

SPOKANEWORD

May
2020



Spokane Friends

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Sunday Schedule
during
Covid-19 Restrictions

Morning Worship

10:00 am

Via Zoom

See Website For Link

Unmasked

by Deborah Suess

Luke 24:13-35

My wonderful Aunt, Bunny Gillin, lives at Friends Homes, a retirement community here in Greensboro. When the plea went out a few weeks ago for homemade masks, she got busy making masks for anyone in need.

As her niece, it has been my job to be a guinea pig for her various experiments as she figures out the best pattern to use. So I have been wearing a lot of masks these days... which may be why the theme of masking and unmasking keeps showing up for me in today's scripture passage.

The scene opens with two of Jesus' friends: one named Cleopas and the other is unnamed. Many scholars today believe that the two were probably a married couple – who had simply come to their end of their rope and were heading home to Emmaus.

According to Biblical scholars, we don't know where to look for a literal Emmaus on the map, it's never been found. But really – don't we all know what it's like to journey on the Emmaus road.? It's the road we walk on when our heart are breaking because of deep grief. Or when our hope feels so so far away ... Thomas Keintert writes that "Emmaus is where we go to walk away from what we cannot forget."

Thankfully these two had each other for that dreary walk home. For companionship often helps when you're in deep grief— to have someone who gets it because they are going through the same thing. And so while the couple walked, they kept rehearsing the story over and over again. They had been so sure that this Jesus was the real thing ... until he wasn't.

As they were processing all of this, a stranger walked up and asked : "What are you discussing so intently?" Their response? verse 17 : They stood still, looking sad. So poignant.

Through their tears, they did not recognize him -- Jesus was (in a sense) masked to them. Luke writes they were "kept from recognizing him." What do you think kept them from seeing Jesus? Was it their hurt? Their disillusionment? Their certainty that he was just plain gone?

But they invite this clueless stranger to walk with them. After all, it gives them a chance to go over the whole story once again. And they really need to talk. So they tell this stranger all about Jesus' life: this amazing rabbi who healed and preached. They told him all about Jesus's ministry and miracles and then his triumphal entry into Jerusalem and then ... his arrest, his crucifixion, his death and burial. And then they offer what Nadia Bolz Weber calls the 3 saddest words in scripture: They say to this stranger: "We Had Hoped." We had hoped

While Jesus might have been hidden from them, those two disciples were fully *unmasked*. They poured out their broken hearts to this Stranger. (Sometimes it's easier, isn't it, to tell your most vital feelings to a stranger whom you will never see again?) Notice: They didn't try to make the story nice or make excuses for anyone. They didn't conclude with ... *but of course ... it could have been worse. Or ... maybe it was just meant to be.*

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They told the story with a sense of raw honesty and destroyed hope.

And I so appreciate that raw-ness. Especially now. In these difficult days of the pandemic ...

It is my hope that all of you have someone with whom you can be as raw as needed. Someone with whom you need not make nice. And the good news is – here at Spokane Friends there is your pastor and elders and just so many who are wonderful listeners.

On that road to Emmaus, I imagine Jesus listened intently to that grief-filled story. And then, when it was his turn to speak, he went for it! He began to *unmask* the scriptures for them. I wonder if, as listeners, it was both exciting and jarring to hear these familiar texts interpreted in brand new ways?

But even then, the two didn't recognize Jesus.

As the couple neared their destination, Jesus began to say his goodbyes. But Cleopas and his wife would have none of that, saying: "Stay and have supper with us. It's nearly evening; the day is done."

And when they gathered at the kitchen table, Jesus took the bread, blessed and broke it and gave it to them. And at that moment, in the breaking of the bread, they recognized him.

I find that scene so moving. I love that it was at an ordinary kitchen table, in the ordinary act of sharing a meal, that the *mask fell away* and they recognized Jesus. And I imagine that in that moment, a seed of hope was re-born.

But before they could rush in for a bear hug, Jesus disappears. And without a second thought, Cleopas and his wife head back to Jerusalem to share their experience of the Resurrected Christ. There is a lot in this passage. And I would love to know what speaks to you this story? So here are some queries for you to consider: What speaks to you or challenges you in this story? What gives you hope? When have you experienced an "unmasking" ... of Scripture? of God? of yourself? How has the Living Christ walked with you on your Emmaus Road? This poignant story reminds me that the Easter message of Resurrection runs parallel to our Good Fridays and Holy Saturdays. It invites us to be present to one another, in both our fears as well as our hopes. And it is a reminder that hope that can indeed be born and die and then reborn and again and again -- in our lives individually and in our lives together. The Easter story is also about a faith that recognizes that God is still at work in us and among us. A reminder that the Light of God shines in the darkness and the darkness cannot, *cannot*, overcome it! For Christ is Risen... Christ is Risen Indeed .

Resources: Nadia Bolz Weber, Molly Baskette, Thomas Keintert

This message was given to Spokane Friends Meeting on April 19, 2020, by **Deborah Suess** (via a Zoom worship (via a Zoom worship service during the COVID-19 restrictions.) and is reprinted here by permission.

(Some news about our Friends serving abroad is accompanied by the request that we not post this information on line. Thus, you will sometimes find an empty space when that has occurred.)

Caritas Stats for March 2020

Individuals served	735
Households served	299
Children (0-18)	225
Adults (18-54)	322
Seniors (55 & over)	188
Lbs. of food through the Table of Plenty & Food Pantry	17,189
Emergency utility assistance	\$ 188.00
Hygiene & Cleaning Supplies	\$ 1334.00
Fuel Vouchers	\$ 10.00
Number of Volunteers	59
Volunteer Hours	646
Bus Passes	1

COVID-19: Caritas is considered an essential service and is remaining open during the State of Emergency. We have already welcomed many new faces with the first wave of shut-downs including nine refugee families who are scared to find their new home town in the midst of upheaval. We expect April and May to be harder months for the community as businesses remain closed and savings accounts dwindle. Caritas is distributing pre-packed kits outside the facility between 11am-1pm to encourage social distancing.

If any seniors or immunocompromised members of your congregation are housebound and in need of food or hygiene supplies, contact us for help.

"For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Romans 8:38-39 (ESV).

Kelsie Rowland

Operations Manager
Caritas Outreach Ministries

Virtual Speaker Schedule

May 10	Walter Simon
May 17	Paul Blankenship
May 24	Paul Blankenship

Sue's Corner



HOMECOMING

by Yaa Gyasi



Yaa Gyasi was born in Ghana in 1989; her family moved to the U.S. in 1991 when her father was completing his Ph.D. The book was inspired by a trip she made to Ghana in 2009 and was com-

pleted in 2015. Gyasi has won numerous awards; her work has appeared in several publications.

The story begins in the Gold Coast of Africa in the late 18th century telling of African cooperation in the slave trade. Gyasi tells of two half-sisters, each unaware of the other's existence. One sister, Effia, catches the attention of a British army officer, who married her despite having a wife and family in England.

Effia lives with him in the Cape Coast Castle, a real place. (I googled it. Not a warm, inviting place.) Her sister Esi has been captured and imprisoned in the castle dungeon with hundreds of others, awaiting transport to the colonies or West Indies.

The story is told through the generations to present time. The chapters alternate between each sister's descendants, paralleling time, bringing us through some heartbreaking experiences and some that give hope for redemption. I wasn't always sure where in time the African experience was until the story got to the independence movements. The American chapters were easier to place.

I was satisfied with the end of the story. It came full circle, so to speak.

Spokane Friends Worship Zooms Along

It's hard to believe, but we have now had FIVE worship services on-line via Zoom. Things we like: People from out of town have attended, faces are seen much more closely than from the Meeting House pews, people can be present in pajamas with a cup of coffee in hand and can control their own microphone and camera. Maybe that's why attendance has been higher than when we meet in our building. Things we don't like: singing together is difficult because different devices used to participate have different lag times, we can't shake hands or hug, we can't socialize afterwards. If you are not on our email list and want to attend services, contact the Office, so we can send you the virtual location of the Meeting.

CALLED MEETING FOR BUSINESS MINUTES

19 April 2020



A Virtual Called Business Meeting via Zoom was opened by Presiding Clerk, Jonas Cox. Approximately 11 people were involved.

The minutes from our February meeting were read and approved as read.

Elders: Three people are recommended by the Elders for membership at Spokane Friends.

Mary Wiese

Paul Blankenship

Tina Weaver

The Presiding Clerk asked us to prayerfully consider these names, and we will have another called meeting in one week.

Bob Wiese dismissed in prayer

Respectfully submitted,

Linda Nixon, Recording Clerk

CALLED MEETING FOR BUSINESS MINUTES

26 April 2020

Our second virtual Called Business Meeting via Zoom was opened by Presiding Clerk, Jonas Cox. Approximately 12 people were involved.

Elders: We have had a week to prayerfully consider three names for membership to Spokane Friends

Mary Wiese

Paul Blankenship

Tina Weaver

All three were approved by the meeting.

Jon Maroni dismissed in prayer.

Respectfully submitted

Linda Nixon, Recording Clerk

[Note: Last month we printed a tribute to Martha Puckett written by her daughters. This month we share her obituary.]

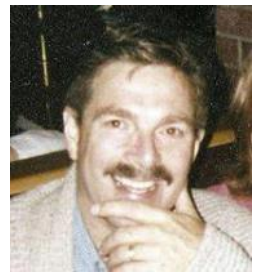
MARTHA PUCKETT

1930 - 2020

Martha Jane (Lemmons) Puckett was born to C. Ralph and Stella Jane (McCollum) Lemmons on July 9, 1929 in near Prosser, Oklahoma. She attended Haviland Bible College for two years and then finished at George Fox College in Newberg, Oregon in June, 1951. She and Paul Puckett were married June 2, 1952. They lived in Spokane, Washington from 1966-2011, when they moved to Friendsview Retirement Center in Newberg, Oregon. Paul passed away in November of 2012. Martha recently moved to Coeur d' Alene, Idaho to live with her daughter Sheryl. She passed away peacefully on March 25th at 11:30 pm. Martha is survived by her daughters Carol (Dave) Schmidt of Mishawaka, Indiana, Sheryl Fendall of Coeur d' Alene, Idaho, Janelle (Frank) Engle of Newberg, Oregon, and Judi Puckett of Newberg, Oregon. Also surviving are grand-daughters Michelle (Josh) Story, Samantha (Adam) Claeys-Smith, Kristina DeMain Shaeffer (Zack), and Megan (Brandon) Gilbert and grandsons Evan (Jolene) Thayer and Lucas Thayer as well as nine great-grandchildren. A memorial service will be held at a later date.



Advocacy Teams: Let Your Voice Be Heard



The following letter by **Jeremy Street** appeared in the Spokesman Review last week as part of his work as a member of the **Spokane Advocacy Team**:

FCNL Advocacy Teams

As a rule I don't trust decisions made by politicians. There are just too many co-opting forces in politics pulling in every imaginable direction. I'm confident that most politicians get ethically tied in knots even if they are trying to do what they think is right.

Honest politicians deserve admiration and all politicians deserve to be prayed for and corrected when they make errors, even moral errors.

Making errors that cause people to die is the most destructive kind of error and the hardest to repair after the fact. We should be on the lookout and try to prevent those kinds of mistakes and citizens should work to help politicians avoid them.

We should have believed the medical community about COVID-19 and our government should have started much sooner to prevent deaths and find a vaccine.

And now we should invest in diplomacy rather than trusting in violence in

Jeremy Street. Cheney

The Spokane Advocacy Team was originated by PJALS (Peace and Justice Action League of Spokane) and FCNL (Friends Committee on National Legislation) and is one of 131 such groups in the country, all part of FCNL's Advocacy Team Network. These teams work together building relationships with members of congress with a focus on a specific policy and unified message. They were part of a historical victory with passage of the War Powers Resolution on Iran in both chambers with bi-partisan support. This is only the 2nd time a war powers resolution has been passed. Team members consistently contact our Senators and Representative and submit letters to the editor on the policy issues they are focused on.

Quaker News

- ⇒ **Northwest Yearly Meeting** annual sessions will be held at George Fox University July 20-22, 2020. Main speaker will be Joseph Clair, Dean of College of Christian Studies, Liberal Arts, and Honors & Associate Professor of Theology at George Fox University. His theme will be "Thriving."
- ⇒ **Annual Gathering** for Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends will be virtual via Zoom due to the current pandemic. We are now accepting registrations for the sessions, which will be June 12-14, 2020. To see the sessions offered, go to <https://www.scymfriends.org/annual-conference> To register, please send an email with your name, email address, Church/Meeting affiliation and family members who will be on-line with you to registrar@scymf.org. You must pre-register to receive the Zoom link for any session. They will not be posted publicly due to security issues.
- ⇒ Come walk with **West Hills Friends** into the future. We are seeking an exceptional individual to join our welcoming and uniquely diverse Quaker community as a released minister. If you are interested in learning more about this position, go to <https://westhillsfriends.org/jobposting>
- ⇒ **Thursdays with Friends** is a new online conversation series brought to you by FCNL during this period of great difficulty when we are isolated from our loved ones. It is a brief 30-minute community chat on issues that Quakers and people of faith are compelled to continue to work on, whatever the circumstances we find ourselves in. For more information, go to <https://www.fcnl.org/updates/thursdays-with-friends-2695>
- ⇒ **Quaker Voluntary Service** is hiring for the part-time position of Portland Coordinator in Portland, OR! We're seeking a motivated, Quaker-Friendly, self-directed individual who feels passionate about supporting young adults during their year of working for social justice, exploring spirituality, and living in community. Someone in this role will work extensively with QVS Fellows, local Quakers and area nonprofits. Read more about the job description on our website: www.quakervoluntaryservice.org/employment-at-qvs/

America is great because She is good.

By Robert L Wiese

Query. Am I so firm in my opinions and beliefs that when I encounter a different opinion on Social Media, I believe I have the right or responsibility to demean, attack and shame the other for their opinion? And during this uncertain time, do I allow personal fear to be my voice rather than compassion and reason, seeking those who share my opinions and rights and again, demean others who differ with me?

I have been a member of Facebook for more years than I can remember, and I have enjoyed being in contact with friends and family and making new friends. Seeing the great stories and wonderful images and the creative humor that we see daily was something I looked for regularly. We all enjoy this I believe. What is surprising to me is that since around 2008, as I recall, there have been disappointing and even disturbing posts that I believe degrades most social media platforms and have drifted away from the original mission and vision of Social Media in general.

We hold tight to freedom of speech. We rely on these services and the freedom of speech, yet we have seen some very harmful family un-friendly posts that have no place on those platforms. No, censorship is not an option. I would not welcome government intrusion into Social Media. What I am hoping for is nothing more or less than self-censorship.

Regarding many of the Face Book political and religious posts and jokes I've read, many are not new and, in most cases, have been slithering about for several years. They arrive in one form or another about one topic or another but are now updated for a current audience. Just a little different heading, wording or flourish will make them look just new enough to encourage certain "instincts" of rude persons of baser sorts to click, like, share and spread untruth and inaccuracy further down the path of harm as long as it makes the baser person or tribe feel superior over another's conversation.

Insulting posts about religion or politics intended to convince me that if I do not agree with the sender's religious view or political opinion, I am somehow deficient and dysfunctional in their eyes. This can leave us feeling like we are going straight to Hell for not sharing their image of Jesus. You know the routine; "if you love Jesus, you'll share this post." Or we can feel unloved if we don't like and share some political post, racist or filthy joke, or pass some other litmus test to make the originator feel superior and more powerful over his or her audience. This suggests one tribe or philosophy is more holy or politically superior than another. This, over a simple difference of opinion or belief. ple difference of opinion or belief. A friend told me a Christian minister once said; "The Christian Right is neither." Therefore, I spend little time on these platforms now except to connect with a close trusted family and friends that will not berate, shame or try to belittle one if one believes differently on some point. Basically, this behavior has no place in polite social discourse. America is currently a nation divided. We now face the COVID-19 outbreak. Fear has grabbed our nation and indeed the world in a death hold, giving the few the license to post harmful comments, images and other slanderous messages on Social Media, mostly from fear. Behaving in this way does not reflect wisdom, compassion, justice, Faith, Hope or Love to anyone.

A few days ago, for the first time in months, I looked at FB at length and scrolled down a few more pages than I might have otherwise. I found myself experiencing some strong negative emotions over some posts and yet was blessed by many others. However, with a feeling of sadness, I stopped because of some of the angry, hate filled posts I read and yes, I did respond to some in a way I am not proud of. I do not need to be exposed to this, nor does anyone else. We have a choice. I signed off FB and went outside and did come chores to gather my thoughts and relax. But I did respond to one or more of those posts in an equally negative and unacceptable way. For that I am sorry I lashed out at those posts. I know better and I failed.

I'm not naïve. I look at our current cultural and national dialog through the lens of history. And as much as current events of our generation may be different in many ways from our predecessors, it is, in many ways like the darker times of Humanity. Language I hear and behavior I see today is very similar to the

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sights and sounds and errors of 1930s Nazi Germany where Adolph Hitler presented as an image of a Christian Leader to his nation. And let's not leave behind fascist Italy and Spain and the early Crusades of the Medieval ages, nor Americas Jim Crow south with its history of lynching's and other racist behavior that is raising its ugly head once again today, and this includes McCarthyism, irreligious and violent hatred of persons and communities of other faiths and cultures than our own. We allowed Japanese Internment Camps in the 1940s through hatred, fear and and ignorance and today we have Indigenous children separated from their parents, held in unmanageable unhealthy conditions for the same reason, ignorance, fear, and racial hatred, simply because of the color of their skin or their language. One of our parents' generation greatest failure and our current political and social failures will be this generation's failure. We now have, during this COVID-19 Pandemic Asian communities across America who are experiencing being shouted at, spat upon and blamed for this pandemic by having it referred to as the "Chinese Flu" and the Right nod's permission. "How Long O' Lord?" the Psalmist cried.

I try to look at this through God's gift of Critical Thinking, seeing these complicated and difficult topics through the Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ, and asking how I measure up. Digging deep into American and world history to learn how to change my personal course and perspective is also helpful. This means also thinking of ways our nation may change course. But there needs to be leadership from the highest spires of our Nation's Capital and Temples of Worship, our workplaces and at the dinner table or at the neighborhood Pub, trying to find ways to show a willingness to change personal narratives and even life styles so that we promote peace and justice for our world. It will mean laying aside hubris, arrogance, pride, greed, racism, xenophobia, covetousness and all other manner of ills of our basest human behavior.

When we make the same bad choices over and over personally, nationally and even Globally, the Powers of Darkness grip our political systems, faith values and cultures near and far, forbidding us to see ourselves through the lens of history. Instead we fawn and covet after the pride of life and the instant gratification through a moment of self-inflicted (self-indulgent?) opportunity to exercise power over another we believe is weak, different, the wrong skin color, unsaved, or just not a member of the selected religion or political party the F.B. Poster believes in. He or She then becomes the *Poster Child* of all that is evil, sinful and what is tearing our nation and planet apart.

This predatory behavior, seeking those whom they believe are weak in some way and those who dare think differently than the "I, me, we, us," (Yes, I am repeating myself but some may not get the truth of this by reading it one time) is what tears our nation, states, communities and yes, even homes, apart. If this does not stop and each individual citizen takes a look at what is really happening right now emotionally, spiritually, ethically and yes, the potential collapse of The Rule of Law happening before our very eyes, which is part of what our country is built upon; this kind of behavior places us in great danger.

When we make the same bad choices over and over personally, nationally and even Globally, the Powers of Darkness grip our political systems, faith values and cultures near and far, forbidding us to see ourselves through the lens of history.

It's time to sit and search our conscience and learn the simple fact that if we can agree to depart from this behavior within ourselves and consider the common welfare, health, security and safety of others, placing others above any opinions and politics we may have, we will do well (or what is right). Time is running out.

"America is great because she is good. If America ceases to be good, America will cease to be great."

— Alexis de Tocqueville—

Robert L. Wiese is a long-standing member of Spokane Friends and is a poet and musician as well as an essayist.