

Spiritual formation report 2025-2026

The LEYM spiritual formation program has been thriving in spiritual depth and growing in 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.

The spiritual formation year begins with a retreat in the fall and ends 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. In addition, we hold a three-hour January online session providing an opportunity for a mid-year check-in.

The theme of the fall 2025 retreat was “Where Next on my Spiritual Journey.” Michael Wajda was the facilitator with Marian Beane as his companion. Thirty-nine Friends from eight LEYM monthly meetings joined Michael and Marian for the retreat held at Weber Center in Adrian, Michigan. In preparation for the retreat, participants read the pamphlet, *Shaping the Light*, that contained the 2001 Southeastern Yearly Meeting’s plenary presentation given by Michael and his wife, Allison.

Michael held the following goals for the retreats:

- Help participants understand their spiritual lives more fully (faith).
- Empower their practice.
- Place their spiritual lives in the Quaker tradition.
- Equip them to work more deeply with their meetings regarding their spiritual support.
- Provide them with resources and prepare them for the work of the coming year.

Using stories and drawings, we learned more about our own spiritual journeys and those in our small groups. Deep sharing took place in our small groups and carried over into the large group sessions.

Each retreat participant received through email a booklet containing information on spiritual disciplines, group guidelines, spiritual friendships and companions, and suggested readings. Saturday evening descriptions of three different Quaker programs for spiritual growth groups were presented, including this program. The local groups then met to plan for the coming year, using the book table provided to make choices. Twenty-nine of the participants who came to the retreat were already members of the six spiritual formation groups and several spiritual companion groups throughout the yearly meeting.

On January 24, twenty-two Friends from seven LEYM monthly meeting joined Michael and Marian on Zoom for a three-hour retreat in which we briefly shared how Spirit has moved in our lives over the last few months, how our journeys were progressing, and how are groups were nurturing and supporting us.

We ended the year when eighteen Friends joined together on May 2 for the spring retreat hosted by Detroit Friends. During the retreat we considered where next we would travel on our spiritual journey, building on what we shared with each other in the fall. In small groups and in the large groups, we explored the following questions: What has life, and/or the Spirit brought your way this year? What have been some spiritual growing points? What has been challenging? What kind of spiritual practice or experience is calling out to you now? All participants were invited to stay for Sunday morning worship with Detroit Friends, followed by a potluck hosted by the meeting. Sunday afternoon we were joined by Detroit and other LEYM Friends in a workshop on exploring the “secret power” among us. The workshop picked up on what Robert Barclay, 17th century Quaker publicist, named the secret power

among us, exploring this power individually and together. How does it show up in our individual and corporate experiences? What difference does it make in our lives? How might we broaden and deepen our experiences and commitment to this Inward Teacher?

Planning for the next year always begins before the current year ends. We are delighted to report that our facilitator for the 2026-2027 year will be Steven Davidson. The theme for the year's retreat will be "Finding Our Way." The fall retreat will be held September 11-12 at the Weber Center. Brochures giving details of the retreat can be found at our table in the display area. We hope that copies of the brochure make their way to all LEYM monthly meetings.

Members of the spiritual formation committee are Ellerie Brownfain, Valerie Groszmann, Barbara LeSage, Olwen Pritchard, Joel Gugnitz, Donna Rodriguez and Sally Weaver Sommer. If you are interested in serving on the planning committee, please contact one of our current members.