

# SPOKANEWORD

January

2024



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

## VILLAGE COHOUSING WORKS

By Walter Simon

[**Editor's Note:** The Director of this project is none other than Sarah Olson (formerly Sarah James, daughter of Norm and Teri James) who grew up in Spokane Friends Church and is remembered by many of us.]

There is no simple answer for America's homeless crisis. In Spokane County, however, there are positive programs available. A regional model is **Village Cohousing Works (VCW)** serving north Spokane County, an effort viewed as the hammer and nails of needed housing.

In their own words, they are a grassroots organization committed to provide "affordable, permanent housing to low-income households in the North Spokane area. . . . we buy brand-new mobile homes and sell them at cost to those in need."

Sarah Olson, Director of this community project, is supported by a focused executive team. Together they have searched out funding sources and found them almost miraculously; it seems that they have tapped into the desire of others with financial or material resources to be part of this cohesive civic project with the goal of reasonable housing as the underpinning of a stable community.

Co-housing refers to an "intentional community" where people come together to build a neighborhood of single-family homes, clustered around shared space. The concept originated in Denmark in the late 1960's. It arrived in north Spokane County in the person of Charles Durrett, who spoke in the Robinson Teaching Theatre at Whitworth University in 2022 to a packed hall about cohousing as a way to address future housing needs. A group of 40 volunteers agreed to meet monthly to address housing insecurity. Their key priority is "seeking to serve those vulnerable to homelessness in north Spokane County who prioritize living in community."

Volunteer Director Sarah Olson offers: "it takes a village" in reference to Hillary Clinton's book as she visualizes an interactive neighborhood supported by a communal spirit and embracing a creative social structure. VCW is working in conjunction with Takesa Village Homeowners Cooperative in Mead. Takesa is a resident-owned manufactured home community offering shared outdoor space, two pools and a community center. It is managed by a democratically elected Board.

The agreement with Takesa Village allows VCW to buy and install 10 HUD approved homes, and resell them to low income households. The long-term goal to place ten homes in this community of caring neighbors. Expectations and present achievement are found on VCW's website (see end of article). They have opened a door for affordable housing for regional neighbors in search of an



(continued on next page)

(continued from page 1) attainable residence, those limited by static income, increased rents, mortgage threats, inflated living, amplified taxes, as well as recession's looming bugaboo — in sum the cost of living! The program is a stepping stone offered for neighbors threatened by economic overload. In simple terms it "helps change lives."



Floor Plan for Village Co-housing

In North Spokane County, rent has increased 70% to 300% since 2020. Families are especially vulnerable to rent increases: Mead schools saw 456 students living

homeless in the 2022 - 2023 school year. We are in the midst of a housing crisis, and Spokane County (outside city limits) has no plan to solve it. VCW is stepping into this gap, harnessing the power of community to change lives, one affordable house at a time!



### Village Cohousing Works

**Our Vision** Let's build community based, cohousing inspired, permanently affordable housing for those who need it.

In conclusion there are those who dream, others who look away, some procrastinate and never act! Nevertheless friends we know serve communal interest with foresight and humane focus in light of the anticipated growth of our region.

VCH is a lesson for us, a look ahead, a clear example of grassroots community effort offering a proven housing system and supported by present action. It hopes for a village of civic-minded neighbors, reinforced by compatible community goals, espousing the opportunity of shelter at reasonable rates in a milieu of increased overhead, static income, a shifting economy, in short a housing challenge.

We know that how we act today determines our future, especially in consideration of sustainable living compatible with societal growth. VCW was described on the ShelterSpokane website as an outstanding team of people with the desire and intelligence to achieve their goal.

References: [hello@villagecohousingworksspokane.org](mailto:hello@villagecohousingworksspokane.org)

**Walter Simon** received a BS in Social Anthropology at the University of WA and studied motion and artiodactyls at Columbia University. Decades of field work -- American, Canadian Natives, and American Gypsies, as well as waterways -- enabled his six decades of media experience, 3 TV documentaries, humorous newspaper publications, voicing for commercial stations and PBS, major market experience, two volumes of poetry, and 50 readings. His second book is about to be published, and best of all, he says, is being a puppeteer for over sixty years. He is a long-time Quaker and is now a member of Spokane Friends Meeting.



## VILLAGE COHOUSING WORKS PLACES FIRST HOME !

Since the above story was written, VCW has purchased its first home. It was installed on December 11, 2023. and prepared for move-in.

To offer a new financing option, Numerica will partner with Village Cohousing Works, a Spokane-based non-profit that helps provide affordable, permanent housing to low-income households, according to a Numerica press release. The new loan will feature lower interest rates and shorter terms.

An open house was held on January 25, 2024.

**Congratulations to this entirely volunteer group and their supporters!**

## MONTHLY MEETING FOR BUSINESS MINUTES

January 21, 2024

The meeting was opened with prayer by Assistant Clerk Jon Maroni. Nineteen people were present.

The Minutes were read and **approved**.

Treasurers Report: There were more building expenses than usual; there were also more people contributing. Thanks to everyone for their contributions, both financial and otherwise.

There will be an additional meeting with Keri Noelle, our new Treasurer, Jon Maroni, and Pam Emery for the final treasurer's training and handoff of responsibilities to Keri.

Elders Report: Speakers were reviewed. There was constructive criticism of Brianna Dilts as she was hard to hear. It was noted that there are individuals in the meeting who would be capable of giving a message and should be encouraged to do so. There was also a discussion of the secretarial position, duties and how to advertise it. The Elders Report is attached.

Walter Simon reported that he needs to have his computer operational. He plans to put out a press release to announce the employment of Ken Peacock as our part-time Congregational Care Chaplain.

Spokane Friends now has a one-year membership in *Greater Spokane*, the region's business development organization and Chamber of Commerce. There has been contact with HUD, and Walter has contacts for HUD funds available locally.

New Business. Kent Biel raised the question of whether we want to consider continuing See the Need, our program of allowing one of our members/attenders to give away \$100 of the Meeting's funds to a need that they see. Its purpose is to help us become more aware of the needs around us..

The meeting was closed with prayer by Jon Maroni.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Keehnen, Recording Clerk.



Spokane Friends

extends a hearty welcome to

**Ken Peacock**

our new Chaplain,

Pastor of Congregational Care

**Ken's Contact Information**

Mobile: 509-279-9625

Email: [ken.spokanefriends@gmail.com](mailto:ken.spokanefriends@gmail.com)

**Ken's Office Hours**

Sundays 12:00 to 4:00 pm

Wednesdays 2:00 to 6:00 pm

Learn more about Ken in the next Newsletter,

### See the Need

Spokane Friends  
Serving the Community

Every month a name is drawn and that individual gets \$100 from the Meeting to meet a need that they see.

Its purpose is to help us open our eyes to become more aware of the needs of others.

The person will report back sometime during the month about how they used the money.

If you would like to participate in this activity, tell an Elder, sign up on the list on the hospitality table, or notify the Office.



## Financial Report

	December 2023	The Year 2023
Income:	\$3,296.45	\$40,236.48
Expenses:	\$1,808.86	\$44,757.19
Difference:	+ \$1,487.59	-\$4,520.71



## GO, PAUL !

We were pleased to learn that our former part-time pastor **Paul Blankenship-Lai** will be travelling to Indiana this spring with his wife Evelyn to take up a teaching position at Earlham School of Religion in Richmond. His dissertation on homelessness will be published by Fordham Press.



We look forward to wishing them well in person as they pass through Spokane on their trip east.

## Praise Be the Whistles of the Valley Train

Praise be the whistles of the valley train.  
 They are the green songs  
 from engine number one-oh-one, a low moan  
 across the moving fields,  
 an answer to the river running  
 a long sob into the full moon light  
 between mountains rushed with undergrowth,  
 in the wet summer of eight-one;  
 As the horses that run free through  
 still meadows  
 as herds of steer chew silent  
 In a brown song as packs of elk,  
 Migrants into echoes  
 Whistles from the valley hills:  
 long voice toots, a passing joy  
 an engine's silver tongue.  
 The roll of sound along cold white tracks.

— Walter Simon

## Quaker News

- ⇒ **Sierra Cascade Yearly Meeting** will have its Quarterly Meeting at Camas Friends Church in Camas, Washington on February 24, 2024. Their Annual Sessions will be June 7-6 at Canby Grove, in Canby, Oregon.
- ⇒ **North Pacific Yearly Meeting** will have its Annual Sessions on July 10—14, 2024
- ⇒ **Friends World Committee on Consultation (FWCC)** has introduced an interactive map and directory of Friends in the Americas. Use the map tool to find the nearest Quaker worship at [fwccdirectory.org](http://fwccdirectory.org).
- ⇒ **FWCC** also gratefully reports that its global fund raising campaign — *Becoming the Quakers the World Needs* — has exceeded its goal in the United States. It has raised 182% of its goal!
- ⇒ **Right Sharing of World Resources** is offering a Zoom Workshop called “The Power of Enough” in which participants will experience new perspectives through various experiential activities. Attendees will leave with a deeper sense of self and connection to how our personal choices ripple forward to others. For more information, see page 5 of this Newsletter.
- ⇒ **Friends Committee on National Legislations (FCNL)** approved a policy statement on abortion and other reproductive issues at its November 2023 annual meeting. The move came after a year of discernment by Quakers at FCNL and in monthly meetings across the country. See the statement on page 5 of this Newsletter.
- ⇒ **Northwest Yearly Meeting** will have its Mid-Year Meeting online on February 9-10, 2024. Their Annual Sessions will be July 21-24, 2024.

**Note:** The opinions expressed within this Newsletter and on our website are those of the authors, not the Meeting or the editor Lois Kieffaber.

## Friends Committee on National Legislations approves Policy on Abortion and other Reproductive Issues

[**Editor's Note:** This information was received via email from Friends Journal on January 29, 2024, so recent that it was not yet on the FCNL website at time of publication of this Newsletter. It was written by by Sharlee Di-Menichi.]

Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL) approved the policy at its November 2023 annual meeting, after a year of discernment by Quakers at FCNL and in monthly meetings across the country. The policy states:

*Quakers recognize that human life is sacred, and that Spirit can guide us individually and collectively. Based on these beliefs, members of the Religious Society of Friends have come to different conclusions regarding abortion. FCNL supports individual discernment in a spirit of love and truth in making reproductive healthcare decisions, as we do in other areas of conscientious moral choice. Government must ensure that people have the legal right to make these decisions. We oppose the criminalization of people seeking, undergoing, or involved in abortion services. We support equitable access to abortion services. FCNL also supports policies that reduce unwanted pregnancies by ensuring equitable access to contraception, sex education, family planning, fertility and adoption services, and support for all who decide to have children.*

Quaker support for the statement was broad but not universal. "FCNL does not speak for each and every Quaker," said Tim McHugh, FCNL's director of media relations.



### Seeking to Simplify Your Life?

Want to take personal steps to create right relations with our world? Right Sharing of World Resources is offering a workshop titled The Power of Enough via Zoom.

Starting on February 14th participants will meet every Wednesday for five weeks, at 11:30 am or 7:30 pm ET (This would be 8:30 am or 4:30 pm PT) Each session will last 90 minutes.

This workshop will be lead by **Nathan Kleban** and is about how we can contribute to right balance in the world through our use of time, energy, and "things"

To register for the workshop, go to Right Sharing's website at <https://rswr.org/project/power-enough>



### Caritas News and Needs

#### Caritas Positions Open

1. Wednesday Distribution person, 9 to 2 pm.
2. Wednesday AM Ride Along Food Pickup, 8 to 8:30 am.

#### Foods Needed

Ramen Noodles  
Canned Chicken



#### Necessities Needed

Laundry Detergent  
Dish Soap  
Cleaning products like Mr. Clean

Thank you so much,  
Caritas Staff and volunteers

## HAVE YOU TRIED “QUAKERSPEAK?”

QuakerSpeak is a Quaker YouTube channel that interviews Friends of all different backgrounds and asks them the core questions of our faith. It is a member-supported project of Friends Publishing, publishers of Friends Journal ([friendsjournal.org](http://friendsjournal.org)). They are personal and intimate, and seek to give viewers worldwide an experience that is entertaining, informative, inspiring, challenging, inviting, unifying and collaborative. The current director is Christopher Cuthrell. Musician and videographer Jon Watts founded and led the project from 2013-2019. Rebecca Hamilton-Levi took over the project from 2019-2023. Many videos are 4 to 7 minutes long and a transcript is included on the site (look for “. . . More”) and click on it. Here is an example of a transcript of one of the videos.

### Reframing the Book of Revelation

By Wess Daniels

The Book of Revelation is an enigma. It has been made into a joke and a laughing stock, primarily by Christian nationalism and right-very Conservative Christian interpretations of Revelation as being about predicting the end of the world; predicting the rapture; you know, the Mark of the Beast as like a kind of birthmark on my forehead sort of thing and like, “Oh, I could be the anti-Christ” sort of stuff. Revelation doesn’t have anything to do with predicting the end of the world. It’s like a handbook for a minority faith community in how to resist empire, and as soon as we see it that way it totally shifts the usefulness of this book because now it actually is instructive about what does it mean to stand in opposition of the religion of empire?

**Reframing the Book of Revelation** My name is Wess Daniels and I am the Director of the Friends Center at Guilford College. I use he/him/his pronouns. I live in Greensboro, North Carolina, and my family and I attend First Friends Meeting in Greensboro.

**The Origin of Revelation** The reality is that actually Revelation was written by a John, who was a pastor, living—who was a Jewish person, as far as I know, living under the Roman empire and was imprisoned on the Island of Patmos, which was kind of like an Alcatraz of the day, and he’s writing to these seven churches which are made up of Christians who are trying to follow the way of Jesus and resisting empire, and these are individuals who are not wealthy, educated politicians; these are the minority folks who are living the Roman imperial regime. Revelation is a letter to those people to say, “here is how you can resist empire; here is how you can continue on in the midst of something that looks like all hope is lost.”

**Examples of Resistance** Revelation kind of works as like, here’s what the empire does and here’s what God calls us to do, and it kind of goes back and forth like this. And it—so some of the ways John invites these communities into resistance is through nonviolence: what early Quakers call the War of the Lamb, so a nonviolent resistance to empire. It talks about liturgies, so it shows that empire has its own liturgy and that liturgy is meant to shape and form people in a particular way, in a particular moral framework. One last one is this idea of the Mark of the Beast, and the Mark of the Beast is actually about—it is a critique of an economics of empire that is an entire system that creates oppression.

**The Mark of the Beast Expanded** The Mark of the Beast, and the mark here in the Greek is the imprint on a coin, so the coinage of the Beast (empire) creates both poor and rich, and it subsumes all. And later in revelation it talks about that the empire trades in human bodies—that the empire is a system, an economic system, that enslaves individuals—in Revelation 18! In like goCE there’s a critique, in Christian text, against human slavery as being a part of the economics of the Beast. And so this is what we lose when we make Revelation into a big joke—is a two-thousand year old critique about stuff we’re still dealing with, so you can see how there’s a lot in there to unpack and we’re not sort of left to our own devices when coming up with, “how do we resist empire? How do we do this?” There have been communities standing in resistance to this for thousands of years. Let’s draw on that wisdom and those tools where it helps—where we can—and join that community of resistance over time.

#### Discussion Questions:

- What does it look like to take back or reinterpret sections of the Bible that have been used in harmful ways? Is this practice useful or productive to you? If so, why? If not, why not?
- How do we resist empire today? What does that mean to you and your community?

*The views expressed in this video/transcript are of the speakers and do not necessarily reflect the views of Friends Journal or its collaborators.*

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