

*Report from the Advancement and Outreach Committee
To Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Annual Sessions 2026*

The Advancement and Outreach Committee has had a full year, with all members actively involved in the committee and its activities. Susan Loucks left the committee in February. She was an active and creative member of the committee and we miss her energy and insights, while wishing her well in her new home.

Highlights of our year included

Events and programs to share resources and information among monthly meetings

We presented five programs online, covering several aspects of Quaker faith and practice, with a goal of introducing newer Friends to these topics and providing more seasoned Friends (both attenders and presenters) with an opportunity to explore more deeply. Again this year, we experimented with different formats, in an attempt to design programs that were replicable or adaptable by monthly meetings for their own future use. All programs included opportunities for interaction or discussion with participants. Attendance numbers varied from about 8 to about 25 in the various events.

The first program, *Praying Like Quakers—What does it mean to connect to the Divine?*, presented three short videos from QuakerSpeak, each addressing one aspect of the topic, followed by a moderated discussion among participants. QuakerSpeak has a topic index, which we encouraged monthly meetings to explore if they wished to provide similar programming.

Two programs each consisted of a panel of three Friends, offering their perspectives on a topic. The first, *Living Peace – Three Quakers Share*, offered shared their experience of living and interpreting the peace testimony in quite different settings. The second, *Spiritual Deepening and Vital Community: A Two-Way Street*, featured testimonies about each panelist's experience of the interaction between spirituality and community as they experienced it in their own monthly meeting. This session, along with the two in the presentation format, were recorded and are available on the LEYM website and YouTube channel <https://www.youtube.com/@lakeerieyearlymeeting/videos>.

Two programs featured a presenter or presenters. The first, *Gifts and Leadings among Friends: An Exploration*, used a discussion format, and provided materials that monthly meetings can use to conduct a similar program (materials are available at <https://leym.org/gifts-leadings-session/>). The last event, *Exploring Spiritual Companionship*, provided an introduction to Spiritual Companionship,

along with a follow-up session to give participants additional practice time. More information is available at <https://leym.org/spiritual-companions/>.

The committee expects to continue to explore educational programming within LEYM. We welcome ideas from others about what formats and topics best meet the needs of Friends and Monthly Meetings in the coming year.

Intervisitation and connection between meetings and worship groups and the yearly meeting

Again this year, after consultation with the Ministry and Nurture Committee, we read all the State of the Meeting Reports from monthly meetings. We continue to find these a deep and meaningful source of connection and understanding. For example, we used these reports as one tool to identify meetings who might provide panelists for the spirituality and community discussion. We followed up on a few meetings for whom no report was included in the Annual Records, and were able to identify a few that missed the printed version, but were able to be added to the online version.

Our discussion of the reports led to this year's activities planned for the Annual Meeting. We asked Monthly Meetings to create a brief video showing something special about their meeting, and several meetings have responded. We anticipate inviting those meetings that have not yet submitted a video to consider making one for later display. These videos will be on display at the annual meeting. In addition, we have created "passports" to help and encourage Friends to reach out and learn about other Monthly Meetings and their members.

Our physical visits to Monthly Meetings were limited this year. Although we revised and updated the video introducing and describing LEYM, we did not personally take it to other meetings as we did last year. It is available at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HwEdFapltmQ> for Monthly Meetings or individual Friends to view. In the course of preparing this video, we reviewed the privacy policy of LEYM and will be bringing a proposal for a slight modification to the Meeting. Only one formal intervisitation was made this year, which was a positive experience for both the meeting and the visitors.

We were asked by Executive Committee to explore whether Monthly Meeting Peace and Justice Committees (by any name) desired to meet together to share resources, activities, or other ideas. We reached out to the Monthly Meetings, but got only one response, and hence did not attempt to facilitate such a meeting.

We made some updates to the Advancement and Outreach materials on the website, but have not yet completed a full review.

We have been in preliminary discussion with a group that is considering discussing an application to become part of LEYM, and will follow up as this discussion continues.

Submitted by the Advancement and Outreach Committee

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