
LAKE ERIE YEARLY MEETING

of the Religious Society of Friends

Sixth

Month 15, 2008

To Friends Everywhere,

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting gathered at Bluffton University in Bluffton, Ohio, for its 45th session, Sixth Month 12 through 15, 2008. Friends weathered storms of climate, including torrents of rain that miraculously parted whenever the children's program had outside activities. Friends were not challenged during our meetings, however, by storms of the spirit or heart, and showed great love to each other during business sessions, in worship sharing, at meals, during fun, and during our spiritual practice periods.

The Lake Erie Association of Friends was founded in 1939, becoming a Yearly Meeting in 1963. At 45 years old, LEYM has shifted from the developmental task of solidifying its identity to becoming a nurturing resource for its Monthly Meetings and Worship Groups. Signs of this new stage include a survey of households regarding their attitudes toward the Yearly Meeting, a consultation for clerks of Ministry and Nurture committees of the monthly meetings, the planned development of a set of Queries for use by the monthly meetings, opportunities with a traveling minister from Friends General Conference, a vibrant and ongoing spiritual formation program, and a planned consultation for monthly meeting clerks. We are excited and energized by this shift in our consciousness about who we are as Friends and what we can accomplish together.

Another sign of our growth is the interest and energy that young adult Friends are bringing to the Yearly Meeting. These young Friends grew up in our Yearly Meeting, coming to us as nursing babies and roaming toddlers. Now the wheel has turned, and they are taking on advancement and outreach among their peers. They have also enriched our gathering the last two years with special activities following the plenary sessions that spoke meaningfully to the themes. We look forward to the fruits of their fresh outlook and energy.

This year's theme was Peacemaking from the Inside Out. Helen Horn, a cherished member of our Yearly Meeting and our plenary speaker, asked us if we were "Centered Enough for Peacemaking." Helen encouraged us to act out of faith, despite our fear, to follow the nudges of Spirit to act on behalf of peace and justice. She also encouraged us to take time for reflection and refreshment, for "feeling the Presence of something yearning, through the mystery of suffering, for us to help channel healing into the world."

Friends were presented with an opportunity to discern how Spirit may be nudging us. Friends School in Detroit, under the care of Green Pastures Quarterly Meeting of LEYM, suffers the impact of Michigan's economic downturn. Ten percent of the student body had to withdraw mid-year due to an inability to pay school fees, resulting in layoffs of essential and talented teachers. Given the extremely high academic achievements and community contributions of the students and graduates of this school, we are saddened by this news, and encourage Friends everywhere to examine their hearts regarding support for Friends schools, and especially Friends School in Detroit.

During our time together we have been blessed by the power, peace and love of the Spirit of God and by each others' presence. We thank God for the strength of our loving connection.

On behalf of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting,

Shirley Bechill, Clerk

Shirley Bechill, Clerk
Merry Stanford, Asst. Clerk
Joseph Mills, Recording Clerk

bechill@alma.edu or (989) 463-4539
merry.stanford@comcast.net or (517) 281-1570
millrae@juno.com or (269) 375-4414

<http://leym.quaker.org>
