

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

June, 2025

Founders Day 2025

Founders Day 2025, organized by the Whittier Historical Society with support from the City of Whittier, was held on May 10, in Central Park. This year's event was well attended by our Meeting, as well as friends of the Meeting, despite temperatures in the high 90's.

In past years, First Friends Church and Whittier Friends School have had tables together. This year they were joined by Whittier's FCNL Advocacy Group and the Whittier/La Mirada Mission Collaborative. While each display had its own distinct message, there was a higher sense of unity and purpose among the groups with many opportunities for connections and conversations with community members.

Whittier Friends School offered coloring pages to kids and spoke with families about preschool and elementary enrollment as well as the Summer Enrichment Program and Peace Camp Week. The display for First Friends featured famous Quakers like Dave Matthews, Bonnie Raitt, and Bayard Rustin which sparked deeper conversations about Quaker beliefs and practices. The Mission Collaborative had a button-making machine that allowed visitors to create their own messages of the heart.



The FCNL table gave visitors an opportunity to rate their personal priorities for the country by placing stickers on a display-board in pre-selected categories which included Human Rights, Health and Food Assistance, Mass Deportation, Foreign Aid, Indian Boarding Schools, Clean Energy, and Peace and Diplomacy Spending. While each category received a share of marks, the top picks were "Protection of Human Rights for All", "Protection of Health and Food Assistance", and "Stopping Mass Deportation." There was also space for "write-in" concerns. A number of these involved protection of constitutional rights, freedoms, and procedures. Other issues

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Friendly Fare by Lea Wright

Dear Friends, Lately I've struggled with my Friendly Fare column (especially my opening). What can I write that will be interesting? Let me confess one of my little insecurities. Do people really read this? Do they enjoy it? Ok, so I'm not looking for compliments, just inspiration and contributions. I read the following somewhere, and it really spoke to me, so I'll share it: "Bear with me, because it either means be patient, or the zoo heist was a success."

Friends Travel: **Elinore Petoletti** went on an American Heritage tour. Her six-day trip included Washington D.C., Baltimore, Annapolis, and Manors of the Potomac. Last month, **Harry & Anne Eggleton** traveled to some places they've never been - New York City and Washington DC. They enjoyed visits with family, seeing all the monuments and sights,



and an evening of *Lion King* in New York. Here they are on the steps of Friends Place on Capitol Hill

in Washington, holding the Living Light continuing our tradition: "The Living Light Travels." (Remember, your submissions are welcome and needed.)

Friends About Town: Lots of Friends were seen at Whittier's Founders Day. **Dan and Milton Wright** arrived together in Dan's 1914 Model T Ford and enjoyed swapping old car stories with people. **Margaret Nagy** was spotted volunteering at the Whittier Historical Society booth. (See more in the article in this issue)

Friends Visit: **Debi & Bruce Nelson** enjoyed a visit from Bruce's sister **Linda** and her husband **John** who stopped over for a quick visit on

their way to Seattle to board a Princess cruise to Alaska. It allowed **Melissa's** kids, **Norah** and **Jordan**, to become reacquainted with their Auntie Linda.

Friends Remember: Back in 1975, my dad had to take an early retirement from work due to his cancer diagnosis, and his school district had



a wonderful retirement luncheon for him. My brother recently shared this picture for Mother's Day on Facebook, and I feel led to share it as an early "Happy Father's Day, Dad."

School and Work: On May 15, **Ashley, Candice,** and **Bill Ryder** attended Whittier College's 122nd commencement to cheer for Toby Forney-Griego (Ashley's brother) as he received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Business Administration. **Kenna Dutil-Baker** graduates from high school this year and will attend UC Santa Barbara in the fall. **Francoise Dutil** has been accepted to Earlham School of Religion (ESR) where she will work on her Masters of Divinity. **Elyse Woirhaye** graduated from Troy High School. **Cassie (& Steven) Caringella** received recognition at the "Day of the Parent" volunteer celebration with Norwalk La Mirada School District, where parent volunteers from all the elementary, middle, and high schools in the district were honored. Only three other parent volunteers from Benton Middle School were invited to the 22nd annual award

Loletta's Lines

In an Atlantic Magazine article "Religious Education and the Meaning of Life", Isabel Fattal lays it all out in a less than four-minute read. I wish I had written it. She cites a



1927 Atlantic article by Episcopal priest Bernard Iddings Bell where, "Bell leveled quite the original insult at college students who 'were becoming mental and ethical jellyfish.'" But the criticism can really be aimed at institutions obsessed with teaching facts that do not help students and disciples learn to mold those facts into some sort of "interpretation of life," and I would add, help to learn how to continue the journey of seeking.

Learning the facts, history, memorization of scripture, doctrine, and dogma without encouraging exploration of faith does not deepen our faith. While others can help and offer support, there is no teacher qualified to be in charge of leading, teaching, and guiding our journey of faith. It is Jesus "who has come to teach us himself" that we can trust. We find his "voice" when we pay attention to the luring of God's Spirit and our own yearning for a deeper understanding of the mysteries of Life and Death. It can seem to be a lonely path - unless and until we find others who are on the same journey.

It is why our once-a-month adult Bible class is not about memorizing stories, verses, or begats. It is why we ask more questions each time we delve into the myths, teachings, and stories and bring our brains, hearts, and spirits to the study and exploration. It is why Quaker readings are a wide collection of works that include the Bible, scripture, and stories from other faith traditions; diaries, and writings by Quakers and friends; and the ongoing

revelation of science. We expand our understanding - humbly acknowledging we don't begin to understand what we don't understand about the universe, much less God. What joy to find that no matter what we learn about God, the universe, and the meaning of life, there is much more to learn!

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mentioned were support for education, libraries, PBS, NPR, and peace efforts. Advocacy volunteers also encouraged visitors to contact their federal representatives and provided sample letter templates.

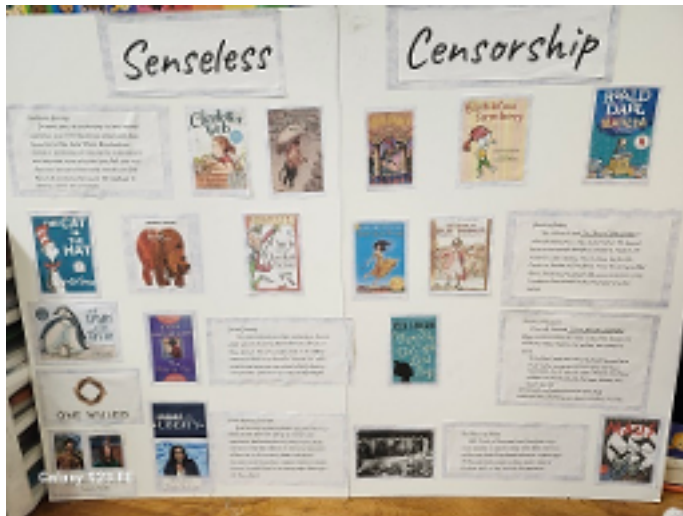
A touching moment at the FCNL table involved a mother and her two young children. The mom encouraged her children to join in choosing among the priorities offered. When they asked her where to put their preference stickers, she replied they should choose the issues that really meant the most to them. It was a beautiful lesson, and they made thoughtful choices.

Another man observed that all of the issues could be easily solved if we followed the first choice listed: *Protect Human Rights for All*. He explained that if we just respected and loved each other, the other issues would go away. Such a profound expression God's love and witness to the testimony of Simplicity!

A special thanks to all the participants that helped make this a memorable and fun event despite the record-breaking heat.



News from Whittier Friends School



Whittier Friends School was bursting with visitors at our annual Open House in May. Our students enjoyed presenting their felt board stories and dioramas exhibiting various biomes of the world. It's always fun to hear what the children say about their experiences. "My science night went amazing! My science project is the Amazon Rainforest. It's so cool!" said a 3rd grader. A 6th grader shared, "Quite a few people came to my board, and I explained why women not being able to vote was a problem, and I answered the questions they asked. And the people told me that it was a good project and they liked it." Another student, a fourth grader, really enjoyed sharing his project. He says it was really fun because he got some laughs from people about a joke he included in the travel brochure he made about the Congo Jungle. It's such a great opportunity for children to get a chance to speak to adults and share what they create and learn. Children often don't get an opportunity to be the expert, and the Whittier Friends School Open House gives them this unique opportunity. Thanks to all who attended this special night and gave our children the opportunity to shine!

Many fun things are right around the corner. Elementary Recognition is scheduled

for Wednesday, June 11, and then their summer break begins. Preschool Graduation is scheduled for Wednesday, June 18. Our preschool will be closed for the Juneteenth holiday, on the day after graduation, and on the 4th of July holiday. However, we will be open the rest of the summer. Elementary Enrichment begins Monday, June 23, and we look forward to sharing our campus with some returning summer friends. We have six weeks of enrichment with fun themes that include "Welcome Summer", "Exploring the Outback," and "Creepy Crawlers."

Enrollment is still open for Elementary Summer Enrichment, Preschool (Year-round), and Elementary 2025-2026. See our website <http://whittierfriendsschool.org> or email cassie.wfs@gmail.com for information about enrollment in any of our programs. As always, be sure to follow Whittier Friends School's adventures on Facebook at: facebook.com/whittierfriendsschool and on Instagram at: instagram.com/whittierfriendsschool/ and check out our wishlist at: amzn.to/2QK8Yp8

-Cassie Caringella

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ceremony. Cassie has been enjoying volunteering with the Benton Middle School theatre department for the past four years, and Steven helped at several 8th grade events last year, including the field day and 8th grade East Coast trip. They enjoy being involved in their kids' school experiences and look forward to many more activities in the future.

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!

"We Are All One in Mission"

Hymn Festival 2025



"The true beauty of music is that it connects people." This quote by the late jazz musician Roy Ayers captures the heart and intention of the Hymn Festival held at First Friends Church on May 24. FFC Music Director Russ Litchfield, organizer and accompanist for the event, gave the introduction for the program entitled "We Are All One in Mission." He said, "We seek to proclaim that 'we are all one in mission,' that we have much in common, and that Jesus calls us to reach out in witness and in action to our neighbors and to the whole world with the gifts of the Spirit and with compassion toward all persons."

Over 20 singers representing several Mission Collaborative congregations - First United Methodist Church of Whittier, La Mirada United Methodist Church, St. Andrews Lutheran Church, and First Friends of Whittier - as well as other friends of Russ, joined in ethereal harmony to present 14 inspiring hymns connected to the theme. Many were old favorites, and a few were lesser-known. A couple were even arranged by Russ. Audience members were provided with the words and music for most of the songs and encouraged "to join the singing with energy, to express our solidarity between our faith communities, and to find courage and inspiration from the hymns we sing."

The spoken words woven between the songs highlighted the message of ministry. It conveyed that all believers belong to the Body of Christ, and, despite our differences, "we are

called by Christ to go out into the world to share the gospel. When we unite our gifts in the service of others, we become witnesses to God's love" as well as the gospel of Christ. Like the disciples that were offered the opportunity to become "fishers of humans", God will take and use us to spread the love of God to those around us. We are reminded to live "soberly, righteously, and godly, in this present world" and also let our "hearts be broken for a world in need, still in need at this very moment." The Spirit calls us to service, and we are fueled by God's Light. We are God's people spreading the seeds of hope, love, and grace. Each of us is a unique human with individual gifts and talents that "empower us for ministry" that "is less about conversion than sharing the Gospel and living in a way that attracts others to it."

Hymn services offer a unique form of worship. Studies have shown that choral singing builds community, fosters self-expression, creativity, and appreciation for music and poetry. More specifically, singing hymns promotes spirituality and improves our focus, comprehension, and memory of the message found in the words. Singing hymns helps us to worship more deeply and inspires us to live out our values. In these difficult times, we are so grateful for this opportunity to gather and lift up our voices in song.

Special thanks go to Russ for facilitating this event and to all who participated and attended. We look forward to the next inter-ecumenical choir event on the Sunday before Thanksgiving.

5 Mark your calendar now.

Kathleen (Kathy) Harrington Hood
August 22, 1952 – March 28, 2025



Kathy came to our meeting with heart and hands open to share herself and jumped into serving with us. It felt like she was both a gift out of the blue and yet had always been part of this family. Kathy grew up back East but spent her adult years in California raising

her son Michael. She overcame life challenges including severe discrimination in childhood because of a disability. When she told stories about her life, she witnessed how she was transformed by God's love and by embracing her own gifts. It gave her the capacity to love, forgive, and laugh at herself and serve others. Kathy was very bright and started work in a highly technical data and computer field. But she found her true vocation teaching severely handicapped children and supporting their parents in understanding their gifts.

After retiring, Kathy looked for ways to serve. She wanted to keep busy and fill her days with caring for others. She continued to support adult neighbors as well as families with children who were differently abled. She volunteered at St Mathias Soup Hour serving hot meals for anyone who needed a meal. She helped at First Friends wherever needed. She especially offered her knowledge, expertise, and gifts to help plan and implement our Peace Camp. She brought supplies, helped set up and clean up, and loved working with the children. She also loved caring for stray kitties who became part of her extended family. Kathy's only regrets were not having enough time to be with the people she loved and to do all the loving things she wanted to do to serve others.

Thank you to all the Friends who facilitated celebrating her life at First Friends Church. Her son Michael, grandchildren Sidnee and Zakary, brother Glen, and friends greatly appreciated the hospitality. Her sister Pat, brother Bob, and other family and friends were grateful for the opportunity to join us on Zoom.

Ami Troedsson
May 15, 1929 - March 23, 2025

Ami Troedsson grew up in war-torn Budapest, Hungary. Her father died when she was a child, but she held very fond memories of time together as a family. Her mother worked very hard and sent her



to a Catholic School to ensure she was safe and educated. Ami appreciated the kindness she received from the nuns. During World War II, she witnessed brutality and violence in the battles in the streets and destruction of neighbors' homes. She and a friend narrowly missed being killed by a bomb walking home from school. Ami fled to the United States with help from a church underground network. Here she met her Swedish husband, Carl, who was an architect. Ami worked in the architectural office and raised their three children, Peter, Anders, and Christina. They and her grandchildren were a great joy to her.

Ami joined First Friends Church in May 1994 by transferring from Pasadena First Friends. Later, after moving to Ventura to be close to her daughter, Ami continued to attend women's retreats and Sunday School when in this area visiting friends. She participated in a United Methodist Church near her home until she moved to Oregon during the pandemic. Ami

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wanted to be sure the Friends knew she was praying for them and felt a deep connection to all of us here. She regularly sent notes to the Friends and was fond of reading the Living Light and having her picture and greetings published. Two of Ami's passions were cooking and gardening. Ami was very dedicated to social justice and serving others as well, and she regretted when she could no longer do all these things. She was also an avid reader and "seeker after the Truth" until she died. She was very educated and never stopped reading and learning. Loletta enjoyed weekly phone conversations with her that included in-depth discussions about God, religion, Friends' history, FCNL, and many, many other things! Loletta was grateful to be able to visit her in person last July while in Oregon facilitating a friend's celebration of life. Most of all, Ami loved to spend time with God. When Loletta called, Ami would often say, "Oh I was just spending time with my Best Friend." Ami passed to New Life in Albany, Oregon on March 23, 2025.

"Walking with Quakers" Returns

It's back! Once again, the "Walking with Quakers" class will be offered Monday evenings on Zoom from August 18 through September 29. This series of six workshops is designed to help us explore, deepen, and share our understandings of Quaker heritage, practices, and faith. Everyone is invited, so whether you are new to First Friends, grew up in the faith, or fall somewhere in between, we encourage you to take part in this unique opportunity to walk alongside one another as we examine our faith journeys together. Be sure to mark your calendar now and watch for more details coming up.

Peace Camp

July 14 to July 18, 9 am to 3 pm

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Arts and crafts, stories, games, snacks, conflict resolution skills, songs, values

Kids entering 1st - 6th grade in the fall

Open and affirming of all children and families

\$100 for the week for first child;
(20% sibling discount)

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"PEACE IS MY SUPERPOWER!"

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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!**



Summer Picnics in the Park

June 25 - August 27

**Join us at Michigan Park
every Wednesday evening
at 6 pm for food and
fellowship. Bring food to
share and your own plates
and utensils. We hope to
see you there!**