

# 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 04

Whittier First Friends Church

Fourth Month, 2024

## FCNL “Pieorities” Day! April 7th



We will celebrate our priorities with pie! Every two years Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) asks Quakers all over the country to help set leg-

islative priorities for the upcoming Congress. FCNL does its lobbying in many issue areas: Economic Justice, Sustainable Energy and Environment, Justice Reform and Gun Violence Prevention, Just Migration, Native American Concerns, Middle East Policy, Nuclear Non-proliferation, Pentagon Spending, International Peace Building, U.S. Wars and Militarism, and Voting and Elections. But the organization and staff look to the membership to set the priorities so that it is clear where valuable resources - time of the staff, lobbyists, advocacy teams, and grassroots networks - should focus each legislative session.

As Quakers and members of FCNL, we set the broad priorities. Staff members then con-

sider whether they should work on individual bills by considering the content and purpose of each bill, whether a bill has been designated a priority (by us!), how it fits into FCNL's strategy for each issue area, availability of FCNL's value-added services in advocating on the issue, congressional opportunities, and whether the FCNL staff has the expertise, capacity, and resources to work on that bill. As you can see, what we say is important to the overall organization, and our impact is significant.

You are invited to participate on April 7, 2024, at 12:30 in Fellowship Hall. You can come as you are or prepare by checking out the discernment process website at [www.fcnl.org/priorities](http://www.fcnl.org/priorities).

First Friends has also made this a fun experience because we include pie. Bring a pie or just come to try different pies and discern together with Friends! You are also welcome to participate by Zoom. Use the regular worship Zoom ID number.

*(Sadly we haven't figured out how to share pie by zoom.)*



## Friendly Fare by Lea Wright

**Dear Friends,** The first time that I wrote a Friendly Fare column for *The Living Light* was for Volume 47, Number 10, AKA (also known as) Tenth Month 2008, or October 2008. How is it even possible that it has been 15 years? Soon after that first column, my wonderful mother-in-law, **Donna Wright**, suggested to me that we start a "Living Light Travels" feature in *The Living Light*. This is one of those special things that I will always remember about her.



The first "Living Light Travels" was in March 2009, and it was **Dan & Lea Wright** on vacation in Laguna Beach. It just so happens that we were there

again this past February, and just for fun, I thought I'd share our recent picture. It also just so happens that *The Living Light* pictured here is from July 2012. The Living Light never goes out of style.

**Friends About Town: Aaron Espinosa** was



recently in the play *The Prom* at Cypress College. Friends posed with him, and they shared this picture.

**Darrell Warren** says that in the last two weeks, he has talked to 20 different countries by amateur radio, using only 5 watts of power. If anyone is interested in how you can do this, please ask him. It is a good way to make the

world a little more friendly.

**School and Work: Landon Caringella** was voted "most likely to succeed" for the Benton Middle School yearbook. His guitar class received the highest honors possible from Biola when they performed there. And he was Cogsworth in *Beauty and the Beast* in March at Benton. **Ashley Ryder** has started a new job. Whittier Friends School is happy to have her back with them, this time as a staff member.

**Friends Travel: Jasmine Sturr**, and her father

**Mel**, traveled to Tampa, FL in March to launch their new product, StomaEase, at a conference for healthcare

professionals who provide nutritional support to their patients. Jasmine spent the last few years gaining a patent and finding a manufacturer in order to get this



product to market. It will provide relief to the thousands of people who suffer from skin breakdown around their feeding tubes. The response was overwhelmingly positive among the attendees of the conference that stopped by the booth.

**Friends Correspond: Ami Troedsson** enjoys sharing Loletta's messages with some of the ladies where she lives. She says, "just a few lines about God's SPICES".

**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



Did you grow up in a church that encouraged you to memorize Bible verses? I did not. It is a good thing because I rebelled against memorization and was not enticed by the stickers or awards for learning even the basics like the Lord's Prayer, Beatitudes, or Ten Commandments. Instead, even as a child, I wanted to talk about the hard questions of faith. Thankfully the community was happy to have me. Or at least tolerated my questions!

But every once in a while, a verse will just pop into my head. I rarely know where it is from, and usually know it as a result of singing in choir. I am not sure where I learned the one that is popping up in my head regularly lately. I even hear it in the (for me) unfamiliar King James Version. "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof." The whole is text from Psalm 24:1-2: "The earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof, the world, and they that dwell therein. For he hath founded it upon the seas, and established it upon the floods." The translation in the Revised Standard version is similar: "The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world, and those who live in it; for God has founded it on the seas, and established it on the rivers."

I am not sure which translation resonates for me more. Perhaps the reason it is singing to my spirit is I hear confused and conflicting messages about the unsustainable situation we are in on our planet because of war, overpopulation, lack of sharing, and overuse and abuse of nature. This year's annual celebration of Earth Day on April 22, 2024 points out one of the larger problems with the theme "Planet vs. Plastics." As we approach the 55th anniversary of Earth Day, it is good to be humbled by the reminder, "The earth belongs to God and all of creation within and around it.

God created it all and said it was good." It is our choice how we care for and celebrate all our blessings. But in this month perhaps we need to focus most of all on the precious blue planet that is our home, and home to all our more-than-human siblings.

## Remembering Donna Wright (part 1)



*Donna Wright, longtime member of First Friends, lived February 11, 1935 - February 21, 2024, but her legacy lives on. Here is a reflection from one of her granddaughters, Tammy Van Dorn, daughter of Mindy Van Dorn, youngest child of Donna Wright:*

My amazing grandma Donna passed away in February. She was the most wonderful, kind, loving, woman in all the world! That might sound like an exaggeration, but in my life it's true. What a gift it is to have known her and been loved by her.

I feel lucky to say that so much of who I am is because of who she was, the family she led, the life she lived, and who my mom is because of her. I carry her with me in every card game I play, with every puzzle I put together, each craft I make, every flower bouquet I admire, and all the time I share with my family. I am grateful for every minute I had with my grandma Donna - it's never, ever enough.

When I'm feeling blue, I'll bake some cookies in her honor. She always made the best ones.

~ *Tammy Van Dorn*

*Watch for a reflection from granddaughter Cassie Caringella in next month's issue*

## Music Sunday, March 17, 2024



Inspirational messages and ethereal strains of organ, violin, and vocal music filled the Meeting House during Meeting for Worship on Music Sunday, March 17, 2024. Conducted by Music Director, Russ Litchfield (who also played the organ), the First Friends Choir and guest violinists Sasha Chandler and Christopher Jackson-Green performed *Light in Deepest Night: A Lenten Meditation Based on the Writings of Julian of Norwich*. The work is a compilation of choir anthems, congregational hymns, and instrumental pieces interspersed with prayers, and short spoken meditations based on the mystical writings of Julian of Norwich (1342-c. to 1416).

Aaron David Miller (award-winning organist, composer, performer, and Director of Music at House of Hope Presbyterian Church in St. Paul Minnesota) composed the music, and his father David L. Miller (pastor, professor, and theologian at Lutheran School of Theology in Chicago) wrote the spoken prayers and meditations.

The duo was commissioned in 2008 by a Lutheran publishing house to bring artistic expression to spiritual texts from the late-medieval period and chose to focus on Julian of Norwich's manuscript known as

*Continued on page 5*



## News from Whittier Friends School



Whittier Friends School 4th and 5th graders attended the 2024 History Day Los Angeles Competition on March 2, with great success. All four of our students (with three entries) received "finalist" ribbons. One fifth grader also received an Honorable Mention medal for her project, "How Coco Chanel Changed Fashion in History." The project made by fifth graders Avalon Caringella and Winter Horbino, "A Change In Mental Hospitals," received a First Place Medal and earned the students the opportunity to take their project to the state competition.

A history competition that requires students to put together a research project about an annual theme, there were over 450 students from 35 4th grade through 12 grade schools attending this year's competition, "Turning Points in History."

One of the benefits of going to the History Day LA competition is the interactions our students get to have with other students their age from other nearby schools, and getting to see projects made by other students. Another benefit of the event is our students having the responsibility of presenting their research to a panel of judges. This was the 9th time Whittier Friends School has taken part in this county-wide competition.

*Continued on page 5*



*Revelations of Divine Love* (thought to be the earliest surviving English language work by a woman and one of the most remarkable documents of medieval religious experience.) It is believed that at the age of 30, as she lay near death, Julian had a series of visions of Christ at the time of his crucifixion and of the Virgin Mary. Norwich subsequently recovered and wrote about this experience. Her texts have been translated from Middle English and analyzed extensively, and Miller spent a month combing through it to distill her message in order to bring it to life musically. The composition continues to be performed world-wide, in a variety of faith communities, particularly during Holy Week.

The songs have a chant-like quality that reflects Norwich's time period while maintaining a modern feel. The lyrics, readings, and prayers convey Julian's message that God is present in all things and God's essence is love. They reflect on her belief in the dual nature of God as that of a father (a guide) and a mother (a nurturer). The words speak of God's love and grace as creator and keeper, and the source of all love, wisdom, and endless joy. We are reminded of the essence of God as Light and that our faith is our "Light in Deepest Night."

We extend our heartfelt appreciation to the singers, musicians, and to Russ for their faithful and devoted efforts in bringing us this deeply moving worship experience.

*"Our life is all grounded and rooted in love, and without love we may not live."* **Julian of Norwich**



Whittier Friends School had a successful Open House on Tuesday, March 19, where students shared about the aforementioned history projects, as well as about their human body-themed research projects. We had a great turnout of current families, visitors from First Friends Church and Whittier Friends School Committee members, as well as several WFS Alum. We are so proud of our students' hard work and poise when presenting their projects to both friends and "strangers."

We have begun enrollment for our Elementary Summer Enrichment Program, which will occur from June 24 through August 8. Weekly themes will include such topics as Ocean, Zoo, and Fairy Tales. Families can sign up for whichever weeks they are interested in attending. Payments received by June 7 will give them a discount! We have also begun Fall enrollment for the 2024-2025 elementary school year.

Several of our current students are a direct result of our First Friends Church community sharing about our beloved school with friends, so thank you so much for passing on the news that we are a great option for those looking for a more unique approach to education. You can find information about our enrollment processes for summer or fall on our website, [whittierfriendsschool.org](http://whittierfriendsschool.org), or by emailing [Cassie.wfs@gmail.com](mailto:Cassie.wfs@gmail.com)

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

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

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

and visit our wishlist at

<https://amzn.to/2QK8Yp8>

*-Cassie Caringella*

## Remembering Marygene Wright



Marygene was born in Whittier, California, on November 22, 1927. She was welcomed by parents, Rose Olive and Oscar Marshburn, and brothers, Hadley and Howard. Younger brother Ted completed the family two years later.

In the days when citrus groves still dotted Whittier, Marygene grew up in the house her grandparents built on the county road, now Whittier Boulevard. She spent her sophomore and junior years of high school at Olney Friends School in Ohio. Traveling by rail across the country was an adventure for a teen—she spent at least one multi-day trip seated on her suitcase in a train car packed with servicemen. She returned to Whittier High School for her senior year and graduated in 1945.

Marygene got to know Bill Wright during their senior year of high school. They both enrolled at Whittier College and began dating the fall of their freshman year. On August 30, 1946, Marygene and Bill (William Harrison Wright, Jr.) were married. Early in their marriage, they lived in Salem, Oregon, where Jeananne was born, and returned to Whittier before Bill (William Howard) joined the family. After completing his BA and credential, Bill began teaching, and soon Lea made her appearance. In 1952, the family moved into Marygene's childhood home, and Norman arrived shortly after. The family home was perfect for their growing household and was brimming with the additions of Kirk and Betsy. It was heart and home of the Wright family for 64 years.

For many years, Marygene focused on caring for the family, keeping the calendar, making endless school lunches, and occasionally stitching up matching shirts and dresses. She served on many committees at Whittier First Friends Church, including its United Society of Friends Women and as a youth group sponsor with Bill. Marygene served on the Board of Advisors for Earlham School of Religion and was also an active member of P.E.O. for more than 50 years. She helped manage family rental properties as well as her parents' home in their advanced years.

Marygene and Bill relished opportunities to travel, whether on a return trip to Yosemite or an Atlantic crossing. Over their years of cruising, they made port on four continents. After Bill's passing in 2015, Marygene made her home at Morningside in Fullerton in 2016.

Marygene was known for her pies, her cookies, and for always welcoming one more to the family dining table. Many family members have a handmade afghan, flannel quilt, or needlepoint piece she crafted. She enjoyed reading and puzzles and was a worthy Cribbage opponent for Bill. Family get-togethers with children, grandchildren, and, eventually, great-grandkids were favorite times for Marygene and Bill.

Marygene had a calm disposition and a good sense of humor. She was compassionate, conscientious, and always practical—traits no doubt enhanced by raising six children. She passed away peacefully on February 24, 2024, at home in Fullerton with her daughter, Lea, by her side. Marygene is survived by four of her children, Lea, Norman, Kirk, and Betsy; eight grand-children and seven great-grandchildren; her brother Ted; and many loving extended family members and friends.

In lieu of flowers, the family suggests memorial donations to Whittier Friends School or The Whittier Public Library Foundation.

## AFFN: On a Phishing Trip in Cyberland



“Viruses”,  
“phishing”,  
“malware”,  
“identity  
theft”.

Brendon  
Woirhaye’s  
list of  
dangers  
lurking on  
the inter-  
net was a

litany of horrors and a commentary on how access to the great benefits of cyberspace has also exposed us to the malfeasance of skillful predators. Brendon’s presentation at All Friends Fellowship Night on March 11, was titled “Keeping Safe in a Connected World.” Brendon is an authority on this topic, having served for 24 years as a cybersecurity developer at Norton Co.

Following a bountiful potluck supper arranged by Mary Marshburn and the Fellowship Committee, Brendon’s apt protege, daughter Elyse, gave an introduction to the principles of cybersecurity. Perhaps the most important element of cybersecurity is the password to your account. The most predator-proof password should comprise a large number of characters (12+) consisting of a mixture of letters, numbers, and editorial symbols (like “&”), and should be remembered so as to avoid writing it in a notebook. He also listed a couple of secure ways to store passwords if you have too many to remember.

Mobile phones are vulnerable, as they are often lost, as the present author can attest—I have found three of them in recent years. Brendon described an experiment his team performed in which 50 cell phones (clearly

marked with how to return if lost) were dropped off in a variety of public places. The results gave a rather sour commentary on human nature—only about half of the phones were returned, and about 80% of the total number were opened and the apps were accessed in some way.

The term “phishing” connotes the most common ways would-be predators try to gain access to your accounts. Brendon listed some common “phishing” ploys. Fraudsters send authentic looking messages such as: “Microsoft will help you to remove a virus”; “Your medical accounts say your payments are overdue”; “Your CEO urgently needs some information”; “A friend (or loved one) needs emergency help.” They provide a link to their own fraudulent information-gathering or malware installing site disguised as the only way to solve the problem.

The recent great advances in Artificial Intelligence (A.I.) have also made possible new opportunities for cyber fraud. Your personal habits and routines can be targeted for efficient “phishing”, and even your voice can be precisely imitated to fool your acquaintances.

Brendon listed several safeguard procedures that should be adhered to by internet users: 1) Never open dubious links, 2) Ask personal questions when in doubt about a correspondent, 3) Verify sources by going directly to a company’s secure website or calling them directly (as a hospital).

In a world of rapidly advancing technology, always remember: 1) Be vigilant, 2) Don’t be naïve, 3) Stay informed, 4) Be aware that there’s no such thing as a free lunch. And for an unsophisticated old-timer like this author, I might add another item, 5) Try to minimize internet transactions!

Friends expressed gratitude to both Brendon and Elyse for their practical advice and a most informative AFFN program.

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 04  
Issue Date: April 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!