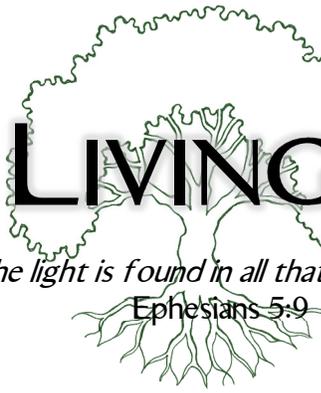


THE LIVING LIGHT

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

Ephesians 5:9



Volume 60 Number 1

Whittier First Friends Church

January 2021

A Place of Abundance

After a year full of trials, we joyfully greet 2021 and our theme "A Place of Abundance."

The theme has its roots in our Meeting for Learning sessions studying Parker Palmer and his exploration of how our lives are shaped by the choice we make every day between the Gospel of Scarcity and the Gospel of Abundance.

"For those of us who are relatively affluent, scarcity and abundance turn out to be spiritually rooted issues, not conditions external to our lives," writes Palmer. "When we cling to the world's resources—material or otherwise—we create external scarcity. But that scarcity is a reflection of our inner condition, a condition in which we try to make meaning and assuage our fears by clinging. Of course, the more we cling, the more meaning recedes and fear triumphs: no matter how much we have, we always 'need' more."

In scripture, Jesus places a constant emphasis on trusting God's abundance and living beyond our fears of scarcity. "At the heart of 'letting go' is faith and trust," says Palmer. "If we do not trust that God knows well that you need them, we will grasp at life's necessities and even at luxuries."

Throughout the year, in worship, in service activities and in fellowship, we will "take the world's logic of scarcity and turn it upside down," in Palmer's words.

How can we move toward living with hearts that embrace abundance rather than a fear of scarcity?

Join us as we celebrate and explore our own spiritual abundance.

—Elisabeth Elliot

Whittier First Friends Church
A Quaker Meeting

2021



A PLACE OF ABUNDANCE

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What are you doing on...

Sunday, January 24, 2021
at 3:00 P.M.

See the back page of this issue
for information!

Friendly Fare by Lea Wright

Dear Friends, 2020 has been a challenging year, probably for everyone. With each approaching holiday, we have made decisions to celebrate in a simpler way. Halloween pumpkin carving has always been a very big event. **Dan Wright** and the kids would choose a theme and carve 10 or 15 pumpkins. They would set them up at **Milt & Donna's** house with appropriate music. Over the years, more and more trick or treaters and guests came by to see and enjoy the pumpkin display. We made a really tough decision when we said we were going to stay home and watch a movie for Halloween. Dan carved two pumpkins just because, and we ate a little candy. As Thanksgiving approached, we realized that our large family gathering on the day after wasn't a good idea. We went small on Thanksgiving and enjoyed the company of our immediate family as we missed those that are usually at our table. At this writing, Christmas is coming. We have cut back on some of our plans, but some traditions can't be forgotten. Through the years, we have amassed many tree ornaments. Our favorites include ornaments in memory of our first kitties, pictures of our kids (and now grandkids), and lots of kitties, cows, sheep, turtles, Santas, stained glass and candy canes. The star on top was made by Cassie when she was just a few years old. The whole tradition of the whole family helping with the tree decorating continues. Thankfully we have traditions that can continue.

Friends Visit: We continue to enjoy seeing friends that join us on Zoom for Meeting for Worship, Advent Sunday and other events. There have been so many friends that we don't usually get to see that have been able to join us via Zoom.

Friends About Town: **Bose' Robinson** and **Buddy** love reading *The Living Light* when they "travel" all the way to their home in the parsonage guest house! Bose' is a friend to Friends who helped us get the "Understanding through Sharing" group started. She is a senior at Cal State



Long Beach and runs her own media communications consulting company. Here she is with *The Living Light* continuing our tradition "*The Living Light Travels*." (Remember, your submissions are welcome and needed.)

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. See you next month!

Education and Spirituality

Moving into the New Year, our Christian Education classes and offerings will continue on Zoom.

Adult Meeting for Learning resumes this month on Sunday mornings 9:30–10:15 a.m. on Zoom. We are continuing our devotional time with the writings of Parker Palmer. Our book is "40-Day Journal with Parker Palmer" and is available from the church office or your favorite book seller. Please contact Candice Ryder at cryder55@hotmail.com.

Our youth will continue their study of well-known Bible stories and discover some not-so-well-known stories through videos and follow-up discussion. This class meets Sunday mornings 10:00–10:30 a.m. on Zoom and is being facilitated by Ashley Ryder with the support of Cassie Caringella.

Young Friends Fellowship and Young Adults meet every two weeks on Sundays at 2:00 p.m. on Zoom for a friendly check-in and fellowship. This month, we'll begin an overview of the books of the Bible as presented by the Bible Project. The group is facilitated by Loletta Barrett with other Friends. The Bible Project is a nonprofit organization that produces free educational resources presenting the Bible as one unified story leading to Jesus. The Bible is often perceived as merely a collection of inspirational quotes or a divine instruction manual dropped from heaven, with people tending to gravitate toward sections they enjoy while avoiding parts that are confusing or even disturbing. The Project experiences the Bible in a way that is approachable, engaging, and hopefully transformative by showcasing the literary art of the Scriptures and tracing the themes from beginning to end.

Meanderings and Ponderings—A Journey with Maya Angelou continues at 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday afternoons through April.

Understanding through Sharing meets Thursday evenings at 6:30 pm. and engages in conversations about specific topics such as racism. Using videos, articles and guest speakers, we delve into items that are of interest to the participants and gain a better understanding of perspectives both new and familiar. To join the email invitation list of *Meanderings and Ponderings* and *Understanding Through Sharing*, please contact Loletta at pastorffc@verizon.net.

—Lynda Ladwig

This Month in Meeting for Worship

January 3	Loletta Barrett brings the message <i>Living and Dying Abundantly</i> Jeremiah 31: 7-14
January 10	Loletta Barrett brings the message <i>Why Scarcity is an Attitude</i> Isaiah 60: 1-9
January 17	Loletta Barrett brings the message <i>I Wish You Enough</i> 1 Samuel 3: 1-20
January 24	Loletta Barrett brings the message <i>When Comparisons Fail</i> Matthew 26: 11, Luke 7: 47b
January 31	Bobby Trice brings the message <i>Wise as Serpents, Innocent as Doves</i> Matthew 10: 16-23



Thanks to the convenience of Zoom, more Friends are now attending Monthly Meeting. At Monthly Meeting on December 6, we expressed appreciation to office administrator Mary Boltz for her work formatting Monthly Meeting materials. Trustees reported that we are about halfway through the Sharpless rehab process with new carpet and flooring as well as lighting in the basement. We are planning on repairs to one of our rental properties when we are pandemic-free.

There have, unfortunately, been increased safety and law enforcement issues on our property and we are working with the Whittier Police Department in establishing consistent policies with everyone who uses the area. Liability is a concern. We need to revisit the necessity of fencing.

Continued on page 4

We welcome and encourage your comments as well as your contributions and photos for inclusion in *The Living Light*. Kindly send your email to Elisabeth Elliot at communiquaker@gmail.com.

The Facing Bench

I am so excited about this new year. Yes, we are done with 2020 and all the challenges it brought between the arrival of Covid-19, racial justice actions, multiple storms and disasters, and the election. But that is not why. I'm sure we'll be dealing with at least a couple of those things in 2021, too. Now I'm not Pollyanna—I'm more a glass-is-half-empty "Murphy's little sister." You know the guy whose Law says, "What can go wrong, will go wrong." Add my Girl Scout background and "Be Prepared" and Murphy's little sister spends some anxious all-nighters. But this year our Meeting has adopted the theme "A Place of Abundance."



There is nothing more exciting than celebrating what God has done and is doing, for, in and through us—a year recognizing all we have been given—from life to Life! Far from being in crisis, struggling or surviving, our Meeting is thriving! We exist in a place of absolute abundance. Our Meeting is spiritually healthy; our worship is gathered and connected. We are healthy in our budget and our bank accounts, and our physical assets are beautiful and sound. We have incredible Friends with gifts, skills, talents and enthusiasm, and our 2021 clerks and committees are ready to go.

This is a time of opportunity to open ourselves to the Spirit's leading and our dearest dreams for the Meeting. So much of what is happening has never happened before, at least not in our lifetime or that of our Meeting. This is exciting because it means we can step out into new possibilities and try new things without any risk of failure—if it has never been done before, we define what success looks like. The projects and paths we choose are experiences for learning and growing. There are no mistakes; only new things to try and discard or try again in different ways.

As we heard on Christmas Eve, "This is one of the great gifts of community, of the shared belonging to the collective becoming of the body of God—the incarnation again and again, together. Full of hope for a better world, saved by the in-breaking of God with us, Emmanuel. You and I and everyone who chooses to work and bear forth the better world that is possible is the divine intervention."

Welcome to 2021, Friends. Because of God and you, our Meeting is truly "A Place of Abundance."





YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

In December, we gathered for conversation and to take part in a bit of Christmas tradition—making gingerbread houses with and without gingerbread. Lynda demonstrated how to make a house out of Pop Tarts while the Woirhaye clan worked with real gingerbread. All candy decorations were tasty and used with creativity.

Following our culinary excursion, we spent some time watching a video on the word *Shalom* and reflecting on the biblical meaning of peace.

Shalom is not only the absence of conflict but, perhaps even more importantly, it is the presence of connection, wholeness and completion. The prophet Isaiah looked forward to the arrival of the Prince of Peace, whose reign would lead to eternal *shalom*, righting all wrongs and healing all brokenness. Isaiah's words are fulfilled with the arrival of Jesus. When Jesus is born, *shalom* is proclaimed. He is the one who brings peace and restoration to the broken fragments of our world.

As we head into the year 2021, we pray *shalom* will come to be a reality for us all.

—Lynda Ladwig



'Monthly Meeting' continued from page 3

The financial report is consistent and we appreciate the rental clients who are continuing to pay in full during the pandemic. Beth Shalom continues to be a very happy tenant, and broadcasting their services on Facebook. The budget for 2021 was approved. Our number of faith promises and plans for giving is down but total contributions are up.

The Nominating Committee reports that there are still open slots on some committees.

We approved a plan for improved use of the Zoom application.

Friends are reminded to please sign in in the foyer whenever they come on property for the purposes of contact tracing.

Monthly Meeting for January is Sunday, January 10 at 1:00 p.m.



News from Whittier Friends School

Often when it's time to plan the monthly holiday activities, we at Whittier Friends School like to look back to previous years to reintroduce tried and true treasured traditions. However, this year is different. With Los Angeles County and neighboring counties changing to more restrictive tiers due to COVID-19 challenges, so many of our school traditions have had to be cancelled, such as singing for Brookdale retirement home and joining the Meeting for the Family Christmas Dinner. When things get cancelled, we are left appreciating what we can do all the more.

Early in December, our school families met virtually on Zoom and rang in the holidays together. We sang "Frosty the Snowman" and "We Wish You a Merry Christmas." The teachers read an illustrated version of *Twas the Night Before Christmas*. The children took turns sharing their own holiday memories and read their original stories to everyone gathered.

We have been fortunate to have health, and with it, the small gathering of children for tutoring. However, we are looking forward to the new year and the promises it brings. On January 11, we are planning to extend our preschool back to full day, offering childcare from 8:30 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. We know that families in our community need care for their young children, even during the pandemic, and we look forward to serving them. We will continue with providing instruction online via Zoom for our elementary students, with some small group tutoring available.

We also look forward to a different kind of yard sale this year. On February 27, we will donate a (hopefully large) load of donated clothes and soft goods. We will be paid by the pound. Please consider putting together bags of donations for Whittier Friends School, as you clean out your closets during the holidays. Plan to bring your trash bags of clothes to us at the church parking lot on the morning of February 27. Thank you!

—Cassie Caringella

FCNL Quaker Engagement Associate to Bring Message

Bobby Trice of Friends Committee on National Legislation will be with us on Sunday, January 31 to bring the message and share a presentation about driving change in the new Congress. We will be joined once again by Berkeley Friends Church.

What touchstones, teachings and traditions can Quakers draw on to nourish and guide our outward lives and activism?

Christmas Sharing

It's the most wonderful time of the year and once again, Zoom enabled us to worship and enjoy fellowship in a new way. Our four Advent Evenings at Home in December were inspirational, full of Christmas spirit and a whole lot of fun.

Over the four evenings, worship was led by Tom and Tish Purkiss, Michael and Elisabeth Elliot, the Woirhaye family and Diane Wemmerus. Each night, a candle was lit in the Meeting House by Russ Litchfield and musical selections were shared by our choir section leaders Allison Coop, Aaron Espinosa, Alexandra Grabarchuk, Alex Montoya, and Lou Rosen.

Each evening concluded with interactive activity and entertainment. Marilyn Fant taught us how to make an origami Christmas ornament. Some Friends displayed impressive origami skills and it was fine entertainment to watch those who had challenges!



We paid a virtual visit to Bob and Lou Secord's home, where we ooh'd and ahh'd over their traditional decorations, including themed trees and Lou's nativity collection.

We may not have been able to meet for a Family Christmas Dinner, but we enjoyed a montage of Dinners past and, of course, an auction of a Dan Wright stained glass creation. This year, there were two items, with Harry Eggleton once again overseeing bidding that was perhaps even more spirited virtually than in person. Harry also led us through lively games, including Christmas Jeopardy, and shared his anticipated/dreaded dumb Christmas jokes.



Finally, the Christmas story from the viewpoint of the Magi was told by the Caringella family, featuring Landon and Avalon, and a special appearance by their little brother Hudson.

It is highly possible that we have started a new Advent Evening tradition.

—Elisabeth Elliot



Jacob Adam
Olivia Bald
Matthew Bouchard
Mark Brickley
Barbara Cote
Christopher Foley
Barbara Fuller
Barbara Healy-Sprague
Marshall Hockett
Barbara Koch

Janice Lindsay
Meredith Marshburn
Norah Martinez
Joshua Rollins
Robert Semans
Sarah Singleton
Darrell Warren
Natalie Weitkamp
Cedric Woirhaye
Alli Wright

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!



Cupcakes! The pre-holiday Young Friends Fellowship fund raiser for the Dig Deep Navajo water project was a sweet success beyond expectations. Ashley Ryder participated in the socially-distanced distribution. Adrian Day approves!

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Lynda Ladwig

IS ZOOMING INTO RETIREMENT—
AND WE'RE CELEBRATING!

Sunday, January 24, 2021
at 3:00 P.M.

**EMAIL PASTORFFC@VERIZON.NET
FOR THE ZOOM INVITATION LINK**



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

Peggy Anderson
Jack Carlisle
Rose Nedrow
Kathy Robison
Ann Smith
Ami Troedsson
Carol Urner
Gerry Wolfe