

# 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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Whittier First Friends Church

March 2026

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## Organ and Hymns on Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday)

This year, Mardi Gras fell on February 17, and was the theme for the Tuesday Evening Organ and Hymns night on the same date. What is Mardi Gras? The term is actually French for “Fat Tuesday” and refers to the day before Ash Wednesday which marks the beginning of the Christian ecumenical season of Lent (a 40-day period of repentance and self-reflection). Historically, it was the deadline for many households to consume the rich, fatty foods that were forbidden during Lent. The occasion is celebrated under different names throughout the world. For example, in the UK and Ireland, it is known as Pancake Tuesday, when families use up eggs and milk to make pancakes.

While traditional Quaker belief holds that each day is equally holy, and that traditional “feast days” are contrary to the testimony of simplicity, as modern-day Quakers, we can recognize the occasion as a reminder to focus daily on our inner spiritual lives and to observe the spirit of Lent through ongoing service. (And have pancakes for dinner, right?)

So prior to the evening’s music, a delicious pancake dinner was prepared and served by George Bouchard and First Friends kitchen staff: Carrin Bouchard, Mindy Van Dorn, Dan Wright,



and Philip Wright. Tables in the foyer were dressed in purple, green, and gold, and Music Director/Organist, Russ Litchfield - decked out in a Mardi Gras themed outfit - challenged the diners to trivia. Questions included, “What do the colors stand for?” (Purple = justice; Green = faith; Gold = power). “What is a ‘King Cake?’” (A sweet pastry with a plastic baby inside). “What tiny settlement outside of New Orleans celebrated the very first Mardi Gras in the United States in 1703?” (Mobile, Alabama)

The evening’s musical program consisted of organ pieces each followed by related hymns including two familiar songs: “Oh, When the

*Mardi Gras Continued on Page 4*

## Friendly Fare by Lea Wright

**Dear Friends,** Another month, and this time I have a lot of rain and cold to report. I was really enjoying an early spring last month, but I guess it was too much to hope for it to continue.

**Friends Visit:** **Paul & Marcee Marshburn** came in early February from Arizona to reunite with the So Cal family and cook a feast for all of them. Included were their fresh, home-grown, green vegetables and the labor intensive Medjool dates from their front yard tree. **Loletta Barrett** had a nice visit with



**Barbara Cote**, who happily brought out her Living Light for a picture. Here they are with the Living Light continuing our tradition: "The Living Light Travels." (Remember, your submissions are welcome and needed.)

**Friends About Town:** This month **Jo Nita Beede** will be

performing her eclectic repertoire of music at 2 different venues. On Sat. March 21, at 7:00 pm, she has a one-hour showcase on the outdoor patio, at The Night Owl (200 N Harbor Blvd. Fullerton). On Friday, March 27, from 5:30-8:30, she will be performing inside at Stefano's [stefanoshams.com](http://stefanoshams.com) (18220 Yorba Linda Blvd #307, Yorba Linda CA, 714-993-4267).



Reservations are recommended at Stefano's.

**Annabelle and Adrian Day** (grandkids of **Carrin & George Bouchard**) are shown here at a scout

"bridging-over" ceremony. **Deanna & Brendon Woirhaye** were grateful to have gotten their repaired vehicle back from Manteca, CA, where

their truck tire nearly fell off while taking **Elyse Woirhaye** to Cal Poly Humboldt last month. Deanna was especially happy to visit with Elyse who briefly came down to Whittier over Presidents' Day weekend to celebrate their birthday with the family and friends.



**School and Work News:** **Pat Garland's** son, **James**, & his Fontana crew were sent to Shreveport, LA, in January. They left on a Friday morning and did not arrive until Tuesday because of the weather. Here is a picture of James high up in a bucket on a pole smiling into the camera giving the thumbs up sign. Please keep James & his crew in the Light as they work hard to help bring Shreveport back to having power.

**Friends Travel:** On a recent trip to Disneyland, this conversation was



overheard between **Hudson and Cassie Caringella:** "Some people think Peter Pan is just from storybooks, but I know he's real." "How do you know he's real?" "Because we met him at Disneyland!"

**Friends Remember:** We were sad to hear about the passing of **Jerome (Jerry) Montgomery** in December. Read more about Jerry in this issue of the Living Light.

**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!

## Loletta's Lines

Apology and reconciliation are deeply embedded in the biblical narrative, reflecting God's love. Apology includes confessing wrongdoing and requesting forgiveness. When based in humility and love, it can restore relationships with God, ourselves, and others. David apologized to God for wronging others. Hopefully he apologized to them too. "...Teach me that I may know my weaknesses, the shortcomings that bind me, the unloving ways that separate me, that keep me from recognizing your life in me... teach me the wisdom of the heart...look not on my past mistakes but on the aspirations of my heart..." A sincere apology must also include restitution and a commitment to change.

I am brokenhearted and feel deep shame about things that are happening that violate my values. I am not doing them, but I have a responsibility for people who do. I was once asked, "Should you resign from an organization that violates what you believe?" My answer was "No, I should work to correct the wrong and to ensure the organization reflects its values." So I am moved to apologize.

To the people of the world, my country, and Meeting,

I apologize for the chaos leaders and others in my country are causing. It shows a complete lack of respect for your inherent dignity, the sovereignty of your life and our countries, and any possibility for peace. I am truly sorry for the hurt it causes you.

My faith and morals require me to work for peace, health, equity, economic stability, and environmental and civil justice for people and creation. I believe in loving my neighbor without exception. That requires me to act to



support the dignity and respect of others and to remove fallacies allowing me to see anyone as an enemy.

It is my responsibility to work for change. I work to influence leaders in how they create, interpret, and implement public policy. This includes voting to replace officials not acting in a manner consistent with our Constitution and values, doing all I can to influence the restoration of US aid funding, halting the threat of economic and military intervention and war mongering, changing immigration policies and actions, and working toward economic stability and health programs to meet the needs of all. I also take direct action: listening, seeking reconciliation and peace in my daily life, and working with, and supporting, organizations that empower those in need.

I know these are only small first steps to redress the ongoing wrongs. I do not ask for forgiveness or forbearance. Neither I, nor the people causing chaos, deserve it. I simply need to say I abhor the disruption, damage, and death that is being perpetrated in my name. I commit to work to change that.

**Batch Cooking Group**

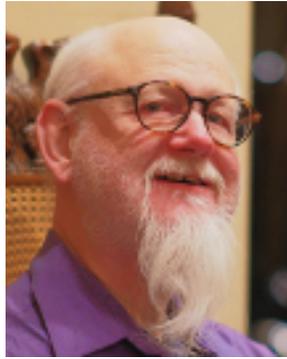
**Fourth Thursday of Each Month**  
First Friends Church Kitchen

Participants sign up to bring pre-approved ingredients, cook together, share a meal, help with cleanup, and head home with leftovers in containers brought from home.

To sign up or learn more, contact  
Loletta Barrett at [pastorffc@verizon.net](mailto:pastorffc@verizon.net)

## Russ' Reflections

The latest issue of CrossAccent (the official journal of the Association of Lutheran Church Musicians) has articles about church music's role in hospitality. I have been thinking about hospitality and what we do to



welcome newcomers to our meeting. This is something we need to think about as a meeting: how can we become more outward focused? How can we invite and include those who are seeking spiritual growth who may resonate with our Quaker values? Our long-term future depends on these questions.

How does our music ministry aid or hinder this outward focus? We have attempted to encourage Friends by singing songs about witness and going out into the world with our truth and our action. We have an established a repertoire of hymns and choral anthems that are familiar to Friends, but what about visitors? Should we sing only the familiar music? The Psalms admonish us to "sing unto the Lord a new song," and we do at times; we have introduced many new texts and tunes in the last several years and have been using materials from With One Voice (WOV), the blue songbook you may notice on our hymnal cart. The choir sings a balance of old and new music, as we are always seeking to connect what we do to the scripture readings and messages in Meeting for Worship. If you were a visitor, what would be welcoming or helpful to you in order to join in the singing?

You may have noticed that we have repeated some songs recently. This is partly because they support the readings and messages, but also because they are less familiar hymns for Friends and repetition is helpful in learning them. What is your experience like? Is it helpful to repeat hymns within a short period of time? We also provide the lyrics to hymns in our worship bulletin, primarily for the benefit of those who attend online via Zoom. What is your experience online like? Do you follow the words as the hymns are sung in the Meeting House?

If you/we were starting a Friends meeting from "scratch," how would music have a role in worship? What sort of music would you like to sing? I invite you to reflect and share your thoughts with me and others. Let's start thinking about how we might attract growth.

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### *Mardi Gras Continued From Page 1*



"Saints Go Marching In," the famous American gospel hymn deeply rooted in New Orleans culture expressing a desire to be among the "saints" entering heaven, and "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot," the 19th-century African American spiritual with deep roots in slavery which served as both a song about heavenly salvation and a code of hope for escape via the Underground Railroad. Other hymns honored the birth, ministry, and resurrection of Jesus of Nazareth. The closing organ piece was "Alleluyas" (Simon Preston 1965), a fiery, colorful, and dramatic piece often used as an Eastertide prelude and recognized as a modern masterpiece.

We are so grateful to the kitchen crew for sharing their time and gifts, and to Russ, for sharing his amazing musical talents and vision. The Tuesday Night Organ and Hymns series is dedicated to the upkeep and repair of our magnificent Harris Organ which celebrates its 50th anniversary this coming fall. Be sure to join us for more musical evenings on March 31, April 21, and May 26, all at 7 pm in the Meeting House.



## News from Whittier Friends School

Whittier Friends School (WFS) is booming! If you haven't visited our campus in awhile, here are some numbers to help you understand more about First Friends Church's education ministry.

We currently have three classrooms: Preschool (2 to 4 years old), Lower Elementary (transitional kindergarten through second grade), and Upper Elementary (third grade through fifth grade, plus seventh grade independent study.) There are a total of 17 elementary children and 17 preschool children learning in those 3 rooms. That's 10 more children than we had a year ago! Employed to teach in those three classrooms are 10 teachers and 7 Whittier College work-study aides. Additionally, we have a financial manager in the office and are overseen by a committee of 6 members.

Other numbers that help you understand our school include the seven field trips and four student performances scheduled for this school year, plus the dozens of books we read every month! Also, take into consideration that we have an average of 20 family members attending our monthly Zoom parent meetings. All of these people and activities add up to a very special school where children have the opportunity to become unique individuals: life-long learners, responsible citizens, spiritual beings, social individuals, and peace-makers.

We are in the midst of enrolling for the 2026-2027 school year, and there is a discount on tuition if paperwork and fees are received by Friday, May 15. We urge you to contact us if you are interested in knowing more about our Quaker school. Members of First Friends Church receive a special tuition rate! We've also received some very wonderful kids from church member referrals so spread the news! For more information, email Director Cassie Caringella at [cassie.wfs@gmail.com](mailto:cassie.wfs@gmail.com).

And if you are interested in supporting our special school, visit our online See's Candy store at [tinyurl.com/9hfkshb8](https://tinyurl.com/9hfkshb8) or talk to Cassie about ordering. Orders are due by March 20, and will arrive by Easter.

-Cassie Caringella

## In Memory of Jerry Montgomery (November 10, 1933 - December 6 2025)

Jerome (Jerry) Alan Montgomery was born in Grandview, Arkansas, the only son of Cyrus J. Montgomery and Sue Montgomery.

When he was six years old, the family moved to New York City, and after a year, they drove out to California where they lived in Sierra Madre before settling in Norwalk.

Jerry graduated from Whittier High School in 1952 before earning his associate's degree from Long Beach City College in 1954. He then attended Long Beach State before joining the Army as an MP. He spent the next four years in Germany and was honorably discharged with the rank of Sergeant in 1960. Jerry completed his bachelor's degree in political science in 1961 at Long Beach State before earning his law degree in 1964 from UC Hastings School of Law.

Jerry married the love of his life, Marilyn Jane Mayo Montgomery, on March 23, 1974. They spent the next 51 years traveling the world and enjoying their love of sailing together. They were active members of the Alamitos Bay Yacht Club (ABYC). Jerry served in numerous leadership roles over the years. He will be remembered as an honorable, kind, and compassionate man who cared deeply for his family and friends. He was a member of Whittier First Friends Church since 1951, serving on many committees, most recently on Personnel. Jerry passed to new life peacefully on December 6, 2025 and was preceded in death by his cherished wife who passed to new life on July 25, 2025. He is survived by his three nieces, two nephews, and two cats, Wilbur and Orville.



## Friends Visited “Merry Old England” with the Woirhayes at February AFFN



At the February All Friends Fellowship Night (AFFN), Brendon and Deanna Woirhaye shared photos from their travels to Great Britain over the years. The engaging presentation featured Deanna’s masterful photos interspersed with famous quotes and interesting facts about the places they have visited

The first stop on our virtual field trip, naturally, was to London, home of numerous iconic landmarks, including the Parliament Building, The Palace of Westminster, and the Elizabeth Tower (Big Ben). We also saw the pictures of the massive Westminster Abbey, an active Anglican Church featuring Gothic style architecture. It is famous for its royal weddings, 40 coronations, and for being the final resting place for over 3,300 notable Brits, including monarchs and prime ministers.

Other recognizable images were the London Eye (Europe’s tallest ferris wheel), Trafalgar Square, Harrods Department Store, Kensington Palace, Paddington Station, and the Tower Bridge (which houses the Crown Jewels.)

From there, our tour moved on to the county of Kent in Southeast England, where we enjoyed photos of Leed’s Castle with its hedge maze, nearby Canterbury with its Roman walls, and Canterbury Cathedral (one of the oldest Christian structures in England.) Interestingly, there is evidence in this area of human settlement dating back to prehistoric times. And to the east is the coastal town of Dover, home to Dover Castle, the iconic White Cliffs, and a ferry port that serves as a gateway to the European continent.

Moving clockwise to southwest England, we got glimpses of Salisbury and nearby “Old Sarum” whose history spans over 5,000 years and includes evidence of Neolithic, Iron Age, Roman, Saxon, and Norman occupations. Salis-



bury is the home of Salisbury Cathedral (featuring the tallest church spire in England) and is known as the gateway to Stonehenge. Also in Southwest England, Bath is famous for its warm springs, ancient Roman Baths, and being the former home of Jane Austen.

Next was Stratford Upon Avon (Shakespeare’s birthplace and home to the Royal Shakespeare Theatre and Anne Hathaway’s Cottage), Oxford, (site of the University of Oxford with its with its 39 self-governing colleges) and Nottingham, (famous for its deep ties to the legend of Robin Hood, featuring Sherwood Forest and Nottingham Castle,)

Additionally, we were treated to photos of the Woirhayes at Pendle Hill (where Quaker founder, George Fox, famously had his vision in 1652 of a “Great People to be Gathered”), Liverpool, (important port and hometown of the Beatles), York (world’s largest collection of stained glass), and Hadrian’s Wall (northern border of the Roman Empire). Our final stops were to the capital of Scotland, Edinburgh, (never conquered by the Romans) and then to Falkirk (home to the legendary kelpies.).

Whether we were just trying to live vicariously, plan to go in the future, or were remembering our own travels, it was a true treat to experience the vibrant and colorful photos and the rich history of Great Britain. Be sure to join us on Wed., March 11, at 6 pm in Fellowship Hall for our next AFFN potluck and presentation, when we will hear from Monica Cena about the importance and benefits of organ donation.

## **FCNL Advocacy Team Meets with Representative Sanchez**

In late February, Whittier's FCNL Advocacy Team met with Congresswoman Linda Sanchez to share our concerns about equality and the humane treatment of our neighbors, both near and far. The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) is a national, nonpartisan Quaker organization that lobbies Congress and the administration to advance peace, justice, and environmental stewardship. The mission of FCNL's local Advocacy Teams is to build relationships between the team members, their Congressional Representatives, and FCNL with the goal of changing public policy in Washington.

Nine of us from Whittier's Advocacy Team sat down with Representative Sanchez in her Whittier office. The Congresswoman was open and frank as we expressed thoughts about humanitarian aid, the prevalent misuse of power and force, and the implementation of a just and lasting peace. We also shared our interactive poster board on which people from several communities in the area had an opportunity over the past year to voice their own priorities about current issues.

Rep. Sanchez shared our concerns on many matters, including the fair treatment of immigrant families within our community. And, while she expressed that many issues are complex with no easy fixes, the Congresswoman noted the Advocacy Team's commitment to the democratic process. She also encouraged us to continue to support democracy by sharing our ideas and listening to the community for its voice and input.

Listening, fundamental to Quaker practice, is a key component of democracy. Listening is essential to a balanced and just peace, a peace that is fair and doesn't rely merely upon violence and force alone. This applies both here at home and abroad. Similarly, democracy functions at its best when the branches of our government are balanced, rather than overpowered by any single branch..

From a Quaker perspective, true peace is more than the mere cessation of physical hostilities alone. An enforced "lack of violence" bolstered by overwhelming arms and force, is not really peace. To complicate matters, starvation and lack of

healthcare are often used as weapons. Such situations lead to extended years of war, turmoil, and instability. Instead, a true peace is tempered by justice, allowing all parties a voice at the table and a fair shake.

If this type of work appeals to you, or if you simply want to learn more, you are invited to attend our meetings the first Wednesday of each month in Fellowship Hall at 5 pm, when we participate in FCNL's National Call followed by our local planning session. You can also visit: [fcnl.org/act/join-advocacy-team](http://fcnl.org/act/join-advocacy-team) to learn more about FCNL's Advocacy Teams Network.

~ Darrell Warren

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## **Housing Advocacy Workshop, Sat. March 14, 1 - 4 pm at First Friends**

Do you believe that Jesus's call to love our neighbors means they are entitled to access to housing they can afford? Do you believe all residents should have a meaningful slice of the city's abundance, including the vulnerable? Do you envision that all neighborhoods look like the kingdom of God: where diverse housing options enable people of all races, classes, and backgrounds to live side by side? Are you ready to put your beliefs into action (or know someone who is)?



If so, please attend the Housing Advocacy Workshop on Saturday, March 14 from 1 to 4 pm at First Friends Church hosted by the Whittier/La Mirada Mission Collaborative to hear from the Faith and Housing Coalition about the root causes of our housing and homelessness crisis, successful policy solutions, stories of hope, and the practical processes of systematic changes. All are invited and admission is free, so spread the word. RSVP at [whittierlamiradahope@gmail.com](mailto:whittierlamiradahope@gmail.com).

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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!