

**LAKE ERIE YEARLY MEETING
MINUTES OF ANNUAL MEETING JUNE 18-21, 2026**

Sessions were held in a blended (hybrid) format with many participants in person at Ashland University, Ashland, Ohio, and a few online.

Clerks' table: Jack Smith (Red Cedar), Clerk; Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor), Recording Clerk

SESSION 1: Thursday, June 18, 2026, 7:30pm – 9:00pm

YM 2026-01 Opening and Reading of Epistle

Clerk Jack Smith (Red Cedar) welcomed the group of Friends gathered at Ashland University in Ashland, Ohio for the 64th Annual Meeting of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting on Thursday, June 18, 2026. Friends settled into worship at 7:30 pm.

Clémence Ravaçon Merшон read an epistle from France Yearly Meeting in October 2025. They considered the theme “Welcoming: Expecting the Unexpected” and found that welcoming can have many meanings. Hospitality can be a spiritual practice. It can mean not letting anyone feel excluded, offering a place where people, especially the most vulnerable, feel safe. It is a choice to be welcoming, to choose to listen with curiosity and respond with love. They asked, “Could we and Should we welcome everyone?” The path is a winding road that brings us back to ourselves. [See text for all epistles read or excerpted at: https://fwcc.world/resources_cpt/epistles/]

YM 2026-02 Roll Call

The Clerk introduced the Roll Call by recognizing that many Friends attending our sessions are not able to be in this first session. Friends stood when their meetings were named. Official numbers from each meeting are listed below based on registration figures. Attenders not part of an LEYM monthly meeting and visitors are listed below as “Other.”

Akron	2	Holland	0
Ann Arbor	11	Kalamazoo	3
Athens	6	Kent	0
Birmingham	6	Mid-Ohio Valley	0
Broadmead	11	North Columbus	12
Cleveland	8	Oberlin	2
Delaware	0	Pittsburgh	9
Detroit	7	Red Cedar	14
Erie Worship Group	1	Wooster	2
Grand Rapids	2	Other	14
Granville	1		

YM 2026-03 Welcome to First-Time Attenders and Visitors

The Clerk welcomed first-time attenders. We also welcomed visitors to Yearly Meeting in attendance, including Jackson Napier (Fairfield Friends Meeting, Western Yearly Meeting), Doug Gwyn (Whitewater Monthly Meeting, New Association of Friends), Justin Hurdle (FCNL),

Johanna Jackson (Friends General Conference), Traci Hjelt Sullivan (Chapel Hill Monthly Meeting, Right Sharing of World Resources), and Zoe Jannuzi (AFSC).

YM 2026-04 Remembering Friends who are not able to attend this year

Jack asked us to remember Friends who are not able to be in attendance. Friends named included Flo Friender (Kalamazoo), Joe and Wanda Guthrie (Pittsburgh), Joyce Balderston (Wooster), Helen and George Hebben (Kalamazoo), and June Grabemeyer (Red Cedar).

YM 2026-05 Arrangements & Site Committee: Carolyn Lejuste (Red Cedar) reported. Carolyn shared a brief overview of who is attending this Annual Meeting of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting. There were 114 people registered, although 5 have had to cancel after registering. The largest group of Friends are in the category of 60 and above, but ages are well distributed. Carolyn invited everyone to fill out an evaluation sheet; they are available at the registration table. Newcomers are identified by a star on their nametag – please welcome them. This year there is a “passport” to encourage all to talk with people from a wide variety of meetings. There will be a prize awarded at the end of sessions. She also cautioned that there is a fee of \$50 if a key to a dorm room is lost.

YM 2026-06 Adult & Family Program Committee: Clémence Ravaçon Mershon (Erie Worship Group) reported.

Clémence thanked the nine people who have worked very hard since last fall to plan the program of this Annual Meeting with the theme “Finding Hope, Joy and Courage in Community.” Their inspiration came from the dandelion and a book entitled *The Dandelion Insurrection* (by Rivera Sun). The dandelion grows almost anywhere, is hardy and resilient, and represents the joy of spring. Its soft seeds can be used to line birds’ nests.

Bill Warters (Birmingham) announced that there are resources available for some workshops on the LEYM website by going to the Resources tab from the Annual Meeting page.

YM 2026-07 Youth & Children Program Committee: Diane Mott (Broadmead) reported. The Committee asks for help with the following: 1) three volunteers are needed on Friday morning at 10:15am to assist with a workshop for middle-school aged Friends; 2) sitters are needed to help care for a toddler during afternoon hours; 3) on Saturday, an additional driver is needed to transport young Friends and their adult helpers to go bowling in Wooster. Friends who can help with any of these needs should talk to Diane.

YM 2026-08 Epistle Committee

The Clerk asked Joann Neuroth (Red Cedar) to anchor the Committee to write the epistle reflecting our time together this weekend. The Meeting **approved** the following Friends to serve on the Epistle Committee: Joann Neuroth, Alexa Kay (Pittsburgh), and Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham).

YM 2026-09 Sending Greetings to Susan Loucks

The Clerk announced that there will be a space in the Alumni Room during Annual Meeting where Friends can write personal messages and greetings to Susan Loucks, who served Lake Erie Yearly Meeting as Clerk and Database Manager but has now moved and will be part of a different yearly meeting.

YM 2026-10 Memorial Minute

Susan Hartman (Ann Arbor) read a Memorial Minute for Don and Nancy Nagler, who helped to establish Pine River Friends Meeting in Mount Pleasant, Michigan (now Pine River Worship Group). The full text of the minute will be included in the *LEYM Annual Records* and on the LEYM website.

YM 2026-11 Harassment Discernment Committee

The Yearly Meeting approved the following Friends to serve on the Harassment Discernment Committee: Bill Warters (Birmingham) and Carolyn Lejuste (Red Cedar). An additional Friend may be added to the Committee. [Aran Reinhart (Broadmead) agreed to serve later.]

YM 2026-12 Announcements

Valerie Groszmann (Kalamazoo) described two issues regarding this year's book table. Quaker Books of FGC will no longer provide books for displays like ours after this year. The books Valerie ordered from Quaker Books have not yet arrived despite a promised delivery date of today from the warehouse fulfillment service. A Friend suggested that in future years Friends might donate books to be sold to benefit LEYM. The Yearly Meeting thanked Valerie for her many years of providing this service to us.

Dorothy Stratton (Wooster) reminded Friends that the Ashland Center for Nonviolence will have an open house Friday morning 8-10:30 am. The Director of the Center enjoys visits from Friends. A Friend reminded us that the Center arose from the concern and actions of the late John Stratton of Wooster Meeting.

Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor) asked for volunteers to assist the work of the Publications & Archives Committee by attending the workshop on Godly Play and writing a brief summary of it for the *LEYM Annual Records*. Chelsea Middlemiss (Red Cedar) volunteered to do this.

Dreama VanCise (Pittsburgh) reminded Friends that tomorrow marks Juneteenth and asked us to hold in the Light that commemoration.

SESSION 2: Friday, June 19, 2026, 10:30am – 12:00pm

YM 2026-13 Friends entered into worship. Clémence Ravaçon Mershon read an epistle from Monteverde Monthly Meeting (Costa Rica) written in 2025. Friends there considered the idea that disturbance, by its nature, invites change. When a tree falls in the forest, the gap it leaves allows light and space to help new trees grow. Disturbance also brings challenges that can open us to creative solutions. They are struggling to make decisions regarding the future of Monteverde Friends School and are grateful for the memoirs published recently by an elder Friend. They wonder what can grow in a space of light.

YM 2026-14 Clerk's Announcements

Clerk Jack Smith announced that Mary Igoe Meyers has volunteered to hold our business sessions in Light. Others are welcome to join her. He encouraged those in the body of Friends who wish to speak to wait until a microphone is delivered to them so all may hear.

YM 2026-15 Youth & Children's Program Committee: Diane Mott (Broadmead) reported. Diane described the activities children and youth enjoyed at last year's annual meeting, including a pseudo-escape room for older youth and the Buckeye Imagination Station. Various ages of youth really enjoyed spending time with each other and that will continue this year. Last fall there was a youth retreat at a new location near Zanesfield, Ohio, which was enjoyed by all. This year's retreat will be there again the weekend of October 2-4. There are thirteen children at annual sessions this year, including some new families. (The full report is attached.)

YM 2026-16 Naming Committee

The Clerk explained that a Naming Committee, which identifies Friends to serve on our Nominating Committee, is being formed. The Meeting **approved** Nancy Taylor (Ann Arbor) and Claire Cohen (Pittsburgh) to serve on the Naming Committee.

YM 2026-17 Laying Down Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting: Susan Hartman (Ann Arbor) reported.

Friends who have served on a "laying down" committee for Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting include Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor), convener, Geoff Brieger (Birmingham), Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham), Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor), Terry Grant (Red Cedar), Susan Hartman (Ann Arbor), Joe Mills (Kalamazoo), and John Williams (Ann Arbor). Susan described the founding and history of Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting (GPQM), which began as an informal organization for fellowship in the 1930s. GPQM was responsible for Friends School in Detroit from its founding in 1965 until it closed in 2015. In recent years, interest and attendance at quarterly meeting have dwindled and Friends could not be found to serve in essential roles. GPQM came to unity at its meeting in September 2025 to begin laying itself down and has taken steps to do so since then, including informing the yearly meeting, the constituent monthly meetings, and the three groups it supported through annual donations (Michigan Friends Center, the Michigan AFSC Office, and the Michigan Alternatives to Violence Project). The LEYM Executive Committee, at its meeting in January 2026, found the laying down process in good order, as did the LEYM Representative Meeting in March 2026. Any financial residue from GPQM will come to Lake Erie Yearly Meeting, per GPQM's bylaws. LEYM's *Policies & Procedures* will need changes to reflect the changed status of GPQM. The Committee now asks the yearly meeting to recognize Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting as being laid down. (The full report is attached.)

In discussion, a Friend asked if GPQM maintained a link with Friends General Conference and whether they need to be informed. It is Friends' understanding that when GPQM was formed there was no local yearly meeting, but after Lake Erie Yearly Meeting was formed GPQM became associated with it and did not maintain direct ties to FGC. The Committee was thanked for its complete and interesting report. It was clarified that what is asked now is for LEYM to recognize that GPQM has laid itself down and that changes to *Policies & Procedures* are needed. A Friend asked Yearly Meeting to encourage and guide monthly meetings in how they might support the three organizations previously supported by Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting. A Friend reminded us that Quaker Finder should be updated when meetings are laid down.

The Yearly Meeting **accepted** the report of the Laying Down Committee of Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting, **recognized** that the Quarterly Meeting is now laid down, and **approved**

making changes to *Policies and Procedures* that will state the Yearly Meeting has no quarterly meetings at present but acknowledge the previous existence of Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting.

YM 2026-18 Advancement & Outreach Committee: Barbara LeSage (North Columbus) reported.

Barbara acknowledged the members of the Committee: Cassie Camman (Ann Arbor), Stephanie Charlot (Red Cedar), Valerie Groszmann (Kalamazoo), Susan Hartman, Co-Clerk (Ann Arbor), and Barbara LeSage, Co-Clerk (North Columbus). Susan Loucks (Pittsburgh) was a valued and energetic member of the Committee until she resigned in February when she moved.

A full report of their activities for the past year is on the LEYM website and will appear in the *LEYM Annual Records*. This report focused on their activities related to the Annual Meeting. The Committee thanked the meetings that submitted videos for display. They can be viewed at a table in the Alumni Room and are a delightful way to be introduced to other meetings. There is also a new video introduction to LEYM itself at that table and on the LEYM YouTube channel. Friends are encouraged to share this video with their monthly meeting.

The Committee has created “passports” to help and encourage Friends to reach out and learn about other Friends and other monthly meetings. Friends who wish to enter the drawing for a prize on Saturday night should bring a filled-in passport to Stephanie Charlot to have their names recorded. (The full report is attached.)

YM 2026-19 Ministry & Nurture Committee: Dennis Gregg (Ann Arbor) reported.

Serving on the Ministry & Nurture Committee this year were Dennis Gregg (Ann Arbor) and Flo Friender (Kalamazoo), Co-Clerks; Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham), Christopher Farrand (Cleveland), Linda Szilagye (Broadmead), and Tom Blackwell (Ann Arbor). Monthly meetings are invited to send representatives to this Committee. Its purpose is to support the spiritual life of our Yearly Meeting through our monthly meetings. They provided a query for monthly meetings this year asking how they provide a foundation in religious education and whether the Yearly Meeting could help with this. They received thirteen responses. State of the Meeting reports have been received from seventeen monthly meetings and worship groups. They are available for Friends’ review at a table in the Alumni Room.

The Committee’s work has included facilitating four Clerks’ Chats for monthly meeting clerks and an additional four chats for clerks of local Ministry and Worship committees. At this year’s Annual Meeting the Committee is presenting two sessions that arose from those chats: a workshop on conflict and a sharing session for those who are curious about clerking. A suggestion for offering a time to talk about grief was taken up by the Program Committee.

Intervisitation among meetings is a concern for both this Committee and for the Advancement & Outreach Committee. They continue to be in liaison with the Spiritual Formation Group Planning Committee and educated themselves on the various kinds of financial assistance the yearly meeting offers for spiritual education. (The full Committee report is attached, along with their summary of responses to the annual query a summary of state of the meeting reports, and a report from the Spiritual Formation Group Planning Committee.)

YM 2026-20 Nominating Committee: Clémence Ravaçon Mershon (Erie) reported. Clémence outlined the positions the Committee is working to fill and the appointments it will be bringing for approval later in this meeting.

YM 2026-21 Memorial Minutes

Clémence Ravaçon Mershon (Erie Worship Group) read a Memorial Minute for Stephen Dando of Akron Meeting. Thomas Taylor (Ann Arbor) read a Memorial Minute for Phil Hoffer of Ann Arbor Meeting. The full text of both minutes will be included in the *LEYM Annual Records* and on the LEYM website.

SESSION 3: Friday, June 19, 2026, 1:15pm – 3:15pm

YM 2026-22 Friends entered into worship. Our Clerk expressed joy for the sound of children's voices in the adjoining room during our worship and asked us to remember on this Juneteenth how we are called to be witnesses to that of God in all people. Clémence Ravaçon Mershon read a passage from an Epistle from the Spring 2026 gathering of European and Middle Eastern Young Friends. They considered the theme "Witnessing Borders" and saw that borders can be dangerous obstacles causing death, with the refugee crisis on European borders much on their hearts. But they also recognized that many people are trying to bring light into this darkness. They were grateful they had been able to cross borders safely to attend this gathering, and were mindful of those who do not have this privilege. They thought about ways of identifying and overcoming borders in and by Quaker faith and practice. They left feeling nourished by the space they had created in their gathering.

YM 2026-23 Clerk's Report

Jack Smith, our presiding Clerk, reminded Friends that the LEYM Executive Committee served the functions of his Assistant Clerk this past year while that position was vacant. He thanked those Friends for helping him in his first year as Presiding Clerk.

1. Representative Meeting at Red Cedar Meeting in Lansing was attended by 33 Friends and included time in which Friends could choose to participate in a "No Kings March" at the state capital.
2. Next year's Representative Meeting will be hosted by Broadmead Meeting on Saturday, March 27, 2027, at the Victory Center in Toledo.
3. The Clerk asked Clémence Ravaçon Mershon (Erie) to find appropriate epistles to read at our sessions this year. He also asked Joann Neuroth (Red Cedar) to anchor the committee writing an Epistle that reflects our 2026 Annual Meeting. Both are carrying out these charges this week.
4. The Clerk has hired Alexa Kay (Pittsburgh) to become the LEYM Database Manager to replace Friend Susan Loucks, who has moved away from the LEYM area.
5. Friends who can see how they might serve LEYM are invited to contact anyone on the Nominating Committee to discern with them.
6. The Clerk was contacted by a Friend who recently moved to Wheelersburg, Ohio, who is led to form a new Meeting and wishes to explore contacts within Lake Erie Yearly Meeting. Talks and contacts are proceeding, with Athens Monthly Meeting possibly serving as sponsor to a Preparatory Meeting formed in Wheelersburg.

7. The Clerk will try to make space at this meeting for brief oral reports from monthly meetings who have been or are involved in building/renovation meeting projects, notably Detroit, Cleveland, and North Columbus.

YM 2026-24 Publications & Archives Committee: Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor) reported. Jeff thanked Christopher Farrand (Cleveland) for his faithful production of informative and attractive issues of the *LEYM Bulletin*. Jeff thanked Elise Yoder (Pittsburgh) for editing *LEYM Annual Records* for the last five years. Members of the Committee have volunteered to collect and format materials for the *Annual Records*, but a copyeditor is still needed.

The Committee, along with outgoing Database Manager, Susan Loucks, proposed a new method of collecting data. It has been seasoned by the Committee, and supported by the LEYM Executive Committee at its meeting on January 9, 2026, as follows:

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 to Friends General Conference but not compile this data into a Yearly Meeting directory or add it to the database. ... 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.

With this change, monthly meetings would not supply contact information for all their members and regular attenders. Instead, they would be asked to provide a digital copy of their directory, from which data for the meeting's officers, committee clerks, representatives, employees, and other position holders named in *Annual Records* can be extracted. This would be easier for both the Database Manager and local meetings, with any desired fuller historical data being available at the Friends Historical Collection at Swarthmore. (The full report is attached.)

The Clerk asked for clarification of exactly what change is being requested. Jeff explained that currently Meetings are asked to provide lists of changes for all members and attenders, including contact information. This level of detail would no longer be gathered.

The Yearly Meeting **approved** the Proposal as made by the Publications & Archives Committee.

YM 2026-25 Treasurer's Report: Tom Kangas (North Columbus) reported.

Our Treasurer, Tom Kangas, explained that his present report focuses on the history of our finances over the past year, while the Finance Committee's report will focus on our financial future. All but one of our monthly meetings have made their annual contributions, with the final one in process. Expenses for our contract workers are as expected, although more hours than needed were budgeted for the Database Manager.

Following a suggestion made at last year's Annual Meeting, our investments in Friends Fiduciary are reported somewhat differently this year, so that unrealized funds are treated differently than monies invested or received as dividends. The ending balance of our general fund is healthy and includes gains from investments and from the transfer of money into it from the laid down Consultation Fund. Information for the Annual Meeting Fund is not complete because final income and expenses from the Annual Meeting are not yet known. A financial report specifically on the Annual Meeting will be published in the Fall *LEYM Bulletin*, as is our usual practice.

In summary, our Yearly Meeting's finances are healthy and holding steady.

A Friend asked if our investments represent divestment from funds that support military efforts affecting Palestinians. The current answer to how Friends Fiduciary Funds is handling pertinent funds is not known, but the Treasurer and Finance Committee will pursue it. A Friend reminded us that some years ago a request to Friends Fiduciary Funds spearheaded by Anne Remley from Ann Arbor had good success when they asked FFF to divest from several companies that supported destruction of Palestinian areas and homes.

YM 2026-26 Finance Committee, Draft Budget: Ellen Barnes (Detroit) reported.

Ellen introduced the members of the Committee as herself (Co-Clerk), Joann Neuroth (Red Cedar, Co-Clerk), Mary Igoe Meyers (Broadmead), Aran Reinhart (Broadmead), and *ex officio* Tom Kangas (North Columbus), Treasurer. She introduced a draft budget for our consideration with an increase of about 2.7% in the hourly rate of pay for both the Digital Communications Facilitator and the Database Manager and a reduction in hours for the Database Manager based on expected needs.

Reflecting recent inflation, the budget includes proposed increases to Friends organizations including Friends General Conference, Olney Friends School, and Swarthmore (for archival support). The total proposed expenses reflect the actual income we received this past year. The result is a deficit budget, but our general fund is currently higher than what is considered its ceiling. The Committee's proposal is based on a philosophy of putting money to work rather than having it build up unused.

In discussion, a Friend asked us to consider a small donation to Friends Peace Teams. The usual process for such requests is that the Finance Committee considers them first and discerns whether to bring them to annual sessions. We will follow that process for this request. Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor), who has been serving as Treasurer of Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting, reported that a sum of roughly \$400 is expected to be transferred from their bank account to LEYM later this year.

Ellen further reported that John Howell (Athens) performed an audit on our financial records for fiscal year 2024-25. He found that our records were adequate and he had no recommendations for modifying the current system.

YM 2026-27 Peace & Justice Committee: Claire Cohen (Pittsburgh) reported.

The Peace & Justice Committee has encountered various obstacles in moving forward in recent years. Last year, they thought their focus would be to help the efforts of local peace committees. Claire is led now to propose a different focus for the committee, which would be a clearinghouse for minutes that relate to peace and social justice concerns. This would be a way to share minutes adopted by local monthly meetings and encourage others to take action. She invites other Friends to let her know if they feel led to join her in this effort.

Johanna Jackson, representing Friends General Conference, shared her own enthusiasm for Claire's proposal. In the last year the number of visitors to the FGC webpage on minutes of conscience has skyrocketed. Others are looking for models for these kinds of action. A Friend suggested a section of our LEYM webpage could be devoted to publishing such minutes.

YM 2026-28 Digital Communications Facilitator: Bill Warters (Birmingham) reported.

Bill Warters, as our Digital Communications Facilitator, maintains an online presence for LEYM in various ways, including our website, email lists, and both webinar and zoom meetings. Many

programs organized by LEYM Friends, including both committees and individual monthly meetings, are presented online with support from Bill.

The traffic to LEYM.org now stands at 9,000 visitors a month. Bill has taken the initiative to make several additions to our website, ranging from a video of LEYM Meetings, to our *LEYM Advices and Queries*, a list of resources pertaining to conflict in Meeting, and games and puzzles. He has begun succession planning for a (hopefully far-off) day when someone else will take on his duties. He is also exploring options for shared digital tools across LEYM, possibly via a Quaker Meeting Network platform. (The full report is attached.)

YM 2026-29 Friends Peace Teams: Cassie Cammann (Ann Arbor) reported.

Cassie was joined by Melanie Siaw and Jackson Napier to report on the work of Friends Peace Teams. She described the history of their work, arising from the practices of the Alternative to Violence Project (AVP). It now does work across five regions of the World, including North America. She introduced Melanie, who was recently appointed North American Regional Coordinator of Friends Peace Teams. Melanie told us that the Peace Teams are us, and success in achieving peace depends on us believing and visualizing it. In the next year her office will be working to help Americans adapt to the enactment of a new law pertaining to the draft. Jackson shared his experience visiting Ukraine last year for a Friends Peace Teams retreat. He experienced the threats of war at first hand and asked us to support the work of the Peace Teams in Ukraine so the people there realize they are not forgotten. Cassie suggested that Friends pick up and share bookmarks in the Alumni Room describing Friends Peace Teams, including a QR code for additional information. (The full report is attached.)

YM 2026-30 Memorial Minute

Jon Sommer (Broadmead) read a Memorial Minute for John Templin of Broadmead Meeting. The full text of the minute will be included in the *LEYM Annual Records* and on the LEYM website.

SESSION 4: Saturday, June 20, 2026, 1:15pm – 3:15pm

YM 2026-31 Friends entered into worship. Clémence Ravaçon Mershon read an Epistle from the April 2026 gathering of the Yearly Meeting of Aotearoa/New Zealand. They gathered with an awareness of turbulence around the world while a cyclone threatened their country and were reminded of a prayer asking for love and the courage to hold both pain and possibility in their hearts. They spoke of their actions and the Light that points to the Light and guides how they give support. They asked if making simplifications to their Yearly Meeting structure might free up time for the spiritual lives of individuals and meetings. They recognized the value of person-to-person relationships and the braided nature of their interactions. In their annual Quaker Lecture the speaker spoke of the interconnectedness of everything and that the Maori recognize the personhood of the natural world. We can observe and value the relationships among everything in creation as we value human relationships. They raised up these queries: “When we work together, do we remember to value one another?” and “Do we leave enough time to recognize the divine spirit of love and peace in everything we do?”

YM 2026-32 Friends General Conference (FGC): Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham) reported (read by Brad Shaw, Red Cedar).

FGC has now completed a significant restructuring, with the Executive Committee replaced by a Governance Board and the Central Committee replaced by a smaller Representatives Council with just two members from each yearly meeting. Marvin Barnes from this yearly meeting has served as Presiding Clerk and will be stepping down this fall after six years of service. Two long-time staff of FGC, Vanessa Julye and Liz Dykes, have both retired; gifts to honor them are invited. Although the 2025 Young Adults and Youth Gathering did not have the attendance or financial results hoped for, future gatherings of this kind are being considered. The 2026 Gathering will be July 7-12 at the University of Vermont. FGC is part of an interfaith coalition challenging an executive order that removed protections from ICE enforcement for houses of worship. The case is ongoing. A fundraising campaign concluded in 2026 and met its goal of raising \$2.4 million. (The full report is attached.)

Johanna Jackson, visiting FGC staff member, added that the Newsletter she puts together for FGC (*Vitality*) is happy to help advertise events planned by local meetings. She is looking for someone from a meeting that has experienced recent growth to help with an upcoming workshop. There will be a joint meeting between FGC and Quaker Voluntary Service that will focus on racism and helping our meetings become more welcoming.

YM 2026-33 Friends World Committee for Consultation (FWCC): Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham) reported (read by Clémence Ravaçon Mershon, Erie Worship Group).

FWCC's Section of the Americas observed World Quaker Day last October with a time for global online worship. A recently formed Young Adult Friends group gathered online twice during the past year. The 2026 Section of the Americas Meeting in March was also held online, with more than 300 Friends attending. The Section continues to work on useful digital tools such as adding to their Quaker glossary and forming an interactive map. They are providing training for interpreters to help them develop a group of compensated interpreters who can assist at their meetings. Coming up next year will be a 2027 Section of the Americas Meeting in Indiana and World Quaker Day on October 4 with the theme "Let Peace Be Among You." A global online FWCC conference is being planned for 2027 on the theme "Sowing Seeds of Justice." Feel free to reach out to LEYM's representatives to FWCC with any questions. Gifts to FWCC/Section of the Americas are always welcome. Our representatives are Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham), Clémence Ravaçon Mershon (Erie Worship Group), Jana Norlin (Grand Rapids), and Mike Hinshaw (Wooster). (The full report is attached.)

Jana Norlin added that all of the LEYM representatives were able to attend the Section of the Americas Meeting in March. There are many other opportunities to gather with FWCC Friends, and she often does so, serving as a Spanish translator. The Section of the Americas covers North and South America, Central America, and the Caribbean.

YM 2025-34 Memorial Minute

Wink Covintree (Birmingham) read a Memorial Minute for Phil Clampitt of the Birmingham Meeting. The full text of the minute will be included in the *LEYM Annual Records* and on the LEYM website.

YM 2026-35 Friends Committee on National Legislation: Wink Covintree (Birmingham) and Michael Fuson (Granville) reported.

Wink remembered back to an event before the first Iraq war when Joe Volk, then General Secretary of FCNL, said there were no weapons of mass destruction in Iraq. He was right and since then Wink has trusted FCNL. She found herself hesitant to visit congresspeople on her own but learned about FCNL advocacy teams and was trained in how to advocate with like-minded Friends. She is now part of both local and state-wide FCNL advocacy teams. It is a hard and heartbreaking time in our country. The support from FCNL is welcoming, including monthly calls featuring good speakers. She finished by reading a poem by Mary Oliver:

“Don't Hesitate”

If you suddenly and unexpectedly feel joy,
don't hesitate. Give in to it. There are plenty
of lives and whole towns destroyed or about
to be. We are not wise, and not very often
kind. And much can never be redeemed.
Still, life has some possibility left. Perhaps this
is its way of fighting back, that sometimes
something happens better than all the riches
or power in the world. It could be anything,
but very likely you notice it in the instant
when love begins. Anyway, that's often the
case. Anyway, whatever it is, don't be afraid
of its plenty. Joy is not made to be a crumb.

Michael Fuson (Granville), LEYM's other representative to FCNL, pointed out that the organization has had only five general secretaries in its more than a century of existence and two of them (Joe Volk and Bridget Moix) have been from southwestern Ohio. He noted that appointments from yearly meetings to the FCNL General Committee are the lifeblood of the organization, and many of its meetings are virtual so service is now easier. LEYM is not appointing as many representatives as we are allowed, and he invited Friends to consider if they are led to serve. He echoed Wink in sharing how working with advocacy teams provides important support for Friends who wish to share views with lawmakers and urge them toward better legislation. In recent years, FCNL has done important work on many issues Friends feel deeply about, including war and militarism and immigration issues.

YM 2026-36 American Friends Service Committee: Chelsea Middlemiss (Red Cedar) reported.

Chelsea Middlemiss is the only representative to AFSC from LEYM at present, and invited others to consider joining her in service. AFSC is on the ground doing work in many different locations and helps Quaker beliefs stay well-grounded in service. A celebration of their receiving the Nobel Peace Prize 80 years ago will be coming up.

At the national level, AFSC has invited groups to become Anti-Apartheid Communities. Their “Love as Action” movement urges people to show that there is a strong current that disagrees with many harmful government policies. There is an AFSC office in Ypsilanti, Michigan, focusing on criminal justice, especially issues affecting imprisoned women in Michigan.

Claire Cohen (Pittsburgh), who is a delegate-at-large to AFSC Corporation, reminded us that AFSC takes on a wide array of work including divestment, security issues, and immigration.

Bill Warters (Birmingham), who recently served as one of our representatives to AFSC, organizes regular local gatherings around AFSC's "Love as Action" initiative. There will be a special program on the 4th of July, when people will be asked to sign a declaration of resistance.

YM 2026-37 Reports on Meetings Undertaking Building Work

Joel Gugnitz (Detroit) explained that the Detroit Meeting's former Meetinghouse was seized through eminent domain, and they subsequently acquired a new property. Through the work of several years, they have improved the sustainability and other aspects of the new building to meet their needs. Their challenges have included higher expenses than expected, but those have been met with many generous donations as well as personal loans from within the meeting community. Some debt remains, but they have accomplished much. They are now able to host meetings of Friends and other Quaker organizations.

Steve Finger (Cleveland) reported that their old building was too large for their needs after a school using part of the space left. They sold it and rented space in a church but found there were some inconveniences. Through a series of what felt very much like Spirit-filled steps, a suitable location was found, they were urged to make an offer, the offer was accepted, and a recent attendee of their meeting who is an architect became involved. They are gratefully moving forward in their new space at 17702 Nottingham, Cleveland, Ohio.

Tom Kangas (North Columbus) reported that their meeting purchased a Meetinghouse in 1953 and reached a decision several years ago to sell it as it no longer met the Meeting's needs. After renting space in a church for a few years, in 2025 they purchased a lot and are now discerning their way forward.

Wayne Norlin (Grand Rapids) reported that a year ago their Meeting lost the space at Aquinas College they had used for about 30 years. They are now renting space at the large, activist Fountain Street Church in downtown Grand Rapids. Visitors are welcome, in person or online. One of their neighbors is the Institute for Global Education, which grew out of a former AFSC office in Grand Rapids.

YM 2025-38 Memorial Minute

Jeff Cooper (Ann Arbor) read a Memorial Minute for Phil Volk of the Ann Arbor Meeting. The full text of the minute will be included in the *LEYM Annual Records* and on the LEYM website.

YM 2026-39 Spiritual Formation Program: Sally Weaver Sommer (Broadmead) reported. Sally announced that Steve Davison (Princeton Meeting) will lead this fall's retreat for the LEYM Spiritual Formation Program, September 11-13, 2026, at the Weber Center in Adrian, Michigan. Informational flyers are available. All are invited, but there is a limit of 40 participants. (The Annual Report of the Spiritual Formation Program is attached.)

SESSION 5: Sunday, June 21, 2026, 8:45am – 9:30am

YM 2025-40 Friends gathered in worship. Clémence Ravaçon Mershon read a paragraph from an epistle from Wilmington Yearly Meeting, gathered in July 2025. As they considered looking ahead, they noted energy and possibilities. They enjoyed a lively service organized by their young Friends. In discussion they considered future interaction and collaboration with the New Association of Friends and Western Yearly Meeting, both in Indiana.

YM 2025-41 Memorial Minute

Peggy Daub (Ann Arbor) read a Memorial Minute for Joan Sampieri of the Ann Arbor Meeting. The full text of the minute will be included in the *LEYM Annual Records* and on the LEYM website.

YM 2026-42 Epistle Committee: Joann Neuroth (Red Cedar) reported.

The Epistle Committee, consisting of Joann Neuroth (Red Cedar), Alexa Kay (Pittsburgh), and Ellerie Brownfain (Birmingham), presented the Epistle for the 2026 Annual Meeting of LEYM. Friends appreciated the beauty of the Epistle and were moved by it. The inclusion of descriptions of interactions of children and adults was especially welcome. A Friend suggested including the observation that the moments described by Joe Volk carried the common thread of turning enemies into friends. Friends agreed to leave this possible change to the discernment of the Epistle Committee. The Epistle was **approved** by the Yearly Meeting.

*Lake Erie Yearly Meeting Epistle Sixth Month 18-21, 2026
To Beloved Friends everywhere:*

Grace to you and peace from God. One hundred ten Friends from Meetings and Worship Groups in Michigan, Ohio, and western Pennsylvania gathered on the campus of Ashland University in Ashland, Ohio, for our sixty-fourth Annual Meeting. As we have three times before on this campus, in-person attendees settled quickly into our daily routine, as our location again provided great support for our business, workshops, worship, and evening activities. We welcomed remote participants to the evening plenary and Meetings for Worship with Attention to Business. A visitor commented that our Meetings for Business were notable among Yearly Meetings in her traveling experience for their tender mix of decisions and information with fellowship and relationship.

We hold these truths in tension: joy and loss. The year's theme, "Hope, Joy and Courage in Community," invited us to reunion, re-connection and joy. Noticeably, however, profound losses accompanied our joyful moments. Among them were the losses of dear Friends who have moved away or died (sometimes unexpectedly), and the loss of our newly laid down constituent Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting. We suspect your meetings are also burdened by the losses in our world. Humanity has fallen short of God's charges of peace, love and justice. Creation itself is being burdened by omnipresent injustice, cruelty, and greed.

What, then, are we to do under this burden? We find inspiration in Lamentations. In his grief, the author affirms:

The LORD is good to those who wait for him, to the soul that seeks him.

It is good that one should wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

It is good for one to bear the yoke in youth,

to sit alone in silence when the Lord has imposed it,

to put one's mouth to the dust (there may yet be hope),

to give one's cheek to the smiter, and be filled with insults.

For the Lord will not reject forever.

Although he causes grief, he will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for he does not willingly afflict or grieve anyone. (Lam. 3:25–33)

Only after we lift up our problems to Spirit, for they are not ours alone, can we nurture joy and hope. Wielding that joy and hope, we gain the courage to be God's hands on Earth.

Something quiet and holy that happened during our time together showed us what it means to be God's hands on Earth. A huge asset of our Ashland University site is that the Children and Youth program

happens in and among adult programming spaces. A session we call “Birds of a Feather” allows intergenerational activity groups to rise spontaneously. Children and elders played and spoke and wondered together with no wall between them. Conversations moved both ways with warmth and respect. The elders delighted in the children. The children honored the elders. Both spoke frankly, collaborated on joint projects or competed vigorously.

The intergenerational group was embodying the wisdom being discussed elsewhere as parents of young and older children pondered how we raise our children in the way of Friends in today's world. What emerged was more sustaining than simple answers: people listened, people shared. Those who had walked further down the path offered their learnings and those who were just beginning found themselves less alone. This itself is a testimony. We do not raise Quaker children in isolation. We raise them together, held in the life of the meeting, learning from one another across the years. Young Friends, for instance, had this to teach us this year: asked from where hope, joy, and courage spring, the youth identified two sources – friends and family. Children name what they see in the world and do not flinch from it. They remind us that Spirit does not wait for us to grow up before it moves; it is already at work in the youngest among us.

Our plenary speaker offered other examples of how courage leads us to become God’s hands on Earth. Friend Joe Volk traced the long unfolding of a life given to peace, from his decision as a conscientious objector to his years of service with the American Friends Service Committee and the Friends Committee on National Legislation. With humor and humble surprise, he spoke of large and small moments of conviction that could have seemed insignificant at the time or else certain to lead to disaster, but which instead opened the Way for unpredictable movement of Spirit. Joe explained that he had no way of knowing where a courageous choice for integrity might lead; but he was sure that none of the ensuing openings could have happened without the moment of taking the risk. Joe honored a mentor who taught him that the question during a moment calling for courage is not whether we will suffer; there will always be suffering. The question is to what purpose we dedicate our suffering.

Doug Gwynn’s Bible Study offered still another insight on how to be God’s hands in the world. He explored alternative groups of Seekers in the 1600s, some of whom recommended recovering practice from the past and others of whom sought progress toward a new future age and a clearer version of truth. But he drew us back to George Fox’s letter to his parents in 1652, in which he admonished them that “Ye have no time but this present time, therefore prize your time for your soul’s sake.” reminding us that it is only in the present moment we can hear and respond to our Inner Teacher.

Our hope for you, Friends far and near, is that you will ask for which and whose purposes you suffer. Hold truth as your anchor and source of authority. Prize your present moment. Do righteousness inasmuch as you are guided. And know, Friends, that you do not walk alone.

*Written for the sake of that Spirit who has moved through us this weekend,
Epistle Committee: Joann Neuroth, Ellerie Brownfain, Alexa Kay
Signed, Jack Smith, Clerk, Lake Erie Yearly Meeting*

YM 2026-43 Finance Committee: Ellen Barnes (Detroit) reported.

The proposed LEYM budget for 2026-27 was brought back for further consideration. The Committee considered the request that a donation to Friends Peace Teams be included in this year’s budget and felt that the question needs further and deeper discernment before taking action. In the meantime, individuals and monthly meetings are urged to consider donations to Friends Peace Teams. The budget for 2026-27 was unchanged and **approved** by the Yearly Meeting as presented. (The approved budget is attached.)

YM 2026-44 Nominating Committee: Clem  nce Rava  on Mershon (Erie) reported.

The Committee brought a proposed slate of officers, representatives, and committee members for 2026  27. The slate reflects the unpredictability of life, and so some spots are filled by people who may be able to serve only one year. Small corrections of years of service and spelling of names will be made before the slate is published in the *LEYM Annual Records*. The Yearly Meeting **approved** the Nominating slate for 2026-27. (The full report is attached.)

YM 2026-45 Youth & Children Program

The youth and children, with their teachers and helpers, joined us to report. With joy we accepted their three-part Epistle: 1) collages made by the children for World Refugee Day, 2) a poster displaying photographs from their time together this weekend, and 3) the following Epistle describing their activities:

June 21, 2026

Dear Young Friends everywhere,

We are the youth program of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting. At LEYM we

- Played at the Children’s Museum, air hockey, chess, the laser room, served ice cream, dressed up*
- Went bowling*
- Went hiking, played with balloons, played with a toddler, badminton, baseball, chalk*
- Made flags about finding joy in community*
- Made collages for World Refugee Day*
- Had great conversations in the lounge*
- Danced and sang, played games*
- Helped people*

In Friendship, the teachers and youth at LEYM

YM 2026-46 Naming Committee: Claire Cohen (Pittsburgh) reported.

The Naming Committee, consisting of Claire Cohen and Nancy Taylor (Ann Arbor), brought the name of Michael Hinshaw to begin a new three-year term of service on the Nominating Committee. Friends **approved** this appointment.

YM 2026-47 Announcements

Clerk Jack Smith asked Friends to note that the 2027 Representative Meeting will be on Saturday, March 27, 2027, at the Victory Center in Toledo.

Carolyn LeJuste reported for the Arrangements & Site Committee that it is their intention to return to Ashland University for next Annual Meeting of LEYM on June 17-20, 2027.

Joe Mills (Kalamazoo) announced that Kalamazoo Meeting will host outdoor worship followed by a picnic in Quaker Park, Battle Creek, Michigan, on Sunday, August 2, 2026.

A Friend rose in appreciation for those among us who extend care for children on this Father’s Day.

The 2026 sessions of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting closed in waiting worship.

FINANCE & NOMINATING REPORTS ATTACHED:

Financial Statement for LEYM as of Mid-June 2026

LEYM Budget for 2026-27, as approved

Nominating Slate, as approved

LEYM General Fund Income

As of 6/17/2026

For the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year (12 months ending June 30, 2026)

Contribution From	Amount	Deposit Date			
Akron Monthly Meeting	250	3/23/2026			
Ann Arbor Monthly Meeting	5,124	2/6/2026			
Athens Monthly Meeting	2,000	12/12/2025			
Birmingham Monthly Meeting	560	10/14/2025			
Broadmead Monthly Meeting	1,500	2/7/2026			
Cleveland Monthly Meeting	1,806	4/24/2026			
Delaware Monthly Meeting	155	11/15/25 & 4/17/26			
Detroit Monthly Meeting	924	1/9/2026			
Grand Rapids Monthly Meeting	420	1/11/2026			
Granville Monthly Meeting	1,000	3/14/2026			
Holland Monthly Meeting	400	1/9/2026			
Kalamazoo Monthly Meeting	1,134	3/11/2026			
Kent Monthly Meeting	774	11/29/2025			
Mid-Ohio Valley Monthly Meeting					
North Columbus Monthly Meeting	1,260	10/16/2025			
Oberlin Monthly Meeting	1,100	2/17/2026			
Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting	5,040	2/28/2026			
Red Cedar Monthly Meeting	3,318	12/5/2025			
Wooster Monthly Meeting	504	3/25 & 4/21/26			
Subtotal - contributing MM or WG	27,269		<i>Expected, per budget</i>	<i>Actual as a % of Budget</i>	<i>Variance, favorable (unfavorable)</i>
			26,838	102%	431
Individuals - via check	-				
Individuals - via FFC online	602				
Individuals - via RegFox					
Interest income from Savings Acct	11				
Total Cash Contribution Income	27,882		In-kind	Total contribution income	
			+	-	27,882
FFC Dividend Income (Base Acct only)	1,075				
Total Income	28,956	(cash income, excluding in-kind)			

LEYM General Fund Expenses - with comparison to Budget

For the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year (12 months ending June 30, 2026)

Account	Actual Expense through 6/17/2026	Budget (annual)	Actual expense as a % of Budget	Variance, budget-to- actual, favorable (unfavorable)	Non-cash, in- kind donations through 6/17/2026	Total Expense, including in- kind, through 6/17/2026
Operations						
Contract Worker: Database Manager	1,334.50	2,260	59%	926	-	1,335
Contract Worker: Digital Comm Facil'r	3,743.99	5,906	63%	2,162	-	3,744
Insurance	613.00	675	91%	62	-	613
Office/administration	490.58	1,000	49%	509	-	491
Committees						
Advancement & Outreach	-	100	0%	100	-	-
Ministry & Nurture	-	100	0%	100	-	-
Publications	3,426.62	3,750	91%	323	-	3,427
Members						
Attend conference w/ Quaker values	-	500	0%	500	-	-
Organizations						
Friends General Conference	6,350.00	6,350	100%	-	-	6,350
Olney Friends School	3,175.00	3,175	100%	-	-	3,175
Swarthmore records project	150.00	150	100%	-	-	150
Potential meetinghouse contribution	-	1,000	0%	1,000	-	-
Subtotal cash expenditures	19,284	24,966	77%	5,683	-	19,283.69
Transfers from General Fund to other Funds						
Annual Meeting Fund	5,000.00	5,000	100%	-		
Travel Fund	1,500.00	1,500	100%	-		
FWCC Travel Fund & Donation	900.00	900	100%	-		
Transfers to General Fund from other Funds						
Consultation Fund	(3,143.68)	(3,144)	100%	-		
Subtotal Transfers	4,256.32	4,256		-		
Totals - General Fund Expenses	23,540.01	29,223	81%	5,683		

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting – Financial Position

For the 2025-2026 Fiscal Year (12 months ending June 30, 2026)

	Beginning Balance as of 7/1/2025	Change during the fiscal year	Ending Balance as of 6/17/2026
The Citizens National Bank of Bluffton, OH			
Checking Account	9,779.42	8,135.36	17,914.78
Savings Account	9,757.45	(5,989.14)	3,768.31
Subtotal of both CNB accounts	19,536.87	2,146.22	21,683.09
Friends Fiduciary Corporation, Philadelphia, PA (a)			
Cost Basis			
General (Base) Account	55,620.65	1,074.67	56,695.32
Granville Youth Fund Account	9,157.59	(b)	9,157.59
Subtotal	64,778.24	1,074.67	65,852.91
Unrealized gain or <loss>			
General (Base) Account	4,955.39	982.56	5,937.95
Granville Youth Fund Account	802.28	166.68	968.96
Subtotal	5,757.67	1,149.24	6,906.91
Total market value of FFC investments	70,535.91	2,223.91	72,759.82
Prepaid Expenses			
Kirkmont Ctr deposit for Youth & Family retreat, Oct 2026	100.00	-	100.00
Weber Ctr deposit for Spir Form retreats, Sep 2026 & 2027	150.00	150.00	300.00
	250.00	150.00	400.00
Total (monetary assets and unrealized gain<loss>)	90,322.78	4,520.13	94,842.91

- (a) All of the funds with Friends Fiduciary Corporation are invested in FFC's Quaker Growth & Income Fund (QGIF). The Quaker Growth & Income Fund is a diversified, co-mingled fund with allocations to equities, fixed income and real estate investment trusts (REITs). Its primary objective is to provide stable current income and long-term growth consistent with protecting principal investments against inflation over time. The fund adheres to Friends Fiduciary's Quaker-values investment guidelines and participates in our shareholder advocacy work. It is intended for investors with an investment horizon of five years or longer. The Fund has a standard income distribution policy based on the fund's total return. The following is per friendsfiduciary.org as of 6/30/2025

HOLDINGS BY ASSET CLASS	Equity	Fixed Income	REITS
Global and International Equity	25.8%		
Small and Mid Cap Equity	17.2%		
Large Cap Equity	28.2%		
Fixed Income (Domestic, Global, Short-Term, plus Cash)		24.2%	4.7%

- (b) Granville Youth dividends aren't reinvested. They're transferred to CNB Checking and credited to LEYM's Youth Activities Fund.

LEYM Summary of Funds for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026

LEYM Summary of Funds for the Fiscal Year 2025-2026										Floor/ /Ceiling	
Fund Name	Beginning Balance as of 7/1/2025		Friends Fiduciary account activity ¹	Transfers between funds	Cash Income	Cash Expense	Subtotal: activity for current fiscal year		Ending Balance as of 6/17/2026	Suggested floor/ceiling amounts for each fund	Last activity prior to FY25-26
Funds held in (i) Base account with Friends Fiduciary Corp and (ii) Citizens National Bank											
General Fund ²	42,214.86		2,057.23	(4,256.32)	27,881.63	(19,283.69)	6,398.85		48,613.71	na	35,000
Annual Meeting Fund	3,000.00			5,000.00	21,493.19	(26,188.17)	305.02		3,305.02	1,000	3,000
Travel Fund	2,686.59			1,500.00	1,400.00	(2,230.16)	669.84		3,356.43	2,000	4,000
Youth Activities Fund ⁴	6,509.45			176.91	470.00	(450.00)	196.91		6,706.36	4,000	8,000
Quaker Coll/Svc Schol Fund	4,000.00			-	-	-	-		4,000.00	2,000	4,000
HS Teen Retreat Fund	4,000.00			-	-	-	-		4,000.00	3,000	4,000
Ministry Scholarship Fund	1,649.00					(1,300.00)	(1,300.00)		349.00	na	2,000
Spiritual Formation Fund	1,327.99			-	8,348.60	(8,022.09)	326.51		1,654.50	500	2,000
Consultation Fund	3,143.68			(3,143.68)	-	-	(3,143.68)		-	500	2,000
Traveling Ministries Fund	3,363.12			-	-	-	-		3,363.12	na	na
Work Projects Fund	2,182.39						-		2,182.39	na	2,000
FWCC Travel Fund	5,385.83			-	-	-	-		5,385.83	na	9,000
FWCC Travel Donation	900.00			900.00		-	900.00		1,800.00	na	9,000
Funds held in separate account with Friends Fiduciary Corp											
Granville Youth Fund ³	9,959.87		343.59	(176.91)			166.68		10,126.55	na	na
TOTAL											
	90,322.78		2,400.82	-	59,593.42	(57,474.11)	4,520.13		94,842.91		

NOTES> Funds other than the General Fund are managed through accounting and may be subsidized from the General Fund.

¹ Friends Fiduciary Corp (FFC) activity includes dividends and net change portfolio value due to market conditions. See Balance Sheet for detail.

² FFC General (Base) Account activity is included here in LEYM's General Fund.

³ Granville Friends Youth Fund is a separate FFC account. FFC activity shown on this line reflects only that fund's change in portfolio value.

⁴ FFC dollars transferred to this line represent dividends paid to the Granville Friends Youth Fund during current fiscal year and credited to YAF.

⁵ Established in FY13-14 by a donation toward LEYM's Traveling Ministry Program, this fund had its first-ever activity in FY2024-2025.

LEYM Budgets

*Budget approved 06/15/2025

***Prelim budget, not approved

**Actual as of 6/18/2026

		FY 2025-26		FY 2026-27	
General Fund Expenses		*Budget	**Actual	***Budget	Change
General	Contractor: Database Manager	2,260	1,335	1,450	(810)
	Contractor: Digital Comm Facil'r	5,906	3,744	6,081	175
	Insurance	675	613	675	-
	Administration	1,000	491	1,000	-
Committees	Advancement & Outreach	100	-	100	-
	Ministry & Nurture	100	-	100	-
	Publications	3,750	3,427	3,750	-
Members	Attend conf w/ Quaker values	500	-	500	-
Organizations	Friends General Conference	6,350	6,350	7,000	650
	Olney Friends School	3,175	3,175	3,500	325
	Swarthmore Records Project	150	150	200	50
	Potential meetinghse contrib'ns	1,000	-	2,000	1,000
Tranfers:	Annual Meeting subsidy	5,000	5,000	6,000	1,000
	from General	1,500	1,500	700	(800)
Fund to...	Quaker Coll/Svc Sch'ship Fund	-	-	-	-
	FWCC Travel Fund (& Donation)	900	900	900	-
	or (to General				
Fund from)...	Consultation Fund	(3,144)	(3,144)		3,144
	High School Teen Retreat Fund				
Total Expenses and Transfers =		29,223	23,540	33,956	4,734
General Fund Income					
	Contributions Income	26,838	27,882	25,960	(878)
	FFC Div Inc (Base Acct only)	2,000	1,075	2,100	100
Total Income =		28,838	28,956	28,060	(778)
Income - (Expenses and Transfers) =		(385)	5,416	(5,896)	(5,512)
Base FFC account unrealized gain<loss>			983		
Subtotal Other Changes in General Fund =			983		
Total Change in General Fund =			6,399		
# members used to produce above estimate =		639		649	
Suggested contribution per member =		\$42	0%	\$40	-5%
Travel reimbursement, with limits, rate per mile =		\$ 0.21		\$ 0.205	

History						LEYM Budgets		*Budget approved 06/15/2025	***Prelim budget, not approved			
FY 2022-23		FY 2023-24		FY 2024-25				**Actual as of 6/17/2026	FY 2025-26		FY 2026-27	
Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	Budget	Actual	General Fund Expenses			*Budget	**Actual	***Budget	Change
3,900	2,828	4,320	1,838	3,575	967	General	Contractor: Database Manager		2,260	1,335	1,450	(810)
6,200	4,996	6,500	4,756	5,775	5,181		Contractor: Digital Comm Facil'r		5,906	3,744	6,081	175
650	597	650	597	650	613		Insurance		675	613	675	-
1,500	1,035	1,200	557	1,100	369		Administration		1,000	491	1,000	-
500	-	100	-	100	-	Committees	Advancement & Outreach		100	-	100	-
100	-	100	-	100	-		Ministry & Nurture		100	-	100	-
3,500	2,876	3,500	2,722	3,500	3,240		Publications		3,750	3,427	3,750	-
600	-	600	-	500	-	Members	Attend conf w/ Quaker values		500	-	500	-
6,500	6,500	6,000	6,000	6,200	6,200	Organizations	Friends General Conference		6,350	6,350	7,000	650
3,500	3,500	3,000	3,000	3,100	3,100		Olney Friends School		3,175	3,175	3,500	325
150	150	150	150	150	150		Swarthmore Records Project		150	150	200	50
-	-	-	-	-	-		Potential meetinghse contrib'ns		1,000	-	2,000	1,000
10,000	6,100	5,000	3,200	5,000	3,715	Tranfers: from General Fund to... or (to General Fund from)...	Annual Meeting subsidy		5,000	5,000	6,000	1,000
-	-	1,000	1,000	1,500	1,500		Travel Fund		1,500	1,500	700	(800)
1,000	1,000	-	-	-	-		Quaker Coll/Svc Sch'ship Fund		-	-	-	-
1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800	1,800		FWCC Travel Fund (& Donation)		900	900	900	-
-	-	-	-	-	-		Consultation Fund		(3,144)	(3,144)		3,144
-	-	-	(2,893)	-	-		High School Teen Retreat Fund					
39,900	31,382	33,920	22,728	33,050	26,833	Total Expenses and Transfers =			29,223	23,540	33,956	4,734
						General Fund Income						
26,005	25,390	27,510	26,863	26,250	26,946		Contributions Income		26,838	27,882	25,960	(878)
1,500	1,916	1,500	2,038	2,000	2,108		FFC Div Inc (Base Acct only)		2,000	1,075	2,100	100
27,505	27,306	29,010	28,901	28,250	29,054	Total Income =			28,838	28,956	28,060	(778)
(12,395)	(4,076)	(4,910)	6,173	(4,800)	2,221	Income - (Expenses and Transfers) =			(385)	5,416	(5,896)	(5,512)
	2,815		3,679		3,591	Base FFC account unrealized gain<loss>				983		
	2,815		3,679		3,591	Subtotal Other Changes in General Fund =				983		
	(1,261)		9,852		5,812	Total Change in General Fund =				6,399		
743		655		625		# members used to produce above estimate =			639		649	
\$35		\$42		\$42		Suggested contribution per member =			\$42	0%	\$40	-5%
\$ 0.22		\$ 0.22		\$ 0.21		Travel reimbursement, with limits, rate per mile =			\$ 0.21		\$ 0.205	

NOMINATING SLATE	2026-2027				
Officers	Presiding Clerk	Jack Smith	Red Cedar	3	2028
Officers	Assistant Clerk				
Officers	Recording Clerk	Susan Hartman	Ann Arbor	1	2027
Officers	Treasurer	Tom Kangas	North Columbus	7	2027
Communications	Bulletin Editor	Christopher Farrand	Cleveland	3	2027
Communications	Annual Records Editor				
Communications	Database Manager	Alexa Kay	Pittsburgh	1	2027
Communications	Digital Comms Facilitator	Bill Warters	Birmingham	8	2027
Communications	Bookstore	Valerie Groszmann	Kalamazoo	23	2027
Advancement & Outreach	Co-Clerk	Cassie Cammann	Ann Arbor	2	2028
Advancement & Outreach	Co-Clerk	Stephanie Charlot	Red Cedar	3	2028
Advancement & Outreach	Member	Valerie Groszmann	Kalamazoo	3	2027
Advancement & Outreach	Member	Shelley Kotz	Broadmead	1	2029
Advancement & Outreach	Member	Peggy Daub	Ann Arbor	1	2027
Advancement & Outreach	Member				
Finance	Co-clerk	Joann Neuroth	Red Cedar	9	2027
Finance	Co-Clerk	Ellen Barnes	Birmingham	6	2027
Finance	Member	Aran Reinhart	Broadmead	5	2028
Finance	Member	Mary Igoe Meyers	Broadmead	2	2028
Finance	Treasurer (ex officio)				
Ministry & Nurture	Co-Clerk	Flo Friender	Kalamazoo	5	2028
Ministry & Nurture	Co-Clerk	Dennis Gregg	Ann Arbor	3	2028
Ministry & Nurture	Member	Ellerie Brownfain	Birmingham	4	2028
Ministry & Nurture	Member	Christopher Farrand	Cleveland	3	2027
Ministry & Nurture	Member	Linda Yoder Szilagye	Broadmead	2	2028
Ministry & Nurture	Member			1	
Nominating	Co-Clerk	Clémence Ravaçon- Mershon	Erie WG	3	2027
Nominating	Co-Clerk	Mary Igoe Meyers	Broadmead	3	2027
Nominating	Member	Mike Hinshaw	Wooster	3	2029
Nominating	Member	Joe Mills	Kalamazoo	2	2028
Nominating	Member	Bernard Miller	Detroit	2	2028
Nominating	Member	Charles Thompson	Detroit	2	2028
Peace & Justice	Clerk	Claire Cohen	Pittsburgh	3	2027
Peace & Justice	Member	Jessica Clinger	North Columbus	1	2029
Peace & Justice	Member	James Kerr	North Columbus	1	2029
Peace & Justice	Member	Chelsea Middlemiss	Red Cedar	1	2029
Publications & Archives	Co-Clerk	Abbey Pratt-Harrington	Athens	2	2028

Publications & Archives	Co-Clerk	Bob Roehm	North Columbus	9	2027
Publications & Archives	Member	Elise Yoder	Pittsburgh	2	2028
Publications & Archives	Member	Emilia Marcyk-Taylor	Red Cedar	2	2028
Publications & Archives	Member	Erica Smith	Detroit	1	2029
Adult & Family Program	Clerk	Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon	Erie WG	5	2028
Adult & Family Program	Member	Greg Mott	Broadmead	5	2028
Adult & Family Program	Member	Valerie Groszmann	Kalamazoo	4	2029
Adult & Family Program	Member	Ellerie Brownfain	Birmingham	3	2026
Adult & Family Program	Member	Wink Covintree	Birmingham	3	2027
Adult & Family Program	Member	Nancy Taylor	Ann Arbor	2	2028
Arrangements & Site	Clerk	Carolyn Lejuste	Red Cedar	4	2029
Arrangements & Site	Member	Bill Warters	Birmingham	8	2028
Arrangements & Site	Member	Mike Hinshaw	Wooster	5	2028
Arrangements & Site	Member	Sally Weaver Sommer	Broadmead	11	2028
Arrangements & Site	Member	Janet Dando	Akron	4	2029
Arrangements & Site	Member				
Youth & Children Program	Clerk	Cristin Graham	Detroit	1	2027
Youth & Children Program	Asst. Clerk				
Youth & Children Program	Member	Ellerie Brownfain	Birmingham		
Youth & Children Program	Member	Jonah Brownfain	Birmingham		
Youth & Children Program	Member	Olwen Pritchard	Broadmead		
Youth & Children Program	Member	Carla Pratt-Harrington	Athens		
Youth & Children Program	Member				
AFSC Corporation	Representative	Chelsea Middlemiss	Red Cedar	3	2027
AFSC Corporation	Representative	Cheryl VanDeKerkhove	Red Cedar	1	2029
AFSC Corporation	Representative	Gerard Wenson	Birmingham	1	2029
FCNL General Committee	Representative	Wink Covintree	Birmingham	4	2029
FCNL General Committee	Representative	Michael Fuson	Granville	4	2029
FGC Representative Council	Representative	Ellerie Brownfain	Birmingham	5	2029
FGC Representative Council	Representative	Matt Butler	Ann Arbor	1	2029
FWCC	Representative	Ellerie Brownfain	Birmingham	6	2027
FWCC	Representative	Clémence Ravaçon-Mershon	Erie WG	5	2027
FWCC	Representative	Jana Norlin	Grand Rapids	3	2027
FWCC	Representative	Mike Hinshaw	Wooster	2	2027
FLGBTQC	Representative	No nomination made			
Olney Friends School	Representative	Greg Mott	Broadmead	2	2028
Quaker Earthcare Witness	Representative	Richard Tucker	Ann Arbor	5	2028
Friends Peace Teams	Representative	Cassie Cammann	Ann Arbor	2	2028

Reports from Internal Committees and Employees Presented During Annual Sessions:

YM 2026-15 Annual Report from Youth and Children's Program Committee

YM 2026-17 Laying Down Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting (GPQM) Report

YM 2026-18 Annual Report from the Advancement and Outreach Committee

YM 2026-19 Annual Report, Ministry and Nurture Committee

Summary of Responses to Annual Query

Summary of State of the Meeting Reports

Annual Report from Spiritual Formation Program

YM 2026-24 Publications & Archives Committee Report

YM 2026-25 Treasurer's Report

YM 2026-28 Digital Communications Facilitator 2025-26 Report

Annual Report from Youth and Children's Program Committee

Submitted by Diane Mott, Clerk

The Annual Fall Youth Retreat (grades K-12) was held October 3-5, 2025, at the Kirkmont Center in Zanesfield, Ohio. Five youth and seven adults attended from Athens, Birmingham, Broadmead, Detroit, North Columbus, and Red Cedar. The new location was a wonderful fit for our gathering. Zanesfield is more centralized, making attendance easier for many folks. Perfect fall weather allowed us to explore our new retreat location and to fully enjoy the outdoors in our new setting. We took walks, flew paper airplanes, and played tag, kickball and gaga ball. Indoor activities included puzzles, games, drawing, reading, and listening to music. We cooked meals together in our lodge. On Sunday, we had a Prayer Walk where youth paired with adults to walk 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, followed by Meeting for Worship. The weekend left everyone looking forward to next year's Fall Youth Retreat.

This spring, we have been preparing for the Youth and Children's Program for Annual Sessions. The teachers of each age group have met virtually to plan for the mornings, and the clerks have met virtually to plan the afternoon activities. There are thirteen children and teenagers registered from seven meetings.

The Fall Youth Retreat will be at Kirkmont Center, October 2 – 4, 2026.

Laying Down Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting (GPQM) Report

Submitted by Susan Hartman and Jeff Cooper

Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting began as an informal gathering in November 1936 when Friends from several meetings in Michigan gathered at Patterson Lake, near Jackson. For the next 20 years, Friends continued this social gathering, with families and individuals spending a weekend camping in various places in Michigan. In 1957, an organization formed, calling itself Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting, after the name of a camp where the gathering was often held. In 1960, GPQM was formally approved as a member of FGC, and GPQM began to appoint Friends to serve on FGC Committees.

About the same time, the AFSC Office in Ann Arbor opened, and GPQM was an early and continuing supporter. GPQM continued to hold weekend retreats, often held at Friends Lake Community, which were an important source of community among both adults and children of the monthly meetings.

In 1962, GPQM was first approached by Wade and Dores McCree and other concerned parents and community members who wanted a private school in Detroit that would accept children of all races provide an education that reflected the city's cultural diversity and operate based on the values of supporting students' self-respect and respect for others, emphasizing nonviolent resolution of conflict, and helping students develop integrity and responsibility. This discussion eventually led Green Pastures to start Friends School in Detroit under its care, providing that a majority of board members must be members of the Religious Society of Friends. From 1965 until the school closed in 2015, many Friends from GPQM were deeply involved with the School. Its closure was a disappointing and painful experience for many of us.

By about the mid-1980s, the weekend retreats were replaced by one-day sessions. GPQM met for business twice a year, in the spring (often at Friends Lake) and the fall (at Friends School), met in the winter for a social or educational program hosted by a monthly meeting, and more recently held worship and potluck each summer around Hiroshima Day. Although the Meeting held a cherished place in the hearts of many, in recent years, particularly since the pandemic, attendance has decreased, and volunteers for service as officers and committee members have become difficult or impossible to find.

- 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).
- Final donations to the three organizations supported by GPQM (Michigan AFSC Office, Michigan Friends Center, and the Michigan Alternatives to Violence Project) have been made. The GPQM By-Laws require that assets of the quarter be directed to LEYM upon its dissolution, but there are likely to be no or few assets because of intentional spending down from GPQM's modest bank account. Monthly meetings are being asked to consider how they can help close this gap in support to the three organizations in lieu of their annual contributions to GPQM.
- Other ways of continuing ties within the LEYM monthly meetings and worship groups in Michigan are being encouraged. For example, Kalamazoo Monthly Meeting is organizing the annual worship and potluck in Peace Park in Battle Creek on August 2 this year.
- LEYM's *Policies and Procedures* will need to be revised in response to this change. In January LEYM Exec Committee recommended that references to quarterly meetings be kept in *Policies & Procedures* in case new ones are added in the future.
- The Executive Committee at its January meeting **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. They also asked for reports on proposed changes to LEYM's *Policies and Procedures* resulting from this

change. The Advancement and Outreach Committee was informed of the decision to lay down the meeting and determined that no action was needed from their committee unless GPQM requested assistance.

- The following procedure is proposed for changing our *Policies and Procedures* to reflect the laying down of GPQM:

In the section describing “Quarterly Meetings” remove all text and insert a statement such as “Lake Erie Yearly Meeting does not currently have any quarterly meetings.” Keep other references to quarterly meetings as examples of how they would function within the yearly meeting if any should be created.

- GPQM requests that LEYM recognize its laying down at this time.

Annual Report from the Advancement and Outreach Committee

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

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

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 -- 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

Cassie Camman (Ann Arbor), Stephanie Charlot (Red Cedar), Valerie Groszman (Kalamazoo), Susan Hartman, Co-Clerk (Ann Arbor), Barbara LeSage, Co-Clerk (North Columbus)

Annual Report, Ministry and Nurture Committee
Summary of Responses to Annual Query
Summary of State of the Meeting Reports
Annual Report from Spiritual Formation Program

Ministry and Nurture members: Dennis Gregg, Ann Arbor and Flo Friender, Kalamazoo, Co-Convenors; Ellerie Brownfain, Broadmead, Christopher Farrand, Cleveland, Linda Szilagye, and Tom Blackwell, Recorder.

Ministry and Nurture has had a busy year. We have faithfully met by Zoom monthly, with all members present most of the time. We work well together with thoughtful, energetic enthusiasm

We discerned a Query for Meetings: "How does your Meeting assure that members and attenders receive a solid and well-rounded foundation in the religious thought, experience, and history of Friends? Does your Meeting have an ongoing religious education program? How can the Yearly Meeting assist in this?" We collected Query Responses from 13 (out of 24 total) meetings and worship groups and submitted a summary at Representatives' Meeting.

We received 17 State of the Meeting Reports and include a comprehensive summary with this report. (See below)

We have encouraged intervisitation between meetings and members have participated in seven zoom meetings other than our own. We are aware of other non-committee member intervisitations.

We have scheduled and facilitated four Clerks' Chats on Zoom for meeting clerks and an additional four zoom meetings for clerks of meeting Ministry and Worship/Counsel committees. These have been welcome points of contact for those clerks who attend and have informed the work of our committee. Discussions have ranged widely.

Our committee is involved in presenting a workshop on conflict at Annual Sessions as well as a Sharing Session on Clerking for current and potential clerks of committees and meetings on Saturday evening between 6:00 and 7:30 pm (The only time available).

We met with a member of LEYM's Financial Committee to better understand the three forms of financial help available to yearly members for further educational opportunities for spiritual growth. We awarded help to one request.

We are in communication with Advancement and Outreach Committee to further intervisitation between meetings.

We met with a Friend with an idea for a workshop at Annual Sessions about grief; Program Committee took this on.

Several of our committee members are involved with the Spiritual Formation Program and one person is on the planning committee. We are receiving an annual report from that program.

We sent out a Welcome Message from the Abington Meeting to monthly meetings to share with their members. This met with a variety of responses.

As I stated, a busy but very fruitful year. We are grateful for this opportunity to labor together.

Summary of Responses to Annual Query

Meetings responding: Ann Arbor, Athens, Birmingham, Broadmead, Cleveland, Detroit, Granville, Holland, Kalamazoo, Kent, Oberlin, Red Cedar, Wooster

A. "How does your Meeting assure that members and attenders receive a solid and well-rounded foundation in the (a) religious thought, (b) experience, the (c) practice of discernment, and the (d) history of Friends?"

Religious education in the Monthly Meetings is largely conducted primarily through:

- small group book readings;
- discussions on various topics held either before or after Meeting for Worship;
- Bible study groups;
- brochures for visitors and new attenders;
- information and links on the Monthly Meeting website;
- periodic worship sharing;
- occasional forums;
- occasional retreats.

B. Does your Meeting have an ongoing religious education program?

The description of what constitutes an ongoing religious education program varies by Meeting. In most cases, what is indicated is some form of activity described in Section A. A few Meetings indicated that they had an ongoing religious education program. The most structured of these indicated holding a six-part "newcomer session," attended on average by 10-14 newcomers, which covers Quaker history, the history of the Meeting, the testimonies, an introduction to the Meeting library, Quaker terminology, and Quaker process.

A number of Meetings indicated that they have held "Quakerism 101" classes, in the past, for new attenders, but that these have lapsed. Several Meetings are considering reinitiating these.

Most Meetings indicated that they had no adult religious education committee or committee responsible for religious education.

Religious education, in most Meetings, often appears to be at the initiative of individuals. One Meeting described their Meetings as "not hav[ing] a great sense of Quaker history" and "we tend to pour whatever we want into the Quaker 'vessel'". Smaller Meetings find it difficult to organize religious education due to their size and the limited number of new people coming in. One Meeting felt "a foundation in Quakerism is best communicated rather than taught, by exposure to the experience of respect, thoughtfulness, joy and seeking."

A number of Meetings mentioned that as a result of their considering the Annual Query a

sense arose that more attention should be paid to Quaker practice, theology, history, and the varieties of Quakerism. One Meeting expressed that this Annual Query has been much on their hearts and are planning a retreat on ongoing religious education for adults. A number of Meetings, independent of considering the Query, have also come to the sense that more is needed to be done within their Meeting to cultivate a deeper understanding among Friends and attenders of the foundations of the Quaker way. One Meeting holds a bi-monthly discussion led by two Friends on “What it means to be a Quaker.” One Meeting provides regular attenders with a copy of *Faith and Practice* (which one is not specified). Another Meeting recently purchased 30 copies of North Pacific YM’s *Faith & Practice*. Several Meetings mentioned having a well-provided library. Most responses addressed adult education. A number also referred to their First Day School. A number of other Meetings indicated that they had no children.

C. How can the Yearly Meeting assist in this?"

A number of Meetings suggested that LEYM could offer a regular Quaker 101 online for new attenders or provide a curriculum on Quaker history and Quakerism that Monthly Meetings could use. One Meeting referred to having to reinvent educational materials and would like to have access to educational materials, both for First Day School and adult education that have been tested and refined. LEYM should publicize online presentations, discussions, or study groups open to Friends from different Monthly Meetings.

Summary of State of the Meeting Reports

The following Review is based on the reports received from the following Meetings: Akron, Ann Arbor, Athens, Birmingham, Broadmead, Cleveland, Delaware, Detroit, Grand Rapids, Kalamazoo, Kent, Mid-Ohio Valley, North Columbus, Oberlin, Red Cedar, Tustin WG, and Wooster.

General Health of Monthly Meetings

Meetings report a general uptick in attendance and interest, with several Meetings reporting growth in membership (Ann Arbor, Athens, Red Cedar, North Columbus), especially among younger adults and/or families. This has also been reflected in more participation in Meeting committees and an easier task for Nominating committees. Other Meetings report that while there is a growth in the number of visitors to meeting for worship, this does not always translate into new regular attenders or members. No Meetings have indicated that they are struggling, although several are quite small and greying.

Several Meetings report budget surpluses.

Broadmead and Wooster hold quarterly business meetings. Oberlin meets every other month. North Columbus holds its business meetings entirely online.

Spiritual Life

Generally, Meetings report that their spiritual life is rich and healthy.

A number of Meetings have modified their worship Schedule. Ann Arbor and Red Cedar hold two meetings for worship on First Days – one of which is in person only and the other hybrid. In Ann Arbor's case, the in-person meeting for worship is the larger, at Red Cedar the reverse is true. Athens holds Sunday afternoon worship twice a month. Most other Meetings hold hybrid meetings for worship. Several smaller Meetings (Broadmead, Wooster) hold in-person worship and Zoom worship on alternating weeks. Some Meetings are still working on how to best incorporate Zoom into worship.

Most Meetings do not indicate any concern with the quality of vocal ministry, although several are actively reflecting on how to educate newer attenders on what constitutes vocal ministry. A number of Meetings begin meeting for worship with a reading. Cleveland, on a trial basis, reads from the statement on vocal ministry by Abington Friends, circulated by LEYM M&N, at the start of the first meeting for worship each month. At Grand Rapids, the clerk reads a query half-way through worship, a practice it began during Covid. Kent and Broadmead also use a reading at the start of worship to help center worship. Cleveland has also initiated inter-generational worship on the first First Day of the month with the children sitting in the center of the Meeting Room. Birmingham has a five-minute "Quaker History Moment" at the rise of Meeting.

A number of Meetings are exploring alternative settings for worship. Ann Arbor holds Meeting for Walking. Detroit is also exploring walking. North Columbus has been holding monthly meetings in the park.

A number of Meetings have spiritual formation groups and activities such as retreats (Broadmead, Kent, North Columbus, Red Cedar), spiritual companions (Ann Arbor), spiritual formation reading groups (Birmingham, Cleveland), sharing about individual spiritual journeys (Athens), and other forms of worship sharing (Akron, Athens, Cleveland, Kent). A significant number of Red Cedar Friends attended School of the Spirit retreats as did a number of North Columbus Friends.

A number of Meetings, often as a result of deaths of members, have initiated discussions about end-of-life concerns (Birmingham, Ann Arbor, Broadmead)

Meeting Life

A number of Meetings have been exploring different committee structures. At Ann Arbor, Peace & Social Action committee now operates as an umbrella for various interest groups. A number of other, usually smaller, Meetings have no committees but undertake activities as a meeting of the whole. Kalamazoo has a "helping hands" category for Friends who do not have the time to commit as a fulltime member of a committee, but who contribute when needed.

Many meetings hold regular potlucks, usually once a month, which are a welcome way to bring Friends together. A number of Meetings also hold annual picnics or periodic gatherings in Friends' houses. A number of Meetings have singing, either before or after worship, once a month or so. A Friend at Birmingham Meeting has created a game called "Spicy Talk" to engage members in the testimonies. North Columbus has been holding a quarterly breakfast, with over a

dozen normally attending. Kalamazoo holds a Men's Breakfast. A number of Meetings have organized activities for young Adults (Ann Arbor, North Columbus).

Educational Activities

There are a wide range of educational activities across Meetings. Many Meetings hold pre-meeting or after meeting for worship discussions on various topics of interest to members of the Meeting. These often deal with current events, individual concerns, or topics of concern to the Meeting. Some Meetings hold regular educational activities such as Bible Study (Ann Arbor, Cleveland), Quaker history forums (Athens), Quaker Studies (Cleveland), Quaker practice addressed to newcomers (Red Cedar).

Work in the World

Here too, Meetings or Meeting members are involved in a wide range of activities.

Red Cedar has a concern with the unhoused. A number of unhoused live around the Meeting House. The Meeting has allowed them to access water and outdoor outlets for cell phones. But there is a concern with tents being pitched around the Meeting House. The Meeting is working to provide resources for the unhoused. It has also served food. A reading group is reading about and discussing homelessness. Ann Arbor hosted a local Overnight Shelter and a Daytime Warming Centre last winter for two weeks each. Cleveland adopted a "Minute on Service to People Experiencing Poverty" and asked each committee and member to examine how they are addressing poverty. Meeting members also recently participated in the Homeless Standdown, which provided a range of services for over 500 homeless persons. Many Meetings also help prepare food for people in the community or maintain a small food pantry or donate to a larger food bank.

Many Meetings have been involved with support work for immigrants either as a Meeting or through individual Meeting members or in cooperation with other organizations (Akron, Ann Arbor, Cleveland, North Columbus, Oberlin).

A number of Meetings have participated with AFSC or FCNL activities (Ann Arbor, Birmingham, Mid-Ohio Valley, Oberlin). Oberlin Meeting raised \$4,000 to send Oberlin College students to the FCNL Change Makers Weekend. Individual Friends in various Meetings are involved activities with AFSC and FCNL. Mid-Ohio Valley participated in the West Virginia Fall Gathering of Quakers.

Kalamazoo reported reviving its Peace & Social Action committee to work in conjunction with other organizations around peace. A number of Meetings have Friends involved in prison work.

Monthly Meetings have also made financial contributions to various organizations and causes such as the Ramallah Quaker school in Palestine, Negro College Fund, Education Assistance, and support for immigrant advocacy organizations. Ann Arbor has an ad hoc committee on Reparative Justice and has been involved in supporting the 339 Manumissions and Beyond Project, which researches the histories of the descendants of Black Americans who were

enslaved and freed by members of Philadelphia YM as well as with Anishinaabe Nokomis Cultural Centre in Okemos, Michigan.

Several Meetings reported being involved in interfaith organizations (Broadmead, Kent).

Meeting Outreach

A few Meetings report outreach activities. Mid-Ohio Valley held an outdoor vigil “Love as Action” in Marietta, which attracted 25 participants. It also gave an Introduction to Quakerism at a Unitarian Universalist church in Marietta, which has attracted some new attenders. Akron held a Peace Day lecture at a public library. Several Meetings have improved their signage around their meeting place (Delaware, Kalamazoo). A number of Meetings have improved messages addressed to seekers on social media and on the Meeting website.

Children

Few Meetings reported having an active First Day School or on activities for children. A number of Meetings expressed their desire to be able to attract young families with children and how much children contribute to the health of a Meeting. Attracting more families and children is an active concern for many Meetings. North Columbus noted an increase in the number of children attending. Ann Arbor also has an active and growing First Day School program.

Meeting Places

Cleveland has bought a new Meeting House and is in the process of developing a remodeling plan. Grand Rapids has moved into a new space. While no rent is charged, it is making a freewill offering to the host church. North Columbus is still renting space in a local church but has found a location for a Meeting House. A design plan has been proposed.

Red Cedar rents space in its Meeting House for outside groups. Athens rents its Meeting House for the village board. Detroit is using its new building to build community relations.

Milestones

Cleveland Meeting held a 100th Anniversary observance in September 2025, with former Meeting members and other Friends attending to share memories. Birmingham Meeting is observing its 60th Anniversary this year (2026).

Annual Report from Spiritual Formation Program

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 our 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 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.

Publications & Archives Committee Report

Submitted by Jeff Cooper, Clerk

1. We are once again grateful to Christopher Farrand for producing informative, well-written, and visually appealing *Bulletins*. Thank you, Christopher.

2. Every year we strive to provide summaries of the workshops, which ultimately appear in *Annual Records*. This year, we have 11 workshops, only 9 of which can be covered by our committee. Last year, we asked for volunteers to cover a few workshops, and this worked out well. If you would like to write a 200 – 400-word summary of a workshop, please speak with me as soon as possible.

3. We have not fully determined how the *Annual Records* will be completed. This will need to be decided by the Committee continuing after Annual Meeting ends. One of our continuing members is Elise Yoder, who edited the last five Annual Records and says that is plenty. Amen and thank you, Elise! Among other continuing members, Abbey Pratt-Harrington has agreed to collect the materials for *Annual Records*, and Emilia Marcyk-Taylor to format the contents. This leaves the middle step of copyediting, and we're still unsure who will tackle this. One needn't be a member of the Committee, so volunteers are welcome. It appears that Peggy and I will not be moving away as soon as we initially thought, so I could probably do the copyediting one more year, but I'd be happy to turn this over to someone else. Please speak with me if you are interested.

4. With the database manager, we are proposing a new method of collecting data from monthly meetings and worship groups. This was suggested by the outgoing database manager, Susan Loucks, has been supported by the Executive Committee, and was reported at Representative Meeting. Quoting from the minutes of Representative Meeting:

Last June the Committee was charged with considering "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." They brought a proposal that was considered and supported by the LEYM Executive Committee at its meeting on January 9, 2026, as follows:

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 to Friends General Conference but not compile this data into a Yearly Meeting directory or add it to the database. ... 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.

Please note: Rather than asking Friends at each monthly meeting to supply contact information for all of their members and regular attenders, they will be asked to provide a digital copy of their directory, from which data for the meeting's officers, committee clerks, representatives, employees, and other position holders named in *Annual Records* can be extracted. We believe that, by not collecting and maintaining data on *all* members and attenders, there will be less work for the database manager, and *far* less work for Friends at Monthly Meetings. Meanwhile, Friends interested in genealogy can presumably see the digital directories of specific monthly meetings at the Friends Historical Collection at Swarthmore.

Treasurer's Report

Submitted by Tom Kangas, Treasurer

Presenting preliminary financial results for the fiscal year ending June 30, 2026

General Fund

- Revenue
 - a. All monthly meetings have paid their annual contribution, save for one that is in process
 - b. We'll get another \$1K of dividend income from Friends Fiduciary investments later this month (i.e., in June)
 - c. Revenue for the year is where we expected it would be
 - d. We are very grateful for all of the contributions to LEYM from MMs and from individual Friends
- Expenses
 - a. Contract Workers
 - i. Database Manager amount shown here as actual is really an estimate through end of the year
 - ii. Digital Communications Facilitator has billed for actual work performed through May 2026
 - b. Transfers between funds
 - i. shown here as being done for the year
 - ii. one potential change: if the Annual Meeting Fund doesn't end up needing this much, then this \$5K subsidy in the Actual column could be decreased
 - c. Variances—comparing actual to budget
 - i. There are no unfavorable variances
 - ii. In total, actual expenses stand today at 81% of total amount budgeted

Balance Sheet

- Shows where our money is kept and related details

- About 1/4 is held by a bank and 3/4 invested in a fund managed by Friends Fiduciary Corp
- Friends Fiduciary
 - a. Cost Basis reflects dollars invested by LEYM plus dividends earned
 - b. Unrealized amounts reflect changes in market value of amounts invested
 - c. The middle column, Change during the fiscal year, reflects only activity through Dec 31st
- Note ending balance of \$95K; we'll look now at that \$95K from a different angle

Funds Summary page

Note that the total of all LEYM funds is \$95K

General Fund

- The General Fund is the core fund of LEYM's finances and, as always, this body will be considering a budget to govern the use of the General Fund during these Annual Sessions
- Each of the components of activity for the current year have been discussed already (e.g., income, expenditures, FFC, transfers)
- The Consultation Fund was laid down by LEYM this year and that fund's balance was transferred to the G/F
- The General Fund will likely end the year higher than its beginning balance and higher than its suggested ceiling

Annual Meeting Fund

- We see the \$5K subsidy from the General Fund here
- Expense includes advance payments of 90% of total amount owed Ashland University
- Income and expense data are incomplete
- The final net cost of Annual Meeting will be reported in the Fall Bulletin

Travel Fund—There were expenditures related to

- a. representatives attending FGC Central Comm meeting, and
- b. a representative attendance at a meeting of FWCC Section of the Americas

Youth Activities Fund—Activity shown here pertains to the youth and families retreat in Sept 2025

Spiritual Formation Fund—Activity shown here pertains to retreat activities in Fall 2025 and Spring 2026

Ministry Scholarship Fund—Scholarship granted to assist a Friend to attend School of the Spirit

Treasurer's Summary—LEYM's finances are in good shape.

Digital Communications Facilitator 2025-26 Report

Submitted by Bill Wartens

The Digital Communications Facilitator (DCF) for LEYM serves to maintain our online presence and help Friends across LEYM connect with each other via the website (leym.org), email listservs, webinars and Zoom meetings. The DCF also plays a central role in preparing for, coordinating and helping to host our Annual Meeting in Ashland, including hosting the Zoom portions of the program and managing the online registration system. This year we also provided Zoom support for the Representative Meeting hosted by Red Cedar Friends Meeting in March. While not a central focus, we also periodically post to the revived LEYM Facebook page. Look at the top right of our homepage for links to our Facebook

(<https://www.facebook.com/LEYMQuakers/>) and to our YouTube account (<https://www.youtube.com/@lakeerietyearlymeeting>) where you can find archived recordings of many past events.

Here's a list of some of the specific offerings the DCF supported this year:

Spiritual Companioning Coaching Sessions (March 19, May 7)

Spiritual Deepening and Vital Community webinar (Feb 26)

Gifts and Leadings among Friends: An Exploration webinar developed and presented by the DCF (Jan 6)

Trans Day of Remembrance Online Vigil (Nov 18)

Living Peace: Three Quakers Share webinar (Nov 5)

Praying Like Quakers webinar (Oct 9)

LEYM Spiritual Formation Mystics Group Discussion (July 17, Oct 16, Jan 15)

What Does It Mean to be Quaker? - promoted wider access to AAFM's regular Zoom offering for Friends exploring Quakerism

Hosted 3-part Peace and Justice Book Discussion entitled *Kind, Connected & Unafraid* exploring *The Dandelion Insurrection: Love and Revolution* by Rivera Sun. Developed and facilitated by the DCF. (July 29, Aug 5, Aug 12)

Website Traffic

Our website continues to attract a growing amount of traffic, currently at around 9000 unique visitors per month, although it is increasingly hard to tell which traffic is human and which is driven by search engine and ai bots. [See below for Website Traffic]

The website requires regular attention, and this past year we stepped up our security features, moving to a two-factor authentication model and a new firewall to help strengthen protection against malicious actors. We also implemented a new "staging site" where significant design changes could be tested before being pushed to the public site. This may be important in the coming year, as the website theme and underlying structure of our site, while still fully functional, is no longer being supported by the original developer, leading to problems over time. Thus, we may need to consider some renovations that could break some things without careful testing.

Distribution of Billed Activity Hours

We use a time-tracking app set to record 10-minute intervals, designed to track quick website updates and other small tasks that accumulate over time. Most committee meetings that the DCF attended in a dual (volunteer and attending in my role as DCF) capacity were not included for billing. We changed time-tracking tools in January when the prior tool was no longer supported, so some changes make combining the category totals tricky. But as an estimate, the time billed to LEYM from June 1, 2024 – June 1, 2025, was between 160-170 hours, similar to last year, distributed as follows:

- Annual Sessions Work 46%
- Website Updates 30%
- Zoom-related 12%
- Email 6%
- Research Reporting 4%

- Social Media 1%
- Phone 1%

Special Creative Projects

This past year, Bill was on a roll creating a number of unique online resources specific to Quakers that are now hosted on the LEYM website. Aside from the video browser requested by the Advancement & Outreach Committee, these projects were all developed on his own time.

Specific offerings, not yet well advertised, include:

Get to Know LEYM Meetings video browser for LEYM Annual 2026

LEYM Advices and Queries Browser drawing on our 2012 LEYM Advices and Queries booklet (<https://tools.leym.org/leymqqueries/>)

Interactive Quaker Peace Testimony History Timeline (<https://leym.org/peace-testimony-history/>)

Gifts and Leadings Discernment Helper (<https://tools.leym.org/gifts/>)

Quaker Spicy Talk pass-and-play mobile game for hosting discussions on the Quaker Testimonies (<https://tools.leym.org/spicytalk/>)

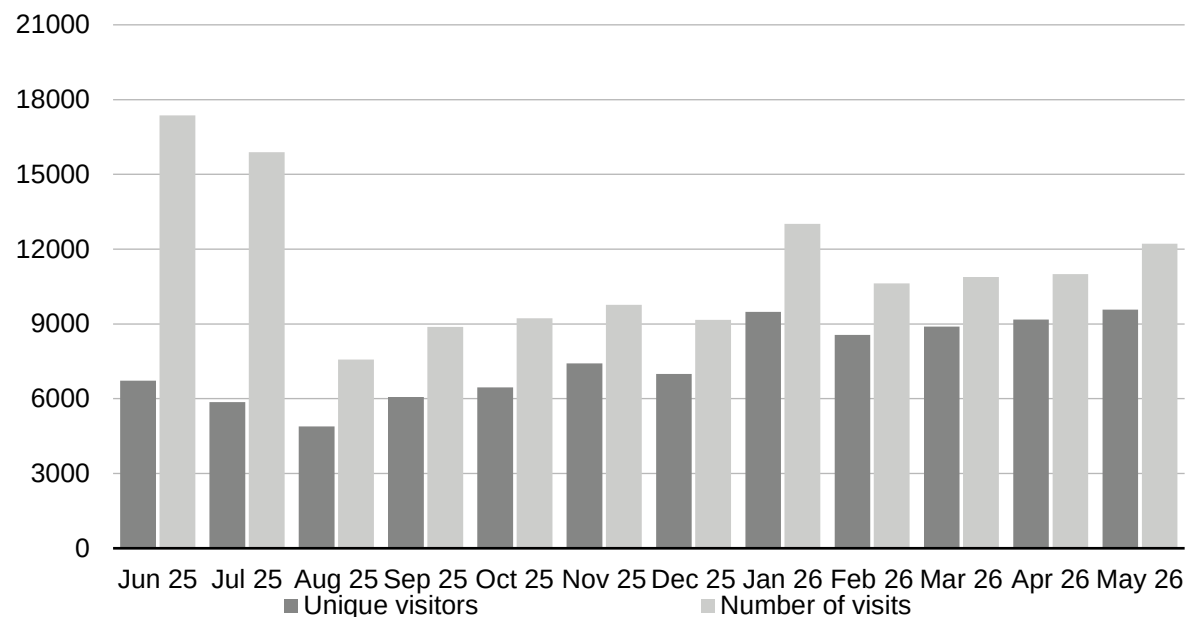
On Friendly Terms Quaker Wordsearch game (<https://leym.org/on-friendly-terms-wordsearch-puzzle/>)

Navigating Conflict in Quaker Meetings online learning resource (under review before public release)

Looking Forward

A number of issues are being explored for the coming year, including thinking about practical ways to ensure a smooth transition of the website and digital resources if the current DCF is incapacitated or moves on to another position. Based on some inquiries from committee clerks, we are also exploring the possibility of creating a set of shared digital tools for all LEYM committees, making the transition from one set of clerks to another more seamless, while

LEYM.ORG Website Traffic



maintaining committee documents and offering integrated email listservs for each working group. One very practical possibility would be to subscribe to a Quaker Meetings Network meeting support site with each committee having their own subsite, which would also enable us to consolidate our email listserv (now hosted by electricembers) under one service. Further discernment will be required.

Reports from Representatives to Quaker Organizations Presented During Annual Sessions:

YM 2026-29 Friends Peace Teams Report

YM 2026-32 Friends General Conference Report for 2025-26

YM 2026-33 FWCC Report for 2025-2026

Friends Peace Teams Report

Submitted by Cassie Cammann

Friends Peace Teams is a Spirit Led Organization of a network of Quaker volunteers, working and supporting Justice and Peace work around the world. In 1999, Quaker volunteers took the practices of AVP (Alternatives to Violence Project) out of prisons and into the communities of Aceh, Burundi and Rwanda. They developed an AVP advanced topics series for justice and peace in the community. They called the work they were doing Friends Peace Teams.

In the past three years we have worked to transform Friends Peace Teams from a group of Quakers in the United States offering support to the global majority regions of the world into a "Decolonized Organization" of five equal regions in the world (Asia West Pacific, African Great Lakes, Peacebuilding en las Américas including Central and South America, Europe and Middle East, and North America). The leadership is now shared amongst all five regions! This is a significant and exciting transformation!

Today, we have the newly appointed Regional Coordinator of the North American Region of Friends Peace Teams here to tell us a bit more about the work of Friends Peace Teams. Melanie Siaw grew up in Malaysia and is currently living in Pittsburgh. She has been an attendee at Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting and is attending our LEYM for the first time. This afternoon she will be co-leading a workshop about revitalizing the anti-war movement in the local community with the clerk of our Justice and Peace Committee, Claire Cohen, and the clerk of Pittsburgh Monthly Meeting, Michael James. Melanie will speak for one or two minutes about the work of FPT, and will also introduce Jackson Napier, who spent time with FPT in Ukraine last October. I now have a few asks of you:

1-Please realize that Friends Peace Teams is "all of us" who wish to build justice and peace! If you wish to get involved with peace work in the world, you are welcome!

Please get to know us:

A) Read and share our news online: at friendspeaceteams.org. If you are so moved, you are invited to copy any article and reprint it into your meeting's Monthly Newsletter.

B) Attend a Monthly Regional Meeting on Zoom! This is how I got involved; I attended Asia West Pacific for a year before I did anything but listen.

C) Volunteer at the organizational level. We need Clerks, AVP trainers, peace workers (bring your own peace work and work with us.) We need people to personally support one Peace Worker by helping them write up their news, (many of them are not native English speakers). We need help with Power of Goodness (mini AVP workshops using stories and AVP techniques to introduce people to AVP).

D) Volunteer as the representative to FPT. From LEYM! Don Buckingham had to step down from this role, due to illness and his commitment to AVP work. I have stepped in for the time being, but we need an official LEYM representative to Friends Peace Teams! Might it be you? 2-Donate to support this work. I am asking LEYM to consider making an annual pledge of support at the Yearly Meeting level. The act of support is key. Any amount will be very much appreciated. Ongoing support is essential for the funding of our new regional Coordinators. This year we have established Regional Coordinators in both North America, and Europe Middle East. This is another act of equality within the organization.

If you want to know more about the work of Friends Peace Teams, please ask any of the three of us, and/or sit with us on Saturday Lunch at our FPT table! Check out our display in the Alumnae Room, and If you are able, and take a packet of bookmarks back to share with your Monthly Meeting.

Remember, peace is possible!!

Friends General Conference Report for 2025-26

Submitted by Ellerie Brownfain

This has been a year for big changes at Friends General Conference. For this verbal report I am highlighting a few.

Changes in Governance

FGC adopted a new governance structure in October 2025 after nearly two years of discernment. A Governing Board replaces the Executive Committee, and a Representatives Council replaces Central Committee. Each yearly meeting now names two representatives regardless of size, making participation simpler and more equitable. Friends may also serve on program committees without holding a representative role. Marvin Barnes of LEYM has served as Presiding Clerk for six years. Melissa Rycroft of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting has been named Rising Presiding Clerk and will assume the role later in 2026.

Staff Transitions and Restructuring

Two beloved long-serving staff members retired. Vanessa Julye concluded 30 years of service and was the architect of the Ministry on Racism. In her honor, over 80 Friends raised \$20,000 for the new Vanessa Julye Fund within months of its launch. Liz Dykes, the heart of Gathering planning and coordination, also retired. These retirements coincided with a planned staff reduction as campaign-funded positions concluded.

The 2026 Gathering

The in-person Gathering is themed “A Window and a Door: A Prayer” and will be held July 7 through 12 2026 at the University of Vermont in Burlington. The theme is drawn from a poem by LVM Shelton who passed away in early 2025 and was a beloved Gathering workshop

facilitator deeply connected to the Friends of Color community. Keynote speakers include Bryan Stevenson and Kazu Haga. Workshops this year run for four days rather than five reflecting a commitment to a simpler and more sustainable format.

Other Programs

The Spiritual Deepening Program offers online eRetreats throughout the year. Each runs four weeks and is led by a seasoned facilitator. Topics include Silence and Light, Living into Wholeness, and Understanding and Healing White Supremacy. The suggested fee is \$35 to \$45 per participant on a pay as led basis open to Friends of all means. As a participant in these eRetreats I can say from experience that they have greatly enriched my spiritual life.

The Ministry on Racism continues its regular programming. It hosts weekly virtual worship and online retreats specifically for Friends of Color as well as separate worship spaces for white Friends confronting racism and white supremacy. In November 2025 it hosted its Fall Online Retreat for Friends of Color. A 2026 community read of *Fit for Freedom, Not for Friendship* was launched in honor of Vanessa Julye's retirement and is supported by the Vanessa Julye Fund. I am participating and encourage others to explore this opportunity.

QuakerPress publishes books for seekers, scholars, and everyday Friends alike. QuakerBooks is available online and in person at the Gathering. A new Outreach and Visibility Committee was newly formed with the hope of sharing the Quaker faith more widely. We hope our communications will be clear, welcoming, and true to our values.

Litigation

Friends General Conference joined an interfaith coalition challenging a federal executive order that removed protections for houses of worship from ICE enforcement. The case is ongoing and General Secretary Barry Crossno traveled to Washington in February 2026 for the appeal hearing. The legal team is taking the case for free. For more information, please contact Friends General Conference at fgcquaker.org.

Public Witness

In our ongoing commitment to public witness we stood with transgender, intersex, and nonbinary Friends on Transgender Day of Remembrance. In April 2026 we offered listening sessions to gather community input on a potential Lily Grant application. If received this grant would help us serve a broader and more diverse community of Friends.

A Note on Stewardship

This organization depends on the generosity of meetings and individuals to sustain all of this work. Donations support our programs and the Annual Fund is the single largest source of contributions. A young person may find their spiritual home at the Gathering. A Friend may deepen their practice through an eRetreat. A meeting may learn to become more welcoming. These programs touch our lives.

If the work on anti-racism has touched your life or your meeting's life, please consider a gift to the Vanessa Julye Fund. If the Gathering has ever meant something to you, please consider giving in honor of Liz Dykes who devoted her career to making it a home in so many Friends' hearts. Donations may go to specific funds or the general operating budget. We encourage all Friends to read about giving at fgcquaker.org.

FWCC Report 2025-2026

Submitted by Ellerie Brownfain

This report covers the work of the Friends World Committee for Consultation Section of the Americas from August 2025 through the present.

The Section observed World Quaker Day on October 5, 2025, with the theme “Love Your Neighbor,” drawn from Galatians 5:14. A special global online worship gathering followed on October 11, with Friends joining across time zones from the Pacific coast to Bolivia and Cuba.

Also in October, Friends World Committee published “As Way Opens,” a collection of spiritual reflections growing out of the 2025 Section Meeting theme, and shared the entries received from a section-wide hymn contest, with songs in English and Spanish reflecting the faith of Friends across the hemisphere.

In November 2025 the organization participated in a consultation convened by the Bolivian Quaker Education Fund, joining other organizations focused on the lives and work of Friends in Bolivia.

Young Adult Friends from across the Section gathered online twice during this period, in September and December 2025, for worship and conversation and to build relationships across national, cultural, and theological boundaries.

Running through this entire period, the Section has been investing in several digital tools to strengthen its work. The Digital Quaker Glossary is an interactive and printable resource being built to make Quaker terms accessible across languages, supporting both interpreters and Friends who travel to visit Friends in other countries. The Section has conducted its business bilingually in Spanish and English for more than forty years and the glossary grows directly out of that commitment. Alongside it, FWCC maintains an interactive map at fwccdirectory.org where anyone can find Quaker meetings, churches, worship groups, and Friends’ projects across the Americas and around the world. The Section also publishes a regular digital newsletter, Friends World News, which keeps Friends informed about events, programs, and news from across the Americas. Please consider signing up at fwccamericas.org. All of these tools reflect the Section’s vision of a connected and accessible global Quaker community.

The 2026 Section Meeting was held online on March 21 under the theme “Love Your Neighbor.” More than 300 Friends gathered from across the Americas. I am pleased to report that a number of Friends from Lake Erie Yearly Meeting were among those who attended. The gathering began in worship sharing groups and then moved through worship and the business of the Section, including nominations and financial reports. Plenary speaker Colin Saxton opened the parable of the Good Samaritan from Luke 10 and gave a moving message, inviting Friends to examine what it truly means to love a neighbor and whether their meeting is a community of rest and healing for those who come seeking it.

In May 2026 a professional interpreter training was held in Greensboro, North Carolina. The goal was to move the Section away from its long reliance on a small pool of volunteers and

toward a stable corps of compensated interpreters. Bilingual Friends and other fluent speakers were trained in the craft of interpretation so that the Section can draw on skilled and fairly paid professionals for its committees, events, and gatherings. This is a meaningful investment in equity and in the long-term health of the Section's bilingual life.

The 2027 Section Meeting is planned for March 18 through 21 at Quaker Haven Camp in Syracuse, Indiana and will be offered both in person and online.

Looking ahead, World Quaker Day is October 4, 2026, and the theme is "Let Peace Be Among Us," drawn from Hebrews 12:14. This is a wonderful opportunity for your meeting to reach across borders or across branches of Friends for a joint time of worship, whether via Zoom or in person. Such connections take some advance planning so now is a good time to begin thinking about it. If you would like help connecting with a meeting outside of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting please be in touch with me or any of your FWCC representatives.

Beginning July 1, representatives will meet quarterly via Zoom to share ideas and initiatives and to support one another in carrying forward the work of this organization. If you wish to get involved or have questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to your representatives: Ellerie Brownfain, Clemence Mershon, Jana Norlan, and Mike Hinshaw.

The work of FWCC depends on the generosity of Friends across the Section. Personal contributions of any size are welcome and are tax deductible. Information about giving can be found at fwccamericas.org.