

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 11

Whittier First Friends Church

12th Month, 2024

Friends Celebrate the Holiday Season



This year's holiday season brings many opportunities to gather with family, friends, and community, and the festivities have already started at First Friends. On Sunday, Nov. 24, along with Beth Shalom of Whittier, we hosted the Whittier Area Clergy Association's Thanksgiving Celebration. Several local faith communities were invited, and the program included music by a combined choir, soloists, and hymns, interspersed with gratitude themed readings, and a time for silent reflection. Attendees gathered afterward for fellowship, punch, and cookies.

In December, the festivities will continue. On Tuesday, December 10 at 7:30 pm, Music Director, Russ Litchfield, will present "Still Waiting", an evening of organ and Advent hymns. For Music Sunday, the First Friends Choir will present "Rejoice, A Child is Born," on December 22, at 11 am.

Whittier Friends School is sponsoring a Christmas gift boutique Dec. 6 through 11, with a special session at Rise of Meeting on Sunday, December 8. They will also present "A Charlie Brown Christmas" on December 18, at 6 pm in Fellowship Hall (see page 5 for more information.)



This year's Family Christmas Dinner Potluck is called "I Love to Tell the Story" and will be on Sunday, December 15, at 5 pm, in Fellowship Hall. Join us for a festive time of food, singing, crafts, and story-telling. Plan to bring your favorite holiday dish, and watch for the RSVP coming your way soon to help us with planning.



Finally, Christmas Eve service is Tuesday, Dec. 24, at 7 pm, and will feature music, scripture, and candle lighting. As with all of these special events, everyone is welcome and encouraged to participate, so mark your calendar now, and plan to bring a friend.

Friendly Fare by Lea Wright

Dear Friends, The holidays are upon us. Next month I look forward to reporting about your Thanksgiving celebrations. (See my email address at the end of the page.) One of the biggest Thanksgiving news items in my family is



when our 3 tortoises go into hibernation for the winter. Part of our Thanksgiving tradition is when Dan puts them in cardboard boxes that go on a shelf in the garage. This year they were ready to go much earlier than usual. Maybe the weather was colder than usual. Who can figure out what goes on in their tortoise brains?

Friends Celebrate: **Ashley Ryder** celebrated her 21st birthday during the week of Thanksgiving with a girls' trip to Las Vegas with her mom, **Candice**, and sisters, **Katerina** and **Margarita**.

School and Work: **Avalon Caringella** enjoyed



her debut on the Benton Middle School stage as a shark in her school's play "Silver's Secret" in November. She got to help move set pieces around and also provided comedic relief between scenes. It was a joy for her family and friends to see her having a great time up there! Here she is with the Living Light continuing our tradition: "The Living Light Travels." (Remember, your

submissions are welcome and needed.) A dress recently designed and created by

Anathea Woirhaye using historically informed sewing techniques is currently on exhibition at the Metropolitan



Museum of Art's Employee Art Show in New York City, New York. The dress is historically reproducing Giacomo Ceruti's painting "A Woman With a Dog". Anathea's dress is in the center. Meanwhile, **Deanna Woirhaye** reports that the photography exhibition at the Whittier Art Gallery showcasing some of her more recent artwork was successful. She enjoyed visiting with many old friends during the show's reception.

Friends About Town: On November 11, **Tom Van Dorn** got his picture taken as the first client to donate platelets at the new Red Cross Donation Center in Riverside, CA. After 20+ years of donating in Fullerton, it is a welcome change to become a regular at the Riverside center just 5 miles from his house. Tom has donated 1463 units (183 gallons) so far and is aiming for 1500 and beyond.

Friends Remember: **Rev. Dr. William (Bill) Peterson** passed to new life peacefully on October 28, 2024. Bill was the interim pastor for our meeting from 2008 to 2010. Read more about him on page 4.

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

Light is present throughout the Bible. It was there "in the beginning." It was in the wilderness's burning bush and pillar of fire. It shined brilliantly as angels proclaimed the



Messiah. John reported in his Good News, and Jesus said "I am the Light of the world." It showed up at the end of the Bible in The Revelation to (a different) John, where there is no need for a sun or moon in the city of God.

Psalm 119 says God's word is a lamp to guide our feet and light our path. The word "lamp" is *ner* in Hebrew. This is a gentler version of the Light. It is a small lantern with a solitary wick. It is not an explosion creating the universe, a bush burning without being consumed, a towering guide blazing in the night, a blinding celebration, incarnation of Love, or God's brilliant glory illuminating a heavenly city. But we know God is experienced in large and small ways. God is always present guiding, luring, lighting the path!

The archetype of Light is in all faith traditions. Both light and darkness exist as part of creation, life, and spiritual experience. They are not opposites; both are necessary for life. Light in unlimited measure dehydrates and burns, but little grows without light. A whole and healthy cycle of life includes both light, excitement and activity, and darkness, rest, and rejuvenation. Earth-based spiritual traditions see spring and summer as time for planting, blooming, and growing spiritually. Fall and winter are the time for them to come to fruition, harvest, and to be nourished and rest. This is true in annual cycles and our whole life.

This Advent, Christmas, and winter season is filled with light and dark. The times in our world are, too. Jesus said we are to light our

lamps and not to hide them. But he also said to come away with me to rest and pray. It's a balance of light and dark, activity and rest. It is time to be quiet and find nourishment and rejuvenation, knowing the Light is always present within and around. Even when it is dark, the Light accompanies us always. Where do you rest in the quiet darkness and how do you keep your lamp lit?



Jackie Stillwell Brings News from Right Sharing of World Resources

Friends Elisabeth Elliot, Marilyn Fant and Loletta Barrett gathered with Jackie Stillwell and her colleague Eva from Guatemala to talk about our support for Right Sharing of World Resources. Jackie is stepping down as Executive Director in January after ten years but brought news of a new curriculum to help our meeting engage in support of RSWR! The visit also included a tour of Whittier Friends School. Jackie was head of school for a Quaker boarding school for 22 years.

Russ's Reflections

I would like to invite you to two musical events in December. The first is "Still Waiting," an evening of organ and hymns for the season of Advent on Tuesday, December 10th, at 7:30



pm. The program will feature settings of some Advent hymns, old and new, each followed by singing the hymn. Come join your voices with others who like to sing together in longing for the coming of Jesus at Christmas.

The second will be a Music Sunday on Sunday, December 22, at 11 am, entitled "Rejoice, A Child is Born." The choir will present two Baroque German works. *Puer natus in Bethlehem (A Child is Born in Bethlehem)* by Michael Praetorius (c.1571-1621), is a concerto-like work in two parts that alternates between soloists, choir, and instruments. It is based on a hymn, "A Boy is Born in Bethlehem," which we will sing all together. We will also present a brief cantata, "Rejoice, Earth and Heaven," by Dietrich Buxtehude (1637-1707), which celebrates the coming of Christ, bringer of grace, peace, and truth, and expresses gratitude to God for bringing salvation to Earth. The choir will be joined by stringed instruments and trumpets. We will conclude with the singing of "Good Christian Friends, Rejoice," followed by a festive piece by Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) for trumpets and organ. Please invite someone and come celebrate Christmas with the Friends Choir.

Finally, I wish to express my gratitude to you who attend Meeting for Worship and sing together. The singing has been stronger lately. I encourage you to continue to sing the hymns with courage and enthusiasm. It is one way we all can actively participate together in worship. Best wishes for the holidays.



Remembering Bill Peterson June 5, 1942 - October 28, 2024

Rev. Dr. William (Bill) M. Peterson was Interim Pastor at First Friends Church, a Quaker Meeting, from October 2008 until January 2010. He was a friend, colleague, and mentor to our current pastor Loletta Barrett. He cherished his time with the Friends - "the best experience in ministry in 40 years."

Bill was born on June 5, 1942, in Moline, Illinois. He grew up there and later attended and graduated from University of Illinois, Champaign in 1965 with an engineering degree. He moved to Seattle, working with the Boeing Company during the time of the Vietnam War. As a youth minister, he began supporting many who were leaving the country to avoid the draft. This experience caused him to return to Chicago where he simultaneously attended the University of Chicago, earning a Master of Arts in Social Services Administration in 1974, and Chicago Theological Seminary to earn a Master of Divinity.

Bill was called to Hillcrest Congregational Church in Whittier, California, as Senior Minister in 1985. During this ministry there, he studied with Nova Southwest University and received a Doctor of Education degree in 1998. He also studied and became a trainer of Interim Ministers serving many Southern California churches.

Among his many passions was peace. As a poet, he wrote about the power of relationships to nurture, heal, and support life. His sermons were inclusive, multiculturally sensitive, and unprejudiced.



News from Whittier Friends School



Fifteen Whittier Friends School students witnessed life-size blue whales on their IMAX field trip on November 7. In a spectacular 3D film, they learned how the endangered blue

whales are slowly making a comeback to certain locations on Earth, after having their populations decimated due to poaching. It was a film with a hopeful ending, as whale calves were spotted, and the children in our school were amazed to find out many new facts about blue whales. Did you know baby whales eat as much as 200 pounds of food a day? Wow! After the movie, WFS students visited the Ecosystems exhibit at California Science Center, as a preview of learning topics scheduled later in this school year.

If this sounds like a fun activity, we are always happy to have guests along on our field trips! Save the date - Monday, January 6 - for a trip to Los Angeles Zoo! If you'd like to come along, email Cassie.wfs@gmail.com for information on getting in on this zoo trip.

Wednesday, December 18, at 6:00 pm, will bring Whittier Friends School's annual Christmas program. "A Charlie Brown Christmas" explores the hustle and bustle and busy-ness of the holidays, and how we can sometimes lose sight of the message of hope for the season. This Christmas program is free for all, and we are happy to have guests join us for our festive show as we celebrate this special time of year together.

Two more exciting events will also be happening at Whittier Friends School this December. Check out our annual gift boutique and craft show, Friday, December 6 through Wednesday, December 11. For friends attending Meeting for Worship at First Friends Church on Sunday, December 8, we will have our boutique open at the rise of meeting. And for alum and current and past staff members of Whittier Friends School, we invite you to come and celebrate our 50th Anniversary at our Reunion Party on Saturday, December 28. RSVP at <http://evite.me/wfs50years> If you cannot attend, we encourage you to send memories or photos of your time at WFS (or even an update about yourself!) to WFS50years@gmail.com If you are looking for See's Candies for the holidays, we've got the solution. Contact the school office to place your order. Finally, we still have a few bags of our signature bean soup mix which make great gifts. Let us know how many you want - whittierfriendsschool@gmail.com (562)945-1654.

-Cassie Caringella

Calling all alum and present and former staff

Whittier Friends School Reunion Party

RSVP

<http://evite.me/wfs50years>

now!

Sat, 12/28/24
2:00-4:00 pm

Email your memories and photos wfs50years@gmail.com



Kathy Marin Shares Her African Travel Adventures at All Friends Fellowship Night

At November AFFN, Kathy Marin shared photos and stories from her most recent trip to eastern Africa where she spent a total of four weeks visiting Rwanda, Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania. She booked her trip with Overseas Adventure Travel which she recommends for individuals, couples, and groups who want to go beyond the usual tourist experience to learn more about local culture and interact with the people of a region.

This adventure began in the mountains of Volcanoes National Park in the tiny country of Rwanda in search of the once endangered gorillas made famous by Dian Fossey who wrote "Gorillas in the Mist." Her group followed, and closely observed, one of the 12 habituated (those used to humans) families that live in the area.

From there she traveled to Kigali, the capital of Rwanda, and visited the Nyamata Church Genocide Memorial about 30 miles outside the town. This World Heritage Site is one of over 250 locations that honor the slain of the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi ethnic group. It was originally a church in which 10,000 Tutsi took refuge from attacks by Hutu extremists. Eventually the Tutsi were slaughtered along with thousands more in the surrounding countryside. Now more than 50,000 people are buried on the grounds.

The tour continued on to Mumbai, one of Rwanda's six "Reconciliation Villages" where they dined with, and heard stories from, survivors of this devastating national tragedy. Established under the leadership of Rwanda's President Paul Kagami, survivors and perpetrators live in these villages as neighbors in an effort to promote forgiveness, understanding, and reconciliation.

Next, it was on to Nairobi to visit a factory and a museum followed by a propeller plane



ride to Maasai Mara National Reserve in southwest Kenya (which borders Serengeti National Park). In addition to 20 safaris over the course of her stay, Kathy and her group had the opportunity to visit a village to meet with its chief and learn about their lifestyle and culture, sit with school children to learn of their hopes and dreams, and spend time with a band of hunter-gatherers who live off the land like their indigenous ancestors and struggle with a shrinking range and government pressure to become sedentary. They also met a group of former subsistence poachers that have found an alternate way of making a living as musicians.

Her tour continued on to Uganda and Tanzania, but time did not allow her to show those photos at this AFFN. She says she is often asked if the numerous vaccines and mandatory malaria medication required for travel to Africa, (not to mention the length of the flight) are worth the trip, and she always exclaims, "Yes, it is worth it, very worth it!"

Be sure to join us for more food, fellowship, and photos at the next AFFN on January 8, as well as on December 15, for the First Friends Christmas party potluck at 5 pm in Fellowship Hall. And, if you (or someone you know) are willing to share your travels, hobby, passion, or a presentation at a future AFFN, contact Candice Ryder or let the church office know.

Whittier Friends Participate in FCNL's Annual Quaker Public Policy Institute

While attending any organization's annual gathering can be motivating, energizing, and uplifting, it is not always practical or affordable to travel in person, especially as a large group. On November 14, the First Friends Advocacy Team and other like-minded peace-seeking community members joined FCNL's annual Quaker Public Policy Institute's advocacy training from the comfort of Fellowship Hall and experienced the positivity and motivation that comes from gathering as a community for a common cause. This year's event, *Advocacy that Never Gives Up*, brought together dozens of passionate advocates for peace and justice from across the country, both online and in Washington D.C., to learn and to lobby their federal representatives for a more peaceful and just world.

This year's legislative priority was support of the Joint Resolutions of Disapproval to block the future sale of offensive weapons to Israel. These weapons include *joint direct attack munitions (JDAMs)* and *tank shells* which have been documented to harm civilians. Additionally, their sales by the U.S. violate current U.S. law and policy. These resolutions send the message that diplomacy, not more weapons, is the "way to bring hostages home and achieve a peaceful settlement to the violence..." After learning about these bills, advocates nationwide emailed, wrote cards and letters, made calls, and paid visits to their Senators to share their personal feelings and urge support.

After lunch, Mario Castaneda, professor, long-time activist, and colleague of Darrell Warren spoke to our Whittier group in person about immigration with a reminder that most Americans are either children or descendants of immigrants, slaves, or bonded servants. He urges America to honor its heritage as an



immigrant nation and counter the harmful rhetoric and disinformation surrounding the topic today.

Our group also participated in workshops and presentations throughout the day. These included "Make it Memorable: Creative Advocacy" in which attendees brainstormed ideas to bring awareness to peace and justice issues through art, music, and poetry; "Help FCNL Prepare for the 119th Congress" in which FCNL leaders explained the work to be done over the next two years on numerous issues; and "Beyond the Headlines: Human Impact in Gaza" in which two women, one Israeli and one Palestinian, shared their own experiences with the ongoing violence, discrimination, and personal tragedies created by the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The message of the day was one rooted in hope, resilience, and persistence: That we must live our faith by standing on the shoulders of generations of FCNL advocates to be the voice for peace and social justice. We are reminded that the job is "a marathon, not a sprint," it takes courage to do the work, and together we are stronger. So, if advocacy rooted in peace, not anger and blame, based on the Quaker belief in seeing the Light of God in each person appeals to you, visit [FCNL.org](https://www.fcnl.org) or contact an Advocacy Team member for information on how you can make a difference.

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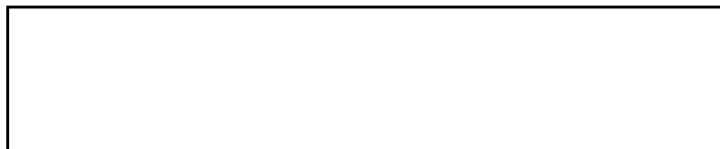
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Please remember in
prayer those Friends
unable to worship
with us regularly.

- 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!