LEYM Minute Against Torture
Summer 2011

Lake Erie Yearly Meeting of the Religious Society of Friends joins with Yearly Meetings around the United States of America and with the Quaker Initiative to End Torture (QUIT) in condemning the use of torture by our government, including the practice of prolonged solitary confinement.

"Remember those in prison as though you were in prison with them, those who are being tortured as though you yourselves were being tortured." Hebrews 13:3 (NSRV) These words from Scripture, and our years of Quaker commitment to witness prophetically against injustices, remind us of our responsibility to speak out against the continued use of torture in government sponsored public, private and secret prisons and detention facilities.

It is with great concern and sadness that we recognize that the use of torture has been tolerated and justified by many people in our country. We are also concerned about the expanded use of solitary confinement. Many people in prison are kept in isolation 23 hours a day, sometimes for decades. The prolonged use of solitary confinement has been proven to have a severe impact on the mental health of those in prison and to impede their eventual reintegration into society. Our care is not only for the victims of torture in any of its forms but also for the individuals and institutions carrying out these practices. Lake Erie Yearly Meeting asks its member Meetings to inform themselves on this matter and to discern how they are led to respond. Possible contacts for information: Quaker Initiative to end Torture: www.quit-torture-now.org, and National Religious Campaign Against Torture: www.nrcat.org.