11/2025
Location of monetary assets			
The Citizens National Bank of Bluffton, OH			
Checking Account	4,206.54	2,724.74	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	
• Change in Portfolio Value + or -		59.91	
includes: • 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

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

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 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	Equity	Fixed Income	REITS
	Global and International 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%	22.7%	4.7%

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	Floor/Ceiling 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	4,500
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)	(1,229.00)	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.

Budget for 2025-26

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 2025-26	
Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	General Fund Expenses		*Budget	**Actual	***Budget	Change
2,500	2,898	3,900	2,828	4,320	1,838	General	Contractor: Database Manager	3,575	1,084	2,260	(1,315)
5,100	5,570	6,200	4,996	6,500	4,756		Contractor: Digital Comm Facil'r	5,775	5,258	5,906	131
500	597	650	597	650	597		Insurance	650	613	675	25
1,500	677	1,500	1,035	1,200	557		Administration	1,100	542	1,000	(100)
500	-	500	-	100	-	Committees	Advancement & Outreach	100	-	100	-
100	-	100	-	100	-		Ministry & Nurture	100	-	100	-
3,200	3,393	3,500	2,876	3,500	2,722		Publications	3,500	3,240	3,750	250
1,000	-	600	-	600	-	Members	Attend conf w/ Quaker values	500	-	500	-
6,500	6,500	6,500	6,500	6,000	6,000	Organizations	Friends General Conference	6,200	6,200	6,350	150
3,500	3,500	3,500	3,500	3,000	3,000		Olney Friends School	3,100	3,100	3,175	75
150	150	150	150	150	150		Swarthmore Records Project	150	150	150	-
1,000	1,000	-	-	-	-		Potential NCFM mtg/hsse contrib	-	-	1,000	1,000
-	-	10,000	6,100	5,000	3,200	Transfers:	Annual Meeting subsidy	5,000	5,000	5,000	-
1,200	1,200	-	-	1,000	1,000		Travel Fund	1,500	1,500	1,500	500
1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000	-	-		Quaker Coll/Svc Sch'ship Fund	-	-	-	-
1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800		FWCC Travel Fund (& Donation)	1,800	1,800	900	(900)
-	-	-	-	-	-	or (to General Fund from)...	Consultation Fund	-	-	(3,144)	(3,144)
-	-	-	-	-	(2,893)		High School Teen Retreat Fund	-	-	-	-
29,550	28,285	39,900	31,382	33,920	22,728	Total Expenses and Transfers =		33,050	28,487	29,223	(3,327)
						General Fund Income					
17,875	18,780	26,005	25,390	27,510	26,863	Contributions Income		26,250	26,944	26,838	588
1,000	1,728	1,500	1,916	1,500	2,038	FFC Div Inc (Base Acct only)		2,000	1,044	2,000	-
18,875	20,508	27,505	27,306	29,010	28,901	Total Income =		28,250	27,988	28,838	588
(10,675)	(7,777)	(12,395)	(4,076)	(4,910)	6,173	Income - (Expenses and Transfers) =		(4,800)	(499)	(385)	3,915
(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		639	
\$25	\$35	\$42				Suggested contribution per member =		\$42	0%	\$42	0%
\$ 0.16	\$ 0.22	\$ 0.22				Travel reimbursement, with limits, rate per mile =		\$ 0.21		\$ 0.21	

Additional Reports (published here but not presented)

**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:

- How do I actively get to know my neighbors?
- 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.

How do I actively get to know my neighbors?

The responses came back in two basic views of neighborliness: (1) casual and (2) active. The first response reflects 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.

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. 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.

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 oneself 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 Meetings 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

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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, Pittsburgh, and Red Cedar have their own Meetinghouses. Birmingham, Cleveland, Delaware, Grand Rapids, Granville, Mid-Ohio Valley, North Columbus, and 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 dinner circles (Athens, Pittsburgh)
- Quaker teas (Cleveland)
- Shared meals once a month (Kent)
- Singing before Meeting for Worship (Athens, Ann Arbor, Kent, Pittsburgh)
- 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

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individual conscience on the Meeting and the Meeting's role on individual conscience.

Many 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; they 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 a 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 an 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 the 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, 27 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 22 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 to 8:30. The Zoom link can be found in the LEYM calendar 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, May 2025 Bill Warters (Birmingham)

I have served as an LEYM Representative to the AFSC Corporation since 2019, and have entered my final year of my second three-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: [Full Text EY d2edjcF.docx](#). 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 AFSC 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-ground work 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," which 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 21st 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 U.S. focused on support for indigenous and African-American people, in local areas where AFSC works.
- Completion of negotiations with the five U.S. 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 U.S. 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 U.S.-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.
- The 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

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.

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.

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.

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.

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 (Athens)

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 Thy Neighbors – No Exceptions,” needs our continued support.

Friends General Conference Annual Report, 2024 to 2025

Marvin Barnes (Detroit)

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 that 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 1000 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 at the University of Vermont in Burlington, Vermont.

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 ongoing.

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 (Ann Arbor)

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://fpt.org/2025/04/01/fpt-april-2025-epistle/) (<https://friendspeaceteams.org/peaceways/>). Peace is possible!

FWCC World Plenary 2024 Report

Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham), LEYM FWCC Representative

The Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC) World Plenary Meeting convened in Vanderbijlpark near Johannesburg, South Africa from August 5 through 12, 2024, bringing together over 250 Friends from 53 countries, with an equal number participating virtually through “Hub” groups. The plenary's theme, “Ubuntu,” meaning “I am, because we are,” guided all aspects of the gathering. Through the daily schedule, the spirit of Ubuntu wound its path through workshops, worship,

(programmed and unprogrammed) free time, and meals. All were seamlessly knitted together. When led by the Spirit, we danced in the aisles, sang songs, held hands, cried, and prayed together. Language translation was not needed for these experiences! 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 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 change is radically

unleashing on 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, and 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. Inclusion 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 and our Monthly and Yearly Meetings can actively do to create a better future for our world and strengthen the ties within the Society of Friends.

**FWCC Section Meeting Report (held March 20–23, 2025):
Latin-American Friends’ Participation**

Jana Norlin (Grand Rapids), 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 to 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 and 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 to facilitate 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 1, 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, 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 40 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 (Birmingham), LEYM Representative

Olney Friends School just celebrated its 187th commencement, with seven students graduating. Students this year came from Ecuador, China, Uganda, Kenya, South Africa, and Zimbabwe, as well as the 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.

ANNUAL MEETING

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 look ahead to taking a break and then readying 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.

Plenary Presentation

Mending our Nets: The Power of Becoming Whole

Pamela Haines

June 13, 2025, 7:30 pm

Strong nets are a wonderful thing. We use physical nets to catch tadpoles and fish and protect our fruits and vegetables from insects and birds. We rely on strong relational networks to get jobs, survive trauma, pursue passions, effect change. The idea of a safety net is a powerful one; it allows us to try, and to be caught if we fall. We're embedded and connected in a variety of nets and networks. The network of living organisms—around us and inside us—is what keeps us alive. So holes in our nets are a problem, and mending can be seen as a critical, if undervalued, skill.

We can start by valuing the net. Look around, take in the precious resource of a net that is whole (though, paradoxically, when it's whole, it's hardest to see): human bodies that work, including our internal networks of micro-organisms; supportive and loving extended families; communities that nourish their members, hopefully including our Meeting communities and meetings for worship; inspired classrooms and work teams; islands of responsive and participatory democracy and economics; cultural and religious traditions that uphold whole groups of people; systems of information sharing that allow us to benefit from the knowledge of others; the vibrant and sturdy ecosystems that undergird all life on earth. These are all precious manifestations of connection.

Then, we dare to notice the holes. Our nets are tattered, with gaping holes in many places—and people, places, and values falling through. Consider: our personal lives, with gaps in our well-being, whether physical, emotional, social, economic, spiritual; the gaps in well-being in our families and our Meeting communities; great rents in our shared understanding of what

matters as a nation; the tears in our social fabric that come from centering greed and domination, leading to ever-growing wealth inequality and widening holes in our social safety nets that increasingly threaten our access to healthcare, housing, and livelihood at home; even greater gaps in well-being in countries that have been additionally ravaged by colonialism; and damage to the life-giving capacities of our precious planet and the resultant threat to all living beings.

So—how do we become whole? We grieve—and we celebrate. We mend—and in mending, we connect.

We Grieve

I don't quite know what to name the malady that makes our culture so allergic to grieving, but it leaves us all diminished. We're confused by a narrative of inevitable progress, awash in distractions and pop solutions. Unable to grieve, we may turn those feelings of loss outward—to blame, protest, even revenge. (Vengeance, they say, is a lazy form of grief.) Or we turn them in on ourselves. Or we just try to get away: shove each new loss aside and refuse to pay attention; go into our heads; make ourselves small and hide in our comfortable safe places, or turn to our chosen addictions—all of which rob us of our power. Or we bargain to work every waking hour against greater loss in exchange for not having to actually face it.

And yet: a common outcome of any of these strategies for warding off grief is that, by blunting the hard edge of loss, they blunt our ability to connect with all the love and joy and possibility that is also present in our world. In the deepest of ironies, our attempts to protect our hearts from breaking can have the result of hardening them.

I'm persuaded that our greatest safety lies in holding hands, daring to look head on, and just opening our hearts to loss and grief. Yet, this prospect, frankly, terrifies me. If we let loose the floodgates of accumulated grief that are so tightly held in check in this culture, will any of us survive the flood? I have to

wonder: is it our grief that is at the heart of the problem, or our fear of facing it?

I need to remember that I know some things. I know the value of having a good cry, and how much more refreshed I feel afterwards. I know about welcoming the tears of children and holding them as they cry. I know that it's better to be with someone than to face loss alone, that good listening helps to open space for grief. I know that being grounded in all the good parts of life helps me to face the grief of the hard ones. And, if the options are being broken-hearted or hard-hearted, my choice is clear.

There is wisdom from the ages to lean on. We can learn from Indigenous traditions around naming and honoring loss: I heard one native elder say, "Weep till the bitter tears run sweet." We can learn models of encouraging shared grieving—from the wall of names at the Vietnam War Memorial to the AIDS quilt and the displays of boots and shoes, t-shirts, and little flags. We can learn from those who are comfortable helping others to just open up and wail. (I heard a story from one Yearly Meeting session that was truly extraordinary).

A two-part frame that's helpful to me is that it's all ours, and all we have to do is our share.

It's all ours. When I was a child, there was a pond nearby, and everyone came to the pond to swim. I can remember later, being in an airplane and seeing housing developments spread out below, almost every one with its little dot or squiggle of blue in back—the swimming pool. What we used to do together in common water, we now do individually and in private.

More recently, after a devastating earthquake, I wondered why I was unable to feel anything. I realized that I was facing some big personal losses; maybe I was just filled up with my own sorrows. But while this was true, it didn't satisfy. Then, the image of a great common sea came to mind. What if I could leave my private little blue dot of grief and come out to the sea with

everyone else who was grieving all the loss of the world? Then those impossible questions, “Why me?” and “Why them instead of me?” would lose their sting, in the recognition that it’s all ours.

If my tears can flow in with the tears of those who lost so much in that earthquake, then we can be bound together in our loss. Maybe that string of personal losses just loosened my share of the tears of the world. Maybe those tears flowing down my cheeks are mine to feel, but not mine to possess or control, not mine to ascribe to any particular loss.

The same would have to hold true for love. It’s easy to think of our loves as private affairs. But what if there’s a great sea of love that we all get to swim in? Any loving that I do, then, is part of the great loving of the world. I’m left thinking that who we can grieve for and who we can love is less important than whether we are willing to step into that common sea and do the big loving and grieving that our world needs.

All we have to do is our share. To think that all the loss of the world belonged on my shoulders would be a sign of both hubris and isolation. Maybe my share will be a little less at times when I’m pressed by one thing or another, and maybe a little more as I’m able. I think of the way I pick up trash in the park on my morning walk: I don’t try to clean the whole neighborhood, much less the whole city. Sometimes I miss a day altogether, but then I’m back.

I have a program taking shape: We work to challenge our own fears, commit to doing our share of grieving, and help others to do the same – as we also support each other to act as we are able to minimize harm and loss. It won’t be easy. Losses will keep coming, and we’ll have to keep facing them, moving through layers of grief to find a place to stand. But what could be better than finding that solid ground and looking out at the world together with hearts that remain open?

Aligning ourselves with this power of healing gives us a way to share our love for the world that may have been blocked for many of us. As we find ways to grieve—and grieve together—for this precious world, I believe that new paths, perhaps ones we had never imagined, will open before us.

We Celebrate All that Is Whole

There is a vital balance to be found between sorrow and joy, grieving and celebration. After the election in the fall, I identified the importance of being able to grieve the losses we would witness, but I hadn't realized the importance of tending to joy and celebration as part of that balancing process. The more there is to grieve, the more we need to pay active attention to what is good and whole. And the more we pay that attention, the more space we have for grief.

We're best at celebrating with families and close-in friend circles. But more is possible there. We can intentionally share good news in groups, let no opportunity to appreciate or thank someone go unnoticed, join in noticing the wonders of the natural world, do more singing and dancing together. On a larger scale, we have school events where we celebrate our children, religious ceremonies, local parades, national holidays, sports victories. (Our team won the Super Bowl, and boy, did our city celebrate!) What more might be possible?

Though I don't usually do this, I want to quote Brian McLaren, from his book *Life after Doom*, where he reflects on the potential for celebration in the midst of loss, in the compelling image of a group of people around a campfire singing joyfully into the night:

I could imagine people gathering in small circles of beauty everywhere... on front porches, in living rooms, in forest clearings, around kitchen tables . . . Even if their governments collapsed and electric grids failed, even if the internet were monitored by authoritarian goons, even if public schools were commandeered to teach Orwellian propaganda. Even then,

they would gather and give one another life, in twos and threes and tens and twenties. They would speak truth. They would celebrate goodness. They would honor beauty, to see it as the real story, the aboriginal story, the eternal beautiful story. They would sing songs, recite poetry, tell stories, tell jokes They would laugh and cry and dance and sit in silence, watching the sparks rise upward. And life would be beautiful in that circle. There would be joy unspeakable in that circle. No matter what happened outside it.

Here's another angle on sharing our heartbreaks and our joys: It's about a young woman in the youth climate movement. She works long hours. The stakes are high, there are many setbacks and it's easy to get discouraged. She misses her family, who live far away. She worries that she's not doing enough.

Her therapist tries to steer her toward greater attention to her well-being: *Don't work so hard. Close your computer at 5:00. Do things that bring you joy.* As I listen to her explore her sense that something has not been acknowledged, the theme of individualism begins to rise to the surface. Everything the therapist has suggested assumes an individual problem calling for individual solutions.

But the underlying reason that she is working so hard and feeling so badly about not doing enough is the threat to the future of human life on earth—hardly a personal issue! She is responding with overwork. Others respond by looking away and putting their attention, instead, to pleasurable distractions.

But there's a third path, a way between working long hours for the public good and focusing on personal well-being. This is the path of working together, agreeing to long hours during stretches when the stakes are particularly high, making shared agreements to rest deeply at other times, backing each other to do things that bring personal joy.

On this path, everyone in a group effort is encouraged to stop and breathe; share the tiniest successes widely; again, leave no

possible appreciation of a community member unspoken; and at times celebrate together with abandon.

People used to work together to bring in the harvest, then feast. We now have a different form of common work to ensure our future, and we could all benefit from bringing more of our work and our pleasures back into the commons, sweating together through the crunch times, then dancing and singing together in the lulls, gathering strength for what lies ahead.

So, let's talk about celebrating! Let's plan for more singing around campfires, more dancing, more attention to the wonders of nature, more open caring for those we love, more tears and more joy as we face these hard times together.

We Mend

Mending doesn't get much respect in this culture. If something develops flaws, we're encouraged to just throw it out. (And we are not helped by a system that is focused on consumption rather than quality—that produces things with an intentionally short life so that it can sell us more.) Throw it out! Get a new one! That's a sign of having made it! Mending is for people who haven't been successful, who have no choice but to scrimp and save, for losers.

But what do we do with this world that is torn and broken, with great gashes, holes, and frayed edges? We can't throw it out—it's the only one we've got. So, even though we're not very good at it, we have to learn to mend.

Fortunately, there may be nothing more satisfying. Why do I love to mend? Let me count the ways! Mending supports relationships and leads to peerness. Mending requires an understanding of how things work. Mending calls for confidence, and is helped by cooperation. Mending requires humility. Mending challenges a throw-away culture. I have so many stories to tell!

Mending supports relationships and leads to peerness. I have been puzzled over the years by how tenacious I get in mending torn and broken possessions. Sometimes it seems ridiculous. Why not, for goodness sake, just throw them out and get something that will work?

It has occurred to me that the issue is one of relationship and service. When I buy something new, it serves me. I am in the relationship of master to that possession. I have it at will. I have placed some value on the service it can provide me, and I expect it to serve me well. If it falls short, there is no reason not to replace it.

Once I start repairing, however, there is a relational shift. Now that my time and skill have gone into making that thing whole again, the relationship is more one of peers. It serves me, and I serve it to the best of my repairing ability. Sometimes it doesn't do as well as I would wish, and sometimes my repairs are wholly inadequate—and I am the one found wanting.

The brown sweater provides a simple example. Acquired by chance, it was not a favorite piece of clothing, but a serviceable one. When I noticed a seam that was coming undone, I took a few minutes to make a neat repair, glad for the skill that made the task so easy. Later it was more seams, a small hole in the back, and a missing button. This repair took a little more time, and more ingenuity. As I studied it for anything I might have missed, I felt a new sense of connection. This sweater had a new lease on life because of my care, and I cared for it more as a result.

As I mend more, I care more. The challenge then becomes when to acknowledge that something I have cared about has come to the end of its useful life, to find a way to dispose of it fittingly, and to mourn its loss. The acquisition of a replacement is bittersweet, and brings with it all the weight of a new relationship.

But I have no regrets. I would rather have all the responsibilities of a give-and-take relationship, when I sometimes do well and sometimes fall short, than be in the role of master, surrounded by servant/slave possessions that exist at my pleasure and are likely to be discarded at the first sign of frailty. I have to admit, it can feel like I'm running a nursing home at times! Letting one of them finally go can be a relief, though bittersweet, and getting something new that works to perfection is a real treat. But I'm still glad to have the skills to prolong so many good and useful lives, and I would never want to give up that sense of peerness, and all that opportunity to care.

Mending requires an understanding of how things work. To mend something well, you have to understand how it's put together. How do the seams work in a dress? What is the process of knitting that will allow me to repair a long unraveling? How is a chair constructed? It can be hard when, in order to fix something, you have to take a first step that makes it worse. I don't mind disassembling things; if I just pay enough attention, I can usually get them back together. But with my wobbly dining room chairs I needed the support of a more experienced friend to know that, before they could be solidly reglued, I had to knock the joints completely apart. Then, once I had good access to all those pegs and holes, it was easy to know what to do.

Mending requires confidence, and confidence is enhanced by cooperation. There are some things I can't mend. I think of the time my computer was down and nobody around me could help. Though I'm generally suspicious of putting myself in the hands of people with power, the computer store seemed to offer the only hope.

So I walk into the store with my unusable computer, my need, and my suspicion. What I get is a revelation: pure help, served up with kindness on all sides—and a computer that is not only fixed but improved. Why does this rock me to my core?

Well, there's the issue of asking for and getting help: not my forte. But there's more. I think their ability to offer their help

with such warmth and generosity was rooted in confidence. They had access to solutions, and they had each other. When one part of the puzzle was outside someone's expertise, they didn't need to defend his limitations or worry about them. They knew that, together, they could do anything that was possible to be done.

I begin imagining other things that might be fixed in such an environment. Maybe children could bring their malfunctioning families to the store. They would describe the problem they were experiencing, and an employee would say, "Oh yes, we can help you with this. We know what to do. We've seen this problem before. It may take a little while, but we can straighten it out."

Or maybe people who are concerned about the climate could bring the planet to the store. They would explain what was broken, and an employee would say, "You're right; this is a bad problem. I'll have to call in all my colleagues—and actually there's a role you'll need to play here too. Let me explain the process. It will take quite a while, but don't worry. We do know just what has to be done. Let's all put our heads and hearts in that direction and do our best. More is possible than you fear."

This experience reminds me of the importance of sharing every bit of real confidence in the possibility of mending that I have. And when I don't, that's where my co-workers—my fellow human beings—can come in. What would it mean, and what would it make possible, if we all could rest in the confidence that we have each other, that together we can make any mend that is possible to be made?

Mending requires humility. Then there is the relationship that gets broken or torn or frayed around the edges. The impulse to just throw it out and get a new one can be strong. But we can practice mending here as well—acknowledging our part, saying we're sorry, listening from the heart, not giving up on ourselves or the other person.

I have struggled in a new relationship that crosses divisions of race and class. The opportunity to be close to this person is a

precious gift. I am astonished at how she moves in the world—it is so different from my experience. We take on a project together and come to a point of conflict. Wishing in every bone in my body that this were not the reality, I wade in, knowing beyond a shadow of doubt that keeping my distance could easily be a mortal blow to the life of the relationship. I do my best, but the way I approach it leaves her feeling unseen and disrespected. I feel devastated.

I listen, try to understand, hold off on my urge to explain and defend, pour out my fears to another friend, focus on the part that is mine to correct. I work to stay open to everyone's goodness, including mine, open to new perspectives and opportunities for growth, open to truth. As I learn, acknowledge, apologize, respond in the most open-hearted way I can summon, power dynamics are illuminated, the hard knot of conflict loosens, and the rift begins to mend. Incredibly, we find ourselves stronger on the other side.

Mending challenges a throw-away culture. Our economy has increasingly set us up to be unable to make repairs. Those crappy plastic toys that came into our house when the children were small, and broke soon thereafter, used to drive me crazy. (I'm sure the manufacturers count on adults preferring to buy new ones rather than having to handle the big upsets of small children!) Our electronics are intended for obsolescence as well—so much better for the company's bottom line!

I love the growing global movement for the "right to repair." Major appliances in Europe must now be produced to be repairable and recyclable. What a concept! And now, right-to-repair legislation has been introduced or passed in every state in the U.S., so consumers can fix their own electronic property, including tractors—whether through parts, software, manuals, independent repair shops, or skilled friends.

With manufacturers being required to produce with the sustainability of products and the planet in mind, we can not only cut down waste, extend product life, and support a cadre of

skilled repair people, but also reorient our whole culture to one of valuing what we have, rather than focusing always on the next new thing.

Whole new vistas open up. Maybe we can expand the categories of things we don't throw away—from phones, washers, and computers to marginalized people and small towns here at home, to whole countries that somehow can be seen as expendable. To repair assumes agency and power. What if we claimed it as a human right?

Mending is how it connects us with others, in so many different ways. It connects us with those who are skilled but often unappreciated. I imagine we all have stories we could tell about finding a human being who can actually repair things that are beyond our skills. What a gift!

I place great value on these relationships, and am never quite comfortable with a new appliance till I find someone who can keep it going. It was a pleasure to visit with and get to know the man who was so good with our washer, dryer, and stove, resting in the knowledge that I was in the very best of hands. I would hang out with him, visiting while he worked, just glad to be in his presence. And I'll never forget the sewing machine repair man who once sent home not only my repaired machine, but another one that he had on hand and thought I could use! I have a deep respect for their skills, and my life is better for knowing them.

Mending connects us with others whose need to mend is unavoidable. Here's another story: When the collar began to fray on a favorite shirt, I felt a great sense of loss—until I remembered the possibility of turning the collar. People used to do it all the time—surely I had the skills to pull it off!

Finding a moment when I could justify turning away from “more important work,” it wasn't hard at all to snip the collar loose from the rest of the shirt, sew it back on the other way, then put a little patch on the frayed part, now invisible underneath. I was so

pleased! I kept looking at it, folding that fine new collar down, running my finger over it, turning it up to see the patch that would be visible to no one but me.

Why such pleasure? As I sat with this question, it came to me that it was something about claiming my connections in time and space. It connects me to our ancestors, who knew the value of a well-made garment and mended everything as a matter of course.

It connects me to our neighbors as well, to those with less means in the present who have no choice but to mend. My partner and I have spent a lot of time in Northern Uganda. If I had slides, I would show a photo of one of the plastic chairs that can be found everywhere. A broken leg had been repaired with string woven through a series of carefully placed holes. And some of my most satisfying excursions when visiting our son in Nicaragua involved shoe repair. More than once I brought down old shoes that would be discarded as worthless here. At the market, however, we always found men who saw their value and were glad to use their skills to make a sturdy and serviceable mend.

It also connects me to our descendants. The time will arrive when we finally come to our senses and realize that we are living beyond our ecological means, when—willingly or unwillingly—we in the wealthier nations adjust our lifestyles to a level that the planet can support. When that time comes, a good shirt will have a value that may be hard to imagine in our present-day orgy of consumption and waste. Looking down that tunnel of time, I can see our descendants turning the collars of their shirts once again—and I will be with them in spirit. I just hope it might give them a fraction of the satisfaction and pleasure that it has given me.

Mending connects us with individuals whom we have cast off as “other.” In this country, where we increasingly fear and demonize the “other,” I’m heartened by stories of people who refuse to be divided from family members, but to reach across those divides and tend deeply to the relationships.

To challenge this “othering,” we have to decide to like people. We have to hold out a vision that includes them. We have to have some compassionate and respectful understanding of the ground on which their beliefs have grown. We have to cultivate the humility to be open to learning from them, even as we may continue to hold out a different perspective. If we approach this project of “de-othering” with integrity, I have to believe that nothing of enduring value will be lost. We will emerge more fully human, and our nets will be more whole.

Ultimately, an orientation toward mending connects us with everyone. A grandmother who lived not far from me, but seemed like she might have been from another world, had been in the news. Her children had been lost to drugs, killed, accused of killing. She was now raising a granddaughter, trying against all odds to keep her safe. How could she keep going amidst such violence and despair? And how could she and I, in all my ease, ever have anything in common? It came to me that I have a choice. I can feel isolated from my neighbors whose personal nets are in tatters, which I, from privilege and good fortune, have been able to avoid. Or I can expand my vision to glimpse the reality of my place in a whole world in tatters, and claim my small role, alongside her and everyone else, in the work we all have of mending.

Sometimes, we have to deal with bad mends, and take something apart so it can be put back together in a way that allows it to be whole. There was that case of my dining room chairs. I think also of nets where gaping holes have been clumsily pulled together in bunches and hard ridges in an attempt to recreate wholeness. But they don’t serve. They’ve become narrower, lost that spacious openness that a net needs to do its work of gathering in. The first task is to pull that bad mend apart.

When we’re speaking of humans, this can be painful, like opening a wound. George Yancy, in his book on racism, *Backlash*, speaks of white folks “suturing” to gain closure and control. We try to close off the parts of racism that make us too

uncomfortable, sew up those open wounds so that we can seal ourselves off from pain and otherness. The lasting mend calls us to dare to survey the damage, undo those sutures, expose and feel the pain, then do the painstaking healing work of reknitting the strands of our net—one truth, one relationship at a time.

I had my own experience of this on our fourth year in a river paddle in southern Ontario—natives and allies joining together to honor the treaties and protect our Earth. The teaching one evening was a sharing by two women—one indigenous and one settler—of their research on previous impact of the paddle. They found that the overarching theme for indigenous participants was about change, while that for the settler group was about connection. Eager to connect, we non-indigenous folks were learning that there is work to do first.

We need to *reconnect* to ourselves, to the natural world around us, and to our own roots. At the same time, we need to *disconnect* from the lures and traps of materialism and individualism in our culture, and from all the points at which we're attached, often unwarily, to narratives and systems of privilege. It's only when we are actively engaged in this process of reconnecting and disconnecting that we can find our way to our heart's desire: connecting deeply to others across the divisions that colonialism and racism have created.

If we stay fastened securely within the comfort of the status quo, deep connection with those who suffer from it can only be disruptive. Our hearts have not broken open wide enough to make space for the other. Alternatively, if we flee from our heritage and people in order to cast our lot with the oppressed, what we have left to offer may be of little use. Unrooted, we lean, dependent on the strength of others.

So this paddle down the river gives us allies the opportunity to reconnect: to the land and the water and the sky; to our muscles and skin and beating hearts; to our own goodness as we see the goodness of others like us; to our ancestors, who once knew and

loved some bit of land as intimately as indigenous people have known and loved this river.

At the same time, we have powerful motivation to disconnect from the comfortable narratives that have reassured us: that injustice to native people is safely in the past; that we, personally, are not complicit in oppressive institutions. In this process, we are both rooted and opened up. Paddling down the river together, we build our capacity to take in all the connections for which our hearts yearn.

Our national story offers another example. We have a compelling origin story—the birthplace of freedom, a land of sturdy colonists, intrepid pioneers, fierce defenders of liberty, a melting pot that offers opportunity for all.

Yet we are increasingly unable to ignore the unstable foundations or all the structural weaknesses, and some of us are ready to just throw the whole thing out in disgust. Others are clinging to it fiercely: willing it to be true ever more desperately as the weaknesses are exposed, shoring it up with intense loyalty and being angry at those who would do the exposing.

To mend our broken family story, we must do a combination of daring to face reality, reaching to understand and forgive those who were part of the breakage, working to heal what can be healed, and to retrieve and hold that which is solid and good, claiming those who can't bear to look, grieving that which is lost.

Isabel Wilkerson, in her book *Caste*, speaks of that family story and repair project through the metaphor of a house. Here we are, all living together in this old house of a country that was built centuries ago. Unconscionable things happened here before our time, and some are still happening. Regardless of whether we or our ancestors did harm, were harmed, were present to harm, or hadn't yet arrived, we are the ones who are living here now, and our house is in need of major, foundational repair.

I love the image of us all putting our shoulders to the task of repairing this old house of ours: taking on the monumental but doable work of uncovering and repairing rotten foundations; reaching into every dark corner to expose and clean out cobwebs and layers of dirt; cutting down rotting drapes, fixing and cleaning the windows to let in the light.

An orientation toward mending builds our capacities for taking on the gaping holes in our nets. I love how theologian Walter Wink invites us to claim the work of mending our broken institutions. The first step is to envision those institutions—our economy, our political system—whole. Once we have articulated their “divine vocations,” then we can see how far they have strayed, how broken they have become, and begin the process of calling them home—of mending. I love how this invitation is grounded in confidence. We know where we want to be. We are listening for and speaking from our deepest understanding of truth. We are not enslaved. We are not confused. We just have a mending job.

Whether we’re sewing a button, saying we’re sorry, or doing our part in rebuilding a broken economy or repairing our old house, the nature of the mend and the scale are less important than the vision and the intention. We’re engaged in the same process of restoring wholeness. Mostly it just requires commitment, practice, vision, and patience. Mending takes time.

And so we mend. We mend our psyches, healing from trauma and reconnecting with inner wholeness. We mend our souls, tending our wobbly orbits, our fractured moments, our frayed intentions. We tend to holes in meetings for worship, in our families, in the communities that sustain us. We mend our relationships. We mend our stories. When we don’t have the skills to do the mend by ourselves, we gather together or look for and support others who can.

The damage to our nets may appear so great that wholeness seems like an impossible dream. But I can see only two choices: to despair and give up, or to turn our lives in the direction of

mending. If we think of mending as a critical activity in our quest for a truly livable world, then every time we apologized, or repaired something rather than throwing it out, we could remember that we are building the skills, muscles, and attitudes that are needed to make our world whole again.

To go down this path means shifting the focus from our own shame or guilt, which can so easily immobilize us. It means daring to look straight at the damage and grieve the loss. It means building the relationships that are key to the repair—including with those who have been wronged. It means deciding to stay awake and alert to possibility, to stay in motion in the direction of mending.

In a way, it's breathtakingly simple. All we need is a disposition toward wholeness and a willingness to try. Walter Wink reminds us that it's not all on us. Our job is to listen for that which we are called to, to do that, no less and no more, and then to wait in quiet confidence for a miracle.

Or, as somebody else has said: "How do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time." How do we mend our nets? One repair, one connection, one knot at a time.

LEYM Annual Meeting Workshop Summaries

Session 1, Friday, June 13, 3:30

Getting into Good Trouble: Theories of the Third Side from People Who've Been There

Presented by Bill Warters (Birmingham)

Bill dug deep into his significant academic study of conflict resolution theory to extract for us five mentors/teachers from whom he learned helpful lenses to understand the dynamics of conflict resolution and identify roles peacemakers might take. We thought together in each case about how these roles fit Quaker strengths.

James Laue, a Civil Rights colleague of Martin Luther King, taught Bill that an intervener in a conflict cannot really be neutral. Instead, they should think of themselves as advocating for a particular process, a particular party to the conflict, or a particular outcome. We agreed that often Quakers can advocate for fair and inclusive *process*.

Raymond Shonholz, at heart a community organizer in San Francisco, saw conflict resolution forums as a continuum from most participatory to most coercive: direct negotiation, conciliation, mediation, arbitration, and litigation. As the level of coercion increases, the power of individuals and relationships diminishes. He trained “community boards” to listen and build capacity to manage conflicts in the early stages, before they become coercive.

William Ury, a Harvard-trained negotiator and author of the popular book *Getting to Yes*, was the inspiration for a program developed by Bill and his Wayne State students – “East Side 3rd Side” – which offered neighborhood people help with preventing, resolving, or containing disagreements.

Adam Curle, a British Quaker peacemaker, was active in large-scale international conflicts as a third-party negotiator. He

envisioned stages of change that moved from unbalanced to balanced power as awareness of conflict deepens.

George Lakey, contemporary Quaker, and subject of the movie “Citizen George,” shown during the weekend, was the founder of Movement for a New Society and more recently the Earth Quaker Action Team (EQAT). His contributions to Bill’s practice include the roles of interposition (standing between parties), protective accompaniment, observation/monitoring, and presence/modelling.

Submitted by Joann Neuroth (Red Cedar)

Quaker Mending: Recapturing Lost Values of Our Money System

Presented by John Howell (Athens)

Eighteen of us crowded into the President’s Dining Room for “Quaker Mending: Recapturing Lost Values of our Money System,” presented by John Howell. John opened this workshop by saying that we are living in a “crisis time” and added that this topic may seem very abstract but actually is extremely important.

John briefly described the work of the Alliance for Just Money, “a non-partisan organization of people of all political, vocational, philosophical, and personal viewpoints who share the common value of working together — and with individual and organizational allies who share our purpose — to achieve real monetary reform.”

John asked, “How does wealth become concentrated in this country?” Our current monetary system concentrates wealth but could be changed to function in a different way. John pointed out that Quakers are already concerned about inequity and the plight of the poor but tend not to focus on “the other end of the scale,” the extremely rich.

John listed several issuers of money (either current issuers or potential future issuers) and explained the advantages and disadvantages of each of those particular issuers.

Private Issuers of Money

1. Commercial banks, including Wall Street megabanks operating under federal regulation (current practice)
2. Commercial banks operating locally (as in the U.S. 1836–1913)
3. Non-bank corporations (under little regulation)

Public Issuers of Money

1. The Federal Reserve as our central bank (central bank digital currency proposals)
2. Public banks operating locally (e.g., Bank of North Dakota, proposed by the Public Banking Institute)
3. Community-based non-profit organizations (e.g., Berkshares and Sarafu-Credit)
4. Congress, as specified by the Constitution, acting through the Treasury Department (proposed by the Alliance for Just Money)

We concluded our workshop by discussing three questions (listed below) that are related to the larger question, “Are we Quakers concerned about the extreme concentration of wealth in private hands in our society?”

1. How does wealth become concentrated in society?
2. What processes counteract wealth concentration?
3. How do we feel about wealth concentration?

Submitted by Bob Roehm (North Columbus)

White Noise: One Meeting's Work on Racism

Presented by Chuck Esser (Central Philadelphia Meeting)

Chuck had for some years worked on racism workshops with Vanessa Julye (also of Central Philadelphia MM), but eventually they divided into leading separate workshops for Blacks and whites, and at Annual Meeting, Chuck brought the white version. The expectation was that white Quakers have little experience with integrated groups, but many of us yearned for more.

Central Philadelphia Meeting's Committee on Racial Healing and Wholeness has developed a series of queries, one of which was put to this workshop's participants for worship sharing: "How is my integrated life going this month?" As a group, we had difficulty answering this, especially narrowing it down to "this month." Some of us drew on a much longer personal history, citing successes and failures. Friends spoke of acknowledging everyone's humanity, seeking out conversations and appreciating a Black friend's willingness to tell them when they did something offensive, having friendly exchanges with Black neighbors, providing meals at a Black church, and joy that a Black Friend who attended Annual Meeting last year returned this year.

A second query asked what each of us is best equipped to do, given our skills and circumstances. This seemed even harder to answer, one Friend stating that they learn something every day but are still ill-equipped to effect change.

Friends in our initial group of eight were all white, but late-comers included a Black Friend, who has been surrounded by whites for most of his life and is trying to integrate his life more. He had more inter-racial relationships before retiring than now.

We were left with more queries to consider as we continue the effort to expand inter-racial connections: "What would I like to try in the next month?" and "What action shall I take next?"

Submitted by Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor)

Session 2, Saturday, June 14, 10:30

**Revitalizing Your Networks Through
Intergenerational Events**

Presented by Ruth Cutcher (Durango, CO MM, QVS) and Jackie Lamars (Pittsburgh)

In keeping with the Annual Meeting theme, this workshop addressed mending nets across generations, and quickly asked participants to pair up with someone of a different generation and seek common threads, some of which were surprising. The leaders noted a surge in younger attenders among several Meetings, be they children or young adults.

As a first exercise, we were asked to introduce ourselves to the whole group and identify ways of integrating young Friends into a Meeting and related concerns. Among the intergenerational events mentioned were soup kitchen work, community dances, Quakerism 101, First Day School activities, fixing up a nursery, skill-share meetings (on changing a tire, baking bread, etc.), PowerPoint parties, in which Friends share something about a topic they love, dinners for YAFs prepared by older adults, and “pop-up pizza picnics in the park.”

In a second exercise, we stood in a circle and the leaders introduced a large ball of what might be called “chunky yarn” or “soft rope,” which, as it was tossed randomly from one person to another, slowly unraveled, linking us together through miscellaneous patterns. After the group recognized the connectivity/strength of the resulting web, some Friends were asked to let go and others to pick up the slack, thereby creating a new web – a metaphor for Meetings losing older members and rebuilding with younger Friends in a new structure.

A challenge in our Meetings is how to welcome both old-timers and newcomers. Both the workshop leaders work for Quaker Voluntary Service (QVS), where much mending is needed in intentional communities of young adult Friends. Mutually

beneficial activities match older and younger Friends for monthly Spiritual nurturing. Activities for children include crafts and singing. Requirements for leading programs for children are finding reliable teachers, writing safety policies, and running background checks.

Other topics addressed in the workshop included communications and technology (establishing an online presence), activism as a gateway to spiritual communities, and using the language of the generation we wish to attract. The leaders demonstrated a template for matching skill sets with needs and for communicating with people in colleges and universities. Jackie invites Friends to reach out to her (jackie@quakervoluntaryservice.org) for social media support for their Meeting or assistance in attracting Young Adult Friends online; similarly, Ruth (ruth@quakervoluntaryservice.org) can provide support in making connections with colleges or universities near Meetings.

Submitted by Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor)

Speaking Our Truth: What Canst Thou Say?

Presented by Pamela Haines (Central Philadelphia MM)

Pamela's presentation explored our understanding of truth and the ways it is communicated. We began by sharing what in our culture and environment discourages speaking truth, including our own lack of clarity, gender programming, or the desire to protect oneself by "buffering" behind someone else's truth. We included emergent fears such as state power or the need to combat disinformation (focusing on what's not true, as opposed to what is).

We recognized that sometimes our own truth is revealed internally through individual discernment, and other times emerges gradually in conversation with others, or to oneself through another's attentive listening. Some participants felt that the concept of truth was difficult to align with their lived experiences of continuing revelation.

We then considered the costs of not speaking our truth, ranging from frustration and health issues to “stuckness;” without knowing where you stand, or where a group stands, it is difficult to understand where the next step should take you.

We shared stories of times we have witnessed truth-speaking, including individuals blossoming into their wholeness within a transgender rights support group and the image of a single man standing in front of a tank in Tiananmen Square. We also acknowledged that, for some who have been repeatedly marginalized and victimized, sharing their truth can come at great emotional cost.

We were invited to formulate, stand, and briefly share an individual truth. We noted the profound energy this exercise evoked.

Pamela’s presentation included short samples of her original poetry. She – and at least one other participant in the workshop – understand poetry as one way truth is exposed and shared.

Submitted by Susan Loucks (Pittsburgh)

Make a Surprising Spiral Circle Book!

Presented by Wink Covintree (Birmingham)

Among the 11 workshops offered at Annual Meeting this year, the one that took my fancy was Wink Covintree’s “Make a Surprising Spiral Circle Book!” Having known Wink for over 50 years and appreciating what a fun, creative person she is, I was there early and glad, because eventually, there were no empty chairs in the room!

The supplies were all assembled and ready. We were provided with scissors and glue and instructed to choose four paper circles in different colors. Then we were given instructions on how to create these indeed surprising circular books. We all got busy amid much talk and laughter. I believe everyone was able to make at least one circular book, some two or three. A few

creative people were able to create a truly spiral paper wall hanging, which they proudly showed off.

Wink explained how to write a story, a poem, or whatever around the inside of the book. One of mine ended up being a Grief Book, with phrases from Megan Devine's book *It's OK That You're Not OK*. Wink also provided special bags for each new book.

Several of us made plans to take this project home to our Meetings and/or our families. It was a joyful time well spent in our Annual Meeting community.

Submitted by Flo Friender (Kalamazoo)

Power of Enough

Presented by Nathan Kleban. Right Sharing of World Resources.

The theme of the workshop was, "How can I balance my time and energy to do God's work in the world?" The topic was explored through a number of queries. In some cases, participants responded with short comments in an open session; in others, participants were broken up into pairs to explore a query in more detail. The queries/exercises included:

- What do I need in my life? What is essential?
- Share a story from your life that shaped your perspective on need versus want.
- How did culture and economic system impact your story?
- Describe three situations: (1) when you had too little; (2) when you had too much; (3) when you had just enough.
- Reflect on a time things were in balance. What was going on internally and externally?
- What new habit will support me to be in a "power of enough" space?

Submitted by Christopher Farrand (Cleveland)

Session 3, Saturday, June 14, 3:30

Understanding Power in Flat Organizations: We Aren't In Traffic, We Are Traffic

Presented by Susan Loucks (Pittsburgh)

Whenever I am stuck in traffic these days (always as a passenger, as I am a non-driver), I am reminded of the title of Susan Loucks' workshop: "We Aren't IN Traffic, We ARE Traffic." In other words, all of us are participants — whether or not that reality is our wish — in all of our current situations.

To quote from a description of a previous version of this workshop, "Quaker meetings are ideally places where power is shared broadly. However, we come conditioned by power relationships in society, carrying complicated relationships with authority. When we don't understand how power works – or how it could be working – we can fall into unhealthy habits."

At the beginning of this workshop, participants were asked to write on pieces of paper (1) what they believe about power and/or (2) what they believe that Quakers believe about power. "Power," for the purpose of the workshop, had been defined as the "ability to act or produce an effect" and the "possession of control, authority, or influence over others." Several minutes later, we were asked to share and discuss with the rest of the group what we had previously written on our pieces of paper.

We briefly discussed how Quakers respond to those who try to "take over" Quaker Meetings. We then considered the origin of the phrase "Speak Truth to Power," which originated with a pamphlet, "Speak Truth to Power: a Quaker Search for an Alternative to Violence," published by the AFSC in 1955 (see <https://quaker.org/legacy/sttp.html>).

We next discussed at length a list of "Power Archetypes" and their traits:

Victim: Helpless, depleted. Puts responsibility for personal needs on others.

Warrior: Defined in relationship to the powers they oppose. Hypervigilant. Anxious.

Bystander: Chooses not to engage or act. Allows the dominant force to prevail.

Leader: Personally grounded, promotes connections for others. Uses power to shape and do.

Creator: Spiritual Power. Equanimity and ease. Generosity. Space for everything. Flow.

Of course, no Quaker discussion about “power” would be complete without this quotation from George Fox: “I told them . . . that I lived in the virtue of that life and power that took away the occasion of all wars.”

Submitted by Bob Roehm (North Columbus)

Weaving Safety Nets from Community Fabric

Presented by Kenny Matthews (AFSC, West Virginia)

When the scheduled leader of this workshop, Lewis Webb (AFSC), had to cancel at the last moment, Kenny Matthews raced up from West Virginia to take his place. Kenny is the AFSC Program Associate for the [West Virginia Economic Justice Project](#). In an energetic presentation, he described his work addressing poverty and criminal law issues.

From the WVEJ website: “WVEJ works to create and defend policies that will enhance quality of life for West Virginians. We accomplish this through legislative advocacy, public education, strategic organizing, and coalition building.” Working in a deeply red state, Kenny has learned how to engage legislators and protect people’s liberties, focusing on issues such as legal aid, housing needs, social services, food, and utilities—many *nets*.

Much work is focused on addressing *capias* warrants, in which an arrest warrant is issued for failing to appear in court.

Emphasizing the need to control the narrative, Kenny asked, “What stories do people *hear*?” He repeatedly spoke of doing “homework” and asset mapping – getting to know legislators and their voting propensities, and learning which ones might be persuaded to break with their party because of their professed values and goals. He works with organizations and individuals to develop coalitions and disseminate information through networks.

West Virginia has few people considered to be immigrants, but Black people there fear being deported, and the AFSC staff has created a narrative to promote safety. Personal connections are important and can counter the power of “big bucks.” Doing research to learn who can move specific legislators and partnering with persons having this skill can lead to coalitions among people who might typically disagree with one another.

Submitted by Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor)

Right Relationship and Public Ministry in the Religious Society of Friends: The War For and Against Quakers

Presented by Windy Cooler, Friends Incubator for Public Ministry

Windy Cooler first described how she was called to public ministry over the concern about interfamily violence among Friends, growing out of an abusive marriage. When she first approached her Meeting’s Ministry and Care committee, she received only money and the name of a lawyer and was told that the Meeting couldn’t help her. She felt rejected by “the good people.” She heard similar stories from others.

When she first began to travel to talk about interpersonal violence, an elder in her Meeting told her she was a “public minister.” Her reaction was that it was a threat to be called a public minister.

Although she was considered a public minister, she received no support from her Meeting. She felt that she was in the same kind of situation in the Meeting as she had been in her marriage.

This led her to no longer see her ministry as being about interpersonal violence, but about “right relationship.” She referred to Marty Grundy’s “Tall Poppies: Supporting Gifts of Ministry and Eldering in the Monthly Meeting” (Pendle Hill Pamphlet #347) as a helpful resource.

When a Meeting issues a “travel minute,” it means that it has united with you. The travel minute spells out the calling of the public minister. This is identified through meeting with a clearness committee. A travel minute establishes accountability between the public minister and the Meeting: right relationship. When one goes to the Meeting to discern one’s ministry, “this is serious.” If the Meeting tells you it can’t hold you in its care, it means it can’t provide you with support.

Windy now travels in the ministry with the support of a committee for her Friends Incubator for Public Ministry. She now has resources.

The workshop had a period of worship sharing around the query, “What is my ministry in my Meeting (public or non-public)?” A number of participants spoke out about their own callings and their relationship with their Meeting and how Windy’s description of her experience in ministry provided points for reflection on their own callings to ministry.

Windy asked, “What is ministry?” Ministry is a reconciliation of the Truth. Grief ends with acceptance. Acceptance is a profound experience of the Truth.

Submitted by Christopher Farrand (Cleveland)

Quaker Values in the Immigration Courtroom

Presented by Brian Hoffman (Wooster)

Brian gave us an insightful sketch of immigration law and a brief tour of his remarkable career in using that law to help refugees and asylum seekers. Refugees are away from their home country, many in refugee camps such as the Kakuma camp of 300,000 in northwest Kenya. Asylum seekers are already in the country where they seek refuge, many now in detention camps.

Brian's work with asylum seekers began as a private immigration practice before he established, in 2020, a 501(c)(3) organization, the **Ohio Center for Strategic Litigation & Outreach (ocsilio.org)** as a basis for his pro bono practice providing legal services to people in immigration custody in Ohio. Asylum seekers do not qualify for any government benefits and are usually not allowed to work. Brian's work has taken him to a 55-acre detention camp in Dilley, Texas, where there were many families with infants (2400 beds with 600 officers and guards) – referred to as “baby jail.” He went on to work with the Southern Poverty Law Center at a notorious private prison in Georgia.

Brian explained that, in 1968, the U.S. ratified the Protocol of the League of Nations' Convention relating to the International Status of Refugees, but immigration law has been handled, not in the federal court system, but by a separate system of 60–70 courts run by the Department of Justice. Its judges are political actors hired by the Department of Justice, changing with each administration. Its “basic due process” provides no right to an attorney unless you can pay for it and no right to remain silent. Rules of evidence don't apply, and, instead of being assumed innocent until proven guilty by the prosecution, one is assumed deportable until one provides proof to the contrary.

Brian shared the stories of three asylum seekers he had helped in the courtroom. None of them actually got to present their cases, but two were allowed to stay in the U.S. Those present at the

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workshop saw a wonderful spirit undergirding Brian's work, a powerful expression of Quaker values in a system stacked against those seeking refuge in this country.

Submitted by John Howell (Athens)

History and Description of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting

Established: Association of Friends Meetings, 1939; Association and Yearly Meeting, 1963; Yearly Meeting with Associate Members, 1969

Membership: 588 adult members (as of August 2025)

Meetings: 1 Quarterly Meeting, 19 Monthly Meetings, and 6 Worship Groups

Central Address: Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, c/o Ann Arbor Friends Meeting, 1420 Hill Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48104

Publications: *LEYM Bulletin*, 3 times a year; *Annual Records*, annually; *Advices & Queries*; *Policies and Procedures*

Website: <http://leym.org>

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting began in 1939 as an association of Friends Meetings in Ohio, Michigan, western Pennsylvania, and West Virginia. It became a Yearly Meeting within the Association in 1963, and changed to a Yearly Meeting with associate meetings in 1969. All associated meetings are now part of the Yearly Meeting. The Annual Meeting is for inspiration and fellowship, with business meeting for consideration of basic policies; committee reports and responses to concerns brought by committees; and the naming of officers, representatives to Friends' organizations, and standing committees.

A Representative Meeting is held in the spring to handle business that has arisen since the previous Annual Sessions and to consider and season matters for the next Annual Sessions.

At present, the following standing committees are active: Advancement & Outreach, Arrangements & Site, Executive, Finance, Ministry & Nurture, Nominating, Peace & Justice, Program, Publications & Archives, and Youth & Children.

HISTORY AND CHRONOLOGY

These committees meet and consult throughout the year to carry on the work of the Yearly Meeting. Committees of concern are set up as the occasion arises, made up of those persons under the weight of that concern, and are laid down when their work is complete.

Committees and representatives to Friends' organizations report to Annual Meeting and through the *Bulletin* and *Annual Records*. Electronic distribution of the *Bulletin* is the main means of distribution, supplemented by mailing several hard copies to each Monthly Meeting. The Lake Erie Yearly Meeting *Policies and Procedures* manual is revised from time to time. Since 1985, all member Meetings have been invited to participate in an annual process of responding to a set of queries, usually developed by the Ministry & Nurture Committee, on concerns arising from the membership. Summaries of the responses are published in the *Bulletin* and/or the *Annual Records*.

The focus of the Yearly Meeting budget is on supporting member Meetings, youth and children of the Yearly Meeting, and individuals engaged in spiritual formation and other ministries. The Yearly Meeting supports Olney Friends School in Barnesville, Ohio. The Yearly Meeting does not donate directly to Friends' organizations outside our region other than Friends General Conference. All member Meetings and worship groups, and individual Friends, are encouraged to make contributions to these organizations.

LEYM values and interacts with the work of the local Meetings as well as national and worldwide Quaker organizations; accordingly, it has not developed an administrative structure requiring a paid staff except for a digital communications facilitator, a database manager, and, when needed, a coordinator for the Teen Retreat program.

The one Quarterly Meeting within LEYM, Green Pastures, consisting of seven Monthly Meetings and two Worship Groups in Lower Michigan, shares some program activity with Lake Erie Yearly Meeting. GPQM has financial and interactive relationships with the Michigan Area office of the American Friends Service Committee in Ypsilanti.

HISTORY AND CHRONOLOGY

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Chronology

Year	Location	Clerks	Comments
1939	Cleveland		Great Lakes Regional Meeting organized
1940	Ann Arbor (Lane Hall)		
1941	Columbus		
1942	Pittsburgh		“Fourth Annual Great Lakes Regional Conference, New and United Meetings”
1943	No record found		
1944	Cleveland		
1945	No record found		
1946	No record found		
1947	Patterson Lake, MI (Ann Arbor-Detroit)		
1948	Camp Wise (Cleveland-Oberlin)		
1949	Delaware (Columbus)		
1950	Camp Lutherlyn (Pittsburgh)		
1951	Green Pastures (AA-Detroit)		
1952	Hiram House Camp (Cleveland)	Winthrop Leeds	FWCC—Oxford, England; Sheldon and Lucy Clark, Dick McCoy, Dorothy Kinsey, Ruth Hyde
1953	Columbus		
1954	Camp Lutherlyn (Pittsburgh)		
1955	Green Pastures (AA-Detroit)	Martin Cobin	FWCC Statement of “Objectives and Organization of the Lake Erie Association” adopted
1956	Friends Boarding School (“Olney”)	Bill Bliss	Sunday dinner was 85¢.

HISTORY AND CHRONOLOGY

1957	Wilmington College	Isabel Bliss	
1958	Friends Boarding School ("Olney")	Bernard Gross	FWCC—Bad Pymont, Germ.; Florence Shute, Bill Preis. Budget 1958-59: \$475
1959	Wilmington College	Dick Stow	
1960	Camp Mary Orton (N. Columbus)	William Johnson	
1961	Friends Boarding School ("Olney")	Howard Harris	LEYM <i>Bulletin</i> started. Elise Boulding first editor. FWCC—Kenya; Margaret Utterbeck, Winifred Crossman
1962	Wilmington and Waynesville (with Indiana YM)	Bob Blood	
1963	Friends Boarding School ("Olney")	Bob Blood	Lake Erie Yearly Mtg formed within Lake Erie Association
1964	Wilmington College	Howard McKinney	FWCC-Ireland; Bill and Isabel Bliss. Pittsburgh joins LEYM. Delaware first new MM in LEYM.
1965	Malone College, Canton, OH	Howard McKinney	Kent becomes MM. Oberlin joins LEYM. Cleveland joins both LEYM and Ohio (Cons.) YM.
1966	Wilmington College	Esther Ewald	Adopted statement urging U.S. withdrawal from Vietnam.
1967	Friends Boarding School ("Olney")	Esther Ewald	LEYM affiliated with FGC. FWCC-Guilford; Rilma Buckman, Helen Healy
1968	Bluffton College	Flora McKinney	Approved minute opposing conscription.
1969	Bluffton College	Flora McKinney	"Association" dropped from name. Ground broken for Friends' School in Detroit's permanent building.
1969	Bluffton College	Flora McKinney	

HISTORY AND CHRONOLOGY

1970	Bluffton College	Flora McKinney	FWCC-Sweden; Flora and Howard McKinney; Bill Bliss
1971	Bluffton College	Flora McKinney	
1972	Ann Arbor	Rilma Buckman	
1973	Friends Boarding School ("Olney")	Rilma Buckman	FWCC—Sydney, AU. Paul Reagan, Dorothy Bower
1974	Hiram College	Rilma Buckman	Broadmead accepted as MM.
1975	Hiram College	Ralph Liske	<i>Procedures</i> of LEYM adopted
1976	Hiram College	Ralph Liske	FWCC—Hamilton, ONT.
1977	Hiram College	Ralph Liske	
1978	Hiram College	Ralph Liske	Membership passed 1000; budget reached \$4000.
1979	Hiram College	Sam Prellwitz	FWCC—Gwatt, Switzerland; Benton Meeks, Evelyn Culver
1980	Hiram College	Sam Prellwitz	
1981	Olney Friends School	Sam Prellwitz, Claire Davis	
1982	Defiance College	Claire Davis, Sam Prellwitz	
1983	Olney Friends School	Claire Davis, Isabel Bliss	
1984	Defiance College	Isabel Bliss, Claire Davis	
1985	Olney Friends School	Isabel Bliss, Dick Taylor	FWCC—Mexico; Thomas Taylor
1986	Defiance College	Dick Taylor, Isabel Bliss	
1987	Olney Friends School	Dick Taylor, Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon	
1988	Bluffton College	Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon, Dick Taylor	FWCC—Tokyo; Jean Stuntz, Terry Landoll

HISTORY AND CHRONOLOGY

1989	Olney Friends School	Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon, Marty Grundy	
1990	Bluffton College	Marty Grundy, Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon	
1991	Olney Friends School	Marty Grundy Pat Campbell	FWCC World Conference – Netherlands, Honduras, Kenya. Claire Davis, Patricia Thomas, John Musgrave, C. Ravaçon-Mershon, Dick Taylor
1992	Olney Friends School	Pat Campbell Marty Grundy	
1993	Bluffton College	Pat Campbell Damon Hickey	
1994	Bluffton College	Damon Hickey Pat Campbell	FWCC—Albuquerque, NM; Rosemary Coffey, Joyce Balderston
1995	Bluffton College	Damon Hickey John Howell	<i>Adopted LEYM Policies and Procedures</i>
1996	Bluffton College	Damon Hickey John Howell	
1997	Bluffton College	John Howell Damon Hickey	FWCC—Birmingham, Eng.; R. Coffey (repl. Rosemary Lore), Merry Stanford
1998	Bluffton College	John Howell Janet Smith	
1999	Bluffton College	Janet Smith, John Howell	
2000	Bluffton College	Janet Smith, Don Nagler	FWCC—Geneva Point, NH; Beth Joy Blackbird, Richard Lee. First <i>Annual Records</i> published in booklet form.
2001	Bluffton College	Don Nagler Janet Smith	Commemorated on the web in photos by Bill Hummon with Plenary Address by Marty Grundy: <i>Thoughts on the Relationship Between an Individual and the Meeting</i>

HISTORY AND CHRONOLOGY

2002	Bluffton College	Don Nagler, Sally Weaver Sommer	
2003	Bluffton College	Sally Weaver Sommer, Don Nagler	
2004	Bluffton College	Sally Weaver Sommer, Michael Fuson	FWCC—Auckland, NZ; Zig Dermer, Margaret Kanost
2005	Bluffton Univ.	Michael Fuson, Sally Weaver Sommer	
2006	Bluffton Univ.	Michael Fuson, Shirley Bechill	
2007	Bluffton Univ.	Shirley Bechill, Michael Fuson	First Adult Young Friends Group. FWCC—Dublin, Ireland. Raelyn Joyce, Mike Hinshaw
2008	Bluffton Univ.	Shirley Bechill Merry Stanford	Holland accepted as MM
2009	Bluffton Univ.	Merry Stanford Shirley Bechill	Scholarships assist first-time attenders.
2010	Bluffton Univ.	Merry Stanford Peggy Daub	Family attendance encouraged by meeting later in summer and free attendance for young Friends (through age 18).
2011	Bluffton Univ.	Peggy Daub Merry Stanford	Presentations and entertainment offered from within LEYM.
2012	Bluffton Univ.	Peggy Daub, Rebecca Morehouse	High School retreat held at and during Annual Sessions.
2013	Bluffton Univ.	Peggy Daub, Sally Weaver Sommer	50 th anniversary celebration. Work camp held before Annual Meeting.
2014	Bluffton Univ.	Sally Weaver Sommer, Peggy Daub	Three-day work camp in Detroit preceding Annual Meeting.

HISTORY AND CHRONOLOGY

2015	Bluffton Univ.	Sally Weaver Sommer, Mike Holaday	Plenary Address: <i>Unconventional Joy: The Scandalous Ministry of Befriending</i> , by Merry Stanford.
2016	Bluffton Univ.	Mike Holaday, Sally Weaver Sommer	FWCC--World Plenary in Pisac, Peru; Jana Norlin, C. Ravaçon-Mershon
2017	Bluffton Univ.	Mike Holaday, [none]	Plenary address and three workshops presented by young adult Friends.
2018	Bluffton Univ.	Nancy Reeves Mike Holaday	Plenary address by Yvette Shipman. Steps to “green” Annual Meeting meals.
2019	Bluffton Univ.	Nancy Reeves Jo Posti	Plenary address by Joyce Ajilouny. Harassment Policy approved.
2020	Virtual (Zoom)	Jo Posti Nancy Reeves	Covid-19 pandemic necessitated online meeting.
2021	Virtual (Zoom)	Jo Posti Susan Loucks	Plenary address by Paula Palmer: <i>From Truth to Healing with Native Peoples</i> .
2022	Virtual (Zoom)	Susan Loucks Jo Posti	Theme “Many Roots, One Tree” interwoven throughout sessions. Plenary address by Christian Acemah, Head of Olney Friends School.
2023	Ashland Univ., Ashland, OH and virtual (Zoom)	Susan Loucks [none]	Theme “Navigating Anew” apt for new location. Plenary address by Emily Provance. 60th anniversary.
2024	Ashland Univ. and virtual (Zoom)	Susan Loucks [none]	Theme “Friends Together: Outpourings of the Spirit.” Plenary presentation by Paulette Meier on Contemplative Communal Chant. FWCC – Johannesburg, South Africa; Ellerie Brownfain

HISTORY AND CHRONOLOGY

2025	Ashland Univ. and virtual (Zoom)	Joe Mills Jack Smith	Theme: “Mending Our Nets.” Plenary address by Pamela Haines. Some Friends held a peace vigil on campus and/or joined a “No Kings” protest in town, while others held them in the Light.
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*First compiled by Leonora Cayard (Pittsburgh) in 2001; updated
by Annual Records editors since 2005.*

Meetings and Worship Groups

State of the Meeting Reports

Ministry & Nurture Committee's Suggested Guidelines for State of the Meeting Reports

Having a meeting to discuss the state of a Monthly Meeting is a traditional and valuable activity for Meetings. There is an old Quaker greeting that is something like, "How is it with thy Spirit, Friend?" This is the question one might ask in a State of the Meeting discussion: "How is it with the Spirit of your Meeting, Friends?"

It's an occasion for members to gather and consider if the Meeting is a boon to their individual and communal lives. It's an opportunity to consider the structures and activities of your Meeting, and to ask if these are meeting the needs of your members.

In the past, Ministry & Nurture Committee has provided questions that Meetings might use to structure the discussion, but answering these questions may limit the range of discussion. The topics mentioned in the questions, such as vocal ministry, quality of the silence, work of committees, and support of members, may be instructive but may also limit the range of responses.

This last year, we invited Meetings to be more creative, and the challenge was met! It is helpful, though, to have at least some of the report in language that the computer can translate.

Primarily, we ask for your participation and response. The summary and the individual reports all become part of the *Annual Records*, published in the fall. Themes that emerge from the reports are used by Ministry & Nurture as guidelines for where we can be of use to Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups, and possibly to structure our queries for the coming year.

Due Date: The State of the Meeting Report is to be sent to the clerk of LEYM's Ministry & Nurture Committee and to the editor of the *LEYM Annual Records* by Fifth Month, 15th Day (May 15), of each year.

Akron State of the Meeting Report 2025

Akron Friends are saddened and troubled by the state of our country and the world today. Our concerns, both as a Meeting and as individual Friends, lead us to use whatever gifts we have to alleviate the effects of our imperfect world. Some members work to aid and support immigrants and Muslims in our community, and some also work to abolish the death penalty in Ohio.

In order to keep ourselves grounded, Friends take turns selecting a query each month for worship sharing. This practice has been valuable in that the query and Friends' responses often linger with us long after the worship sharing.

As a small (but now growing) Meeting, we have long labored over how to attract new attenders. In this year of tumult and uncertainty, we have learned something important. It isn't about what the Meeting needs. It's about how the Meeting can provide acceptance and support for newcomers who share our concerns. This year, we are pleased to welcome two new regular attenders and several Friends who attend occasionally. We are appreciative and glad that they have chosen to share worship and fellowship with us.

In spite of the world's current challenges, we remember the words of one of our late founding members, Adele Looney. We have many reasons to be delighted to be Quakers.

Ann Arbor Meeting
Spiritual State of the Meeting Report, April 2025

Quality of worship and spiritual development: The Ann Arbor Meeting has experienced growth and development in the last year, and finds itself happily growing in numbers and experiencing deep ministry.

Our meetings for worship provide sustenance and support for us. Friends say the worship feels increasingly settled and they experience covered meetings. During the past year, we have heard new voices in ministry, including those of a younger generation, and that helps each of us understand how others experience Spirit. Children join worship for 15 minutes at the beginning of our later worship, and it is a joy to see even the youngest become more practiced in settling into the quiet. Inviting the sharing of joys and sorrows near the end of the time of worship is a precious way for us to share our deep feelings and leads to a sense of being in community with one another.

Our Committee on Ministry and Counsel organized forums on ministry and eldering to help us grow in our discernment and worship practices. Our Membership and Outreach Committee organized three forums that helped us understand our experience as Quakers in three concentric circles, including our individual experiences, our experiences in community, and how we engage with the wider world. Many individuals have participated in other opportunities for growth in the Spirit, including Spiritual Companioning groups, Spiritual Formation, Reading & Discussion, and training in Alternatives to Violence and Nonviolent Communication skills.

Growth of the Meeting and sense of community: We have continued to see increasing numbers of Young Adult Friends and young families with children in our Meeting. What is truly a blessing to us is that they have gradually become full participants in the life of the Meeting, sharing ministry, serving on committees, volunteering for service, and presenting forums, in addition to building fellowship within the Young Adult Friends

and family groups. With a growing First Day School, we hired a person to provide support for the Committee for Children and Families, a position that had been unfilled for several years. The consistent attention this person can give, along with work from many others, has led to increasing stability and cohesion in planning lessons and activities. We also increased the hours of childcare on Sunday mornings to include the time of early worship and between meetings.

Many other groups and committees contribute to building us into a stronger community by organizing refreshments, caring for Friends who have physical or other needs, walking, singing, and canoeing together, and caring for those who live in Quaker House (who have developed their own successful community).

Some new people have come to Meeting through the efforts of our Membership and Outreach Committee, such as being on campus (sometimes giving away cookies) and scheduling regular discussions of Quakerism open to all. Other visitors may come because they have heard about or seen actions of conscience taken by Friends in the community. Some become regular attenders and appreciate the opportunity for a spiritual context for their lives. We welcomed five new members of our Meeting this year.

Our Meeting lost four longtime, active members with the deaths of Alan Connor, Catherine McClary, Anne Ogren, and Ruth Zweifler. Each of them made their lives speak among Friends and in the wider community, and we miss them.

Defining our community and difficulty reaching unity:

Having larger numbers of a younger generation in our community has led to additional energy and more perspectives. A Friend recently said that we feel like a living community, not a fossilized one. We have healthy attendance at our two meetings for worship each Sunday, with some people attending online and others in person, plus a steady flow of visitors and returning newish attenders. We are seeking ways to nourish the different needs of a more diverse group and continue to build stronger

links between us. Although the Meeting considered a detailed statement on Spiritual Community prepared by an ad hoc committee this year, there is a sense that we have not yet reached unity on defining “Who is our community?”

We continue to wrestle with questions of how to make our meetings for worship inviting and comfortable for all when we have varying needs. We have welcomed people into our community who attend exclusively online, while other Friends attend online or in person as needs dictate week to week. There are some among us who feel so much discomfort that it disrupts their ability to worship when there is an online presence in worship. A solution of how to schedule these different types of worship to meet conflicting needs has not been found. We have experienced angry and hurtful outbursts in our business meetings when searching for an answer. Some people are impatient. Some have stayed away from meeting for worship. We pray that we can learn how to be present and tender with each other so we can seek a way forward and avoid hurting people more. We have held several general gatherings, variously named threshing sessions and listening sessions, and continue to seek paths for discerning our way together. A Friend pointed out that the positive side of this is that we have many people who want to be present in worship and who care deeply about our Meeting.

We continue to work on healing from the sexual harassment episode our Meeting experienced a few years ago. An ad hoc group is working on ways to make early reporting of incidents simple and clear. We also find that our community is not immune to the polarization and anger felt throughout much of American society today. One committee reports that they sometimes have a harder time working together and finding agreement, although some committees feel deep spirituality in doing their work.

Ministry of our committee work and doing the work of the meeting: Last year our State of the Meeting Report raised a question of whether our committee structure was outdated for

our times and suggested trying to envision new ways to care for and nurture our faith community. Our structure seems to be evolving slowly to meet needs as they arise. When Nominating Committee was not able to propose conveners for several committees, at least two committees chose to rotate or share the clerking/convening responsibilities among members. We have increasingly used ad hoc committees to take on particular concerns. One committee, Peace and Social Justice, has encouraged fluidity in its subgroups that focus on particular issues as they are deemed to be priorities by members. This approach has served us well, especially for young adults who participate.

The Finance Committee experienced a major turnover in personnel, as the committee convener, treasurer, bookkeeper, and Meeting worker all retired from their positions during the year. Continuity has been maintained by focused training and mentoring by the retirees for the new people in the positions, several of whom are relatively new to the Meeting as well as to the committee. The Meeting is in a stable financial condition. As our building ages and volunteer labor is often less available than in the past, the Property Committee reminds us that we need to face conceptual issues, balancing repair and replacement and questioning how we measure cost and value in the context of our stewardship of the physical property.

Marriage under the care of the Meeting: This year, for the first time in many years, we have approved two marriages under the care of the Meeting. Quaker House residents Elliott Brannon and Luiza Duarte Caetano were married in August. The marriage of Brendan Ireland and Teeth will take place in May 2025. Both requests for marriage included a statement that the couple are in non-monogamous relationships. We reached unity on accepting the recommendations of the clearness committees that these particular marriages be taken under the care of the Meeting, and joyfully celebrated the marriage commitments with the couples. We continue to discern what it means for a marriage to be “under the care of” the Meeting, recognizing that every marriage is an

“experiment” and that we do not always reach our aspirational goal of continuing to be a source of care and support for a marriage after the ceremony.

Interacting with the world outside of AAFM: In these times of division and political upheaval, many of us find the Meeting gives us a solid spiritual base from which we can do work in the world. It is both a retreat and respite, helping us find spiritual renewal and recommitment. Many Friends live their testimonies through their actions in other community organizations, some as representatives of the Meeting, some as individuals.

After our Meeting’s large contribution last year toward homeland return of the Woolman School property to the Nisenan tribe, the ad hoc Reparative Justice committee spent much of this year discerning and seasoning how to define and approach reparative justice going forward. The Meeting has now united in establishing a reserve fund for reparative justice and supporting, with our money and our time, three organizations that are working to address the debt owed by society to persons harmed by structural and systemic injustice.

The Peace and Social Justice Committee has had an active year. The Meeting used the Sol Metz Palestinian Travel Fund to sponsor three individuals, Levi Pierpont from our Meeting and two Friends from New England Yearly Meeting, to travel to Israel-Palestine for the purposes of fostering peace, justice, and reconciliation. Other ongoing projects include advocacy and support work for prisoners, support for education in East Africa, and, in coordination with the Earthcare Committee, support for organizations addressing issues affecting indigenous people in Michigan. The Meeting hosted an overnight shelter for a week in December and a daytime warming shelter for two weeks in March. Both provided an opportunity for Friends to interact directly with other community members. Our guest in sanctuary continues to be in good personal health and comfort, but we and he remain vigilant for his protection and safety in the current atmosphere of fear and uncertainty.

As we go forward, we recognize that many Friends have felt an energy for growth and transformation within our Meeting, an aliveness with possibility. Can that energy help us live into the challenge of deepening our commitment to our faith and letting our lives speak more powerfully and with more integrity, as expressions and reflections of Quaker values and Quaker testimonies? In these fractious and emotionally charged times, our Meeting seems especially called to learn how to practice the peace testimony with one another. Can we learn to deal with conflicts that arise among us, and use the transformation of those conflicts to build a deeper and stronger sense of spiritual community?

Athens Friends Meeting 2025 State of the Meeting Report

Our Meeting is growing in numbers and in its sense of solidarity and community. Meeting for worship, with its tradition of silent waiting, is a central source of strength, comfort, and joy. Additional sources have been important too. Sharings of members' and attenders' personal spiritual journeys during our second hour have been deep and rich. A once-a-month 20-minute period of sharing after meeting for worship that we have called worship-sharing has helped keep us in touch with one another. Our potluck meals together on the fourth Sunday of each month, when we also celebrate birthdays, also bring us together. Smaller gatherings, Quaker 8's, offer further opportunities for being together. Many Friends love singing prior to meeting for worship, usually only 15 minutes, but for a full hour once a month, finding it a ministry of music. Holding Meeting at Dow Lake once a month during the summer has been much appreciated. A second worship group is held at the United Campus Ministry Building next to the Ohio University campus at 5 pm, on the first and third Sundays, with a period of worship, followed by sharing and discussion.

We seem to be effective in making newcomers feel welcome, seen, and heard. We have a new welcome sheet describing the

Meeting and explaining some of its Quaker practices, traditions, and beliefs, and a handout sheet about getting the Newsletter and getting on our Meeting listserv. Having a paid childcare worker provides a continuity for the children, as various adult Friends take turns in providing activities for the children. Recently, a couple of our children have enjoyed carrying the microphone around to everyone after meeting for worship for everyone to be heard in giving their names, and sometimes their pronouns, as Friends have been invited to do. Getting accustomed to using a microphone has been awkward for some, but it has helped several folks who have hearing deficits to stay fully involved.

Individual Athens Friends are active in several community groups dedicated to supporting people whose safety and well-being are being threatened at this time. The Meeting seeks to support those who are out in the community supporting those who are vulnerable. The Village of Chauncey, where our Meeting House is located, is now using our Meeting House for its Council meetings, as there is no other satisfactory space available to them in the Village. 10% of our Meeting budget goes to helping those in the area in need to prevent their water, gas, or electric service from being shut off. Our support over the years for the Chauncey Public Library has enabled it to plan an expansion of its local facility.

We have not faithfully maintained our hybrid meeting and have decided to invest in the technology necessary to make this happen. We also intend to make better use of the internet to make information about us available to the general public. In the Meeting House we need to make our facilities for the handicapped better known for easier access. Like other organizations, we are challenged in identifying people to keep all our committees going and are considering simplifying. For instance, rather than forming a separate Naming Committee, that function is now being carried out by Ministry & Nurture. We are also feeling a need for more interaction with Friends in other Meetings in the area and within LEYM.

We are deeply grateful for the Quaker Community of which we are a part. It is a source of comfort and strength as we face uncertain times.

**Birmingham Friends Meeting
2025 State of the Meeting Report**

Birmingham Friends Meeting appears to be in relatively good shape as a spiritual community, despite challenging personal experiences occurring for members during the past year. A core group of regular longtime participants is supplemented with some relatively new attenders who report feeling quite welcomed and who are coming back again and again to deepen their connection to our Meeting and Quakerism more generally. We find this new energy uplifting.

Our spirits have been challenged in the past year by grief and loss, serious illness and surgeries, loss/change in employment and LGBTQ+ personal concerns, and an increasingly chaotic and sometimes more hostile social and political climate. The Meeting has still found ways to provide comfort and support during worship, one on one, and through efforts like individual meal preparation, transportation support, and more. In one notable case, shared bereavement within the Meeting grew into a scholarship fund for great-grandchildren who had lost their father quite unexpectedly.

Meeting for worship itself has been an acceptable mix of deep silent worship and vocal ministry from a range of Friends. The clerk recently hosted a discussion and exploration of the quality of vocal ministry that had broad participation and provided a valuable opportunity for Friends to speak about their own personal preferences and experiences with what makes for meaningful and deep vocal and waiting worship. Some newcomers expressed appreciation for brief vocal ministry or shared queries, as they can provide a theme to focus on during the course of what can seem like a long period of silent worship. Other friends spoke of their love of worshipful silence,

something they experienced as precious in a noisy and often uncentered world.

Our meetings for business are reported to be very satisfying by some members, while others would sometimes like more time for topics under consideration to breathe. We have careful agendas, which are followed attentively. The business attended to is meaningful. Attendance and participation are good, but we'd like to see more people join in as they feel ready. Last year, we moved to a practice of having meeting for business every other month, which seemed sufficient for our small meeting size, but turmoil in the political climate may indicate a need for more opportunity for deeper reflection and discussion of actions. Also, the every-other-month pattern means that if a person misses a meeting for business, it can be a long stretch of time between sessions.

It was noted that members may need to be reminded that many items brought forward from committees have already been discussed and threshed out there, and may not need to be discussed in detail again with the whole body. However, it is okay and valued for Friends to voice their opinions and share their sense of what Spirit calls for. Newcomers and even some existing members may benefit from a refresher on how to handle themselves in a consensus process that relies on the sense of the meeting to make decisions, rather than something like Robert's Rules of Order. Decisions reached at our meetings are generally followed up promptly.

In our small Meeting, almost everyone is involved in one committee or another, and many tasks are taken on by the body as a whole. We have felt that we have accomplished a lot, with an especially active Ministry and Nurture Committee, which was strengthened this past year. A dormant Peace and Social Justice Committee is being revived with a new working title, The Birmingham Hopefuls, and an ad hoc structure designed to meet the needs for both healing and support for action. Our Religious Education Committee is relatively inactive now, due to the lack

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of children attending, after a busy period last spring of offering Quakerism 101 to a keen high-school age attender and several others new to Quakerism. A relatively newly formed Food Insecurity Committee has supported our continued involvement hosting a soup kitchen a couple times a year and a recent effort to collect jars of peanut butter on meeting for business days, which are then donated to a nearby food pantry. This past year, our Communications Committee facilitated the transition of our old website over to a new system hosted by the U.K.-based Quaker Meetings Network. We are pleased with the new system and are gradually learning to take advantage of some of the new tools we have at hand. A sub-committee of Ministry and Nurture has made good progress this past year going through boxes of historical documents from our Meeting in preparation for another submission of materials to the Quaker Archives at Swarthmore. We are reminded of the rich history of our Meeting since its formal creation in the mid-1960s.

Key events during the year include some that are routine, like our bi-annual soup kitchen hosted at a nearby church, and others that are unique, such as the support of a scholarship fund for some children who lost their father and our signing on as a Meeting to the Vision for Peace in Palestine and Israel and the revitalization of our Peace and Social Justice Committee. As part of our witness in the world, Birmingham Friends Meeting tries to maintain meaningful relationships with our elected officials and to encourage them to act in ways that promote peace, integrity, and justice. New this year, prior to Valentine's Day, a group gathered after meeting to create personally signed cards thanking elected officials for their work to restore and protect democracy and support core human values. One of our members, Wink Covintree, formerly an art teacher at Friends School in Detroit, prepared the handmade Valentine cards which were then assembled and signed.

We make good use of our social times together during coffee and refreshments after the rise of meeting and during regular lunchtime get-togethers, readings, discussions, potlucks, and

educational sessions to build connections and strengthen our community. We continue to explore ways to be more welcoming to newcomers and to make sure our Zoom participants are also feeling included and supported.

The Meeting's connections with the wider Quaker community are evident from the active participation of Meeting members in Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting, Michigan Friends Center, the Alternatives to Violence Project, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, FGC, AFSC, FWCC, and FCNL. One member is very active in visiting other Meetings, and several Friends have made a regular practice of attending Quaker-based conferences and retreats. It was noted that some Meeting participants would like more time where Friends are encouraged to share their experiences interacting with the wider Quaker Fellowship, as an educational opportunity and as a way to learn more about each other. Overall, the state of our meeting is good.

*Respectfully submitted, April 20, 2025,
Bill Warters, Birmingham Friends Meeting Clerk*

Broadmead Friends Meeting 2025 State of the Meeting Report

Broadmead Friends continue with the structure of many years with two worship groups, Toledo and Bluffton, and many individuals from outlying areas. Toledo worship group continues to host the Zoom connection for our hybrid sessions. Toledo also meets in person every week and Bluffton meets in person on the second, fourth, and fifth Sundays. We have been inconsistent lately in planning who will convene in Toledo and overall in using a brief reading from Quaker elders or other spiritual guidance as we settle into worship. Many find the early reading helps them center and go more easily to a deeper worship. The Toledo worship group has recently changed rooms at the Victory Center, and this has had a positive effect both in person and for those on Zoom.

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We continue to be open to making adjustments so that the hybrid situation is a nurturing experience for all and the quality of the silence is enhanced. We still long to be together in person. We had two meetings in summer 2024 at a halfway point in Van Buren, Ohio, and everyone expresses gratitude for the deep nurturing this provides. As a way of celebrating our 50 years as a Monthly Meeting, all Friends gathered in November at the Victory Center for worship, sharing of memories, and a sumptuous potluck lunch. Old Friends who have moved away joined us both in person and on screen. It was a deeply meaningful time together.

As we discussed the spiritual state of our Meeting, we confirmed that the quality of the silence and the vocal ministry are enhanced when we are all together in person. Our yearly retreat offers another opportunity for this and for nourishing our spiritual lives and our sense of community.

We reflected on our meeting for worship for business and our committee work. We like our quarterly meeting for worship for business and recognize that not owning property facilitates our quarterly schedule. We also know our committees work well because our members and attenders are willing to serve and are faithful to doing the work needed to keep our community strong.

Lastly, as we considered what might be needed to strengthen our spirituality and our witness on behalf of Friends testimonies, we acknowledged that the turbulence in our world has affected everyone. It has brought new seekers to our meeting for worship. We recognize we are all responsible for helping new people feel welcome and for teaching by example the Quaker traditions we cherish: arriving early if possible; maintaining the early silence; not lecturing in meeting; speaking one at a time in worship for business and leaving space between speakers; and other Quaker customs, lest we become but another well-meaning secular group.

We also must be more visible as Quakers in the community by acknowledging our faith publicly where appropriate. We

challenge ourselves to be open to new experiences or to ideas and words we may not want to hear and to see where these might lead. This year's self-examination shows Broadmead Friends' care, concern, and love for one another; our desire to help one another deepen our spiritual lives; and our desire to be a strong Quaker presence in northwest Ohio.

Cleveland Friends Meeting 2025 State of the Meeting Report

Cleveland Friends Meeting has begun its 100th year, having been founded on Easter First Day of 1925. Plans have begun for a yearlong 100th Anniversary Celebration.

As we looked back on this past year, our clerk observed that “this was the first year since the Covid pandemic that felt relatively normal with respect to the Meeting’s operations. People did what they needed to do and did it well. . . . The Meeting has been enriched by the gifts of newer members and attenders, along with the faithful service of many long-time members and attenders.”

Since the Presidential election, Friends have expressed increasing concern about the direction of our country. Clearly, we are living in a fraught time, where our values as a religious society are being tested. Using monthly queries, Ministry and Care is monitoring how this situation affects our members and community. We will continue to listen and discern how Meeting may be led to respond.

Witness in the World Committee has been seeking a way for the Meeting to witness for peace and justice as a collective body, beyond members’ individual service. Our first effort toward this goal was holding a called meeting for Friends to share ways they were already serving in the world, so we could identify common themes and ways to support each other. A speaker from FCNL joined us by Zoom. Witness in the World will continue to discern a collective calling for the Meeting and provide support for Friends in these times of political turmoil.

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This period of difficulty in our country offers an opportunity for our Meeting to focus on outreach. Following Barry Crossno's address on dwindling religious participation in America, the committee discussed the topic of outreach to our community. Many visitors have been attending meeting, seeking a spiritual home. The Hospitality Committee, motivated by the Pendle Hill Pamphlet "Deep Hospitality: Reflections on Welcome to the Quaker Community," by Rhiannon Grant, is looking at ways to enhance our hospitality to those visitors. At rise of meeting, we now offer visitors an invitation to speak with seasoned members or attenders. In addition, we are evaluating our available pamphlets, website, and follow-up.

Since January 2024, Quaker Studies Group with Cleveland and Wooster Friends has met weekly via Zoom on Tuesday evenings to read and discuss the *Journal of George Fox*. Most of those participating had never read it and discovered that impressions they had of George Fox changed as a result. The group will now move on to *Twentieth Century Penn*, edited by Paul Buckley. All Friends are welcome who are interested in deepening their understanding of the spiritual and historical foundations of Quakerism. Bible study continues to meet for an hour before meeting for worship 3–4 times a month. Fifteen books of the New Testament were read and discussed in the manner of Friends.

Last fall, adult Friends asked for more spiritual companionship, more education on Friends' history, practice, and process, and a general deepening of spiritual life through closer ties with each other. They wanted a corporate experience. After considerable discussion and discernment, the M&C Committee created a program called *Deepening into Worship*, consisting of twice-monthly experiential sessions held for 30 minutes prior to meeting for worship. The initial six sessions have been well received.

The Meeting continues its commitment to provide First Day School (FDS). We currently have five children who come on a

regular basis but will lose two this summer. A teacher brings together the pre-school and elementary children to listen to a Bible story. The pre-school children leave following the reading to allow the older children to discuss the story. Our goal is to attract new families, which would provide a stable core; but in the meantime, we will need to maintain a regular FDS structure to accomplish this. The committee has begun to discuss putting together a brochure about FDS to have available for families attending meeting for the first time, in hopes of encouraging them to return.

There were times of joyful and tender celebration in meeting this past year. Our community gathered for a loving memorial service for Leslie Walden, a joyful marriage under the care of the meeting in October, regular Quaker teas on the East and West Sides of town, and our first Annual Cleveland Friends Picnic, with members attending from other Monthly Meetings. In addition, we welcomed two new members into our Meeting.

The financial status of the Meeting is stable. We renewed our lease with the Church of the Covenant; however, feeling the need for a more adequate space, there arose renewed interest in purchasing a meetinghouse. The Meeting has entered into an agreement with a realtor to search for the property that best fits our needs. The ad hoc committee has visited several properties. Where and when Spirit will lead us is unknown.

Cleveland Friends decided to double our 2025 financial support for Quaker organizations and to continue our support for other peace and justice groups. Friends have also been preparing community hot meals once a month at Greater New Canaan Church. Two members of New Canaan usually join us to enjoy the fellowship as the meals are prepared and distributed. Friends have been preparing and serving meals on fifth Mondays at Antioch Baptist Church for over 30 years.

The Library Committee continues to expand our library through purchase and donation of books and continuing our Pendle Hill Pamphlet and "Quaker Religious Thought" subscriptions. Many

missing pamphlet titles were replaced through an appeal to members and attenders.

We look forward to next year with a complete slate of positions and committees, including new co-clerks and an assistant clerk.

Grand Rapids Friends Meeting State of the Meeting Report 2025

Grand Rapids Friends Meeting has continued to meet at the Browne Center on the campus of Aquinas College. Worship is followed by a time for informal “check-in,” giving everyone a moment to share how they’re doing. Our Meeting community has grown to value this time together as a form of ministry and nurturing for one another.

We are still meeting in a hybrid format, with most attending in person but still a few joining by Zoom. We continue to frequently see visitors and new attenders. We understand that being here for anyone who is looking for a welcoming faith community is part of our purpose.

Our Meeting has been blessed for over 20 years by a good relationship with Aquinas College, allowing the affordable use of the Browne Center for weekly worship (including the technology for hybrid meeting), First Day School, monthly potlucks, business meetings, programs, Meeting library, and other materials.

However, in late March we were notified that Aquinas has sold the building and we will need to leave when our rental contract runs out at the end of June. We have just begun to mobilize members and attenders to help move our materials out of the building and simultaneously find a new place to meet.

Our Meeting budget has been well managed and maintained, and Friends have been very generous with their donations. We hope to finish the fiscal year with a balanced budget, but the challenges of finding a new location with affordable rent has now become our focus.

While we are working together to seek solutions for our current challenges, we still look forward to another year of nurturing our community, welcoming new Friends, and thanking Spirit for the blessing of worship together.

**Granville Friends Meeting
State of the Meeting Report 2025**

The Meeting gathered on March 2, 2025 for a monthly forum to discuss the state of the Meeting, using the guidelines from Lake Erie Yearly Meeting. Seven Friends participated in person and two joined the discussion via Zoom.

The spiritual condition of the Meeting, both strengths and challenges.

Overall we believe the spiritual condition is strong. Our weekly meeting for worship feels like a refuge in a tumultuous world, where we can put aside anxious feelings and feel rejuvenated. Worship and additional activities such as our monthly potluck and monthly forum help us build spiritual and personal connections in our shared refuge. Many of the forum topics and readings are chosen to enhance the spiritual life of the Meeting. Often during these forums, we look deeply inside and discuss more than just the text of the reading.

The primary challenge to the condition of our Meeting is our small size. Even a few absences can leave us with a very small group for worship or discussions. There are activities some of us would like to pursue with a committee, but our small size prevents this from happening. We have come to know each other well and are like-minded, which is comforting, but the lack of diversity and closeness of the group could be off-putting to someone who is new or may not agree with the rest.

The nature of meetings for worship during the year, including the quality of the silence, and the content and quality of the vocal ministry.

We continue to be a quiet Meeting, but when there is vocal ministry, it is welcome and appropriate. The sense of community in the silence is important for us and it continues to be very strong and uplifting. In our quietness we have a sense of hope, and we take it with us when we interact with others outside of Meeting. The silence is comforting, and meeting for worship is one of the few opportunities during the hectic week to sit in silence.

Our practice of reading a query aloud early in meeting for worship continues to enhance the quality of worship. The queries are well selected and thought-provoking, and they often resonate with Friends as timely and appropriate for individual and collective concerns during the week. At times when it is challenging to settle in and quiet other thoughts, the query can provide a focus.

The meetings for business during the year, including the range of concerns considered, attendance of members, and implementation of Meeting's decisions.

Friends typically make a special effort to attend on third Sundays, when we hold meeting for business, followed by potluck. Our practice over the past year has been to hold meeting for business every other month, rather than monthly, and our clerk continues to do an excellent job of keeping communications flowing. It has been a challenge to switch out Meeting roles, as there are few people who are in a position to serve in them.

Concerns addressed during the meetings for business include how we will spend money donated by Friends for support of Quaker organizations and local community support organizations; topics for adult religious education, such as adult forum and book group discussions; website and social media issues, communications, and outreach; and opportunities to participate in various activities for personal and spiritual development. We do not own or lease our Meeting space or other property, so we

do not have concerns and responsibilities related to property maintenance.

The contributions of committees such as Peace & Social Justice, Religious Education, Ministry & Nurture, Youth, and others.

We do not have standing committees because of our small size. Religious education, ministry and nurture items, and opportunities for engagement with others outside the Meeting are initiated by individuals.

That which is most needed to deepen the spiritual life of the Meeting and to strengthen its witness of Friends testimonies to the world.

It would be very beneficial if we could attract and retain more people who are able to be active in the Meeting. A few new people who joined us regularly and were invested and contributed to the spiritual life of the Meeting no longer attend. We need to do a better job of reaching out and checking in with the people we have not seen in a while.

Key events during the year which helped build the Meeting in the Life.

We continue to hold a monthly potluck on the third Sunday of every month, whether or not there is meeting for business. In addition, we held a potluck at an area park to celebrate the installation of a Peace Pole that our Meeting donated to a local community. Taking the time to share food and conversation in a relaxed setting is a very important way for us to nurture and connect with one another. We have been holding book group discussions this spring, which provide another opportunity to gather and share thoughts and concerns.

Our meeting space in the [Denison] University Spiritual Life Center is beautifully decorated with inspirational words as well as symbols of the world's religions and religious observances. These decorations are very pleasant to look at, and help us feel a connection to the other groups who use the space.

The Meeting's ongoing connections to the wider Quaker community.

We make monetary donations annually to several Quaker organizations. This year, we discussed the legislative priorities of the Friends Committee on National Legislation and provided a report on our discussion. One of our longtime and active members, Michael Fuson, has served key roles in FCNL, including clerk, and has felt the support and encouragement of Granville Friends Meeting as he does this demanding and important work.

Occasionally, we feel led to witness our Quaker values and adopt a formal minute on an issue of concern. We share these minutes with other Quaker Meetings and adapt them as editorials for publication in local newspapers.

Kalamazoo Friends Meeting 2025 State of the Meeting Report

A look back at the past year reveals a time of community, of events, of worship in the Spirit, of joy, of grief, of learning, of caring, and of commitment. We gather faithfully for First Day worship, expectantly waiting in profound silence, which is periodically enhanced by spoken ministry. Worship is also enhanced by a successful integration of the images and voices of people participating remotely via Zoom.

Our meetings for worship with attention to business are well-attended, thoughtful, and effective. Our several committees faithfully carry out the essential work of the Meeting.

- Ministry and Worship Committee provides First Hour adult discussions every week on a wide variety of topics, sometimes with guest speakers. Ministry and Worship also sponsored a spring retreat for the Meeting with a leader from New York Yearly Meeting.
- Pastoral Care Committee leads in providing comfort in times of trouble. They also sponsored a Conscious Aging retreat.

- Building and Grounds Committee lovingly sees to the perpetual needs of our 70-year-old Meetinghouse and its grounds. They conducted two well-attended work days and arranged for an energy audit that made several improvements in our systems.
- Our Earthcare Committee has gained vitality, leading our consciences about environmental issues, forging alliances with allied organizations, and bringing guest speakers from our area and from Quaker Earthcare Witness.
- Hospitality Committee never fails to facilitate our monthly potlucks and provide refreshments and sustenance for special events, including our spring retreat.
- Library Committee maintains our subscriptions and collections and Records Committee continues its work of seeing that our policies and our archives are organized and accessible.
- Nominating Committee, as always, comes through with Friends who joyfully agree to serve in all the roles that keep Kalamazoo Meeting vital.
- The ad hoc Visioning Committee helps us look at our future, how we use our resources, and how we present ourselves to the community and the world. New signs have been placed, a new brochure has been designed and printed, and a First Hour walk-through of the Meetinghouse has inspired visions of how some of our spaces might be used.
- The ad hoc Accessibility Committee is exploring the seemingly intractable problems presented by our two-story space and mostly non-functional elevator. Lots of light is needed here.

The Adda Dilts Peace Park has long been a powerful ministry to our neighborhood. The Peace Park Committee, our resident, and our faithful Peacekeepers see that the park is a safe place for children and families. Once again this year, the Peace Park held a National Night Out observance which included two neighborhood associations and participation by city officials. An ice

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cream social celebrated the end of the school year for neighboring children.

We have been blessed by newcomers to our Meeting who are finding a spiritual home here and greatly enriching our community, and who need fuller orientation and integration into Quaker faith, traditions, and practice. We pray that they may find what they need here, or if not, that we have at least provided a sojourn in their spiritual quests.

This has been an event-filled year. The annual outdoor worship at Quaker Park in Battle Creek, sponsored by Quarterly Meeting and commemorating the bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, was well attended. Our 70th anniversary celebration in the fall brought together seldom-seen Friends and faces from the past. Hosting the fall session of Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting combined with the anniversary celebration and a picnic visit to a nearby Underground Railroad museum to make a memorable weekend. A spring retreat on getting into the flow of the Spirit enriched our lives.

We continue to be well-connected with the world beyond our walls. Kalamazoo Meeting maintains active relationships with Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, Friends General Conference, Friends Committee on National Legislation, the American Friends Service Committee, Friends World Committee for Consultation, and Quaker Earthcare Witness. Outside of Quakerdom, Kalamazoo Friends are deeply involved with organizations and movements, including the Alternatives to Violence project, Faith Alliance of Out Front Kalamazoo, Kalamazoo Nonviolent Opponents of War, and many other service and advocacy organizations. Most recently, several Friends have participated in direct action sponsored by national groups, out of deep concern regarding the current Federal administration.

Our fellowship and hospitality have been enhanced by the newly re-instituted greeters, by coffee and refreshments after worship, by the Men's Breakfasts and Women's Gatherings, by monthly

potlucks, and by Friendly Gatherings of small groups in our homes. We celebrated the high school graduations of Griffin Hebben-Bagge and Lucas and James Hunsinger, and we were saddened by the passing from this life of Patrick Reardon and Doug Howe.

And so life in Kalamazoo Friends Meeting ends one year and will soon begin another. We celebrate and we look forward, confident that our community will continue in the love and joy of the Spirit.

Kent Friends Meeting 2025 State of the Meeting Report

Kent Friends Meeting continues to meet, in person only, in the United Christian Ministries Lounge at the Kent United Methodist Church each Sunday morning at 10:30. We are maintaining an average attendance of 15 adults. Our worship has been enhanced by meeting for singing 30 minutes prior to meeting for worship on the third Sunday of the month. A Shared Meal is hosted by different Friends on the first Sunday of the month, as well as a Carol Sing in December—all times of warm fellowship and full stomachs! Meeting for business takes place on the second Sunday of each month.

We have been blessed with the presence of Harold (Hal) Walker III in our Meeting. His ongoing challenge of dealing with ME/CFS has inspired us spiritually. We enthusiastically welcomed him as a member of Kent Friends Meeting in November!

Our committees have been active in offering spiritual guidance as well as information on concrete actions to be taken to address intense political emotions and dramatic social changes.

Ministry and Counsel/Religious Education Committee has met prior to meeting for worship on the first Sunday of each month. This committee planned and facilitated a retreat in February at the Moebius Nature Center in Aurora to reflect on the topic, “What is the role of individual conscience in shaping the

Meeting and the role of the Meeting in forming individual conscience?” The background materials for this discussion were two Pendle Hill pamphlets: “The Fundamental Principle of Quaker Spirituality: Light in the Conscience,” by David Johnson, and “Speaking as one Friend to Another on the Mystical Way Forward,” by John Youngblut. Beginning with a period of worship sharing on individual definitions of conscience and mysticism, a lively discussion ensued on the topic. Many thoughts, feelings, and experiences were shared. The unifying thought was that the individual’s pursuit of “that of God in everyone” and the matching corporate search supported the development of conscience. “Is it really that simple?” is the working question.

The LEYM Query was reflected on following two meetings for worship in January, following the Worship Sharing format. A summary of these periods of reflections was forwarded to LEYM.

In addition to Ministry and Counsel supporting the Meeting with an updated Meeting Directory, monthly reading of LEYM Queries, and informal supportive encounters with each other, one committee member suggested introducing the practice of “Healing Touch” to the Meeting. This was approved by the committee and facilitated by this member in a deeply spiritual introduction and demonstration following meeting for worship. Interested Friends look forward to pursuing this topic as way opens.

Peace and Social Action Committee has become even more vital to the emotional and spiritual health of our Meeting as we face a period of political turbulence. The committee interviewed, and the Meeting approved, Adal Rhoubaid, a KSU doctoral student from Niger, as a recipient of an Education Grant, in addition to Ogulkeyik Hodayberdiyeva, our present Education Grant recipient. Our Meeting has been blessed with the relationships developed with our diverse grant recipients!

Individuals supported the local CROP Walk, sponsored by Kent Interfaith Alliance for Racial Reconciliation and Justice (KIFA), through participation and donations. The Meeting was able to make contributions to World Central Kitchen and AFSC to aid in both the support of Gaza and the North Carolina victims of Hurricane Helene. Local donations to support Kent Social Services and Pendle Hill were also made. These donations were made possible by a bequest from the estate of Shirley Parsons Reiner, a former Kent Friends Meeting member.

Kent Early Learning Center was contacted and information obtained for our Christmas family adoptions. Meeting individuals found joy in purchasing and wrapping gifts and taking them to the Carol Sing. These were then picked up by the Learning Center and distributed to the families.

Peace and Social Action also organized volunteers to serve meals at Kent Social Services on four occasions. This is also a heart-warming experience! One of our members continues to volunteer weekly in the Kent Social Services kitchen, building lasting relationships.

This committee, and other politically active members of the Meeting, offer valuable information on resources, events, and plans of action to address the political turmoil that now surrounds us. Individuals found hope in participating in local protests. The committee prepared a draft of a minute addressing many concerns with issues that contradict our Quaker values. This minute will be revised and recipients chosen as way opens.

Greeting Committee kept us all welcomed each week by enlisting volunteers, and well-fed each month through shared meals!

Our treasurer has kept us on budget and informed in matters of finance throughout the year. In addition to budgeted items, two donations were made to Moebius Nature Center for the use of their facility, and an additional amount to World Central Kitchen.

MEETINGS AND WORSHIP GROUPS

The Finance Committee has proposed an increased percentage amount in the 2025–26 budget across the board to reflect inflation. Our bottom line is quite healthy and can support increases we have not made for several years.

Our webmaster has added more photos of Meeting events on Facebook, as well as other submissions to create more interest in our Meeting page.

Nominating Committee has successfully “twisted arms” one more time to fill all committee spots for the 2025–26 year!

The Archivist, with the support of the Meeting, made great strides in organizing the KFM archives this year. Copies of all minutes from the 1960s to the present were made for us to keep, and the originals were hand-delivered to Swarthmore Library in October, to be digitized and archived. An ongoing effort will be made to make annual submissions to the Swarthmore archives! Our recording clerks have thoughtfully captured the details of our meetings for business throughout the year, also enhancing our archives.

Kent Friends Meeting finds strength in the Spirit of our meetings for worship. We walk a fine line of being lifted up by our communal worship and being dragged down by our mission to pursue justice and peace in this overwhelming turbulent world. Our gifts of love and humor, and the presence of our Higher Power, are what we share above all else as we embrace our “community of the heart.”

*Respectfully submitted,
Barb Warrington, Clerk*

Mid-Ohio Valley Friends Meeting 2025 State of the Meeting Report

As a small meeting, rather than starting new projects, we often try to find ways to lend our support to ongoing projects of our members. These have included:

- Assisting with Charlotte's coordination of the children program and the MOV Multicultural Festival
- Participating in programs of the MOVCA, along with Jean and Cindy
- Environmental programs such as Jane's reopening of the Ritchie County Recycling Center
- Continuing to develop and strengthen our relationship with FUUSM, with whom we have individuals who participate in both congregations and where we hold our meetings, by supporting their Green Sanctuary and other spiritual endeavors.

Oberlin Friends Meeting 2025 State of the Meeting Report

Oberlin Friends Meeting (OFM) began collecting input for this State of the Meeting report during our nomination process. We attached questions asking Friends how they felt about the state of our Meeting to our nomination interest forms. We asked how Friends felt about the Meeting and about possible ways to improve our meeting for worship and our meeting for worship with attention to business. We also asked similar questions during our April meeting for worship with attention to business and again during our May 4 meeting for worship. Our clerk then compiled these comments into a draft, which has been improved and approved by the Ministry and Nurture Committee and our May meeting for worship with attention to business.

In general, Friends are very pleased with OFM. They feel that meeting for worship provides important times for weekly centering and meditation. For many, meeting for worship is a vital part of the rhythm of our lives. The messages during meeting are rich, thoughtful, and varied. One Friend quoted from Isaac Penington:

*Give over thine own willing; give over thine own running;
give over thine own desiring to know or to be anything, and*

sink down to the seed which God sows in thy heart, and let that grow in thee . . . —Isaac Penington, 1661

In fact, the only suggestions for improving our worship involved difficulty hearing the messages. This has led us to include closed captions on our Zoom screen.

Friends are also very pleased with the deepening of our sense of community. On the first First Day of the month, we gather after worship for snacks and informal conversation. We also gather every other month at one Friend's house for snacks and a chance to relax and talk. Several committees have provided opportunities for us to share our hobbies, poetry, and the words of Saint Francis and Howard Thurman and discuss books and Pendle Hill Pamphlets together. As a result of these activities, our sense of community has grown and deepened.

These activities are especially important for our Meeting, because many of us moved to Oberlin after retirement, not knowing anyone here. So, we miss our old Meetings, where we attended for decades, where we had close friendships, and where our understandings of Quaker practices and beliefs were shaped. Thus, we are grateful to the Activities Committee for taking leadership in helping form new friendships and a growing sense of community.

Possibly because of this increased sense of community, we were very pleased to realize, at the end of the nomination process, that every committee and volunteer service opportunity in the Meeting had grown in number of participants. In fact, as one Friend put it, for a bunch of 70-, 80-, and 90-year-olds, we get a lot done. We take this growth as a sign of the health and vitality of our community. It is also the result of lives lived in the habit of service to the community.

During the nomination process, no Friend was led to clerk the Meeting. As a consequence, the Meeting is reducing the role of the clerk by scheduling meetings for worship with attention to business six times a year, with the option of single-issue called

meetings for business if the need arises. With this change, we have found someone willing to clerk the Meeting. Our concern is that clerking a Meeting may be better suited to the energy level of a younger Friend. However, we have met this challenge, and we look forward to seeing how this new arrangement works out.

OFM is also pleased that we have been able to build a better relationship with the Oberlin College young Friends group. While they have joined us several times for meeting for worship and first First Day hospitality, they prefer to host their own meetings for worship on Sunday nights. We are very pleased that they have invited us to share a potluck with them about once a semester. We find we really enjoy and respect these young people and their commitment to building their own Quaker worship community in the midst of their busy college days.

In general, then, Oberlin Friends Meeting is working to deepen and enrich our worship, grow our sense of community, and meet our challenges with courage and the commitment to be a vibrant, useful, and loving community.

Pittsburgh Friends Meeting 2025 State of the Meeting Report

The energy in Pittsburgh Friends Meeting ebbs and flows. It moves around from issue to issue, from committee to committee, and from person to person. How do we know when a project or a practice has run its natural course, and might therefore be significantly altered or laid down; and when something is simply experiencing a temporary lull, requiring patience and a little encouragement?

PFM has had many sources and manifestations of energy this year.

There has been much energy in the presence of newcomers, who continue to seek out our Meeting. They come for many reasons, one of which is the reputation of Quakers as people of conviction and nonviolence. For that, we thank the Quakers who have gone before us, and those who travel with us today.

Our FIGs (Friendly Interest Groups) are really ripening. Our community members are gathering to sing rounds, hike, study the Bible, visit museums and share food, create fiber arts, and enjoy companionship in the Queer affinity group. They are meeting to explore the topics of aging, right relationship with native people, and the spirituality of nature.

At the Fall Gathering, we laughed together while drawing portraits of each other (some were better likenesses than others), learned about the process of seeking clearness, and delighted in an amateur talent show – “amateur” in the best sense of people who are doing what they love.

The Meeting Room was again pulsing with joyous energy during the benefit concert in March. Music rang out while baked goods flew out the door. The concert raised over \$7K for Casa San José and Abuelas Responden, two local groups who care for immigrant communities and those seeking asylum.

We continue to rely on volunteer energy to do the work of all of our committee and liaison roles, to serve as office manager, and to care for our property. This is still holding together, although, as always, we rely too much on a small group of willing workers. However, when they finally burn out, it can be difficult to replace them.

We have also found the psychic energy as a community to commit to rebuilding our financial stability. Partly, this takes the form of actual, physical rebuilding of our third-floor apartment and our carriage house, both of which can be significant ongoing revenue streams. Another form it takes is the commitment to rebuild our Major Projects fund (for non-routine building expenses) and to inaugurate a Long-Term Savings fund for contingencies of all kinds.

There are other areas in which our community energy seems to be waning.

In 2020, PFM committed to being an “anti-racist” meeting. Initially, energy was high, but as the years have gone by, it has been ebbing. Of course, individuals continue their own activism and involvement with outside organizations. But the Working Group Against Racism and the Exploring Reparations group are not as present in the life of the Meeting. The Earthcare Working Group has suffered a similar fate. The Peaceful Practices group, having led us through many workshops on tools for listening and for conflict resolution, no longer feels the energy from the larger community that would justify continuing.

Our Meeting continues to struggle to find enough First Day School teachers. For several years, we’ve been in a tenuous limbo in which some days there are not many students, which is a disincentive for those teachers to return, and in turn a further disincentive for parents to send their children. In the fall, we will start paying a teacher to join our volunteer cadre. We may need to ask ourselves as a community whether we truly can commit to a First Day School ministry right now, given our ongoing lack of a critical mass of volunteer teachers.

It seems that each year, our Nominating Committee finds it more difficult to identify a new associate (junior) clerk to join the three-person clerking team. It is clear that we need to focus on having our newer attenders deepen their engagement with the Meeting, its practices, and its workings, to the point where they would feel confident stepping into leadership roles. But in the meantime, what will we do? We may need to re-evaluate our clerking structure and responsibilities for both short-term and possible long-term adjustments.

Finally, we should note that hanging over every aspect of our individual lives and the life of the Meeting is the distressing national political situation and the disastrous wars and famines in other countries. The energy of anger is often first to arise. It can be followed by the energy of sadness, but also by a feeling of helplessness. Where does the energy to take action come from? So many of us wish to be active and effective, but do not know

what we, personally, can do that would have any meaningful impact.

Can we, as a Meeting, help release and coordinate this bottled-up energy into active endeavors? Is this a time when we need each other's energy to become Dangerous Quakers?

Respectfully submitted by Elise Yoder, Co-Clerk of Pittsburgh Friends Meeting

Red Cedar Friends Meeting 2025 State of the Meeting Report

Wanting to focus this year on the spiritual state of our meeting, our Worship & Ministry Committee offered this query at meeting for business:

How did you witness or experience Spirit rising up in our Meeting this year in ways that shaped us as a community?

Our reflection helped us realize that we have felt the life and breath of Spirit among us in at least three different ways during this year.

Growing Vitality as a Community

One way is how we relate to each other as a community: We're excited to welcome several new individuals and families and to feel our energy rise as we integrate their kids into our First Day activities and them into our worship. We have observed an outpouring of people offering practical assistance to others when needed, as health or life crises catch up with us. A homegrown retreat day this year explored our gifts and our differences, including what happens when those rise to the level of conflict.

A large number of Red Cedar Friends (RCF) attended last fall's LEYM Spiritual Formation kickoff retreat, and significantly more (including first-timers) participated in this year's RCF small groups. This has become a rich part of many people's RCF experience. Both early and 10:30 worship are increasing in attendance; many early attenders appreciate the technology-free,

contemplative atmosphere. Our 10:30 meeting tech team is faithful about setting up and using Zoom technology to make worship accessible to a number of beloved members who couldn't attend otherwise. Adult Religious Ed has organized lively, interactive monthly sessions that allow both learning about new topics and also rich exchange of experience among new and longtime attenders.

We're conscious of several occasions when our commitment to each other is helping us grapple with hard conversations. For one example, we are in the process of seeking to balance our preparedness to possible ICE interactions in a way that recognizes and takes seriously the threat but doesn't allow it to shift our focus to fear or defensiveness. For another, prompted by a projected budget shortfall this year, we're beginning to talk more frankly about our giving patterns and how they affect the expanded visions we've undertaken for ways we want to contribute to the world we want to live in.

Connecting with the Larger Quaker World in New Ways

Another place we're noticing Spirit-led growth and change is that we've become more actively engaged recently with several national and international Quaker organizations. AFSC's Apartheid-Free pledge led us to begin searching for local allies in our effort to understand how we can be public about resisting Israeli oppression of Palestinians. It has resulted in a partnership with Edgewood United Church of Christ and the formation of a new alliance, PIN (Palestine Interfaith Network). The FCNL Advocacy Team remains vitally active in communicating with our public officials. And for the first time ever, we responded to a *Friends Journal* invitation to write about how we think of money; it led us to realize new things about how we've been evolving through our longtime support of our Tiny Pantry, our reparations payments to Lansing's Justice League, and our commitment to investing some of our funds in an African American-owned bank. Internationally, we are exchanging communication with Lancaster and London Meetings in Britain

Yearly Meeting about how children can contribute to growing meetings.

Using our Meetinghouse Purposefully

On our 15-year anniversary of completing the construction of the Meetinghouse, we are realizing the ways the building itself is becoming a tool of Spirit among us. We share the building each First Day afternoon with another faith community, Fellowship for Today. It reminds us of the days when our own ability to gather relied on other places of worship sharing their space. The Gathering Society, a collection of indigenous women and their allies, who meet to cultivate awareness of and skill-building in crafts and traditions inherited from our ancestors, meets monthly in the building; we started out renting to them, then waived the rental fees, and now have been invited to join them in those sessions. Both PIN (mentioned earlier) and Crowded Table (a justice-oriented production organization) are also making good use of the space we built and cherish, and Sistrum (a local women's chorus) uses the space for rehearsals.

There is a significant amount of maintenance and refurbishing that is needed to keep this spiritual home available for its many good offerings. We relish the opportunity and look forward to deepening through the challenges that growth always involves.

Wooster Friends Meeting 2025 State of the Meeting Report

Wooster Friends Meeting has continued with the schedule for our weekly meeting for worship that we developed as we emerged from the pandemic. First and third First Days are in-person at our traditional meeting place on the campus of the College of Wooster. Second, fourth, and fifth First Days are Zoom-only format. This way, we have in-person fellowship twice a month; the other weeks we are able to accommodate folks who cannot regularly drive to Wooster. Our home locations span several counties, so there is an environmentally advantageous reason to skip the long drives for at least half our

meetings. We are holding business meetings quarterly, rather than monthly or every other month. This is working well. If an item of business needing timely action arises, we can hold a called business meeting to consider that one item.

This year we continue to consider our finances, which have softened along with our shrinking size. We want to be sure our use of resources and our sharing of resources are in keeping with our values and beliefs as Friends. In this time of conflict and crisis in our own country and around the world, supporting the work of Friends organizations is a way that small meetings can encourage nonviolent, peaceful, and loving solutions to problems of great magnitude.

Our Meeting is very small, but we maintain forward momentum despite challenges. We continue to welcome occasional visitors and have had some who visit fairly regularly. So far, none has settled into a commitment to Meeting, but we provide conversation and information to help them become better acquainted with Friends. We are reinstating after-meeting programs and discussions. Members of our group have volunteered topics and prepared presentations. We have enjoyed and have been informed on a variety of topics this way. We continue our ongoing interest in undocumented refugees, with a regular attendee often updating us about his legal work with detained refugees. Our hearts have been engaged with the plight of Palestinians as the conflict in Israel/Palestine goes on and on.

As always, we offer support for our own members and attenders, with our small group truly operating as a committee-of-the-whole in terms of Ministry and Nurture.

In the year before us, we hope to maintain our numbers and our support for each other, as well as contributing to Quaker organizations and to local organizations whose values reflect our own.

Submitted by Dottie Stratton, clerk

Note: This report was added after the original print publication was released.

North Columbus Friends Meeting State of the Meeting Report (May 2025)

Our Meeting matters and is worth cherishing. Worshiping together is exciting, simple, true, and real. We envision our Meeting as a vibrant community inspiring, encouraging, and holding one another in all aspects of our lives. We continue to learn how to live in community, one that is welcoming, safe, and equally accessible in all ways. Our values are grounded in Quaker faith and practice which enable us to discern and follow leadings in our personal lives and with regard to the wider world. We hope that when people discover us, they will feel invited in and that all will be enriched. (Vision Statement, North Columbus Friends Meeting)

The spiritual condition of our Meeting remains strong having navigated our change of venue from our meetinghouse to temporary accommodation at North Broadway United Methodist Church. The new physically accessible venue has presented opportunities as well as challenges. Parking is no longer an issue. Our online connections are now easier and more inclusive in relation to Friends meeting via zoom for Meeting for Worship who are easily seen on a large screen. Though we have childcare in place for children we regret that we have only sporadically had children attend. Our monthly meetings in the park have continued during summer months while our monthly afternoon meetings have recently been put on hiatus. Our recent change to having the set-up and tear-down of the tables and chairs

Note: This report was added after the original print publication was released.

in the meeting space done by our host church, rather than by Friends who facilitate and greet, has made gathering at rise of meeting feel more leisurely and more inclusive. Rather than having a quarterly potluck after meeting we are experimenting with having a quarterly breakfast.

The quality of the silence and vocal ministry during Meeting for Worship remains worshipful and spirit-led. Most meetings have felt gathered. The reading of a query on the day we have Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business has been well received. Fellowship at rise of meeting has been welcomed.

Meetings for Worship with Attention to Business continue to be held monthly online. Attendance has ranged from about ten to fifteen people: mostly members and few attenders. We have instituted some new practices that have been well-received: guidelines; checking-in emotionally and spiritually before and after a break in the middle of meeting; reflecting at the end on the spirit of the meeting. We publish an agenda usually a week in advance divided into informational reports and requests for discernment/action. Business has been conducted both worshipfully and efficiently. The most momentous decision was to approve the sale of the meetinghouse.

Our committee structure remains strong and effective. Members of our Nominating Committee speak with

Note: This report was added after the original print publication was released.

active members and attenders to discern with them how best they might serve the meeting. The Monthly Meeting has approved membership in committees with minimal effort. Members of Outreach and Inreach Committee updated and maintain our website, publish a weekly online digest, and organize ongoing and one-off events. These range from our monthly Seeking Quakers to our annual Spring retreat and our recently reestablished Solstice Party and Friendly Suppers for self-organized groups. Adult Young Friends have organized in-person and online events. Peace and Social Action Committee remains active. The committee recently drafted a minute of concern in response to the planned establishment of a weapons factory in Central Ohio. The minute, approved by Monthly Meeting, was sent to the editor of our local newspaper and will be sent to relevant local, state, and federal officials. Ministry and Nurture Committee meets twice a month online to address any issue that arises. The committee will be reviewing the Meeting's Harassment Policy with members of the Harassment Response and Safeguarding Committee, which is under the care of Ministry and Nurture. Because of our new venue, Library and House Committees have had minimal work to do. Archives Committee continues to scan Meeting minutes, creating a digital version of these documents. As we have rarely had children attend the work of First Day School Committee has been minimal. Finance and Audit

Note: This report was added after the original print publication was released.

Committees continue to work closely with our Treasurer. Our Ad Hoc Relocation Committee has provided invaluable leadership over the move from and sale of the meetinghouse and has steadfastly continued its work looking for potential new venues.

Friends' response to the 2025 LEYM queries via worship sharing during Meeting for Worship with Attention to Business in April helped Friends reach some clearness about how we might strengthen our witness of Friends' testimonies to the world.

Key events during the year which helped deepen the life of the Meeting include the following: two weddings; the publication of the article "Welcoming Joy and Spirit through Accessibility" in February 2024 *Friends Journal*; our Spring Retreat and an advanced Alternatives to Violence workshop in May; attendance at LEYM Annual Meeting; summer meetings in the park; spiritual formation retreat; our support of drives for Neighborhood Services, for example, return to school backpacks for children; a meeting in celebration of our life in the meetinghouse that we sold in September and a chance to say goodbye; and a Solstice Party in December. Finally, the presentation of a "Celebration of 2024" slideshow at rise of meeting in March 2025 that documented these, and other events was invaluable and well received with gratitude.

North Columbus Friends Meeting

Memorial Minutes and Obituaries

Memorial Minute for Al Connor (Ann Arbor) January 15, 1927 – September 7, 2024

Alan Norris Connor was born in Camden, New Jersey on January 15, 1927, to Ethelbert “Bill” and Marion Connor, the first of their eight children. He grew up in Glassboro, New Jersey, attending the local high school, and served in the U.S. Army Air Corps, 1945–47, stationed mostly in the Philippines. He said, “In some ways, the Army was the best thing that ever happened to me – it was only by rejecting it that I learned to think for myself.”

Following his discharge, he attended Guilford College, majoring in English. He married Polly Lynnette Edgerton in 1952 and then worked as a journalist for a few years, but his growing interest in social justice led him, with Polly, to direct student community service projects with the AFSC in Berkeley, California. He attended the University of Michigan School of Social Work in Ann Arbor, receiving his master’s degree in 1961 and later a Ph.D. In the 1960s, he was a clinical social worker at Longview State Hospital in Cincinnati for two years before moving to Kabwe (then Broken Hill), Zambia, to do community development work for the AFSC.

In 1966, he returned to Ann Arbor and joined the faculty of the School of Social Work, where he taught until 1981. He served as director of the Ann Arbor Human Rights Commission in the 1970s and later as a community organizer in agricultural communities in Minnesota. Returning to Michigan, he became chair of the Department of Social Work at Siena Heights University, in Adrian, where he taught until his retirement. He was a dedicated and enthusiastic organic gardener, and for a time had a farm near Adrian, where he loved to bring his grandchildren.

Al became a member of Ann Arbor Friends Meeting in 1977, transferring his membership from Community Meeting of

Cincinnati. He served briefly in a wide variety of roles, and for longer periods on the Committee on Ministry and Counsel and Friends Center Committee, notably in the mid-to-late 80s, when the Meeting housed a family of Salvadoran refugees, and again in the 90s, after the Meeting established a residential community. Al was the driving force behind the establishment of the Meeting's Environment and Social Concerns Committee (later Earthcare Committee) in 1999, and remained active on it for the rest of his life. For both Ann Arbor Meeting and Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, Al was a representative to Quaker Earthcare Witness (which he helped to found) and to FCNL. He also served on LEYM's Earthcare Committee and was the named visitor to Wilmington Yearly Meeting for many years.

Ann Arbor Friends remember the integrity with which Al merged his beliefs and his actions; his persistent concern about global warming and environmental degradation; his encyclopedic depth of knowledge and remarkable range of personal acquaintances among environmental representatives and activists, both local and national; his frequent reminders to consider the importance of farmers, agriculture, and food; his leadership and compassion as a committee clerk; and his readiness to loan his pickup truck and his own manual labor in support of a good cause. One Friend recalled that, "no matter what issue we were scheduled to lobby [with FCNL], Al always found an easy entry into the topic of the latest farm bill." And another wrote that "he embodied walking cheerfully and addressing God in everyone."

Athletically gifted, Al played three sports in high school and at Guilford, and remained active in sports throughout his life. When the Meeting established a softball team in a recreational league in the early 1990s, Al played joyfully and well, even though he was some 20 years senior to the next oldest player. He was an integral part of a gold medal-winning Senior Olympics basketball team in 2003 and 2004 and continued to play basketball weekly until he was 88.

Al passed away peacefully at the age of 97 on September 7, 2024, following a long period of declining health. He is survived by Polly, his wife of 72 years, three children, seven grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and five siblings.

**Memorial Minute for Judy Peace Watkins Greenberg
(Broadmead)**

March 22, 1942 – March 19, 2025

Judy Greenberg was a person who gave her spirit and heart to the things that she cared about. Broadmead Monthly Meeting of Friends was fortunate to be among the things she cared about. For many years, starting in the early 1990s, she enriched us with her remarkable gifts. She was active in so many aspects of our Meeting that she seemed to embody the testimony of community.

Judy delighted in our young Friends. Perhaps from her work as a reading specialist in public schools, where she often created her own teaching tools, she enjoyed devising ways and materials that taught Quaker values. Judy was for many years a thoughtful, loving presence on the First Day School Committee. She helped our Meeting establish the tradition of recognizing milestones as young Friends matured. She thought carefully about the messages being shared with young Friends and even crossed out words in the picture books she shared, adapting them to better reflect Quaker values. Judy took care to involve young Friends in the activities of the meeting.

Judy had a special interest in Earthcare and liked sharing that interest with others, especially children. She would sometimes write new words to familiar songs, such as changing the words of “I am an Acorn,” to “I am a Chrysalis,” to teach about the stages of a butterfly’s life. One special memory for many is the Teeny Tiny Tea Party she helped create when two First Day School attenders were moving out of state. The Teeny Tiny Tea Party included teeny tiny dishes, teeny tiny refreshments, teeny

tiny napkins and place cards, and maybe even some teeny tiny tears at saying good-bye to dear friends.

Judy once described herself as having “ancestors (that) included countless generations of amphibians, mammals, and primates.” She had a special concern for the environment and helped start an Earthcare Committee in Broadmead and was active in the Earthcare Committee in Lake Erie Yearly Meeting. At her home, she created a Monarch Butterfly Waystation at the front of their property. She introduced many of us to the concept of watersheds. Thanks to Judy, during introductions at the end of worship we sometimes name our watershed along with our names. As with so many things, Judy asked us to think not just about oceans and rivers, but also about the little geographic elements that start in our own backyards and create the ecosystem of earth that we all share.

One big project that Judy and the Broadmead Earthcare Committee took on was the creation of a model of the lower Maumee River Watershed. The purpose of the model was to show the large number of Concentrated Animal Feeding Operations (CAFOs) proliferating in the watershed and polluting Lake Erie. Judy was horrified at the treatment of the animals in these factory “farms” and the harm done to our drinking water source by their effluent.

The model, created by her husband Bill from individual sections printed from Google Maps, showed an aerial view of the terrain in the watershed. The map, mounted on sections that could be joined together, was divided by an open space winding through the middle that represented the Maumee River. Thus, a viewer could walk the length of the river and observe scenes representing both positive and negative impacts on the watershed. Model buildings, farm animals, and other items told the story of the watershed. This model was exhibited first at the Friends General Conference Gathering held in Bowling Green in 2010 and was resurrected in 2018 for the Gathering held in Toledo. In between the two Gatherings, the watershed was

displayed several times in Toledo for community programs and in Bluffton at LEYM's Annual Meeting. Judy got many people, not just those on the Earthcare Committee, involved with this project, including one young friend who made an elaborate "wayfinding" sign for the watershed model.

Judy also served Lake Erie Yearly Meeting for several years as first a member and then clerk of the Arrangements & Site Committee. As clerk, she developed a booklet of guidelines and relevant information to aid the Committee in its preparation for the Annual Meeting. Judy turned those preparations into a fun project and got Bill to develop the spreadsheets for registration!

Judy always held a concern that everyone's voice should be heard in our Meeting. Whether it was being certain that everyone who wished to speak on a topic had the opportunity to do so, or making sure that young Friends got to participate in projects taken on by the Meeting, Judy wanted everyone to feel that their input mattered. With her influence, people who were new to the Meeting quickly learned that we wanted to hear what they had to say.

Judy and her husband, Bill, opened their home for many Quaker occasions, such as committee meetings, planning meetings, a speaker on environmental matters, and work on the watershed model.

The most special times, however, were when we engaged in activities that feed the soul, such as musical soirees, poetry readings, celebrating a Friend's recovering from illness, and other milestones. Many of us learned that we could just stop by and sit with them on the porch, looking out at their gardens when we needed the view of their garden and the presence of friends.

Judy once wrote a poem to a couple in the Meeting who had a stillborn child, expressing her feelings on the loss of this "child of our Meeting." The last lines speak to us now, as we remember Judy:

We will hold you tight, tight with us
safe inside our hearts always.
And we will watch for the joy
of your presence with us,
gentle, delighting spirit,
buoying us on as we stumble and sing
seeking,
as in a glass dimly,
to live in love's Light.

Memorial Minute for Kathleen Helbling (Broadmead)
September 18, 1942 – May 17, 2025

Kathleen Helbling was a beloved member of Broadmead Friends Meeting. She and her husband, Paul, sought out a Quaker community in 2009 after meeting a Quaker while volunteering. After finding Broadmead Friends, they quickly became active participants. She often found the silence of Quaker worship difficult but she persevered in her search for ways to center down and find peace in the silence. Kathleen had a big voice and an even bigger heart! She was curious, engaging, and accepting of every new person who came to Quaker meeting.

Kathleen Tarr was born in Los Angeles, and her life in childhood and as a young woman involved many moves back and forth across the country. She had health problems as a child and often, being unable to play outside, spent much of her time reading. Books were her solace and her friends.

After a first marriage, three children, and a difficult divorce, Kathleen moved back to Michigan with her youngest daughter. These were difficult times, but she persevered and returned to college to enhance her education degree. After getting a bi-lingual certification from Michigan State, she moved to Arizona and began her teaching career at an inner-city school in Phoenix. She taught elementary and junior high students and loved teaching and learning throughout her life.

MEETINGS AND WORSHIP GROUPS

It was in Arizona that she met and married Paul Helbling, a man who shared many of the same social justice concerns. Their concerns led them to take the Community Peacemaker Teams training to work with No More Deaths on the southern border. In their volunteer work they provided water and other lifesaving assistance to undocumented people crossing the Arizona desert on foot. Kathleen and Paul moved to a small farm near Liberty Center, Ohio in 1999, where they had a large garden for many years and shared the bounty with local food pantries. Following a 2018 Broadmead retreat, Kathleen and Paul were inspired by the retreat leader to begin growing medicinal herbs and shipping them to a group supporting health education for the African American communities at high risk of negative environmental influences.

After retirement, Kathleen often used the small library in Liberty Center as a way to meet local people with different points of view. She also persuaded a friend to start a Facebook page on current and political topics. She thought there should be a place where people could express differing views on current events in a polite and reasonable way.

Kathleen served Lake Erie Yearly Meeting as well as Broadmead Friends. She began on the LEYM Peace & Justice Committee and then accepted an appointment to represent LEYM at the American Friends Service Committee. She kept us informed of AFSC activity and encouraged us to engage with actions on the national level.

In Broadmead, Kathleen was a member and then co-clerk of the Ministry and Nurture Committee, a member of our Earthcare Interest Group, and our representative to AFSC.

Kathleen loved bringing Friends together for social events such as their annual “corn fest,” game nights around their kitchen table, apple picking from their bountiful trees, or impromptu lunches at local restaurants. Kathleen recognized the need for fun in an often harsh world. Everyone was always welcome and Kathleen encouraged lively discussions!

As Kathleen's health issues became more frequent, she slowed down her many physical activities around the farm. About three months before her death, after months of rehabilitation therapy, which failed to help her regain strength, and faced with living in a nursing home, she chose to go home to the farm with hospice and family care. There Kathleen continued to welcome visits with friends and family and comforted us with her sense of peace and optimism about her next journey.

Kathleen was a kind and generous soul who loved her large family and her wide circle of F/friends. She is deeply missed.

**Memorial Minute for Douglas Henry Howe (Kalamazoo)
October 15, 1937 – November 23, 2024**

Douglas Henry Howe died of complications from cancer on November 23, 2024, at Kalamazoo, Michigan. He was born on October 15, 1937, in Ogden, Utah to Melvin Orville Howe and Ruth Coombs Howe. He grew up in West Carleton, Ohio.

Doug is survived by his beloved best friend and wife of 21 years, Flo Friender; his daughters Laura Lee, of Portage, Michigan, Rita (John) Schweiss, of St. Paul, Minnesota, step daughters Margie Roth, of Paonia, Colorado, Rebecca Fortes, of Cranston, Rhode Island, and Ruth Figgins, of Kalamazoo.

He attended Western Michigan University, in Kalamazoo, receiving his master's in electrical engineering. His main careers were Chief Recording Engineer at Western Michigan University and teaching Electronics and Math at Kalamazoo Valley Community College. He loved riding his Harley Davidson motorcycle, traveling by (or just watching) trains, foreign films, and music.

While Doug did not consider himself a Quaker, he called himself a Quaker groupie, and grew in appreciation of Quaker values and beliefs. He regularly attended the Kalamazoo Friends monthly men's breakfast group meetings.

With Flo, he was a regular attendee at Annual Meeting for Lake Erie Yearly Meeting and Friends General Conference. He is missed by many of us.

**Memorial Minute for Anne Elisabeth Ogren (Ann Arbor)
February 18, 1945 – March 12, 2025**

Born in Des Moines, Iowa, to Donald and Margaret (Vandenburgh) Ogren, Anne was the middle child of three. She was raised within the Des Moines Friends Meeting, and her family lived out the values of social justice, embracing others, and community service – values that she lived by throughout her life. Her family home was filled with music and singing, and she began playing violin at an early age. After studying at Drake University and Earlham College, she earned a degree in violin performance from the Cincinnati Conservatory, a master's degree in music theory from the University of Wisconsin, and a master's in music education from the University of Michigan.

Anne's passion for music never diminished – she played violin professionally with orchestras every place she lived, including the Ann Arbor Symphony for over 30 years. She was also a founding member of Childgrove, an English country dance band with whom she traveled across the U.S. and even to France. She taught countless private violin students out of her home and dedicated 17 years to teaching orchestra at Abbott Middle School in West Bloomfield Public Schools, inspiring generations of students.

Anne became active in Ann Arbor Friends Meeting in the mid-1990s, eventually serving on eight committees, most notably the Membership and Outreach Committee for 12 years, convening or co-convening it for 5 years. She joined the Meeting as a member in 2004. In the pre-COVID years, Anne was one of the beloved caring grandmothers who looked after the Meeting's youngest children in the nursery.

Anne was an adventurous traveler who embraced cultures from around the world. Her journeys took her to some 20 countries in

Europe, Africa, Asia, and Central America. She was captivated by the music, traditions, and natural beauty of every place she visited. Her five trips to Kenya had a profound impact on her and she made lasting connections there, supporting the education of young Kenyan scholars as well as teaching violin classes for the Meru Music Program.

Anne inherited a love of birdwatching from her parents and passed this knowledge and passion on to her daughters. She was known for her easygoing disposition, her wonderful sense of humor, and full laugh. Anne made indelible friendships throughout her life, and lovingly nurtured these connections.

In March 2025, Anne passed away at the age of 80, with her loving daughters by her side. At the celebration of her life, on April 13, 2025, at the Ann Arbor Friends Meetinghouse, Friends remembered her love of family, her kindness, her healthy cooking (and the ever-ready availability of homemade granola at her house), her deep concern for social justice, and generosity without boundary. Anne is deeply missed by her three daughters, Heidi (Steve) Snyder, Abigail “Abby” Alwin, and Rebecca “Becky” (Rich) Cox; her grandchildren, Zach (Becca) Snyder, Drew (Emily) Snyder, and Rebekah Snyder; her great-granddaughter, Junia Snyder; and her brothers, Paul (Cherie) Ogren and Ben (Joyce) Ogren.

**Memorial Minute for Patrick Reardon (Kalamazoo)
November 13, 1941 – May 20, 2024**

Patrick Joseph Reardon passed away on May 20, 2024. He was born on November 13, 1941, to Joseph P. and Clare M. Reardon, in Kalamazoo, Michigan. He leaves two children surviving: Kathryn Richards and John Reardon. He served in the Peace Corps in Afghanistan and earned a master’s in science in politics from the University of Wisconsin.

Patrick worked for the Michigan Civil Rights Commission and was proud of his years as civil rights activist and labor organizer

for the Teamsters. He sought to help people seeking sobriety to overcome alcoholism.

Pat was a lifelong seeker and explorer of the spiritual life. He had attended Kalamazoo Friends for a period in the early 2000s, and returned for the past few years. He often remarked how wonderful it was to feel the Presence at Meeting.

Obituary for Julie Ann Walters Sooy (Holland)
December 22, 1967 – August 30, 2024

Julie Ann Walters Sooy, 56, of Zeeland, passed away peacefully on Friday, August 30, 2024, surrounded by her family.

Julie was born December 22, 1967, in Zeeland, Michigan, to Jason and Rosella (Jager) Walters. She was raised in Zeeland and graduated from Zeeland Christian and Holland Christian Schools. Julie loved music and graduated from Bowling Green State University with a bachelor's degree in flute performance, music education, a German minor, and later a master's degree in music theory. Julie studied abroad for a year in Salzburg, Austria, and attended the Mozarteum. She became a music professor at Hope College, where she taught flute performance, music theory, and world music. Julie invested much of her time at Hope College mentoring students.

Julie was a longstanding member of the West Michigan Flute Orchestra, eventually becoming the music director after her own personal flute instructor was no longer able. Julie was also influential in the National Flute Association. At their 2024 convention, Julie was selected to conduct the Opening and Closing Concerts.

Julie was patient and peaceful and she loved nature. She was very active and enjoyed biking, walking, kayaking, birds, gardening, and fixing puzzles, and she heard music in everything. Julie loved learning new bird calls and was profoundly punctual at having her bird feeders properly filled.

Julie had an explosive laugh that filled the room. Julie wholeheartedly loved her Lord and her family.

Julie married Eric Sooy in 1991, and they moved permanently from Ohio to West Michigan in 1997. They have three children – Trevor and Morgan Sooy, Meredith Sooy, Phoenix Sooy – as well as a first soon-to-arrive granddaughter that Julie desperately wanted to meet. She is also survived by her father, Jason, and Barb Walters, father-in-law Gordon Sooy; siblings Del and Heidi Walters, Kevin and Stephanie Walters, and Jan and Bob Drenten; in-laws Brian and Lisa Sooy, Mark and Elisabeth Sooy; and many extended family and friends.

Julie was an indomitable spirit, laboring hard in putting her faith into practice by serving others. She was selfless and was a force of positivity in every endeavor. Julie always took the burnt hamburger

A memorial service will be held at 10:30 am, Thursday, September 5, 2024, at Hope Church (RCA), 77 W. 11th Street, Holland MI 49423. . . . Memorial contributions may be made to Hope Church (RCA), West Michigan Flute Association, or Ottawa County Parks.

**Memorial Minute for Leslie Walden (Cleveland)
October 26, 1935 – November 14, 2023**

Leslie Walden died on November 14, 2023. He was a member of Cleveland Friends Meeting.

Born on October 26, 1935, in Memphis, Tennessee, Leslie lived in various Southern towns growing up, and graduated from John Harris High School in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. The next three years Leslie spent in the U.S. Army, learning radar and the German language. After the service, he attended Franklin College of Indiana, graduating with a degree in English, journalism, and German.

Leslie had the mind of an engineer and the heart of a romantic. He could have been happy with any number of careers, but

journalism turned out to be his life's work. First working at a local Indianapolis TV station, he learned to do many jobs, including playing Lowell L. Owl, a tree puppet. Working at Channel 6, then a Time-Life station, Leslie accompanied a reporter to India, Pakistan, and Vietnam, sending back reports that included Indira Gandhi's first interview as Prime Minister of India. This work led to awards and eventually a move to Detroit, in 1966, where he worked at WJBK, Channel 2, and from which he retired. He was a union man during those Detroit years.

Leslie was a lifelong seeker of truth; this was his intent in every news story he covered. He was always learning something new. He loved the sailing assignments that included the Port Huron to Mackinac Race and a reenactment of the last voyage of the Edmund Fitzgerald, sans sinking. A long-distance drive was never turned down.

In 1967, he and his wife, Margaret, joined the Detroit Monthly Meeting, where he served as clerk, along with other roles. Leslie cared for his mother-in-law for her last two years, while Margaret was still working at Friends School in Detroit. He was a great reader; for years, his favorite book was Rudyard Kipling's *Kim*. Leslie was involved in several writing, editing, and photography projects for his local meetings as well as for Lake Erie Yearly Meeting. With Sharon Ottenbreit, he created a children's book on homelessness and helped to present it to classrooms.

In 2013, he and Margaret moved to Cleveland to be close to their daughter, Heather Blonsky. They joined Cleveland Friends Meeting in 2014. Despite an aversion to committee work, Leslie served cheerfully on the Library Committee, helping to catalog the collection and even donating the computer that held the catalog. Leslie is fondly remembered at Cleveland Meeting. His easy ways and good humor are sorely missed. As a photographer, he noticed the small details of life and made his observations known, if one were listening. When COVID struck, he especially missed sitting in the circle of worship on First Day.

Leslie Walden died peacefully at age 88 in the memory care unit at Brookdale Westlake Village (Ohio). Although vascular dementia overtook him his last year, he never lost his chances to make jokes or to say, “I love you.” Leslie is survived by his wife of 65 years, Margaret; four children – Andrew, Jonathan (Miriam), Sarah Feitler, and Heather Blonsky (Amelia); and four grandchildren – Ninevra Walden, Kai Feitler, Bean Feitler, and Andrew Blonsky. One grandchild, Olive, preceded him in death. His sisters, Carol Swindell and Dorothy Lohmeyer, also survive, as well as several nieces, nephews, and cousins.

Memorial Minute for Ruth Zweifler (Ann Arbor)
September 26, 1929 – January 12, 2025

Ruth Millicent LaPlace Zweifler was born in Palisades, New Jersey, in 1929 to Oscar and Minna LaPlace and shared her childhood with a brother, Maurice Allan LaPlace, and sister, Rosabelle Leifer. While a student at Bryn Mawr College, she began her journey as a Quaker, which eventually led to her spiritual home of many decades at Ann Arbor Friends Meeting. She married Dr. Andrew Zweifler in 1955, with whom she shared a rich life devoted to family, social justice, service, and community. Together they reared six children – John, Liz (Steve), Mark (Donna), Rhyana, Natanya, and Ylonda – and played a precious role in the upbringing of 16 grandchildren and three great-grandchildren. Ruth and Andy nurtured a family rooted in love, values, and a commitment to improving the world.

Ruth will be remembered for her formidable achievements and intellect, her love of birds, flowers, children’s art, and opera. Her warmth, curiosity, and generosity supported many loved ones during their times of trouble with open arms and warm hospitality. As she was known to say, “The door is open and I don’t have a gun.” She was incredibly strong, shoveling snow, pulling weeds, and planting flowers in her garden well into her 90s. She had a restless spirit, deeply troubled by our world’s very human failures, which led her to serve for 15 years on the

Friends Meeting's committees on Peace and Social Concerns and the Palestine-Israel Action Group, which she hosted in her home for several years. She also served on the Committee on Ministry and Counsel, and Contributions (to outside organizations).

Ruth and Andy hosted, for about eight years, a Christmas feast and carol sing, accompanied on their lovely Steinway piano and by a pop-up "orchestra." The Zweifler home, with the sounds of birds in her garden and cheerful chattering of kids next door in the Angell School playground, was her dream of sanctuary for 65 years. This home, known to many as simply 1706, became akin to the soul of Ann Arbor, where the door was truly always open, with a steady stream of visitors and guests. It was a place of many meetings about peace and social justice, not to mention countless raucous parties, birthdays, holiday gatherings, weddings, and other celebrations.

Her special concern was in the realm of education, where she saw that children of color were disadvantaged in the public school system and worked to correct that. In 1975, she founded the Student Advocacy Center (SAC) to support and encourage young people who were marginalized; she served as its Executive Director until her retirement in 2004. Under Ruth's leadership, SAC successfully sued the Ann Arbor School District in 1977 in what has become known as the Black English case, claiming that the school failed to meet the educational needs of children because of their use of African American Vernacular English, or Ebonics. The decision established a precedent that recognized linguistic diversity and educational equity. Ruth always spoke uncomfortable truths to those in power. She was a fighter for the dismissed and oppressed, a spirited anti-racist activist, and a warrior against racial injustice, mass incarceration, and the brutal displacement of Palestinians. In 2003 Ruth was inducted into Michigan's Women's Hall of Fame, a testament to her unwavering dedication to improving the lives of children and families.

In very recent years Ruth said with some frequency, “I need a job! Can you find me a job?” But she had done her job and earned her rest, and her passing was a typical Zweifler event, with family and friends surrounding her with love.

MEETINGS AND WORSHIP GROUPS

Statistics – Monthly Meetings (as of 8/1/25)

Recorded Members of Monthly Meetings

Monthly Meeting	Adult	Child members/ active kids	New Mem- bers	Births	Ended Member- ships ¹	Marri- ages ²	Avg. Mtg Atten- dance
Akron	5	0	0	0	0	0	6
Ann Arbor	120	4/12	4	0	6	2	95
Athens	47	7/12	0	0	0	0	33
Birmingham	18	0	0	0	1	0	15
Broadmead	22	1/1	1	0	2	0	19
Cleveland	44	0/6	5	0	0	1	21
Delaware	1	0	0	0	0	0	5
Detroit	23	0/3	1	0	1	1	25
Grand Rapids	12	0	0	0	0	0	21
Granville	13	1/1	0	0	0	0	10
Holland	4	0	2	0	0	0	10
Kalamazoo	27	3/0	0	0	0	0	22
Kent	14	0	1	0	0	0	15
Mid-Ohio Valley	10	0	0	0	0	0	6
North Columbus	9	0/4	1	0	0	1	24
Oberlin	21	0	0	0	1	0	20
Pittsburgh	117	6/7	3	0	1	1	50
Red Cedar	42	0/9	0	1	1	1	45
Wooster	19	0	0	0	0	0	10
Total # Meetings: 19	588	22 members	17	1	13	7	--

¹Ended by request, transfer, or death

²Marriages or ceremonies of commitment under care of the Meeting

Members Gained and Lost

New Memberships			
Name	Action	Start Date	Primary MM Affiliation
Roberta (Bobbi) Gutman	Application	9/15/2024	Ann Arbor
Julie Cadman-Kim	Application	9/15/2024	Ann Arbor
Alex Houser	Application	3/16/2025	Ann Arbor
Grayson Moore	Application	4/20/2025	Ann Arbor
Jonah Brownfain	Transfer	4/27/2025	Broadmead
Vickey Finger	Transfer	8/18/2024	Cleveland
Steven Finger	Transfer	8/18/2024	Cleveland
Sarah Gridley	Application	8/18/2024	Cleveland
Mark Kinnucan	Transfer	10/20/2024	Cleveland
Brian Baker	Application	2/16/2025	Red Cedar
Anamaria (Mari) Isaac Madison de Stuckey	Transfer	3/9/2025	Detroit
Julie Luedtke	Application	4/2025	Holland
Rhett Luedtke	Application	4/2025	Holland
Harold (Hal) Walker III	Application	11/10/2024	Kent
Liz Olson	Application	9/9/2024	North Columbus
Ariel Bartunek	Application	11/10/2024	Pittsburgh
Beth Schongar	Application	11/10/2024	Pittsburgh
anita arguello	Application	4/9/2025	Pittsburgh

MEETINGS AND WORSHIP GROUPS

Ended Memberships			
Name	Reason	Date	Primary MM Affiliation
Alan Connor	Death	9/7/2024	Ann Arbor
Catherine McClary	Death	12/2/2024	Ann Arbor
Ruth Zweifler	Death	1/12/2025	Ann Arbor
Rabindar Subbian	Request	1/19/2025	Ann Arbor
Anne Ogren	Death	3/12/2025	Ann Arbor
Robin Warner	Death	5/6/2025	Ann Arbor
Jonah Brownfain	Transfer	4/27/2025	Birmingham
Judy Greenberg	Death	3/29/2025	Broadmead
Kathleen Helbling	Death	2025	Broadmead
Samuel Hayes	Request	2/25/2025	Detroit
Russ Bimber	Death	9/21/2024	Oberlin
Avis Zawadi	Death	2/4/2025	Pittsburgh
April Allison	Transfer	6/24/2024	Red Cedar

Marriages or Ceremonies of Commitment Under the Care of a Meeting		
Name	Date	Meeting
Luiza Duarte Caetano & Elliott Brannon	8/24/2024	Ann Arbor
Teeth & Brendan Ireland	5/10/2025	Ann Arbor
Jon-Paul Jones & Laura Turello	7/6/2024	Cleveland
Annie Press & Brad Brown	8/31/2024	Detroit
Claire Roth & Tommy Redd	9/28/2024	North Columbus
Alexa Lake & Jason Kay	5/17/2025	Pittsburgh
Ed & Theresa O'Connell	9/15/2024	Red Cedar

Contacts and Communications

Note: The locations shown for meetings and worship groups tell where their meetings for worship take place when Friends are gathering in person. Many meetings for worship occur virtually. Check the website of a meeting or worship group to learn the latest information on how and where they are meeting.

Akron Monthly Meeting	
Day and time	Sunday 11:00 am
Worship location	2047 Wyndham Rd., Akron, OH 44313
Business mtg	2 nd Sunday 11:00 am
Contact	Janet Dando, Clerk, 330-666-7222 dandojanet4@gmail.com
Date offices change	July 1
Officers	Clerk: Janet Dando Treasurer: Leah Holden

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Ann Arbor Monthly Meeting	
Day and time	Sunday 9:30 am, in person only, and Sunday 11:30 am (but 12 noon on 3 rd Sundays), hybrid; Children's program at 9:30 and 11:30 am (All times on a trial basis)
Worship location	1420 Hill Street Ann Arbor, MI 48104
Business Mtg	3 rd Sunday 10:00 am (time on a trial basis), hybrid. No meetings in August or December
Meeting Phone	734-761-7435
Contact	Luiza Duarte Caetano (Meeting Worker), 734-761-7435 aafmooffice@sbcglobal.net OR Karen Connor (Clerk), 734-717-6353 clerks@annarborfriends.org
Website	www.annarborfriends.org
Date offices change	September 1
Officers	Clerk: Karen Connor Assistant Clerk: Ben Kuipers Recording Clerk: Peggy Daub Recorder: Luiza Duarte Caetano Treasurer: Alex Houser
Reps to LEYM	Jeff Cooper Rick Thomas

Meeting Worker: Luiza Duarte Caetano
 Communications Coordinator: Eric Wozniak
 Webmaster: Ben Kuipers
 Bookkeeper: Christine Drayer
 Librarian: Jeff Cooper
 AFSC Liaison: Megan Mueller-Johnson
 Carbon Footprint Convener: John Williams

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Care and Visitation Convener: Sharon Simonton
Committee for Children & Families Conveners: Claire
Tinkerhess & Molly Tinkerhess
Contributions Convener: Lauren Ungar
Earthcare Convener: Richard Tucker
East Africa Education Action Group: Harry Sheehan
FCNL Liaison: John Deikis
Finance Conveners: Debs Roush & Steve Morehouse
Furnishings Conveners: Cynthia Lempert & Lonnie Harvey
Indigenous Action Group: Sandra Stegman
Membership and Outreach Convener: Susan Cooper
Ministry and Counsel Conveners: Kevin Miller & Laura Scott
Ministry and Counsel Representative to LEYM Ministry &
Nurture: Tom Blackwell
Nominating Convener: TBD
Palestine-Israel Action Group: Rotating
Peace & Social Justice Convener: Kiera Scott
Personnel Conveners: Brian Jones-Chance & Kate Kelley
Property Convener: Tom Blackwell
Quaker House Convener: Jeff Cooper
Refreshments & Potluck Conveners: Cynthia Lempert &
Jan Wright
Reparations Convener: Lynn Drickamer
Sanctuary Convener: Johanna Kowitz
Technology Convener: Matt Butler

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Athens Monthly Meeting	
Day and time	Sunday 10:00 am, preceded by singing at 9:45
Worship location	22 Birge Drive Chauncey, OH 45719
Business Mtg	2 nd Sunday 10:45 am
Mailing address	Athens Monthly Meeting PO Box 17 Athens, OH 45701
Meeting phone	740-797-4636
Contact	John Howell, 740-592-5789, jhowell45701@gmail.com; Christa White, 740-274-2308, ChristaWhite1016@gmail.com
Facebook	Athens, Ohio Friends Meeting (Quakers)
Date offices change	June 30
Officers	Clerks: Christa White, John Howell Assistant Clerk: StarMary Castro Recording Clerk: Joanna Mitchell Recorder/Historian: Tim Dransfield, Brian Long Treasurer: Warren Haydon Assistant Treasurer: David Herold
Rep to LEYM	Dale Pratt-Harrington

Directory Publisher: Tim Dransfield
 Newsletter Co-Editors: Carol Beale, Birch Moonwoman
 AFM Listserv: Ivars Balkits
 AFSC Contact: [No one named]
 Aging in the Light Convener: Birch Moonwoman
 Athens Food Pantry Contact: Deedee Dransfield

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Community Emergency Services: Kelly Madewell, Tim Dransfield (contact), Joanna Mitchell
 Community Outreach/Sunday Evening Meetings: Tim Dransfield
 Fall Campout: Regina Warfel, Joanna Mitchell, contact
 FCNL Contact: Ivars Balkits
 Finance Committee Clerk: Warren Haydon
 First Day School Committee: StarMary Castro
 Greeters: Suzanne Howell, Carey Lea
 Library Committee Contact: Donna Lofgren
 Meetinghouse Committee Clerk: StarMary Castro
 Meetinghouse Scheduler: David Herold
 Ministry & Nurture Clerks: Peggy Gish & Trisha Lachman
 Music Committee Contact: Carol Beale
 Nominating Committee Contact: Tom Medley
 P.O. Box Collector: Warren Haydon
 Peace and Social Concerns Contact: Robin Wilson
 Pendle Hill Contact: [No one named]
 QEW Contact: [No one named]
 QUNO Contact: [No one named]
 Seeking the Light Contact: Trisha Lachman
 Subcommittee–Racism, Contact: Peggy Gish
 Technology/FaceBook Admin: Christa White

Birmingham Monthly Meeting	
Day and time	Sunday 10:30 am (hybrid)
Worship location	Royal Oak Chamber Office 200 S. Washington Ave. Royal Oak, MI 48073
Business Mtg	3 rd Sunday, every other month
Mailing address	Birmingham Monthly Meeting 18746 Old Homestead Dr Harper Woods, MI 48225
Contact	Bill Warters, 313-648-8626, clerk@birminghamfriendsmi.org

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Website	birminghamfriendsmi.org
Date offices change	September 1
Officers	Clerk: Bill Warters Recording Clerk: Tom Hulbert Treasurer: Heather Matora
Rep to LEYM	Ellerie Brownfain

Archivist: Ellerie Brownfain

Web Master: Bill Warters

First Day School Coordinator: Heather Matora

Ministry & Oversight Clerk: Tom Hulbert

Bluffton Worship Group <i>Part of Broadmead Monthly Meeting</i>	
Day and time	2 nd , 4 th , and 5 th Sunday 10:00 am in person; 1 st and 3 rd Sundays online with all of Broadmead Meeting
Worship location	118 S. Spring St. Bluffton, OH 45817
Mailing address	Jon and Sally Weaver Sommer 118 South Spring St. Bluffton, OH 45817
Contacts	Sally Weaver Sommer and Jonathan Sommer 419-953-9455 sommerjs@bluffton.edu See note for Broadmead Monthly Meeting
Email	clerk@broadmeadfriends.org
Facebook	Bluffton Friends Worship Group – Quakers
Website	broadmeadfriends.org

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Broadmead Monthly Meeting	
Day and Time	Sunday 10:00 am
Worship location	See Bluffton and Toledo Worship Groups and notes below.
Business Mtg	3 rd Sunday, Jan, April, July, Oct
Mailing address	Broadmead Monthly Meeting C/O Sally Weaver Sommer, Clerk 118 S. Spring St. Bluffton, OH 45817
Contact	Sally Weaver Sommer, 419-953-9455 Or see the contact information for the group in Toledo or in Bluffton.
Notes	Broadmead Meeting pulls people from an area 65 miles long and 60 miles wide in northwest Ohio. On 1 st and 3 rd Sundays, worship is held at 10:00 in Toledo and on Zoom. On 2 nd , 4 th , and 5 th Sundays, worship is held at 10:00 in Bluffton, in Toledo, and on Zoom. Call for more info.
Website	broadmeadfriends.org
Email	clerk@broadmeadfriends.org
Date offices change	July 1
Officers	Clerk: Sally Weaver Sommer Recording Clerk: Shelley Kotz Recorder: Linda Yoder Szilagye Treasurer: Ken Lawrence
Rep to LEYM	Ken Lawrence

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Newsletter Editor: William Greenberg

Web Manager: Brad Wade

Database Keeper: Ken Lawrence

Finance Committee Clerk: Paul Helbling

Ministry & Nurture Clerk: Linda Dangelo

Nominating Clerk: Linda Yoder Szilagye

Site & Arrangements Clerk: Greg Mott

Youth & Children Clerks: Sally Weaver Sommer, Jonathan Sommer

Cleveland Monthly Meeting	
Day and time	Sunday 11:00 am
Worship location	11205 Euclid Ave. Cleveland, OH 44106 In NE corner of the building (concrete addition next to older church building—has its own entrance in back of the building)
Business Mtg	3 rd Sunday 1:00 pm, hybrid
Mailing address	Cleveland Monthly Meeting Unit 554 11459 Mayfield Rd. Cleveland, OH 44106
Meeting phone	216-804-3471
Meeting email	clevequakers@yahoo.com
Contact	Jim Brinza, 216-398-8069 jbrinza07@aol.com
Website	clevelandfriendsmeeting.org
Facebook	Cleveland Friends Meeting
Date offices change	May 31

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Officers	Clerks: Carol Laursen & Diana Gurley Assistant Clerk: Brian Baker Recording Clerk: Robert Loftis Recorder: Jim Markel Treasurer: James Wilson
Rep to LEYM	Vickie Finger

Communications Contact: Jo Steigerwald
 Business Clerk: Lynn Clark
 First Day School: Chris Farrand
 Library Clerk: Chris Farrand
 Ministry and Care Clerk: Steve Finger
 Nomination Convener: Chris Farrand
 Witness in the World Convener: Rob Loftis

Delaware Monthly Meeting	
Day and Time	Sunday 10:00 am September – May No meeting during summer months
Worship location	Andrews House 39 West Winter St. (corner of W. Winter and N. Franklin) Delaware, OH 43015
Business Mtg	First Sunday
Mailing address	Delaware Monthly Meeting 175 Pennsylvania Ave. Delaware, OH 43015
Contact	Marianne Derr, 740-362-8921 maderr@owu.edu
Website	delawarefriendsmeeting.org
Date offices change	September
Officers	Acting Clerk: Marianne Derr Acting Recording Clerk: Carol Army Treasurer: Meredith Wolfe

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Detroit Monthly Meeting	
Day and Time	Sunday 10:30 am (online only)
Worship location	19309 Greenfield Rd. Detroit, MI 48235
Business Mtg	2 nd Sunday except Jun, Jul, Aug
Mailing address	Detroit Monthly Meeting 19309 Greenfield Rd. Detroit, MI 48235
Meeting email	detroitfriendsmeeting@gmail.com
Website	detroitfriendsmeeting.org
Date offices change	2 nd Sunday of March
Facebook	Detroit Friends Meeting–Quaker
Contacts	Cristin Graham, crisgraham@Icloud.com , OR Anamaria Madison de Stuckey, amstuckey@protonmail.com , co-clerks
Officers	Co-Clerks: Cristin Graham & Anamaria Madison de Stuckey Recording Clerk: Maria Milletti Recorder: Maria Milletti Treasurer: Peter Dale Treasurer Assistant: Kevin Howley
Rep to LEYM	Erika Smith

Archivist: Charles Thompson

Newsletter Editor: [No one named]

Technology Working Group: Joel Ottenbreit

Outreach Committee Convener: Jacques Aharonian

Ad hoc Universal/Inclusive Design Working Group Convener:
Emily Obert

Anti-racist Working Group Convener: Charles Thompson

Auditor: Dave Goeddeke

Development Subcommittee Convener: Sharon Ottenbreit

Earth Care Clerk: Bernard Miller

Finance Convener: Jason Tylenda

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Library Clerk: Peter Dale
 Meetinghouse Convener: Dave Goeddeke
 Ministry & Counsel Clerk: Ellen Barnes
 Nominating Committee Convener: Maria Milletti
 Peace & Social Action Co-Clerks: Carmen Kelly, Michael Kelly
 Quaker History & Theology Working Group Convener: Charles Thompson
 Religious Education Convenor: Sharon Ottenbreit
 Spiritual Enrichment Book Club Convener: Ellen Barnes
 Representative to GPQM: Cristin Graham
 Representatives to FWCC: Mike and Carmen Kelly
 Representative to FGC: Chuck Thompson

Erie Worship Group <i>Under the care of Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting</i>	
Day and time	Some Sundays 10:30 am. Schedule and location vary; ask the Contacts (see below) to confirm.
Worship location	Varies week to week in attenders' homes
Contact	Linda Williams, 814-825-2030 desertplumpt9@aol.com OR Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon, 814-587-3479 andre14@earthlink.net
Website	leym.org/lista-z/#erie
Officers	Co-conveners: Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon and Linda Williams

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Grand Rapids Monthly Meeting	
Day and time	Sunday 10:30 am (hybrid)
Worship location	24 Fountain St., Northeast Grand Rapids, MI 49503
Business Mtg	2 nd Sunday
Mailing address	Grand Rapids Monthly Meeting PO Box 1274 Grand Rapids, MI 49501
Meeting email	clerk@grandrapidsfriends.org
Contact	Patricia Pennell, 616-292-8263 patricia.pennell@gmail.com
Website	GrandRapidsFriends.org
Facebook	Grand Rapids Friends Meeting
Date offices change	2 nd Sunday in July
Officers	Clerk: Patricia Pennell Assistant Clerk: Gerard Akkerhuis Recording Clerk: Wayne Norlin Treasurer: Walter Marston Archivist: Wayne Norlin
Rep to LEYM	Jana (Terry) Norlin

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Granville Monthly Meeting	
Day and time	Sunday 10:00 am
Worship location	Center for Spiritual Life (Denison campus) 500 Chapel Dr. Granville, OH 43023 Directions: From the Denison campus entrance, follow Presidents' Drive, turn right at T-shaped intersection, continue past Chapel Dr. and take second right on East Loop. Park in the lot just beyond the Chapel, on the right. The Center is a white house on the east side of the parking lot. On 5 th Sundays, at Otterbein Senior Living, 2158 Columbus Rd. Granville, OH 43023
Business Mtg	3 rd Sunday 11:00 am, every other month
Mailing address	Granville Monthly Meeting PO Box 287 Granville, OH 43023
Contact	Jessica Rettig, 740-587-9847 rettig@denison.edu
Facebook	Granville Friends Meeting (Quakers)
Website	https://granville.quakermeeting.org
Date offices change	July 1
Officers	Clerk: Jessica Rettig Recording Clerk: Jean Backs Treasurer: Patrick Hunkler Archivist: Mari McLean

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting	
Schedule	<p>Fall Gathering: 3rd Saturday in September, usually at Michigan Friends Center, Chelsea (business)</p> <p>Midwinter: Often February, at a monthly meeting (worship, fellowship, singing, recreation)</p> <p>Spring: 3rd Saturday in May, Michigan Friends Center (business, worship, presentation followed by discussion)</p> <p>Summer: Sunday in August nearest to Hiroshima Day, Quaker Park, Battle Creek (worship and picnic)</p>
Mailing address	TBD
Contact	Peggy Daub, Communications Coordinator peggydaub@hotmail.com
Website	leym.org/green-pastures-quarterly
Date offices change	July 1
Officers	<p>Clerk: None</p> <p>Recording Clerk: None</p> <p>Treasurer: Jeff Cooper</p>

In September 2025, Friends were in unity to begin the process of laying down Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting. The process may take about a year.

Resident Agent: Jeff Cooper

Finance Convener: John Williams

Nominating Convener: Ellerie Brownfain

Communications Coordinator: Peggy Daub

Holland Monthly Meeting	
Day and time	1 st , 3 rd , and 5 th Sunday 10:30 am
Worship location	Western Theological Seminary Prayer Chapel, Room 106, 101 E. 13th Street, Holland, MI 49423
Business Mtg	As needed, right after Meeting for Worship
Mailing address	Larry Dickie, Clerk Holland Monthly Meeting 6108 Old Allegan Road Saugatuck, MI 49453
Contact	Larry Dickie, 269-857-4694 (h); 616-566-7905 (c) lawrencedickie@gmail.com
Website	www.hollandquakers.org
Officers	Clerk: Julia Luedtke Assistant Clerk: Larry Dickie Treasurer: Jane Beggs-Joles Web Master: Eric Sooy

Indiana Worship Group <i>Under the care of Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting</i>	
Day and time	Sunday 10:30 am
Worship location	Zoom only
Mailing address	Yolanda Broad, Convener Indiana Worship Group 215 N. 4 th Street Indiana, PA 15701
Contact	Yolanda and Peter Broad, 724-463-9827 ysbroad@gmail.com and peterbroad7@gmail.com . Contact Yolanda or Peter for current ZOOM information
Website	quaker.org/legacy/indianapa/
Officers	Convener: Yolanda Broad Treasurer: Yolanda Broad

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Kalamazoo Monthly Meeting	
Day and time	Sunday 10:30 am (online and in-person) Religious Ed for adults, 9:30 Religious Ed for children and teens, 10:30 (school year only) Child care, 9:30 (also 10:30 during summer)
Worship location	Kalamazoo Friends Meeting 508 Denner St. Kalamazoo, MI 49006
Business Mtg	Alternating monthly: 3 rd Sunday 9:30 am / 3 rd Monday 7:00 pm
Mailing address	See above
Phone at Meeting	269-349-1754
Contact	George Hebben, 269-806-2918 coclerkgeorge@yahoo.com
Website	KalamazooQuakers.org
Facebook	Kalamazoo Friends Meeting
Date offices change	May 1
Officers	Co-clerks: George Hebben, Carol Meyer-Niedzwiecki Recording Clerk: Mark Donovan Treasurer: Pat Crowley
Reps to LEYM	Flo Friender, Valerie Groszmann

Newsletter Editor: Elizabeth Nagler

Web Master: Rebecca Joyce

Building & Grounds Clerk: Paula Allred

Earthcare Clerk: Caroline Weber

First Day School Clerk: Joseph Mills

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Library Clerk: Paula Allred
 Ministry & Worship Clerk: Joseph Mills
 Nominating Clerk: TBD
 Pastoral Care Clerk: Paula Branch
 Peace & Social Action Clerk: Valerie Groszmann
 Peace Park Clerk: Tacie Draznin

Kent Monthly Meeting	
Day and time	Sunday 10:30 am
Worship location	United Christian Ministries Lounge 1435 E. Main St. Kent, OH 44240
Business Mtg	2 nd Sunday
Mailing Address	Barb Warrington, Clerk Kent Monthly Meeting 155 Sunset Dr. Hudson, OH 44236
Contact	Barb Warrington 330-342-3503 bjwarrington55@gmail.com OR Annette Dowling 330-842-0267 amfindowling@gmail.com
Website	Leym.org/lista-z
Facebook	Kent Friends Meeting–Quakers
Date offices change	June 1
Officers	Clerk: Barb Warrington Recording Co-Clerks: Caroline Stilwell, Sarah McNulty Treasurer: Jim Tomko
Reps to LEYM	Margaret Liske Barb Warrington

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Archivist: Barb Warrington

Earthcare Contact: Karl Liske

Finance Clerk: Dave Warrington

Ministry & Counsel Clerk: Annette Dowling

Peace & Social Action Contact: Nancy Warlop

Religious Education Contact: Annette Dowling

Mid-Ohio Valley Monthly Meeting	
Day and time	2 nd and 4 th Sunday 11 am (online and in-person)
Worship location	White office building of First Unitarian Universalist Society of Marietta (next to church) 232 Third St. (corner of Third and Putnam), Marietta, OH 45750
Business Mtg	2 nd Sunday
Contact	Chris Jacobs, 304-491-2725 jacobsc4@asme-member.org
Website	movquakers.org
Date offices change	1 st Sunday of May
Officers	Clerk: Chris Jacobs Treasurer: Jane Hearne Archivist: Chris Jacobs

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

North Columbus Monthly Meeting	
Day and time	Sunday 10:30 am (hybrid: online and in-person)
Worship location	North Broadway United Methodist Church 48 E N Broadway St. Columbus, OH 43214
Business Mtg	2 nd Sunday 12:30 pm
Mailing address	North Columbus Monthly Meeting PO Box 141323 Columbus, OH 43214
Phone	(614) 596-7391
Contact	Brian Edmiston NorthColumbusFriends@gmail.com (614) 596-7391
Website	northcolumbusfriends.org
Facebook	North Columbus Friends Meeting (Quakers)
Date offices change	January
Officers	Clerk: Brian Edmiston Past Clerk: Rick Adams Treasurer: Judy Hartman Recording Clerk: Sarah Reimer Assistant Recording Clerk: Kitty McConnell
Reps to LEYM	Barbara LeSage Bob Roehm

Archivist: Gail Thornburg
 Trustees: Pat Enciso, Sarah Reimer, Bob Roehm
 Recorder: Judy Hartman
 Statutory Agent: Tom Kangas
 Adult Education Clerk: Martha Maas
 Adult Young Friends Clerk: Marin Waltz
 Archives Clerk: Gail Thornburg
 Audit: Cicily Sweet, Chris Wells
 Finance Clerk: Tom Kangas

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

First Day School Clerk: Brian Edmiston
Harassment Response Clerk ex officio: Brian Edmiston
House Committee Clerk: Tom Kangas
Library Clerk: Gail Thornburg
Ministry & Nurture Clerk: Clare Roth
Nominating Clerk: Tom Kangas
Outreach and Inreach Clerk: Brian Edmiston
Outreach and Inreach, Fellowship Hour: Penny Herd
Outreach and Inreach, IT Manager: Sean McGovern
Outreach and Inreach, Seeking Quakers: Brian Edmiston
Outreach and Inreach, Social Media Coordinator: Cara Fassino
Outreach and Inreach, Weekly Digest: Brittany Koresch
Interfaith Council at OSU: Bob Roehm
Peace and Social Action Clerk: Pat Enciso
Relocation Clerk: Susan Towner-Larsen
Child Caregiver: Faye Macrae Edmiston
Designated to solemnize weddings: Don Buckingham, Bradley Clymer, Susan Towner-Larsen
Rep to FCNL: Bob Roehm
Rep to Theta Tau: Bradley Clymer

Oberlin Monthly Meeting	
Day and time	Sunday 10:30 am (hybrid–online and in-person)
Worship location	Kendal at Oberlin, Education Center 600 Kendal Drive (north end of Pleasant Street) Oberlin, OH 44074
Business Mtg	3 rd Sunday, every other month
Mailing address	Oberlin Monthly Meeting PO Box 444 Oberlin, OH 44074
Contact	Dan Styer, 440 281-1348, dan.styer@oberlin.edu

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Website	Leym.org/lista-z
Date offices change	July 1
Officers	Clerk: Elizabeth Hole Recording Clerk: Dan Styer Treasurer: Taylor Allen Membership Recorder: Elizabeth Hole
Rep to LEYM	David Finke, Nancy Finke, Lyn Cope

Activities Clerk: Brian Hedges

Ministry & Nurture Clerk: Elizabeth Hole

Peace Building & Justice Clerk: David Finke

Pine River Worship Group <i>Under the care of Red Cedar Monthly Meeting</i>	
Day and time	We try to meet on 1 st and 3 rd Sunday, 10:30 am
Worship location	Wesley Foundation 1400 South Washington Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858 If attending for the first time or unsure if Meeting is to be held, please call the contact below. Let us know if you need child care.
Mailing address	Pine River Worship Group 615 E. Wisconsin Mt. Pleasant, MI 48858
Website	www.Pineriverquakers.org
Contact	Laura Gourlay, 989-621-6986 lauragourlay@hotmail.com
Officers	Convener: Laura Gourlay

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting	
Day and time	10:30 am (hybrid; children's program or child care available). Contact clerks for Zoom link
Worship location	Pittsburgh Friends Meeting 4836 Ellsworth Ave. Pittsburgh, PA 15213
Business Mtg	2 nd Sunday 12:15 pm, hybrid
Mailing address	See above
Contact	Phone at meeting 412-683-2669 pfmclerks@gmail.com or on Facebook: Pittsburgh Friends Meeting (Quakers/Religious Society of Friends)
Website	pittsburghquakers.org
Facebook	Pittsburgh Friends Meeting – Quakers
Date offices change	2nd Sunday of May
Officers	Co-Clerks: Alexa Kay, Ali-Asghar Aghbar Co-Recording Clerks: Elise Yoder, Susan Loucks Treasurer: Nick Coles Assistant Treasurer: Eric Starbuck Recorder: George Bradley
Reps to LEYM	Susan Loucks Claire Cohen

Archivist: Maura Klyce

Childcare Clerk: Jo Schlesinger

Clearness & Care Clerk: Wanda Guthrie

Communications Clerks: Mary King & Emily Anderson

Fall Gathering Clerks: Caitlin Koerber, Simone deJarnett

Finance Clerk: Alexa Kay

First Day School Clerk: Flynn Godfrey

Funeral Committee Clerk: Wanda Guthrie

Hospitality Committee Co-Clerk: Stewart Mbae

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

House Committee Clerk: Gina Godfrey

Library Committee Clerk: Pat May

Ministry Committee Clerk: Jami Burns

Nominating Committee Clerks: Jo Schlesinger, DaLee Miller

Outreach Committee Clerks: Anita Kulina, James Morgan

Peace & Social Concerns Clerk: Alexandra Neumann, Ryan Reagan

Personnel & Building Use Clerks: Ryan Reagan, Gina Godfrey

Quaker Community Fund Clerk: Emily Anderson

Red Cedar Monthly Meeting	
Day and time	Sunday 9:00 am (no child care, in-person only) Sunday 10:30 am (with First Day School, hybrid) Weekend Cafe, Saturday and Sunday, 5:00 pm (online only)
Worship location	Red Cedar Monthly Meeting 1400 Turner Rd. Lansing, MI 48906
Business Mtg	2 nd Sunday 12:15 pm
Mailing address	See above
Contact	Phone: 517-371-1047 Jamie Archer, jamielarcher@gmail.com
Website	redcedarfriends.org (email also received through a form on this website)
Date offices change	June 1
Officers	Co-Clerks: Jamie Archer, Terry Grant Recording Clerk: Mae Wilson Treasurer: Susan Waltz
Reps to LEYM	Carolyn Lejuste Brad Shaw

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Archivist: Yvonne LeFave
Publications Editor: Ann Blumer
Listserv Manager: Julia Bell
Rep to GPQM: [No one named]
Adult Religious Education Clerk: Maryann Concannon
Adult Religious Education Reporter: Vicki Hoelzer-Maddox
Building & Grounds Clerk: Jeanne Donado
Building Rentals: Kathy Booth, Joann Neuroth
Directory: Yvonne LeFave, Becky Payne
Finance Clerk: Susan Waltz
Hospitality Clerk: Jim Bloomfield
Landscaping Working Group: Susan Waltz
Membership & Outreach Clerk: Becky Payne
Newsletter Editor: Ann Blumer
Nominating Clerk: Carolyn Lejuste
Pastoral Care Clerk: Thoralf Hoelzer
Peace & Social Justice Convener: Erick Williams
Religious Education Clerk: Lynette Biery
Worship & Ministry Clerk: Jane Bush

Somerset Worship Group <i>Under the care of Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting</i>	
Day and time	Sunday 10:00 am
Worship location	331 Trolls Lake Road Somerset, PA 15501 Call or email to confirm location of worship
Mailing address	c/o Carol Famariss 331 Trolls Lake Rd Somerset, PA 15501
Contact	Carol Famariss, 814-443-3010 OR Brenda Benner, blbenner66@hotmail.com
Officers	Co-Conveners: Brenda Benner, Carol Famariss

Toledo Worship Group <i>Part of Broadmead Monthly Meeting</i>	
Day and time	Sunday 10:00 am (online and in-person). On 1 st and 3 rd Sunday, joined online by the Bluffton Worship Group
Worship location	The Victory Center 3166 N. Republic Blvd. Toledo, OH 43615
Mailing address	1532 Bernath Pkwy. Toledo, OH 43615
Contact	Bill Greenberg, 419-885-0441 drwmg@buckeye-express.com
Email	Toledo@broadmeadfriends.org
Website	broadmeadfriends.org
Facebook	Toledo Friends Worship Group–Quakers

Tustin Worship Group <i>Under the care of Grand Rapids Monthly Meeting</i>	
Day and time	Wednesday 7:00 pm
Worship location	Will vary; please call for location.
Mailing address	Mitzi Ruswick, Convener Tustin Worship Group 17617 20 Mile Road Tustin, MI 49688-8513
Contact	Mitzi Ruswick, 231-829-3440 OR Betsy Erickson, 231-829-3328
Officers	Convener: Mitzi Ruswick

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Waysmeet Worship Group	
Day and Time	Sunday 10:30 am (Bible study at 9:30) Thursday 2:15 pm (social time 2:00–2:15)
Location	Online only, with Friends from Ohio Valley Yearly Meeting - Conservative
Mailing address	Paula Deming, Convener Waysmeet Worship Group 6775 W. Alloway Street Worthington, OH 43085
Contact	Paula Deming, 614-846-7459 pdeming3506@gmail.com
Website	waysmeetfriends@columbus.rr.oh
Officers	Convener: Paula Deming Zoom Host: Sylvia Thomas, sethos@gcfn.org

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Wooster Monthly Meeting	
Day and time	Sunday 10:30 am 1 st and 3 rd Sundays in-person; other Sundays online only; contact James Gentry for Zoom link (see below)
Worship location	The Meeting Place Westminster Church House College of Wooster 353 E. Pine St. Wooster, OH 44691
Business Mtg	2 nd Sunday, Jan, Apr, July, Oct
Mailing address	Wooster Monthly Meeting 353 E. Pine St. Wooster, OH 44691
Contact	James Gentry, 440-488-5457 jinsight@zoho.com
Website	woosterfriends.org
Facebook	Wooster Friends Meeting (Quakers)
Date offices change	January 1
Officers	Clerk: Dottie Stratton Recording Clerk: James Gentry Treasurer: Catherine Quinn

Web Master: James Gentry

Finance and Location Contact: Mike Hinshaw

Outreach Contact: Joyce Balderston

Program Contact: Dottie Stratton

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-year 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.

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Finance		
Suggested # of Members: 3		
Joann Neuroth, Red Cedar, 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 <i>ex officio</i> .		

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 <i>ExC</i>)	1	2028
Open (1)		

Nominating		
Suggested # of Members: 6; appointed by YM through Naming Committee; Years of Term: 3		
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 (deceased 7/25)	1	2028
Open (5)		

Publications & Archives		
Suggested # of Members: 4		
Jeff Cooper, Ann Arbor, Clerk <i>ExC</i>	3	2026
Bob Roehm, North Columbus	8	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> .		

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Note: The Annual Meeting 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		
Suggested # of Members: 12-16; Years of Term: 2 (Clerk only)		
Diane Mott, Broadmead, Clerk <i>ExC</i>	3	2026
Erika Smith, Detroit, Asst. Clerk	4	2026
Ellerie Brownfain, Birmingham		
Jonah Brownfain, Birmingham		
Cristin Graham, Detroit		
Carla Pratt-Harrington, Athens		
Owen Pritchard, Broadmead		

Representatives to Other Quaker Organizations

AFSC Corporation		
Chelsea Middlemiss, Red Cedar	2	2027
** Phil Volk, Ann Arbor (deceased 7/25)	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

CONTACTS AND COMMUNICATIONS

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	4	2027
Jana Norlin, Grand Rapids	2	2027
Mike Hinshaw, Wooster	1	2027

FLGBTQC		
No nomination made		

Olney Friends School		
Greg Mott, Broadmead	1	2028

Quaker Earthcare Witness		
Richard Tucker, Ann Arbor	4	2028

Friends Peace Teams		
Cassie Cammann, Ann Arbor	1	2028