

THE LIVING LIGHT

For the fruit of the light is found in all that is good and right and true.
Ephesians 5:9

Volume 64, Number 07

Whittier First Friends Church

July / August, 2025

Promotion Sunday Recognition



Each June, faithful in attendance."

First Friends recognizes and celebrates the youth of our meeting on Promotion Sunday, at a very special meeting for

Students pursuing higher education are eligible to apply for Jessup Scholarship funds to assist with purchase of books and general supplies. These awards are made possible from an endowment established by the family and friends of Mildred Votaw Jessup, beloved longtime Sunday school teacher at First Friends. All the meeting's high school graduates and continuing college students are encouraged to apply. This year's recipients are Elyse Woirhaye (Cal Poly Humboldt), Ashley Ryder (Rio Hondo Community College), Cedric Woirhaye (Cal Poly Pomona), and Bella Sturr (Notre Dame of Maryland).

worship. The Christian Education and Outreach Committee is responsible for reviewing and approving the honorees. This year, on June 8, Marilyn Fant, Clerk of CEO and Lori Graham, CEO member, presented the awards.

The elementary through high school students were recognized for their attendance and involvement in our faith community. This year's certificate recipients were Hudson Caringella, Anabelle Day, Adrian Day, Avalon Caringella, and Landon Caringella.

Additionally, Avalon and Landon were chosen to receive the Davidson Award. This is a monetary gift made possible by an endowment provided by the generosity of friends and family of Larry, Lucy, and George Davidson presented to junior high and high school students who use their gifts to serve the meeting. "In addition to artistic talents, the recipients are honored for displaying leadership, sharing humor and joy, exhibiting dependability, and being

Elyse Woirhaye also brought the message in Meeting for Worship. Elyse graduated from Troy High School this year and is what we call a "birthright Quaker", born and raised in our meeting. After expressing gratitude for support from our faith community, Elyse acknowledged a nervous sense of anticipation about the future. However, "I'm not going to lose this connection, so why should I be scared . . .? This place has always been a safe space for me, and I'm glad to be here. And since I have such a good foundation here, that really opens up the gate for me to reach out into the world."

We extend heartfelt congratulations to all the youth participants of our meeting and hold them in the Light as they go forth in peace and seek to live out their Quaker values.

Friendly Fare by Lea Wright

Dear Friends, Do you have a favorite day of the year (besides holidays and birthdays)? Mine is the summer solstice which marks the start of summer (in the Northern Hemisphere). It is when the longest day and shortest night of the year are combined. The Earth's tilt positions the northern half of earth most directly toward the sun. This year, that moment happened on June 20, at 10:42 pm, so the first official day of summer was June 21. Happy Summer!

Friends Celebrate: We are so happy to report that

Christian & Andrea

Eggleton welcomed

baby **Ellen** on May

31! Baby and mom

are home now and

doing really well.

Ellen is a good

sleeper (so far) and

feeds well. Brother

Silas is fascinated by

her and has been

really attentive. He

holds her whenever

he gets the chance

and is happy to be a

big brother. **Tom & Tish Purkiss** have a new

Granddaughter, **Alaina Rayna Purkiss** born June 3,

to parents **Shane & Kristen**. In June, **Lloyd & Marie**

Kaneko celebrated their 40th anniversary, and **Ted**

& Mary Marshburn celebrated 72 years of

marriage! **John Marshburn**, his 4 kids, and his

mother-in-law **Liz** came to Meeting for Worship



with **Ted & Mary** for Father's Day.

Friends About Town: **Elizabeth Camp** received her 40 year certificate from Soroptimist International of Whittier. What fun times she has shared while improving the lives of women and girls!

Deanna Woirhaye

was delighted that

"Boardwalk Sunset",

an image from a trip

out to Luna Park,

Coney Island taken on

New Year's Day of this

year, earned 3rd place

at the Whittier Art

Gallery's Summer

Show. On Friday, June

13, several Friends

supported Pastor

Loletta Barrett as she led a gathering of citizens in

prayer at a candlelight vigil held in Central Park. The

event was organized in an effort to pray for

protection, safety, and peace for the people who

have been taken by ICE, those who are grieving,

and those who are standing in support of them. **Bill**

& Candice Ryder went to the Kronenberg

Renaissance Faire in Eastvale, CA, in June. Their first

date was at a Ren Faire over 40 years ago, and they

have enjoyed attending them ever since.

Friends Visit: **Susan Walker-Conta** was in town

visiting family. She came to Meeting for Worship

with first cousin **Elizabeth Camp**. **Jo Nita Beede**

was best friends with them when they were



Loletta's Lines

Each season sees a change in the rhythm of activity in our church calendar, in our lives, and in the world-at-large. We might want to take some time off to enjoy the lazy days of summer. But there are things going on that can force us to postpone taking a vacation, or prevent us from giving ourselves permission to take time to sit on the beach, relax, or just sip a glass of lemonade.



Instead of the lazy days of summer, we might feel like the furnace has been turned up! We certainly feel the hotter days due to climate change and all the other challenges in our world. There are issues requiring our attention and attendance more and more. How do we find time for fun, relaxation, or even rest?

Like all things, I suspect it is a matter of setting priorities, and I am not at all an expert in negotiating that challenge! However, I do remember a friend said she felt guilty taking time to go and have a fun day when others were having their very worst day. Ah, the crux of the matter! How do we navigate the empathy slalom?

Spirit prompted an answer to her query. Every day, somewhere in the world, someone is having their worst day ever. We do what we can, when we can, however we can, to meet the challenges and issues. We work for a better world with love, justice, compassion, and sharing.

Taking some time - even a whole day (!) to enjoy life does not negate the good we do. When we take time to celebrate life, we are not intentionally being insensitive to others who are having their worst day. Instead, it refills our joy cup, rejuvenates our energy levels, and refreshes us for the next project and challenge. Taking time to sit and listen to God, to watch nature, to enjoy the company of friends, Friends, and family is not frivolous. It is necessary to replenish our human body, heart, and mind, and to re-inflate the lungs of our souls with the breath of Life, and tend the Divine spark of Light within. It is the holy work of living, preparing for the holy work of serving. And God delights in them both.

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Summer Mission Project and FUM Visit



This summer we are commencing a journey! First Friends has a long and faithful history of supporting Friends United Meeting and its missions, and over the next several months, we will seek ways to renew and



Kelly Kellum, General Secretary

strengthen this bond. We want to learn how best to support their endeavors, and our journey will include meeting the FUM staff and global ministry partners from various locations worldwide, both in-person and online.

Our first stop is with our dear Friends in Belize where FUM sponsors a small school for at-risk students. The church is growing there as well and is having a significant impact on the southside of Belize City. Belize Friends School provides a meal program for all students with nutritious food that children need to help them focus on their learning throughout the day. This is a critical service for their health and well-being, and Belize Friends School is asking for help with this vital program. This year's Summer Mission Project is dedicated to its support.

All summer long, there will be a display table at the entrance to Meeting for Worship in Fellowship Hall where you can drop your donations. (or contribute by mail or online - be sure to designate for "Summer Mission Project"). And to enhance this fundraising campaign, the Christian Education and Outreach Committee will be offering "A Taste of Belize" to all attendees at Meeting for Worship once a month. A small appetizer-sized treat will be served directly after worship for a suggested donation of \$1.00, which will, of course, be

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Russ' Reflections

Summer Organ Concerts

As I continue to learn new organ music (to keep my brain in shape), I like to share it with friends so I will, for a third summer, present a series of concerts in July. They will take place on the five Tuesday evenings of July at 7:30 pm in the Meeting House. Each concert will conclude with the singing of a hymn, and an offering will be taken to benefit our Organ Fund. This year there will be some collaborations with singer friends and organist colleagues.



Here is the schedule

July 1 - Movie Songs - Love songs, Bond, Mancini, a couple of waltzes, and a march. The program will feature three singers, Judy Kertes, Michael Fausto, and Aaron Espinosa.

July 8 - A Visit to England - will include examples of the English Voluntary and other pieces from 19th and 20th century English composers.

July 15 - Traditions and Friends - three organist colleagues, Ty Woodward, Justin Senneff, and Kyle Black will present music from Jewish, Catholic, and Protestant traditions, including a hymn for us to sing from each tradition.

July 22 - "Free Style" with Louis Vierne - will consist of ten pieces from his collection, *24 Pièces en style libre* and a hymn by the composer.

July 29 - A-B-C-D-E-F-G - pieces by Mendelssohn, Franck, Buxtehude, Bach, Pachelbel and Peeters. Come find out what the title means.

July/August Worship Music

If you play an instrument and would like to offer a piece of music for Meeting for Worship, please contact Russ. Together we will seek an appropriate piece of music to prepare and arrange time to practice. musicffc@verizon.net



News from Whittier Friends School

It was a satisfying end to Whittier Friends School's 50th anniversary year at our June Recognition Ceremonies, when we revisited our year's theme of "Walking in Truth: Where We've Come From, Where We're Going." We acknowledged and honored this year's 14 elementary students on Wednesday, June 11, and our 13 Preschoolers (7 graduates, and 6 who will continue in our preschool) on Wednesday, June 18. Students, parents, Committee Members, staff, and donors were celebrated. Our children have grown and learned so much this year!



Another positive community activity for our school occurred off campus at Mother's Beach in Long Beach on June 10. Our annual Family Beach Day was attended by elementary children, preschool families, and former students. Some of the attendees were new to our community, so it was a great chance for the families to get to know each other. As children dug sand castles, splashed in the water, and played on the impressive



playground, families were able to socialize in a relaxed setting, living our testimony of community.

Our Summer is going to be full of fun, with lots of kids returning for the summer, so stay tuned as we share our Summer Enrichment Adventures! Be sure to follow Whittier Friends School's adventures on Facebook:

[facebook.com/whittierfriendsschool](https://www.facebook.com/whittierfriendsschool)

and Instagram at:

[instagram.com/whittierfriendsschool/](https://www.instagram.com/whittierfriendsschool/)

or you can visit our school's Amazon Wishlist at <https://amzn.to/2QK8Yp8>

-Cassie Caringella

Whittier's FCNL Advocacy Update

FRIENDS COMMITTEE ON



NATIONAL LEGISLATION

At the Friends Committee on National Legislation's "National Call" in June, Michael Merryman-Lotz, Just Peace Global Policy Director at American Friends Service Committee, was the guest speaker. Mike spoke about

AFSC's relief and humanitarian assistance work in Gaza.

He told us that more than 60,000 people have died and over 90% of homes have been lost or damaged there. Access to water, food, gas, and electricity have been cut off, which is considered "collective punishment", a war crime. Some experts claim the area is on the brink of famine, and others call it mass genocide.

For the past 18 months, AFSC has worked with the U.N. as part of a group of five food aid organizations that have networked with local food sources and distributors to alleviate some of the suffering. Tragically, due to limited resources, restrictions, and disrupted electricity and internet, the situation has reached a crisis point.

Recently, the U.S. has passed laws to further hinder these efforts and, according to USA Today (June 5, 2025), "vetoed a draft U.N. Security Council resolution that demanded an immediate, unconditional and permanent ceasefire between Israel and Hamas militants in Gaza and unhindered aid access across the war-torn enclave." Instead, the U.S. is backing the Gaza Humanitarian Foundation, a controversial new aid distribution system.

According to Mike, under the GHF program, there are only a few distribution centers which creates huge crowds, requires people to travel long distances, and exposes the vulnerable population to dangerous situations. It is the position of AFSC that this is an intentional strategy to weaponize food and supplies against civilians. He stated that there is no evidence that aid is being confiscated by insurgents and that allowing unlimited access would actually discourage any group from seizing food and supplies for a black market.

Mike acknowledged that the current situation has been nearly two decades in the making and that the dehumanization extends to conditions in the West Bank as well. A long-term solution would need to address the occupation and apartheid that exists. Ultimately, he calls for accountability and recognition of the root causes.

But for now, what can we do? First, urge our U.S. Representatives and Senators to call for an arms embargo and for unrestricted, neutral party, humanitarian access to Gaza. Write a letter or email. You can also call or make an in-person appointment. (The advocacy group can help you with this.) Join efforts to bring attention to what is happening. Take time to write a letter to the editor or take part in a peaceful demonstration. Check out this page from the AFSC website for more ideas: afsc.org/news/6-ways-you-can-support-palestinians-gaza.

FFC hosts Whittier's FCNL Advocacy Group meeting on the first Wednesday of each month at 5 pm in Fellowship Hall. Following the National Call on Zoom, we plan for how we can bring attention to these and other important peace and justice issues. All are welcome to attend. You can even join by Zoom. We encourage you to come and find out ways you can make a difference.

FUM continued from page 3

contributed to the mission fund. So, get your palate ready, and bring your donations on Sundays this summer to benefit the Belize Friends School Meal Program.

And be sure to join us for our first in-person visit from FUM on **Sunday, July 6**, when Kelly Kellum, FUM's General Secretary, will bring the message in Meeting for Worship. He will be accompanied by Rania Ma'ayeh, Head of Ramallah Friends School, another of FUM's global partners. Following worship, we will gather in Fellowship Hall for a potluck lunch and listen to updates from Rania. Mark your calendar now, and plan to be a part of our journey with FUM.

Let's Take a Walk

Walking With Quakers, a six-week Zoom series on Monday evenings presented by the Ministry and Counsel committee, starts on August 18. The sessions are both an introduction to Quakerism for those new to the faith and a time of renewal for all members and attenders.

Take a look at where we'll walk together:

August 18--*The World Turned Upside Down: The Quaker Heritage* - It's 1652 in England. Religion is in turmoil with a huge conflict between church and state, there are endless wars abroad, and the legislative branch of the government is being eliminated. Sound familiar? Join us as we discuss how the rise of Quakerism was a response to violence, hypocrisy, persecution, and theological corruption.

August 25--*Let Us See What Love Can Do: The Quaker Testimonies*. What are they, and how do we live them? What makes them "spicy"?

September 8--*An Infinite Ocean of Life and Love: Quaker Worship*. Why is it called a meeting? Are there rules? What does unprogrammed mean? What does centering mean, and how do I do it? How is Quaker worship different from other faiths, and what does it have in common? And why is it so quiet in here?

September 15--*Quiet Processes and Small Circles: The Quaker Way(s)*. How do Quakers communicate, discuss issues, and make decisions? What is "sense of the meeting" and how is it different from consensus? And how can a business meeting become worship?

September 22--*A People To Be Gathered: The Quaker Community*. What happens when we all just can't get along, and what brings us together again? Are there different "kinds" of Quakers? And where does our meeting in Whittier fit in?

September 29--*What Canst Thou Say?: Quakers in the World*. What exactly is social justice, and how do we reflect it? What are some of the issues Quakers have taken on through the years, and what's most important to us now? And what do all these acronyms mean?

All six 90-minute sessions begin at 7:00 p.m. and include worship, sharing, and discussion.

Attendance at all six sessions is not required but encouraged! There is no class on Labor Day (September 1).

To RSVP and get the Zoom link, call the church office at (562) 698-9805 or email firstfriendswhittier@verizon.com.

Friendly Fare continued from page 2

growing up. **Carrin & George Bouchard** had the grandkids **Annabelle and Adrian** for a week of festivities and fellowship.

School and Work: Tish Purkiss retired in June from psych nursing where she has worked since 1983 and is looking forward to new adventures.

Avalon Caringella received multiple certificate awards for the end of 6th grade including Outstanding 6th grader and Human Jukebox in drama.

Friends Travel: The **Woirhayes** spent a week at the



Oregon Shakespeare festival where they saw a lot of plays, visited with friends and family, and went to Medford to hold up signs.

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.

Peace Cafe Raises Funds for Summer Peace Camp

Peace Cafe has been raising money to support Peace Camp since 2001, and this year's event did not disappoint. Over 50 attendees, volunteers, and vendors, enjoyed an evening of delicious food, handmade crafts, music, and other entertainment. Admission was free, but donations were accepted. Over \$700 was raised from generous supporters at the event. Peace Camp is a week-long summer day camp for elementary aged youth where they build lasting friendships, grow in confidence, and gain practical skills to inspire peace in their own lives and communities.

The food table, coordinated by Carrin Bouchard, was a bountiful offering of appetizers, salads, and soups - including Whittier Friends School's Beautiful Bean Soup. (The bean soup kits were also made available to guests for a donation.) As an added treat, George Bouchard made his delicious homemade ziti casserole and special iced coffee recipe.

The evening of open mic entertainment was coordinated by Jo Nita Beede who also performed. Other musical entertainment included Holly Overin on guitar, Nefta and Natalie Pereda with Spanish Folk music, and indigenous flute music by Michael White Horse Aviles. Elisabeth Elliot (authentically dressed as a "camper") offered a hilariously memorable rendition of "Hello Muddah, Hello Fadduh! (A Letter from Camp)" from 1963 by Allen Sherman as a reminder that the purpose of the evening was to support Peace Camp. Audience volunteers rounded out the program with musical solos, poetry, personal stories, and comedy.

Hand crafted items offered for sale included pieces from the Whittier Art Gallery gift shop, jewelry from Subconscious Affairs, artwork by Cynthia Nalbach, note cards by Deanna Woirhay, and hand sewn kitchen linens by Pam Laswell.

Pastor Cate Luehr, Mission Collaborative Coordinator, offered attendees an opportunity to create a peace message on a wearable button or take a premade one. Other tables included Rita Torres, children's author; Wendy Gardner, Mary Kay Beauty Consultant; and Holly Overin, who honored her late mother, Janet Church - a long-time First



Friends member and peace activist.

A special thanks goes to the volunteers who helped with event planning, promotion, and coordination, as well as the food, set-up, and clean-up. Their tireless efforts make the Peace Camp ministry possible. This year's camp will be held in Fellowship Hall, July 14 through 18, from 9 am to 3 pm for kids entering 1st through 6th grade. The cost is \$100 per camper (\$25 discount if registered by June 30; 20% sibling discount; financial aid available) For more information, contact Cassie Caringella at cassie.wfs@gmail.com or go to forms.gle/VJMAPrN9AC1quukG6.

A colorful poster for the Peace Camp event. It features a comic book style with a blue background and yellow stars. The text "ARTS & CRAFTS", "STORIES", "GAMES", "SNACKS", "CONFLICT RESOLUTION", "SONGS", and "VALUES" are listed in red and yellow. A large yellow speech bubble contains the text "PEACE IS MY SUPERPOWER!!". Below this, it says "Whittier First Friends Church" and "JULY 14-JULY 18 9:00 AM-3:00 PM". The title "PEACE CAMP" is in large, bold letters. Below the title, it says "Kids going into 1st grade through 6th grade", "\$100 for the first child, plus 20% sibling discount!", and "Register by June 30 and save additional \$25". At the bottom, it says "OPEN AND AFFIRMING OF ALL CHILDREN AND FAMILIES" and "18205 PHILADELPHIA ST. WHITTIER, CA 90601 FRIENDSPACECAMP@GMAIL.COM".

Return Service Requested
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The Living Light
Whittier First Friends Church
13205 Philadelphia St
Whittier, CA 90601-4384

Periodicals
Postage Paid at
Whittier, California

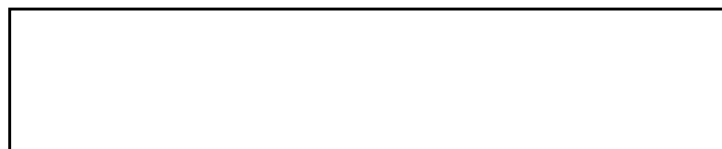
The Living Light
USPS 316-320
Volume 64 Number 07
Issue Date: July 1, 2024

The Living Light is published monthly by
Whittier First Friends Church, 13205
Philadelphia Street, Whittier, California,
90601-4303.

Periodical postage paid at Whittier, California.

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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!