

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

October, 2025

God's Grace and Provision



As we continue to seek to deepen our connection with Friends United Meeting ministries, on Sunday, September 7, we welcomed Karla Jay, FUM Global Ministries Coordinator who

brought the message in Meeting for Worship. Karla supports FUM's Global Ministries Team, coordinating schedules and communications and providing administrative support for field staff and ministry partners. Her message: "Building the Future as Way Opens" was based on Isaiah 43:19 which says, "See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Using examples of three Bible stories in which God's people found themselves in difficulties in the desert, she reminded us that God always "makes a way" in the wilderness, but we must see it and choose that path.

She spoke of Abraham's Egyptian servant, Hagar (his illegitimate son Ishmael's mother) who

was sent to wander the desert with her young child and only the food and water she could carry. As the young Ishmael nears death, an angel of God appears to tell her not to be afraid and relays God's promise that her son would live to become the patriarch of a great nation. She then found water, they both survived, and Ishmael grew, and thrived. This is Ishmael's story as the father of the Arabian nation, but also Hagar's, a slave without privilege, power, or money who was granted a way to save her child, survive, and attain equality as a nation's matriarch. God opened a way.

Karla's second reference was to the familiar story of the Israelites wandering in the desert for 40 years. In the book of Joshua it says, "The Israelites had moved about in the wilderness forty years . . . since they had not obeyed the LORD." Karla points out that our nation is in a "wilderness" right now. God has given us all a roadmap for peace, stability, and prosperity, yet, when we choose division, rather than inclusion, rhetoric rather than communication, and violence rather than peace, we will continue to wander without those blessings.

And finally, she referred to the passage from the book of Matthew in which Jesus is tempted in the desert after 40 days of fasting. When he is offered materialism, he chooses simplicity, when

Continued on page 6

Friendly Fare by Lea Wright

Dear Friends, Well, summer is over, and we are planning our fall and winter events. What do you anticipate this time of year? Homecoming, Halloween, Thanksgiving, Christmas, and New Years. I'm looking forward to my family visiting from out of town.

Friends Move: **Weston Van Dorn** has set off to the Pacific Northwest. He will be residing in the Roseway area of Portland Oregon. He welcomes recommendations of Friends and Meetings he can check out there. This is his email: WestonVanDorn@gmail.com where you can send suggestions. The **Van Dorn** and **Wright** families are happy for this exciting adventure he is beginning.

School and Work News: **Francoise Dutil** is currently in Richmond, IN, attending Earlham School of Religion (ESR). (Her address is available through the church office.)

Friends Travel: **Bill & Candice Ryder** went to Bill's hometown of Muscatine, Iowa, for two weeks. They attended Bill's 55th high school reunion and visited with family and friends. **Kathy Marin** sends "Greetings from the Stans"



Here she is with the Living Light continuing our tradition: "The Living Light Travels." (Remember, your submissions are

welcome and needed.)

Friends Correspond: **Lea & Dan Wright** recently received greetings and an update from **Jan Harmer** after she read the latest Living Light. She said, "Somehow I am still on your mailing list and I still enjoy reading the familiar names of people that touched Brad and myself." Renovations on Jan's house in Massachusetts are coming along with a finished basement for daughter Jessica and a new bathroom for herself. "Still taking forever though". Jan's 2

daughter **Elizabeth**, a former student and teacher at Whittier Friends School, got her Masters Degree in May, and she and Robert got married. Their daughter Iris continues to grow (author's note: too fast!). She has a Siberian Huskie now!!



Friends Remember: Friends of **Anka Montgomery** gathered informally at the parsonage



to share memories and honor her life. Anka was born in Koblenz, Germany, on October 20, 1927. She became acquainted with Quakers through her future American husband, Bob Montgomery. He was a member of the American Friends Service Committee

providing support after World War II. After they married in Germany, they sailed to the United States. They had two children, Norm and Krista. She taught Earth Science and German at Norwalk High School. Anka referred to herself as a Catholic Quaker. She was a pacifist and was involved in social justice. She attended First Friends on occasion, and appreciated being on our prayer list. Anka passed peacefully on July 8, 2025. She generously donated her body to USC Keck School of Medicine, an option she learned from her friends Grace and Yosh Nakamura.

Friends Sharing News: Help to keep the Friendly Fare going. Email me a quick note and tell me your news - lealouw@gmail.com, or deliver to me at church on Sunday. See you next month!

Loletta's Lines

As I write this on September 11, I already see Halloween decorations in the neighborhood. It is a definite signal that fall is here. The changing seasons of the year can bring new adventures, memories of past celebrations, and awareness of the passing of time. The changing seasons of our lives can be a little more daunting. Children grow up before we know it. Jobs and organizations come and go. Changes in our bodies can make each day “interesting.” But in the midst of it all, we can remain centered in the Presence of God.



I have been enjoying a class on contemplative practice. This week we explored *Lectio Divina*. It is perhaps the oldest meditative practice known in the Christian tradition. Sacred reading involves reading a text, not for information or instruction, but to hear the voice of the Divine speak. As we read, we listen for the word or phrase that “shimmers.” Then we savor that word or phrase. It may bring comfort or encouragement, but always a deeper connection. In these times and others, the reading from Psalm 139 seemed most appropriate.

“Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. If I rise on the wings of the dawn, if I settle on the far side of the sea, even there your hand will guide me, your right hand will hold me fast. If I say, ‘Surely the darkness will hide me and the light become night around me,’ even the darkness will not be dark to you; the night will shine like the day, for darkness is as light to you. For you created my inmost being; you knit me together in my mother’s womb. I praise you because I am fearfully and wonderfully made; your works are wonderful, I know that full well.”

What word or phrase “shimmers” for you?
What is the Beloved saying to you?



World Quaker Day Sunday, Oct. 5

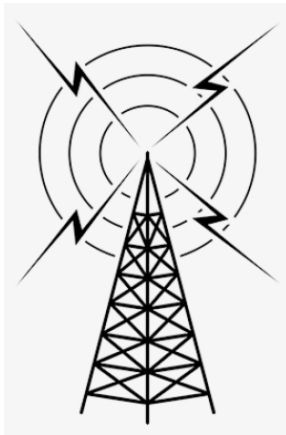
Quakers believe that anyone can have a direct, unmediated relationship with God, sometimes described as a Light in every person. This leads us to strive for peace, equality, and environmental protection. We also try to live relatively simply, and to treat others as we would wish to be treated ourselves. All of this is a reflection of the ‘Great Commandment’: to love God and ‘love your neighbour as yourself’. In times when conflict, untruths, and unfairness seem to dominate, the Friends World Committee for Consultation asks us to “let us see what love can do.” Join us for Meeting for Worship on Oct. 5, at 11 am (in the meeting house or online) as we explore what love can do. We will also be honoring and affirming our newest members and taking a group photo. For more information on how other meetings worldwide are commemorating World Quaker Day, visit:

<https://fwcc.world/event/wqd-2025/>



News from Whittier Friends School

Join Us for October All Friends Fellowship Night



Mark your calendar now and plan to join us on Wednesday, October 8, for the next All Friends Fellowship Night in Fellowship Hall. Our guest presenters will be Darrel Warren, Randy and Sylvia Pastrone, and Rita Barakat, who will speak about their experiences and connections

with the ham radio community. The evening starts at 6 pm with a potluck dinner, followed by the presentation at 7 pm; bring a dish or dessert to share if you can. All are welcome so invite family and friends to join us. See you there!



Whittier Friends School has jumped right into the new school year feet first! Our first event of the year was in our second week of school, when we held Grand Pals Day on Friday, September 5. We had a total of 29 guests (Grandparents and other Friends/Family members) for some Eric Carle themed activities, inspired by a few of his famous books, *Little Cloud* (Preschool), *Brown Bear, Brown Bear* (Lower Elementary), and *10 Little Rubber Ducks* (Upper Elementary). The grandparents also took part in other daily activities such as recess, arts and crafts, and share (show & tell) time. Lunch was a tasty but easy pizza and salad! In the following weeks, the elementary children wrote thank you notes to their grandparents and then walked them over to the post office to mail them.

Keep an eye out for Back-to-School Sunday, also known as Whittier Friends School Sunday, which is scheduled for Sunday, October 19, this year. This combined Meeting for Worship is an important tradition because our relationship with our founders, Whittier First Friends Church, is special to us. After Meeting for Worship, we invite everyone to come visit our classrooms and see all we have been up to in the short months we have been in school so far.

We thank our First Friends Community for keeping us in your hearts. We are always inspired by our Quaker roots, and we are proud to be your school for over 50 years now!



Seeking Christmas Potluck Volunteers



This year's Christmas potluck and celebration will be held on the evening of Sunday, December 14, at 5 pm in Fellowship Hall so mark your calendars now! We are seeking volunteers to help with planning, decorating, and assisting with the event. If you are willing to use your gifts and talents to ensure a fun and festive evening, message the church office at:

firstfriendswhittier@verizon.net

AFFN Returns from Summer Break

After a three month summer break, All Friends Fellowship Night returned to Fellowship Hall on Sept. 10, with a bounteous potluck dinner followed by guest speaker Karen Frey. Karen is a retired school teacher, a self professed history lover, and a Civil War reenactor. She appeared in her beautiful hand-stitched mid-nineteenth century dress and spoke about women's roles and unique contributions during the American Civil War.

We were reminded, first and foremost, of the devastation and horrific loss of life that war brings. In the U.S. Civil War, this was particularly painful because all lives lost were American. It was the deadliest war in U.S. history with over 620,000 American lives lost - more than both World War I and World War II combined. This number represents 2% of the total U.S. population at the time, and for perspective, 2% of today's population would be 6 million lives. Historians have documented that the majority of deaths were from disease, infection, and the limited medical capabilities at the time.

The profound loss of lives had a devastating effect on society emotionally and physically as husbands, brothers, and sons never returned to their families. Women filled in roles at home on farms and in businesses. Others served in army camps as cooks, laundresses, nurses, medics, seamstresses, flag bearers, and spies. The "Daughters of the Regiment" (daughters and wives of officers) wore adapted military outfits and risked their lives in battle to aid wounded soldiers and provide comfort and support.

Though women were not allowed to enlist in either army, it is estimated that between 250 to 400 women disguised themselves and fought as men. Sarah Emma Edmonds, fought as a Union Infantryman under the name of Frank Thompson. After being wounded in battle, Sarah was forced to leave to seek medical help or risk being discovered but returned later to serve as a female nurse. Although listed as a deserter, years later she fought for and received a military



pension, and she was awarded membership to the Grand Army of the Republic (the only woman ever admitted to this fraternal organization of honorably discharged Union war veterans.)

Suzie King Taylor, born a slave in Georgia, is another example of a woman recently recognized for her contributions. A garden square in Savannah, Georgia, was renamed for her in 2023 due to her significant contributions as an educator, author, and first black U.S. army regiment nurse.

The Gettysburg Women's Memorial statue at Evergreen Cemetery was dedicated to Elizabeth Thorn in 2002, the caretaker of the cemetery in her husband's absence during the war. The Union used her land as a defensive base during the battle of Gettysburg. Afterwards, she found her home ransacked, her property strewn with bodies, and personally dug the graves for and buried over 90 men while six months pregnant in the sweltering July heat.

Karen reminded us that these are just a few of the stories of strength and determination by women during these desperate times. They have become part of history but represent so many more who sacrificed and persevered without recognition. They serve as models and reminders of significant capabilities and indispensable contributions by women in the face of devastating hardships and seemingly insurmountable obstacles.

Continued from page 1

offered privilege, he chooses humility, and when offered worldly power, he chooses service.

Karla reminds us that the message of Friends is relevant and needed now more than ever. Friends propose simplicity over materialism, conflict resolution rather than fighting, integrity instead of false claims, community instead of isolation and loneliness, stewardship of our planet's precious resources, and equality and inclusion rather than racism. God offers the way, if we can only see it and follow the path.

Karla reminded us that despite the grievous and overwhelming injustices across the globe, Friends can and do make a difference with their ministries individually and collectively. For example, Friends in Richmond have established the Friends Immigrant Solidarity Network to support immigrants with language instruction, support, and visitation. FUM's small school in Belize has grown over the last decade to support at-risk youth in the violent crime-ridden part of the city. Additionally, a bilingual church and community center also provide help and hope for the community there. Karla shared that as a young child, she and her family were recipients of the kindness and generosity of the Latino Friends Church of Los Angeles. After her mother died in childbirth and her widowed father was unable to both work and care for his four small children by himself, the pastor opened the facilities to the young family and the community supported them until her father could.

Today Karla is a member of the FUM community and participates in meetings in both Indiana Yearly Meeting and the New Association of Friends. Her husband, Michael Jay, is the pastor of Raysville Friends Church, and she has been on the pastoral team at Iglesia Amigos de Indianapolis, where her father is pastor.

Karla admits that being able to see the new ways in the wilderness is not always obvious or the easy way forward, but she pleads that now is the time to "make pathways straight." She urges us to be the voice in the wilderness. "We are called to be the future, as way opens."

Summer Organ Concerts - 2025



This July, First Friends Church was filled with music and joy as Music Director and Organist Russ Litchfield presented a five-part organ concert series that spanned centuries, continents, and musical styles. Held Tuesday evenings, each concert offered a unique theme and showcased the versatility of our beloved Harris organ.

The series opened with "Movie Songs," featuring beloved film melodies from *Titanic*, *The Muppet Movie*, and James Bond classics, with vocal solos adding cinematic flair. A standout moment was Aaron Espisona's heartfelt rendition of "Rainbow Connection" in the voice of Kermit the Frog.

On July 8, Russ transported listeners to Jolly Ole' England with a program of English Voluntaries - improvisatory organ pieces from the Renaissance and Baroque eras, rich in expressive character and church tradition.

July 15 welcomed three guest organists from Jewish, Roman Catholic, and Lutheran traditions. Each shared music from their faith, followed by congregational hymns that celebrated spiritual diversity and unity.

The fourth concert, on July 22, honored French composer Louis Vierne, organist of Notre-Dame de Paris, with ten selections from his evocative repertoire.

The final evening, July 29, featured a musical journey through the major keys, from A to G, with pieces spanning the 17th to 20th centuries.

Russ extends heartfelt thanks to all who performed and attended. We are deeply grateful for his leadership and look forward to next summer's series. These concerts were a gift to our community and a celebration of music, faith, and fellowship.

FCNL Advocacy Group Network Celebrates 10 Years



Ten years ago, this September, Friends Committee on National Legislation launched its local Advocacy Group network with only seven local teams. Today there are

more than 135 teams across all 50 states. These groups use their power as constituents to lobby their representatives for change in Washington, D.C. FCNL provides support with training, tools, and monthly meetings on Zoom. The goal is to build relationships with Congress grounded in mutual respect and listening.

To commemorate this 10-year milestone and the growth it represents, the September national Zoom call featured encouraging words from two U.S. senators, updates from FCNL's legislative director, Hassan El-Tayyab, messages from a couple of the network's original organizers, and success stories from two of the groups.

Senator Tim Kaine of Virginia currently serves on the Armed Services; Budget; Foreign Relations; and Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions committees. He shared that his wife attended Friends Meeting of Richmond when he met her and finds inspiration in George Fox's words: "Walk cheerfully over the earth, answering that of God in every one." Kane acknowledges the divine spark in each human and stated that his experience serving with Jesuit missionaries in Honduras during college opened his eyes to tyranny first hand. He feels it is imperative now to fight the tyrannical government practices by enforcing the guardrails of the U.S. Constitution, and he is appreciative and fully supportive of FCNL's advocacy mission.

Senator Peter Welch of Vermont was the lead

sponsor of the UNRWA Funding Emergency Restoration Act of 2025. He emphasized that FCNL's advocacy makes a difference, citing growing (but still insufficient) support for the joint resolutions to block the sales of various bombs and munitions to Israel. He acknowledges that the Oct. 7, 2023 Hamas attack was a horrific act of terrorism, but the continuing devastation, destruction, and displacement of Palestinians and their homes has been disproportionate. He views the horror of death and starvation as no longer defensive, but rather revengeful with the ultimate goal of annexation and loss of Palestinian sovereignty. He believes it is not anti-Semitic to support an end to the destruction and provide aid. He also feels public support for these ideas is growing and is grateful to FCNL for their grassroots efforts in this issue.

FCNL's legislative director, Hassan El-Tayyab shared that there is still much work to do with regard to Gaza. Israel has launched a military offensive into densely populated areas with the ultimate goal of ethnic cleansing, and there is a 38-page plan which calls for relocation of Palestinians (either voluntarily or through internment). Although the United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) has lost its U.S. funding, there are still 12,000 staff members on the ground, many of whom are providing medical services. Our continuing advocacy to restore UNRWA funding and block the sale of bombs and munitions is needed now more than ever as public support for these issues is swelling. He encourages us to keep the momentum going.

Two former FCNL staff members who were instrumental in launching the Advocacy Teams network 10 years ago shared how exciting and inspirational it is to see the network's growth, and Susan Navi, FCNL's Major Gifts Officer announced its *2035 Sustainers Campaign* in which donors pledge \$20.35 a month to ensure FCNL's financial stability over the next 10 years. For more information about the Sustainers Campaign visit: fcnl.org/become-sustainer-celebrate-10-years-advocacy-teams.

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

Barbara Cote

Kathy Robison

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!