

# West Branch Friends Meeting

March 2023

“Who Are We? Why Are We Here?”



I know we have had a rather mild winter (with a couple of exceptions), but I am still SO ready for the arrival of Spring! Spring isn't only about warmer, brighter weather for me this year (although I certainly appreciate those things).

I'm hoping to experience a spring renewal in all aspects of my life — AND our lives together as West Branch Friends Church. I want green new growth in my attitude, in my thinking, in my interactions with others, in meeting new people, in revitalizing our faith together.

Rekindling, rejuvenating, refreshing, rejoicing — these are the words resounding in my head right now. As you know, we spent some time together at the end of 2022 in listening sessions on Sunday mornings. We talked about our identity as a Friends meeting here in West Branch, and what that means to us. We talked about the things that are most important to us in being “church”. We talked about the things we treasure and value, and the struggles that we each (and collectively) face.

Now I think it's time to us to consider our purpose here in this place in this time. Let's listen for what Spirit has to say, let's listen to our wider community, and let's listen once again to each other as we discern what we should be about as this particular group of gathered Quakers.

Do you have thoughts or ideas you'd like to share? I'd like to hear them! Do you have knowledge of needs or do you have a particular cause or work that you think needs to be addressed in our world? If so, I'd like to hear it! Quite simply, what's on your heart? I would most certainly like to hear about that!

I hope we can prayerfully grow together — in our faith, in building community, in helping one another, in living the life God has called us to in this place. What does that look like to you?

In Riotous Joy,

*Pastor Chris*

I hope you are enjoying the return of this favorite “column” — Which West Branch Friend Am I? I will invite a F/friend each month to answer a few simple questions. See if you can guess who it is simply by their statements. (The answer will be included on the last page of the newsletter). Keep your eyes/ears open — I may call on you next!

## Which West Branch Friend Am I?

My favorite food is: **fried oysters**

I spent my early years in: **Philadelphia**

Children?: **Yes. One**

My favorite color is: **magenta**

My favorite hymn is: **How Great Thou Art**

My favorite non-hymn song is: **Coat of Many Colors — Dolly Parton**

My favorite season is: **Autumn**

My hobbies are: **quilting, reading, gardening**

The best book (other than the Bible) I ever read was: **Greg Iles’ Mississippi Burning**

The scripture most meaningful to me is: **John 11:35 Jesus wept.**

My favorite thing about West Branch Friends Meeting: **the hope that it represents for a better world**

WHO AM I?

## A Story from Our Quaker Heritage

I was inspired by our visit from Betsy Fry in worship this past Sunday. Kathleen Darling certainly does have a gift for bringing our history to life! Her children's message prompted me to think about exploring important figures in our Quaker past — names from the history books, and also names from our own meeting. Since March is Women's History month, I thought I would begin with a woman. Turns out the woman I selected just happened to be a leader in the fight for women's rights. I hope you enjoy getting to know Lucretia Mott.

Lucretia Mott was born in 1793 in Nantucket, Massachusetts, the second of five children raised in a Quaker household. While at Quaker boarding school in New York, Mott excelled both in her education and personal life. As a teenager, she became an assistant teacher and met her future husband who would support her in all of her endeavors. This was also her first foray into women's rights, as she soon discovered the wage disparity between male and female teachers. Mott and her family moved to Philadelphia in 1809, where her work truly began in earnest. She and husband James also raised six children.

In the 1830s, the abolitionist movement was not a popular cause — even in the northern states. In fact, it was commonplace to hear stories of mob violence against abolitionists. This did not stop Lucretia — she founded the Philadelphia Female Anti-Slavery Society. Five years later, she hosted the second Anti-Slavery Convention of American Women in Philadelphia, which brought 175 black and white female abolitionists together from 10 states. Protestors (17,000 in number) threatened their lives, burning the meeting building and attempting to burn Mott's home.

Mott's fight against slavery continued, but in 1840, her activism would adopt an additional cause that would change the course of history forever. That year, she and her husband were selected as Pennsylvania delegates to the World Anti-Slavery Convention in London. When they arrived, many of the male abolitionists refused to let female delegates into the convention, deeming it improper for them to participate.

Mott and her fellow abolitionist Elizabeth Cady Stanton vowed to work together to establish a meeting for women's rights once they returned to the States. In 1848 they launched a Women's Rights Convention in Seneca Falls, New York. Mott co-wrote the "Declaration of Sentiments" a purposefully crafted re-working of the Declaration of Independence.: "We hold these truths to be self-evident: that all men and women are created equal"

For Mott, abolitionism and women's rights went hand in hand, and she continued to fight for both issues. She became a part of the Underground Railroad and the National Woman Suffrage Association. She went on to found Swarthmore College — a Quaker, co-educational institute of higher learning—in Philadelphia in 1864. Swarthmore continues to rank as one of the top liberal arts colleges in the nation.

Mott died in 1880 at her home in Pennsylvania. She was 87 years old. Although she didn't live to see the day women won the right to vote, Mott is credited with igniting the women's rights movement and serving as a mentor to Elizabeth Cady Stanton, who continued the work after Mott's death. Mott stands as one of the most radical feminist reformers of her day, tirelessly pushing for equal voting, education, and economic rights for all who were disadvantaged and disenfranchised.

American author Susan Jacoby wrote: "When Mott died in 1880, she was widely judged by her contemporaries...as the greatest American woman of the nineteenth century."

\*Many thanks to history.com, A&E Television Network, The Library of Congress, and American National Biography for info on Lucretia.

## **BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS**

### Our Senior Friends

Larry Reiner

Lois Semotan

Fran Fritz

Nancy Stax

Maria Denmead

Mildred Torkelson

Darlene Baum

Pat Bradley

Sheila Tallman

### Joys & Blessings

Eddie is now officially on the transplant list

Erick is officially living with Diane and Shawn and going to school online.

Maxine's friend Kelsey had successful aneurysm surgery and is home recuperating.



Oh Divine Cosmic Mind  
Holy awareness in all creation  
Carried in the Heart  
Ruler of the mind  
Savior of the soul  
live in me today  
Be my daily bread  
as I give bread to others  
Help me grow in knowledge  
of all creation  
Clear my eyes  
That I may see  
Clear my ears  
That I may hear  
Cleanse my Heart  
That I may know and love  
The holiness of true existence  
Divine Cosmic Mind

### Requests for Prayer

Greg's mom Mary recovering from back surgery

Chris' mom Pat, needing surgery and unable to get on the schedule

Maxine's niece needing shunt repair

Joan's sister-in-law Marge dealing with severe depression, unable to leave the house

For all those struggling with mental health

For the on-going gun violence in our nation

For racial justice in our nation

### The Ecumenical World Prayer Cycle for February

**February 26-March 4:** Belgium, Luxembourg, Netherlands

**March 5-March 11:** Ireland and United Kingdom: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland, and Wales

**March 12-March 18:** Denmark, Faroe Islands, Finland, Greenland, Iceland, Norway, and Sweden

**March 19-March 25:** Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania

**March 26-April 4:** Czech Republic, Poland, Slovakia

## WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH

*Who Inspires You?*



## March Anniversaries and Birthdays

### Birthdays

March 11: Jon Tippin

March 13: Ryan Bowers

March 14: Rob Hinkhouse

March 18: Samantha Rozinek

March 20: Julie Tallman

March 21: Janet Espensen

Donna Hemingway

March 22: Carolyn Hansen

March 23: Robin Jindrich-Cecil

March 26: Otto Jeddelloh

March 27: Stan Hinkhouse

March 28: Ed English

March 29: Al Bohanan

March 30: Carolyn Meisner

**This month's mystery friend:**

**Joan Blundall**

## Upcoming Events

**March 7:** M&C 7:00 pm on Zoom

**March 12:** Daylight Savings Time Begins

**March 17:** St. Patrick's Day

**March 19:** Potluck & Monthly Meeting for Business

**March 20:** First Day of Spring

**March 26:** Special Offering for CommUnity Crisis Center

**March 27:** Humans for Racial Justice 7:00 pm

**March 28:** Stewardship & Endowment 7:00p

**\*Mark Your Calendars: Everything Sale on April 29 — set up on April 28.**

Gathering Music each Sunday 10:20 am

Meeting for Worship Sunday 10:30 am

Prayer Group Mondays 9:30 am