

# 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 04

Whittier First Friends Church

April, 2025

## Our FCNL Advocacy Team Hosts a Training



On Saturday, March 15, Whittier's Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) Advocacy Team hosted a training session for over two dozen people interested in learning how to engage more deeply in our democracy during these frustrating and uncertain times. Over the course of the three-hour seminar, attendees learned about FCNL and its best practices for communicating with elected officials about important issues and support for specific legislation.

The workshop was facilitated by Pastor Loletta with support from Whittier's Advocacy Team members. FCNL's Advocacy Teams are local groups of constituents that connect with

their elected officials at a "grassroots" level. The Advocacy Teams Network is made up of more than 1,500 individuals from across the country who use their power as constituents to make change in Washington. FCNL says, "Our success comes from our commitment to building relationships with Congress grounded in mutual respect and listening."

After introducing the work of FCNL, Loletta reiterated that the key to effective advocacy is relationship building. It is important to remain polite, respectful, and grateful for their service. Getting to know your representatives, seeking common ground, and being consistent with contact goes a long way. While this may seem daunting, Whittier's Advocacy Group has learned that visits, whether in person, on a video conference, with the official, or a staff member, become less intimidating each time. In fact, they can be enlightening, energizing, and highly satisfying sessions.

The workshop focused on FCNL's "Lobby Visit Roadmap", a simple model that provides a framework for a group visit with an elected official. The key elements are preplanning and rehearsing, assigning roles with specific tasks, (ie. facilitator, note-taker, time-keeper, story-teller), following an agenda, and staying within the time limit.

*Advocacy Training Continued on page 5*

## Friendly Fare by Lea Wright

**Dear Friends,** Another busy month when it seems like nothing gets done. How many of you keep a "To Do" list? I am constantly carrying my to do's over to a new list, and eventually I just drop things off of it when I realize that I will never accomplish that thing that has been on my list for way too long. Hmm, if that is you too, I wish I had words to help you, but today I'm drawing a blank.

**Friends About Town: Russ Litchfield** recently played pieces at two American Guild of Organists Member's Recitals. He played three works for Trinity Sunday, including his own composition based on the hymn, "Mothering God," for the Long Beach Chapter, and a group of pieces based on the parts of the Lutheran Liturgy for the President's Day Organ Tour sponsored by the Los Angeles Chapter.



**School and Work: Avalon Caringella** had a still life art piece on display at the 14th Annual Artastic Art Festival in Norwalk. She is also in the Benton Middle School play. We'll share more on that next month.

**Friends Travel: Marilyn Fant's** journey to New Zealand was a lifelong dream come true. She



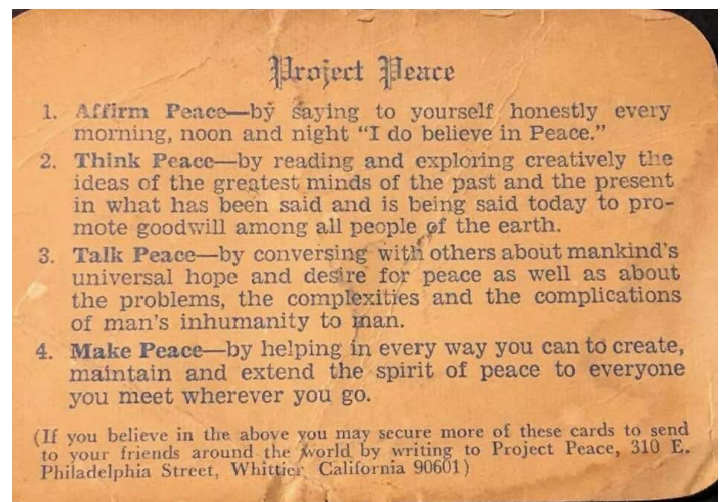
enjoyed the company of five family members and toured all parts of

the country for two weeks. They climbed the mountains in a gondola, tasted wine in Central Otago, flew in a helicopter into Milford Sound, and knocked on the front doors in Hobbiton. The spectacular scenery and variety of experiences caused the time to pass too quickly. Some of the 2

best moments were shared with two half-cousins of Marilyn's, members of her maternal New Zealand Family. She plans to return!

**Friends Remember: Dennis & Linda Upton** were longtime members of First Friends beginning in the 60's. Dennis's parents joined them in membership, and two of their children were dedicated here. They retired to Lake Arrowhead in 2002 and continued to look forward to, and support, *The Living Light*. We received the sad news that Dennis passed away in January. Linda, you are in our prayers as you adjust to life without Dennis.

**Susie Cush**, who grew up in the Meeting, was the daughter of **Frank & Martha Cush** and sister of **Tom Cush**. She passed away in March. Her good friend, Judy Fitzgerald in Oregon, shared with us, "She was such a lovely woman and always a good Christian Quaker." On Facebook, I found the following post and comment from Susie. "May I share some Quaker statements about PEACE? All souls are created to embrace one another." She also shared these words from "Project Peace".



**Ami Troedsson**, a longtime member, supporter, and Friend of First Friends, passed away in March. She was grateful to attend our women's retreat with us several years back, and she often shared photos with us for the Friendly Fare. She will be missed.

**Friends Sharing News:** Email me a quick note and tell me your news. Send to Lea at [lealouw@gmail.com](mailto:lealouw@gmail.com). See you next month!



## Loletta's Lines

In Ohio we needed an April Easter to even begin to hope Spring had sprung. I have many memories of Easter bonnets and patent leather shoes sadly abandoned for winter hats and boots. But the first blooming flowers brought to mind the joy of new life and resurrection - Jesus's and the earth's.



In the midst of pondering those memories, something caught my eye, and I couldn't let go of it. The first letters in resurrection - "Re." Thus, I began a mind game. Think of as many synonyms as possible for resurrection that start with "Re" as fast as possible: renewal, rejuvenation, resuscitation, reincarnation, revival, rebirth, revitalization, renaissance, revivification, reappearance, restoration, resurgence, recreation, reawakening, restoration, and re-embodiment.

The thought worm wouldn't stop. It propelled me to look up the prefix "Re." It can be used to mean once more, afresh, anew, and return. But it can also be used in opposition: behind, after, a withdrawn state, back and away, or down, and with frequent and intensive, or even negative force. Wait! It can have meanings opposite to resurrection? That can't be good, can it?

Then came to mind some opposite words: resistance, refuse, reject, rebellious, revolutionary, repudiate, and revolve. Jesus's resurrection was powerful proof of love's resistance to death. He revolutionized the way people thought about God by using the intimate name Abba. He rebelled against the traditional kingdom on earth as a military industrial complex politic of oppression and saw it as a loving compassionate beloved

community. He repudiated the judgmental way of thinking of sin as breaking rules, in favor of understanding it as broken relationships and separation from God, ourselves, and others. Jesus showed us how to refuse those who abuse, and reject and respond to hatred and violence with love and peace. His teachings and actions were rebellious, revolutionary, and repudiated the people and power of darkness and death that were and are. His life is proof the world does not revolve around hatred but the love and Light that is. Oh! We can definitely revel and rejoice in that!

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## Shelter's Right Hand 5K Walk



This year's Shelter's Right Hand 5K Walk will be held on **Saturday April 26**. The walk will begin at 8 am with sign-in and same-day registration starting at 6:30 am in Central Park, in Uptown Whittier. This is a major fundraiser for the Women and Children's Crisis Center and is being facilitated by Marilyn Fant of First Friends and Lori Harris and Diane Britton, both of First United Methodist Church, with support from the Mission Collaborative. Volunteers are needed as well as participants for this worthy event. Mark your calendar now and spread the word. For more information, contact Marilyn Fant or go to [sheltersrighthand.org/5k-walk](http://sheltersrighthand.org/5k-walk).

## Russ's Reflections

*"Auf, mein Herz! Des Herren Tag hat die Nacht der Furcht vertrieben"* (Rise up, my heart; the Lord's day has driven away the night of fear...Jesus has redeemed the world.)



These are the opening words of the cantata the Friends Choir will present on Sunday, April 27, during Meeting for Worship. J.S. Bach used two chorales (hymn verses to bookend the piece), a choral movement by Georg Philipp Telemann, and some solos and duets to construct a cantata for Easter Tuesday, April 19, 1729. (In liturgical traditions, the Tuesday after Easter Sunday is a day to honor Jesus's resurrection.) The readings for that day included Acts 13:26-33 and Luke 24:36-47.

The textual themes are: "If you acknowledge Jesus to be the Lord God, your faith will save you;" Jesus and (the Soul) - "I (You) live to your (my) delight - your Life raises my life on high; The writing of laws are torn, and peace opens the heavenly door;" "Mark ye that your Savior is alive; be grounded and settled;" "My Jesus lives! Therefore we are justly cheerful and praise you, Lord Jesus Christ."

We will sing in English. The music is scored for trumpet, woodwinds, strings, and continuo. We will be using strings and continuo only (continuo is cello and organ.) We will begin worship with an anthem derived from another cantata by J.S. Bach.

One of the tasks I have been working on is entering instrumental parts from an old public domain score into computer software to generate individual parts for each instrument. I tried to find published parts, but this cantata is unusual, and I could only find a full score. So, I chip away at entering parts - Bach and Telemann wrote a lot of notes! This is not unlike what was done in the 1700s, where

*Russ' Reflections Continued on page 5*



## News from Whittier Friends School

Whittier Friends School 5th and 6th graders attended the 2025 History Day Los Angeles County Competition on Saturday, March 1, with great success. Both entries received recognition from the judges! Our fifth grader's project titled, "Senseless Censorship" won him a first place medal in his category of 4th and 5th graders! He also earned a second recognition from the Social Science Teachers Association for "exemplary work telling an untold story." Our sixth grader, judged against more than 20 other projects in her category of 6th, 7th, and 8th graders, received a runner-up medal! Her project was titled, "Votes for Women."

A history competition that requires students to put together a research project about an annual theme, History Day LA 2025 had over 470 students, 4th through 12th grade, from dozens of schools in LA County. This year's competition was "Rights and Responsibilities in History." Students are required to research and analyze how their topic of choice fits this theme and then explain their project by themselves (without a teacher or parent present!) to a panel of judges they do not know.

WFS students have taken part in this event for the past several years, and it has become a rite of passage for Teacher Cassie's oldest students to work toward the privilege of entering their projects. Make sure to visit our Open House night on Wednesday, May 14, to see these terrific award-winning projects, as well as other projects by our younger students.

WFS has begun enrollment for our Elementary Summer Enrichment Program, which will occur from June 23 through August 7, on six select weeks of summer. Some themes include "Digging Dinosaurs," "World of

*Whittier Friends School Continued on page 5*

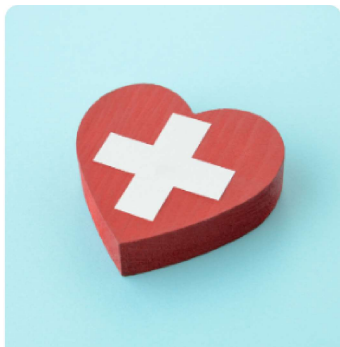
### *Russ' Reflections Continued from page 4*

composers prepared a score, and each instrumental part was copied out by hand. My end result will be much more legible, fortunately. The process gives me a chance to get to know the music better and to while away the hours. I hope you can join us on April 27th and that this music will inspire you. Happy Easter!

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### *Whittier Friends School Continued from page 4*

Wizardry," and "Time Travelers." Children do not have to be from WFS to attend the program. Email [cassie.wfs@gmail.com](mailto:cassie.wfs@gmail.com) for information about this, or about enrolling for the Fall 2025 school year.



Our Red Cross Blood Drive occurred on February 20 in Fellowship Hall, and it felt like a great success! Of 30 donors scheduled, 18 were able to donate blood. (This

typically happens, which is why they try to schedule so many people!) Three of these donors were first-time donors, which was an especially great accomplishment. Of those that donated, 19 life-saving units of blood were collected. Thank you so much!

A few months ago, when our country was dealing with the aftermath of Hurricane Helene, I felt like there just wasn't enough I could do to help. I called up the Red Cross to see if I could host a Blood Drive, since I heard that in the aftermath of tragedies, there is often not enough blood donated. Whittier Friends School, with the support of First Friends Church, got a Blood Drive on the books for February 20, which conveniently occurred shortly after the recent California Wildfires. Though the Hurricane and flooding were months ago, this new tragedy, right in our backyard, needed blood donation! So it felt like all the puzzle pieces fell into place.

*-Cassie Caringella*

### *Advocacy Training Continued from page 1*



Crucial to this model is storytelling. While it is important to be specific with the "ask" and back it up with facts

and figures, advocacy is brought to life with personal stories. Ideally, two or three of the group should be ready to share a brief personal narrative relevant to the issue at hand. If no story comes to mind, a personal conviction or value can be shared.

After learning about the "Roadmap", training participants broke into groups of five, were assigned roles, and practiced according to the model. Following a hearty lunch, ideas were shared for other ways to connect with officials and raise awareness. These include hosting a table at a local event, writing postcards and letters, and attending events hosted by elected officials.

According to FCNL, "Meeting face to face with your members of Congress is the single most effective way to persuade them to support the issues you care about. These meetings let them know that their constituents are paying attention — and that they support peace, justice, and sustainability." Whittier's Advocacy Team meets the first Wednesday of each month at 5 pm in First Friends' Fellowship Hall for a call with FCNL's national office followed by a local planning meeting. Everyone is invited and encouraged to attend. For more information on other upcoming FCNL events, contact Darrell Warren and check the FFC weekly newsletter. For more information on FCNL's Advocacy groups go to:

[www.fcnl.org/act/join-advocacy-team](http://www.fcnl.org/act/join-advocacy-team)



## March AFFN Attendees Learn How to Prepare for the Next Disaster

Pandemics, fires, floods, earthquakes! What is next? One lesson we can learn from these tragic events is that life, as we know it, can change in an instant, often with little or no warning. While we can't necessarily stop a disaster, we can prepare ourselves. At All Friends Fellowship Night in March, Chris Sanchez from the Red Cross Evacuation Program brought practical tips and helpful information on ways to be ready, based on the Red Cross slogan "Get a kit. Make a plan. Be informed."

**Get a kit:** Her first piece of advice was to create a portable "grab and go" bag for each family member (like a backpack or rolling suitcase) with clothes, water, and lightweight non-perishable food for at least a week. Don't forget to include medications, personal hygiene items, and individual needs items (glasses, hearing aids, baby formula, diapers, etc.) She recommends a flash drive with copies of important documents (birth certificates, passports, insurance policies, banking and credit card information, etc.) and extra cash (in small bills). Other useful items are flashlights, radios, spare batteries, phone chargers, and an all-purpose tool. And don't forget your pets! Additional supplies for a bigger kit to keep at home would include N95 masks, matches, rain gear, gloves, towels, blankets, sunscreen, bug repellent, rope, duct tape, and extra food and water. Be sure to refresh your kit twice a year.

**Make a plan:** Assign and discuss responsibilities for each family member. Consider various scenarios (work, school, home). Have a couple of meeting places (near home as well as further away) and make a list of out-of-state contact information. Keep a list of important phone numbers in case your phone is lost or destroyed. Discuss and

practice evacuation plans. Contact your neighbors and make note of any special needs.

When you are out, scan for exits, and remain aware of your surroundings.

**Stay informed:** Learn the difference between weather "watches" and "warnings." Know the best ways to stay protected in different types of emergencies. Create and carry an "Emergency Contact" card (for each family member.) Take CPR and AED training. Learn how to stack sandbags effectively. Install smoke alarms. Share what you know.

Does all this seem too overwhelming? The Red Cross has you covered. Their campaign PrepareSoCal has a website with checklists, resources, and contact information for helpful resources. It even has a handy guide called "21 Weeks to Prepare" which suggests five items to add to your grocery list each week to be set aside for an emergency in order to be fully prepared in as little as 21 weeks. Go to [redcross.org/local/california/preparesocal.html](http://redcross.org/local/california/preparesocal.html) for more information. March was Red Cross month, and Chris reminded us that over 100,000 Southern Californians were displaced by the recent fires. The Red Cross is an independent non-profit organization poised to help. To donate money or blood, go to [www.redcross.org](http://www.redcross.org). First Friends extends its heartfelt thanks to Ms. Sanchez for this valuable presentation. And, if you would like to schedule her as a speaker for a group, contact Candice Ryder.



# Friends United Meeting



## **USAID Funding Cuts Impact FUM Ministries**

Friends United Meeting is a coalition of 37 yearly meetings and associations encompassing thousands of local gatherings and hundreds of thousands of Friends across the globe. Sadly, the U.S.'s recent dramatic and abrupt foreign aid cuts and funding uncertainty have deeply affected two mission projects supported by FUM abroad: Ramallah Friends School and Lugulu Friends Mission Hospital. Both have received USAID grants through the American Schools and Hospitals Abroad (ASHA) program.

Ramallah Friends School (RMS) is an International Baccalaureate World School located on the West Bank of Palestine devoted to providing a Quaker education to Kindergarten through 12th Grade students of all faiths, ethnicities, and backgrounds. Recently, FUM received a \$1.4 million ASHA grant as part of their "Foundation for Tomorrow" campaign for construction of a multipurpose hall providing essential indoor space for children to play during the winter. Funds were also earmarked for a clean-water cistern and outdoor restrooms to support student health and hygiene. In February, FUM received notice of termination of the previously approved award - after construction had begun - leaving "a gaping hole" on the site as well as liability for \$332,000 owed for work already done. The school also faced the prospect of raising the remaining \$1,058,488 on its own to complete the project. Then, on March 10, thanks to a Supreme Court ruling, notice was received that the distribution request for the work already done had been approved,

however, as of this writing, the funds had not been released. A request for disbursement of the remaining \$1+ million remains under review.

Friends Lugulu Mission Hospital is an award-winning facility in Western Kenya which provides essential surgical, obstetric, and medical care to patients without regard to religion, ethnicity, or ability to pay. It has also been deeply affected by the executive order to halt funding. Initially, the hospital had to cease clinic services to over 2,900 patients and dismiss twenty-three dedicated staff members who provided life-saving medical services and counseling to patients diagnosed with HIV and tuberculosis. The clinic also runs essential programs to mitigate malaria in the region. Since then, the hospital reports that funding has been restored for a period of two and a half months, however, long-term support for the program is in question. "We remain concerned that the decision to suspend this program will result in the preventable deaths of the very patients we are called to serve."

Kelly Kellum, General Secretary of FUM, is asking for our help. One way is through prayer and holding these programs in the Light. FUM will also gratefully accept monetary support for these missions. And finally, he says they need Friends to advocate with local and state representatives for awareness and restoration of full funding. In our advocacy efforts (both as a group and individually) we are reminded to highlight these institutions' long-standing commitment to education and service, emphasizing their history and contributions to their communities as well as the role they play in promoting peace, understanding, and cross-cultural dialogue. And don't forget to share success stories, such as students who have thrived thanks to their RFS education or patients whose lives have been saved by FLMH. To learn more about these projects and how you can support them, visit:

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

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

Luke Barboza

Wendy Marsh

Mary Coop

Lori McLane

Ted Coop

Ian Rollins

Todd Cramer

Kat Ryder

Christian Eggleton

Lou Secord

Lloyd Kaneko

Thomas Thirkettle

Kathy Marin

Owen Torres

Barbara Cote

Kathy Hood

Kathy Robison

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!