

THE LIVING LIGHT

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

Volume 62, Number 8

Whittier First Friends Church

Ninth Month, 2023

A Full and Blessed Summer

It has been two months since the last Living Light issue, and Friends have had a full summer of activity with plenty of fellowship, learning, and service opportunities. We have experienced: **concerts in the park** on Mondays, **organ concerts** in the meetinghouse on Tuesdays, and **picnics** in the park on Wednesdays. We also had an ice cream social and a crazy hat tea party.



We participated in the **Christmas in July** and **Car Show** fun and fundraisers with the Mission **Collaborative** to provide diapers and canned food for families at the Food Distribution Center, held our Summer FUM cam-

paign to raise funds for the **Turkana Mission** and remember **Eden Grace**, and hosted our amazing water themed **Peace Day** featuring the Aquarium of the Pacific touch tank and guests from the Collaborative. Finally, our FCNL Whittier **Advocacy Team** has been going strong, meeting with Representative Linda

Sanchez at her office, having a Zoom meeting with Senator Diane Feinstein's office, and making contact to set up a meeting with Senator Padilla's office to advocate for funding of peacebuilding programs in the federal budget.

Some of our fall activities are already underway. We have begun our **Walking with Quakers** series on Zoom on Monday nights from 7 to 8:30 pm. Coming up, we have the return of **All Friends Fellowship Night** (Wed., Sept. 13, 6 pm and Wed., Oct. 11, 6 pm), and our **Intergenerational Meeting for Learning** is scheduled to begin October 1. That will be a big day because we will celebrate **World Quaker Day** with the Friends World Committee on Consultation as we return to Sunday morning worship in the meeting house. The theme this year is "Living the Spirit of Ubuntu: Responding with Hope to God's Call to Care for Creation and One-another". Ubuntu is a concept from our African neighbors. In Nguni Bantu it means "humanity". It is sometimes translated as "I am because we are" (also "I am because you are") or "humanity towards others". In Xhosa, it is also used in a more philosophical sense to mean "the belief in a universal bond of sharing that connects all humanity." Check out the articles in this issue for more details on some of these events.

Friendly Fare by Lea Wright

Dear Friends, It's been a summer of getting out and traveling again for many people. I've been living vicariously through all of you lucky people as I read about your fun vacations and travels.

Friends Travel: **Cassie, Steven, Landon, Avalon, and Hudson Caringella** spent two weeks in Ohio enjoying time with family who live there. Fireflies, sparklers, and ice cream were highlights of their stay. **Elinore Petoletti** sailed on the Mississippi and Ohio



Rivers from Pittsburgh to Minneapolis on a river boat cruise. **Mahlon & Gwen Woirhaye** traveled a lot this summer: A week in Times Square with Musical Theatre West kicked off their month of June, closely followed by a river cruise in Germany with friends of over 60 years. Next they enjoyed a few days at the Oregon Shakespeare Festival. (Unfortunately further travels were put on hold when Gwen hurt her back. We continue to keep Gwen in our prayers for her ongoing recovery.) During the summer, **Brendon & Deanna** and **Cedric, Anthea, and Elyse (ABCDE) Woirhaye** had the wonderful opportunity to visit such places as Yellowstone National Park, Craters of the Moon National Monument, and the Experimental Breeder Reactor-I (EBR-I) (world's first nuclear power plant to produce usable electricity through atomic fission) in Idaho. After those excursions, the family settled in Cedar City, Utah, (Shakespeare Festival) to take in several theatrical productions such as "The Play That Goes Wrong", "Romeo and Juliet", and "Raisin in the Sun", to name a few. Also, Cedric and Elyse gained employment experience working

at San Dimas Canyon Nature Center by caring for the collection of animals in the sanctuary there. The family closed their summer vacation in Laguna Beach relaxing. Next stops will include their children returning to college and high school. The family felt blessed to still be able to get everyone together to enjoy vacation. **Marilyn Fant** celebrated her birthday with her son, **Dave**, on a special cruise to Norway. They immersed themselves in 9 days of all shades of green and blue, quaint villages nestled in the fjords, singing with the piano man, and dancing in the club! **Candice, Bill, and Ashley Ryder** took a short trip to the Central Coast, visiting San Luis Obispo, Pismo Beach, Morro Bay, and Solvang. **Lori Graham & husband Bruce Crocker** traveled



to Pittsburgh for a family wedding. Lori's mother-in-law **Barbara** joined her on Zoom for First Friends Meeting for Worship while they

were there. **Elizabeth Camp** brought the Living Light with her to the quadrennial convention of Soroptimist International in Dublin, Ireland, where about 1,700 people from 120 countries and territories came together to share how



they work to improve the lives of women and girls. Here she is with the Living Light continuing our tradition: "The Living Light

Friendly Fare - continued from page 2

Travels." (Remember, your submissions are welcome and needed.) Unfortunately Elizabeth came home with a bad cold and sinus congestion which turned out to be Covid.

Friends Celebrate: Prayers of joy and thanksgiving for the happy and safe arrival of two new nieces for **Marilyn Fant:** Eleanor and Abigail.

Friends Visit: **Bob & Sabron Newton** were visited by son, **Ben**, daughter-in-law, **Melinda**, and their son **Henry**.



School and Work: **Cedric Woirhaye** celebrated his 5 year high school reunion. **Landon Caringella** posed for a back-to-school picture with siblings **Avalon** and **Hudson**. (8th grade, 5th grade and preschool, respectively.)

Friends Correspond: It's always nice to hear from **Ami Troedsson** who sends greetings to everyone who reads the *Living Light*. She says she is looking forward to hearing more about **Loletta's** adventures to Egypt and Washington DC.

Friends Remember: Prayers for the family and friends of **Elizabeth Flournoy** who passed to new life on July 3, 2023. She was the mother of **Jim** and mother-in-law to **Linda**. And prayers for the family and friends of **Thomas Creelman** who passed on August 3. He was the husband of **Joy (Klane Robison's** niece), and father of **Derek**.

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, or deliver to me at church on Sunday. See you next month!

Loletta's Lines

Seeing humor in all things makes a difference in my life and attitude. When I started using the term *Theater of the Absurd*, I realized I should know more about it. Wikipedia reports: "... [It] attacks the



comfortable certainties... It aims to shock its audience out of complacency, to bring it face to face with the harsh facts of the human situation ...But the challenge behind this message is anything but one of despair. It is a challenge to accept the human condition as it is, in all its mystery and absurdity, and to bear it with dignity, nobly, responsibly; precisely *because* there are no easy solutions to the mysteries of existence, because ultimately man is alone in a meaningless world. The shedding of easy solutions, of comforting illusions... leaves behind it a sense of freedom and relief. And that is why... the Theatre of the Absurd does not provoke tears of despair but the laughter of liberation." There are things I both agree and disagree with. I would remove "ultimately man is alone in a meaningless world." I would substitute "ultimately immersion, submersion, and absolute submission to the beauty of God is the meaningfulness of life." Life has meaning!

The article also says, "...nothing is funnier than unhappiness." Hmm. I do agree that when I let go of my false sense of control, and realize the root of unhappiness is my own insistence that life conform to my ideas, I experience freedom that is the ultimate in relief- culminating in laughing at myself!

Finally, "Good is only an illusion. Evil is a Nothingness which arises upon the ruins of Good." I don't agree. Good is not an illusion, and evil may bring a feeling of nothingness. But they exist simultaneously; determined in their definition by how the world is affected by them



Russ' Reflections

Because we have cut back the amount of music in Meeting for Worship, I have not been able to play much organ repertoire, especially postludes, so I decided to prepare a weekly organ concert series for the summer. I have been able to play some favorite pieces, but also to learn some new repertoire. By the time you receive this issue, I will have played eight programs and presented a piano colleague who plays repertoire by Sergei Rachmaninoff. The audiences have averaged about 25 attendees which include friends from Chorale Bel Canto, New Century Singers, college friends, several organist colleagues, a few Friends, and even my mom, sister, and brother-in-law who attended one. We have received offerings of about \$200 a night which will go into our Organ Fund. I have collaborated with Michael Fausto, tenor, Linda Brown, organist, and some singer friends. I have played some of the earliest organ music to some very recent compositions. Some of my favorites have been: Franck Andantino, Hindemith Sonata II and William Mathias Recessional, "The Greatest of These is Love" by Daniel Moe (with Michael), pieces for two organs, and some Bach and Reger pieces. The most challenging programs to prepare were the Songs of Middle Earth (requiring arranging piano music for organ and coordinating with six singers), and a couple of new Bach pieces. I have typically spent 16-20 hours of practice and preparation for each program. I undertook this series, mostly for something to do, but it has been fabulous to share music with friends. I am grateful for those who attended and for those who joined me in music-making. An audience member said to me, "You know, you will have to do this again next summer." We'll see.

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News from Whittier Friends School



Summer was a time of great adventure for Whittier Friends School children. Preschool had "Summer Fun Days" once a week,

which included such things as visits to the Whittier Farmer's Market, water sprinkler days, and special "science days" (experiences with shaving cream one day, and experiences with balloons another day). Elementary and Pre-kindergarten children had the opportunity to attend "Summer Enrichment" which occurred for a total of 8 weeks, Tuesday-Friday, from 9:00 am to 3:00 pm most weeks. With an attendance as high as 15 one week, some of whom were former students of WFS returning specifically for this program, it was a successful club-like program where students were able to practice numbers and letters skills, make art projects, play card games and mad libs, and experience numerous social activities.

Now Whittier Friends School is back to the school year and hitting our 49th year running! Kindergarten through fifth grade began Wednesday, August 30, and preschool began Friday, September 1. We currently have 24 students enrolled, more than last fall. This year in history, our children will be studying world exploration and American history. In science, they will focus on human biology and health. We are looking forward to a field trip to the Pumpkin Patch planned for October and an intergenerational activity day, scheduled for September 11.

Our school continues to rely on fundraising to support our budget. During the next few weeks, invitations will go out to support our

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Russ' Reflections - continued from page 4

The Music Committee met recently to discuss choir plans for the fall. We would like to return to Meeting for Worship with singers on October 1st, when we return to the Meeting House. We will be recruiting singers and attempting to rebuild the Friends Choir. We realize that we do not offer our section leaders a salary that will attract good readers and strong commitment. We have looked at the resources we have for section leaders and choir scholars and, with some adjustments in our schedule (Sundays only and 9 months instead of 10), feel that we can offer higher salaries without needing additional funds. We will see if it is enough to attract singers to First Friends. We would like to invite Whittier Friends who may have interest to join the Friends Choir. Contact Russ if you are interested. All parts are needed.



AFFN Returns

Mark your calendar for the return of All Friends Fellowship Night on Wednesday, Sept. 13, at 6 pm in Fellowship Hall. A potluck dinner will be followed by a presentation from our very own pastor, Loletta, to share her adventures in Egypt during her recent Sabbatical. On October 11, we will gather again at 6 pm for food followed by Loletta's presentation of her time in Washington D.C. this summer. All are welcome to attend. Participants are encouraged to bring their own plates, cups, eating utensils and dessert, side dish, or both.

Whittier Friends School - continued from page 4

Annual Giving Campaign. Please consider adding us to your regular giving. We are also beginning to collect memories and stories about experiences for our 50th anniversary celebration, coming next school year. If you do not receive information about this and would like to, you can email Cassie at cassie.wfs@gmail.com. There are also other ways you can support us. Scrip gift card orders are placed every other month. You can email Lea at lea.wfs@gmail.com for information on scrip - gift cards where you receive the face value that you pay for, while the company donates to us. It is a great way to budget your monthly spending or purchase gifts. You can also purchase scrip and then donate it to our school to help with classroom expenses. We especially appreciate amazon.com and Petco scrip. Visit our Amazon wish list at <https://amzn.to/2QK8Yp8> If you prefer not to shop at Amazon, looking at our wish list can give you ideas for the types of items we can use.

We thank our First Friends Church community for the ceaseless support and look forward to sharing with you all of the exciting things we do this year. Remember to refer us to local families seeking a school that promotes our Quaker values!

-Cassie Caringella

Intergenerational Meeting for Learning Returns October 1

The Intergenerational Meeting for Learning class resumes October 1, at 9:30 am. Friends of all ages are invited to meet with us in person or by Zoom to share and discuss stories by children's authors that bring awareness to the issues of peace, social justice, racial equality, and environmental stewardship. Don't miss this unique opportunity to share and explore these topics with Friends of all ages.

FCNL Advocacy Team at Work

The Whittier FCNL Advocacy Team has been especially active these last several weeks. In addition to our own Zoom visit with Senator Feinstein's staff, we joined the FCNL California Team of 75 participants from across the state who also lobbied senators. And we had met previously with our local congressional representative.



The 860 jellybeans on the left represent the military budget for a year. The middle 76 jelly beans represent the budget for diplomacy, humanitarian, and other developmental assistance. The partial slice of a single jelly bean on the right represents the cost for the three programs for which we advocate.

We are advocating for three peacebuilding programs. First and foremost, these programs protect and save lives and promote peace. But they also save money and the planet's resources by avoiding or resolving conflict before it escalates into violence. The funds we request are equivalent to a single grain of rice when compared to the "pounds of rice" for other proposed aspects of military spending. The three programs we support are the *Complex Crises Fund* (\$66 million); *Reconciliation Programs* (\$40 million); and the *Atrocities Prevention Fund* (\$25 million). Although we are advocating for this increased funding, we insist that Congress, at the very least, maintain the 2023 funding levels for these vital programs.

~Darrell Warren

Peace Day Teaches Stewardship



On the bright and sunny afternoon of Aug. 26, First Friends Church hosted our second annual Peace Day, a free, fun, family friendly event. This year's theme was "Sharing and Caring for Water" and featured water-themed interactive stations as well as a special guest appearance by the Aquarium of the Pacific mobile touch tank. Approximately 50 kids and their parents shared in the activities which included sidewalk chalk drawings; watercolor artwork; games and songs; stories teaching about the precious resource of fresh water as well as the importance of all water habitats; a bubble station; ring toss; and the opportunity to touch and learn about some delicate sea creatures. Participants earned a sticker on their "peace-port" at each station as well as a snack or a small prize. Members of the recently formed Mission Collaborative attended as well. "This was a wonderful outreach for the community," commented Pastor Loletta. We are especially grateful to all the volunteers that worked together to put on this event.

Candice Ryder

Summer Mission Project Honors Eden Grace



First Friends Church joins the Friends United Meeting community in grieving the passing of Eden Grace, longtime key staff member at FUM. Her legacy continues to make a transformative

difference in lives and places where she served. This is especially true in Turkana, Kenya, where she was instrumental in starting the Girl Child Education program, supporting the training of pastors, assisting in the development of the board, and raising funds for the mission. This year's FFC Summer Mission Project honors Eden's service in Turkana.

Her colleague, John Muhanji writes: "Turkana Friends Mission is doing an incredible job in promoting the gospel of Christ in such a poor environment, planting churches, and providing basic education and meals for children. The mission struggles with multiple challenges ranging from a harsh climate to extreme poverty, but this has not discouraged the mission from spreading the gospel of Christ.

"Turkana Friends Mission has 31 local churches spread among the pastoralist communities in the vast Turkana desert area of northern Kenya. The Mission has four primary schools, which have been turned over to the government for management and teacher posting. It has over 25 ECD (Early Childhood Development) schools in local churches, and each preschool has a feeding program. It promotes adult literacy education to those people who never saw the door of a classroom. It also supports Girl Child Education. Many girls have since benefited, and many of them are teaching or assisting in ECD classes in their

local churches. They also have some buildings that were built 40 years ago, which remain centers for food distribution and evangelism. The renovations for these houses are needed, which will provide extra income to the mission.

"Despite the hardship in Turkana, the mission has found it worthy of extending its ministry to South Sudan. With the little they get, they are sharing to reach the unreached communities for Christ."

This year's FFC Summer Mission Project began collecting in mid-July and will conclude mid-October soon after we return to the Meeting House for Sunday morning worship. Friends are encouraged to make donations:

- 1. At Meeting for Worship in a basket that's ready for coins, bills or checks - make check out to First Friends Church with "Summer Mission" in the memo line.***
- 2. By mailing checks directly to the church.***
- 3. Through our FFC website donation option. Add "Summer Mission" to the comments section. Thanks to everyone for their support and generosity.***

Loletta's Lines - continued from page 3

and how we react to them. All things work for good for those who love God- not because evil or bad things don't happen to us. Not because they aren't painful or even just aggravating. But because we learn, grow, and make them into positive experiences we find good in, and make good out of.

After all, when bad things happen to us- why not us? They are all around. But so are good things. If good things or bad things happen to run into us...they weren't aiming for us! We have a choice how to respond either way. One way is to laugh at the absurdity of thinking I am in control of it! Life can be very absurd! And God laughs, cries, and dances along with us!

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 62 Number #8

Issue Date: September 1, 2023

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

Rose Nedrow

Kathy Robison

Ami Troedsson

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