

# West Branch Friends

## January, 2020



What an interesting time we are living in! A new decade, a new impeachment trial impending, and a time of increased division, unease and distrust of those not like us, and an upcoming chance to be the first in the nation to support the candidate of your choice at the caucuses (you can be of either party or independent to participate – but you will have to register democrat to support one of the candidates for the next nominee since there are no contests in the republican party).

I've listened to the reasons over 80% of evangelical voters cast their votes for the current president, and they are passionate in their support. I've listened to the debates in the house for impeachment, and I'll probably watch again when the senate takes up the charge. But what I really never want to do is criticize someone for whomever they choose to support. Voting is a right – no, in my view an obligation - that each of us has to make our wishes known. My first vote was in 1967, and although I've missed a few local elections, I've never failed to vote in a presidential election.

So 2020 will be very interesting, and also very challenging. Will the United States find itself immersed in demonstrations like currently in Hong Kong, India, and other world countries if the November election doesn't suit the wants and desires of those of the opposing party? I hope not, but there have already been threats that exactly that may happen.

Jesus tried to change the political system in his day by offering ways for individuals to change their way of living. Love God and love your neighbor, He said, and then we can change the world. Unfortunately, there was too much power in the Roman rulers to let it happen. But if we truly want peaceful change, we will have to start with ourselves. What is my attitude toward those I don't like because of their positions on the poor, immigrants, healthcare? Am I willing to engage in conversation with those in opposition to my choice of leadership, understanding that peace can only come through cooperation? Because peace doesn't begin with the government, it begins with each one of us.

So go caucus if you can, support the candidate of your choice, and then start conversations with family, friends, neighbors – even strangers – and search for common ground – love, justice, cooperation, hope, and peace. It takes courage and willingness to be open to other's opinions if we are to prevent a world filled with hatred. Wishing you Light and Peace in 2020! Pastor Sue

# January Birthdays, Anniversaries And Upcoming Events



## Anniversaries:

None this month

## Birthdays:

January 11: Thad Piegors

January 22: Jonny Stax

## Upcoming Meeting Events:

January 06: Prayer Group, 9:30 AM at Meeting House

January 07: Ministry and Counsel, 7 PM

January 09: Crestview worship, 2 PM

January 12: 9:30 Discussion Group

January 14: Endowment Committee, 7 PM

January 19: Potluck lunch and Monthly Meeting following worship

January 28: Stewardship Committee, 7 PM

January 26: Special offering for West Branch Food Pantry

## Upcoming Yearly Meeting Events:

*See the information from Iowa Yearly Meeting further in this newsletter.*

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*Infuse your life with action. Don't wait for it to happen. Make it happen. Make your own future. Make your own hope. Make your own love. And whatever your beliefs, honor your creator, not by passively waiting for grace to come down from upon high, but by doing what you can to make grace happen... yourself, right now, right down here on Earth.*

*-Bradley Whitford*

# Which West Branch Friend Am I

## ??????

My favorite food is: *Lasagna! With lots of garlic bread!*

The best book (other than the Bible) I ever read was:

*I don't have a favorite, my taste in books is kinda eclectic. I do have two bookshelves filled with keepers. Some of which date back many years.*

My favorite hymn is: *"Will the Circle be Unbroken"*

I spent my early years in: *Solon Iowa*

I have *one* child.

My favorite color is: *Azure*

The scripture most meaningful to me is: *I John, 2<sup>nd</sup> Chapter*

My favorite season is: *Fall*

My favorite thing about West Branch Friends Meeting is:

*The people; they help celebrate the good times, and help out in the bad.*

Who Am I?

*Last month's mystery friend was Lisa Baum.*

# January 2020

# Caring Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>KEY:</b> <b>Birthdays #</b> <b>Anniversaries *</b>						
5 Sue McCracken	6 Stan Hinkhouse	7 Lyn Kane <b>7:00 M&amp;C</b>	8 Jeff & Maxine Koepp	9 Ruth & Jim Blayer <b>2:00 Crestview</b>	10 Regina Casco	11 Thad Piegors #
12 Roscoe Millett	13 Chas Haworth #	14 Diane Painter	15 Larry Reiner	16 Julie Tallman	17 Allan & Teresa Winder	18 Lois Semotan
19 John Yapp <b>9:30 Discussion Gp</b>	20 Micheala & Corinda Wolfgram	21 Deborah Dee <b>7:00 Endowment</b>	22 Jonny Stax #	23 Suzanne Wedeking	24 Mynor & Katy, Camila, Simon Meren Fuchtmann	25 Jim Glasson & Kathleen Darling
26 Barbara (Murray-Bechtoldt) Hatfield # WB Food Pantry Coll.	27 Jennifer Peck	28 Ed & Tanya English <b>7:00 Stewardship</b>	29 Gwen Senio	30 Mike Torkelson, Mary Denmead, Sam, Nina, Victoria	31 Ryan & Lauren, Ted, Ben, Lucas, Eli Bowers	

**Gathering Music – 10:20 am**

**Meeting for Worship – 10:30 am**

**Prayer Group – Mondays 9:30 am at the Meetinghouse**



## *Roscoe's Ramblings*

*(Reprinted from January, 2008)*

### *The Poet's Thoughts*

*The presidential election is nearly a year away  
But for weeks prospective candidates have been  
stumping Ioway.  
I'm sure their repeated promises have made us all  
bored,  
And shortly after caucuses Iowa will soon be  
ignored.*

*Now the joyous Christmas holiday is over and  
we've taken down our tree,  
I hope you have joined Helen and me in answering  
Salvation Army's plea.  
Shopping for gifts is something that we did not do  
well –  
We could not decide what size to get – medium,  
Large, or XXL!*

*And now the gifts and toys around the house are spread,  
And we begin to wonder, are any of them laced with lead?  
We stayed away from video games of violence, guns and such,  
Today in our world we have that stuff too much.*

*There are lots of GOOD games, another nice gift is a book.  
I wonder if anyone received an old-fashioned card game called Rook?  
Lucky us, a very nice gift certificate came our way  
That will make for us later, another happy day.*

*Let's focus on the true meaning the Christ child brings,  
And share our love and blessings as the world around us sings.  
May the Lord bless us all as we continue to celebrate His birth  
And do what we must to protect His beautiful earth.*

*May there be peace and good will in your new year!*

**Blessings, RM**

*(I found it so interesting to note the parallels between this poem Roscoe wrote  
12 years ago and our world today. The important things really don't change!  
SMc)*



*97 years young author Roscoe Millett*

# *January Worship Team Volunteers*



January 5 Roger Wolsey, Guest Speaker)

Greeter: Maxine Koepp

Facing Bench: Jim Glasson

Children's Message: Volunteer?

Children's Teacher:

Pianist:

Gathering Music: Jim Glasson

January 12

Greeter: Volunteer?

Facing Bench: Anita Starr

Special Music: Mary Denmead

Children's Message: Henry and Priscilla

Children's Teacher:

Pianist: Julie Tallman

Gathering Music: John Yapp

*As you can see, there are  
lots of opportunities for  
January worship help, so  
take a look at the  
clipboard and see what  
might work for you!*

January 19

Greeter: Gordon Edgar

Facing Bench: Volunteer?

Special Music: Volunteer?

Children's Message: Volunteer?

Children's Teacher: Volunteer?

Pianist:

Gathering Music: Volunteer?

January 26

Greeter: Sally Peck

Facing Bench: Maxine Koepp

Special Music: Volunteer?

Children's Message: Henry and Priscilla

Children's Teacher: Volunteer

Pianist: Gwen Senio

Gathering Music: Volunteer?

***Favorite Meeting Recipes***  
***French Toast Casserole***  
***By Hilda Bowers***

**Ingredients:**

- 1 Cup Brown Sugar
- ½ Cup butter
- 1 (8 oz) loaf crusty French Bread, cut into bite size pieces
- 2 Cups milk
- 6 eggs
- 2 t. vanilla
- 1 pinch ground cinnamon, (or to taste)
- 1 T. brown sugar

**Directions:**

1. Grease a 9x12 inch baking dish
2. Stir 1 cup brown sugar and butter together in a saucepan over medium heat until butter melts and sugar dissolves into butter, two to four minutes. Pour into prepared baking dish and spread a 1 ½ - 2 inch layer of bread over the top.
3. Beat eggs, milk, and vanilla extract together in a bowl. Pour milk mixture over bread in the baking dish, making sure all bread is absorbing milk. Sprinkle cinnamon over the top, cover with plastic wrap, and refrigerate 8 hours –overnight.
4. Preheat oven to 450 degrees; remove the plastic wrap and sprinkle brown sugar over the top.
5. Bake in preheated oven until brown and bubbling, about 30 minutes.

*(This was a popular choice at our Christmas Past free breakfast. The recipe says to consider adding additional ingredients such as blueberries, cream cheese, cinnamon apples, dried fruit, or nuts. SMC)*



## Prayer and Praise Notes

### **Prayers for our Senior members:**

Roscoe Millett

Larry Reiner

Lois Semotan

Marvin and Fran Fritz

Wayne and Nancy Stacks

### **Prayers for other friends and family:**

All those dealing with cancer  
including Diane, Sally's sister Sue, and  
Jonny's dad, Wayne

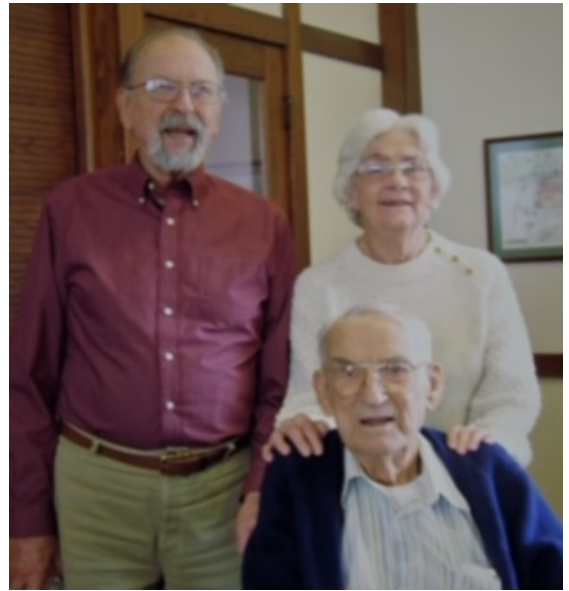
Scott's sister Libby and mother Pat

Teresa's brother Bryan

Mary's dad Ed

Liberty English and family

All others facing difficult health or family issues



Our seniors: Larry Reiner, Lois Semotan, and Roscoe Millett

### **Praise Notes:**

Families gathering for the holidays

Jennifer, Malia, Tali, and the Alvarez family's return for the holidays

Wonderful children's Christmas program

Beautiful warm December weather

Kathleen's trip to Alaska to spend Christmas with her daughter

Beautiful Christmas Eve service led by Jim and Tanya

Prayer of St. Francis for our nation and the world:

***Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love. Where there is injury, pardon; Where there is doubt, faith; where despair, hope; where there is darkness, light. And where there is sadness, joy.***

***Oh divine master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console; to be understood as to understand; to be loved, as to love. For it is in giving that we receive; It is in pardoning that we are pardoned; And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.***



# Iowa Yearly Meeting News

## Prayer Requests

- **Superintendent Tom Showalter** has recently been found to have an issue with his heart, which will require some treatment(s). This "issue" was discovered after an allergic reaction, which prompted a doctor appointment. More information will be provided after a January appt. with a cardiologist. Thanks for your prayers!
- Remember **Nancy Bontempo**, pastor at Sturgeon Bay Friends. She has been diagnosed with breast cancer. She will be continuing treatment in the Chicago area (Cancer Treatment Center).
  - Nancy has completed 3 of the scheduled 4 chemotherapy treatments! She appreciates the continued prayers!
  - She is scheduled for surgery in January and will have a round of radiation treatment following surgery.
  - She has a Facebook page (not sure if it is public or private??) she set up to keep people updated on her progress "[amightysling](#)"
- **Grace Showalter**, daughter of superintendent Tom Showalter, was recently found having a very low blood platelet count. Normal is 150,000-400,000. Hers began at 5,000:
  - **12-19-19 Update:** At our appointment yesterday, Grace's numbers have remained good (Platelet count was 298,000). We will not need to go back for 3 months to see the one doctor and 6 months for the other. Praise God from whom all blessings flow!

- Feb 22, 2020: **Quaker Men's Winter Banquet** with Van Harden (from WHO radio) as speaker
- March 28: **Spring Body Meeting @ Grinnell Friends**
- March 30-April 3: **Beane Lecture & Pastor's Short Course**
- April 4: **CQH Spring Work Day**
- May 16: **CQH Cookie Day**
- Summer Quaker Camp Dates:
  - June 12-14 Little Fry
  - June 14-18 Middle School
  - June 19-24 High School
  - June 24-28 Elementary

# F.U.M. Missions News

## Ramallah Friends School Celebrates 150 Years



Celebrations of the 150th anniversary of the Ramallah Friends School culminated this weekend in a Gala Dinner. [Friends there wrote about the experience on their website:](#)

*On the eve of December 6th, 2019, about 300 RFS community members came together for the final event of the School's 150th anniversary celebrations, RFS's first Gala Dinner. The dinner was organized by RFS' Communications Department, and attended by alumni, parents, staff, RFS friends, and Quakers.*

*Friends United Meeting General Secretary Kelly Kellum commenced the event with a period of silence, a Quaker tradition RFS has always held dear. In addition to Kellum, FUM staff members Eden Grace and Andy Albertini, along with FUM Presiding Clerk Ron Bryan, flew from the United States to attend the event, joining the local community in celebration—and fundraising.*

*All proceeds from the Gala dinner will go into the student scholarship fund, in an effort to entice the local and public community to increase the percentage of RFS students receiving financial aid.*

*For the academic year of 2019-2020, almost 17% of the entire student body at RFS is receiving some form of financial aid. For the academic year of 2020-2021, RFS aims to increase that percentage.*

## First Sunday Discussion Group

### 9:30 AM

If you have never been a part of this one Sunday a month discussion, I would encourage you to give it a go. For January only, however, the second Sunday (12<sup>th</sup>) will be the day we get together for coffee and great discussion. Here are some of the questions that were generated during one of our last sessions, and ones we'll be tackling this year.

### Spirituality

- How do I stay close to God? Prayer?
- What does God expect of me...of us...?
- How can we see God in all things and yet still be unwilling to protect the planet in bigger ways? Especially if we call ourselves a "Christian" majority country?
- What does it mean to live simply?
- If Christians are led by the light of spirit within (and a personal connection with God) why do we keep putting "ruling bodies" as authority over 'shoulds/should nots'?
- What do we do with the Old Testament?
- When/why did God change? Old Testament God seems vengeful and New Testament God is all about love.
- What past teachings should be examined and possibly rethought?
- Streets paved with gold? (Heaven) Fire and brimstone? (Hell) Curious about people's beliefs in a "place" - heaven and hell.
- How did the idea of hell become a part of most Protestants?
- How did certain books get left out of our current Bible?
- Who really wrote the books of the Bible?

### Quakerism-Iowa Yearly Meeting

- Will there even be a West Branch Monthly Meeting Friends Church in 10...20...50 years?
- What is the Annual Iowa Meeting?
- George Fox believed exactly in what?? (other than freedom)
- Is it the Quaker belief that the only way to have a relationship (personally) with God is through accepting his Son, Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior?

Questions continued:

- The history of our church.
- The history of Quakers: of American Quakers.
- Quaker stories from US
- More about queries?
- What is membership in the meeting? Is it important?
- How should we respond if someone asks us why we are Quakers?
- What is the history of “Breaking of Bread” in this Friends Church?
- Why are some religions focused on confession and communion (Catholics and Lutherans) for God’s forgiveness and what is the Quaker thought on these?

Looking Forward

- What does the future of organized religion, especially Christianity, look like?
- Friends General Conference...for us?
- If WB Friends leaves Iowa Yearly Meeting (IAYM) what happens to the church? Quaker connections?
- How do we as a meeting stay connected to other Quakers?
- Reasons to continue with IAYM?
- What are reasons to end our affiliation with IAYM?
- Ideas on how to preserve the history of this area’s Quaker background, etc.
- Should WBF go back to being a silent meeting?

*All are welcomed to come and listen, comment, learn, and ask even more questions!! Pastor Sue*

***This month’s mystery friend is Michael Conner!***