

THE LIVING LIGHT

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

Ephesians 5:9

Volume 60 Number 7

Whittier First Friends Church

July/August 2021

Where the Spirit Is, There is Freedom

Announcing our scholarship recipients

The Mildred Votaw Jessup Award

For assistance in continuing education

Katerina Ryder

Bella Sturr

Anathea Woirhaye

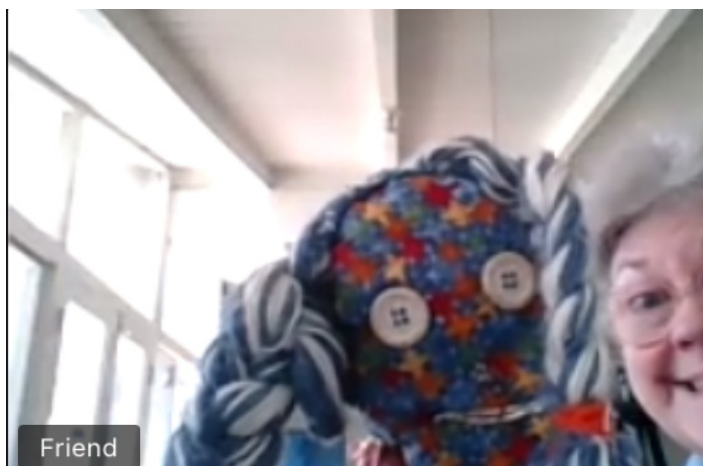
Cedric Woirhaye

The Larry Davidson Award

*For contributing and sharing gifts and talents
with the Meeting*

Cedric Woirhaye

Elyse Woirhaye



*Has your faithful **Living Light** editor taken to playing with sock puppets on Zoom? Friends, meet Friend! For more details, see the last page of this issue. #travelingfriend*

Peace Camp starts July 19



Seeking Peace Around the World is the theme of Peace Camp 2021. It will be held on Zoom for the second year and is offered free to students first through sixth grade.

Peace Camp encourages and enables youth to promote an understanding of peace and justice, appreciate themselves and others, cooperate and work together in group settings, manage conflict and impatience, and appreciate our environment.

We're looking forward to another amazing year! Email FriendsPeaceCamp@gmail.com for further information.

Peace Café Returns This Fall Music & More A Livestream Concert September 25



Share your creative efforts or come to enjoy the magic. Details will soon follow so keep an eye out for updates in social media, First Friends e-news and firstfriendswhittier.org.

All proceeds go to support Peace Camp

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

Friendly Fare by Lea Wright

Dear Friends, Summer is here just in time for being able to come off of the statewide lockdown.

Friends Celebrate: Iris Harris had a special guest playing at her 70th birthday party—the world renowned South American harpist, Alfredo Rolando Ortiz. She has been his fan for thirty years, so it was a wonderful birthday treat for her. **Genevieve Lescsak** celebrated her 100th birthday, and was featured in a Whittier Daily News story. **Milton & Donna Wright** celebrated their 65th and **Don & Shirley Votaw** celebrated their 70 years wedding anniversary! Happy anniversary to the many other special Friends with June anniversaries.

Friends About Town: The **Woirhaye family** was feeling very happy to learn that Elyse earned the President's Honor for having straight A's throughout the entire time they were at Rancho Starbuck Intermediate. Deanna, on the other hand, earned 3rd place for her and Anatheas collaborative photographic art piece consisting of 31 different character images made during the pandemic. The piece is available to be seen until July 18 at the Whittier Art Gallery. In addition, Deanna earned 1st place for a different image of Anatheas at an online music art contest held by the Valley Cultural Foundation. She feels very blessed and honored with these recent recognitions.

Friends At Home: **Liz Ellis** is going to Lake Tahoe with her granddaughter and her boyfriend in July, and visiting her daughter in Denver in August. At home, she has been trying to finish the 1/2" scale model of the Woirhaye's home (formerly her parents' home) at the end of North Friends Ave.

Friends Move: Cory Benjamin is now living in a remote part of Montana, on a large plot that used to be a farm. He is miles from another human and 40 miles from the nearest town with services. He also has beautiful sunsets.

Friends Visit: **Mike & Betsy Wood** were in town visiting Marygene Wright and other family and friends. **Lynda & Mike Ladwig's** granddaughter **Krystal** spent vacation visiting family and staying with Lynda & Mike. She was here for Father's Day.

School and Work: **Weston Van Dorn** is working with a professor who was based at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte but recently moved to

UC Riverside. The professor started his research there and will continue both places, and will compare east coast results with west coast results. The basis of the research is "why are some firefighters averse to incorporating new technology." Preliminary results show that U.S. fire fighting is so steeped in tradition that many firefighters feel their identity dwindles the more they move away from that image. For example, in Europe they commonly use a new helmet that is lighter and safer, but it looks very different than what one would traditionally observe when thinking of a firefighter. In the U.S., it is widely rejected. Wes is conducting and transcribing interviews with current firefighters on both coasts. He was hired and started reviewing research during his last quarter.

Friends Travel: Bill Ryder spent June in his hometown of Muscatine, IA working with his brother and sister to clear out his childhood home to prepare it for sale. It was a difficult and poignant process since the home was built by Bill's grandfather and has been occupied by the family ever since. He enjoyed spending time with family and friends, as well as attending a car show and driving to Missouri for a flea market and strawberry festival while he was there. **Michael & Elisabeth Elliot** are thrilled to be planning not one but two trips after a year of "cabin fever." They'll join the entire Elliot clan in the Bay Area for niece Jessica's wedding in late August, and will return to Elisabeth's beloved New York for various adventures in October. In NYC, Michael will spend some of his time at Lightfair, an architectural and commercial lighting trade show, and Elisabeth is looking forward to doing a lot (and she means A LOT) of "history-trekking." And yes, they will definitely catch some theatre on Broadway and off-Broadway too. Michael finds New York City a little overwhelming ("there are just too many people in one place!") but is happy to have Elisabeth as a guide and navigator of the subway system. In the meantime, Michael is back at work at Disneyland and enjoying a wide variety of tasks as the Resort get back on its feet.

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!

This Summer in Meeting for Worship

This summer, we will be led by the Spirit as we continue our journey with our theme *A Place of Abundance*. Join us for beautiful music, special guests and centered, gathered worship. Here is a preview:

On July 4, Loletta Barrett will bring the message *Abundant Colors*—so please wear or bring something in your favorite color! Later in July, Tim Colohan will bring a message/dharma talk from a Buddhist Temple in Los Angeles. Tim is a colleague of Loletta's in an interfaith spiritual study group. In August, we will hear from Beth Henricks, Clerk of Right Sharing of World Resources, and our own Lynda Ladwig. Stay tuned for more exciting and centering opportunities!



At Monthly Meeting On Sunday, June 13, the Personnel Committee proposed three new part-time positions be created — a meeting coordinator, an office assistant and a coordinator for technology support. Proposed job responsibilities of each were presented and are flexible as way opens. This is a broad plan. Search for a meeting coordinator was approved to begin. Coordination of support for and operating hybrid Meeting for Worship is also being evaluated. Office assistant duties will be filled by staff member Russ Litchfield and Friend Darrell Warren. Other opportunities will surely arise. The Technology Group reported that wi-fi is now active in Fellowship Hall and being used by the Writing Group with thanks. Business and Finance reported that planned giving and fulfillment of faith promises is behind but unplanned giving is above expectations. Significant giving was approved to Rania Maaiah, Head of School at Ramallah Friends; to Robert Wafula, Principal of Friends Theological College in Kenya, and to Nikki Holland, Director of Belize City Friends Center.

Monthly Meetings for July and August are at 1:00 p.m. on Sunday, July 11 and Sunday, August 8.

We welcome and encourage your comments as well as your contributions and photos for inclusion in *The Living Light*. Kindly send your email to Elisabeth Elliot at communiquaker@gmail.com.



The Facing Bench

As I write this, we've just finished celebrating the accomplishments of our younger Friends at Promotion Sunday.

We enjoyed hearing their wisdom as they considered three queries:

•*What is one thing you want the world to know*

about you and your dreams for the future?

•*What is one thing that you learned this year that you wish you did not have to know?*

•*What is one thing that made you smile this year that you will never forget?*

The clincher was asking them to answer in three sentences or less! Since I subjected them to the exercise, I thought I would give it a go!

I want the world to know I work every day at figuring out how to be a loving, caring, kind, and fun person! I know I fail and am often too serious. I dream of being the life of the party, but only in a good way—making sure everyone feels welcomed, loved, and included. (Your help and advice will be gladly accepted!)

I wish I hadn't had to learn how to wear a mask, which is ironic since I once wanted to be a medical doctor. I wish I did not have to know masks may be something we have to deal with from now on, and holding a hand, giving a hug or just sitting quietly with a beloved Friend can risk their health. Never doubt that spending time talking with each of you is a joy (by mail, phone or with a mask!) and I always cherish it.

What made me smile was Buddy, of course, and Bose. I am incredibly grateful Spirit brought these two beautiful souls into my life and home in the middle of the pandemic, the demonstrations and the Glendora fires. I learned more this year about myself, love, and sharing because of an affectionate yellow lab and an amazing young friend.

Now it is your turn, Friends. There have been abundant blessings in the past year amidst the hardship and pain in our lives. How do you answer the queries? Please share your answers with me at pastorffc@verizon.net. I really want to know!



Russ' Reflections Wordless Music

As we slip from spring into summer, things get warmer, slower, and less frenzied. Typically, the Friends Choir would end its season at the end of June and so, the Section Leaders will do likewise. As you read this, we have already scattered into the wind.

I would like to express a huge thank you to Alexandra Grabarchuk and Allison Coop, Axel Mejia-Juarez and Malek Sammour, Lou Rosen, and Aaron Espinosa for their dedicated service to our Meeting. They have covered a lot of musical ground this year and I have been inspired by their efforts. We say farewell to Alex, who is ceasing both her church jobs to make more space for her teaching and professional choir, and Malek, who will be returning to his regular church job when they resume in-person worship.

Plans have not solidified for the fall. Whether we reactivate the Friends Choir or continue with our Section Leaders and when this might occur remains to be worked out. So, in the spirit of the season, I am planning to have a Summer of Wordless Music. There may be some instrumental music with friends, some piano music, some organ music, some music from different cultural traditions, some new music, some old music, some jazzy music, some reflective music, some music filled with praise, but no singing. I hope that you will continue to be inspired each week to draw closer to God as you experience the music we offer for worship. Let's relax and settle into a different pace as we get warmer, slower, and less frenzied and move into the splendor of summer. Blessings to you all.



Congratulations to three of our Whittier Friends School graduates: Landon, Derek, and Bishop. They start middle school in the fall.



News from Whittier Friends School

Whittier Friends School wrapped up the school year with joyful celebrations of student accomplishments, wishes to each other for a happy summer break, and fond farewells to our graduates.

Our annual Recognition Ceremony for our elementary class was held on June 9, on Zoom, with attendance by all 12 students and their families, numerous WFS committee members, and friends from near and far. We recognized our school parents, donors, committee members, and staff by name, and our students received their "superlative" awards which were decided on by the class members. Filtered throughout the slideshow were pictures from recent times, with happy children masked and learning in person, plus older pictures, allowing us to look back fondly to when our graduates were young. In all, we have five graduates leaving our elementary program and heading off to middle school or high school. We wish great success to Landon, Bishop, Derek, Michelle, and Matthew, and look forward to their visits in the future.

A special visitor at our school's recognition ceremony was "Traveling Friend" (#TravelingFriend). The children enjoyed several days interacting with Friend and the book of traveling minutes from other Quakers around the country. We send Traveling Friend off with a few more letters, appreciating the connection brought to our school's heritage.

Throughout the summer, keep an eye on our school's whittierfriendsschool Instagram account where we share updates on our students' art, our school garden, and even our fundraisers!

We are currently accepting applications for preschool, both for summer or the fall. You can contact cassie.wfs@gmail.com for enrollment information. We also appreciate financial support, in the form of checks, mailed to Whittier Friends School or First Friends Church (memo line: Whittier Friends School) or through PayPal at finance@whittierfriendsschool.org, or you can visit our school's Amazon wishlist at <https://amzn.to/2QK8Yp8>

—Cassie Caringella



Like most Friends organizations, our Meeting is not hierarchical in its structure, but is organized from the members and attenders themselves,

following Quaker process to do their work.

The Monthly Meeting has established committees to perform different roles within the church community, and members and attenders are called to serve in those committee positions, usually making a commitment for one year at a time. *The Living Light* offers, on an occasional basis, a description of a committee to inspire you to seek God's guidance in where you are called to serve the meeting.

The Nominating Committee is a vital part of our process, as it identifies the members of the other committees for the following year. Through prayerful consideration, the committee strives to identify members and attenders who are able and willing to serve in committee assignments beneficial to the Meeting ministries and to the individual. Nominating usually works for four to six months to first identify clerks for each committee, then the additional members.

Interfaith Dialogue and Building the Kin-dom of God

The Whittier Area Interfaith Council held two Zoom experiences in interfaith dialogue this spring. They included a panel of three presenters followed by questions from attendees. Loletta Barrett, Rabbi Mark Goldfarb from Temple Beth Ohr in La Mirada, and Jamaal Zaheen from the Islamic Center of Anaheim represented the three Abrahamic faiths, with Jamaal initiating the opportunities. Jamaal is a wonderful Outreach Coordinator for ICA, and is excellent at connecting people.

The first panel addressed "What does your faith tradition teach about God, scripture, Jesus, the afterlife and other faith traditions?" The discussion was enthusiastically received and Friends expressed an interest in exploring more topics in the future to help us to better understand the breadth, depth and differences within the Christian tradition.

—Loletta Barrett



July

Travis Allen
Eric Bald
Carrin Bouchard
Amy Burke
Cassie Caringella
Jon-Paul Cook
Allison Coop
Amanda Cramer
Francoise Dutil
Harry Eggleton
Marilyn Fant
Lynda Ladwig
Elinore Petoletti
Jane Takata
Marcia Vaden
Don Votaw
Julia Weitkamp

August

Bishop Aereaux
Hudson Aguirre
Trevor Allen
Loletta Barrett
Ellie Bewley

George Bouchard
Savanah Burke
Mary Case
Josh Fant
Linda Flournoy
Pat Garland
Kathy Hood
Laura Kaneko
Alexander Marshburn
Emma McIntosh
Jane Moody
Bruce Nelson
Tish Purkiss
Gloria Rice
Sandra Robison
Jennifer Root
Rob Settlege
Bonnie Streeter
Mel Sturr
Tom Van Dorn
Marylinn Wheatley
Deanna Woirhaye
Isaac Wright
Philip Wright

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!

Friends School Endowment Assists Students

The Whittier Friends School endowment established in 2020 provided for financial aid to three students this year who would otherwise likely be unable to attend the school.

The abundance of the Meeting is working to create more opportunities in our community and has received several blessings. With an initial donation from Gwen Woirhaye to establish the endowment, an additional contribution from the estate of Paul Partington was added in May.

Quakers in Unity New From Friends



Friends Committee on National Legislation—

Persistent. Prophetic. Powerful. Those qualities describe our Quaker network well, and we can add a fourth “P”: Productive. The vote on June 17 in the House to repeal the 2002 law that authorized war against Saddam Hussein’s regime in Iraq shows that a small group of determined advocates with the moral high ground can make a big difference.

The bipartisan vote wasn’t the first time the House has voted to wipe this open-ended authorization off the books, but it is the first time the full House has voted on a freestanding measure to terminate a post-9/11 war. And it’s unlikely that the vote would have happened without the influence of FCNL’s activists across the country.

While there has been much debate and little congressional action on repealing the 2001 AUMF, which has become a blank check for endless war, comparatively little attention has been paid to the 2002 Iraq AUMF. Until recently, administrations, legal scholars, and advocacy groups had largely ignored it.

That all changed when Heather Brandon-Smith, FCNL’s legislative director for militarism and human rights, saw an opening for progress and charted a strategy to take advantage of it. She reasoned that since the 2002 Iraq AUMF wasn’t being used as the sole justification for any current operations, but remained susceptible to abuse, it might be easier to convince Congress to bid it farewell. Repealing the 2002 Iraq AUMF would not stop any ongoing wars but it could certainly prevent some new ones.

Hundreds of Friends and supporters took the message to Capitol Hill during the 2019 Annual Meeting and Quaker Public Policy Institute, and thousands more called, wrote, and emailed their elected representatives.

But it took a lot more work than anyone imagined.

Some in the advocacy community didn’t like the incremental approach and wanted to focus on the 2001 AUMF instead. Many in Congress didn’t understand the difference between the two authorizations, and continued to insist, incorrectly, that the Iraq war authorization was needed to continue fighting ISIS and al Qaeda. There were internal divisions within several administrations between policymakers who saw no harm in repealing it and lawyers who wanted to keep it on the books “just in case.”

FCNL’s roughly 125 Advocacy Teams in 44 states meet regularly with their elected representatives to build relationships of trust and to lobby persistently on this issue, and more and more members of Congress began coming around. They were moved not only by the clear reasoning of their constituents, but also by their passion and their moral authority. We have heard numerous stories of representatives and senators who were initially hostile to the repeal becoming supporters after meeting with our teams.

Our lobbyists took a fully bipartisan approach by working with partners that are considered conservative or libertarian, including Concerned Veterans for America, FreedomWorks, Defense Priorities and the Charles Koch Institute.

We led transpartisan letters and circulated an issue brief from the Heritage Foundation that supported our position. We created backgrounders and explainers and made our case in the media. Several members of Congress who rarely agree with FCNL on anything supported our position on this.

All this work culminated in the successful vote on June 17. But our work is not over: we are still a few votes short of the 60 that are needed in the Senate.

At press time, the Senate Foreign Relations Committee is planning to vote on a similar bill, and Majority Leader Schumer has pledged that the full Senate will vote this year. We never would have come this far without your help, and you’ll be hearing from us every step of the way to final victory!

—Diana Ohlbaum

*Legislative Director for Foreign Policy
Friends Committee on National Legislation*

Fire Near and Far

While a virtual retreat does not in any way replace being together in person, it does have its advantages. In May, Loletta Barrett, Lynda Ladwig and Deanna Woirhaye joined 44 other Friends from across the country on Zoom to worship together for *Stoking the Fire 2021—Living In and Offering Hope and Light to the World* retreat. The theme could not have been more timely.

Katie Ubry-Terrell opened the retreat, speaking from the heart of being in a place of darkness and loss. She wondered how she could speak on Light during the darkest time in her life, when all the God-lites in her life had been removed. But Kate discovered that there are layers in the darkness, and that God resides there, too. Eventually the God-lites begin to reveal themselves through other people and their passions and begin to stir you. God-lites are revealed through the caring and compassion of those who ask “Are you ok?”—and then engage you even when you aren’t ok. We need to honor those God-lites in one another to rise above the ocean of darkness towards the Light.

Bryce Coefield reminded us that, in a year filled with tension, killings, protests, and discrimination that has brought pain and suffering, there is also hope and joy. As we hear the chant from protesters “No Justice, No Peace,” perhaps we should be hearing “Know Justice, Know Peace.”

Bryce addressed Jesus as the resister, with the type of resistance that shifts us from fear and bondage to freedom and hope. In Psalm 13, we hear “How long, Lord? Will you forget me forever?” but also “I trust in your unfailing love; my heart rejoices in your salvation. I will sing the LORD’s praise, for he has been good to me.”

We all have our bad days and our good days. They are two sides of the same coin and sometimes they are even on the same side of the coin. Resistance is an example of that coin, the pain and suffering juxtaposed by the light and joy. Joy is an act of resistance, and pursuing justice is an act of joy. God’s presence calls us to dance with hope and joy.

We also explored ways we are brought into service, and ways to make a difference by participating in projects ranging from self-care to visitation to picking up trash in the community to helping at a food bank.

The time between sessions was spent in Ember Groups, where small groups of eight people addressed queries and thoughts about their experiences during this retreat.

Colin Saxton brought the message on Pentecost Sunday. The words breath and breathe have been words of importance this past year. Covid-19 has limited our breath, George Floyd cried “I can’t breathe,” and deep stresses have required us to take deep breaths. Colin left us with these queries:

Are we living to the glory of God and the service of others?

Are we focused on things that matter most with a sense of Holy Expectancy?

Are we living in the now ready to unwrap this gift that we have been given, not knowing what’s inside but knowing God will be there?

The Zen of Just Do It

In July, Tim Colohan from the Dharma Zen Center will bring the message *The Heart of the Buddha’s Teaching/Practice*. He will focus on The Heart Sutra (as translated by Zen Master Thich Nhat Hanh) and how meditation shows us our true nature, the way out of our suffering, and how to help this world out of its suffering. Zen means: “Just do it,” and Dharma means “teaching” or “truth.”

Tim found Zen—or it found him—while waiting tables and pursuing a fine arts career. His practice supports him in the day-to-day realities of the contemporary world. His career as a set decorator for film and television was strenuous and challenging, and he was able to apply the benefits and wisdom of retreats into the “the marketplace” of production work.

Tim is currently a Senior Dharma Teacher, and is periodically invited to teach at Long Beach Meditation. He met Loletta Barrett through a Pasadena interfaith group that is close to his heart, composed of Muslims, Christians, Quakers, Jews, Buddhists and Baha’i. His intention is to help veterans, the homeless, and other underserved communities who are interested in meditation and the teachings of the Buddha.

