

Friends General Conference: June 2025 to June 2026
Oral Report, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting

Friends General Conference has had a monumental year of transition and transformation.

After nearly two years of discernment and deliberation, the organization has completed a significant restructuring of its governance. The Executive Committee has been replaced by a Governance Board, and the large Central Committee has been replaced by a smaller Representatives Council with two members from each yearly meeting regardless of size. This leaner structure will allow us to conduct business more efficiently and serve Friends more effectively going forward.

LEYM has its own connection to this leadership transition. After six years of faithful service Marvin Barnes will be stepping down as Presiding Clerk, and we are proud to claim him as one of our own! Melissa Rycroft of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has been appointed Presiding Clerk and will assume the position this fall.

This period of change also coincides with the retirement of two deeply dedicated long-time staff members. Vanessa Julye served the organization for thirty years, and Liz Dykes first joined in 1996 and returned in 2022. We are enormously grateful for all they have given to this community.

The 2025 YAY Gathering (Young Adult and Youth) did not achieve the attendance or financial results we had hoped for and we are looking at different times and formats for future intergenerational gatherings.

The 2026 Gathering is themed "A Window and a Door: A Prayer" and will be held July 7 through 12 at the University of Vermont in Burlington. Keynote speakers include Bryan Stevenson and Kazu Haga. We hope many of you will join us.

FGC joined an interfaith coalition challenging a federal executive order that removed protections for houses of worship from ICE enforcement. General Secretary Barry Crossno traveled to Washington in February for the appeal hearing and the legal team is taking the case for free.

The Gathering Together fundraising campaign concluded in 2026 having met its \$2.4 million goal. Please consider a gift to the Vanessa Julye Fund or give in honor of Liz Dykes. Visit fgcquaker.org to learn more about giving.

Ellerie Brownfain
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