

The Living Light

“...and Christ shall give thee light.” Ephesians 5:14



Volume 54, Number 1

First Friends Church of Whittier

First Month, 2015

Looking Forward With Faith



Our Lynda Ladwig Recorded In Ministry

“This is a joyous day” said Anne McIntosh as she called Lynda Ladwig to receive recognition of her Recording in Ministry during Meeting for Worship on November 23. “This sort of event does not happen frequently. We chose Thanksgiving Sunday to make it special,” Anne added. This public acknowledgment of “the gifts that she brings to the meeting” followed the approval at the August Monthly Meeting of her recording, as recommended by her Recording Committee..

Lynda grew up in First Friends Church through early adulthood. After a period away, during which she and husband Mike Ladwig raised their two sons, Lynda returned to FFC and became involved in the life of the meeting, teaching First Day classes, participating on various committees, becoming Clerk of the Christian Education Committee, and, in 1999, joining the staff as

Inspired by a wondrous Christmas, Friends look forward with renewed optimism to a New Year of opportunity and commitment. Some of the highlights of the Holiday Season are recounted in succeeding pages, and some important traditional events anticipated in 2015 are listed below.

An Empty Soup Bowl benefit supper will take place on *January 31* in Fellowship Hall.. The ceramic soup bowls decorated by our own resident artists at Monthly Mission Monday sessions on November 17 and January 19 will be on sale, each bowl to be filled with your choice of many gourmet soups. The proceeds will go to the Interfaith Food Center, a major nutrition resource for the needy of this area.

The *January 31-February 1 weekend* is also reserved for the annual visit to First Friends of a staff and student group from the Earlham School of Religion in Richmond IN, including a Saturday breakfast presentation.

On *February 21* the annual meeting of the Western Association of the Religious Society of Friends (WARSF) will be held at the Berkeley Friends Meeting in conjunction with their Quaker Heritage Day. The speaker will be Stephen Angell, Professor of Quaker Studies at the Earlham School of Religion. WARSF is the organization through which we participate in the larger world of Friends.

The *March 7-8 weekend* is the tentative date for our own annual Quaker Forum, the leader for which is still under consideration.

On *April 24-25* a First Friends Women’s Retreat will be held at Dana Point, resuming a Meeting tradition of several years’ standing after a two-year lapse.

May 9 is Founders Day in Central Park, First Friends’ biggest Show-and-Tell of the year. As the founding church of the city of Whittier, we and our Friends School will display posters on our history, current events, and aspirations for the future.

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Friendly Fare by Lea Wright

Dear Friends, Very exciting news, we had some rain. Now that may seem like a funny thing to start things off with, but we all know So Cal has been in the midst of a drought, and this probably won't be enough to help very much, but maybe we are on the right track.

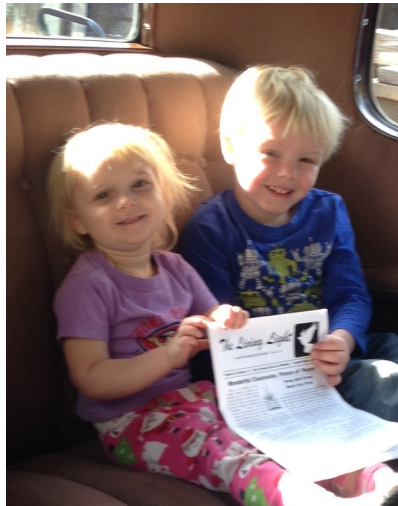
Friends Celebrate: Here we are starting a new year: 2015. If you are reading this prior to New Year's Eve, join us in Fellowship Hall for our tenth annual *Quaker New Year's Eve celebration*: December 31 at 6:00-9:15. Bring snacks and games to share. I'm taking Friendly Fare editor liberties here, and I'm predicting it will be a fun evening, or if it has already past I can tell you, it was a fun evening.

New Friends: Another great grandbaby to report this month for **Milton & Donna Wright**. This time it's a girl. **Alaina Grace Wright** was born in November in Chandler, AZ to **Adam & Aubrie Wright**, sister **Addy** (Adalae Hope), grandparents **Donald & Andrea Wright**.

Friends About Town: "Big news for me," says **Loletta Barrett** who has finally moved into her new home, the parsonage. Also on the move is **Beth Graham Strader**, who is coming back home after many years in northern California. Beth is a new resident of Walnut Village in Anaheim, and she is "over the moon" about rejoining her First Friends family.

Milton Wright's ongoing restoration of the 1931 Chevrolet Independence Sedan has reached a milestone this month with the completion of the upholstery installation. Here we see his great-grandchildren **Avalon & Landon Caringella** trying out the welcoming comfort of the back seat as they enjoy the *Living Light*.

Weston Van Dorn's band, *the Boulevards*, made a return performance at the House of Blues, Anaheim, Downtown



Disney on December 22. **Marie Kaneko** is participating in the Whittier Museum's current exhibition of dolls that runs through March with a loan of twenty items from her collection. **Anathea Woirhaye, Shreeya Dhawal, Justine Whitehead, Gavin, Ella, and Yvonne Huffaker** performed in Claylee's Dance Academy 2014 performances of the Nutcracker. It was a great day for a parade, and **Ashley Ryder** did a great job with the City of Whittier Cheer in the annual Uptown Whittier Christmas Parade. **Candice Ryder** walked along with them. **Milton Wright** drove representatives from the Whittier

Museum in his 1921 Studebaker.

Friends Visit: It was really nice to see **Kevin Flournoy**, his wife, **Carrie** and their baby, **Henry** visiting along with grandparents **Jim & Linda Flournoy** the Sunday of **Lynda Ladwig's** recording recognition. **Ted & Mary Marshburn** enjoyed a visit with their granddaughter **Olivia Ersek** when she came for Christmas on her way home from foreign study in India. Her sister **Bethany Marshburn** also came out after her finals at Mt. Holyoke were over. **Bob & Sabron Newton's** son Ben, his wife Melinda and their 5-year-old grandson came out from Maryland for Thanksgiving. The highlight of Henry's week here was going to the beach. **Jenni Root** took a bus ride from Arkansas and headed west to see California friends in December. Looking forward to hearing about her adventures next month.

School and Work News: **Jeffrey Robin** was home from Washington DC for the holidays after completing his first semester at The George Washington University Law School. Jeff graduated from Whittier Friends School in 2003 with **Christy Tavemelli, Micah Eggleton, and Andrea Whitlock**. He graduated from UCSB in 2013 with honors, where he double majored in Political Science with an emphasis in Public Service and History.

Friends Travel: **Michael & Elisabeth Elliot** went on a Thanksgiving road trip that included Death Valley, which Elisabeth had never seen ("Are we still on planet Earth?" asked E.). **Elinore Petoletti** took part in a "Celebrate the Season" five day trip to Lake Havasu, where her travel group rode in the Christmas Boat Parade, jet boated through Topock Canyon, visited London Bridge and then on to Laughlin, NV. They traveled home via Route 66 to Amboy Crater and then to Mission Inn in Riverside to see their holiday lights. In November **Dan, Lea, & Philip Wright, Cassie, Steven, Landon & Avalon Caringella** and **Elinore Petoletti** took a drive to Oak Glen Apple Butter Festival and stopped at the playground at the historic Oak Glen School House Museum and Park. Here they are with the *Living Light* continuing our tradition: "*The Living Light Travels*" (Remember, your submissions are welcome and needed.)



Friends Sharing News: Help to keep the Friendly Fare going. Did you have visitors over the holidays? Did your family go somewhere special? What are your goals for the New Year? Email me a quick note and tell me your news. Send to Lea at lealouw@gmail.com, or deliver to me at church on Sunday. See you next month!

Christmas Pageant Is The Worst Best Ever...



...and the 2014 First Friends Christmas Dinner ranks among the greatest ever! The dinner and play by the young folks of the Sunday School and Whittier Friends School fed

and entertained over 200 guests on December 14 in Fellowship Hall.

The turkey and roast pork feast, catered by Harry and Anne Eggleton and George and Carrin Bouchard, rose to the high standards set by this team over the past several years. Guests sang Christmas songs over their chocolate cake, with a piano accompaniment coming from behind stage (that must have been Russ Litchfield back there).

Event receipts go to support the Meeting's youth programs. Additional funds were raised by the traditional candy sale and sculpture auction. As soon as the young waiters cleared the tables, they circulated with trays of handsome plates of assorted confections prepared by the Youth Fellowship. All of the plates were sold.

Suspense began to build over the auction of the stained glass-and-metal sculpture designed by Philip Wright and wrought by Philip and dad, Dan. George Bouchard made remarks on the history of glass-making before presenting the exquisite illuminated Nativity scene. He opened the bidding at \$100 and it rapidly escalated to a winning bid of \$450 by Ellie Bewley.

Elyse Woirhaye then came on stage to set the scene for the evening's entertainment, "The Worst, no Best Christmas Pageant Ever," adapted by WFS teacher Cassie Caringella. With a good stage presence and clear articulation, Elyse described the "don't care" attitude about Christmas among the youth of a certain town.

A concerned Mrs. Bradley (played by Elyse's sister, Anatheia) was trying to get the young folks involved in a community Christmas play. It was tough sledding—the kids were not only uninterested, but seemed grossly ignorant of the Christmas story. Mrs. Bradley summoned all of her forbearance and patience to respond to their impertinent comments and uncooperative behavior. They squabbled over everything during the disastrous rehearsals, including who would be Mary and Joseph, and which of these two (Ashley Ryder and Hunter Collins) would get to hold Baby Jesus.

With great trepidation, Mrs. Bradley assembled the kids for the actual performance. To her amazement, as if by heavenly intervention, it all came together in a beautiful Christmas play. After this performance-within-a-

performance, guest actresses Tish Purkiss and Lynda Ladwig, as parents of two of the performers, remarked that this was one of the best Christmas pageants ever. Guests at the Christmas dinner thought so, too. Having already taken many pictures, they gave our youthful actors a deafening ovation.

Fifteen Meeting members served heroically in the kitchen at the frantic tasks of preparing, serving and cleaning-up after the dinner. Space available for this article dictates that their credit must be in the form of personal satisfaction. Marilyn Fant decorated the dinner tables, featuring exquisite small manger scenes, many loaned by Lou Secord. And most of all, the Meeting's gratitude goes to Harry and Anne, who once again journeyed from their home in central California to engineer our Christmas feast. George and Carrin presented them with a large glass window ornament made in Dan Wright's shop as a token of the Meeting's appreciation.

— Bob Newton

Lynda's Ministry Continued from Page 1

Christian Education Coordinator. Mel Sturr cited the positive influence Lynda has had on our young folks, noted particularly during the many trips and outings they have taken together with the youth. Her service to the Meeting also included an 18-month period as Acting Associate Pastor.

Committee members Anne, Jack Huffaker and Bob Secord all cited Lynda's great contributions to our Meeting. Bob explained the qualifying procedure for Recording in Ministry, as outlined in a document 25 pages long (!). Lynda began preparing for her recording several years ago. She was given a study list from which to select, as required reading, fifty books, each of which she not only read but formally reviewed. Jack stated that fulfillment of the rigorous procedure was "a process not to be undertaken lightly, and to be rewarded well."

Anne McIntosh invited members of the family to the platform to share in Lynda's recognition. These included husband Mike, sons Richard and Ken Ladwig, Ken's wife Shannon and their son Jon Michael, and Lynda's Aunt Ladine with husband Terry Moore. Lynda held two-year-old Jon Michael in her arms as she received the Meeting's blessing. The congregation stood for Loletta's invocation, and voiced an emotional "Amen" which could probably be heard out on Philadelphia St.

Lynda was presented a certificate by Anne and a bouquet of flowers by Bob, and a beautiful embroidered stole was placed around her shoulders by Loletta, who explained that while Friends do not customarily wear religious apparel, this stole could symbolize the spiritual yoke that binds Lynda with our congregation.

At Rise of Meeting, loving Friends gathered with Lynda in Fellowship Hall for a delightful reception in her honor.

— Bob Newton

Peace Café Brings Record Donations for Peace Camp

Jo Nita Beede opened Peace Café on November 22 with her signature ballad “Speed of Light.” This Saturday evening event was the 12th in what has become an important tradition at First Friends. Voluntary donations by patrons of this free-to-the-public cabaret evening in Fellowship Hall go to support First Friends’ Summer Peace Camp for Whittier-area children.

Jo Nita reappeared several times during the evening, sometimes with her musical colleague, singer-guitarist Steve Kirby, and emceed the stage activity, which started at 6 p.m. and went on for four hours almost without a pause. As many as 80 patrons enjoyed a light supper of macaroni, chili and a fine array of fruits and biscuits, prepared and set forth attractively by Carrin and George Bouchard, assisted by Jerry Coffin.

The big draw of the program was the eminent composer-guitarist-folk singer-philosopher Mark



Turnbull, who kept the audience spell-bound for almost an hour singing his original ballads. His musical message in such songs as “Turn the Other Cheek” and “Let Go of That Thing” was a compassionate

critique of the human condition, interspersed with quotations from famous personages.

Young Friends Kat Ryder and Amara Overmyer, both veteran Peace Campers and Peace Camp counselors, made a good contribution to peace education. Amara sang a blues-mood ballad with her own improvised piano accompaniment.



Her clear voice and good rhythm control were effective in “Starfall.” Kat Ryder did a very athletic improvisational dance routine to two recorded ballads by a female singer, “Impossible” and “Am I Wrong?” She rendered the varying moods of the songs with great expression. Both young artists received loud and prolonged ovations.

Peace Café regulars Steve Kirby, Chad McCann, Holly Overin and Charell contributed ballads. Some of their numbers were anticipated old favorites of Peace Café-goers.

Ashley’s Pom-Pom Routine Enlivens Christmas Parade

A number of circumstances conspired to limit the participation of First Friends Church in this year’s Whittier Uptown Christmas Parade, held on Saturday December 13. The Whittier Public Library decided against a car entry this year in favor of a walking group of hardy young folks. In other years Milton Wright’s handsome 1921 Studebaker has carried a number of our Friends who have been long-time Board members and supporters of the Library. This time Milton carried a group representing the Whittier Museum. The Whittier Peace and Justice Coalition decided against a marching group, possibly because of their ordeal in the driving rain of last year’s parade and the uncertainty of the weather forecast this year (though the weather turned out to be crystal clear with a warm sun.)

Our lone marching representatives were Ashley and Candice Ryder. Ashley is a several-time participant in the City of Whittier Department of Community Services Pepsters, and her mom, Candice again escorted and monitored the 50-girl pom-pom parade team. Owing to her experience and skill, Ashley, together with another veteran Christmas Parade marcher, led the team in their intricate routines, to fast-paced music coming from the white van driving ahead of them. Their smart Christmasy red and white costumes and snappy routine got a big hand from the crowd of spectators thickly lining the parade route down Greenleaf Ave.

— Bob Newton

The walls of Fellowship Hall were lined with peace-related literature and arts-and-crafts. The Whittier Area Peace and Justice Coalition table sold exquisite small peace-symbol ornaments and jewelry made by Licha Cordero. Pam Laswell showed some of the bead, glass and cloth ornaments from her exhibit at the recent First Friends Holiday Boutique. Lloyd Kaneko sold copies of his award-winning book *A Vision for Humanity*. Dan Wright displayed peace-motif examples of his famous artistry. Voluntary donations from the sale of these were made to Peace Camp.

Throughout the evening the message of First Friends and Peace Camp was kept central. During an intermission, Carrin Bouchard showed her excellent slide show of last August’s Peace Camp, the theme of which was “In Someone Else’s Shoes,” emphasizing the concept of empathy. A background recording of “You’re Not Alone” contributed to a very effective introduction to Peace Camp for new Peace Café attendees.

The dedicated efforts of these First Friends peace workers were well rewarded. At the end, George Bouchard stated that the proceeds from this Peace Café were the largest ever.

— Bob Newton

January 2015

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Schedule for Sundays Unprogrammed Worship—9:30a First Day Classes—9:30 a Meeting for Worship—11:00a			December 31 6:00 p.m. First Friends New Years Eve Party in Fellowship Hall	1	2	3
4 12:30p Quarterly Meeting of Clerks 4:00p Russ Litchfield Organ Concert	5 1:30p Writing Class 6:30p Young Adults Group	6 7:00a Spiritual Growth & Quaker Men 9:15a Trustees 7:00p Bell Choir 7:30p M&C	7 6:30p Business & Finance 7:00p Quaker Men's Evening Group	8 10:00a Personnel Committee 7:00p Choir Rehearsal	9	10
11 12:15p Monthly Meeting	12 10:00a Quiltmakers 1:30p Writing Class 6:30p Young Adults Group	13 Friendly Fare Deadline 7:00a Spiritual Growth & Quaker Men 7:00p Bell Choir	14 6:00p AFFN	15 Living Light Deadline 7:00p Choir Rehearsal	16 6:30p WFS History Day Presentations	17
18 12:30p Couples Baby Shower for Lanning & Eric Bald	19 MLK Day Office Closed 1:30p Writing Class 6:00p Monthly Mission Monday 6:30p Young Adults Group	20 7:00a Spiritual Growth & Quaker Men 7:00p Bell Choir	21 Editors Compose Living Light 7:00p Quaker Men's Evening Group	22 7:00p Choir Rehearsal	23	24 7:00a WFS Parking Lot Sale
25 12:15p Outreach Meeting 12:15p CE Committee Meeting	26 10:00a Quiltmakers 1:30p Writing Class 6:30p Young Adults Group	27 7:00a Spiritual Growth & Quaker Men 7:00p Bell Choir	28 Living Light Folding 7:00p Quaker Men's Evening Group	29 7:00p Choir Rehearsal	30	31 9:00a ESR Breakfast Presentation 5:00p Empty Bowl Soup Dinner



Jacob Adam	Marshall Hockett
Carlos Bailey	Barbara Koch
Matthew Bouchard	Janice Lindsay
Mark Brickley	Meredith Marshburn
Barbara Cote	Norah Martinez
Christopher Foley	Robert Semans
Barbara Fuller	Cedric Woirhaye
Susan Hall	Alli Wright

If we've missed your birthday, we apologize (and happy birthday)! We're working hard to keep our birthday calendar up-to-date so please let us know if we're forgetting anyone.
Thank you!

Devoted Candy-Crafters Labor for Youth Benefit

Lynda Ladwig arrived at Fellowship Hall at 1:00 p.m. on December 6 with a great load of chocolate, caramel, nuts, and other raw materials for candy making, plus detailed recipes for 16 different confections. The joyous youth fellowship activity of Christmas candy making began promptly. Sales of these candies at the annual Christmas dinner make an important contribution toward the work of the Meeting's Youth Program and to a designated charitable youth-serving agency selected by the youth.

Five of the recipes were new this year. Bella Sturr and father Mel tackled "Bea's Millionaires," a turtle-like cereal-chocolate-pecan concoction that required practice in molding. "Cracker Jill Bars" required strenuous mixing of Kettle Korn with viscous chocolate, caramel, nuts and condensed milk in a large bowl. Wei Chen labored at this arm-wearying task until her wooden spoon broke! She was then relieved by Loletta Barrett. "Cranberry Jello Candy," "Cranberry Cashew Clusters" and "Pistachio Fudge" were also new this year.



Samantha and Amanda Cramer undertook "Mocha Truffles," made from chocolate bits and cream cheese that must be melted "just-so" in the microwave. Cedric Woirhaye was assigned "Oreo Truffles," which also require considerable strength to prepare. The chocolate Oreo cookies were mashed inside a plastic bag with a rolling pin, and the cookie-bits then mixed with thick cream cheese. Individual truffles were formed and then oven-baked.

Anathea Woirhaye was given the task of "Easy Fudge." Not so easy! The thick fudge mix proved to be exasperatingly hard to spread into a flat layer in a baking pan. Bella's mom Sharon labored over the stove, cooking canned pumpkin, with constant prolonged stirring, as the principal ingredient of "Pumpkin Fudge." Lynda moved about overseeing the operations while attending to her own painstaking recipe, "Crock Pot Candy."

Assortments of the candies were packaged on colorful Christmas plates by the youth groups the next Sunday to be sold that evening at the Christmas Dinner.

Monthly Mission Monday Brings Songs To Neighbors

A small group of Friends brought some holiday cheer to our neighbors at Brookdale Uptown Whittier across Philadelphia Street. For the second year, meeting members and friends carried paper, ribbon and tags to the retirement center and offered free gift-wrapping to residents. This year, however, the wrapping was done to musical accompaniment. Led by Russ Litchfield, who also played the piano, some members gathered in the lobby area and sang Christmas carols with residents. Gifts were wrapped by other members in the nearby library area, where the singing could easily be heard. The residents were appreciative of the free gift-wrapping service, but even more delighted by the chance to sing familiar holiday carols with the group.

Monthly Mission Mondays is an outreach of our meeting which gathers on the third Monday of each month from 6 to 7 p.m. A task is done which benefits a group in our immediate community, and ranges from preparing pizzas for the hungry to packing goody bags for a shelter's fundraiser. Gatherings are casual, and there is always good conversation. We hope you will join us for January's MMM – the always-popular bowl painting (part 2). More ceramic bowls will be painted to be sold at the January 31 Empty Bowls Soup fundraiser. Hope to see you there!
– Vikki Kendrick

Scenes from
The Best
Christmas
Pageant Ever

(Photos by
Deanna
Woirhaye)



More Friendly Faces: Bob and Sabron Newton



Sixteen years ago a “new” couple started coming through our Meetinghouse doors on a regular basis. Newly retired Bob Newton had grown up in Southern California and felt like he was coming back home. Sabron was not so sure at first about this westward move but is now quite settled here.

Bob and his twin brother Mark were born in Bellingham Washington. They had two older sisters. Very soon after they were born, their father, whom Bob does not remember, deserted the family. At the depths of the Great Depression, with no income, the family was taken in by Bob’s great aunt Florence in Southern CA, his first “special angel.” Auntie Florence soon found a job for Bob’s mother, Esther, as a secretary in a title insurance company. Her boss was Bob’s “second angel.” He recognized her talents and kept her employed as a valued asset to the company until finally she became Chief Title Examiner.

For his last year of high school, Bob went to live in Kansas with his sister and brother-in-law (his “third angel”). He went under the condition that he finish high school and agree to go to college. He started college at the University of Kansas when the only requirement for admission was a high school diploma. When he asked what he should study, his brother-in-law, a geologist, suggested geology, and so Bob was on his way to a lifelong career. After two years he transferred to UCLA where he received his BA, MS and PhD degrees. Upon receiving the PhD in Geology, he was offered a position at the University of Chicago, where he remained, teaching and doing research as a geochemist and experimental petrologist (studying rocks) for 35 years.

Just a month after arriving at his new job in Chicago, while on a walk, Bob was attacked by a would-be robber. This unfortunate episode led Bob to look for a way to improve relationships between people of different races in his new city. Someone suggested he check with the AFSC office, which was developing an interracial cultural and service program for disadvantaged youth from assorted ethnic backgrounds. Some of the Quakers he met through that program suggested he attend the 57th St. Meeting. That is where he met Sabron. They were married in 1967.

Sabron Reynolds was born in West Branch, Iowa, and grew up in New York state, Indiana and Ohio. She attended her first two years of high school in an

Indianapolis suburb, then graduated from Olney, a Friends boarding school in Ohio. Her father was a Friends pastor who served churches in Iowa, New York and Western Yearly Meetings, attended Friends conferences at national and world levels, and was involved with AFSC. Sabron worked summers during high school and college in a bank, a dairy and a state park, and one summer joined an AFSC project as an attendant in a state mental hospital. She graduated from Earlham College and received a masters degree in Library Science from the University of Illinois where she then worked for five years as a reference librarian. Her next positions were at Oberlin and Earlham Colleges. She also spent two summers as a volunteer librarian in Alaska. In her last professional position, prior to the birth of her first child in 1970, she was government documents librarian at the University of Chicago. She was later the 57th St. Meeting’s librarian for a number of years.

Bob and Sabron have two children. Miriam, an accomplished violinist who has also taught math, is married to Chris Jackson, a minister of church music, and they have two children, Amanda and Noah. Ben, a math professor now working for the government in the Washington, D.C. area, is married to Melinda and they have one child, Henry.

The Newtons took their kids to England once when they were little and over the years they visited Canada and all of the “lower 48” states as a family. Their trips were often coordinated with Bob’s geology meetings or speaking engagements. While at the University of Chicago, Bob wrote and published many research papers, some of which he presented at meetings in Europe, India, South Africa, South America, and the United States. Bob was also the editor of *The Journal of Geology* for 14 years. Since “retiring” in 1998, he has worked regularly four days a week at UCLA as a visiting professor and now has the title of “Professor Above Scale.” He has received several prestigious awards in his field.

Since arriving in Whittier, both Bob and Sabron have been involved in our Meeting’s activities. Sabron has been a regular at the Tuesday morning Spiritual Growth Group. For a number of years she selected titles for and managed the USFW book collection and coordinated a monthly reading group. Now she is *The Living Light* copy editor. Bob keeps up with the many activities of our Meeting as *Living Light* editor.

Sabron’s most active hobby is collecting and compiling biographical information on interesting Quaker women, especially those of the Midwest and West. She also has a large collection of postcards from all over the world. Bob jogs regularly in his neighborhood, walks in the Whittier Hills, and has stories to tell about all-day walks he has taken through and around Chicago and other American cities. They both enjoy Scrabble, which they often play together on Saturday evenings.

— Ted Marshburn

Joy To The World

The New Century Singers of Whittier are celebrating their 53rd year. So stated their Director, Judy Kertes at the opening of their traditional Christmastime concert at First Friends Church on the afternoon of December 14. The Meeting House was filled at near-capacity to hear one of the nicest concerts of this or any other year.

Opening numbers sung by the 36-woman chorus were such light favorites as “Rockin’ Around the Christmas Tree” and “Here Comes Santa Claus.” Choristers wore black gowns with sparkly blue and white collars. As always, there was a revue number by costumed singer-dancers. This time, in keeping with the season, it was “Christmas on the Beach at Waikiki” with two garlanded hula dancers accompanied by three ukulele players.

Soprano Pam Laswell gave a nice solo rendition of “Coventry Carol” to bring in the serious side of Christmas. This song, unfamiliar to most Americans, dates back to 16th Century England.

New Century concerts are free and open to the public.



Pam Laswell and Jean Sponsler

A free-will offering is taken during intermission, aided on this occasion by a very large Santa Claus who “Ho-Hoed” up and down the aisles.

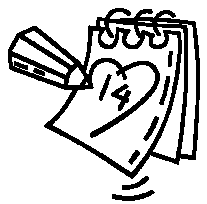
During the second half of the concert, the chorus performed

“Hanukkah’s Child,” “Bring a Torch, Jeannette Isabella” and “Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas” among other favorites. A medley of familiar tunes from “The Nutcracker,” with English words, was followed by the chorus and audience together singing “Joy To The World.”

Chorister Jean Sponsler spoke a few words of thanks to First Friends Church, our Music Director Russ Litchfield, long-time New Century accompanist Clella Snider, and the choir’s Administrative Assistant Sue Walker for helping to make possible these fine concerts.

— *Bob Newton*

Save the Date!!



Everence will be at First Friends on Saturday, February 7 and Sunday, February 8 for investment and wealth management seminars. Details will be available in the church office and in Loletta’s *Friday E-News* email.

Good Tidings To Zion

George Friderick Handel’s mighty oratorio *The Messiah* provided a powerful musical message at Meeting for Worship on the first Sunday of December. The Friends Choir, accompanied on the organ by Minister of Music Russ Litchfield, performed sections 2 through 12 of the first part of the oratorio, sometimes known as the “Christmas” section.

Russ, as always, provided us with excellent notes as well as text in the *Sunday Bulletin*. *The Messiah* was first performed in 1742 in Dublin with a scriptural text compiled by Charles Jennens.

Tenor Evan Mooney, basses Derek Kwong and Ryan Hoffman and alto section leader Allison Coop brought the eight recitatives and airs including “O Thou that tellest good tidings to Zion,” which is familiar to all who love Christmas music. The choir gave passionate joy to the chorus “And the glory of the Lord” and concluded with the majestic “For unto us a Child is born, a Son is given and His name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace.”

The majesty of Handel was also represented in the prelude (*The Messiah* overture) and the postlude (Voluntary in D Major). The hymns were “Hark! The Glad Song” with music by Handel and the favorite carol “Joy To The World,” which was arranged from Handel’s compositions.

The choir has been rehearsing this work since September and we were happy to welcome the families of our choir members as guests.

— *Bob Newton and Elisabeth Elliot*

Rain Blesses Open House

A majestic 12-foot-high tree stood in Bob and Lou Secord’s living room, covered with snow flakes, icicles and frosty pine cones. It was only the second time in 34 years that Lou has designed an all-white theme for her main tree, and the choice was heartily approved by family, neighbors and members of First Friends at the Secord annual Christmas open house on the Sunday after Thanksgiving.

There were beautiful trees in every room, including the familiar upside-down tree hanging over the splendid buffet table. There were also nativity scenes in every room. This year, Lou had added eight new crèches to the two hundred displayed in past years.

Also for only the second time in Secord Christmas open house history, it rained. And it rained hard! But we all delighted in the music of the downpour that broke our drought of many months. Gratitude for the rain enlivened the fellowship. This could happen only in California!

— *Bob Newton*

Professor To Bring Message

Professor Paul Kjellberg from Whittier College will bring the message in meeting for worship on January 25, 2015. **Professor Paul Kjellberg** joined the college faculty in 1993. He specializes in Chinese Philosophy and also works in the Greek and German traditions. His research has focused on the Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi and he co-edited the volume *Skepticism, Relativism, and Ethics in The Zhuangzi*. Recently his interests have broadened to include philosophy of education, American pragmatism, and the Quaker tradition. Professor Kjellberg will teach a class on silence this spring and members of his class will be invited to join us in worship. Let us roll out the red carpet welcome!

Micah Bales To Visit

We are hopeful to be able to visit with Micah Bales on the evening of Sunday, January 4 or Monday, January 5 while he is on the west coast. For those who don't know, Micah is a "writer, teacher and grassroots Christian leader based in Washington, DC." His focus is on helping people connect with a deeper and more authentic experience of the Inward Teacher, Jesus Christ. Together with an amazing community of fellow workers, he works to embolden and connect people to a multiplying movement of radical disciples. The Friends of Jesus Fellowship (FOJF) is a network of communities and ministries gathered around a common experience of the living presence of Jesus in our midst. They seek to lead lives that demonstrate the reality that "Christ is here to teach his people himself," and that "bear the fruit of peace, mercy, economic justice and reconciliation." To learn more about Micah, see his website at www.micahbales.com. Look for more information about his visit in the *Friday E-news* and in the *Sunday Bulletin*.

Afghan Schools Featured At All-Friends Fellowship Night

Percy Hicks-Severn will tell us about the beginnings of an Afghan refugee girls' school at All Friends Fellowship Night on January 14.

The school, started largely due to the efforts of two Southern California Quakers, has grown from just a few students in 2002 to over 600 students today. Percy will show a video and have a display of unique Afghan jewelry, shawls and scarves available for sale.

The evening starts at 6 p.m. in Fellowship Hall with a complete potluck dinner. Sign up in the church patio to bring a main dish, salad or dessert. Please bring \$1 with food or \$3 per person if you do not bring food. There is no charge for children under 12. All are invited.

— Ted Marshburn



Loletta's Lines

I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. (John 10:10b)
That is the verse that popped into my head as I prayed about this month's article. I heard the Spirit

prompting the query: "What is life lived abundantly?"

With all the holiday celebrations and media focus around us on music, food, gifts, family, and friends over the past two months, we certainly have been exposed to some types of abundance! But what is abundant life? The context for the verse in the Gospel according to John is Jesus speaking about being both the gate (the way to) and the shepherd (the one who lovingly guides to) abundant life. But what did Jesus mean by abundant life, and what does it mean for us individually and as a meeting?

I would like to suggest it as a focus query underlying our ministry; to seek together what living abundantly (an abundant life) means. I propose that we begin our seeking with a three-year journey of exploration. Continuing the incredible spiritual momentum we felt after the fall retreat, our journey would be centered on the mission statement of the meeting: "A Christian people called to listen, gathered to seek peace, and sent forth to serve." In the first year we would focus our efforts to understand what it means to be a Christian people called to listen. It would be part of all our committee meetings and discernment, our meetings for worship and for business, our Christian Education and spiritual growth groups, our building maintenance and our finances, our office work and our outreach and mission efforts.

In our second and third year together we would focus on exploring the other portions of the mission statement. We would use our Monthly Meetings, Quaker Forums and our retreats to pull together what we have been learning in a strategic manner and cast our vision ahead on how our meeting needs to anticipate and adapt to the changing world and the needs around us. We have our "usual work" to do in each of these committees, yet I propose we take a short time in each meeting to prayerfully focus and explore our mission statement in an intentional way. I think it will help us to go deeper into understanding who we are, who God is calling us to become, and what abundant life means for our meeting.

I look forward to your thoughtful and prayerful engagement with this suggestion, and your feedback and input on how we can move forward into 2015 and our ministry together as followers of Jesus and his messengers of good news in everything we do.

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Faces of Christmas Dinner
 (Photos by Deanna & Brendon Woirhaye)



*Please
 remember in
 prayer
 those Friends
 unable to
 worship with
 us regularly.*

Peggy Anderson
 Judith Austin
 Audrey & Carlos Bailey
 Helen & Jack Carlisle
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