



# LAKE ERIE YEARLY MEETING

## Bulletin

### Clerk's Message from Jack Smith

## Rest, Reflection, and Openness to Love

Winter came pretty early to our region this year – and stayed. Most of us shifted indoors in response. Gardeners had to admit that the growing season was over; those older had to become more careful, especially when navigating on foot; many watched the weather forecast more attentively and adjusted plans in response.

Winter restricts some of our activities but also opens space for more settled time at home under the roofs that we are privileged to have. In this space may lie more opportunities to turn inward and reflect. Maybe we can pull back a bit from our busyness. In a pamphlet I read with my spiritual formation small group, simplicity was seen as alignment between our inner and outer lives, with the reminder that constant doing can distract us from our spiritual focus on being. What we do in visible action is but part of who we are as Friends.

When we find time to center, how are we led? Which of our gifts seem well-suited to the needs and opportunities we see for loving work? How does the commitment to make love the first motion enter our discernment? With the spiritual focus at our Annual Meeting this past year in mind, which of our many nets – those that hold and sustain us – call to us to mend?

I wish all who read this message some prayerful space for reflection and



discernment this season. As the natural world rests and prepares for a new season of light and warmth, we may also welcome a similar pause for prayer, self-care, and discernment. It is so easy to give that time and space away to doing, leaving little time to attend to our inner voice – the Light we have been given.

As we make personal space for discernment, we may bring our refreshed and reflective selves to worship and the corporate work of our meetings and worship groups. New possibilities for right action, locally or more broadly, may emerge. Certainly, we will grow as Quaker communities in our knowledge of each other and ourselves when we share the fruits of our discernment.



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# Call for Workshops at 2026 Annual Meeting

Annual Meeting is coming again June 18-21, 2026, to Ashland University. We'd like to invite Friends to consider being part of the program by submitting a proposal to offer a workshop. Our 2026 theme is **“Finding Hope, Joy and Courage in Community.”**

Our plenary speaker will be Joe Volk

<https://www.fcnl.org/people/joe-volk>, speaking on the theme “Joyful Resistance as a Practice of Hope.”

Proposals should be submitted by **February 22, 2026**, in order to receive full consideration. Accepted workshops will be offered on either June 19 or 20. As you prepare, note that on the form we are asking for information on the following topics:

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

Submissions should use the form found here:

<https://leym.org/leym2026cfp/>. Note: Questions can be directed to Greg Mott via [mott@findlay.edu](mailto:mott@findlay.edu)

## LEYM Programming Online!

The Advancement and Outreach Committee has been sponsoring programming this year that provides opportunities to be together in structures that translate easily to adult education programming “at home”. We’ve used [QuakerSpeak videos](#) as a seed for discussion, and have asked a few people to prepare (as if for prepared vocal ministry) and share their journey with one of the Quaker testimonies.

In January Bill Warters unpacked the Quaker understanding of gifts and leadings, including using a gifts inventory included in his accompanying

[resources](#). The recording and resources are both available on LEYM’s webpage (use the search bar and type in “gifts and leadings”!).

More programs are coming up:

**February’s program** will provide an opportunity on how monthly meetings are cultivating depth. Watch for announcements about the date and other details of Spiritual Deepening and Vital Community: A Two-Way Street – coming soon!

**March’s program** will explain and allow practice with Spiritual Companioning, a practice common for early Quakers, who traveled in the ministry with Spiritual Companions. We who are currently practicing it find it a powerful way to make time in our full lives to put Spirit First and to develop a support system for doing that. Join Joann Neuroth, Mark Hoover, Barbara LeSage, and Cassie Cammann on **March 19** from 7-9 pm at [this link](#), passcode 84448 (or, if you’re reading this on paper, text Cassie Cammann at 734-604-8878 for details).

If you’ve missed out on previous programs, don’t forget that you can curl up under a blanket and hear everything from a panel on “Families with Children in our Family of Friends” to past plenary speakers on our LEYM YouTube channel:

<https://www.youtube.com/@lakeerieyearlymeeting/videos>

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# All Are Invited to Representative Meeting

## Saturday, March 28, 2026

### In Person at Red Cedar Monthly Meeting and Online

Contrary to its name, there are no designated “representatives” for this meeting. It is a time for everyone in our Yearly Meeting to gather, address our business before Annual Meeting, and enjoy each other’s company, making new spiritual connections and enriching existing ones. The business agenda will include work on the Annual Meeting program as well as other issues in the life of our Yearly Meeting.

One main goal for 2026 is for each attender to learn about the spiritual contours of an LEYM Monthly Meeting other than their own. Before lunch, two

Friends from each Monthly Meeting present will sit at a table, speak briefly on their sense of life in their Meeting, and then anchor discussion with Friends who come to learn. In addressing “life in their Meeting,” Friends may speak to their sense of spiritual strengths of their Meeting and to its practical and spiritual challenges. Regrettably, for technical reasons, this activity may not be available to online participants.

As has been our practice, our Executive Committee meets on Friday evening, March 27<sup>th</sup>.

#### Schedule for Saturday, March 28:

Registration & simple breakfast.....	9:00 AM
Meeting for Worship.....	9:45 AM
Welcome & Announcements.....	10:30 AM
Break.....	10:45 AM
Monthly Meeting Tables.....	11:00 PM
Lunch.....	12:00 PM
Informal Reports from Tables.....	1:00 PM
Meeting for Business.....	1:30 PM
Adjournment.....	4:00 PM

#### ADVANCE REGISTRATION

##### For Friends Attending in Person

To be received by Saturday, March 13th  
(\$12 donation gladly accepted for Saturday lunch)

Please mail or email this form to:

Jack Smith,  
202 East Riverside St.,  
Williamston, MI 48895  
[jsmith@msu.edu](mailto:jsmith@msu.edu)

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

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

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

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

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

Number of persons for SATURDAY LUNCH

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

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

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

Overnight Accommodations (please check):

I (we) will make our own arrangements.

I (we) need hospitality with Friends on:

Friday, March 27 (# people) \_\_\_\_\_

Saturday, March 28 (# people) \_\_\_\_\_

Nearby hotel options will be listed on the LEYM website. <https://leym.org/representative-meeting/>

# 2026 Annual Meeting in Ashland

Join us for LEYM's 2026 Annual Meeting, **June 18-21 in Ashland, Ohio.**

Speaking to our condition, we gather to explore our faith and practice through engaging workshops, birds-of-a-feather tables, children's programming, worship-sharing, night-owl movies, and browsing at the Quaker bookstore. Plenary speaker Joe Volk will address "Joyful Resistance as a Practice of Hope," while Doug Gwyn offers Bible Study and, we hope, shares his beloved "That of Odd in Everyone" at Saturday evening's celebration.

Whether you're a longtime Friend or new to the Quaker way, we welcome you to this opportunity for renewal and connection.

## Why Ashland?

We gather in the small town of Ashland, Ohio, located about halfway between Cleveland and Columbus. The Ashland University campus is compact with easy parking and centralized spaces for meeting and socializing. The food is good, with a salad bar and menu that prioritizes local sourcing. Downtown offers interesting shops for nature lovers and craft beer fans. Also on campus is the Ashland Center for Nonviolence, founded by the late LEYM Friend John Stratton.

We welcome all members, attenders, and friends of LEYM to share deep worship and connect with old Friends and new. Keeping with the knowledge that Friends learn the truth experientially, we will be making more space this year to explore Connections among Young Friends, the experience of Parenting Quaker Kids, Guidance on Clerking of all kinds, sharing a Simple Meal, and space for Grieving and Sharing of Memories. Watch for the full program and registration details in the next *Bulletin* and at [leym.org/annual](http://leym.org/annual).

Save **June 18-21** on your calendar and encourage meeting Friends and families to attend.

## Simple Meal

LEYM Program and Arrangements Committee has arranged to designate one of our meals in June as a Simple Meal. This is an opportunity for Friends to consider the wealth of food opportunities available to many of us in this country.

Those who chose to share a simple meal will be encouraged to choose specific items in the cafeteria. We will eat at identified tables where queries will be posted that can guide the conversation. At these tables we will consider our gratitude for what is before us and how it got there; those who share the planet, who do not have a richness of available food; the portions we put on our plate and what we leave; eating together as an example of community building and/or community breaking.

## Grieving While Quaker: Acknowledging Grief

Grief is a part of life, and each year when we gather there are people attending who are at various points on a grief journey. To acknowledge this fact, we are planning to have a space at Yearly Meeting for people to bring items that represent memories and feelings about someone (or something) which has been especially significant to them and whose loss has been painful. At some time during yearly session, those of us who wish will have an opportunity to talk about our experiences. We hope to explore how our Quaker beliefs and values support us in these times of grief. If you would like to help in planning or just have some ideas on how we should do this, please contact Shelley Kotz at [sh.s3ktz@gmail.com](mailto:sh.s3ktz@gmail.com).

## Informal Clerking Discussions at Annual Meeting

Join us for a casual conversation about clerking practices. All welcome, whether experienced, curious, or simply interested in learning more about this vital Quaker role.

# 2026 Annual Meeting Plenary

## "Joyful Resistance as a Practice of Hope"

### With Joe Volk

**Joe Volk**, Executive Secretary Emeritus of Friends Committee on National Legislation, will be the Plenary Speaker at the 2026 LEYM Annual Meeting, the theme of which is "Finding Hope, Joy and Courage in Community"

Joe served as Executive Secretary of the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) from 1990 to 2011. He served as the American Friends Service Committee's National Peace Education Secretary, in Philadelphia, from 1982 to 1990. Prior to that he served as the Coordinator of the AFSC Michigan Area Office, based in Ann Arbor, from 1978 to 1982, the AFSC's Dayton Regional Peace Education Secretary from 1974 to 1978, and the Southeast Regional Office's Nonviolence Training and Action Coordinator from 1972 to 74. When in

## Give Us a Tour! Short Videos Requested for Annual Meeting

Last summer in Ashland we had a good time seeing how each meeting is an important "puzzle piece" of the whole. Your puzzle pieces (and guessing which was which) provided many moments of fascination!

The Advancement and Outreach Committee is hoping this year to inspire similar fascination with a different medium, and are requesting **one to two minute videos** from **each willing LEYM monthly meeting and worship group** to give us an virtual introduction to you that we can display for everyone this summer. Will it include a rousing hello from the kitchen while preparing for a potluck, a glimpse of that deer that hangs out in the landscaping, the kids making pinwheels? (maybe the kids want to be in charge of this project!) Don't overthink it and send your footage to [susanloucks@gmail.com](mailto:susanloucks@gmail.com). If the thought of shooting video makes you shudder, we welcome your 'virtual introduction' with some still shots, too!

Can't wait to see you all – in person and/or virtually – in June.



graduate school at Miami University in 1969, he met Beth Wiener, and they married in 1970. In February 1967, Joe returned his draft deferment to his Wilmington, Ohio, draft board explaining that he would no longer use his white, middle class privilege to be exempt from military

service and that, because he was opposed to the U.S. war in Vietnam, he would not serve there in the military. He declined his draft board's offer of conscientious objector status and was inducted into the U.S. Army in June. Later, he refused movement to Vietnam with A Troop/4th of the 12th Cav/5th Division. He received a general courts martial, did a brief time in confinement, got reassigned to assist an army psychiatrist, and processed out with an honorable release from active duty at the end of his two years.

Joe was born in Cincinnati, Ohio, in 1945, was raised a Methodist by his parents, graduated from Blanchester High School in 1963, and became a convinced Friend in 1984. He is a member of Ann Arbor Friends Meeting and is a regular attender of Kendal Meeting for Worship at the Quaker Life Plan Community, Kendal at Longwood, in Pennsylvania. Joe and Beth have 3 children and 4 grandchildren.

Joe says: "My experience tells me that standing up for the rule of law and accepting the risks can take us to a joyful place. That, as James Lawson, the civil rights nonviolent genius put it, most people ask, "But will I suffer, if I stand up?" Jim said, "That's the wrong question, because we all will suffer. The right question to ask is to what purpose will I put my suffering?"

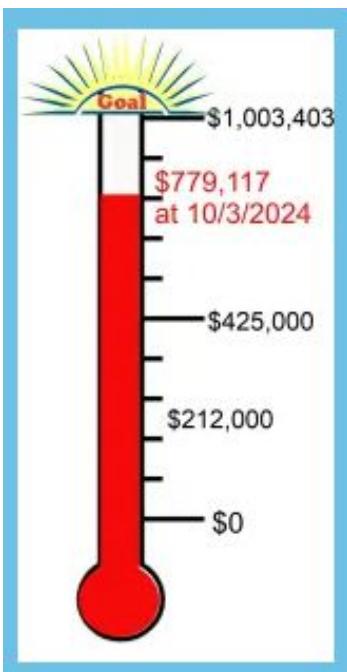
# Detroit Friends Meeting House

Dear Friends,

Detroit Friends Meeting is grateful for the opportunity to share an update on the renovation of our new meetinghouse on Greenfield in Detroit. As we near the final stages of this long journey, we want to thank you for the steady spiritual and financial support you have offered over the years. Your continued care has sustained us.

As with many building projects, several unexpected requirements from DTE and the City of Detroit—such as the construction of a four-foot cement wall along the back property line, an additional parking space, and the installation of a new utility transformer and pole for our energy-efficient systems—added significant costs. Rising material prices due to tariffs, along with our inability to receive previously anticipated governmental environmental reimbursements, created additional financial strain even with a 20% contingency built into our budget. These factors have left us with a sizable amount still to raise.

Throughout this process, we have felt held by the wider body of F/friends. Your encouragement, your prayers, and your belief in the value of a Quaker presence in Detroit have helped us remain grounded



**FUNDS  
RAISED  
AS OF  
1/6/2026**

and hopeful. Together, we have carried forward the shared commitment that our Light continues to shine in the city – to service neighbors, welcoming newcomers, and offering a place of quiet witness in challenging times.

We invite you to view our newly updated seven-minute video, available at [www.detroitfriendsmeeting.org](http://www.detroitfriendsmeeting.org), which offers a glimpse of the remarkable progress that your generosity has already made possible.

We also hope that in the months ahead, you may be able to worship with us in Detroit. It would be a joy to show you how deeply your support has shaped this new home for our Meeting and its ministry.

With Gratitude and Friendship,

*Members of Detroit Friends Meeting*

# Cleveland Meeting Finds a New Home

2025 proved to be an eventful year for Cleveland Meeting. We celebrated our 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary and we found a new Meeting house.

In 2021, when we sold our old Meeting house, which had been our home for 65 years, the Meeting moved into rented space at the back of a nearby church. The worship space was acceptable, except for when the carillons rang during silent worship, but we had no kitchen and little space for fellowship; our library was mainly housed in boxes; and especially concerning was the lack of dedicated space for our small First Day School.

In the summer of 2024, the Meeting began the search for a new Meeting space. Although our realtor was also a Friend, we found it very difficult to find a property suitable for a Meeting house. Having looked unsuccessfully for a year, we were beginning to resign ourselves to having to find a vacant property and build a new Meeting house. A Called Meeting was scheduled to explore our options – and then, way opened. A property turned up. It had taken us 14 years to find clearness about selling our old Meeting house. It took us two weeks to find clearness to make an offer on this building. We were one of three or four bids on the property, and the Lord delivered it to us.

The new Meeting house is smaller than our old one, but in a community, which the old one was not, and we look forward to building relations with our neighbors. A Metro Park on Lake Erie is within walking distance, as is a black congregation with which we have been working together for the past eight years.

We still have a lot of work to do to get the building in shape for a Meeting house. Friends have been sharing their ideas as we are exploring various floor plans and features we want.

Cleveland Meeting begins 2026 – and our next 100 years – with joy and optimism.



*The new Meeting house at 17702 Nottingham Rd, Cleveland*



*Cleveland Friends take possession of the new Meeting house on 9 November 2025.*  
*(Pictured L to R): Christopher Farrand, Oskar Baker, Eric Coble, Amaya Coble, Carol Laursen, Owen Baker, Brian Baker, and our realtor Friend Sharon Phelps.*

## Cleveland Celebrates 100 Years

On Saturday, 6 September, Cleveland Meeting observed its 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary. We greeted Friends who joined us in person, including F(f)riends from Oberlin Meeting and from Greater New Canaan Ministries, and by former Cleveland Friends unable to join us in person, but who joined us on Zoom. Others, unable to join us, sent in written recollections and stories which were read aloud, interspersed with the stories and memories shared by those attending in person or on Zoom. We shared photos and slides of past Friends and of the old Meeting house on Magnolia Drive – at that point we had not yet found our new Meeting house.

We were deeply grateful to be joined by Marty Grundy, a greatly missed past member of 40 years, who gave a timely and moving keynote message (which can be found on Page 10 of this *Bulletin*).

# Green Pastures QM Begins Laying Down Process

At the Fall Meeting of Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting, on Saturday, September 20, 2025, Friends in attendance came to unity that it is time to begin the process of laying GPQM down. Declining attendance and a lack of people willing to accept service in clerking or on committees were two of the main factors in this decision. The process is expected to take about a year.

Although many Friends greatly enjoy in-person contact with one another, the large number of Quaker programs and events easily accessible online have made geographical proximity less important in making and maintaining spiritual and social connections or participating in presentations and discussions.

A “laying down” Committee is charged with following good order in wrapping up the financial affairs and other obligations of the Quarterly Meeting. Members include Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor, clerk), Geoff Brieger (Birmingham), Ellerie Brownfein (Birmingham), Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor), Joe Mills (Kalamazoo), and John Williams (Ann Arbor). They welcome prayers, questions, and suggestions from any Friend.

During the coming months, the three organizations who received support from GPQM will be notified that the contributions will end after 2026. They are the Michigan AFSC Office, the Michigan Friends Center, and the Michigan Alternatives to Violence Project.

Friends in Michigan are encouraged to host events with other Friends in the region, whether in person or online. The responsibility falls to all of us to maintain the broader Quaker community that can nurture us. We look forward to seeing how Spirit leads us together in new ways.

*Peggy Daub*

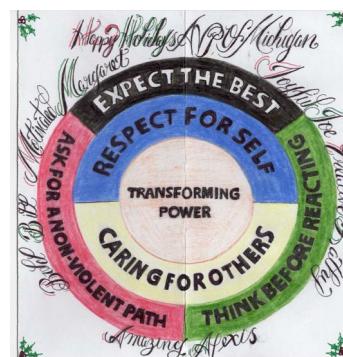


## Michigan Alternatives to Violence Project Update

The Michigan AVP community remains active in a variety of ways, with Friends from the Kalamazoo, Ann Arbor and Birmingham Friends Meetings providing direct support and volunteer workshop facilitation. Recent examples include cross-cultural community workshops (basic, advanced, and trainings for facilitators) happening in Ann Arbor (including one session held on the International Day of Peace) and AVP-mini workshops offered at Quaker Haven Camp in Indiana as part of the “Quaker Nexus” event in early November. We partnered with AVP Indiana to staff the mini-workshops offered to all campers, including a group of Cuban Friends.

We have had to pause our monthly workshops at Ionia Correctional Facility due to a request from prison administration that we stand-down for now as they deal with under-staffing issues. We hope to get things restarted there in the new year. A recent holiday card from our inside facilitator team raised our spirits. More information on AVP Michigan can be found at [avpmichigan.org](http://avpmichigan.org)

*Bill Warters (Birmingham Friends Meeting)*



# Fall Youth Retreat

The Annual Fall Youth Retreat (grades K-12) was held October 2-4, 2025, at the Kirkmont Center Camp and Retreat Center in Zanesfield, Ohio. This new location was a wonderful fit for our gathering. It's more centralized, making attendance easier for many folks.

Perfect fall weather allowed us to fully enjoy the outdoors in our new setting. We explored the grounds through walks and played Tag, Kickball and Gaga Ball. Indoor activities included puzzles, games, drawing and reading.

A highlight was our contemplative nature walk, a peaceful treasure hunt where participants followed clues along the path. They walked with adults in silence or quiet conversation. Afterwards, we gathered to share our experiences through pictures and writing, reflecting on the feelings and thoughts that arose during the walk.



Adults cooked meals together, with the exception of pizza night, always a special treat. Our small group of youth and adults bonded deeply. New friendships formed across ages. We ended our retreat with Meeting for Worship on Sunday morning.

The weekend left everyone looking forward to next year's Fall Youth Retreat. Next year's retreat will return to the Kirkmont Center in fall 2026. Watch for details!

*Ellerie Brownfain*



## Quaker Nexus

Ellerie Brownfain, member of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, helped to organize and lead a Quaker intergenerational program for Friends from the Midwest. Western Yearly Meeting sponsored the program. To plan this event, they invited folks from various Yearly Meetings, mainly in the Midwest.

People met from Western, New Association of Friends, Ohio Valley, Illinois, Lake Erie, and North Carolina Conservative Yearly Meetings at Quaker Hill Conference Center in Richmond, Indiana. After months of planning through Zoom calls and phone conversations, Quaker Nexus became a reality in November 2025. We met at Quaker Haven Camp in Syracuse, Indiana.

Around 50 Friends attended, ranging in age from babies to older adults. Our bilingual gathering included games, music, worship held in different Friends traditions and good food. Saturday was devoted to participating in a bilingual Alternatives to Violence program through morning and afternoon mini-workshops. We offered sessions for both adults and children, so everyone could take part.

The weekend concluded with Sunday morning worship held by Cuban Friends, who have a meeting in Indiana. It was rich with prayer and music. It was a beautiful time together. New friendships formed across generations and between programmed and unprogrammed Friends.

We were blessed with snow covering the ground when we woke on that last morning. Details will be shared about the next Midwest Quaker Nexus gathering, planned for next fall.

# Marty Grundy on the Bedrock of Our Quaker Faith

## *Delivered on the Occasion of the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Cleveland Meeting*

One thing that has been rising within me for some time and hadn't yet found the right place to offer, is an attempt to describe in a few short points exactly what is the bedrock foundation upon which our Quaker faith rests. From there it seems to grow organically to an exploration of what we as a faith community are called upon to say, do, and be in today's challenging situation.

Let's start with a brief glance at *Matthew 7:24-27* in which Jesus speaks of the wise man who builds his house upon a rock. "The rain fell, the floods came, and the winds blew and beat on that house, but it did not fall, because it had been founded on rock." I want to briefly describe that rock, because I think we all sense that the rain, floods, and winds of trouble will come.

Friends' faith – our rock – starts with God. Another Biblical reference, this one to what I understand scholars think is the very oldest story in the Bible: Moses and the burning bush. God tells Moses to go to Pharaoh and demand that he set God's people free. Moses is a bit leery and wants to know just who to say is sending him with this message. God tells Moses to say "I am" sent him. In other words, God wants us to know that God exists. (*Exodus 3:14*)

Already for Friends this is problematical, at least in our use of words, but perhaps not in our inexpressible experiences of awe or love. We need to listen in tongues, remembering that each person needs to speak using their own words, metaphors, images; we are speaking of something that is by definition beyond our ability to capture (and "own" it) in words; so be patient and listen with our hearts, not our intellect. For some it may be a Person, for others simply the energy of Love; some find traditional Christian language and metaphors are expressive of their experience; for others this is a turn-off. This could easily be an entire weekend retreat in itself, but please just hold your own understanding and let's move on, translating as you feel necessary. Please hold in your mind the name you use for yourself when considering the reality that is bigger than you, but not you, and may be experienced in a myriad of possible ways. Now let's each say our word all together, in a chorus: GOD!

Through the generations Friends have found this . . . what I will call "God" . . . is both transcendent and imminent, and that each of us can build a relation with it without any human intermediary, and no special ritual or special place or time is required. It's always available if we humbly pay attention.

Furthermore, Friends in each period have discovered that this "God" is love. Not acting loving, but is the actual embodiment or energy of Love.

Interactions of us with this powerful Love nudge us towards better, more loving ways of living and dealing with one another. In other words, God teaches us – as much as we are willing to learn – what is the better way to live. This runs from small daily interactions and choices to the trajectory of one's whole life. Not only are we given instructions on what to do, but we are given the courage and power to do it.

Friends from our beginning realized that we are being called together to be a faith community, a people led by what they described as the Inward Christ. So Friends developed ways to worship and ways to do the business of the group that gave credence and authority to the presence of a Divine Teacher in our midst.

We have inherited a precious tradition that answers to so many of today's issues; but are we living into its fullness, sharing its joys and fruits? As well as its challenges? How does this tradition help us meet today's fraught environmental, political, economic, and social crises? How does our tradition inform our personal as well as our corporate lifestyle?

I have found some of the old traditional queries suggest ways to consider bringing our lifestyles into conformity with our stated beliefs. Let's start with a relatively easy one, for example, that asks us to look at the words we use, our habits of conversation, and how the way we talk reflects our inner life.

- Do you manifest a forgiving spirit and a care for the reputation of others?
- Do you refrain from using hurtful and provocative language?
- Do you avoid and discourage hurtful criticism and unkind gossip?
- Do you respect that of God in each one, though it may be expressed in unfamiliar ways or may be difficult to discern?

Are you honest and truthful in word and deed? I have a habit of speaking in hyperbole and have tried to curb it since working with these queries with my present meeting. I'm not always successful. The idea is for others to be able to trust what we say. As authoritarianism increases and reputable sources of information are compromised, people want to know whom they can trust. Let's be those trustworthy people who are careful with their words.

Here are too common examples of untruthful speech/conversation:

- exaggeration
- repeating hearsay
- using a broad brush to describe groups of people
- efforts at humor that also cause hurt
- remarks that are snide, cynical, tend to divide us/them
- advice not given from a place of love
- speculation on what horrible things will (may) happen

A somewhat more difficult set of Queries asked about the use of our time:

- Do you choose recreations which will strengthen the physical, mental and spiritual life of yourself and your family, and do you avoid those that may be a hindrance to you and to others?
- Do we guard against involving ourselves in temporal affairs to the hindrance of spiritual growth?
- Do I choose recreation and manner of living that enriches the body, mind, and spirit; and shows a high regard for family, community, and creation?

In order to act with integrity and wholeness in the world, a world which so needs integrity and wholeness, we must slow down into a deeper, quiet space. We need to find our own center, the Light within, and touch that regularly. We need to learn how to live out from that center, and help one another.

For at least 250 years Friends understood that they were being called to a lifestyle somewhat at odds with the dominant culture surrounding them. Today it seems that many people are disquieted and stressed because what they long for is not what the dominant culture offers. So these queries are helpful:

- Does your manner of life as a Friend attract others to our Religious Society? Do we speak boldly of the Truth we have found?
- How does our meeting as a faith community help me be more mindful/careful about my use of time and way I talk? and How do I help others in the meeting be more mindful and careful about their use of time and their way of talking?

There isn't an old query specifically asking us to be kind. But if part of the current administration's strategy is deliberate fear and cruelty, then we are the people who are actively resisting by being kind. I have a Friend in Orchard Park – a small meeting near Buffalo, NY – that recently had 4 people request membership. At least two of them in their clearness committees specifically stated they were drawn to request membership because people in the meeting were kind. Let's be the people who are kind, spread love, who smile, have eye-contact; are cheerful; let's look for "that of God/Christ" in everyone we meet, especially those with whom we disagree or find disagreeable. In times of fear and repression being open and friendly – being kind – is an act of defiance and resistance.

Seemingly a lot of stuff on the media claims a "Christian" excuse for quite un-Christlike behavior. So we Friends need to practice – first with one another until we get a bit more comfortable with the idea and the words – speaking of the spiritual, faith-based reasons for our behavior. Yes, let your lives speak, but when necessary, use words.

Another thing that needs to be done as despotism increases is to build networks with other people and organizations. You are already doing this very well, I think, with New Canaan Church, dinners at Antioch Baptist, and the interfaith group as well as with individuals and meetings within LEYM, FGC, FCNL, and FWCC. Keep ties of love and common understanding and experience fresh and strong. It doesn't hurt to have friends in the ACLU or CWRU's School of Law.

Scrupulously obey the laws unless they contravene Divine law as discerned by Friends, then be open and honest about why you are led to disobey. It's good if the whole meeting community discerns this and minutes it, and then lives it together. When something is discerned, then send the minute to other meetings within Lake Erie YM. Keep communicating and sharing loving concern with one another. Also share word of sufferings for Truth's sake – perhaps to *Friends Journal* and FCNL.

Each of us will probably face a moment when there is a line we feel must not be crossed; it will likely be different for each of us; how can we prepare one another to bravely resist crossing our line? We need

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**February 1:** Meeting responses to Annual Query due.

**February 22:** Deadline for Annual Meeting Workshop Proposals.

**March 28:** LEYM Representative Meeting at Red Cedar MM in Lansing.

**May 15:** Deadline for "State of the Meeting Reports."

**June 1:** Monthly Meeting "Statistical Reports" due.

**June 18-21:** LEYM Annual Meeting at Ashland U.

**July 30:** Due date for submissions to 2026 *Annual Records*.

## LEYM Annual Query

"How does your Meeting assure that members and attenders receive a solid and well-rounded foundation in the religious thought, experience, the practice of discernment, and the history of Friends? Does your Meeting have an ongoing religious education program? How can the Yearly Meeting assist in this?"

Meetings are asked to respond to the Query by 1 February.

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to support one another even though the lines we draw quite possibly will differ.

As authoritarianism increases there will be increasing opportunities to take action – or resist taking a "required" action. When possible discern together and act together, with prayer, love, and integrity. Don't discount the power and clarity that may come from corporate deep listening for the movement of the Spirit. Deepen our dependence on Divine love which is always present, undergirding all we do. Pray and prepare now for the courage and understanding of when each of us will be called to take a stand, small or large.

Our strength is not as individuals but as a faith community unified with strong bonds of love. Yes, there is an ocean of darkness and its tide is coming in,

## LEYM Committee Clerks

### 2025-2026

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

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but there is also an infinite ocean of Light and the darkness cannot overcome it. [Fox, and John 1:5]

*Marty Grundy is currently a member of Wellesley Meeting in Massachusetts. She was a member of Cleveland Meeting for 40 years and served many years as Meeting clerk, as well as Clerk of LEYM.*