

# THE LIVING LIGHT

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

Ephesians 5:9

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Volume 62, Number 11

Whittier First Friends Church

12th Month, 2023

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Merry Christmas!



## First Friends Family Christmas Extravaganza

For this year's Christmas dinner, we're going "Family and Friends, Friendly and Simple" style. On **Sunday, December 10, at 5:00 pm**, we will gather for this extravaganza in Fellowship Hall for a favorite Christmas foods potluck dinner with crafts, carols, and games. There will be no cost for this event, but please be sure to RSVP to let us know how many will come and what you are bringing to add to the feast. All are invited, so invite extended family, friends, and other loved ones to join in celebrating the holiday with your First Friends family.

## Christmas Eve - December 24

On December 24, we will have two opportunities to gather for Meeting for Worship. We will

meet at the usual **11:00 am** hour in the Meeting House for Sunday worship, and then gather again at **7:00 pm**, for a special Christmas Eve evening experience. Both will be hybrid. Please consider joining Friends for one or both of these worship experiences, either online or in person.

## New Year's Eve Party with Friends

The First Friends New Year's Eve party is back! Save the date for our 6 to 9 pm celebration in Fellowship Hall. Bring family, F(f)riends, games, puzzles, and food to share (including Christmas goodies that need to go to make room for the New Year)! We will have our traditional salute to the New Year at midnight Philadelphia time (9 pm) and wish everyone a happy, healthy, and peaceful New Year together.

## Friendly Fare by Lea Wright

**Dear Friends,** November was a month of



Thanksgiving, and what better way to give special thanks than to enjoy the tradition of the harvest display in the front of the Meeting House. **Mary Marshburn** has

enjoyed sharing the bounty of her garden harvest for

many, many years, and we have enjoyed viewing it. The **Caringella** kids are shown here in front of the harvest display in the meetinghouse on November 19.

**Friends About Town:** In November, **Bill and Ashley Ryder** wrapped up their first soccer

season of coaching together for AYSO Region 75, Whittier. Bill has coached youth for many years and Ashley played until she was in eighth grade. This year, they pooled their talents to coach a



team of five-year-old boys on Friday nights.

**Friends At Home:** This was the first year that Friends didn't venture out to **Bob & Lou Secord's** house for their annual Christmas open house party after 40 years. Thanks for the memories! We love you both!

**Friends Visit:** Last month while in CA for **Emily's** wedding (See *The Friendly Fare* Nov 2023) **Mike & Betsy Wood**, and **Kirk Wright** had a chance to visit **Donna & Milton Wright**.



**School and Work:** **Landon Caringella**

performed in his sixth middle school drama production last month. In "The Greek Mythology Olympiaganza," Landon was one of two narrators, sharing a humorous view of Greek myth after Greek myth, and hardly getting to go off stage during the entire one-hour-and-fifteen-minute show! He began the show with his monologue about "Geek Mythology," where he described all kinds of geeks, but his co-host informed him that their performance was supposed to be about Greek mythology, not Geeks. Landon got many laughs throughout the three performances of his play, and had many relatives and friends come see him perform. He looks forward to his seventh middle school drama show this month, when he will perform in "A Christmas Carol," and will be auditioning for his eighth show for the spring. The family has enjoyed the opportunities Landon received from Benton Middle School for drama these last three years.

**Friends Travel:** **Elinore Petoletti** had quite a traveling adventure. She said, "It was fun - a good group of people." This time she stayed in California - a little closer to home than in the past. The trip included the Scarecrow Festival in Cambria, olive oil tasting, and visits to a couple of new wineries, including Sculpterra Winery and Sculptural Garden. Her group also toured Return to Freedom, a wild horse sanctuary that provides a safe haven to almost 400 wild

*Friendly Fare Continued on page 3*

## Loletta's Lines

In the blink of an eye it's already November and I am writing a December article. Time flew this year as always, and by the time you read this we will be well into the Advent season (four weeks of anticipation of the birth of Jesus) and enjoying our Music Sunday.



This time is both joyful and melancholy for me and many Friends. I love all the feelings. In spite of the warmer weather in California, my body still seeks the comfort of flannel pajamas, the taste of hot chocolate, the smell of baking cookies, the sight of lights and pine trees, and the sound of familiar carols. My heart goes to memories of loved ones, family, friends and Friends near and far, present and past, creating a safe, loving and joy-filled experience. I experience the feeling I get when I read the verse in Genesis, "God saw everything that God made, and indeed, it was very good." I know that whether it is a happy time or the darkest valley, God's goodness and mercy is with us all the days of our life. My mind goes to queries of peace, and hope of finding love and joy in a world that sorely needs them, and God's promise in Isaiah of, "...a Wonderful Counselor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. "My soul goes to seeking the Presence in it all; a Presence that exists now as strongly as it did before time began. That is what the celebration is all about. Realizing the Presence in our midst, which we are in the midst of all the time. The Gospel according to John reports Jesus assuring us, "This is the Spirit of truth... You know the Spirit, because the Spirit abides with you, and the Spirit will be in and among you." As we celebrate Christmas may you feel it; may you hear, see, taste, smell, touch, and know- Emanuel-God with us. May we all embody it for the world.

## Friendly Fare Continued from page 2

horses in a natural habitat. **Jo Nita Beede** and her brother **Norm** got to take a little road trip to the Bay Area of Northern California for an extended weekend (Nov.18-20). The occasion was an annual pre-Thanksgiving 'Harvest Party' hosted by (brother) **Ben** & (sister-in-law) **Gayle Beede**, in their beautiful home on a hillside in Pleasant Hill. Jo Nita said, "It was really nice just to relax, hear and tell stories, play with the kids, laugh a lot, enjoy a little music, great meals and time with family, and extended family and friends. A time to realize and be grateful for the true gift and blessings of family and friends!" Shown is Ben's youngest granddaughter, Alice.



**Friends Correspond:** It's always a treat to hear from **Ami Troedson** who sent her greetings and appreciation to Friends. **Kirk Wright** & wife **Allison** are enjoying the fall holiday season. They've enjoyed seeing photos of his cousin, **Dan Wright's** family pumpkins and are glad to know the tradition continues. Kirk says it's definitely fall in Portland: colorful trees, intermittent rain, and "leaf day" when the city collects leaves that residents push into the street.

**Friends Remember:** Prayers for the family of **Don Carty** who passed away recently.

**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! Pictures are welcome.

## Russ' Reflections

Welcome to **Eliya Frantz**, our new Alto Section Leader! Eliya has degrees in Music Performance and Psychology from Azusa Pacific University. She has a diverse experience across musical genres including pop, soul, jazz, Broadway, and opera. She has worked with children as a gymnastics coach and teaches voice. She is a good music reader and has a lovely voice. We are thrilled to have her join the Friends Choir.



Be Prepared - Music Sunday, December 3, 2023. Please join the Friends Choir in a musical service based on themes of the season of Advent. We will present five choral pieces: "Come, Rejoice Believers" - Dietrich Buxtehude; "The Yearning" - Craig Courtney; "Prepare Ye" - Marc Robinson; "Canticle of the Turning" - Rory Cooney; and "Thou Who Wast Rich" - Molly Ijames. These will be woven between sections of Charles Tournemire's (1870-1939) set of pieces for Mass on the Third Sunday of Advent. We will sing together two early plainsong hymns that resonate with the other music. Scriptures will include Mark 13:24-37, 2 Peter 3:8-15a, and Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13.

**Ninth Night of Christmas - Organ and Hymns, Tuesday, January 2, 2023 at 7 pm.** Come sing Christmas Hymns and hear some organ arrangements for the season of Christmas. Russ Litchfield will offer some of his favorite pieces and will lead the singing from our Harris organ.

**Thank you** for a few weeks of robust singing during Meeting for Worship! Keep it up! It is great having the Friends Choir back again to inspire us to deepen our worship. We now have eight singers. You are welcome to join us Sundays at 9 am for rehearsal if you feel the call to music ministry. Contact Russ so music can be prepared for you. Best wishes to you for the holidays!



## News from Whittier Friends School

It was with thankful hearts that Whittier Friends School elementary children prepared and enjoyed a full spread of foods for their annual Feast Day, this year held on Friday, November 17. Children in kindergarten through fifth



grade worked as a team to make mashed potatoes and gravy, chicken nuggets, corn, green beans, and biscuits. The elementary students cooked for themselves and also shared the meal with the preschool children. For some of the children, it was the first time ever working a can opener! Other important lessons included the difference between "tsp" and "tbsp," and proper hygiene when cooking for a group. Before eating, children also shared reasons to be thankful in their lives. This was the first time our students have "cooked" the full Feast Day meal since November 2019! It is a special tradition that we are so happy to see return.

Friday, December 15, at 6:30 pm will bring Whittier Friends School's annual Christmas program. "The Gift of the Magi" is a full, multi-scene skit with lots of lines for our elementary students to memorize! There will also be holiday songs sung by our children of all ages, preschool through 5th grade. The Christmas program is free for all! Guests are welcome to bring single servings of treats to share after the show, but it is not required. Join us to ring in the holiday season.

-Cassie Caringella

## **RIGHT SHARING: "THE POWER OF ENOUGH"**

Jackie Stillwell brought the Worship Message on First Day, October 29. Her title "The Power of Enough" describes the philosophy of Right Sharing of World Resources, the Quaker-led community development organization of which Jackie has been Executive Secretary since 2015. RSWR is a unique US-based village self-help program operating in India, Kenya, Sierra Leone, and Guatemala. Ruth Bueso, RSWR's Guatemala Coordinator, accompanied Jackie on her visit to First Friends.

Right Sharing of World Resources grew out of concerns expressed at the Fourth World Conference of Friends in Guilford, NC, in 1967. These included finding ways to improve the economy of impoverished people living in developing countries. Since its inception as a program of the Friends World Committee for Consultation, and later as an independent organization, RSWR has come to concentrate on empowerment of women as a major means of economic development. Jackie emphasized the importance of Friends' testimonies of simplicity and equality to world peace and prosperity and the role played by RSWR in this effort.

Jackie's worship message was followed by a buffet lunch in Fellowship Hall and a slide show description of RSWR's activities narrated by Jackie and Ruth. RSWR operates through a country's Coordinator (Ruth is Guatemala's Coordinator) who identifies local groups seeking funding for industries such as small vegetable farms, dairies, or brick-making operations. These are encouraged, if they seem worthy, to apply to RSWR for small grants, offered as loans, to be repaid from proceeds of the new industry. The RSWR Board of Trustees, mostly members of Friends Meetings in the US, judges the proposals and makes recommendations for funding. The success of this system of "micro-lending" has proven very successful, as evi-

denced by the fact that 97% of the loans have been repaid within the first year or two of operation of the new industry.

Ruth Bueso described women's self-help efforts in her country. There are now more than a dozen groups that sponsor community-building activities, including educational seminars on improving women's status in Guatemala, seeking to build concepts of self-esteem, community, conflict resolution, and decision-making. Jackie also has a personal interest in Guatemala, having lived in that country for ten years, three of those as a Peace Corps worker.

*-Bob Newton*

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## **Christmas Tree of Peace Winter Mission Project**



Sparkling lights on the Christmas Tree of Peace will decorate our foyer again this season. Your contributions will help make our tree even merrier! The tree will welcome donations of colorful mittens, scarves, winter caps, and socks until the end of December. All of these gathered items will be gifted to "The Loving Thing", serving our neighbors who stop in at St. Matthias. In addition, any canned food items that choose to ride in our red wagon will be pulled through the back gate at the Interfaith Food Center for distribution to families in 2024! If you are unable to bring items to the Meetinghouse, and are interested in participating, please send your monetary contributions to First Friends with "Winter Mission" noted in the comments section. We will be purchasing grocery gift cards through Whittier Friends School scrip program to give along with our other donations. Merry giving!!!

## **Advocacy Team Hosts FCNL Event: "Democracy Beyond Voting"**



Our own Advocacy Team was recently joined by other interested community members for a day of FCNL's Quaker Public Policy Institute. The event, which included local teams from across the country, was presented online from Washington, D.C. We heard from speakers about lobbying, writing letters to the editor, investing in local peacebuilding, the current Israel-Palestine conflict, and the future of peacebuilding itself. Many speakers were eloquent and powerful, sharing their own very personal experiences as they advocate for peace.

We were also joined by a live visit from Nicholas Hernandez, from Senator Laphonza Butler's office. Nicholas shared his thoughts and insights on lobbying, but he also fielded questions and listened attentively as we shared our own concerns about peacebuilding and intersectional issues, such as immigration, the environment, and other very current events. It was a meaningful dialogue. We hope that this gathering will motivate others to share their voices and participate more directly in democracy.

An energy was felt in the room, and we thank our own Advocacy Team members who shared their experience with new community members.

We are also grateful for our able Tech Team for the set-up, and extend gratitude to Carrin Bouchard who helped to prepare refreshments for our guests and Team Members.

Our next FCNL National Call is December 6, at 5:00 p.m. in the meetinghouse library. Everyone is welcome. For more details on either of these events, contact the church office or ask any Advocacy Team member.

*-Darrell Warren*

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## **Mission Project with The Ministry Collaborative January 27, 2023, 10-12 AM**

### **Hygiene Kit Packing Party For Neighbors Without Homes**

#### **Start Collecting:**

- 1) Clean, screw top, prescription bottles with labels removed.
- 2) Regular size shampoo, laundry soap, liquid hand soap and men's white athletic socks.

*Also welcomed are: women's hygiene items, razors, toothbrushes, and travel size: toothpaste, shampoo, and hand lotion and basic first aid items (band aids, antiseptic ointment)*

### **Bring Items & Help Assemble**

**Saturday January 27, 2024**

**10AM - 12PM**

**First Friends Church**

**13205 Philadelphia Street**

**Whittier CA 90601**

**562-698-9805**

## IN THE CAUCASUS WITH KATHY

All Friends Fellowship Night is in full-swing this year after a long pandemic layoff. On Nov. 8, world traveler Kathy Marin brought a slide show documenting her tour earlier this year of the Transcaucasian countries of Azerbaijan, Georgia, and Armenia. Her presentation followed a sumptuous potluck supper organized by Mary Marshburn and the Hospitality Committee.

Kathy's tour began in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. This city on the Caspian Sea is both very old and ultramodern. The Royal Palace of the former Shahs contrasts with the graceful avant-garde architecture of the Performing Arts Center. This and many other beautiful modern buildings are the result of petroleum revenues: Azerbaijan is one of the world's largest oil- and- gas producers. Representing extreme antiquity are the 20,000-year-old lithographs (engraved rock inscriptions) near Baku.

From Baku, Kathy's illustrated narrative took Fellowshipippers into the Caucasus Mountains, with its beautiful scenery and quaint rural cultures. Copper-working and rug-weaving are examples of folk-industries described by Kathy. Her group witnessed a charming ceremony in honor of a bride-to-be and actually got to participate in the communal dancing.

The group entered the country of Georgia at one of the four border-crossings. Previously a Soviet republic, Georgia became independent in 1981. Georgia is a dominantly Christian country - actually the second nation to adopt Christianity as the official state religion, after Armenia. Tbilisi, the capital city, has several World Heritage Sites. These include a basilica built in the 6th Century and a monastery with monk's living quarters, no longer occupied, carved into rocky cliff sides. The tour group visited a unique community of identical three-room houses built in 2007 for the 60,000 refugees from fighting in the break-away re-



gion of Abkhazia in northern Georgia. Kathy noted that Josef Stalin was a native of Georgia. Georgians discreetly avoid mention of the pogroms and gulags of the Soviet Stalinist regime.

The snow-covered Caucasus Mountains extend into Armenia. The tour group avoided the Nagorno-Karabakh region, still under dispute, sometimes violently, between Azerbaijan and Armenia. Armenia calls itself the oldest Christian nation: the Armenian Apostolic Church was founded in the First Century, and Armenia was declared officially Christian in 302 CE. Kathy showed pictures of the world's oldest Christian cathedral near Yerevan, the capital. A choir of five beautifully-costumed young women performed ancient religious chants for visitors to the cathedral.

Yerevan lies at the foot of Mt. Ararat, the legendary lodging place of Noah's Ark after the Deluge. In Yerevan, Kathy's group visited the Armenian Genocide Memorial, created in memory of the 1.5 million Armenians that were deported by the Ottoman Empire in 1916 and left to die in the Syrian Desert. Kathy's presentation ended with beautiful pastoral scenes with Mt. Ararat in the background. Friends expressed great appreciation to Kathy for yet another memorable virtual excursion.

-Bob Newton

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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!