

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting

Religious Society of Friends

Monthly Meetings:

Akron
Ann Arbor
Athens
Birmingham
Broadmead
Cleveland
Delaware
Detroit
Grand Rapids
Granville
Kalamazoo
Kent
Mid-Ohio Valley
Monongalia
North Columbus
Oberlin
Pine River
Pittsburgh
Red Cedar
Wooster

Preparative Meeting:

Indiana

Worship Groups:

Chelsea
Erie
Holland
Manitou
Mansfield Area

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting

Held at Bluffton College, Bluffton, Ohio

Sixth Month 12-15, 1997

To Friends everywhere:

“Sampling the Powerful Roots of Quakerism” was the theme that animated Lake Erie Yearly Meeting as we gathered at Bluffton College in Ohio, Sixth Month 12-15, 1997.

Our plenary speaker, Lloyd Lee Wilson, spoke of the taproot, not only of our individual, familial and national stories, but of all stories — the cosmic story of the eternally-developing relationship between God and creation. All other roots may perish, but the taproot remains to sustain us.

Lloyd Lee Wilson used the story of Moses’ encounter with God in the burning bush on Mt. Horeb to illustrate the ways in which God continues to deal with creation. As early Friends rediscovered, any ground can be holy ground, and God may communicate directly with anyone. God intervenes on behalf of the poor, the oppressed, and the powerless, and calls us to do the same. Our concern should not be with our own salvation, because God, not we, is the center of our story. Rather, we are called to intervene radically — to work to free the world of domination and hierarchy and to create new circles of community — to love one another without regard to an individual’s worthiness.

In worship-sharing groups, we focused on our own meetings and on writings that have inspired us — powerful roots of our faith. The Bible and the scriptures of many faiths, the writings of Friends past and present, and other spiritual texts have given direction to life courses, provided sustenance in times of sorrow and need, furnished daily inspiration, and fed and nourished meetings in their spiritual quests.

Separate programs for children and youth followed the same overall theme, blending with the adult program on the final evening of yearly meeting in intergenerational Bible skits shared by all ages.

In our meetings for worship with attention to business, we were led through the exercises of committee reports, nominations, finances, and other affairs of our religious society. We rejoiced to learn that Friends School in Detroit is operating “in the black” for the first time in memory, and we received with thanks the report of Marty Grundy and Connie McPeak’s travels in the ministry among Friends in the west and in Alaska. Our Peace Committee helped us to address issues of militarism and to begin to face the lack of racial diversity in our own meetings.

Florence Kimball shared with us the work of the Friends Committee on National Legislation.

This yearly meeting was an opportunity to reestablish contact with our roots in personal friendships, memories of yearly meetings past, the lives of our individual meetings, and inspired writings that sustain and nurture us. It was also an opportunity to establish anew our contact with the taproot that is always there, whether we acknowledge it or not. We pray that your sessions will be for you a similar opportunity.

On behalf of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting,

John Howell, Clerk

Pre-School Epistle

The preschool youth had fun making friends and playing together.

One way we explored our Quaker roots was by drawing a great blue whale with sidewalk chalk. We sat inside the whale together, listening to the story of "Jonah and the Big Fish." We learned that God gave Jonah a "time out" inside a big fish, then Jonah obeyed God.

We enjoyed the company of "Grandpa" Russell Bimber. He helped us make some delicious strawberry ice cream. Thank you, Russell.

We send greetings to all and we look forward to meeting again next year.

Jessie Dalrymple, Ian Wrifford-Lore, Sam Spry, Meaghan Callahan Diffenderfer

Elementary School Epistle

We made new friends and made contact with old friends.

We played a name game on the first day to get to know each other.

We met Noah and Franny who were here for the first time.

We made journals and then wrote in our journals like Friends have done for hundreds of years.

We talked about George Fox and John Woolman.

We went on a nature walk.

We went swimming two days in a row.

We sang songs and learned dances of universal peace.

We made bags of toiletries for Guatemalans living in Ohio. (Thanks LEYM for your help with contributions.)

We played Wizards and Gelfings.

We put on a play called "John Woolman and the Slave Girl."

We learned "Love was the first motion."

We had a Dakota Hunka ceremony and became "children beloved" of Lake Erie Yearly Meeting.

From the elementary group

Franny, David, Hannah, Theo, Jacob, Micah, Erin, Noah, Robin, Peggy, Judy, Helen

Middle School Epistle

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting was fun this year. We got to know each other by showing each other the covers of our journals. We acted out a skit about equality and fairness. The story came from the book, *Lighting Candles in the Dark*.

We made miniature books with Gretchen Dixon out of paper and cardboard. At Twin Lakes we had a raft fight where you push each other off the floating raft. That night we danced Dances of Universal Peace with Peggy Christensen and Mary Ellen Newport. Then we sang with Helen Horn. Then we played a game called Wizards and Gelfings. Then we ate popcorn and drank juice. The next day after breakfast a mother duck and her dozen, day-old, ducklings went down to Riley Creek while we were going to Meeting for Worship at Peace Thrones.

After that we planted flowers at the Mennonite Memorial Home for our service project. We then wrote this epistle. We went swimming at Twin Lakes (again!). LEYM has been fun. We want to come back again, but right now we're exhausted — zzzz!

Bekah Sommer, Erin Hogan, Matthew Hogan, Duncan Gromko, Laurel Fuson, Kevin Roose, Alex Dixon, Donna Hawkins

High School Epistle

Dear Teen Friends,

The theme of this year's LEYM was "Sampling the Powerful Roots of Quakerism." To help express this, we attended the plenary with guest speaker Lloyd Lee Wilson and engaged in a discussion afterwards. One of the first activities we did was brainstorm on the testimonies of Quakers and the acronyms Fitches and Friends. We came up with many words to describe these testimonies and to describe Quakers.

We were included in a workshop of Bluffton's Peace Troupe. We acted out a skit and did some exercises, and while we were there, we made friends with the other participants.

To help the community, we did some gardening at the Mennonite Memorial Home. They were thankful because they have limited numbers of workers for the grounds.

As a fun activity, we watched "Lean on Me," a movie about good values in people. The weekend was spiritually enriching and we feel we have learned something about Quaker history.

High School Program