

# THE LIVING LIGHT

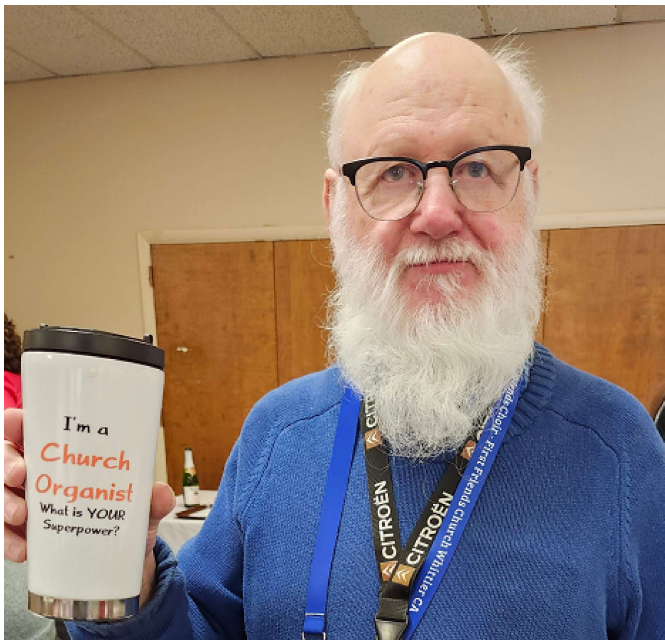
For the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.  
Ephesians 5:9

Volume 64, Number 03

Whittier First Friends Church

March, 2025

## Friends Celebrate Russ Litchfield's 20th Anniversary with First Friends



On Feb. 23, at Rise of Meeting, over 30 friends and supporters gathered in Fellowship Hall to celebrate Director of Music Ministries, Russ Litchfield's, 20th anniversary with First Friends. Friends were joined by members of the New Century Singers for a surprise cookie reception. Russ was greeted with a rousing round of "For He's a Jolly Good Fellow" and presented with congratulation cards and "love gifts" that had been collected. He expressed his deep appreciation for the Meeting's support and the opportunity to serve over the last two decades.

The decor was musically themed, and the refreshment table featured a nearly 10-foot long "train" display for the cookies, complete with an engine, caboose, and musical notes floating from the smokestack. (If you know Russ, you know that he loves trains.) He had recently shared with Loletta that his favorite flavor in sweets was peanut butter, so each of the variety of cookies had peanut butter as an ingredient. Who knew there were so many ways to incorporate peanut butter into a cookie recipe!

Russ began his service with First Friends in 2005 following the tenure of the late George L. Davidson, who served as organist from 1946 until his retirement in 2005. The following year, Russ took over as Director of Music Ministries. In addition to his duties as organist, he plans music for worship, directs and accompanies the choir, and takes responsibility for the care and upkeep of the organ.

Russ began studying the organ in high school and has been accompanying choirs since 1972. He graduated from Whittier College in 1977 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music where he studied organ and voice. In addition to First Friends, he has served Lutheran,

*Russ Celebration - Continued on page 3*

## Friendly Fare by Lea Wright

**Dear Friends,** Dan and I have been vacationing in Laguna Beach every year for many years. I



often kid that I am going to reach into my archives and share previous pictures. You've seen those posts, "**9 years ago today**"? Well the following post popped up on Facebook while we were on vacation in Laguna Beach, and I decided it was time to

share one of our archived pictures. And with that explanation, I will move right into...

**Friends Travel: Dan & Lea Wright** enjoyed an almost week-long vacation in Laguna Beach. Here they are with the Living Light from 2016 continuing our tradition: "The Living Light Travels." Seriously, where are your pictures! (Remember, your submissions are welcome and needed.)

**Friends Move and Celebrate:** Happy birthday to (my brother)



**Ward Bates!** He recently relocated from WY to MN. The extra special good news is that he now lives close to his

grandkids, **Jonas** and twins **Ryan** and **Lauren**. Suddenly 71 sounds great.

**Friends About Town: Jo Nita Beede** has got a new gig! It's been awhile since she has had the chance, so she is really looking forward to getting out and playing some music. Jo Nita will be doing a solo gig at a little restaurant/sandwich shop called Stefano's

([stefanoshams.com](http://stefanoshams.com)) on Friday, March 21st from 5:30 - 8:30 pm. at 18220 Yorba Linda Blvd #307 in Yorba Linda. She says reservations are recommended. Here is **George Bouchard** helping granddaughter **Annabelle Day** and her



Brownie Troop earn their STEM ENGINEERING BADGE

**Friends At Home:** The roofing crew worked quickly between storms

to reroof the parsonage. Loletta reported, "All is dry here!"

**School and Work: Avalon Caringella** has been busy singing and preparing for the stage production of *Matilda Jr.* at Benton Middle School. Performance dates are the last 2 weekends in March.

**Friends Remember:** Prayers for peace and comfort for **Dianne Hughes** and her kids, **Blake** and **Katrina**, as we continue to remember our Friend **Bob Hughes** who passed away in February.

**Friends Visit:** A good time was had by all at Polly's Pies in Norco when **Lynda & Mike Ladwig** met up with Lynda's cousin Gerry and her husband Dave Reeves, who were visiting from Michigan.



**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](mailto:lealouw@gmail.com), or deliver to me at church on Sunday. See you next month!



## Loletta's Lines

Each time I sit down to write an article I wonder, "What can I write now that will speak to the Friends next month? Will my article still be relevant?" With the 24 hour news cycle, and the push of stories on our cell phones every few minutes, it seems there are world-changing things going on every moment, faster and faster! And indeed there are. In every moment - down to the cellular level. And with the newest images from the Webb and Hubble telescopes, the unfolding of the mystery and new more puzzling questions about the universe are occurring simultaneously. So, exactly how do we stop and get off of this madly spinning carousel?



You might remember the movie *Parenthood*. Gil (Steve Martin) is a control-freak perfectionist, for whom everything in life is spinning out of control - marriage, family, job, friendships. As he melts down, his centered wife Karen, (Mary Steenburgen) calmly smiles, cleans up the messes, breathes in the love in the air, and breathes out peace. In a critical moment watching a school play, Gil has a vivid hallucinatory experience - he is suddenly riding a rollercoaster. His usual instinct would be to panic, hold on for dear life, and frantically search for the exit. Instead, he lets go and experiences absolute joy.

I think the place for us all to start is just breathing and opening ourselves to the Presence, letting go of having to feel in control or in charge, settling into the peace and love that undergirds and infuses every moment. Knowing that God created us to co-create with God frees us from the responsibility of being God. Jesus reminded us God provides for us abundantly as we go about our lives sharing and loving. Trusting that all things happen in God makes it easier to understand; God will not control or handle everything, but we have all we need, and we will never be alone. So Friends, let's put down the cell phones, turn off the TVs, and go ride God's peace together!

## Russ Celebration - Continued from page 1

Episcopal, and U.C.C. churches. He worked for 15 years in the retail printed church music business, spent eight years accompanying high school choirs, and was secretary for the Music Department at Whittier College for 14+ years.

Throughout this time, Russ has accompanied many singers, instrumentalists, and choirs, (including Chorale Bel Canto under Stephen Gothold), and has been active as pianist or music director for more than 30 musicals or plays, including *Camelot*, *Oklahoma*, *Pippin*, *Side by Side by Sondheim*, and *Working* (his favorite musical.) Russ continues to accompany New Century Singers and is a past adjudicator for their Vocal Scholarship Auditions.



He regularly plays music by his favorite composer, J.S. Bach (especially on First Friends Harris Organ) but likes a wide spectrum of music, including Gregorian Chant, Tuvan throat music, musical theatre, jazz, and other popular genres. He is also an avid builder of model cars and trains. While Russ is a "convinced" Quaker, he is well versed in worship practices of several other faith traditions and says he has an "ecumenical spirit." Thank you, Russ, for your service for the past 20 years. Here is to many more!



## News from Whittier Friends School

Whittier Friends School classrooms are happily bursting with animals right now! We use the excuse that we are studying biomes and animal biology, but to be honest, we just really enjoy having fuzzy, feathery, and scaly friends around us as we learn.



We have had Creeper, our orange and black striped milk snake, for almost 13 years. And Ratito, our light brown spotted rat, joined us last fall. Our latest arrivals include Blueberry and Angela, male and female crayfish, and a dozen newly hatched quail chicks. Our children waited impatiently for over two weeks for the chicks to hatch, only to have them hatch on a Sunday! Our students might have missed the action, but several lucky First Friends Church members got to pop over and see them hatch on February 9. It was fascinating to see how quickly the chicks changed in the two weeks after their hatching, though, with reaching full feathering in just two weeks. We look forward to hatching new quail eggs soon, after these quails go back home to where they came from.

Whittier Friends School had a fun, tasty Chili Cook Off on February 1, with WFS parent Phil Fox winning for best chili and WFS parent

Lessette Eagle Child winning for best non-chili with her Fry Bread. We have plenty more activities scheduled in the near future, such as our Spring Event on Saturday, April 5, and Open House/Science Night on Wednesday, May 14 - in conjunction with All Friends Fellowship Night - so mark your calendars, and we will plan to see you then!



We are officially kicking-off early enrollment for the 2025-2026 school year. There is a discount on tuition if paperwork and fees are received by Friday, May 16. 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! We've also received some very wonderful kids from referrals from our church members, so spread the news! Email Director Cassie Caringella at [cassie.wfs@gmail.com](mailto:cassie.wfs@gmail.com) for more information. And as always, you can follow Whittier Friends School's adventures on Facebook at [facebook.com/whittierfriendsschool/](https://facebook.com/whittierfriendsschool/) and on Instagram at [instagram.com/whittierfriendsschool/](https://instagram.com/whittierfriendsschool/)

*-Cassie Caringella*



## Loletta Shares *Know Your Rights* Training at February All Friends Fellowship Night

As we hear more news stories about immigration policy shifts and aggressive enforcement, we may wonder what to do in the event of an encounter with an immigration enforcement officer. The Southern California group called CLUE (Clergy and Laity United for Economic Justice) has been offering workshops entitled *Know-Your-Rights, Sanctuary, and Rapid Response* both in-person and online. Pastor Loletta recently attended one and shared her insights and key points she gleaned at the February All Friends Fellowship Night.

First and foremost, Loletta reminded us to breathe! Stop and find that sacred center where we listen for the divine message of peace, hope, and love and are able to connect with “that of God in each person” as described by George Fox. While this may not be easy in an emotionally charged or anxiety provoking situation, it is an essential foundation for an appropriate response. Remember, those involved - people being investigated, allies, and officers alike - are all God’s children and should be treated with dignity and respect. Loletta made the point that all of this information applies to everyone - including those of us who consider ourselves safely in the ally position.

CLUE’s training included the following information. First, preparation is important! Get the facts and do the research ahead of time. Many groups have resources available online. CLUE’s webpage, has links to recordings of *Know Your Rights* trainings, printable wallet-size cards with a script for responding to officers, and resources and tips for individuals, families, workplaces, and communities ([www.cluejustice.org/immigration-resources/](http://www.cluejustice.org/immigration-resources/))

A key element of preparation is having a plan. This applies to individuals, families, and organizations. The plan should include documentation everyone needs to carry in these



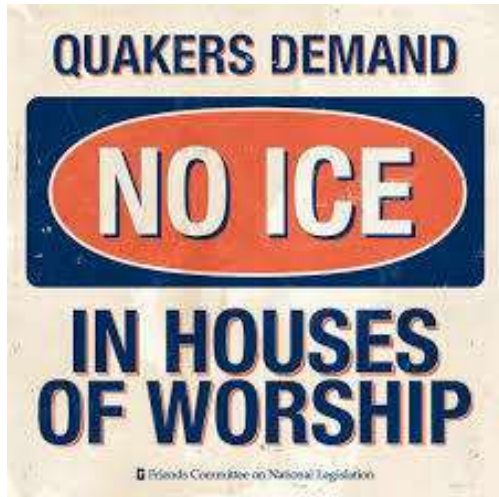
times to prove citizenship or legal right to remain in the USA, how to respond legally if approached at home or in public, and contact information for an attorney. Groups, organizations, and businesses should establish a contact person and train in best practices.

In case of an encounter with an immigration officer, it is essential to remain calm and never evade. An attorney should be contacted immediately. Officers should not be allowed into a residence or private business and must have a legal judicial warrant on court letterhead, signed by a judge, with the individual’s name and the address of the location where it is being served. To protect others inside, the person on the warrant should step outside. Anyone being questioned has the right to remain silent and should never sign anything without an attorney present. “Administrative Warrants” do not replace judicial warrants, and group arrests are not legal. Allies are encouraged to center, pray, and never speak for or about others.

Loletta reminded us we are admonished by God, “When a foreigner resides among you in your land, do not mistreat them.” (Leviticus 19:33.) As Quakers, we have a centuries-old legacy of speaking out against injustice. Let us consider the query: How do we prepare, respond, and speak out?

***Editor’s Note: Since the writing of this article, a brand new national Immigrant Assistance Hotline has also been set up to allow community members to report immigration enforcement operations in real time, verify ICE activity before sharing on social media, and receive referrals to trusted legal and support services. [(888) 624-4752].***

## Quakers Challenge Homeland Security Policy



In late January, the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) announced it was abruptly reversing its 31-year long policy to treat certain public areas as “protected” where Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) agents would not engage in enforcement. These locations included schools, universities, healthcare facilities, places of worship, “places where children gather,” social service establishments, food banks, religious or civil ceremonies, and disaster or emergency response and relief centers. This removed protection for “people’s access to essential services or engagement in essential activities.” (former DHS Secretary Alejandro Mayorkas).

Less than a week later, a lawsuit was filed by Friends of Philadelphia Yearly Meeting (PYM), New England Yearly Meeting (NEYM), Baltimore Yearly Meeting (BYM), and two monthly meetings within BYM, to challenge the new policy as unconstitutional. Pro bono legal representation is being provided by Democracy Forward, a non-profit organization that “uses the law to build collective power and advance a bold, vibrant democracy for all people.” (<https://democracyforward.org>) The lawsuit alleges the new policy serves as a deterrent to attending worship services for people of all faiths and damages houses of worship who would lose the ability to gather as a community without fear.

According to Noah Merrill, Secretary of

NEYM, “Quaker meetings for worship seek to be a sanctuary and a refuge for all, and this new and invasive practice tangibly erodes that possibility by creating unnecessary anxiety, confusion, and chilling of our members’ and neighbors’ willingness to share with us in the worship which sustains our lives. This undermines our communities and, we believe, violates our religious freedom.”

On their website, PYM states their two primary reasons for participating in the lawsuit. One is that “The new policy interferes with our ability to practice our faith.” Quakers believe anyone with a leading to follow a Quaker-based path is welcome, and necessary, in meeting for worship. It is through this diversity that we experience the voice of the divine. Additionally, Quakers’ centuries-old commitment to peace prevents Friends from knowingly putting someone in harm’s way by allowing a potentially violent encounter with an armed law enforcement officer on their premises.

Another reason PYM stated for participating is that “The new policy interferes with other faiths’ ability to practice.” Since the time of William Penn, Quakers have championed religious freedom. The U.S. Constitution's First Amendment right to worship without persecution and government interference dates back to the ideas contained in Pennsylvania’s *Charter of Privileges*. According to Skye Perryman, President and CEO of Democracy Forward, “The troubling nature of the policy goes beyond just houses of worship with sanctuary programs — it is that ICE could enter religious and sacred spaces whenever it wants.”

A second suit was filed by a group of over two dozen religious groups, including Friends General Conference. Since these actions are challenging an administrative policy and not a law, it remains unclear how the courts will respond. However, the Protecting Sensitive Locations Act was filed on February 6, 2025, in the Senate (S455) and House of Representatives (HR1061). Both California Senators and the Representative for the Whittier area are co-sponsors.



**At All Friends Fellowship Night** on *Wednesday, March 12*, Christine Sanchez, from the Red Cross Evacuation Program will educate and instruct us in disaster preparedness. She will provide a “hands on” presentation with a packet of resources and practical steps to take. All are invited and encouraged to join us, especially spouses and partners. Bring a main dish, side dish, salad, or dessert to share at the potluck at 6 pm which will be followed by Ms. Sanchez’s presentation at 7 pm. Don’t wait until it is too late, get prepared now!



**Learn to engage deeply in democracy.**

The truth is, no one of us can be free until everybody is free. *Maya Angelou*

**THE FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL LEGISLATION (FCNL)  
WHITTIER ADVOCACY TEAM**

*invites you to join our...*

## Advocacy Training

March 15, 2025 10:00 am to 1:30 pm

**First Friends Church**

13205 Philadelphia St., Whittier

[Register via email to fcnlwhittier@firstfriendswhittier.org](mailto:fcnlwhittier@firstfriendswhittier.org)

Suggested donation is \$10 at the door.

Space is limited RSVP by March 10th.



*We the People*



We must use time wisely and forever realize that the time is always ripe to do right.

*Nelson Mandela*



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 64 Number 03  
Issue Date: March 1, 2025

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

Periodical postage paid at Whittier, California.

Candice Ryder and Mel Sturr, Editors  
Loletta Barrett, Pastor  
Russell Litchfield, Dir of Music Ministries and  
Organist  
Lorenzo Mora, Custodian  
Telephone 562-698-9805

[www.firstfriendswhittier.org](http://www.firstfriendswhittier.org)

Whittier Friends School Staff  
Candice Ryder, School Committee Clerk  
562-945-1654



Sara Adams

Lauren Marshburn Zermeno

Adrian Day

Debi Nelson

Annabelle Day

Sabron Newton

Micah Eggleton

Lee Riley

Silas Eggleton

Paul Smith

James Garland

Dennis Upton

Clinton Harris

Gary Wemmerus

Eric Haynes

Jay Wemmerus

Debbie Hays

Emily Wood

Rex Jones

Dan Wright

Allison Lew



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!