

SPOKANENWORD

February
2021



Spokane Friends
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Spokane, WA 99205

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Sunday Schedule

Traditional worship in stillness
begins at 9:00 a.m.
when first person sits down
Programmed worship 10:00 a.m.
In-Person (masked)
and Via Zoom
See Website For Link

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

Listen to Jesus

An Advent Message by Nick Block

In recent decades Friends have paid little attention to the historic and quite intentional Quaker disdain for the keeping of the seasons. Sometimes as we decorate for Christmas, we include lighting colored candles during Advent. Like the majority of the church the season of Advent has become the season of pre-Christmas. We put up Christmas lights, do our Christmas shopping and decorate our Christmas trees. We act like Christmas starts at midnight on Christmas Eve and by sundown Christmas day, we are ready to take down the tree. But according to the perspective of orthodox liturgy the season of Christmastide has just begun, and it continues until Ground Hog Day on February 2nd, not a universally acknowledged religious holiday. By the time Punxsutwney Phil is pulled from his lair, we've long since taken down all the Christmas decorations we put up during the season of Advent.

Traditionally, however, Advent is not about the birth of a child in a manger. Its purpose is to reinforce the belief that it is Jesus' intention to slam the door on the current period of human history when he returns. The time when Jesus will return has been given many names: the Second Coming of Christ; the Day of the Lord, the end time, and the Parousia. Friends embrace a scriptural understanding of Christ's return that is quite distinct from today's understanding of Advent. That accounts for why Quakers, early on, refused to follow the liturgical calendar.

In the first chapter of Acts starting with the fourth verse, the text reads: *And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, "which" He said "you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now." Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying "Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" And He said to them, "It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, in the all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*

After two thousand plus years since the writing of the Book of Acts, the majority of the Christian community continue to live in anticipation of a future return of Christ. Friends have held to a simpler understanding. When Jesus told his disciples that they should stay in Jerusalem because he would return soon that is exactly what he did. For Friends Christ's spirit returned at Pentecost, as promised, and that Spirit continues to inspire today.

This was the heart of the Gospel for George Fox and early Friends. Underlying Fox's message of good news was the firm understanding that 'Christ has come to teach his people himself.' No intermediary, not priest or teacher nor the institutional church, was needed to communicate what Christ had to share with his people. Of course, in the 17th century this got early Friends in trouble with churchmen of all stripes. This is the core of Quaker faith, that Christ can and does speak directly to us. Quakers have held that we need not live fearing some other shoe to fall on creation. The second coming occurred two thousand years ago and we can live in that life and power today.

I can't stress this enough. When the Holy Spirit was given it was given to the community of faith, not to individuals. With the communitarian nature of the community of the faithful, it is essential that we share our leadings with one another and feel the responsibility of giving each other feedback to clarify or challenge the leading one of us may have.

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We find the story of Jesus' Transfiguration reported in all three of the Synoptic Gospels, Matthew 17:1-8; Mark 9:2-9; Luke 8:28-36; and referred to in II Peter 1:16-18. The simplest report is that in the Gospel of Mark.

After six days Jesus took Peter, James and John with him and led them up a high mountain, where they were all alone. There he was transfigured before them. His clothes became dazzling white, whiter than anyone in the world could bleach them. And there appeared before them Elijah and Moses, who were talking with Jesus. Peter said to Jesus, "Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us put up three shelters—one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah." He did not know what to say, they were so frightened. Then a cloud appeared and covered them, and a voice came from the cloud: "This is my Son, whom I love. Listen to him!"

According to the record provided to us by the evangelists, Jesus had been extraordinarily busy doing one healing after another, the last, the raising of a young woman thought dead brought back to service. Although he performs many miracles, we often read of Jesus' human need for rest and restoration. We have stories of Jesus going off alone to pray. But not this time. This time he conscripts Peter, James and John to go apart with him.

Jesus' intent was clear, this was to be a prayer meeting. A Meeting for Worship.

Evidently in that meeting their heads weren't bowed and their eyes weren't closed, because they reported what took place. It most certainly would have been awe-inspiring to be in Jesus' presence while he was praying. But beyond that, these disciples saw Jesus in the company of two extraordinary spiritual leaders, a visitation by the two most celebrated persons of their faith, Moses and Elijah.

Hebrews 12 speaks of our being "*surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses...*" I have to wonder, when we gather for worship whether we have that sense of being in the company of extraordinary spiritual guides? That small Meeting for Worship became enveloped in a cloud. Is that anything you've experienced before? The sense of having a cloud descend and settle on the group; closing in around you, shortening your horizons like a dense fog? Some Quakers have described meetings for worship that feel like that as having been 'gathered' or 'covered'.

Words failed the disciples. In both the Gospel of Mark and Luke the evangelist admits they didn't know what to say, and when they did speak they suggested that three shelters be built, one for Jesus and one each for the two spiritual visitors. The idea was turned down. What happened next in that gathered meeting is important "*A voice came from the cloud, saying, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen; listen to him."*" This is the essence of worship. Not a sermon or a liturgy, not an anthem or a praise chorus. "*This is my Son, listen to him*".

Christopher Robin speaks with Pooh Bear. He says "Say, Pooh. Why aren't you busy?" Pooh replies "Because it's a nice day" Christopher started to say, "Yes but...". And Pooh interrupts him saying "Why ruin it?" But Christopher Robin says "you could be doing something important". "I am," said Pooh. "Oh? Doing what?" To which Pooh replied, "Listening."

I once heard Howard Thurman say that "it is out of silence that all sounds come". Soren Kierkegaard wrote: "If I were a doctor and were asked for my advice, I would reply: "Create silence! The Word of God cannot be heard in the noisy world of today."

That's a lesson Jesus' disciples learned on their trip up the mountain. When we come to worship, it's tempting to build structures and follow patterns that memorialize the past, and unfortunately it is as real a problem for Quakers as it is for others. The challenge is to follow the words of the Gospels, "This is my Son, whom I have chosen, listen to him."

David Steindl-Rast wrote what for me is a blessing and a benediction:

May you grow still enough to hear the small noises earth makes in preparing for the long sleep of winter, so that you yourself may grow calm and grounded deep within.

May you grow still enough to hear the trickling of water seeping into the ground, so that your soul may be softened and healed and guided in its flow.

May you grow still enough to hear the splintering of starlight in the winter sky and the roar of the earth's fiery core.

May you grow still enough to hear the stir of a single snowflake in the air, so that your inner silence may turn into hushed expectation.

Hymn: *Teach Me to Stop and Listen* by Ken Medema

Teach me to stop and listen, teach me to center down, teach me the use of silence, teach me where peace is found.

Teach me to hear your calling, teach me to search your word, teach me to hear in silence things I have never heard.

Teach me to be collected, teach me to be in tune. Teach me to be directed, silence will end so soon.

Then when it's time for moving. grant that I may bring, to every day and moment, peace from a silent spring.

Nick Block retired from Spokane Friends in 2017 after serving there as pastor for twelve years. He and Susan now live with family in the sea coast village of Kennebunk, Maine. The 1790's house where they make their home, once a bed and breakfast, is attached, in New England practice, to the barndominium where their daughter and family make their home. Three small poodles and nine chickens round out the household. The above piece is adapted from a sermon given by Nick to Spokane Friends on February 14, 2021.

MONTHLY MEETING FOR BUSINESS MINUTES 23 January 2022



The meeting was opened by Presiding Clerk, Jonas Cox. 12 people were in attendance.

The minutes from the November, 2021 were read and **approved as read**.

Treasurer's Report: Jon Maroni gave a positive report and has gotten all the liabilities cleared from the report. He has looked into some new investments with US Bank and a portfolio with Everance, a company he has researched through Colin Saxton. We have a CD at Friends Church Extension Fund that will mature in July 2022. At that time we will need to invest that somewhere else. Since we are no longer part of NW Yearly Meeting of Friends we are unable to take advantage of this investment.

Elder's Report: We have had very positive feedback concerning our recent messages. Any further rearranging of the pews will be brought before the meeting before the changes are made. We will be looking at individuals that have been attending our meetings for the past year to see if they would like to become members of our meeting. Speakers have been chosen for the majority of February.

Stewards & Trustees Report: Our shed on the back of the property was recently broke into but nothing was taken. Repairs have been made.

Pillar Reports:

Serving the Community: We are still considering supporting a refugee family from Afghanistan but unsure which organization that will be directed through.

Congregational Care: no specific report.

Sharing the Light: no specific report.-=

With no other old or new business and all hearts and minds were clear, Tina Weaver dismissed in prayer.

Respectfully submitted

Linda Nixon, Recording Clerk



The Day the World Came to Town

by Jim DeFede (a former staff writer with the Spokesman Review)

Reviewed by **Sue Kehneen**

Gander, Newfoundland. September 11, 2001.

This is about a wide variety of people whose lives were changed when U.S. airspace closed down. Flights from Europe were diverted to Gander, which luckily had been a U.S. airbase during WWII. The book was originally published in 2002.

DeFede spoke with many of the passengers and Ganderites, making a narrative of generosity and people meeting the challenge of doing the right thing. The Ganderites organized themselves with amazing efficiency.

The passengers: a bigwig fashion house chairman was upset about possibly missing Fashion Week in NYC.....until he saw the news reports and realized how small his "problem" was. Two couples were returning from Russia after adopting babies; they wondered if this detour would somehow mess up the adoption.

A couple on one of the planes had a son who was a NYC firefighter. The family didn't get news until the parents were home that their son died.

It's impressive how people rise to a challenge.



Meet the New General Secretary of FCNL

Following the retirement of Diane Randall, the Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) announced today that Bridget Moix will be its next General Secretary beginning January 24, 2022.

Moix holds a Ph.D. from George Mason University's Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Conflict Analysis and Resolution. She is author of the book Choosing Peace: Agency and Action in the Midst of War (Rowman and Littlefield, 2019) and a contributing author to Building Peace in America (Rowman and Littlefield, 2020).

Sunday Morning Schedule

Feb 6 John Kinney
 Feb 13 Jon Maroni
 Feb 27 Johan Maurer
 Mar 6 Sarah Scott
 Mar 20 David Morrow



Lunar New Year Celebration



For the first time since 1933, Spokane will be celebrating the Lunar New Year. Festivities will kick off at 1 pm on Saturday, February 5 in the Central Pavilion in Riverfront Park

with Asian, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islanders booths, artists, food trucks, and live cultural performances throughout the day. There will be lots of giveaways, including chances to win carousel rides, Spokane Chiefs Tickets, as well as gift cards to local restaurants, and the first 500 attendees will receive a swag bag full of goodies. There will also be a COVID -19 clinic where first and second vaccines and boosters will be available. The event is free for all ages. It will end with a fireworks display at 7 pm to welcome the Year of the Tiger.

Christmas Query (Belated)

are you a gift to the meeting
 is your present sometimes sent
 wrapped up in plain brown paper
 and filled up with good intent?

are you a gift to the meeting
 do bright ribbons ever hide
 a dark and lonely silence
 that denies the light inside?

well I sometimes feel an answer
 it's a conscious covenant
 to be ready, even willing
 to receive what I have sent
 elaine werner

[Note: This poem is reprinted because in last month's Newsletter (January 2022), the last two lines and the author's name were cut off.]

Caritas Update



Here are the needs for this week:

FOOD

Syrup	Canned peas	Chili
Cream of chicken soup	Chicken broth	Mandarin oranges

NECESSITIES

Shampoo	Dish soap	Can openers
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JOIN OUR CURRENT FUNDRAISING EVENT

This event starts Feb. 1st and continues for the entire month. You can participate by going to Yoke's at Indian Trail, where you will find \$5 and \$10 bags to purchase. These purchases will be used in the Little Food Pantries around town that Caritas oversees.

AND LOOKING AHEAD TO APRIL

A fundraiser for the Caritas Food Bank will be held April 23 at the Inland Cider Mill, which is located at 1020 W. Francis, Suite B. Look for details in the March Newsletter — and thank you again for your generosity. Caritas Staff and Volunteers

Financial Report

Year 2021

Income/Giving:	\$36,566.76
Expenses:	\$38,414.60
Difference:	-\$1,857.84

Quaker News

- ⇒ The **Quarterly Gathering of Sierra Cascades Yearly Meeting** will occur via Zoom on February 26. It will feature a workshop on *Identifying Bias and Triggers within White Supremacy Culture*, facilitated by Victor Small, Jr., a restorative justice activist, facilitator, and trainer. He is also a doctoral student in educational leadership for social justice.
- ⇒ **FCNL is hiring for a number of positions** which are listed below. More information about each is available at <https://www.fcnl.org/about/work-fcnl>
 - **The 2022 – 2023 Program Assistant Cohort.** Applications due February 7, 2022. The program is full-time with a salary at the D.C. living wage standard with benefits. Program Assistants work directly with FCNL lobbyists and other senior staff, gaining first-hand knowledge of the legislative process and the organizing and communications work that is necessary for policy change. Program assistants in this 11-month program work full-time from late August through the end of the following July.
 - Applications are due March 25, 2022 for several **Summer Internships**. Applications due: March 25, 2022. Interns work at FCNL's office throughout June and July to advance our witness for peace on Capitol Hill. These are paid positions that provide a broad introduction to federal policy, grassroots organizing, and nonprofit management.

- **The Advocacy Corps** is a 10-month-long program where young adults between the ages of 19-30 get paid to organize their local community around federal legislation. Advocacy Corps organizers connect local activists and leaders with their local member of Congress to affect big, long-term change. Applications are due During the course of this program, Advocacy Corps organizers learn critical organizing skills and put them in April 11, 2022.
- **The Program Coordinator for Friends Place** coordinator supports operations at Friends Place guesthouse for events and overnight guests, planning and facilitating program and workshops, offering hospitality for guests and participants, and supporting outreach to potential groups and partners.
- Positions of **Director of Human Resources, Grassroots Advocacy Manager, and National Field Organizer** are also being advertised by FCNL

FAITH ACTION NETWORK
A Partnership for the Common Good

REPORT FROM
FAN/FIG TREE



LEGISLATIVE PLANNING SUMMIT

Lois Kieffaber represented Spokane Friends at the Legislative Planning Summit. She reports attending a Workshop on Refugees and Immigration given Kevin Benson, Director of Development for World Relief.

Join Faith Leaders and Leaders of Conscience and Veradale UCC in a

Drive Through Party Celebrating Rosa Parks' 109th Birthday
Friday, February 4, 2022

drop off gifts from 5 to 6pm at Veradale United Church of Christ
611N Progress Road, Spokane Valley, 99037

Suggested gifts for Rosa

that go to Spokane MLK Family Center:

Kids sneakers and socks,

Winter Care Package: put toothpaste, toothbrush, one pair adult socks, hat, gloves, disposable face masks, and a protein bar in a Ziploc bag

Pantry items: Whole grain rice, and noodles,

Whole wheat bread, Sugar,

Brown Sugar, Butter, Flour (all purpose),

Cheerios, Paper plates, Paper Bowls,

Paper Cups, Plastic spoons,

or donate to the Lasting Legacy Campaign

at www.mlkspokane.org

More info: FLLConscience@gmail.com

2013



He explained that refugees who are forced to leave their country of birth go first to a refugee camp and then apply to go to another country for resettlement. The average wait in the refugee camp is **10 years!** This is because there are 80 million of them now compared to 40 million in 2010. Turkey has taken 3 million, Germany 1 million, and the U.S.?? 260,000.! We resettle 0.27% of the world's refugees! Last year we resettled 60,000 Afghans, compared to 200,000 Vietnamese in 1980.

The goal for those arriving is to be self-sufficient in 3-6 months. They are given housing services, a caseworker, English language training, and help to find employment (which is the first thing they want, since they have a travel loan that must be repaid). In Spokane the greatest need is for housing because the market is so tight. Anyone knowing of vacancies should contact WorldRelief.org immediately.