

West Branch Friends Meeting

October 2021

“Practical Reverence”



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Last night I sat miserably in front of this computer with the worst case of writer’s block I’ve had in many a moon. The newsletter was not finished, and was already later going out than I would like. The week had been filled with important appointments, tasks, and deadlines. The printer has not been talking to my husband’s computer, frustrating him, and making it necessary for me to print out any messages and work he needed for the week. My dogs have been paying me back for going on vacation ever since I returned by reverting to some former (I thought!) behaviors that are... shall we say... less than desirable.

So there I sat. Frustrated, tired, and grumpy. Already “blowing” a self-imposed deadline, knowing the dogs needed to go out (that had gone so well on our last walk — NOT) and other things needed to be completed before I could go to bed. I gave up. Grabbing their leashes, I sat out for the Hoover Prairie before the sun set completely. I was determined to tire them out so we could all just stop for a moment.

Trudging along, head down, wanting to get this over with, my dogs decided to teach me a lesson. My dogs have walked almost every inch of this town, of the park, of the prairie. But they greeted that path with joy. Nothing escaped their attention. Every smell, every sound, every movement just begged them to investigate — with glee. None of this was new, I thought, and yet... it was. I began to feel the tension ooze out of me. I lifted my head and watched the sun set. I peered in the wildflowers and prairie grasses to see what I could see. I appreciated so much the slight movement of air on the back of my neck in this hotter than normal week. I began to talk to Poppy and Boomer — “ooh what is that?” “Oooh what do you smell buddy?” They responded with leaps and wags and wiggles — so glad to hear a playful tone of voice. We looked like fools, I’m sure, but it was just what I — and they — needed.

I came home and read an article about wombats. (Did you know a group of wombats is called a “wisdom”? Doesn’t that make you just smile? Oh, and by the way, a group of flamingoes is a flamboyance. Say that in your head and see if it doesn’t make you grin.) I explored all sorts of strange things and topics and smiled and chuckled and improved my outlook!

Last Sunday we talked and prayed together about “practical reverence”. The mindset that includes not only gratitude for this amazing place we call home, but a daily approach of awe and wonder about what surrounds us. I am so grateful I gave up on this article last night and walked my dogs. And I am so thankful that they reminded me to practice what I preach.

Last Sunday in Open Worship, Mary Denmead was prompted to sing a bit of Peter Mayer’s song “Holy Now” which if you haven’t heard, I heartily recommend. It also reminded me of another song of Peter’s that speaks, I think, to practical reverence and getting out of our heads and business. It’s called “Yukon Sally” and the lyrics are on the next page. I hope it inspires you to dally a bit in wonder.

In Riotous Joy,

Pastor Chris

Yukon Sally — by Peter Mayer

Yukon Sally lives on the mountainside
Yukon Sally, she likes to mountain climb
She has a pack and an old canteen
A hundred little things that she has seen
And a hundred stories if you've got awhile

Helicopter Joe lives down the road a ways
Helicopter Joe flies passengers all day
Up to the highest peak around
Takes a photograph and takes them down
So they can verify their lofty claims

Chorus:

Joe calls Sally every now and then
He says "come on Sally, have a little sense
That mountain climbing is a silly waste of time
I've got a way you can skip all that
Get you to the top in minutes flat"
Sally just shakes her head and smiles wide
And says "I think I'd rather climb"

Joe sells rides to the hurried working class
They want sights and they want to see them fast
They say "this is nice and I hate to rush
But we can catch a bite if we hurry up
And maybe do the ocean after that"

Sally dallies in the scent of evergreen
Cools her feet in a chilly mountain stream
Stays outside when the sky grows dark
Walks in time to her beating heart
And meditates a moment at the peak

She says, "Joe, climbing is half the joy
You might reach the peak
But that's not the point"
Joe says "Sally, you're a mystery to me"

Yukon Sally lives on the mountain side...

CHORUS

BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS

Our Senior Friends

Larry Reiner

Lois Semotan

Marvin and Fran Fritz

Nancy Stacks

Ed and Maria Denmead

Mildred Torkelson



Joys & Blessings

- Ray Blue visiting and sharing his wonderful saxophone music with us in worship
- Jonny & Scott finding and purchasing the land for the Art Farm — a dream for 21 years
- Priscilla & Henry visiting and sharing a children's message with us
- Celebrating all of our elders — particularly improved health for Marvin & Fran Fritz
- The joy of gifts shared in worship: our pianists, special music, children's messages and Zoom hosts
- Celebrating all of our birthdays and anniversaries

Requests for Prayer

- Eddie Starr undergoing daily dialysis and plasmapheresis
- Robin's sister Jodi, fighting an autoimmune disease
- All those journeying with mental health issues, and for the availability and accessibility of services
- Diane who continues with cancer treatment — and all those journeying with cancer
- Erick, back home in Missouri
- Lisa's mom Darlene recovering at home
- Maxine's sister recovering at home

The Ecumenical World Prayer Cycle for October

October 3-9: Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela

October 10-16: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama

October 17-23: TBA

October 24-30: TBA

October 31– November 6: TBA

October Anniversaries, Birthdays, and Upcoming Events

Birthdays

- October 4: Jasper Alvarez
October 9: Chad Cermak
October 10: Emily (Hemingway) Kim
October 16: Brian Espensen
October 17: Benjamin Lewis
Lucy Hansen
October 22: Lois Long
October 25: Harper Kane
October 29: Andrea Lewis

Anniversaries

- October 8: Tony & Erin Senio
October 11: Judy Ellyson & Don Swartzendruber
October 15: Eric & Stacey Alvarez
October 21: Mike Torkelson & Mary Denmead

Upcoming Events

- October 5: M&C meeting 7:00 pm
October 12: Endowment 7:00
October 17: Monthly Meeting for Business
11:45 am
October 25: Humans for Racial Justice 7:00
October 26: Stewardship 7:00

Gathering Music each Sunday 10:20 am
Meeting for Worship Sunday 10:30 am
Prayer Group Mondays 9:30 am at the
meetinghouse

Worship Servants for October

October 3

Greeter: Stan Hinkhouse

Zoom Host: Lyn Kane

Facing Bench: Julie Tallman

Children's Message: Diane Painter

Pianist: Gwen Senio

October 10

Greeter: Julie Tallman

Zoom Host: Open

Special Music: Mary Denmead

Children's Message: Kathleen Darling

Children's Teacher: Gwen Senio

Pianist: Johnny Stax

October 17

Greeter: Lyn Kane

Zoom Host: Open

Children's Message: Gwen Senio

Children's Teacher: Michaela Wolfram

Pianist: Julie Tallman

October 24

Greeter: Carolyn Hansen

Zoom Host: Teresa Winder

Children's Message: Open

Pianist: Gwen

October 31 *5th Sunday

Greeter: Gordon Edgar

Zoom Host: Lyn Kane

Facing Bench: Julie Tallman

Children's Message: Sue M.

Pianist: Johnny Stax