

SPOKANEWORD

November

2023



Spokane Friends

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Following the teachings of the Living Christ, we are an open, loving, and affirming community. We believe that God's Light is inherent within all people. There are no exceptions.

Sunday Schedule

Traditional worship in stillness begins at 8:45 a.m. or when first person sits down
Programmed worship 10:00 a.m.
In-Person and Via Zoom
See Website For Link

First Sunday of the Month
Potluck Meal at rise of worship

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

LISTEN. LEARN. LOVE.

by Ruthie Tippin

I cry aloud to God, aloud to God, that he may hear me.

²In the day of my trouble I seek the Lord;

in the night my hand is stretched out without wearying;
my soul refuses to be comforted.

³I think of God, and I moan; I meditate, and my spirit faints. *Selah* [Psalm 77:1-3]

I am not a Palestinian or a Jew. I am not a student of the history of their peoples or traditions. I do not know or understand the complexity of the Middle East. But I am a human. And I understand what it means to want something I do not have, cannot have, and wish I had. We all do. Whether it's a ball on a playground in childhood, a boyfriend some other girl has her grip on, a job a person competed with me for and won, or a piece of land that I consider my home and cannot have... I understand the sense of frustration, denial, privilege, loss, and more that cannot be explained.

The brutality and havoc wreaked this past week by one group on another is, sadly, nothing new. The Hamas attack on Israel on October 7th is being met in the same breath with the al-Qaeda attack on the US on September 11th. 9/11 brought years of war in Iraq and Afghanistan. There is fear now that the Hamas attack may bring the same in the Middle East.

From NPR: 'In 2014, after the abduction and murder of three Israeli teenagers by Hamas-affiliated militants in the West Bank, Israel Defense Forces arrested hundreds of Hamas militants in the territory. In response, Hamas stepped up rocket attacks from Gaza, triggering a weeks-long war that killed dozens of Israeli soldiers and more than 2,000 Palestinians, including many civilians.' Three, then hundreds, then thousands...

Anger breeds anger. Violence breeds violence. War breeds war. And sometimes - just for the sake of war. We become so overwrought that we cannot think clearly, we cannot reason wisely, we cannot learn from the past, or look toward the future. We are caught.

And Jesus says, "...it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come." [Mark 7:21] Jesus knew, and so do we.

Psalm 78:5-8

God established a decree in Jacob and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our ancestors to teach to their children,
⁶that the next generation might know them, the children yet unborn, and rise up and tell them to their children, so that they should set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments;
⁸and that they should not be like their ancestors, a stubborn and rebellious generation, a generation whose heart was not steadfast, whose spirit was not faithful to God.

(continued on next page)

(continued from page 1) In the Gospel of Mark, Pharisees and scribes have come from Jerusalem and gather with Jesus, catching his disciples eating without ritually washing their hands first. They start a conversation about what is clean and unclean. They challenge Jesus about this, and Jesus responds with scripture found in Isaiah 29:13. “Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites saying, ‘*This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me. In vain they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines. You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition.*’” The disciples may very well have washed their hands – just not in the ‘proper’ way. Jesus calls out the scribes and Pharisees who in the same way, follow their own rules rather than God’s commands.

¹⁴ Then he called the crowd again and said to them, “Listen to me, all of you, and understand: ¹⁵ there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile.” ¹⁷ When he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about the parable. ¹⁸ He said to them, “So, are you also without understanding? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile, ¹⁹ since it enters not the heart but the stomach and goes out into the sewer?” (Thus he declared all foods clean.) ²⁰ And he said, “It is what comes out of a person that defiles. ²¹ For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: sexual immorality, theft, murder, ²² adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, debauchery, envy, slander, pride, folly. ²³ All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person.” [Mark 7:14-22]

Jesus said it: ‘For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come.’ **He had heard it from Isaiah first:** ‘This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me.’ It is from the heart...

The scribes and Pharisees were the learned men of the temple. They were responsible for knowing the commands, the rules, the laws. The scribes *transcribed* the laws into writing. Here, Jesus points out that *knowing* the law is not as important as *living out the law with your heart*. Here, Rabbi Jesus is teaching the scribes and the Pharisees the heart of the law they are charged to keep.

And when Jesus was asked, "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" He said, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. ' This is the greatest and first commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.'" [Matthew 22:35–40] The Ten Commandments summarized in just two.

So, the law teaches us to love. To love God and our neighbors with everything we’ve got – all our heart, soul, mind – our spirits, emotions, thoughts. If we loved as we are taught *there wouldn’t be any room in our hearts* for what Jesus called evil intentions. *We wouldn’t have any energy left*, but for love.

Learn. Listen. Love. We must learn all we can. We must engage. We must speak with integrity about those things we know and confess ignorance about things we do not. We must be aware. But this is where we meet the heart of the matter. *We must keep learning, but how?* We must listen deeply, with our hearts.

Lots of us hear a lot of things all the time. But we don’t necessarily *listen*. We don’t necessarily *give ear* to what is being said or shared by another person. It just goes ‘in one ear and out the other.’ Can we truly repeat what a person’s concerns are to them? Can we honestly say that the person we disagree with is one we understand? Are we so aware of another person’s actions – the way they wash their hands, the food they eat, the color of their skin, the prayers they pray – that we cannot listen deeply to the cry of their hearts? *Do we pay attention?*

[Psalm 86: 1,2,6,7,9-12]

¹ Incline your ear, O LORD, and answer me, for I am poor and needy.

² Preserve my life, for I am devoted to you; save your servant who trusts in you.

⁶ Give ear, O LORD, to my prayer; listen to my cry of supplication.

⁷ In the day of my trouble I call on you, for you will answer me.

¹¹ Teach me your way, O LORD, that I may walk in your truth;
give me an undivided heart to revere your name.

(continued on page 4)

MONTHLY MEETING FOR BUSINESS MINUTES.
16 October 2023

The meeting was called to order with prayer by Clerk Laverne Biel. Fifteen people were present.

Minutes were read. Pam Emery requested that wording be corrected that her being an Elder be "put on hold" rather than withdrawing. Minutes were approved as corrected.

Elders. Kent Biel reported that three resumes have been received for the part-time pastor position. Past employment will be verified and references checked. (Report attached.)

Speakers will be contacted to round out the November worship service schedule.

Stewardship: Stewards met to discuss a new treasurer. Keri Noelle is the daughter of Ken Bendixen and has taken over his business. She is interested in doing the work. She has an accounting degree but is not a CPA. She does work in this capacity for another church. She would charge \$75 per hour and could possibly complete our work in three hours.

Stewards recommended that we offer Keri the position with the expense not to exceed \$225 per month (three hours @\$75/hour). The work would include all tax reporting, bill paying, preparing checks, and annual donation receipts. This offer was approved.

There was further discussion of bookkeeping procedures. We need to return to having two people document the offering and to see to making deposits. Pam Emery, Kent Biel and Jon Maroni will be signatories. Jon suggested changing banks for better interest rates.

Carpeting has been purchased for the two downstairs children's rooms. It is awaiting installation by someone hired to do it.

The men's restroom needs refurbishing. The stewards will get estimates for new flooring, new vanity, painting walls and partitions.

Nominating Committee: Pam Emery has been taken off "pause" status for Elder nomination. She has also agreed to assist in some treasurer's duties, including presenting the Treasurer's Report to Monthly Meeting.

Sue Keehnen was approved as an Elder.

Treasurer: The report (attached) was received and reviewed.

Walter Simon has done research on our needs and is reviewing grant potentials. He wants to be prepared by January 24, 2024 to make application. He is trying to plant seeds for community growth.

Other Business. Lois Kieffaber reported on the Quakerism 101 class. There was good attendance and discussion. Thanks to Sue for helping prepare coffee and Pam for providing soup and dessert for lunch.

Concerns were presented as to how to interact more in the neighborhood; plus how to make more/better use of the building.

Bob Wiese's music group, The Crab Creek Wranglers, will be providing entertainment for the Caritas Silent Auction Fundraiser on October 21st.

Questions for further discussion: Should we continue See the Need? Should more people be encouraged to participate?

The meeting was closed with prayer by Don Hyslop.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Keehnen, Recording Clerk



Fig Tree's 2023

FALL FESTIVAL OF SHARING

The Fig Tree Board members have pledged matching funds for donations to the Fall Festival of Sharing up to \$4,000. Donate on their website or mail a check to them at Fig Tree, 1323 S. Perry, Spokane WA 99202.



(continued from page 2)

*give me an undivided heart to revere your name.
12 I give thanks to you, O Lord my God, with my whole heart,
and I will glorify your name forever.*

When I pastored in Indianapolis, I put a sign on my office door, so that even when I was not available, people would know two things about me: I loved them, and I wanted to listen to them. It looked like this:



The central part of the word “heart” is the word “ear”. Hearing is not the same as listening. The center of our hearts needs to be a place of deep, attentive listening. The Psalmist says, “Incline your ear...” “Give ear...” Just as we ask God to ‘lean in’ to our concerns, **we** must be loving, and faithful to *pay attention* to those who we can learn from, we can share our perspectives with, and we *can* learn to love.

So where do we find love? It’s awfully hard to muster up. There’s enough hate to ring the world again and again. To interrupt it, love *has* to intervene, and we can do it, by showing up in love, with our love. But how? How can we do it?

An incredible example, especially today, is the Ramallah Friends School. Quakers began their work in Palestine years ago during the Ottoman Empire. They started in 1869 with a number of small schools for girls in the villages surrounding Ramallah. Twenty years later, the Friends Girls School opened as “The Girls Training Home of Ramallah”. A Boys Training Home was founded in 1901, at the urging of community members, to provide Palestinian boys a rigorous academic program guided by the principles of the Religious Society of Friends. Today, Jewish and Palestinian students live, learn, play, and attend Meeting for Worship together each week. Their graduates receive an International Baccalaureate degree, and are sought after in colleges and universities around the world. The school has grown and endured through World War I, British Mandate, Partition and Expulsion, Jordanian Rule, Israeli Occupation and much more, including present dangers just now. Ramallah Friends School is proving that acts of love are stronger than those that divide.

What are we called to do? We must learn, listen, and love... in active, informed ways. Start where you are. Start right now. Reach out. Look for love. Look for ways to love. Tell someone you love them. And if you can’t speak it, show it - to those you’ve known all your life, and to those you might not know at all. Act in love, in big and small ways. Learn actively. Listen deeply. And Love... with intention.

References: Scripture Readings: Mark 7:14-23 and Psalm 77, 78, 86 excerpts
NPR article: <https://www.npr.org/2023/10/12/1204881032/hamas-israel-attack-palestinians>
Ramallah Friends School: <https://www.rfs.edu.ps/en/page/school-history?p=school-history>

This message was given by **Ruthie Tippin** to Spokane Friends during Sunday morning worship on October 15, 2023. She and her husband Jon raised their sons in Spokane Friends Church. Ruthie was recorded as Friends minister in 2010, and became a pastor at First Friends in Indianapolis in 2012.

The Office Mailbox . . .

Russ Brickner writes from Sedona, AZ:

. . . I also read about the Indiana Yearly Meeting withdrawing from Friends United Meeting. It is a sad turn of events. It just reminds me that God is Love. He loves us because he created us. His affection is unconditional. He both generates and demonstrates love and that love endures forever.

My prayer is that we can love all of God’s people unconditionally.

With Sincere Love, Russ

Elizabeth Fry

Quaker Reformer (1780-1845)

Elizabeth Fry was born into a prosperous English Quaker family. At seventeen she encountered a Quaker abolitionist from the United States who stimulated her desire to pursue a path of godly service. Afterward, she wrote, "I wish the state of enthusiasm I am now in may last, for to-day I have felt there is a God."

After marriage her life was absorbed in the responsibilities of a growing family. She bore eleven children. But after twelve years she felt that she was missing out on her true vocation, noting, "I fear that my life is slipping away to little purpose."

Soon after this, she made her first visit to Newgate Prison, where the horrid conditions filled her with shame and indignation: women and children crowded into fetid cells, in rags and filth, sleeping on the floor. This was the beginning of a cause that Fry pursued for the rest of her life. With the support of a committee of other Quaker women, she launched a campaign for prison reform. Her efforts were criticized by those who felt that by humanizing prisons she was undermining their deterrent value. But Fry was motivated by the conviction that prisoners, regardless of their crimes, were human beings who bore within them the spark of the divine image. It was sacrilege to treat them with no more than punitive cruelty.

She pursued her cause tirelessly until her death on October 12, 1845.

"My mind too much tossed by a variety of interests and duties—husband, children, household, accounts. . . I hope I am not undertaking too much, but it is a little like being in the whirlwind and in the storm."

—Elizabeth Fry © 2023 Liturgical Press.

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Ever wonder how many Quakers there are in the Americas?



Quaker News

- ⇒ Report from **Sierra Cascades Yearly Meeting of Friends' Quarterly Meeting** on Saturday, October 28, 2023 at Eugene Friends Church. The SCYMF Youth who had a Meeting for Worship with attention to Dungeons and Dragons on Friday evening said that all characters were pacifists, which made for some very creative solutions to problems.
And in the Business Session, approval was given for a \$75,000 gift to Native Americans in Alaska for completion of a healing center for generational trauma, the result of close collaboration between SCYMF and Alaska Yearly Meeting. Also under consideration is a gift of \$100,000 for scholarships for Native American students.
- ⇒ The following jobs are being advertised through Northwest Yearly Meeting: **Barclay College** is looking for a Chair, Bible/Theology Program, **Newberg Friends Church** is seeking to hire a fulltime Office Manager, **Metolius Friends Community Church** is searching for a Youth and Family Pastor, and **Meridian Friends Church** is searching for a part-time, paid Youth and Young Adult Pastor. More information can be found at <https://nwfriends.org/job-openings/>
- ⇒ **Earlham College** is still advertising for a full-time, residential teaching faculty member in contextual ministry education, with hopes for the successful candidate to begin teaching as soon as January, 2024.
- ⇒ The **Friends Theological College** in Kaimosi , Kenya, held their 81st graduation ceremony on 27th October, 2023. This occasion, celebrated the hard work, dedication, and exceptional achievements of the 138 graduands (yes, that's what they call graduates in Africa) spread across different programs at FTC and 7 satellite campuses. Nairobi Yearly meeting was honored for their continued support to FTC. Congratulations to the class of 2023.
- ⇒ Friends World Committee on Consultation introduces fwccdirectory.org, an interactive map and directory of Friends in the Americas. Use the map tool to find the nearest Quaker worship. (See also p. 5

Note to Myself

Do not expect the Silence to always be silent.
Life is taking place outside this Meeting House.
The good honest work of the world is noisy, raucous and jarring.
Maybe today, Spirit wants to jar you, for its own good reasons.
Why do you assume that Spirit will only speak the way you want to hear,
some gentle, modulated voice, so as not to annoy you?
Maybe you need to be annoyed.
Maybe the barking dog knows this, or the shrieking children in the yard.
Maybe the chainsaw and the leaf-blower and the nail-gun know this.
Maybe they are all Spirit, just trying to get your attention.
Maybe the incessant ticking of that old clock (*for God's sake, why don't they get a digital one?*)
is Spirit counting down the interminable seconds it has been waiting for you.
Do not expect the Silence to be silent.
Listen.

-- Loré McLaren, Fort Bragg, CA

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