

# THE LIVING LIGHT

*For the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.*

Ephesians 5:9

Volume 60, Number 2

Whittier First Friends Church

February, 2021

## What is an Abundant Life?

Yes, our theme for 2021 is *A Place of Abundance*. But it would help if we took a moment to consider what we really mean by that phrase.

By “abundance,” do we mean material abundance? Quaker author and friend of our Meeting, J. Brent Bill, can help give us some insight into that question. It’s clear what we’re talking about is an abundant life—a life that is found in four essential ideals. Brent’s 2020 book “Beauty, Truth, Life, and Love” takes a look at how these ideals can be incorporated into an abundant life rather than be taken for granted in a life of material abundance.

“There’s a significant difference between the two,” writes Brent. “Many of us middle-class North Americans are living the abundance life. We have more things than ever. Bigger televisions that grow smarter every day. Technology-laden cars telling us when we’ve drifted out of our lane or applying our brakes when someone in front of us stops suddenly. Computers more powerful than the ones that helped land men on the moon are held in the palms of our hands Yet, for all our stuff, Henry David Thoreau’s nineteenth-century dictum that ‘the mass

of men [and women] lead lives of quiet desperation’ is still true.”

As we continue through the treacherous shoals of our new year, we are actively navigating storms that have been with us for some time and preparing for what surprise cloudbursts that are bound to come our way. And, after only one month, we’re already knee deep in challenges and blessings. We look forward to sharing what a place of abundance is, and how we can build our abundant life as a Meeting.

—Elisabeth Elliot



Kasey Allen  
Danielle Bald  
Ward Bates  
Cory Benjamin  
Don Carty  
Caroline Foley  
Sarah Garland  
Christopher Marin  
Mary Marshburn

Melissa Sue Mendoza  
Margarita Vargas  
Sophia Sadler  
Kathy Sargent  
Elyse Woirhaye  
Betsy Wood  
Donna Wright  
Karlene Wright

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



**Wanted: Representative for Whittier First Friends Church to the Western Association of the Religious Society of Friends (WARSF).**

Join a very nice group of Friends from Whittier, Berkeley and Bakersfield and serve the wider Quaker world.

Contact Bob Secord at [atboblousecord@earthlink.net](mailto:atboblousecord@earthlink.net).

*A CHRISTIAN PEOPLE CALLED TO LISTEN, GATHERED TO SEEK PEACE AND SENT FORTH TO SERVE*

## *Friendly Fare* will return next month



Like most Friends organizations, our church is not hierarchical in its structure, but is organized from the members and attenders themselves, who follow the Quaker process

to do their work. The Monthly Meeting has established committees to perform different roles within the church community, and members and attenders are called to serve in those committee positions, usually making a commitment for one year at a time. In the coming months, *The Living Light* will offer a synopsis of one committee per issue in order to inspire you to seek God's guidance in where you are called to serve the meeting.

Whittier Friends School is dedicated to the growth and development of the whole child - as a spiritual being, as a learner, as a responsible citizen, and as a peacemaker. The Clerk of the School Committee works to uphold that mission and must be committed to the vision for the school of a nurturing and thriving community of learners as well as a professionally run and financially responsible organization. The WFS Committee meets once per month (generally 4 to 6 p.m.) to get reports from the School Director and Finance Clerk and to discuss current school concerns. These can include topics such as enrollment, tuition, staffing, grounds, safety, and personnel. The School Committee acts as an advisory group, and at times, a decision-making body for the school. The WFS Committee Clerk establishes the agenda, clerks the committee meetings after the manner of Friends, and reports to First Friends Church Monthly Meeting. He or she may also be called upon to serve on specific sub-committees (examples include personnel, documentation review, etc.), assist the School Director in special circumstances, represent the School Committee to the school families, and attend school events. The most rewarding result is in being able to contribute one's gifts to sustain this ministry and to watch the students learn and grow in all ways.

—Brendon Woirhaye



## News from Whittier Friends School

While the health emergency continues to greater heights in our county, Whittier Friends School continues our remote learning for elementary grades with on-campus childcare for preschool-aged children from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Despite our different schedule and learning methods this year, we look forward to learning about American history and human biology. Children will be sharing what they've learned in March at our (virtual) Open House, so stay tuned!

We also look forward to a different kind of yard sale this year. On February 27, we will collect bags of clothes and soft goods from donors in our community. As you clean out your closets, we would appreciate you putting together trash bags of clothes and bringing them to the church parking lot that morning. If you have questions about this fundraiser, contact Lea Wright or Cassie Caringella at [whittierfriendschool@gmail.com](mailto:whittierfriendschool@gmail.com). We appreciate your support!

—Cassie Caringella

### *'The Facing Bench' continued from page 3*

I confess that lately I need to spend more time with my Center—God; to get new “glasses” to improve my focus and have my “tires” aligned and balanced. Here are some other helpful clues:

“Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect” (Romans 12:2).

“Trust in God with all your heart, and do not rely on your own insight. In all your ways acknowledge God. God will make straight your paths” (Proverbs 3:5-6). “But strive first for the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well” (Matthew 6:33).

I hope these help us all on the journey that leads to peace, calm, tranquility and equilibrium.



## This Month in Meeting for Worship

February 7	Loletta Barrett brings the message <i>Casting Out</i> Mark 1:29-39
February 14	Loletta Barrett brings the message <i>A Double Share</i> 2 Kings 2:1-14
February 21	Loletta Barrett brings the message <i>Overcoming Paralysis</i> Mark 2:1-12
February 28	Loletta Barrett brings the message <i>Everything Included: One Big Covenant</i> Hosea 2:14-23



At Monthly Meeting for December, we found a hidden blessing in the repair process of the Sharpless Building—we were able to identify and solve an insect

problem and the Fireside Room in the basement is brighter and nicer than any of us can remember. Now on to the roof repairs of our other buildings.

We are looking for an additional First Day teacher for the online youth class. We approved a policy in how best to make use of the generous bequests of Friends. We affirmed our intent to invest each bequest immediately as we discern how best to honor the wishes of each individual. We approved Iris Harris as the clerk of the Music Committee, approved the membership application of Nancy Cramer and her nomination to the Personnel Committee. We are seeking a new representative to Western Association of the Religious Society of Friends (WARSF) as Bob Newton has requested release. We thank Bob for his dedicated service.

Finally, we are looking forward to being able to be together in person and, with that hope in mind, set the date of this year's Family Christmas Dinner for December 12, 2021.

**We welcome and encourage your comments as well as your contributions and photos for inclusion in *The Living Light*. Kindly send your email to Elisabeth Elliot at [communicaker@gmail.com](mailto:communicaker@gmail.com).**

## The Facing Bench

No one would blame you if you feel scattered right now. I mean we were all looking forward to getting out of 2020 and into 2021! I saw a cartoon with a person jumping out of a burning building into a firefighters' net, just to be catapulted into another burning building. The buildings were labeled 2020 and 2021—definitely more irony than comedy.



But didn't we know it would be this way? The virus was not going to disappear or the economy recover overnight. We knew the election affirmation and the inauguration would be tense. (And our prognostication, unfortunately, was an understatement.) We knew 2021 would not be like winning a cake walk, but we sure hoped it would be better!

We all want to experience a life of centeredness, peace, balance, equilibrium, calm, and tranquility. Even those among us who are high energy and enjoy excitement want to feel it for a moment or two, if only to rest. So what's the remedy for feeling scattered in all of this confusion?!

One solution is, "Sometimes you have to let go of the picture of what you thought it would be like and learn to find joy in the story you are living." Our Meeting has certainly been doing that since March 2020 and has plans for 2021! Friends have creatively engaged and found new ways to live their lives and be a Meeting while staying safe. But at times the efforts seem herculean, or perhaps the metaphor is Sisyphus—rolling a boulder uphill only for it to roll down when it nears the top.

One clue I found is that synonyms for centered are focused and aligned. Resulting queries include where is our attention focused? With what values are our thoughts, words and actions aligned? When our attention is distracted by things going on around us, we can forget that we want our heart, mind, soul and actions to be focused on God, love, light, and compassion. When trying to achieve our goals or solve the problems of the world or figure out how to tell others how to do it, our alignment with God's goals and values can slip.

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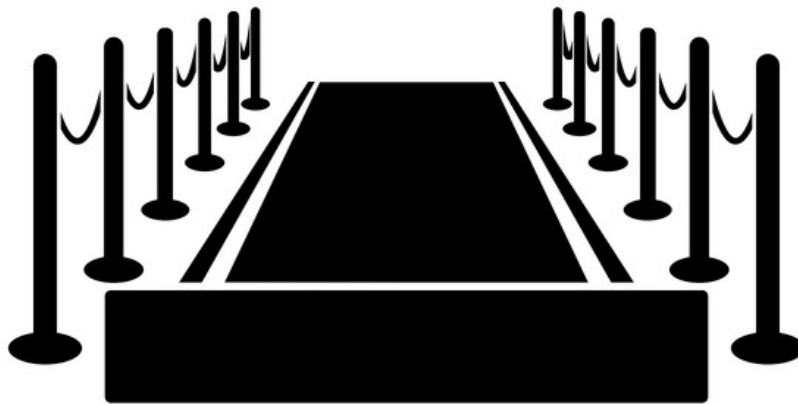
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## Next Month in The Living Light!

*Join us as we share  
a memorable retirement soiree  
and a mission that even a pandemic  
couldn't stop.*



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

Peggy Anderson  
Jack Carlisle  
Rose Nedrow  
Kathy Robison  
Ann Smith  
Ami Troedsson  
Carol Urner  
Gerry Wolfe