



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

Ephesians 5:9

Volume 63, Number 02

Whittier First Friends Church

Second Month, 2024

A Lasting Legacy

This year marks the 50th anniversary of the founding of Whittier Friends School (originally known as The Growing Place. As a tribute to that and to honor the legacy of Gwen Woirhaye, a founder of the school, we offer the following reprint of a write-up found in the school archives. The editors believe it was written by Carl Nelson, but would welcome any information readers may have regarding its origin.

They're at it again. First they laid out a town, set up a church, and founded a college. Now, a bare eighty-five years after all that, they did it again. Went and started an elementary school. Who? Those Quakers, Friends they call themselves. Gwen Woirhaye, clerk of the Growing Place Friends Elementary School Committee (she's what most of us would call the head of the school board), and one of the founders of the school, said, "We didn't start it for a negative reason - because we didn't think our children would do alright in public school. We started the school because we wanted more than what they could offer. We wanted, for the children, a more caring, more individualized education." Like the college, the classes are small, an average of twelve students per class. It provides the atmosphere

for individualized, closely supervised education.

Though the subjects are the same as what you'd find in a public school, the approach isn't. In a class of thirty-five, what a public school teacher often has to deal with, you've got time to assign, explain, and then wait for questions. In the smaller Growing Place class, most subjects seem to be covered by discussion. Gwen offers one reason this is so, "It is so important that the children learn to trust their own ideas, to assert themselves, and to learn that they're okay and their ideas are okay." The class discussions, students helping other students to understand, and the teacher having the opportunity to explain something more than one way, are benefits of this outlook and the small class size.

One gets some blank stares sometimes when referring to the Growing Place as a "church school." It's located next to the First Friends Church at the corner of Washington Ave. and Philadelphia St. in a building belonging to the church. "If you're looking for a Christian school with a fundamentalist approach, then we're not the place," says Gwen Woirhaye. "Friends believe that there's that of God in every person. Our religious life program

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

Friendly Fare by Lea Wright

Dear Friends, It's been a busy year so far, and it is only February. Do people still make New Year's resolutions? I might have. I can't actually tell you, here in writing, because then I might be obligated to keep them. Let me know about them if you dare.

Friends About Town: **Jo Nita Beede** played and sang, and her brother **Norm Beede** played djimbé (a type of drum played with the bare



hands which originated in West Africa whose name, translates to "everyone gather

together in peace.") at the Night Owl in Fullerton on Dec. 30. **Deanna Woirhaye** and **Candice Ryder** attended the performance.

Dan, Lea, and Milton Wright, and Cassie, Steven, Landon and Hudson Caringella took



part in the 2023 Holiday Motor Excursion with over 300 pre-1932 cars in

attendance. Dan drove his 1914 Model T, and Steven drove the 1929 Model A. They followed a 28 mile route starting in Arcadia and continuing through Pasadena, Sierra Madre, Altadena, and San Marino. This annual event happens every year on the Sunday between Christmas and New Years Day.

Friends At Home: Greetings were received from **Iris Harris**, who is recovering from a broken hip. "Hey everybody! I'm walking again! I'm on my feet, but still very slow."

Friends Visit/Friends Move: **Bob & Sabron Newton's** daughter visited from Minnesota. And big changes are ahead for Bob & Sabron who are moving to Maryland in March. They will live near their son. And we will miss them!

School and Work: **Landon Caringella** will be in the Benton Middle School production of "Beauty and the Beast" in March. He will portray Cogsworth.

Friends Travel: **Loletta Barrett** traveled to London. It's too soon for a picture, but hopefully she'll share something next month.



Friends

Correspond:

We received a message from **Ami**

Troeddson: "A Happy, healthy, peaceful, and richly blessed New Year, my dear and loved Friends." Here she is with the

Living Light continuing our tradition: "The Living Light Travels." (Remember, your submissions are welcome and needed.)

Friends Remember: Prayers of peace for **Ellie Bewley** in the loss of **Genevieve Lescak** who, as Ellie said, transitioned to being an angel on January 11.

Friends Sharing News: Help to keep the Friendly Fare going. Email me a quick note and tell me your news. Send to Lea at lealouw@gmail.com. See you next month!

The Growing Place - continued from page 1

enhances and strengthens a child's own religious convictions. We don't try to make little Quakers out of everybody." In fact it looks, at first, as if there is little or no religious life program. After a while, though, it becomes apparent. The children are led to respect each other's rights and beliefs. The adults listen to the children with respect - paying full attention to each child in their turn. "Every child has value, every child has a unique gift to give," says Pati Jackson, the director of the school.

Both Pati and Gwen stressed that the school taught creative conflict resolution. I remember in school that if logic didn't work, shouting often did. When that failed, however, it was time for push to come to shove. If the fight didn't resolve the conflict in one's own favor, then a teacher was called in - or more friends for a bigger fight. "It's something you can see on the playground, as the year goes on," says Pati. The kids are out there talking things out, coming up with their own creative way in which both parties win." It often starts with a staff member interceding, coming in as a third party negotiator, at the beginning of a conflict. There's enough supervision so that problems don't turn into fights.

Perhaps part of the reason for the academic excelling and conflict resolving is the way the kids are treated. Going back to my own memories of school again, it was always an "adults are right" situation. Giving one's opinion, if one were a child, was called "talking back", and was cause for extra punishment. There's a lot of listening, and no punishing, going on at this school. Pati Jackson talks about their view this way, "My own belief is that kids feel best, and perform best, when they feel confident. Also, our system is built in a success-oriented way; it's stacked so that the kids do succeed. Failure isn't considered failure." . . . Failure, not getting the right answer to a question or problem, is seen as a

Loletta's Lines

What if time is an artificial construct developed by human beings to try to organize and control our reality? Abhijit Naskar, the author of "Love, God & Neurons: Memoir of a scientist who found himself by getting lost," believes that. He wrote, "Time is basically an illusion created by the mind to aid in our sense of temporal presence in the vast ocean of space. Without the neurons to create a virtual perception of the past and the future based on all our experiences, there is no actual existence of the past and the future. All that there is, is the present."



Likely he understands Einstein's theory of relativity much better than I do, and is one of the believers Einstein meant when he said, "People like us who believe in physics know that the distinction between past, present, and future is only a stubbornly persistent illusion." Lao Tsu applied it to our lives saying, "If you are depressed, you are living in the past. If you are anxious, you are living in the future. If you are at peace, you are living in the present." Casting off baggage from the past and worries about the future certainly allows us to live better, unburdened in the present.

Jesus told us not to worry about our lives, what we wear, eat, or drink. Life is more than these, and none of us can add an hour to our lives by worrying. He told us to focus on today and to strive first for the kingdom of God. If all these brilliant thinkers think this way, why do we worry or create clocks, timers, and calendars to sustain the illusions? I do it because I want to get up early so I can make the most of each day. I also do it because I don't want the cookies I am baking to burn. But maybe I need to understand: however many or few hours I have in my day, it is how I focus on being present with God and to others that matters. And maybe I can do with a few less cookies.

Russ' Reflections

Hymns from Adversity

Some of the greatest hymn writers lived in times of great adversity, and their words and ideas can speak to us today. Sometimes the language is archaic, but the lived experience is very similar to our experience nowadays. I was struck by this notion as we were singing Hymn 50, "Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above," a text written by Johann Schütz in 1675 that expresses thankfulness for the mercy of God in our distress and the sentiment that "Our Savior saw our helplessness and came with peace to cheer us."

Philipp Nicolai, author of the *King and Queen of Reformation Chorales*, (Hymn 131 - "Wake, Awake for Night is Flying" and "How Lovely Shines the Morning Star"), was a pastor who lost thirteen hundred of his parishioners to the Plague. Johann Heermann (Hymn 231 - "Ah, Holy Jesus") struggled with poor health and the deprivations of war, but wrote hymns of confident faith. Authors like Paul Gerhardt (Hymns 221 - "O Sacred Head," 556 - "Jesus, Thy Boundless Love to Me", 618 - "Give to the Winds Your Fears"), Martin Rinkart (Hymn 374 - "Now Thank We All Our God"), and Johann Rist (Hymn 158 - "Break Forth, O Beauteous, Heavenly Light") - who lived much of their lives during the Thirty Years' War in Germany, a religious war between Protestants and Catholics (1618-1648) - expressed their hope for deliverance from war, their devotion to Jesus, and thankfulness to God when peace was finally established. (The numbers are references to our hymnal, *The Worshiping Church*, which is still in print and available online: if you are local, we could loan you a copy for use at home if you desire.)

There are many examples in our hymnal

Russ' Reflections - continued on page 5



News from Whittier Friends School

One of our very special values at Whittier Friends School is service. We had an opportunity to reinforce this value during the month of November with our "Count Your Blessings" Calendar. Each day during the whole month, the children completed a task to help them appreciate their bounteous blessings, while also practicing money sense. Examples include: "Give 2 cents for every screen in your home. Then spend some time reading!" "Build something with



Lego bricks, then give 1 penny for every brick you use." "Ten fingers and ten toes? Give twenty cents!" After everyone had turned in their coins, our elementary class gathered all the coins, sorted them by type, and counted them. After an hour of counting, they came up with the total of \$97.21! Our children are so excited to share this money with the Interfaith Food Center. Hungry people in the community will be fed because our school children have so many blessings!

While the month of January brought much cold and blustery weather to Whittier, it was

Whittier Friends School - continued on page 5

step toward getting it right. A learning process, rather than an end where the student failed. There is always, it appears, time to try again.

The Growing Place Friends Elementary School ... (is) looking, says the director, for students who can benefit from what they offer, and who can contribute to the life of the school. That concept, that the student makes an active contribution to the educational life of the school is one more example of the great respect shown toward kids by this unique educational institution.

Russ' Reflections - continued from page 4

that arise from the physical and spiritual struggles of their authors. These sorts of challenges are part of the human experience, past, present, and future. Not all of our hymns are centuries old either. Many are from the recent past and reflect the experience of our times, and people continue to write hymns as expressions of their faith to encourage others in their faith journeys. I take comfort in knowing that I am not alone in feeling overwhelmed by life at times, and that I can receive encouragement from people who have gone before, through the singing of hymns.

You may find lots of information on each page of the hymnal about the text and music writers. We provide some of this information in our weekly bulletins as well. There is also much information about authors and hymns online if you search. I have ordered a companion to our hymnal that contains a brief background on each hymn which I will put in the church library. A hymnal is a wonderful devotional tool: you might wish to read the hymn texts, along with the scriptures for each Sunday, as part of your preparation for worship. I encourage you to pay close attention to the ideas expressed in hymns, that you, also, may be uplifted through words and song.



the perfect time for the return of our much anticipated annual WFS Chili Cook-Off Fundraiser, our first time holding it since January 2020. WFS families, alumni, and supporters gathered in Fellowship Hall to compete in both chili and non-chili main dish categories. Five chili entries ran a close race for the top prize (a much coveted gift card). Winner for best chili was Sean Adams, husband of WFS teacher C-J Conklin. Non-chili main dishes included a creamed corn casserole, mac and cheese, cole slaw, Mexican rice, hush puppies, orange slices, and bacon-wrapped jalapeño poppers. Winner in the non-chili category was Chris O'Day, a parent of one of our second graders, with his jalapeño poppers. Traditional chili toppings (cheese, onion, sour cream), several styles of corn bread, and an assortment of delicious desserts rounded out the night's menu. All-in-all, it was a wonderful night of fabulous food, fun fellowship, and successful fundraising.

And as always, you can follow Whittier Friends School's adventures on Facebook and Instagram at:

facebook.com/whittierfriendsschool/
instagram.com/whittierfriendsschool/

-Cassie Caringella

ALL ABOUT ANCESTRY AT AFFN



Many people are curious about their ancestry, which has fostered a major new industry, that of family history research. A

complex technology has evolved, drawing upon state and county records of land ownership, employment, vital statistics, and, most recently, utilizing the science of genetic (DNA) analysis. Marie Hegwer-DiVita, an accomplished genealogical researcher, came to an All Friends Fellowship gathering the evening of Jan. 10, to help Friends understand some things about her complex discipline. Her illustrated program followed a bounteous potluck supper organized by Mary Marshburn and featuring Mary's famous baked Argonaut squash.

There are many online sources of genealogical information, including "Ancestry.com", "23 and Me", "My Heritage", "Find A Grave", and the extensive Family Search Library in Salt Lake City. A powerful new tracing technique is DNA analysis; that is, determination of one's unique personal and family gene structure. There now exist numerous laboratories that will identify a person's specific genetic code, or arrangement of carbon, nitrogen, and oxygen atoms in the chromosomes that determine inheritance.

The price of an analysis of a saliva sample (preferred because it happens to contain a complete chromosomal record) varies from 40 to 400 dollars. Although family searching is the largest use of DNA analysis, the new technique is important in such practical ways as proving

legal inheritance and innocence or guilt in criminal cases where suitable tissue samples may be retrieved from a victim or assailant.

The farther back one goes in tracing ancestry, the more obscure the record becomes. Marie was able to identify from historical records about half of her 256 ancestors seven generations back, but only one of her eighth great-greats, which number more than 1000. Even when there exist good family, government, and church records, ancestry can be obscured by such factors as second marriages and adoptions.

The new DNA techniques are potentially very helpful in determining ancestry, but there are several pitfalls. The analyses have to be of very high quality inasmuch as any person will have DNA identical to that of most acquaintances to within 99.9%. Indeed, our DNA is a 96% match for that of a chimpanzee! Some analyses currently available are of dubious value. One laboratory purports to identify your dog's pedigree for only \$99. Marie told of a news article she read about a woman in Boston who submitted a sample of her own DNA to the above source and learned that she is 28% Bulldog, 40% Border Collie, and 32% Cane Corso!

Perhaps the main thing that Friends gathered from Marie's presentation is that tracing of ancestry is best accomplished through a careful assessment of all available historical and DNA information, with the advice of a competent researcher like Marie. Friends expressed their great appreciation to her for an interesting and informative AFFN program.

AFFN will not meet in February. The next AFFN will be Wed., March 13, 7 pm in Fellowship Hall. Check the March issue of the Living Light for more details.

Remembering Genevieve "Vivi" Lescsak



Long-time friend of the meeting, Colonel Genevieve "Vivi" Lescsak, passed away on January 11, at the age of 102. Ellie Bewley says, "I was Genevieve's partner for 54 years. At the end of her life she asked me several times if she was a good teacher. I always assured her she was one of the best. I hope she is receiving all of these (Facebook post) accolades!!! She is deeply missed by our family!!!"

Tally Eiler remembered Lescsa: "Vivi was an astonishing woman. From crossing on the Queen Mary during World War II, to becoming a Colonel in the Army, she led quite the life. As a Physical Therapist at Walter Reed, and a PE teacher and coach for high school and college, she touched the lives of many. She received her Master's degree in physical education from USC. She was an active advocate for women's sports. Among her many joys was traveling all over the world, from Russia to the wilds of Alaska and many places in between. Vivi was an amazing human being who was loved by all. She treated everyone she encountered with dignity and respect, without regard to their status or circumstance in life. She was open and generous in all things and will be deeply missed by everyone whose path she crossed. We were fortunate to have known her and to have had her with us for so long. Rest well 7 Vivi!"

2024

Friends Ring in the New Year

The long awaited return of First Friends Church New Year's celebration on Dec. 31, 2023 did not disappoint. Friends brought jigsaw puzzles, board games, cards, Jenga, and a mancala board to get the festivities going. The bountiful tables included a variety of sweet and salty snacks, a savory crockpot of tasty vegetable soup, and hot chocolate complete with candy cane spoons. All too soon, the time arrived (9 pm - midnight in Philadelphia) to count down, "drop the ball" (we have our own version of a disco ball that is slowly lowered on a pulley), sing "Auld Lang Syne", offer a toast (of sparkling cider, of course) and make some noise to ring in the New Year. Friends expressed gratitude for the blessings of last year and hopefulness for the new one.



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

Barbara Cote

Kathy Hood

Rose Nedrow

Kathy Robison

Ami Troedsson

Shirley Votaw

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!