

SPOKANENEWORD

January
First Month
2019



Spokane Friends
1612 W Dalke
Spokane, WA 99205
(509) 327-7852
www.spokanefriends.com



Sunday Schedule:

Doors Open at 9:00 a.m.
Worship begins in stillness
when first person sits down.
Worship continues with song
and messages 10:00 am
Fellowship 11:00 am

Second Sunday of the Month:
After worship we gather for a
Community Potluck Dinner .

Third Sunday of the Month:
Monthly Meeting for
Business begins at rise of
worship.

[**Note:** Quaker meetings do not put a pastor's sermon at the center of Meeting for Worship; they believe the life of the Meeting occurs during "open worship", when Friends listen individually for the voice of God and sometimes minister to one another vocally when so directed by God. Spokane Friends has historically been a pastoral meeting, and during this interim period when we have no paid pastor, we attempt to bring people forward (our own members or special guests) to share a message with us during Meeting for Worship. That makes many of us "preachers" at one time or another, so we may be interested in what listeners expect from the person sharing a message. If so, the essay below may be of interest to us.]

What I Wish My Preacher Knew

by James Benedict

Having preached nearly every week for over 30 years now, I have heard the phrase thousands of times: "Nice sermon."

To be honest, I'm still trying to decide how I feel about it. Some people say it with great sincerity, while others say it almost as a reflex. Some signal with their facial expression and body language that a particular sermon has really encouraged them or made them think. Others say the words, but their eyes or tone of voice tell another story.

Of course, immediate feedback is not the most appropriate measure of the value of preaching. If the purpose of all worship — including preaching — is to build up the body of Christ (as Paul states quite plainly in I Corinthians 14), then the real test of whether or not preaching is any good is in how much congregations and the individuals in them come over time to embody the grace and values of Jesus. Still, preaching won't be very edifying if the people tune out. This makes understanding preaching from the congregation's point of view extremely important.

The problem is that people are rarely going to tell you the truth about your preaching, even if you ask them to. Even if it were easier to get people to be honest about our preaching, it would remain quite difficult for most of us as preachers to make ourselves that vulnerable.

Since direct feedback is so hard to get and so hard to take, perhaps some more general sense of what people need and want from preaching can be helpful. Based on my experience and careful listening to a great deal of "indirect feedback" through the years, here are seven thoughts that are often going through the minds of those in the pew when we who preach step up to the pulpit.

1 Don't waste my time.

The speeches of one 20th century politician were described as "thousands of words wandering around an empty plain in search of an idea." The same could be said of more than a few sermons. "Appropriate" sermon length is largely a matter of tradition but, whether short or long, sermons shouldn't meander or go off on tangents. Use your preparation time to come up with a clear idea you want to communicate and then say only what needs to be said to get that idea across. Create clear and meaningful transitions. Start and end strong. Make every minute count.

2 Don't show off how smart (or holy) you are.

Preach to edify, not to impress. You don't have to keep reminding me you can read Greek and Hebrew, or that you like to study Barth's *Dogmatics* in your spare time. And while you are at it, go easy on the illustrations that cast you in the role of "hero" or "saint." Name dropping is a big no-no, too.

3 I'm not stupid, so don't talk down to me.

I'm not here for simple answers and a pat on the head. Don't be afraid to challenge me or to admit that serious thinkers can have sincere disagreements about the meaning of texts or the proper interpretation of doctrines. A sermon shouldn't resemble a seminary lecture, but it shouldn't sound like a children's story, either.

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4 Make me feel something.

I'm not just here for some ideas to consider. I am here to be motivated, comforted, and inspired. Don't manipulate my emotions, but at the same time, don't ignore them. I want to weep with those who weep and rejoice with those who rejoice, just like the good book says. I want to feel the same kind of compassion Jesus felt when he looked out at the crowds, or at Zacchaeus in the tree. And I want the things that break God's heart to break mine, too.

5 Spare me the self-help mumbo-jumbo.

There are plenty of perfectly good self-help and motivational speakers out there, and if I wanted advice or a pep talk, I would seek them out. I come to church for other reasons. I want to understand God's perspective on things. I want to experience God's love and hear God's call to use my gifts in service to God and others. I already spend much time thinking about how I can be happier, healthier, wealthier, and more popular. I come to church to be reminded that it really isn't all about me after all.

6 Be real. Don't try to entertain me.

Nothing is a bigger turn-off in a preacher than phoniness, and the phoniest preachers of all are those who start to think of themselves as entertainers. Sure, it feels good when people laugh at your jokes, but try to not tell a joke unless it is somehow related to your serious points. Be just as cautious about stories that you know can bring people to tears; use them sparingly. If people begin to sense that you are "performing" rather than preaching, they are going to judge you on that basis. You don't want that. Unless you are the second coming of Meryl Streep, the reviews may be brutal.

7 What does this have to do with my life?

The sermon may be well-crafted, reasonable, touching, and sincere, but if it doesn't connect with my life, my struggles, and my effort to follow Jesus in everyday life, what good is it? What am I supposed to think, feel, or do differently in light of the lessons found in scripture? As you craft your sermon, imagine me saying, "So what? Why should I care? What difference does it make?" If you can't answer those questions, get back to work. The sermon isn't ready yet.

Parishioners don't expect every sermon to be perfect. They understand and accept that there may even be a "clunker" now and then. But they rightfully expect preachers to be committed enough to our craft to keep working at it. No matter how long we have been preaching, there is always room for growth and improvement. Taking a workshop or reading books on preaching can help, but so can listening to the folks who listen to us.

James Benedict is a retired Church of the Brethren minister living in New Windsor, MD. Copyright Messenger magazine, all rights reserved, used by permission, link to <http://www.brethren.org/messenger/articles/2018/what-i-wish-my-preacher-knew.html>.

[**Queries:** Do some of these observations seem more appropriate to a sermon-centered service than to a Quaker Meeting? If so, which ones? What would you add to an essay entitled "What I wish my Quaker pastor knew?" Please consider writing a Letter to the Editor to broaden the discussion.]



Coming Soon to Spokane Friends Church The AVP Basic Workshop

After hosting Alternative to Violence Project's mini-workshop in October, Spokane Friends decided they would like to host the AVP BASIC WORKSHOP, which is an intensive 24-hour workshop.

The Workshop will be presented over two consecutive weekends: Feb. 16-17 and Feb. 23-24. On each weekend, participants will meet Friday evening and Saturday till 5:00 pm. The cost of the Workshop is \$30 and will include lunch on Saturday.

The Basic AVP Workshop teaches interpersonal conflict resolution skills through a series of step-by-step processes. These experiences in small groups and one-to-one interactions build a sense of community and trust through exercises focusing on:

- **Communication** — Improving both listening skills and assertive methods of expression.
- **Cooperation** — Developing cooperative attitudes that avoid competitive conflicts.
- **Creative Conflict Resolution** — Getting in touch with the inner **Transforming Power** to resolve violence. Role plays provide an opportunity to explore this power and learn new and creative ways to respond to real life conflicts in our lives.

AVP workshops seek to assist people in personal growth and change, but AVP is not psychotherapy. We join together, participants and facilitators both, to explore our own corners of violence and seek more satisfying ways to respond. Each workshop is generally 12 – 20 participants to facilitate discussion.

More information will be available as the dates get nearer.



MONTHLY MEETING FOR BUSINESS MINUTES 16 December 2018



The meeting was opened by Presiding Clerk Jonas Cox. 14 people were in attendance. The minutes from the November meeting were read and approved with one correction. The urinal in the downstairs men's bathroom will be replaced rather than removed.

Treasurer's Report: Since we have 14K in our checking account, Wade Schwartz put 3K of that into our Friends Foundation Fund. He paid for the parts for the bathroom updates. There are now only 2 outstanding checks regarding pulpit supply that have not been cashed. He will continue to pursue this.

Stewards & Trustees Report: Bill Emery reported that we will continue our church insurance through Insurance of Philadelphia. The person that was allowed to keep his camp trailer on the church property is no longer here. Gold Seal Plumbing has been here to assess the systems needed to update both downstairs bathrooms and the one in the church office. They will contact Bill with the estimates. A new snow blower and ladder were purchased and are in the shed. Caritas paid for half of this expense through a grant that they received from the Railroad to be used for safety items. An ad hoc committee for church improvements includes Anya Lawrence, Krista Maroni and Pam Emery.

Elders Report: Since Caritas is still having trouble with their financial situation, we are still accepting their gift of \$350 a month instead of the \$500 that they agreed to pay. Wade is looking into the increase of our electric bill since they have been using our facility.

The Alternatives to Violence Project (AVP) will be having a workshop at our church the last 2 weekends of February, on Friday evening and all day Saturday for each weekend. The cost is \$30 per person.

A pianist from Whitworth, Polina Beymanov, has been hired for three Sundays. CPA Ken Bendixen will look into helping us set up a 501(c)(3) for the church. Our Articles of Incorporation have been redone by Pam Emery, and they were approved.

Sunday Worship Schedule: December 23rd will utilize Queries about Christmas; on December 30th Jon Maroni will bring the message, and on January 6th Lois Kieffaber will speak.

With no other old or new business and all hearts clear, Jon Maroni dismissed in prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Nixon, Recording Clerk

Eastern Washington
Legislative Conference

"Inform, Inspire, Involve"

Saturday, Jan. 26, 2019

9 am—3 pm

Spokane Valley United Methodist Church

115 N. Raymond St., Spokane Valley

RSVP to info@thefigtree.org



Five generations of the Nelson family who celebrated their Christmas together on Dec. 22 in the Church Fellowship Hall.

News from Caritas

During the month of November, 2018, Caritas Outreach Ministries served **772 individuals** from **304 households**:

Children (0-18)	270
Adults (18-54)	319
Seniors (55 & over)	183



We distributed **12,413 lbs.** of food through the Table of Plenty and Food Pantry.

We helped **3 families** with emergency utility assistance for a total of **\$508.91**.

We connected families with **\$444.50** worth of hygiene and cleaning supplies.

We gave out **\$50** in fuel vouchers for transportation help.

We had **55** volunteers putting in **555** hours.

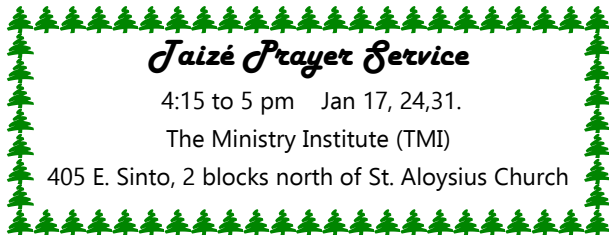
The fundraiser at The Boiler Room sponsored by Caritas on November 9, raised over \$1600 through donations, raffle tickets and restaurant customers. Thanks to all who helped with this endeavor, especially those who created the large and impressive gift baskets which were raffled off.

In preparation for the Holiday Season, we matched nearly forty households with Christmas Sponsors and are distributing lovely handmade donations of winter wear and warm quilts.

Thanks to a grant from the Union Pacific Railroad, Caritas will also be able to improve food access through the winter months. Yak Trax traction cleats are being given out to clients who need to traverse icy conditions on foot. We were also able to purchase a stock of ice melt and a snowplow to improve safety conditions on the property.

Heading into colder months, fresh produce donations tend to decline. Caritas is in need of canned fruit and veggies to supplement our Table of Plenty. This will help keep clients healthy and better able to tackle the stressful road to financial recovery.

Kelsie Rowland, Operations Manager,



Jaizé Prayer Service

4:15 to 5 pm Jan 17, 24,31.

The Ministry Institute (TMI)

405 E. Sinto, 2 blocks north of St. Aloysius Church

Visiting Quakers



Quakers have a long tradition of visiting one another. It may have arisen from the early days of persecution when there was a need to encourage each other, or from the spread of Quakerism when it came to America and Quaker missionaries traveled into regions where there were no established Quaker communities. Since Quaker meetings often had no head, a more established meeting might send an Elder to visit a newly-formed meeting to share a message or inquire about the "state of the Meeting". Such travelers would be welcomed into homes of Quakers they had never met. Quaker gatherings still write "Epistles" to one another, which are then shared by modern technology.

We find the following paragraph in London Yearly Meeting's 1956 "Faith and Practice":

"We both recognize and encourage concerned visitation of other meeting and opportunities of worship with those of other communions . . ." (259)

"We should take an interest not merely in our own particular meetings, but also to other adjacent meetings, especially if they are few in numbers or otherwise in need. The visitation of another meeting in the spirit of Christian fellowship is an act of service, even if unaccompanied by any words of spoken ministry. When carried out under right concern, it may bring encouragement and refreshment both to those who visit and those who are visited." (267)

In the wake of the split in Northwest Yearly Meeting, Spokane Friends has profited from this tradition of entertaining visiting Quakers (including Irv Brendlinger, Dwight Kimberly, Johan and Judy Maurer, Lorraine Watson, Elizabeth Todd, and Eric Muhr and Debbie Harrison) as we seek the will of God regarding affiliation with another Yearly Meeting.

We have been much enriched by contacts and relationships with Quakers from other meetings, Yearly Meetings, and histories.

And on **Sunday, January 13** we will be visited by Julie Peyton from West Hills Friends Church. She will speak during Morning Worship and join us for lunch shortly thereafter (this is our regularly scheduled potluck meal).

Startling News From Family Promise!

To all our Friends, Volunteers and Supporters:

In case you haven't heard, Steve Allen has accepted a position as Family Pastor at Crossroads Bible Church in Bellevue and will be resigning from our Family Promise team.

Like all of you, I feel sadness but also great joy as Steve and Steph Allen embark on their next great adventure together, headed back to their home church in Bellevue. Steve's life has been dedicated to ministry and his call now takes the Allen family back to be close to their parents and the faith community that has been their home base for many years.

Steve has led Family Promise of Spokane to do far greater things than any of us could have imagined. When Steve started we counted the people we served by the dozens, now we count them into the thousands. That said, in the amazing staff he brought in and developed. He leaves behind an outstanding team of dedicated individuals who know how to work with each family they encounter and help them "find a way home". They will carry on this essential work under the leadership of our Interim Director Joe Ader while the board begins the process of calling our next permanent Executive Director.

On behalf of the board, I want to thank Steve for his amazing leadership in his five years with Family Promise and also remind him that he always has friends and a home back here in Spokane.

With much Love, John Lloyd, Board President, Family Promise of Spokane

