

SPOKANE WORD

May
2025



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
Gathering 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 at rise of worship

Last Sunday of the Month
Book Club at rise of worship

LOVE YOUR NEIGHBOR, LOVE YOURSELF

by Taylor

We start with Matthew 22:39:

"And a second (commandment) is like it: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself."

I am going to break this command down in two parts: first, loving your neighbor, and then loving yourself, and ways that both can intersect.

Loving your Neighbor

Matthew 5:43-48 states:

"You have heard that it was said, 'You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy.' But I say to you, Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven; for he makes his sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the righteous and on the unrighteous. For if you love those who love you, what reward do you have? Do not even tax collectors do the same? And if you greet only your brothers and sisters, what more are you doing than others? Do not even the Gentiles do the same? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

That sounds like a tall order — to be asked to be perfect like our heavenly Father, and it can feel like loving your enemy does require perfection as it is certainly not an easy thing to do.

In our book club last year, we read *Love Without Limits* by Jacqueline A. Bussie ; it was really good for teaching to love all people. In one of the chapters the author talks about her experiences as a professor* with a student named Darren Rodeo. Darren would consistently come to her class and challenge things she and other students were saying. She reported that he often said offensive and hurtful things. She was surprised when he signed up for another class of hers during another term. What the author did before starting any class was go through her roster of students and pray individually for each person, despite her feelings for them. She stated, "One day during my prayers, a revelation struck me: the reason God made love a commandment and not a fun intramural option like flag football was because of the Darren Rodeos in our lives. If love for people-who-make-our-lives-less-than-wonderful was a choice, well, God knew, no one would ever sign up. Love's not extracurricular; it's the curriculum." The author later shared a story about how Darren Rodeo was upset one day about something grievous that had happened, and he said he felt safe to talk to this professor about it. Imagine if we could leave a sense of safety for those around us, even to those who think very differently from us.

You may hear some people say: "Love is a verb." If we are honest with ourselves, having warm fuzzy feelings towards people can sometimes feel impossible. I don't see a requirement anywhere to feel these cozy feelings. Feelings are not good or bad, they just communicate a need. I also don't see a requirement to "like" people, but as Christians we are commanded to love them. But when I intentionally choose to BEHAVE in a way that is not vengeful, that seeks to have empathy by seeing the Light in all people, and that extends thoughts of loving kindness for those who have harmed me, I feel the release of tension physiologically and in my spirit. I cannot control other people. But I can choose to focus on what is good and not dwell on hating my neighbor. It is normal and necessary to sit with our feelings and our thoughts and process through our experiences,

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(continued from page 1) but deliberately ruminating on hurt feelings can be a harmful and unproductive choice.

Love as a verb can take many forms. When we look to Jesus as an example, He was far from sitting quietly, avoiding conflict and not standing up against injustices. He was not a doormat. Kazu Haga wrote in his book *Healing Resistance* that sometimes doing nothing is an act of violence, not love.** If we see someone being harmed and we ignore it, this is not love, and it is not nonviolence. I would also argue that it is not love to allow ourselves to be abused and treated poorly; it gives the message that it is acceptable for people to be treated that way. Turning the other cheek is not a verse to allow people to abuse you. Most Biblical interpreters think this response to violence conveys that you respect the other person and will not return violence for violence. [Another unusual interpretation*** is that an aggressor would always slap an equal with the open palm of the right hand (because the left hand was considered unclean). However, if the offender was an inferior or a slave, the slap was back-handed to the right cheek. The response was probably that the slave would kneel and beg forgiveness. However if the person slapped simply looked the aggressor in the eye and turned his right cheek away, offering his left cheek, the aggressor could not backhand—the only option would be an open slap, thus elevating the victim to an equal, not an inferior. Perhaps Jesus is suggesting a powerful and creative way to engage in non-violent resistance.]

Another quote in Kazu Haga's book is:

“Solidarity isn’t about developing a condescending or patronizing savior complex. It is about being in relationship to people because we understand that our liberation is ultimately dependent on their liberation and vice versa. This means that our liberation is not only bound up with the liberation of Indigenous communities, Black communities, or other marginalized communities, but it is also bound up with, say, the liberation of _____. ... We need to work for _____’s liberation not only for his own sake, but because the safety of the people we love depend on it. The best way to protect those that we love is to love those who may hurt them.”

(I have chosen to omit the specific person mentioned, so you can put anyone's name in here that feels fitting).

Love as a verb may mean not striking back, not hitting below the belt, or seeking an eye for eye. For some, it could be the powerful move of walking away and removing yourself from a situation. If we find it hard to act in a place of love, removal may be appropriate—especially in situations where people are harming us. In Mark 6:11 Jesus told His disciplines:

“And if any place will not welcome you or listen to you, leave that place and shake the dust off your feet as a testimony against them.” The context he was referring to was his disciples visiting other villages to share His message. It shows that Jesus Himself gives us permission to leave places and situations where people do not listen or welcome us. It does not encourage us to beg to be heard.

Another way to demonstrate love through action is by giving a gentle answer. Proverbs 15:1 says “A soft answer turns away wrath, but a harsh word stirs up anger.” This verse really stands out to me when I recall a moment in my life. I just had a traumatic birth and was hooked up to IVs for blood transfusions and antibiotics. I felt dehumanizing and I felt powerless. One day a nurse walks into my suite, and I can’t remember what I said, but it wasn’t very nice. Her response was a quiet “Thank you for allowing me to serve you today.” I immediately softened and realized that my own harshness wasn’t necessary, and this nurse had a really strong impact in buffering some of the challenges I went through.

It can be very hard to love certain people, and for me that is people who harm others without remorse. What I have personally noticed is that when I saturate myself in hateful thoughts towards the people who have harmed me and others, it literally does nothing but harm me more. I get bitter. I feel the cortisol running through my body. It is, as some people now say, “I am letting them live rent-free in my mind.” Research has even shown that chronic unforgiveness can cause cardiovascular issues. I don’t believe this hate is worth my health. Fighting hate with more hate doesn’t make the offending person change; instead it just allows more and more hate to grow in my heart.

Many people who actively choose to harm are in constant fight-or-flight survival mode, and anything that feels like an attack is immediately met with a defense mechanism to further preserve their fragile sense of self. If we fight and argue with people who engage in abuse, it tends to escalate the perpetrator and further their defense mechanisms and coercive control dynamics. Acting out of love for other people may also not cause them to change, but it changes us, and can keep us more safe from harm.

People may hurt us and we may respond with gentleness, and they may still be rude. We cannot change the outcome of how others respond, but we can go to sleep at night knowing we acted with integrity and in accordance with our values. This helps our mental health and sense of purpose and thus is a way of loving ourselves. When we do not act according to our values, it can be harmful to our sense of self.

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MONTHLY MEETING FOR BUSINESS MINUTES

April 13, 2025

The Meeting for Worship to Conduct Business was opened with prayer by Clerk Laverne Biel. The minutes from 03/16/2025 were read by Recording Clerk Bob Wiese with one correction by an Elder stating that during discussions, it is not the Elders' responsibility to monitor discussions or messages.



Elders' Report: The Elders are suggesting establishing a committee for Christian Education, which would organize events like the March 29 "Playfulness for Grown-Ups" Workshop.

Treasurer's Report: Jon Maroni reported that giving for March and April is still less than expenses. John suggested further discussion regarding how to increase giving and/or reduce spending. A Friend suggested that a brief financial report be included twice a month in the Sunday bulletin to keep our finances before the meeting.

Stewards' Report: There was no report given. Also, communication and outreach reports were not given due to illness of Walter Simon. This will be provided in May's meeting.

Clerk Laverne Biel opened the floor to hear any new ideas regarding meeting time changes for both services that meet on First days. This will be continued during May's meeting. Jon Maroni suggested there be more discussion when the time is right. Lois noted that these discussions take place, but we don't review the discussion points about this time change the following Month, so nothing new is added.

There being no further business, the meeting was adjourned with prayer by Krista Maroni.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Wiese, Recording Secretary

Join us on May 10 to learn about Quaker Voice Washington and opportunities to shape Washington Public Policy

Where: Spokane Friends Church Library

When: Saturday May 10, 10:30 a.m. to noon

Guest Presenters: Visiting Friends from the Olympia and Seattle Friends Meetings

The intention of this informal gathering is to hear from visiting Friends about how Quaker Meetings and Worship groups throughout Washington are currently involved in state-wide legislative advocacy in three focus areas:

Criminal Justice Economic Justice Environmental Stewardship

Quaker Voice on Washington Public Policy focuses research on these broad issues to educate Friends, legislators, allies and the public about them. It lobbies in Olympia and provides Friends throughout the state with timely information on legislation and legislative actions.

Please join us at this May 10 informal gathering to learn more about Quaker Voice Washington and opportunities to participate. Even as we fight against national and international injustice, it has never been more important to also advocate at the state level as a first line of defense.

Quaker Voice Washington Website: <https://www.quakervoicewa.org/>

Questions About May 10 Informational Gathering?

Contact Bill Gillis, 509-432-4243 (gillis.bill@gmail.com).

Office Hours at Spokane Friends

Diana Davis's Office Hours

Wednesdays 10:00 am to 6:00 pm

Fridays 11:30 am to 2:30 pm

509-327-7852

Walter Simon's Office Hours

Tuesdays 10:30 am to 1:30 pm

Wednesdays 10:30 am to 1:30 pm

509-564-4070 or

509-327-7852.

CARITAS Needs This Week



FOOD

Pancake Mix

Syrup

Jelly/Jam

Cooking Oil

Canned Beans —cannellini, garbanzo

NECESSITIES

Can openers

Laundry Detergent

Dish Soap

(continued from page 2) Actively choosing not to saturate ourselves in hate is an act of self-love. You may have heard the quote from Marianne Williamson: "Unforgiveness is like drinking poison and waiting for the other person to die." Recalling and dwelling on why we can't stand someone can increase our cortisol levels. Research finds that chronic stress and cortisol can lead to many diseases and mental health issues and can result in a lowered life expectancy. Choosing to love our enemies and hold them in the Light can be an act of loving and caring for ourselves.

Loving your neighbor is an act of loving yourself, and loving yourself makes it easier to love your neighbor. Loving ourselves and being secure within ourselves helps us to buffer the pain of rejection and harm from other people. It helps us to show up for ourselves and others and love in healthier ways.

Some groups have taught that loving yourself is sinful. Self-love at the point of putting ourselves ABOVE others is the opposite of what Jesus taught. But let us not forget that the commandment is this: "Love your neighbor AS yourself". It is not "Love your neighbor, not yourself."

Matthew 10:29-31 says

"Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? Yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. And even the hairs of your head are all counted. So do not be afraid; you are of more value than many sparrows."

God sees us as valuable, and therefore, we should see ourselves as valuable. Some people find it easier to love other people or give them more grace and compassion than to love themselves. A technique I often use in therapy when people are hard on themselves is to ask "What would you say to a friend who was going through this?" How would we talk to our friends, our neighbors, our child self? If we love ourselves as we love our neighbors, do we need more self-compassion? Do we need to have gentle answers towards ourselves? Quakers believe in equality. Do we need to see ourselves as equals and not inferior?

In closing, let us all reflect on what it means to love our neighbors as ourselves? What are ways that we can demonstrate love for ourselves and others?

Taylor started attending meetings at Spokane Friends in 2022 and was recorded as a member in 2024. She has a Master's degree from Whitworth University and is a Licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, specializing in helping individuals with OCD and PTSD, particularly survivors of abuse. She has a creative and quirky seven-year-old son and recently married her husband Justin. This essay is a shortened version of a message given to Spokane Friends during morning worship on

Sources:

* Jacqueline A. Bussie, *Love without Limits: Jesus' Radical Vision for Love with No Exceptions*, Fortress Press, 2018.

** Kazu Haga, *Healing Resistance: A Radically Different Response to Harm*, Parallax Press, 2020.

***Walter Wink, *Engaging the Powers: Discernment and Resistance in a World of Domination*, Fortress Press, 1992.



Just launched at Spokane Friends NEW FCNL* ADVOCACY TEAM by Alan Binnie

On Sunday May 6th, following unprogrammed and programmed worship and a delicious Javanese potluck, a large group of people gathered in the upstairs hospitality area to help launch a new Friends Committee on National Legislation Advocacy Team. In an overwhelming response to our invitation, concerned citizens from many different faith communities joined Quakers from upstairs and downstairs, 27 in all.

Staff member Eleni Retta came from Washington, DC to lead the group through an overview of their unique model of influencing members of the U.S. Congress. Rather than just voting, calling, or writing letters to members of Congress, FCNL teams develop long-term relationships with these members and their staff people to more effectively share their Quaker values and how they could influence public policy for the better.

There are over 150 of these Advocacy teams in 48 states and they all focus on one particular topic; this means that our monthly legislative "asks" reach nearly every U.S. Senator and Representative simultaneously, creating more leverage than a single letter or visit to one member. The main theme for 2025 is "Aid not Arms for Gaza", with a secondary objective of addressing **climate change** by preserving the funding already earmarked for clean energy initiatives.

If you're feeling called to this important work, it's never too late to join — contact Alan Binnie.



*Friends Committee on National Legislation



Thank you for giving to Spokane Friends!

YOU CAN GIVE TO SPOKANE FRIENDS in many ways:

- ♦ Click the Donate button on your weekly email with worship information for Sunday or
- ♦ Go to website, Spokanefriends.org, and click the Donate tab, or
- ♦ Drop checks or cash into the offering plate at the back of the meeting room, or
- ♦ Make an automatic donation through your bank's free Bill Pay service — you choose the amount and how often.

Area Quakers Meet for "Fun"

On Saturday March 29 over twenty area Quakers met at Spokane Friends for a workshop "Playfulness for Grownups" presented by Katherine Spinner. She introduced us to a Montessori-style curriculum that encourages the spiritual lives of children and can be easily adapted for multigenerational worship. We became the students in a classroom where we learned about different images people use to think about God/Spirit and also thought deeply about the parable of the Good Shepherd and the lost sheep.



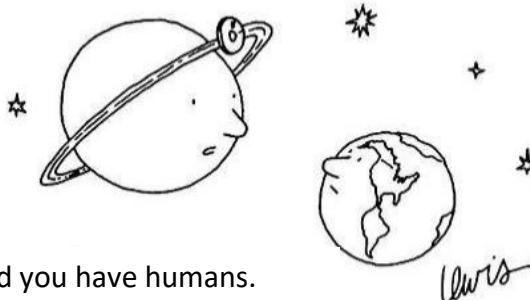
Represented at the Workshop were six Meetings: Sandpoint, Pullman-Moscow, Port Townsend, University Friends (Seattle), Friends in Common, Spokane Friends and Spokane Worship Group. Sandpoint had the largest presence (8 Quakers).

We share with you an email we received after the Workshop:

I am writing on behalf of all 8 of us who travelled to Spokane from Sandpoint on Saturday. We had a great time, and it was fun to see and be with Friends from other Meetings and Worship Groups. The food was satisfying and plentiful. Katherine's work gave us all a chance to do some inner and creative work

Please thank all of those who helped make the day warm and welcoming, and for all the hard work it took to accommodate us. I realize it is not easy to put together such an event. How wonderful to have the use of the Spokane Friends Church for the day. Warmly, Judith Clarke

So this is a shout-out of special thanks to the workshop organizers, Leann Williams, Katherine Spinner, and Caroline Wildflower; presenter Katherine Spinner, whose work is supported by North Pacific Yearly Meeting; Bill and Emalee Gillis for overnight hospitality; and the home-based kitchen crew of Pam, LaVerne, Sue, and Lorna.



The mystic does not bring doubts or riddles: the doubts and riddles exist already. We all feel the riddle of the earth without anyone to point it out.

Poet's Corner

This poem is dedicated to all of us that are of a certain age.

Forgetfulness

by Billy Collins

The name of the author is the first to go
followed obediently by the title, the plot
the heartbreaking conclusion, the entire novel
which suddenly becomes one you have never read, never
even heard of,

As if, one by one, the memories you used to harbor
decided to retire to the southern hemisphere of the
brain,
to a little fishing village where there are no phones.

Long ago you kissed the names of the nine Muses good-
by and watched the quadratic equation pack its bag,
and even now as you memorize the order of the planets,

Something else is slipping away, a state flower perhaps,
the address of an uncle, the capital of Paraguay.

Whatever it is you are struggling to remember
it is not poised on the tip of your tongue,
not even lurking in some obscure corner of your spleen.

It has floated away down a dark mythological river
whose name begins with an *I* as far as you can recall,
well on your own way to oblivion where you will join
those
who have even forgotten how to swim and how to ride a
bicycle.

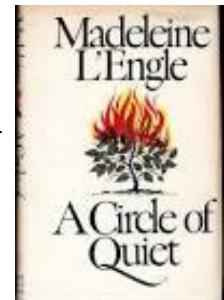
No wonder you rise in the middle of the night
to look up the date of a famous battle in a book on war.
No wonder the moon in the window seems to have drift-

Quaker Gatherings

- ⇒ **North Pacific Yearly Meeting** will hold Annual Sessions on July 9-13, 2024 on the University of Montana campus in Missoula. At that time, consideration will be given to whether North Pacific YM might affiliate with Friends General Conference.
- ⇒ **Sierra-Cascades Annual Sessions** will occur July 25-27 at Reedwood Friends Church in Portland, Oregon. Keep up with Sierra-Cascades Yearly Meeting at <https://www.scymfriends.org/events>
- ⇒ **Northwest Yearly Meeting's Annual Sessions** will be held at George Fox University, July 20-23, 2025.

Book Club Reads

Last month we read Madeleine L'Engle's *A Circle of Quiet*, a collection of her writing when she was middle-aged or younger. In it she muses about being a parent a Christian, and a writer, and living life to its fullest. Our beings are not static. Only as we grow in self-awareness can we accept who we really are and allow the Spirit of God to transform us.



This month, in honor of Asian-American and Pacific Islander month, we are reading *Biting the Hand: Growing up Asian in Black and White America* by Julia Lee. The daughter of Korean immigrants, she was a teenager in 1992 when four Los Angeles police officers were acquitted after savagely beating Rodney King.