

West Branch Friends Meet- ing

October 2024

“Season of
Change”



Friends,

We have been exploring themes of peace, forgiveness, welcoming all, and honoring all of creation and not just humans. Blessings, readings, music, and scripture texts continue to appear along these themes. They do my heart good AND provoke me to deep contemplation about where I am on this journey. This month, I would like to share a brief word from author Margaret Renkl. The following excerpt is from the book [The Comfort of Crows: A Backyard Year](#). This book has weekly readings for each season of the year. It prompts great joy and great reflection for me.

“Praise Song for Fingers That Do Not Form a Fist”

An insect, its name lost among those orders of creatures who number in the millions, has somehow found its way into the kitchen sink. This is not an indoor bug, not one of the ordinary housemates who dwell in the corners of the kitchen cabinets, beneath the unmade beds. How easy it would be to wash this bug out with the pasta water in the pot that has been soaking overnight, but please hold back. Surely the world harbors death enough already.

It's too easy to choose ease, too convenient to choose convenience, but try to take the harder path, for the harder path is not very hard. The creature scurries into the corner of the sink and tries to climb the slick walls. Reach toward it. When it climbs into your palm, gently close your fingers around it. Be careful to hold your thumb to the side. If you never close your thumb around your fingers, you will make of your hand a sanctuary. You will make of your hand safe passage to the world.

How often have I stood with fist clenched — perhaps without even realizing I was doing it? When has my response to someone, something, some situation, some word, been one of a fist — even simply in attitude if not physical being? I hope I am waking to the responses of my body and my mind and can begin to consciously put aside the fist — even in response to deep injustice. I hope I can begin to respond with the offer of “safe passage to the world” — creating sanctuary for all.

In Riotous Joy,

Pastor Chris



What in the world is Wild Church?!

Step into nature. Take a moment. Close your eyes. Breathe. Listen. Feel the air around you and the ground beneath you. Open your eyes. Observe your surroundings. The plants. The wild life. The land. Do you feel it? The life? The history? Your connection to it? Your place in it? The presence of All That Is? You are standing in a sacred place.

Wild Church returns us to nature as a spiritual practice to remind us that we are more than just a part of the human world. Contemporary life removes many of us from the natural world — perhaps especially in church. Wild Church is worship in and with the natural world and it reminds us of our interconnectedness as well as our commitment to care for all creation.

If you've been hurt by church; if you've never connected to church, if you are looking for something different than the church spaces you've found, we invite you to join us in connecting with the Divine in worship and reconnecting with the sacred space of our earth and all its inhabitants.

Friends of the Wild* meets on the **third Sunday** of each month beginning **October 20**. We will meet in the shelter at Hoover Park** at **4:00 pm**. Our worship will begin with this gathering and will include contemplative walks (by yourself or with others), land acknowledgements, care for creation, or simply sitting beneath a tree and contemplating this amazing place in which we live. We meet outside rain or shine, cold or sweltering — unless weather conditions have been deemed dangerous. All are welcome — and all means ALL. Our meeting site is accessible via the paved trails from the Hoover Library parking lot if you are experiencing any physical conditions that limit mobility. Questions? Contact Pastor Chris Humrichouse of West Branch Friends Church at 319-210-4038 or email: dea-conchris@peculiarpilgrimage.org

*Friends of the Wild is an environmental ministry of West Branch Friends Church.

**Meeting place for our first meeting may be subject to change. We will keep you informed.

***Friends who are already a part of West Branch Friends Church, I encourage you to invite friends, neighbors, those who want to care for and about our planet, and those whom you know that have struggled with traditional church settings and practices.

New Opportunity!!

Join us in the meetinghouse basement on First Thursdays for a new Ecumenical Women's Group. We will begin meeting on the first Thursday of November — November 7, at 6:30 pm. Don't like to drive at night or in winter? No problem! This group will also have a Zoom option, so everyone can join! We'll kick off our meeting time together by exploring women and feminine imagery in the Bible. We'll be using *The Women's Lectionary* by Quaker Ashley M. Wilcox (and of course many different translations of the Bible!) for this study. (And no, you don't have to buy a book — all materials provided!) I hope you'll join us for a fresh take on scripture, many differing views from many different branches of faith, and lively discussion about what it means to be women of faith today. No matter what church — no matter if you have NO church — ALL are welcome. Invite your friends!

First Meeting

Ecumenical Women's Group

Thursday, November 7, 6:30-7:30pm

West Branch Friends Church



Worship Servants

October 6

Greeter: Gordon Edgar

Zoom Host: Maxine Koepp

Special Music:

Children's Message:

Piano: Julie Tallman

October 13

Greeter:

Zoom Host: Maxine Koepp

Special Music:

Children's Message:

Piano: Gwen Senio

October 20

Greeter: Gordon Edgar

Zoom Host: Jim Glasson

Special Music:

Children's Message:

Piano: Julie Tallman

October 27

Greeter:

Zoom Host: Dick Hinkhouse

Special Music:

Children's Message:

Piano: Gwen Senio

BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS

Our Senior Friends

Darlene Baum

Pat Bradley

Maria Denmead

Fran Fritz

Donna Mortenson

Larry Reiner

Lois Semotan

Nancy Stax

Mildred Torkelson



Ecumenical Prayer Cycle for October

Sept. 29-Oct. 5: Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela

Oct. 6-Oct. 12: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama

Oct. 13-Oct. 19: Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico

Oct. 20-Oct. 26: The Caribbean

Oct. 27-Nov. 2: Canada, USA

A PRAYER FOR OCTOBER JOY

Loving God, I pray for joy to fill my heart this October. May I find delight in Your presence and rejoice in all the blessings You have given me. Let the joy of the Lord be my strength, lifting me even in difficult times. Help me to spread this joy to others around me.

“Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” Father, let Your joy overflow in my life and strengthen me in every situation. Nehemiah 8:10

Joys & Concerns

Jeff recovering from a heart attack and surgery

Anita dealing with continued back issues

Raghu as he deals with health issues

Elaine's friend Kevin

Maxine's stepdaughter awaiting delivery of her high-risk pregnancy

Traveling mercies for Anji and Michelle

Our country as we enter this time of important decisions in our elections

All those dealing with grief and loss

The people of Israel and Gaza as war continues

The people of Ukraine and Russia as war continues

The people of Israel and Lebanon as war begins