

# 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 11

Whittier First Friends Church

December 2025

---



## 'Tis the Season



**"Christmas Around the World"**  
**Christmas Party Potluck**  
**Sunday, Dec. 14, 2025**  
**5 pm in Fellowship Hall**

Join us for food, fellowship, and fun: games, songs, crafts. Bring a dish to share, friends, family, and your Christmas cheer!



**Ring in the New Year with Quakers**  
**New Year's Eve game/puzzle night**  
**Wed., Dec. 31 - 6 to 9 pm in Fellowship Hall**  
**"Ball Drop" at 9 pm (Midnight in Philadelphia)**

Bring games, puzzles, and your leftover Christmas sweets. All are welcome, so join us to celebrate Quaker style!

## Winter Mission Project - Tree of Christmas Peace December 7 - January 6, 2026



The Giving Tree in our foyer is waiting to be decorated with beanies, gloves, scarves and socks! All of these cozy items will be given to our neighbors at The Loving Thing, St. Matthias Episcopal Church.

In addition, everyone is welcome to spread Christmas cheer by mailing monetary donations to First Friends Church with "Winter Mission" notated on the check or by visiting our website Donations page for more options. Monies will be gathered and then divided to purchase grocery gift cards for the Interfaith Food Center and The Loving Thing.

Merry giving, Friends!

---

*A CHRISTIAN PEOPLE CALLED TO LISTEN, GATHERED TO SEEK PEACE, AND SENT FORTH TO SERVE.*

---

## Friendly Fare by Lea Wright

**Dear Friends,** The Friendly Fare in the Living Light is the place to share the non-church events that happen in your life with your "First Friends family." This can include holiday news, family news, travels, milestones, special projects, celebrations, special events, and school or work news. I often start to feel nostalgic when I work on the Friendly Fare column. Sometimes (like today) I get more involved in reading previous news than writing the current month. It's crazy to think that my first column was in October 2008, and yes, I still think of **Carl Nelson** when I write it. (He was the author when I was younger and used to read it.) I'm anxiously waiting for your newsy email now, so please don't wait too long. I'm always looking for news, though, so I encourage you to get out there, do something newsworthy, and share it with me!

**Friends Celebrate:** Among others, the **Woirhaye family** is very much looking forward to having their kids travel back home for the holidays.

**Friends Travel:** **Jo Nita Beede** and her brother **Ben**, recently traveled to Richmond, Indiana to check in on, and spend some time with, their beloved Aunt Lou (AKA) **Louise Beede**. They were very blessed with good timing for sweet, lively heartfelt conversation. Jo Nita added, "It was



hard to leave." On another note, good timing and proximity, gave them a chance to connect with our dear friend **Francoise Dutil** at Earlham School of Religion. Here they are with the Living Light continuing our tradition: "The Living Light

Travels." (Remember, your submissions are welcome and needed.) Again, with full hearts, Jo Nita said it was very hard to say goodbye. And to top it all off, there was the added amazing fall color collection on trees everywhere...**Frank & Lyn Gruber** took a trip to North Carolina, Virginia, and New York for



Frank's 70th birthday. They went to a UNC football game and tailgated with their son **Jeff** and his friends that all attended UNC, then rode a steam train to see fall foliage. After that, it was on to New York City where their daughter **Karen** met them and they enjoyed two Broad-



way shows. **Carrin Bouchard** has been doing all sorts of bamboo rafting on the Amazon River boat. (More to share next month.)

### Friends

#### About Town:

**Deanna Woirhaye** teamed up with other Whittier photographers and held a photo-



graphy exhibition at the Whittier Art Gallery. The reception was well attended and several church members stopped by to show their support. Deanna was joyful to report that several of her images were purchased during the exhibition. She looks forward to upcoming shows.

## Loletta's Lines

The Advent and Christmas seasons are busy times for family, friends, and fellowship. They are filled with prophecies and stories of angels, Jesus as Messiah, king, and child, and his cousin John heralding the greater One to come. It can be difficult to find time to center in the deep Truth behind the words, stories, and busy-ness. How can we find focus among all the lights, scents, food, meetings and music?



There is a model in the Gospel according to Mark, 6:31-32. "The apostles returned to Jesus, and told him all that they had done and taught. And he said to them, 'Come away by yourselves to a lonely place, and rest a while.' For many were coming and going, and they had no leisure even to eat. And they went away in the boat to a lonely place by themselves."

The disciples debriefed. After hard work we all need to download it all. We need to talk about it, sort through and think about what went well and what didn't. We also need to talk about how we feel about what happened and how we and others were affected by our words, actions, or in-actions. We cannot rest if we cannot lay it all down.

The disciples had not had time to eat, much less rest. We all need food and water to replenish our bodies and keep our brains working. And we need to rest. Rest is not sleep. Rest is removing all distractions, worries, thoughts, ideas, and 'have to's.' Jesus called the disciples to a quiet place without crowds, noise, or human-made sound. They did not go to play music, sing, dance, finish a book, plan, cook, sweep the cabin, repair the garage roof or even actively pray. Quiet rest rejuvenates us. It requires being still in mind, body, heart, and spirit.

We all wonder if this is possible. It is a great challenge every day, but especially during the holidays. I think one key might be simplicity. Jesus and the disciples went away from the hustle and

bustle in a fishing boat, not on a luxury cruise. The other key is the people they chose to go with - people who knew how to, and would, rest and center with them. In the midst of all the world's noise, chaos, and hardship, I am grateful to focus, center, rest, and rejuvenate with you, Friends. May your holiday season be filled with love, peace, quiet centered moments, and joy.

## Hygiene Kit Assembly Save the Date

Make plans now to join us on January 24, for an afternoon of fellowship, accomplishment, and service. On that day, from 1 to 4 pm, members of the Mission Collaborative congregations will gather in Fellowship Hall for a bottle filling frenzy!

We will fill empty, prewashed prescription medication bottles (labels removed) with personal hygiene liquids. The goal is to provide our neighbors who visit The Loving Thing at St. Matthias Church with shampoo, laundry soap, and lotion, as well as socks. Each church will provide a different product, and First Friends has signed up to donate 10 gallons of shampoo for the occasion!

To help us fulfill our commitment, we need volunteers to fill bottles on that day as well as donations of shampoo. Simply deposit a bottle of shampoo of your choice into the Red Wagon by Jan. 16 or send a monetary donation to the church office or through our website at [firstfriendswhittier.org/](http://firstfriendswhittier.org/). Be sure to designate "Shampoo!" to ensure its allocation to the project.

If you wish to give other hygiene products like toothbrushes and paste, sanitary pads, socks, or prescription bottles, just place those items into the Red Wagon as well. Razors are especially in demand.

On that same day, please consider donating to our clothing drive to benefit the Whittier LGBTQ+ Community Center. Bring any variety of new or gently used clothing on January 24, to Fellowship Hall and it will be delivered to the center.

So mark your calendar now, and we hope to see you there!



## Russ' Reflections

Our first Music Sunday of the 2025-26 choir season was on November 2nd. This year, the Christian holy day, All Souls Day, fell on that date. In Western Christian tradition, the day following All Saints (Hallows) Day, November 1st, is an opportunity to remember all our beloved departed. One way to observe the day is to hold a requiem mass: the liturgy that commemorates the dead. Many composers have set these texts to music, including Mozart and Verdi. The Friends Choir presented French composer Gabriel Fauré's (1845-1924) Requiem featuring accompaniment by the organ, augmented with a couple of instruments. Marina Harris joined us to sing the Pie Jesu - a prayer for the departed soul to find rest in the afterlife.



## A Little Advent Music

The Friends Choir will offer another Music Sunday, December 7th. We will present *A Little Advent Music* by Hugo Distler (1908-1942), a cantata based on Martin Luther's hymn, *Nun komm der Heiden Heiland* - Savior of the Nations, Come. There are six choral movements framed by a brief sonata at the beginning and end. It was first performed in 1931. Brief scripture readings will be read between the verses. The piece is scored for flute, oboe, violin, cello, and organ, accompanying a choir in three parts: soprano, alto, and men. Distler's musical style is unique and colorful, and we hope that your preparation for Christmas will be enhanced by this Advent music.

## Organ and Hymns

As we approach the 50th anniversary of our Harris Organ in October, 2026, I am planning to offer a Tuesday evening Organ and Hymns program about once a month. The first one, on December 2nd at 7:30 pm, will feature recent organ settings and the singing of Advent hymns. The second will be January 6th, Epiphany, and

will feature settings and hymns articulating the birth of Jesus and his revealing to the apostles and the gentiles. The third will be February 17th, Mardi Gras (Fat Tuesday), and will be a hinge from the themes of Epiphany into Ash Wednesday and the season of Lent. I am hoping we can offer a Pancake Supper before the program - a tradition for some Christians to get rid of all that fat before the fasting of Lent. I hope to use many of the colorful voices of our organ and offer a spiritual experience through the singing. Be sure to invite a friend and come join your voices with those assembled.

## With One Voice

You may have noticed recently the use of some new hymns indicated in the bulletin with WOV. These come from a new resource to us, *With One Voice*. We have used a few of these hymns previously, but we now have a set of books and hope to introduce more of these contemporary hymns and texts with music available (for those who like to follow the music.) The hymnals have a blue cover and are available on the top shelf of our hymnal cart in the foyer. We also have two large print copies. Be sure to pick up a copy on your way into the meeting house when we have a WOV hymn, and return it to the cart at the end of worship.

---

## Summer Mission Project Goal Achieved

Thanks to everyone who made prayerful gifts to our Summer Mission Project! We met our goal of \$1,000 and sent the donation through Friends United Meeting to the Belize School Meals Program. The school strives to provide a meal program for all students, a critical service for their health and well-being. The program provides nutritious food that children need to help them focus on their learning throughout the day. Because of the generosity of Friends, we were able to make a significant contribution to their mission.

~ Marilyn Fant, Clerk of Christian Education and Outreach



## News from Whittier Friends School



It's been an exciting month here at Whittier Friends School! In support of our students learning about Native American cultures, we were lucky to have two very special visitors to our class-

rooms. Friend Deanna Woithaye supported our exploration of cultures when she came and shared about her Tongva background. She talked about the significance of regalia as an important expression of culture, identity, and spirituality and also led us in song and dance. Friend Lessette Eagle Child came and helped the oldest children make traditional fry bread. Not only was it delicious, but students also learned about its cultural significance in representing resilience, survival, and community.

Halloween was a fun event this year. Our costume theme was science, and our students all came dressed to impress! Elementary students presented how their costumes related to the theme of science, and both elementary and preschool students walked to Brookdale and sang Halloween-themed songs to the residents while wearing their costumes.

Last, but certainly not least, WFS had, not one, but two winners of the design-a-milkshake contest for our fundraiser at Ruby's Diner! Our kindergartner designed the 'Lava Explosion', a strawberry/chocolate delight, and our third



grader designed the 'Masterpiece Shake', which lived up to its name as a delicious combination that included peanut butter, cookie dough, and Oreos. If you missed the Ruby's Diner fundraiser and still want a sweet treat, don't worry! You can still support Whittier Friends School and indulge your sweet tooth through our See's Candy fundraiser, available now until December 4th.

Be sure to save the date for our Holiday Boutique, which will be held in the school office from Friday, December 5th, through Wednesday, December 10th. Come and see our staff and families share their artistic talents and get some holiday shopping done at the same time. If you would like to sell items on consignment at our boutique, let Cassie know. We hope to see you there!



-Cassie Caringella & Marielle Askew



## Is Sycamore Canyon "For the Birds?"

Did you know that the California Blue Jay isn't actually blue, that woodpeckers have special adaptations to protect their brain while pecking, or that Turkey Vultures are thought to be the only birds with a highly developed sense of smell? Attendees at the November All Friends Fellowship Night were treated to a presentation by local Audubon Society members Jim McNamara and Steve Huber which featured stunning photos accompanied by knowledgeable commentary that included these fascinating facts and more

The presentation focused on the birds of Sycamore Canyon which Steve explained is adjacent to Rose Hills (entrance is off Workman Mill Road near Beverly Blvd.) and is part of the Puente Hills Habitat. With its pleasant climate and a creek as a year-round water supply, this habitat is home to numerous species of birds. It also attracts various migratory birds for shorter stays and hosts a variety of plants and wildlife. The birds shown and discussed included hawks, owls, ravens, starlings, thrush, finches, jays, woodpeckers, mockingbirds, warblers, hummingbirds, vultures, sparrows, orioles, and kingfishers. Additional photos of other wildlife included the mule deer, spiders, butterflies, reptiles, and bobcats.

Steve explained that bird watching involves more strolling and standing still rather than hiking. Birds can be in the trees, in the air, or on the ground and binoculars are helpful. Jim explained that he takes hundreds of pictures and spends days reviewing them in order to find one suitable for his presentations.

More advanced birders are able to identify birds by their song as well as appearance, but there are phone apps that aid with identification as well. One such app is the Audubon Bird Guide which allows you to locate and identify birds, track your sightings, and get "bird alerts" according to your preferences. Another app is the Merlin Bird ID from Cornell Labs which helps



both beginners and advanced bird watchers identify birds from photos, songs and calls, and provides a global bird guide.

The Whittier Area Audubon Society is the main birding group in Whittier and offers monthly programs, guided walks, and educational resources for all levels of nature lovers. They meet the third Thursday of the month at 7:30 both online and in our own Fellowship Hall. They also host local beginner's bird walks as well as field trips. All are welcome and encouraged to join, so if you have an interest and appreciation for these fascinating and elusive creatures, check out Whittier Audubon website at [whittieraudubon.org](http://whittieraudubon.org) for a schedule.

---

*Friendly Fare continued from page 2*

**School and Work News: Avalon Caringella** was the "Visual Arts Student of the Month" in October at Benton Middle School. Only 10 students are chosen for this honor each year, and she was also chosen last year. She enjoyed performing in her school play, "Dr. Experimenter and the League of Evil" as Van Gogh, one of the Teenage Mutant ninja bunnies. Her brothers, **Landon** and **Hudson** enjoyed watching the show, and Landon and **Cassie** both helped backstage. In separate news, Hudson lost his first tooth!

**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!

## Mission Collaborative Hosts Family Housing Insecurity Workshop



With the high cost of living in Los Angeles County, rents rising drastically, and limited availability of units, housing insecurity has reached a crisis point for many

low-income families in the area. One of the goals of the Mission Collaborative is to support local families experiencing housing instability, so on October 25, Whittier First United Methodist Church hosted members of the Mission Collaborative congregations and representatives from local organizations and agencies to learn about services available to our unhoused neighbors and to consider how the Mission Collaborative might be supportive.

Faith based groups included St. Vincent de Paul and Whittier Area Interfaith Council (WAIC). Other non-profit organizations included The Greater Whittier LGBTQ+ Community Center, First Day, and the Faith and Housing Coalition (a housing advocacy group in East L.A.) Additionally, Rosa Barragan, the Homeless Liaison for Norwalk La Mirada School District shared their community's success with supporting the nearly 4000 insecurely housed minors in their system. And First Friends member David Barboza spoke about his work facilitating new Accessory Dwelling Units (ADU's) at his job with the California Department of Housing and Community Development.

In addition to these presentations, workshop participants met in small groups to analyze hypothetical case studies of individuals and families seeking help for housing insecurity. As a result, several key points emerged. One is that each situation is unique, and there are a variety of helpful services provided in our area - from

hotel vouchers through WAIC to long-term housing through Whole Child as well as support services like bus passes through St. Vincent de Paul to showers and laundry at the LGBTQ+ Center. Another insight is that when someone is seeking help, it is important to really listen to determine their specific needs and to "walk alongside" them in a non-judgemental way, realising that they may be overwhelmed, embarrassed, or perhaps fearful about seeking help. Additionally, long-term housing solutions are in short supply and have lengthy waiting periods so it is important to work to prevent homelessness before it happens - like helping someone with transportation to work so they can keep their job or helping with utilities so they can pay the rent.

While the issue of housing instability was not solved in a single workshop, it was the first step to exploring how the Mission Collaborative might have an impact on this troubling problem for families in our area. One important takeaway is the need for a database of local services. Another is the need for additional temporary housing for families waiting for a long-term referral.

Our neighbors at Whittier First United Methodist Church have a furnished living space within their facilities that they want to make available as a short-term solution until Whole Child can find families permanent housing. With help from Mission Collaborative volunteers, "Hope Housing" began hosting its first family on November 20, 2025. But they cannot do it alone.

**Overnight volunteer "hosts" are needed to be present on the property from 6 pm to 6 am. Volunteers stay in a separate private room with an attached bathroom and have access to the internet and the kitchen.** If you have an interest in covering a shift, know someone who does, or simply want more information, contact Loletta Barrett, or the church office.

Return Service Requested  
Postmaster: send address changes to:  
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 11

Issue Date: December 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.

Candice Ryder and Mel Sturr, Editors  
Loletta Barrett, Pastor  
Russell Litchfield, Dir of Music Ministries and  
Organist  
Lorenzo Mora, Custodian  
Telephone 562-698-9805

[www.firstfriendswhittier.org](http://www.firstfriendswhittier.org)

Whittier Friends School Staff  
Candice Ryder, School Committee Clerk  
562-945-1654



Lisa Adam	Russ Litchfield
Martin Barboza	Brooke Marshburn
John Bateman	Carol Marshburn
Steven Caringella	Elise Marshburn
Derek Creelman	Holly Marshburn
Ann Davidson	Luke Marshburn
Elisabeth Elliot	Ted Marshburn
Jackson Garland	Becky Memmelaar
Madelyn Garland	Jay Oberholtzer
Luke Harris	Chris Thirkettle
Jack Huffaker	Milton Wright

*Correction: In last month's Living Light article about the October AFFN program, Darrell Warren was erroneously listed as the radio operator for the USC Young Scientists contact with the International Space Station. The operator was Rita Barakat. Darrell was there as an observer.*

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!