

LEYM Executive Committee
January 17, 2026

Present: Jack Smith (Clerk), Peggy Daub (Recording Clerk), Jeff Cooper (Publications & Archives), Christopher Farrand (*LEYM Bulletin* Editor), Flo Friender (Ministry & Nurture), Dennis Gregg (Ministry & Nurture), Susan Hartman (Advancement & Outreach), Tom Kangas (Treasurer), Barbara LeSage (Advancement & Outreach), Carolyn Lejuste (Arrangements & Site), Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon (Adult & Family Program/Nominating), Mary Igoe Myers (Nominating), Bill Wartens (Digital Communications Facilitator)

The Executive Committee of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting gathered in waiting worship on Zoom at 9:30 am on Saturday, January 17, 2026.

1. Planning Representative Meeting: Jack Smith (Red Cedar) reported.

Clerk Jack Smith confirmed that arrangements have been made to have Representative Meeting at Red Cedar Meeting in Lansing, Michigan, on Saturday, March 28, 2026, preceded by a meeting of the LEYM Executive Committee on Friday evening, March 27. He shared the draft of a page to appear in the Winter *LEYM Bulletin* inviting people to attend and providing a schedule and registration form. The schedule includes a tabling session in the morning at which monthly meetings can share information answering the query “What does life in your Meeting look like?” Information about Representative Meeting will also be sent to monthly meeting clerks and representatives, announced in the upcoming “Clerks’ Chat,” and sent by email to everyone who attended Annual Meeting in 2025.

2. Work of the Assistant Clerk: Jack Smith and Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon (Erie Worship Group) reported.

Clémence previously volunteered to choose epistles to be read at our Annual Sessions in 2026. In doing so, she found that our LEYM Epistle for 2025 was not available on the Friends World Committee on Consultation (FWCC) website as expected, though others are found there. Ones she has chosen so far align well with the yearly meeting theme for 2026. She indicated that she cannot participate in the composing of LEYM’s own epistle at Annual Meeting because of her other duties.

Jack said there is a need to find someone to lead the writing of the LEYM Epistle for 2026 (a task usually done by the Assistant Clerk). The name of someone who had taken joy in doing this in 2025 was suggested as a possibility.

3. Publications & Archives Committee: Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor) reported.

The Committee met to consider the question of whether Lake Erie Yearly Meeting should “maintain records for all members of our constituent meetings in the LEYM database and how, if

at all, their contact information should be accessible.” They considered the pros of use for historical research and current communications and the cons of privacy concerns, additional labor, and questionable accuracy. The Committee brought a proposal that monthly meetings will be invited to send their digital directories to our Database Manager and, with the permission of monthly meetings, the Database Manager will forward them to the Friends Historical Collection at Swarthmore College and to Friends General Conference. Directory information for people with responsibilities in their monthly meetings, worship groups, or LEYM, or who attended annual sessions will continue to be included in the LEYM database. Meetings will be asked to identify or exclude people under age 18.

The LEYM Executive Committee **supported** the Publications & Archives Committee recommendation on collecting information about members of constituent meetings. It will be considered further at Representative Meeting and Annual Sessions. (The full report is appended.)

4. Nominating Committee: Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon reported.

The Representative Council within FGC’s new governance structure is now being formed and the Nominating Committee brought forward two names to serve on it: Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham) and Jayson Smith (Detroit). The approval is sought now to facilitate FGC’s work.

The LEYM Executive Committee **approved** the appointment of Ellerie Brownfain and Jayson Smith as our representatives to the FGC Representative Council. To clarify, we ask that Ellerie’s appointment be considered her first year of service to this new body, although she served as LEYM’s representative to FGC last year. Jack will tell FGC about this decision.

The Nominating Committee will be contacting Friends whose term of service ends in 2026. High on the list is finding a Friend to serve as Assistant Clerk for four years, in our historical manner of serving as Assistant Clerk one year, Clerk two years, and Assistant Clerk again for one year. They hope to have a partial slate to share at Representative Meeting.

5. Finance Committee: Tom Kangas (North Columbus), Treasurer, reported as neither Joann Neuroth nor Ellen Barnes were available.

Tom announced that an audit of the LEYM books for 2024-25 is currently underway by two Friends from Athens, John Howell and Warren Haydon. Contributions from our constituent monthly meetings are starting to come in, with 36% received so far, a rate similar to past years. In answer to a question, Tom said that the requested contribution is \$42 per member, the same as last year. These contributions are requested by the end of January because the first payments to Ashland University start soon after.

6. Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting: Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor) reported.

At their meeting in September 2025, Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting found unity in beginning the process of laying down the quarter. An ad hoc committee to oversee the process was appointed, including Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor, convener), Geoff Brieger (Birmingham), Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham), Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor), Terri Grant (Red Cedar), Susan Hartman (Ann Arbor), Joe Mills (Kalamazoo), and John Williams (Ann Arbor). They sent a letter to the LEYM Clerk and the co-clerks of the LEYM Advancement & Outreach Committee to inform them of this decision in September. The A&O Committee discussed and concluded that no response was necessary.

Final donations to the three organizations supported by GPQM (Michigan AFSC Office, Michigan Friends Center, and the Michigan Alternatives to Violence Project) will be made early in 2026. The GPQM By-Laws require that assets of the quarter be directed to LEYM upon its dissolution, but there is likely to be no or few assets because of intentional spending down from GPQM's modest bank account. Monthly meetings will be asked to consider how they can help close this gap in support to the three organizations in lieu of their annual contributions to GPQM.

There will likely be a final celebration of GPQM at the traditional outside worship in Quaker Park, Battle Creek, near Hiroshima Day in August 2026. Other ways of continuing ties within the LEYM monthly meetings and worship groups in Michigan are being encouraged. Dennis mentioned various ways in which "unofficial" quarterly meetings are sometimes contained within yearly meetings through informal gatherings with no business to conduct. A question arose of whether or not LEYM should consider taking on GPQM's traditional winter gathering or the organizational support that had been GPQM's.

LEYM's *Policies and Procedures* will need to be revised in response to this change. Peggy asked for help in discerning whether all mention of quarterly meetings should be excised from P&P or just naming of GPQM. Friends suggested that a mention of the prior existence of GPQM could be added to P&P, and that the second option leaves more room for future additions of quarterly meetings.

The Executive Committee **supported** the process for Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting laying itself down and asking monthly meetings to help bridge the financial support the GPQM had been responsible for. We expect reports on proposed changes to LEYM's *Policies and Procedures* resulting from this change.

7. Advancement & Outreach Committee: Susan Hartman (Ann Arbor) and Barbara LeSage (North Columbus) reported.

An online session concerning Gifts and Leadings, led by Bill Warters (Birmingham) was held recently with a recording and materials developed for meetings added to the website. There will be future events in February, March, and April. The Committee will ask monthly meetings to submit a brief video introducing their meetings to share at our annual meeting. They plan to produce a map showing the location of our constituent meetings and worship groups and may

have a passport-like activity. They are kept busy responding to requests for help from various meetings and are tending to that rather than stressing intervisitation in general.

The Committee continued its practice of reaching out to meetings who do not submit State of the Meeting reports and in this process found that some reports submitted were not published in our *Annual Records*. This year, a way was found to add them to the digital version of *AR* on our website. The reports are sent to a member of the Ministry & Nurture Committee, who gathers them and forward them on to the editor of the *AR*. The Clerk asked the two committees to be in close contact with each other for the collection and publication of State of the Meeting reports, including follow-up to monthly meetings.

8. Ministry & Nurture Committee: Dennis Gregg (Ann Arbor) reported.

The Committee continues to host online “Clerks’ Chats,” including one for clerks of ministry committees this fall. Hearing from the people who attended helped focus the annual query they produced, which asked how we transfer the knowledge of how to be a Quaker to those who are new to Quakerism? Responses to the query are due at the end of January. More Clerks’ Chats are planned.

The Committee distributed a document on vocal ministry to monthly meetings. They will ask for responses at a future Clerks’ Chat.

They are planning two activities for our Annual Meeting: 1) an informal gathering on the process of clerking, and 2) a workshop on conflict in meetings.

9. Peace & Justice Committee: Jack Smith reported on behalf of Claire Cohen (Pittsburgh).

Claire feels she needs to lay down responsibility for revitalizing the Committee. The other people who were to serve with Claire have not been able to due to death and illness. She suggested an article about the importance of the Committee in the Spring *LEYM Bulletin* to try to gather interest in it. Susan will also take this as a suggestion to the A&O Committee for the topic of one of their presentations. Friends suggested that declaring the Committee “dormant” rather than laying it down would be in good order. Friends also suggested having a “chat” for the clerks of local Peace committees and getting interested people together at Annual Meeting.

10. Adult & Family Program Committee: Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon reported.

The theme for this year’s annual meeting is “Finding Hope, Joy, and Courage in Community,” with Joe Volk as our plenary speaker. The schedule is packed. Deadline for workshop proposals is February 22, 2026. The deadline for the Spring *LEYM Bulletin* is March 15, 2026.

11. Announcements: Jack Smith reported.

** Diane Mott (Broadmead) reported for the Youth and Children Committee that she is working with our Treasurer to reserve the Kirkmont Center (northwest of Columbus, Ohio) for the annual Fall Youth Retreat in 2026.

The Meeting ended a bit earlier than planned, but with our business concluded, when the Zoom app closed unexpectedly at about 11:10 am. In follow-up email there were two further announcements: Christopher Farrand shared that Cleveland Meeting has recently purchased an existing building to use as a Meetinghouse, and Tom Kangas said that North Columbus Meeting has acquired a lot on which they plan to build!

ATTACHMENT

Minutes of Publications & Archives Committee, Zoom meeting on January 9, 2026, at 7:30pm.

Present: Jeff Cooper (committee clerk), Susan Loucks (database manager), Abbey Pratt-Harrington, Bob Roehm, Elise Yoder

The Committee was asked to bring a recommendation to Executive Committee on "whether we need to maintain records for *all* members of our constituent meetings in the LEYM database and how, if at all, their contact information should be accessible."

After considering the pros (records of members and attenders being of potential use in historical research and sending announcements to LEYM Friends) and cons (privacy concerns, inaccurate/outdated records, and considerable labor involved in keeping a Yearly Meeting database current), we agreed to recommend a middle ground:

Annually, the database manager will ask Monthly Meetings for their directories in digital format and, unless otherwise requested, forward any that are received to the Friends Historical Collection at Swarthmore College and Friends General Conference but not compile this data into a Yearly Meeting directory or add it to the database. Monthly Meetings can make their own decisions about what information they send to the database manager or can ask that their directory information not be forwarded elsewhere.

In keeping with LEYM's Privacy Policy, Meetings will be asked either to identify or redact names and email addresses for people under 18, so these will not be forwarded to Swarthmore or FGC.

Note: The database manager will continue to collect and include in the database contact information for 1) officers, committee members, and other Friends with individual responsibilities in LEYM (e.g., Bulletin editor); 2) those Friends who attend Annual Meeting; and 3) clerks and committee clerks of Monthly Meetings as well as contact people in worship groups.