

SPOKANEWORD

February
2026



Spokane Friends

1612 W Dalke

Spokane, WA 99205

(509) 327-7852

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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 8:30 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

THE RELIGIOUS SOCIETY OF PIRATES

by Joy Weimer

The group of teens walking behind me think that they are being sneaky. They think that I can't hear them talking about me. They have been following me for several blocks now. I caught their attention at Nothing to See Here, the coffee shop I frequent on my way to meeting for worship. They were thumbing their noses at society by being at the little underground coffee shop. It's the only shop left in town that doesn't require a Blink-to-Pay lens, an EyeDesire, or any of the other Vision-to-Purchase implants to pay and therefore doesn't turn me away at the door. The teens' little act of deviance by being there must have made them feel bold enough to follow me. I wonder if they'll be thrilled or horrified when they find out where I'm going.

You ask her."

"No! You ask her!"

"Scared to?" The sneer with which this is said practically hits me in the back. The attitude on this one. They think they are quite the tough cookie. I'm sure it would break their heart to know I just called them "a cookie" in my head.

"I'll ask her."

"Bet you won't!"

"Bet I will!"

"Guys, let's just go back. I don't think we should be—"

"Shut up!"

"Do it! Do it!" It's the sneering cookie, again.

"Yeah! Do it!" I say spinning on my heel to face them. A half dozen young faces all freeze in horror. The thing they've been following can talk. It's such a shock to them that another person is actually human. I decide to play along as though I don't already know what it is they are going to ask me. At least it won't be some stupid question about oatmeal anymore. I wish life was still that simple though.

"What is it you want to ask me?"

They don't jump at the opportunity. Suddenly everything around us is much more interesting than I am. I can wait. I sip my coffee.

"My blacked-out monocle," I say for her. The group nods back.

"We've heard about them. My dads say that people who wear the patch disappear." She seems genuinely concerned.

"My parents said if they ever caught me with one they'd disown me. They don't want a son who'd bring the Corp Cops to their door—"

A smaller boy shoves this one, the tallest of the group, a playful shove that is too hard.

"I'm not afraid of any mega corp goons. My brother says anyone who'd wear a patch is an idiot and a loser."

"Okay," I shrug, "if that's how you feel about it. I'll be back on my way." I turn and resume my course down the street.

"You wrecked it!" It's Tough Cookie again. "Hey! Hey! Wait!" They chase after me and now instead of following they all swarm about me.

(continued on next page)

(continued from page 1) I'm not so scary after all, it would seem. Either that or their curiosity is getting the best of them.

"Did it hurt getting your implant out?" The girl winces at the thought.

"I still have it. The monocle just covers it. Some people do opt to have their eye removed though. You can't remove the implant itself."

"Can we touch it?"

"I'd rather you didn't."

"I just gotta know," Tough Cookie asks, "are you one of them Pirates?"

"That's what they're calling us these days, isn't it?"

"These days?" They look confused. Ah, to be young and only aware of your own moment.

"In the past, we had other names. Believe it or not, we used to be called Friends."

"Friends with who?"

"The Light."

"That's stupid. Why would you wear the patch if you're a friend with light?" says the one with the older brother who thinks I'm a loser.

"That's a good question," I smile. "I'm going somewhere where you can learn to answer that question for yourself. That is if you are brave enough to follow me."

I must not be too much of a loser because they are all still walking with me. Or maybe they really aren't afraid of the private police the mega corporations hire to "keep subscriptions up," as they like to call it. Naïve bravery, if that is the case. Our meeting has lost members that way. Each time the official record said that they re-upped subscriptions and joined HiveMind Social's VR city, we all knew what that actually meant. We know the truth. Our minute book tells a different story. We say it quietly amongst ourselves for now. Someday we'll be able to say it loudly. They've been sold. Their very thoughts and whims are being mined and sold. They can't take the helmets off. They can't go home.

The kids keep up a steady stream of questions for me and insults for each other.

Do Pirates really just get stuff and then give it away? Isn't that stealing from the corps? I try to answer them as simply as possible, mostly yes and no. I'd like to give them better answers but my attention is being drawn elsewhere. Tough Cookie is incredulous at my answers. He tells me that Pirateism is an affront to The Creator. Equality and caring for one's community are wrong because if Creator wanted those things, it wouldn't take humans to make it happen. New Abundance theology oozes out of him. It seems to me that he's trying to convince himself by convincing me. I understand. Working out a personal philosophy is hard. I had to do it once, too. I let him talk. I listen and my clear eye searches the street. A block or two back I had noticed that the unhoused man I usually see on my weekly walks to meeting was conspicuously absent. There is no trace of him. What there is a trace of is a dark cargo van that has been staying a block's length behind us and matching our pace. The meetinghouse isn't far at this point. It is unlikely that the Corp Cops would follow us inside. We just have to get there before they get to us.

I pick up my speed. I'm not quite jogging. The tallest boy starts prancing along beside me.

"So where are you goin' anyway?"

"Not much farther. I'm on my way to meeting for worship."

"Pirate duty," he smirks. "So where is your pirate ship?"

"Just up ahead. The plain brick building with the cream-colored doors."

"I know where that is! Beat you there!" he crows. He's off like a shot, and before I can stop them, the whole gang is racing one another, pulling me along in their tide. Running feet are all the provocation our stalkers need to pounce on their prey. Tires screech as the cargo van slams to a stop blocking our path. Two men dressed for battle hop out.

"Good morning," I say, trying not to sound out of breath. This is bad. So very bad.

"Well, good morning to you, too. And where are you off to in such a hurry?"

"Nowhere in particular." I'm not sure why I think they'll believe that, as if it is totally normal for a middle-aged woman with a black monocle to be running along a street with a gaggle of teens in tow.

(continued on page 4)

MONTHLY MEETING FOR BUSINESS

January 18, 2026

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

The Minutes were read and approved as submitted.

There was no Elders Report as there was no meeting. It was noted that Sunday speakers were arranged through February.

Treasurers Report was presented. It was noted that the checking account balance was high. It was APPROVED to have the treasurer move \$20,000 to the Everence account.

Stewards/Trustees. Bill Emery reported. It was noted that the children's church room is cooler than other locations in the building. This will be worked on during the next week. Carpeting is completed in the remaining downstairs classroom; baseboard still needs to be installed. Thanks were expressed to those who helped move the banners in the sanctuary.

Nominating Committee: Linda Pierce reported the following nominations::

Recording Clerk - Lois Kieffaber

Assistant Recording Clerk - Susan Keehnen

Stewards/Trustees - Bill Emery, Kent Biel, Lacey Winder, Don Hyslop, Jonathan Watson

There is still a need for Elders.

Lyn Lindell reported on the Sudanese families. She provides transportation to help them get to doctor and social service appointments and food banks. She is working with David Roberts in planning the next "Friendsgiving" meal.

New business. Lacy Winder expressed thanks for the Giving Meter display in the hospitality area which shows progress toward funding the new HVAC system. Thanks also to everyone who made the Friendsgiving fundraiser a success. There will be thought given to future fundraisers.

Lois Kieffaber spoke about children's church. During Laverne Biel's absence, anyone interested in leading children's church should let Pam Emery know in advance. There was a question asked about our abuse policy. Newcomers may be hesitant to let their children leave with someone they don't know. It was suggested that a handout be prepared about the purpose of children's church and what the kids could expect.

David Roberts closed the meeting with prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Susan Keehnen, Temporary Recording Clerk



Financial Report

	<u>Dec 2025</u>	<u>Year to Date</u>
Income:	\$ 3549.45	\$ 51,621.46
Expenses:	2544.88	53,112.34
Difference:	+ 1,004.57	- 1,490.88



Thank you for giving to Spokane Friends !

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.



But wait! There's more! Fundraisers and designated gifts have resulted in \$16,739 for our new HVAC system!

(continued from page 2) “Not running toward anything. So they must be running away from something, eh?” This one slaps the other on the back like this is funny.

“Sure looks like running away to me,” his partner agrees.

The kids are all silent. The energy coming off of them is electric though. It could not be more plainly written all over their faces. They’ve been caught . . . for something. Mere moments ago they weren’t afraid, but now all of their bravado is gone.

“UP AGAINST THE WALL!”

The men don’t even have to put their hands on them. The kids all jump to obey, terrified.

“Someone or someones,” the cops smile a sick grin at each and every face, “has defaced all—all—of the EyeDesire experience ad boards in this area. We got a very reliable source who says it was a bunch of rowdy kids. A bunch of kids who apparently need to go to a better school to learn how to behave.”

Defacing ad boards. These kids are in deep. Those boards are in high-traffic areas so that they can show the most amount of people exactly what products the corps wants them to buy. All a passerby has to do is blink twice at the screen to complete a transaction, and the item will be in their possession by the time they get home. The revenue from these ads is astounding. They are all over. Avoiding them is why my own paths are so long and twisting. The Corps Cops will never let this slide, not even for a bribe.

“Now we’re going to search each pocket and—”

Tough Cookie is trembling. Conflicted boy. Even with all the talk he had about Abundance, I’m sure the evidence is on him.

“It was me,” I interrupt. The goons stop manhandling the kids to stare at me.

“Obviously, it was me.” I tap my blacked-out eye. “These kids were trying to bring me in. They didn’t do anything.” I don’t get to say anything else. A punch lands hard in my stomach. Coffee comes up my throat. Blows rain down on my face knocking me to the ground. Steel-toes stomp on me. I gasp and manage a hoarse, “Run.” And run they do, like terrified rabbits. The men don’t know which way or which one to go after first. I hear shouting and feet running. I’m laying on the pavement. My clear eye is swelling.

The street is silent, and I am alone. Then I feel arms come up around me, and I’m lifted. This is it for me, I suppose. It feels like an eternity passes as I’m carried. I’m shocked that the cops would be so gentle with me to toss me in their van. I didn’t think it was that far away from us, and I wonder if somehow they knocked me down the street while pummeling me. It feels like we go up a few stairs. That doesn’t make sense to me. I hear a pounding. Someone is knocking on a door. Or maybe my head is exploding.

A gasp. “What’s happened?” It’s a voice I know well, our meeting clerk.

“I can explain,” another voice I’m starting to know: Tough Cookie.

“Who are you?” the clerk asks, ushering us to safety inside the door.

“A friend.”

Joy Weimer is a member of West River Meeting in Economy, In. She is a lifelong storyteller and avid reader. This story originally appeared in the November 2024 issue of *Friends Journal* (their annual Fiction issue). Reprinted/republished with permission. Become a member at www.friendsjournal.org/subscribe/.





From the Office Mailbox

A very Special THANK YOU — and may your new year be happy in every way. We greatly

appreciate the use of the basement for our gathering to share friendship and music! Sincerely,

Northside Jam Group

Tom Cline, Gary and Alyse, Brad Keeley

Dear Editor, Why can't we read more about the people and activities of Spokane Friends members? Interested member

Response: What a wonderful idea! I would love to print more of this kind of story — too much of one voice gets pretty boring. Let's all work hard to encourage more members of the community to submit stories, essays, poetry, photos, interviews with each other, etc. and give more life to the Newsletter.

An Interactive Zoom Workshop on March 14



Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples

Join us for this interactive Zoom workshop:

"Roots of Injustice, Seeds of Change: Toward Right Relationship with Native Peoples"

In this 2-hour participatory program, we experience the history of the colonization of Turtle Island, the land now known as the United States. The story is told through the words of Indigenous leaders, European/American leaders, and Western historians. We engage with this history through experiential exercises and small group discussions. And we are invited to consider how we can build relationships with Indigenous peoples based on truth, respect, justice, and our shared humanity. Facilitators are both Native and non-Native persons. Sponsored by Friends Peace Teams. Register: <https://friendspeaceteams.org/upcoming-events/>

Office Hours

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

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

Walter Simon, Publicity Manager,

In-office hours are by appointment Call 509-564-4070 or 509-327-7852

Poet's Corner

And I Speak Up

by Bridget Moix

First, they came for the immigrants and refugees and I spoke up **because immigrants and refugees are our neighbors.**

Then they came for transgender people and I spoke up **because transgender people are our neighbors.**

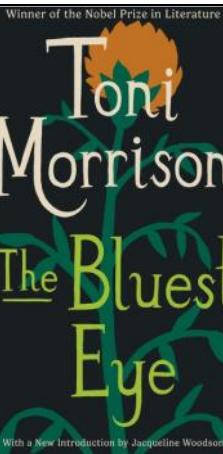
Then they came for the poor and the vulnerable and I spoke up **because the poor and vulnerable are our neighbors.**

Then they came for the aid workers, the federal workers, and the civil servants and I spoke up **because they too are our neighbors.**

They came for the students, the teachers, and the universities and I spoke up **because they too are our neighbors.**

Then they came for us, and we spoke up because we are here together **and we are called to love all all our neighbors, no exceptions.**

Bridget Moix is the General Secretary of The Friends Committee on National Legislation (FCNL). FCNL is a national, non-partisan Quaker organization that lobbies Congress and the administration to advance peace, justice, and environmental stewardship.



THE BLUEST EYE

By Tony Morrison

February's Book Club Selection

To acknowledge February as African American History month, we will read Pulitzer Prize winner Tony Morrison's first book, The Bluest Eye. It tells of the trauma of a little black girl who internalizes societal norms that devalue her looks, culture, and very existence. In Pecola Breedlove's world, Black value and Black beauty are non-entities. From a deeply broken spirit, Pecola identifies the prize: blues eyes promise entry into a place that privileges white skin and tolerates the physical features of a "high yellow dream child." In possession of neither blue eyes nor light skin, Pecola languishes in a world that fails to affirm her. That same destruction of the spirit is revealed in the pathology of her father, Cholly Breedlove, who exemplifies one who has received and transmitted the lethal legacy of slavery that fractured families. (from comments by reviewer Chiquita Mullins-Lee)

The Bluest Eye has often been challenged as high school reading material and has appeared several times among the list of titles most frequently banned. But in the 50 years since its publication, it has become a classic.

WE WILL DISCUSS THIS BOOK AFTER WORSHIP SERVICE ON FEBRUARY 22 AT THE MEETING HOUSE.

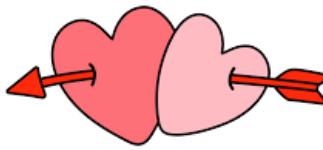
Some funny Valentine quotes for you:

You're the reason I look down at my phone and smile. Then walk into a pole.

I want a man who's kind and understanding. Is that too much to ask of

a millionaire?

I love being married. It's so great to find that one special person you



want to annoy for the rest of your life.

"I never want to be away from you again, except at work, in the

I Didn't Know That !

The year 1984 has come and gone, and we do not live under the watchful eye of Big Brother, as predicted in George Orwell's famous novel which critiques totalitarianism, particularly Stalinism. But Orwell was also interested in how language is always linked to politics and to truth. He thought slovenly use of language and clichés make it easier for those in power to deliberately use misleading language to hide unpleasant political facts. In his "Politics and the English language," he offered six rules for writers; they seem as relevant today as when he wrote them after World War II.

1. Never use a metaphor, simile or other figure of speech which you are used to seeing in print.
2. Never use a long word where a short one will do.
3. If it is possible to cut a word out, always cut it out.
4. Never use the passive when you can use the active.
5. Never use a foreign phrase, a scientific word or a jargon word if you can think of an everyday English equivalent.
6. Break any of these rules sooner than say anything outright barbarous.

One more thing I did not know: George Orwell was a pen name for Eric Blair, an English novelist, poet, essayist, journalist, and critic, known for exposing poverty, social injustice, and the dangers of oppressive power. According to Orwell, when the general atmosphere is bad, language must suffer. 'Language is a political issue, and slovenly use of language and clichés make it easier for those in power to deliberately use misleading language to hide unpleasant political facts. Bad English, he believed, was a vehicle for oppressive ideology.'

The Observer of London says Orwell's essay is part of the newspaper's instructional style book.