

THE LIVING LIGHT

For the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.
Ephesians 5:9

Volume 63, Number 03

Whittier First Friends Church

Third Month, 2024

Hygiene Kit Assembly for The Loving Place

On Saturday January 27th, 25 people from our Mission Collaborative met in Fellowship Hall to assemble Hygiene Kits for *The Loving Place*, a ministry of St. Matthias Episcopal Church that



offers physical and emotional support to those experiencing street-level homelessness in Whittier. We were privileged to have *The Loving Place* director Sophie McIntosh join us to tell us how our work directly serves our community.

People from all different faith communities cleaned out old prescription bottles and filled them with shampoo, hand soap, and laundry detergent. Participants also helped organize and box up the amazing additional supply of donated toothbrushes, toothpaste, feminine hygiene products, lotion, and first aid items to

take to *The Loving Place*. Additionally, to make sure that those receiving these items were being cared for, not only physically, but spiritually and emotionally as well, some people wrote short letters of affirmation



to be bundled with socks that are distributed to our neighbors.

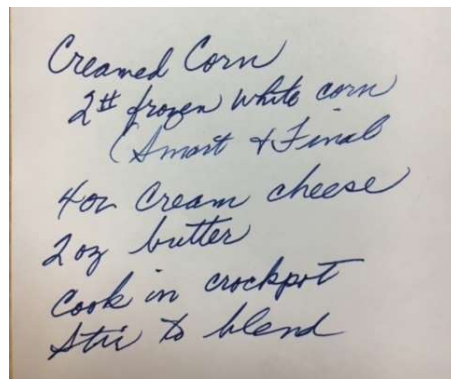
It was a beautiful morning of collaboration and service. Thank you to Marilyn Fant and Loletta Barrett for organizing this project, to Sophie McIntosh for her continued work in our community, and to the congregations of the Mission Collaborative for supporting with supplies and working hands: First Friends Church of Whittier, La Mirada Methodist Church, Women in Faith, Whittier First United Methodist Church, and our newest mission partners Good Samaritan Metropolitan Community Church!

Friendly Fare by Lea Wright

Dear Friends, It's been a wet year so far. As I sit here looking out the window at my vacation spot in Laguna Beach, I'm enjoying watching some fierce waves. I guess that is what a little/lot of rain will do for you. The upside of all this rain is that I've gotten some good use out of my new rain boots that I bought on clearance last year.



Friends Celebrate: Over the years Friends have enjoyed **Gwen Woirhaye's** special creamed corn at Souper Bowl Luncheon, AFFN, and at Whittier Friends School Feast Day, among



other places. When asked who had the recipe, **Cassie Caringella** provided a picture of Gwen's cream corn recipe that Gwen shared with her in November 2018. We will continue to fondly remember our dear friend Gwen whenever we enjoy this recipe.

Friends About Town: Congratulations to **Tom Van Dorn!** In February he made the donation of his 1400th unit of platelets. He has a standing appointment every two weeks and enjoys this way of helping those in need.

Friends Travel: **Bedford & Anne McIntosh** had an amazing three weeks with UCLA alumni in VietNam and Cambodia. They have long awaited travel to these fascinating countries that were such a major part of world history

during their childhood. "The food, culture, history, geography, and people are so much more fascinating than what we even imagined." Here is Anne with the Living Light continuing our tradition: "The Living Light Travels" in a Dragon Boat on the Pearl River in Hue, VietNam, in January 2024. (Remember, your submissions are welcome and needed.)



Friends Correspond: Thank you to **Dennis & Linda Upton** who enjoy reading *The Living Light*. A special Happy Birthday to Dennis whose birthday is in March. Also, thank you to **Sara & Gerald Adams**. It's always nice to hear from Friends who fondly remember us and *The Living Light*.



Friends Visit: **Carol Marshburn** and her daughter **Lake Érsek** were in town several weeks this winter visiting (parents/

grandparents), **Ted & Mary Marshburn**.

Friends Remember: We recently received word from **Charles (Charlie) Browning** that his wife **Sheila** died in September. She ended her life after several years of increasingly chronic mental health issues that were not resolving even after many treatments were tried. He and daughter Megan, who lives in Vermont with

Loletta's Lines



When I was a child, the church calendar confused me. Jesus's birth, baptism, and visitation by the Magi were quickly followed by Palm Sunday, Holy Week, and Easter. It

One way to look at that is there is nothing special going on to prepare for or observe. The other side is that every day is a festival and a celebration of life and love. How are our lives reflected in the larger journey of life happening all around us? The months between Christmas and Easter on March 31 pass quickly. What happens in between? Are there magic and miracles?

seemed Jesus had just been born, and in only a few months between Christmas and Easter, he became a grown up? Was it magic or a miracle? What happened in between?

I now understand the liturgical calendar is not a literal calendar, and Jesus did not complete his ministry and resurrection three months after he was born. I also know the nine months between Easter and Christmas represent the years of Jesus' ministry. It is also time for his followers to not only learn about it, but engage in it ourselves. Simply put, the liturgical calendar is a way of structuring the year for the life of the church.

In fact, the whole calendar thing and holidays and holy days can be a tool for us to, not only mark time, but motivate and encourage us to be intentional about how we journey through the year; to examine, observe, and celebrate the moments of our lives. Christmas - celebrating how the Light is incarnated for and in us. The Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday - reflecting on how we are called to be bringers of justice, equality, and peace for all people regardless of the color of their skin or socio-economic status. President's birthdays - challenging us to consider the nature of leadership in our country. Holy Week and Easter - realizing how love is confronted by hate and how love always wins. I could go on through the whole year.

Traditionally Quakers do not celebrate holidays or consider any day to be more special than another. Every day is God's day.



The Friends Committee on National Legislation seeks direction on lobbying priorities from us every two years. This helps them structure their work to help us engage in the legislative process toward the goals of "a world free of war and the threat of war, a society with equity and justice for all, a community where every person's potential may be fulfilled, and an earth restored."

This year we will meet on April 7, at rise-of-meeting in Fellowship Hall to prayerfully discern our recommendations for priorities for lobbying the 119th Congress which begins in January of 2025. We are asked to submit five priorities no later than April 15. Priorities for the 2024 legislative session can be found here: fcnl.org/about/world-we-seek/legislative-priorities

This will be an opportunity for you to learn more about FCNL, the Whittier Advocacy Team, democracy at the grassroots, and eat pie (or some other goodie). Mark your calendar now, and stay tuned for more information on this fun and engaging process. You can make a difference!

Russ' Reflections

One of the fundamental images of Quakerism is of "light." We each carry the light of God within us. It follows that God is or carries light. On March 17th, at 11 am, the Friends Choir will present a choral service all about light:



Light in Deepest Night, by Aaron David Miller, based on the mystical writings of Julian of Norwich (c.1342 - after 1416). We have presented this work twice before, but it seemed like an appropriate time to offer it again. This worship experience draws on Julian's reflections on life, love, and light. She was known to have had mystical visions in her life. One of her more interesting images was of Christ as our mother. Her ideas may be from the Medieval period, but they can speak to us today.

The service will include anthems, hymns, and short spoken meditations. Hymns will include: "Oh, Love How Deep, How Broad, How High"; "Mothering God, You Gave Me Birth"; "O Trinity, O Blessed Light"; and "Tree of Life". The choir will offer six pieces that explore aspects of Julian's vision. We will be joined by a couple of instruments which will add color to the music. Members of the choir will share prayers and brief meditations that give a glimpse of Julian's thinking and how it might relate to us.

A famous quote by Julian is: "All will be well, and all manner of things shall be well." It is our hope that this music will lift our spirits at this time when there is much darkness in our world, and that Julian's notion that all will be well will come to fruition. Please consider attending in person, if you are able, in order to lend your voices to the singing. Invite someone to join you!



News from Whittier Friends School



Preschool friends at Whittier Friends School making "rainbows" with colored toys one rainy day.

"Heads, Shoulders, Knees, and Toes"... and also all those parts inside your body too! On Tuesday, March 19, at 6:30 pm, you are cordially invited to visit Whittier Friends School's Open House and Science/History Fair! On display, visitors will see elementary-age research reports about parts of the body, and an inquiry/observation project made by our preschool children. Visitors will also get a chance to see the entries for the Los Angeles County history competition, *History Day LA*, made by the upper elementary students.

The annual Open House is also the official kick-off for early enrollment for the 2024-2025 school year. There is a discount on tuition if paperwork and fees are received by Tuesday, April 30. We urge you to contact us if you are interested in knowing more about our Quaker school. Members of First Friends Church receive a special tuition rate! Email Director Cassie Caringella for more information.

We are looking forward to two field trips in the month of March. On Friday, March 8, our school will be walking down to Whittier High School to see a shortened, first-half version of

Friendly Fare - Continued from page 2

husband Will and daughter Haddie, are finding their way forward from this very difficult period. During his stay in Vermont this past fall and winter, Charlie, along with Megan and Haddie, have found a community in The Burlington Friends Meeting. Friends there have been a real support and comfort.

Friends and Family Remember: We are remembering **Hi Mom (Clara Woodard)** this month as both of her daughters - in - laws, **Donna Wright** and **Marygene Wright** slipped away quietly and peacefully with loving family by their sides. Please hold all of the Wright families in the Light. Watch for stories about Donna and about Marygene next month

Friends Sharing News: Help to keep the Friendly Fare going. Email me a quick note and tell me your news. Send to Lea at leal-ouw@gmail.com, or deliver to me at church on Sunday. See you next month!

Whittier Friends School - Continued from page 4

the Tony Award winning musical *In the Heights*, written by Lin-Manuel Miranda and Quiara Alegria Hudes, set in the largely Dominican American neighborhood of Washington Heights in Upper Manhattan, New York City. First Friends community members can join for a mere \$5 per person. Then, on Thursday, March 28, our class plans to visit Independence Hall in Buena Park. We encourage First Friends community members to join us for this trip, too. You can visit this link to RSVP: <https://forms.gle/L1AJAP4W9v1wLtMm9>

As always, you can follow our adventures on Facebook at:

[facebook.com/whittierfriendsschool/](https://www.facebook.com/whittierfriendsschool/)

on Instagram at:

[instagram.com/whittierfriendsschool/](https://www.instagram.com/whittierfriendsschool/)

visit our wish list at:

[amzn.to/2QK8Yp8](https://www.amazon.com/whittierfriendsschool/)

-Cassie Caringella

Mission Collaborative Helps Get the Waystation Set Up

The Mission Collaborative (of which First Friends is a part of) had a wonderful group of 14 people join together on Saturday, Feb 17, at Whittier First United Methodist Church, Whittier, to prepare a room for use as a local waystation. Pastor Jon Waterson provided direction and information about how this space would be used. He explained that people who are coming into the country in Calexico as legal immigrants and refugees are finding themselves stuck without housing from the time they arrive until they get to their sponsor family. For some, this means sleeping in a bus or train station for a day or two until transportation is available to another part of our country.

The goal is for churches from the Mission Collaborative to be able to serve as hosts for individuals and families in need of a 1-2 night stay on their way to their sponsors. We hope that once or twice a month, when families depart from Los Angeles or North Orange County on their way to their immigration sponsors, the waystation at Whittier First UMC can provide a welcome and safe space along the way. As this ministry project takes shape, we look forward to ways in which we can get involved.



First Friends Celebrates the Life of Gwen Woirhaye



On February 3, 2024, the life and legacy of Gwen Woirhaye was remembered, honored, and celebrated by her family, friends, FFC church members, and many people from the Whittier community that filled the meeting house or joined online. After a welcome and opening prayer by pastor Loletta Barrett, Gwen's daughter-in-law, Deanna Woirhaye, offered an adaptation of Psalm 46:10, "Be still and know that I am God" that aptly characterized Gwen's sense of inner peace. The opening hymn was "Simple Gifts", a traditional American Shaker song, to commemorate Gwen's gentle, kind, wise, and loving spirit. Marie Hegwer-DiVita - a member of the Writing Group which meets on Monday afternoons at First Friends - followed by reading a selection from Gwen's large collection of personal memoirs, entitled "Dressing for the Holidays" which gave a little insight into Gwen's thoughts on her love of sewing and her unique personal style.

Deanna then shared her gratitude for Gwen's guidance and inspiration through her loving acceptance and example of service and

advocacy within the community. Three of Gwen's grandchildren, Cedric, Anatheia, and Elyse Woirhaye, who all grew up in the meeting, each gave their own moving examples of how she had inspired and influenced them through her comforting spirit and supportive love, as well her enjoyment of theater arts, (especially the works of Shakespeare), literature, travel, sewing, community service, and a general love of life. One of Gwen's sons, Brendon Woirhaye, paid tribute to his mother's parenting style which supported his curiosity, creativity, and passions as a child. Pastor Loletta read Gwen's husband Mahlon's reflection on a life lived with this talented and loving wife, mother, and cherished travel companion.

Several attendees also shared fond memories and tributes to her character, including former neighborhood children who noted her openness and acceptance, her support of creative play, and the lure of her unique and fanciful home. Whittier College graduate and former Whittier Friends School teacher, Alicia, fondly remembered Gwen's generous support of her society pledging experience.

Closing music was "This Little Light of Mine" followed by an instrumental rendition of "Happy Trails" which Cedric had noted that she used to sing to him as a tot when he was inconsolably missing his parents.

The service was followed by an elegant luncheon reception in Fellowship Hall featuring Gwen's favorite color, red, with catering provided by Crepes and Grapes Cafe of Uptown Whittier and dessert cookies contributed by members of the meeting. Guests enjoyed viewing Gwen's vast collection of decorative nutcrackers, examples of her knitting, crocheting, and sewing projects, as well as several albums of her personal memoirs. Sharing and socializing continued well into the afternoon with many attendees reluctant to



say good-bye. One guest remarked, "Gwen would have loved this party." The event was a poignant reminder of her annual Boxing Day celebrations which many of us fondly remember.

Gwen passed to new life on the evening of

December 25, this past year. She was born in Flint Michigan on September 24, 1938, and moved to California in 1945. After graduating from High School in Monrovia, California, she earned her degree from Whittier College, and has remained in Whittier ever since. She taught in the Whittier Elementary School district for eight years before leaving to raise her sons with husband Mahlon.

In addition to Gwen's extensive involvement in local community organizations, including the American Association of University Women, Whittier Peace Coalition, Whittier Cultural Arts Foundation, Whittier Genealogical Society, Whittier Historic Neighborhood Association, and PEO, she was also very involved in Whittier First Friends Church where she worked in the office from 1990 to 2003. Through the years she served on numerous committees, was president of the Women's Society for multiple terms, convened the Memoirs Writing Group for the past several years, and was instrumental in the founding of The Growing Place which is now Whittier Friends School, which will celebrate its 50th anniversary this year.

Gwen is survived by husband Mahlon; children Mahlon III, Brendon, and Loren; daughter-in-law Deanna; grandchildren Cedric Woirhaye, Anatheia Woirhaye, Elyse Woirhaye, Ashley Roberts, Kaleb Woirhaye, Summer Stevens, and great-granddaughter Adriana Roberts.

March All Friends Fellowship Night

Join us in Fellowship Hall on Wednesday, March 13, for another awesome evening of food and fellowship. Bring your favorite main dish, side dish, and/or dessert for the potluck at 6 pm followed by a special presentation by Brendon Woirhaye on cyber security. We hope to see you there!



Thoughts and Prayers from Students at Ramallah Friends School

Last fall, to celebrate World Quaker Day, we asked Friends in our meeting and those we know around the globe to share what being a Quaker means to them. Rania Maayeh, Head of School at Ramallah Friends School, a Quaker school on the West Bank, forwarded the following thoughts from students at the school:

From a 2nd-grader: "I wish I could share my flashlight with people in Gaza so they can see when their power goes out. I wish I could give everyone in Gaza a mattress to sleep on. I wish I could give everyone in Gaza water that is clean for drinking and enough food to eat. I pray kids will be safe in Gaza."

From a 5th-grader: "Our weapon is education, and the secret to ending violence is nonviolence. My prayer is that the war ends by nonviolence, everyone lives in peace, and no one is under occupation anymore."

From an 8th-grader: "I pray that this war will end through nonviolence because violence never solves anything. I also pray that as a global community, we will make a difference by donating water, food, and crucial medical supplies so that every single person in Gaza can have basic needs. I pray this war will end now."

Return Service Requested
Postmaster: send address changes to:
The Living Light
Whittier First Friends Church
13205 Philadelphia St
Whittier, CA 90601-4384

Periodicals
Postage Paid at
Whittier, California

The Living Light
USPS 316-320

Volume 63 Number 3
Issue Date: March 1, 2024

The Living Light is published monthly by
Whittier First Friends Church, 13205
Philadelphia Street, Whittier, California,
90601-4303.

Periodical postage paid at Whittier, California.

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

Barbara Cote

Kathy Hood

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!