

SPOKANENWORD

December
Twelfth Month
2019



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



Sunday Schedule:
Unprogrammed Worship
9:00—9:45 am
Programmed Worship
10:00 am.
Fellowship 11:00 am

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

Faith of the Magi

By Byron Anderson

Often overlooked in its importance, God's revelation of Christ's birth to the Magi is a significant theological event that provides us with a powerful Christian witness. Mentioned only briefly in scripture, few details are provided about the identities of the wise men and their travel to Jerusalem (Matt. 2:1–17).

The Magi were driven by an intense desire to answer the call of a foreign God. Only God's strong pull on them can explain why they deserted their families, incurred great expense, and risked their lives on a long, dangerous journey to a distant land. While the training and knowledge possessed by the Magi provided them with an understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures, it was their desire to know God that empowered them with the faith required to undertake the journey to Jerusalem.

Although scripture provides us with few details about the Magi, much is known about their beliefs and customs. Many experts believe that the Magi were Medes, a sect of Persians with reputations as fierce warriors and as breeders of exceptional horses. The Magi were known throughout Persia and beyond as priests and scholars possessing special knowledge. They also had a reputation as astrologers, so it is not surprising that God used a star to draw the Magi to Christ.

God's star appeared during a fascinating time in Middle Eastern history, when the Silk Road was already well established and had since become the "information superhighway" of its day. News of world events, medicine, and religion were exchanged by travelers along this great road extending from China to Rome. The Magi were familiar with religious perspectives, as well as the Messianic prophecies contained in the Hebrew Scriptures, particularly since many of the Jews taken to Babylon as captives five hundred years earlier remained in Persia and continued to worship their God. One Messianic prophecy in Hebrew Scriptures that surely would have drawn their attention was the account of God causing the diviner Balaam to proclaim, "There shall come forth a star out of Jacob, and a scepter shall rise out of Israel" (Num. 24:17). Many interpreted this reference to the star and the scepter as identifying the same entity: the Hebrew Messiah.

Depending on where they resided in Persia, a journey to Jerusalem may have taken a year or longer and may have subsequently taken them through areas fraught with danger. In addition to the great expense required to finance a caravan and provide for its protection, they traveled on roads in poor condition while defending against roving groups of bandits and unfriendly militia.

We do not know if the Magi were merely curious adventurers when they left their homeland or if they had already undergone a religious conversion. Scripture suggests that the Magi's long walk with God must have provided them with an intensely strong faith in the Hebrew God. When they reached Jerusalem, the Magi told King Herod that they "had come to worship He who had been born King of the Jews" (Matt. 2:9). If the Magi were not yet believers in the Hebrew God, they would not have announced their intention to worship the King of the Jews. Considering that the Magi were the spiritual leaders of their people, this passage conveys a particularly significant meaning. It was not their curiosity of nature alone that led the Magi to Jerusalem. God's star certainly caught their attention, but it was their understanding of God through the Hebrew Scriptures that gave the star its meaning. In witnessing this incredible event, God's call to the Magi must have been a powerful spiritual experience.

While the Magi's experience was extraordinary, in many ways it must have been similar to what we experience in coming to know God: their acceptance of Christ may have been immediate, or God may have transformed them over a period of time. Similarly, some of us are quite certain about our faith once we receive God's call, while others have doubts about God that may linger long after they have claimed Christ as their Savior. Like us, the Magi had choices to make. In seeking Christ, the Magi were separated from their friends and families, endured much hardship, and risked their lives on the journey to Jerusalem. The next time you or someone you love is struggling with their faith, be reminded of the journey of the Magi and their faith that led them to Christ.

Copyright Friends Journal, all rights reserved, link to <https://www.friendsjournal.org/faith-of-the-magi> [excerpts]. Byron Anderson is a lawyer in Washington, D.C. While attending seminary, Byron became interested in first-century Middle Eastern religion and culture.

GRATITUDE IS . . .

- Is A child seeing color for the first time
When given that special pair of glasses by a teacher
- Is Coming home from a tour of duty
And your toddler child runs into your open arms
- Is My best friend of 20 years says YES,
And slips the engagement ring on her finger
- Is That crazy 69 Ford ranger truck started this morning
And you will get to work with no delays
- Is Hearing your grandchild's healthy heartbeat
At her first ultrasound amid tears of shared joy
- Is A fast but clumsy walk across the platform
To receive your long-awaited diploma
- Is Saying a sad goodbye to a grandparent, yet knowing
There will be such a grand reunion in Heaven
- Is Laughing at the ice cream on your tiny daughters' nose
And letting her kiss your face anyway
- Is Knowing Dred-Scott did not end the discussion but
Now believing, Black Lives, yes, All Lives Matter
- Is Frozen, shaking fingers, groping for dry wood
And that last match did not go out
- Is Finding hard wrought common ground
During an age of such uncertainty
- Is The words I chose to say
Were not the first words that came to mind
- Is Being asked by a homeless man for some shoes
And buying him new clean and warm clothes too
- Is Experiencing Gratitude among Friends
That choose to live Grateful lives.
- Is Knowing to be Grateful will be a life-long beginning
And it starts with mindful silence, prayerful grace

Be grateful today.

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P O E T , S C O R N E R



Really good news about The Fig Tree fundraiser!

Our representative on The Fig Tree board, Wade Schwartz, has announced that their goal of raising donations of \$17,000 by Nov. 27 has been reached! This means they will receive the \$17,000 match offered to them, bringing their total new funds to \$35,000.

Congratulations, Fig Tree!!

Paul Blankenship Seeks Ministry Growth

At the November Monthly Meeting for Business we learned that Paul has been accepted into a course offered by the Graduate Theological Seminary in Berkeley on spiritual formation and growth. Much of it will be done on-line, but the cohort group will meet together for a week at a time four times a year. The Elders think this training will make Paul even more valuable to us and to others he serves in the future.

San Francisco Theological Seminary (SFTS) houses one of the finest spiritual direction and formation programs in the world. Through intensive seminars on site and online classes, its faculty and students explore the holy mystery of divine love in order to provide care for mind and spirit, church and society. Paul's first class of his spiritual direction program, which will begin 7 January, is entitled "Contemplative Listening." It will teach him to help people pay attention to the real and tender movements of God's love within their lives so that they can become more free to love themselves and the world around them.

The first course meeting and tuition installment is due in mid-January. Some at the Business Meeting expressed a desire to help Paul with these expenses. We have decided to include an envelope with the Bulletin during the month of December for those who want to contribute via the Meeting (checks to the Meeting in the envelopes will go to Paul) thus making the donation tax deductible. Paul thanks you, deeply, for your prayers and any financial support you feel freely led to share as he begins this program.

The Office now has an Index of all the Pendle Hill pamphlets published from 1934 through 2018. They are listed Number Index with annotation, Author Index, Title Index, and Subject Index. All are also available for sale. Feel free to borrow this catalogue to see which pamphlets would interest. Our library also has a number of these pamphlets; others can be ordered from Pendle Hill.

MONTHLY MEETING FOR BUSINESS MINUTES 17 November 2019



Jon Maroni, assistant presiding clerk, opened the Meeting with prayer.

Krista Maroni agreed to serve as Recording Secretary and read the minutes of the last Meeting. A request was made to reverse the order of the first two sentences of last month's minutes to indicate Deborah Seuss's suggestions were for more than worship. With that edit, minutes approved.

Treasurer's report: Wade Schwartz gave the treasurer's report. Giving is down from last year by about \$7,600. Payroll expenses have shifted due to the new categorization of secretary pay based on the change from 1099 MISC form to hourly staff. New contributions from building use have come in from the weekly Zumba classes and family gatherings.

Elders report: Elders reviewed the previous month's messages and considered each guest's contribution to the meeting. Elders acknowledge that Gary Jewell's message was controversial but brought about a lot of engagement.

Anya Lawrence submitted a letter of resignation (attached) from Spokane Friends Elders.

Concerns were raised about idols and songs for other gods presented in the Diwali service. Some found the experience educational and inviting while other perceived it crossed the line into another religion's worship during our Sunday worship. This conversation brought up additional concerns about Peace month's focus on other religious groups and if similar challenges would arise. The Meeting asked that the presentations from other religious groups focus on education and peace rather than a worship experience. Paul Blankenship and Laverne Biel agreed to draft queries to present to guests from other faith traditions to provide some guidance in their sharing with us during Peace month.

Paul Blankenship's desired spiritual direction and formation program is 99% confirmed but waiting on an official letter. The program will last about eighteen months, will require three or four visits in person and will cost about \$8,000, not paid all at once. The first payment needed in January and will be between \$1,800 and \$2,000. Elders requested financial support from the meeting for the cost of this program. The meeting approved the request for designated support for Paul's program through envelopes offered in the bulletin, alongside a write up explaining the program. Paul agreed to contribute this write up by December 1.

Elders asked for approval to use church emergency funds for \$200 to repair the railing at Sue Keenhen's home. Don Hyslop offered to help with this project and utilize his personal welding equipment. Use of church emergency funds approved.

Stewardship/Trustees Report

Spokane friends will ask Caritas to pay \$500 rent and a portion of the new entryway flooring in response to their increased fundraising support. Pam Emery is currently requesting a bid on the carpet. The men's toilet downstairs is still in the process of repair.

The stage speaker is broken will likely need repair soon. Bob Weise is currently using and sharing his personal PA system for the time being.

Pastor's report

A consistent attender would like to be a new member of our meeting. On Dec 8 Paul will present the idea for a new street ministry. Paul is nearly half-way through his interim position and wants to get feedback by meeting with individuals and families. In two weeks, Dec 1, Paul will guide Sunday morning worship through an expression of anger at the world and at God.

Bob Weise closed in prayer.

Respectfully submitted by Krista Maroni

Sunday Leadership Schedule

◆ Dec 8 Paul Blankenship
◆ Dec 15 Ruthie Tippin
◆ Dec 22 Derek Taylor
◆ Dec 29 Emily Provance
◆ Jan 5 Tracy Simmons

AN ADVENT RETREAT DAY

The Ministry Institute at Gonzaga will offer a five-hour period of quiet refreshment to seek God in the midst of the busyness of the holiday season. The date is December 7 and the location of the Institute is 405 E. Sinto Ave. A simple lunch will be provided. A donation of \$30 is suggested



News from Caritas

Here are the Service Reports from October 2019:

Individuals served	1281
Households served	441
Children (0-18)	466
Adults (18-54)	535
Seniors (55 & over)	280
Lbs. of food distributed from Table of Plenty & Food Pantry	21,861
Emergency utility assistance	\$ 972.39
Hygiene & Cleaning Supplies	\$ 668.00
Fuel Vouchers	\$ 150.00
Bus Passes	2
Number of Volunteers	49
Volunteer Hours	719



October Fundraiser Update

Final numbers are in!!

Thank you to the volunteers, guests, and donors who made this event a success.

Caritas raised \$16,609.01 through underwriting, auction proceeds, and financial gifts.

! WOW \$16,609.01 WOW!

We could not have done this without you. Thank

you for your support of our mission and making the commitment to see us into another year of service to our neighbors in need.

Christmas at Caritas

- Caritas is accepting Christmas gifts for children 0-14 and seniors 55+

Donations may be wrapped or unwrapped and dropped off any time before Thursday December 12th. Gifts will be matched to a household in need and distributed the week before Christmas. For more information, contact Caritas at 509-326-2249 or staff@caritasoutreachministries.org.

- Holiday Heat and Utilities!

Caritas depends on our HH&U fund to provide Avista & City of Spokane assistance for low income households in financial crisis due to medical emergencies, recent job loss, or other extenuating circumstances. Investing in the lives of our clients through this fund provides heat to seniors, lights for students to study by, and water for hygiene and cooking. If you would like help promoting this holiday fund drive at your church, contact Caritas today!

"Let them give thanks to the LORD for his unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for mankind, for he satisfies the thirsty and fills the hungry with good things."
Psalm 107:8-9

Kelsie Rowland, Operations Manager
Caritas Outreach Ministries

RANDY READS AND REVIEWS

By Randy Vigil



"This book familiarizes the reader with the political, economic, social, cultural and religious aspects of Roman rule and shows how the New Testament enabled its first readers to negotiate their pervasive imperial context. " This quote is from the back cover of The Roman Empire and the New Testament : An Essential Guide, by Warren Carter (Abingdon Press 2006) and when I read it I knew that I had to own and read this book.

I think that many of us when we read the New Testament (and the Old Testament) fail to understand the greater context of the world of its writers and original readers. I believe in the inspiration of the Bible, sometimes seeing it as comprised of stand alone texts, sometimes falling into the 'proof text' mentality, when it was meant to be read (or heard) as a whole. My 21st Century context gets in the way of understanding the writers in their world. Why did they write the things they did? What was influencing their daily lives? What were the influencing factors as the writers proclaimed the person and work of Jesus the Messiah? What did the hearers understand?

This book is a very helpful resource for understanding the background and some of the more thorny passages that we sometimes roll over to get to the easier to understand texts.

Be forewarned that some of the information might be shocking as well as troubling in that he sees several of the New Testament writers as coming to controversial conclusions as to how Christians might relate to Government.

Warren Carter is an exegete specializing in the Gospel of Matthew, as well as the Greek New Testament in general. Born in New Zealand and now living in Tulsa, Oklahoma; Carter's education consists of a Ph.D., from Princeton Theological Seminary; a B.D., Th.M., from Melbourne College of Divinity, Australia; as well as a B.A. Hons, from Victoria University of Wellington, New Zealand. An ordained New Zealand Baptist minister with standing in the Disciples of Christ, Carter is currently the LaDonna Kramer Meinders Professor of New Testament at Phillips Theological Seminary.

Quaker News

Sierra-Cascades Quarterly Gathering this winter will be at on Saturday, Feb. 29, 2020, at **Silverton Friends Church** – 229 Eureka Ave, Silverton, OR 97381 . More information to come.

Annual Gathering for Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends will be this June 12–14, 2020, at Canby Grove.

Northwest Yearly Meeting will have its **Annual Sessions** on July 19-22, 2020. Their annual **Pastors Conference** will be on March 9-12, 2020.

The doors are open for **Way of the Spirit** 2020, with a new distance learning option for far flung participants. **Way of the Spirit** is an 18-month retreat and learning program for spiritual deepening from the wisdom of Quaker spirituality. Details: <https://goodnewsassoc.org/spirit/> You can register for an on-line inquiry session with the program director.

Broken Vessels Quaker Ministries is happy to announce the return of the **Deeper Roots** program. Deborah Shaw, Deborah Fisch, and Lloyd Lee Wilson will lead a group of committed Friends in a “deep dive” into the history of our Quaker faith, a Quaker perspective on the Bible and how to benefit from it, sampling spiritual practices and disciplines valuable to Friends, and building authentic spiritual community. Four long weekend residencies over 18 months, beginning 9/10-13, 2020, at **Ben Lomond Quaker Center** in California. Suitable for seasoned Friends as well as those relatively new to Quakerism. For more details or to request an application, visit Broken Vessels Quaker Ministries at bvqministries.org

Anna Scott-Hinkle and Tom Stave recently attended the **FCNL Annual Meeting (Friends Committee for National Legislation)** in Washington DC, where Nick Block worked for ten years. They represented Sierra Cascades as members of FCNL’s General Committee. SCYMF is one of about thirty participating yearly meetings in FCNL (fcnl.org), which was founded in the years following World War II as a “Quaker lobby in the public interest.

A corporation meeting of **American Friends Service Committee (AFSC)** will be held April 16–18, 2020, at Friends Center in Philadelphia, PA, and Sierra-Cascades YM has been invited to send two observers. Let the clerks know if you are interested in representing Sierra-Cascades there and helping them discern whether they feel called to join American Friends Service Committee

JOBS, JOBS, JOBS: Greenleaf Friends Church is seeking an Associate Pastor for Equipping and Connections. **Rosedale Friends Church** is seeking an interim pastor. **Newberg Friends Church** is seeking a Youth Ministries Coordinator. Visit nwfriends.org for more information.

[**Note:** Sue Keehnen, long-time member, friend, Friend (and supplier of the hospitality table with baked goods!) is recovering at ManorCare Health Services from chemo and radiation treatments. This part of the Newsletter is devoted specifically to communications from Sue, so that we feel less out of touch.]

Sue's Corner

Hello, all There seems to be a rising popularity in a couple of my on-line book groups of stories about World War II. This in turn reminded me of a story I read almost twenty years ago titled STONES FROM THE RIVER by Ursula Hegi.



The main character, Trudi, is a dwarf which certainly sets her apart in Hitler's plan for a perfect and pure German society. I remember wondering through the story when she would be eliminated. We follow Trudi and the rest of her small town through the years of the war, learning how they all manage with destruction going on all around them: Truck's mother descends into insanity while Heidi is still a young child. A family hides a young Jewish man in their basement for most of the war, a tricky endeavor when the local Nazi sympathizer seems to suspect. I was quite impressed with that plot point especially at the end we find out that entire town, including him, knew about it.



Ursula Hegi is a former professor of creative writing at Eastern Washington University. Two other good books from the same time period are THE BOOK THIEF, also set in Germany, and SNOW FALLING ON CEDARS, which is set here in Washington. This story was the first I'd heard of this country's internment of the Japanese. These two books are somewhat faster reads than Hegi's book, but any of them should hold your attention.

Sue

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH FRIENDS



NEW CHURCH DIRECTORIES ARE NOW AVAILABLE. CONTACT THE OFFICE IF YOU HAVE NOT GOTTEN ONE YET AND WOULD LIKE A COPY.

Pendle Hill Seeks Executive Director

Pendle Hill is a Quaker study, retreat, and conference center. Founded in 1930 and located 10 miles from Philadelphia airport on 24 green acres, Pendle Hill sponsors dozens of spiritual and educational programs each year and also provides conference facilities for many others. Full information can be found at pendlehill.org.