

# SPOKANEWORD

*December*  
2025



**Spokane Friends**

1612 W Dalke

Spokane, WA 99205

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

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 8:30 a.m. or

when first person sits down

Gathering worship 10:00 a.m.

In-Person and Via Zoom

See Website For Link

INUUC Worship Service 11:30 am

**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

## ON CALLING OUT GIFTS \*

by Erika Clary

One of my favorite scripture texts is the narrative of Mary visiting Elizabeth in the first chapter of Luke. After Mary discovers she is pregnant with Jesus, she makes the long journey to visit Elizabeth, who has also been told she is miraculously pregnant. Upon Mary's arrival, Elizabeth's baby (John the Baptist) leaps in Elizabeth's womb and she is filled with the Holy Spirit. Elizabeth then expresses what has just happened to her and ensures Mary knows she is blessed among women.

While I love this exchange in general because of the unusual circumstances of Mary as a pregnant virgin and Elizabeth as a pregnant elderly woman previously believed to be barren, I appreciate the scripture even more when I consider it from a leadership perspective.

Since Mary was young and not yet married to Joseph, she likely was terrified about how people would react to her news. Though she was devoted to God and obviously chosen by God, she may have felt unqualified to complete this monumental and miraculous task. Thankfully, she had Elizabeth, who believed in Mary and was not afraid to make Mary's gifts and status known.

**We all need an Elizabeth**— someone who will name our gifts, even when we do not see them ourselves, and despite any reasons we think people will not take us seriously.

**We also must be Elizabeths** for those around us. Other than naming the gifts of those around us, we can be like Elizabeth also by calling leadership out of our community through trust and transparency. It seems to be human nature to select individuals who are most like us for leadership positions. This makes sense, because we want someone we can look up to and someone in whom we can see ourselves. What if we expand our thinking to also learn from those who are different from us? What if we take seriously and trust people who are willing to serve in leadership, even if they do not look like us or worship in different ways than we do?

We also must learn to trust that even young people and those without a lot of church leadership experience can be leaders. Last May, I was part of a conversation with a group of young adults, ages 18 to 35. We heard a tremendous amount of frustration about young adults either being nominated but not selected because they "don't have enough experience," or not being taken seriously, or not being nominated in the first place.

Many of these young adults mentioned that they hear people in their congregations express interest in young adult involvement and leadership, but those thoughts seem to be forgotten when nominations are made. We cannot say we want more young adults in leadership without actually providing those opportunities. Many young adults are willing and eager to serve, despite their busy schedules, and we must trust that they are capable.

(continued on next page)

**\*Note:** The authors of these reflections were members of a two-year study committee on Calling Denominational Leadership, whose results were shared at the denomination's 2025 Annual Conference. Spokane Friends community is in the process of calling members to leadership positions, so the topic seemed timely.]

(continued from page 1) Additionally, there are members of our community who could serve in various leadership positions but do not even try because they feel underqualified due to a lack of experience. While church leadership experience may often be important, it does not need to be the main qualification for every position. Sometimes, especially if we want more diverse leadership, it actually may be worthwhile to consider other qualifications such as personality, gifts, talents, and enthusiasm. In many leadership positions, it is possible for a person to learn as they go. This is not always the case, but it can be true. Once again, we must trust that those who have unique qualifications or skills we do not consider right away can learn the duties of a position and do a good job at it.

Another important lesson from my experience on this study committee was the necessity of transparency. People often decline nominations because they feel they do not have all the details about the position. For example, how long is the term? Are there any expenses involved? How much time will I need to dedicate to this position each week? How much time will I have to spend away from home? Is most of the work completed in person or online? These are questions to answer to the best of our ability. When we are clear about these things with the people we want to nominate, they may be more willing to serve. Sometimes not all of these details are transparent to those who have questions about what the job entails.

As I ponder the future of leadership in our community, I hope that we can all be like Elizabeth and call out the gifts of those around us—and nominate them! I hope we can learn to trust people with fresh ideas that are out of the box. I hope we will continue to work toward full transparency in our job descriptions.

Most of all, I hope to see an increase in accepted nominations because the people who are asked feel trusted to lead and qualified to do so.

**Erika Clary** is the Social Media Coordinator at Bethany Theological Seminary.

## DEEPER WORK IS NEEDED

by Emmett Witkovsky-Eldred

Jeff Carter, President of Bethany Seminary, noted that church folk are sometimes shy about leading (which can entail rocking boats and ruffling feathers) and more keen on managing (which more often involves tending relationships and solving problems). He discussed three “keys” of leadership that even the meekest should be able to summon within themselves:

- Emotional intelligence which involves self-awareness, discipline, motivation, and empathy;
- Curiosity, or the willingness to “ask the second question” that will pierce the surface level and get to a deeper truth between people or behind conflict; and
- Understanding of and attention to group dynamics — that is, being aware in a given situation of yours and others’ positions — the powers and responsibilities you have within your own group, how you relate to the broader group, and what you personally bring to the table.

Membership in most denominations is declining and that makes it more challenging to identify a diverse and capable group that is willing to take on volunteer leadership positions that can often resemble unpaid part-or full-time jobs. But there is resistance from many to the idea that the church even needs diverse leadership. Many say that we should focus on qualifications, not diversity. But interestingly, the concern about qualifications seems to pop up only when people are asked about diversity.

This knee-jerk reaction assumes that calling diverse leaders is somehow at odds with calling well-qualified leaders. There are also situations in which people with leadership gifts were actively discouraged or belittled because they were members of the LGBTQ+ community. If the church truly wants to be better at calling leaders, it would do well not to alienate them.

Just as we may feel shy about leading, we seem to have a suspicion of others leading. When our cultural models of leadership often carry weapons or hoard power and wealth, this suspicion may be deserved. Carter’s three keys of leadership — emotional intelligence, curiosity, and interpersonal awareness —can be a helpful alternative model for us.

In a sense, calling one another into leadership is an act of collective leadership. We lead, and we allow ourselves to be led. Both take grace, humility, and wisdom, but each of us has the ability to call and be called.

**Emmett Witkovsky-Eldred** is a member of University Park (Md.) Church of the Brethren. He is an attorney practicing in Washington, D.C.

The above reflections are condensed from “Denominational Leadership” in the October 2025 issue of **Messenger**, <https://www.brethren.org/messenger/digital/>

## MONTHLY MEETING FOR BUSINESS

November 16, 2025

Friends Meeting for Worship to Conduct Business commenced with the reading of October's Minutes by Recording Secretary Bob Wiese. The Minutes were approved with the following corrections: **Bill Gillis (Quaker Worship Group) and Solomon (INUUC)** helped complete the men's bathroom renovations, in addition to those mentioned in September's Minutes. We are very appreciative to all involved and their contributions. **Also**, it is **Kent Biel, not Bill Emery**, and Sue Keehnen who will represent Spokane Friends on the Coordinating Committee for building use.



Bob Wiese also resigned as Recording Secretary citing personal reasons. Sue Keehnen offered to assume the Recording Secretary position for now.

Elders Report: The Elders met November 15<sup>th</sup>. The speaker schedule was discussed; it is completed through January 18, 2026.

Elders asked the Meeting whether the Mailchimp connection supporting Caritas can be deleted, since that information is on the Website. A question was raised about whether the list of immediate needs for Caritas should appear in the printed Sunday bulletin. The Meeting agreed to maintain the current approach, so Caritas' immediate needs will not be listed in the bulletin.

Elders reminded us again that the silent time during Meeting for Worship is not for joys and concerns or announcements, it is for expectant waiting and listening.

INUUC will host Spokane Friends for the Dec 7th Potluck meal.

David Roberts and Lyn Lindell will be hosting a Thanksgiving Dinner on Wednesday evening, November 26, for several Sudanese refugee families that Lyn works with. Interested people are invited to help with food and transportation.

Stewards/Trustees report: The furnace has been repaired. The Stewards scheduled a workday for Thursday, November 20<sup>th</sup>, to complete the children's room downstairs. They will be tackling additional projects as needed, including replacing the lights on the sign outside.

Treasurer's Report: The yearly income from the Quaker Worship Group was separated and came to \$9,700. The Meeting is thankful for their contributions and commitment to our fellowship. There was a question about the HVAC fund and where it was located in the report -- which was under Maintenance.

The Meeting discussed Jon Maroni being a signature on the Everence account to make transfers when needed. Pam is currently the signature, and she is no longer the Treasurer. Jon Maroni was approved to be the signature on the Everence account.

Nominating Committee Report: Various positions remained open and the committee is waiting to hear back from several people. Sue Keehnen volunteered to step in for Bob until the committee finds someone to fill the position.

Lyn Lindell shared that the Sudanese refugees—Safia, her children, and several adult friends—have recently received assistance with clothing, shoes, and transportation, and are very appreciative.

There being no further business, David Roberts closed the Meeting for Worship to Conduct Business with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Bob Wiese, Recording Secretary



## A Note from Ruthie Tippin

The beauty of fall color comes from loss. As the trees stop producing chlorophyll, their true colors are revealed—vivid reminders that beauty can emerge from change. I'm thankful for that lesson, especially in seasons when gratitude feels hard to find.

**Right Sharing of World Resources** brings that same kind of "greening" to women and communities around the world—new hope and growth arising from struggle. This blessing is made possible by friends like you who understand that gratitude and love are not only feelings, but practices that transform life. Gratitude shifts how we see abundance. It reminds us that there is enough—and that sharing what we have can change everything.



As part of our **Make Love Visible** campaign, I invite you to explore our [Gratitude Curriculum\\*](#), a resource for reflection and conversation at home or in your community. It will also be the focus of our upcoming [Right Sharing Conversations\\*\\*](#) as we explore how gratitude can move us toward love in action.

With transforming hope,

*Ruthie Tippin  
RSWR Board Member*

\*<https://rswr.org/share-your-abundance/gratitude-curriculum>

\*\*<https://subscribe.page.io/C7e91U>



## The North Star Network (NSN)

NSN is a Quaker nonprofit charitable organization that offers counseling and pathways to migrants, refugees and uprooted people considering Canada. Standing by people fleeing oppression has been part of the Quaker DNA for centuries. We respond to requests for help, build bridges and pathways, share information and provide humanitarian aid. NSN partners with a range of migrant and legal aid groups in the U.S. and Canada.

Far too often immigrants considered helpless victims. North Star recognizes the agency and dignity of the people we support. We honor their volition and right to make decisions about their own lives and where they want to live. We work alongside them. We embrace our common humanity and act to support them in a spirit of solidarity and accompaniment.

Our network of Quaker volunteers in various parts of the country are joined by people of conscience and participants from other faith communities and aid organizations who extend NSN's reach.

## CHRISTMAS

### SING-A- LONG

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 20, 2025

7:00PM



Cathedral Plaza, 1120 W Sprague Ave.

Hospitality room (B)

*"Sing for the reason of the season*

LIVE MUSIC

HOSTED BY  
HOLIDAY ELVES



*Santa sez: "bring your favorite holiday snack"*

Co-Hosts: CATHEDRAL PLAZA & SPOKANE FRIENDS

## Office Hours

Diana Davis, Office Administrator,  
works remote Mon-Wed  
checking email and phone messages.

**In-office hours are**  
Thurs and Fri, 10:30 am—2:30 pm

Walter Simon, Publicity Manager,  
**In-office hours are**  
Tues and Wed 10:30 am—3 pm  
or by appointment

You can reach our website at  
[www.thenorthstarnetwork.com](http://www.thenorthstarnetwork.com)

If you can please help us by sharing the website with local immigrant groups in your community so we can get the word of our availability out to as many immigrants as possible. If you would like to help in other ways please sign up on the website.

A big thank you to Doug and Cheri Smith for sharing this information, particularly since we in Spokane are very close to the Canadian border.



## Financial Report

	<u>Oct 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Income:	\$ 3553.45	\$ 40,393.01
Expenses:	3003.16	43,301.09
Difference:	+ 550.29	- 2,209.08



You can now give to Spokane Friends via the QR code on the right!

*..Or via our website,  
your weekly worship email,  
your bank's free Bill Pay service,  
or you can mail it to us.*



Want to designate a gift just for our new HVAC system?  
No problem, just scan the QRcode on the left



**Thank you for giving to Spokane Friends !**



## Out and about with Spokane Quakers



Many Spokane Friends (both kinds), along with folks from Westminster United Church of Christ and St. John's (Episcopalian) participated in a **"postcard" campaign to express distress** that in spite of the "cease-fire," not enough food is reaching the starving people there. About 60 cards were sent to each member of Congress.

**David Roberts answered a distress call** from Sudanese refugee Hassan Abdullah who was having car trouble. Together they got Hassan's vehicle onto the road again.

In other refugee news, **David Roberts and Lyn Lindell** invited members of the Sudanese community living in the same apartment building to attend **"an American Thanksgiving Dinner"** in the Fellowship Hall on Thanksgiving Eve. Check out next month's Newsletter for the whole story.



**David and Hassan are successful!**

On that same "day before Thanksgiving," **Lacy Winder led Spokane Friends' second community event** to raise money for our much-needed new HVAC system. **Friendsgiving**, as the event was named, sold pies for Thanksgiving (pumpkin pies were in high demand) along with hand-crafted items including knitted socks, washcloths, homemade jam, and framed art work. Word has it that around \$1500 was added to the new HVAC system fund through these sales.

Meanwhile over at **Hutton Settlement, Quakers Don and Lorna Hyslop** once more organized the students' **Annual Christmas Tree sale**, which opened the Saturday after Thanksgiving. If you get your tree there, the man with the chain saw is Don.

Spokane Friends were represented by **Lyn Lindell and Lois Kieffaber** at the **Annual FAN (Faith Action Network) Banquet**, "A Night of Unbreakable Spirit," on November 16. The event raised approximately \$200,000 and included at \$50,000 of matching funds from Rick Steves.

**Lyn Lindell** continues to teach a Tuesday evening English class for five Sudanese women who meet in Safia Yacoub's apartment to study together.

Seen at Friday evening's sold-out performance of **The Messiah by the Spokane Symphony and Chorus** at St. John's Cathedral were **Walter Simon** and **Lois Kieffaber**.

## Poet's Corner

During Sunday worship "Joys and Concerns," many told how the beautiful fall colors brought joy to their hearts. It reminded me of a poem that I have always liked, which is shared below.

### Frost

by Lucile Brandt

We stood and looked.

"It's California," I said.

"Golden sunshine on green, with here and there  
Only a streak of yellow where willows and poplars  
Grow near some stream — or maybe there's a  
stray sycamore."

"Beautiful," you replied.

I nodded. "Very!"

There's a kind of halo around those green and gold  
trees,  
The two colors meeting and blending — gold of the  
sunshine  
And yellow and green of leaves. Only — it's been  
This way so long! I want the eastern colors —  
Scarlet, and orange, and russet, and yellow that  
startles you.  
It is so vivid. Always this mellow, soft, light —"

"Only the frost brings the colors." So you spoke quietly.

"Frost? Well, yes, I suppose you're right," I said.

And suddenly turning I saw in one vivid moment  
Your life, rich, varied, busy, awake to all needs,  
Interesting always, helpful always, *colorful!*

I stared. You smiled.

"Yes, it's the frost," you said.

From *The Flame Tree*, The Brethren Press, 1973.



## Quaker Connections

- ⇒ Evangelical Friends Mission, of which Northwest Yearly Meeting is a member, is offering a **Christmas catalog**. You can find it at <https://friendsmission.com/christmas/>
- ⇒ A very recent update (Nov. 20, 2025) from American Friends Service Committee entitled **AFSC's Gaza Emergency Relief** tells of providing life-saving assistance to over 1 million displaced Palestinians. Their staff have provided hot meals, food parcels, and fresh vegetables, drinkable water and hygiene kits with soap, toothbrushes, and women's hygiene products, among other critical supplies across Gaza. Read all about it at <https://afsc.org/news/afscs-gaza-emergency-relief>
- ⇒ **Eight international Quaker organizations** have added their voices to the growing worldwide consensus that Israel is committing genocide in Gaza, and they are asking other Quaker organizations to endorse their statement. The statement and background resources may be found at <https://afsc.org/sites/default/files/2025-08/quakers-discern-genocide-is-occurring-in-gaza-and-urge-courageous-action-2025-07-25>
- ⇒ Pacific Yearly Meeting, North Pacific Yearly Meeting, and San Francisco (Calif.) Meeting have joined a **July lawsuit against the U.S. Department of Homeland Security (DHS)** over the threat of federal immigration enforcement in houses of worship. Other plaintiffs include Evangelical Lutherans, American Baptists, and Metropolitan Community Churches.
- ⇒ **North Pacific Yearly Meeting** has joined with San Francisco Friends Meeting, Pacific Yearly Meeting, American Baptist Churches, Alliance of Baptists, Metropolitan Community Churches, and five synods of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. Together we have **sued the Department of Homeland Security** and Kristi Noem in her role as Secretary of that department. The case was filed in the Federal courts of Massachusetts and the case number is 4:25-cv-