

West Branch Friends Meeting

August 2021

“The Rhythms of Life — and Faith”



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I’m trying to practice the rhythms of life that Jesus demonstrated. You know — one minute he’s teaching, the next minute, he’s praying alone. One minute he’s healing the multitudes, the next he has disappeared to the mountaintop to be alone with God. These rhythms, I believe, are essential to healthy living — and to healthy faith. Faith-based organizing and justice work is essential to who we are as followers of Jesus. (Insert ministry of your choice here — like healing, feeding the hungry, housing people, etc.) These ministries are nothing, however, if we are too burnt out and tired to continue. They are also nothing if we lose touch for the reason for these ministries — if we lose our connection to the Divine. We know in our minds that quiet time, rest, prayer and worship are non-negotiable. We also know that loving our neighbors as ourselves is non-negotiable. The key is balance. Finding our rhythm. Following Jesus.

In order to help me establish a good rhythm that I can maintain, I will be sending you all some weekly emails. One is about a mystic who helps us nurture our relationship with God. I call this “A Month with a Mystic”. (I just realized that in the last newsletter, it said this would start August 1, but that was a typo. It’s supposed to start Sept. 1!) You will receive some background on this mystic, a look into their faith life and a practice or two that you can use in your quiet time.

You will also receive an email called “Holy Troublemakers”. This email will focus on those who worked tirelessly to help their neighbors, find justice, encourage others and reform the church. You will receive some background, a look into their faith life, and a couple of practices to get started on the road to finding the ministry for others that you can call your own.

It is my hope, that we can/will begin to discuss together what these rhythms look like in our lives, and what we are being called to — each of us — as followers of Jesus.

Looking for balance? Looking to establish rhythm? Let’s talk!

In Riotous Joy,

Pastor Chris



September Anniversaries, Birthdays, and Upcoming Events

Birthdays

September 1: Suzanne Wedeking
September 4: Theodore Bowers
September 6: John Yapp
Morgan Draiocht
September 7: Brent Waters
September 8: Benjamin Bowers
September 14: Marilyn Vincent
September 16: Brantley Vincent
September 25: Lyn Kane
September 29: Geery Howe
Joseph Cermak
September 30: Caleb Dlouhy

Anniversaries

September 14: Allan & Teresa Winder
September 15: Dustin & Cassey Bowers
September 22: Jim Glasson &
Kathleen Darling

Upcoming Events

September 7: M&C meeting 7:00 pm
September 12: Monthly Meeting for Business 11:45
am
September 14: Endowment 7:00 pm
September 18: New Association of Friends —
Gathering for Nurture & Fellowship 9:30am-3:00
pm
September 26: Special Offering for WB Food Pantry
September 28: Stewardship meeting 7:00 pm

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

BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS

Our Senior Friends

Larry Reiner

Lois Semotan

Marvin and Fran Fritz

Nancy Stacks

Ed and Maria Denmead

Mildred Torkelson



Joys & Blessings

- Marvin & Fran's 68th anniversary
- Positive results in Diane's recent scans — things are stable
- Good results after Matt's surgery
- 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

- Teresa's parents with on-going health issues
- Robin's sister Jodi, who has an autoimmune disease; hoping her body will tolerate the covid vaccine
- 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
- For Anita fighting and pneumonia and on-going chronic pain issues
- Larry's daughter Lesley and grandson Corey fighting covid
- Jonny and Scott recovering from surgeries
- Lisa's mom Darlene recovering at home
- Maxine's sister recovering at home

The Ecumenical World Prayer Cycle for September

September 5-11: Benin, Cote d'Ivoire, Togo

September 12-18: Ghana, Nigeria

September 19-25: Argentina, Paraguay, Uruguay

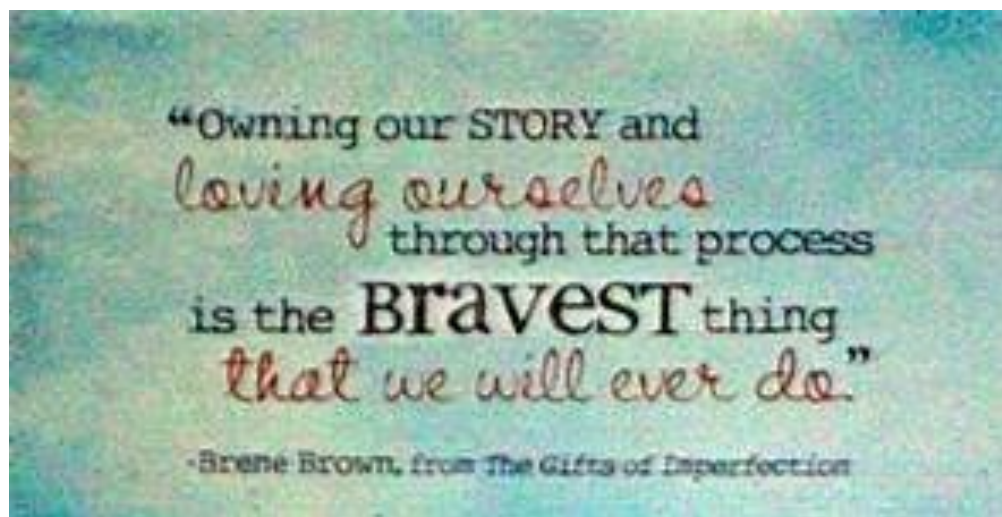
September 26-October 2: Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Peru

The Gifts of Imperfection

As most of you know, in August we embarked together on a “sermon series” about the Gifts of Imperfection — work by renowned shame and resilience researcher, Dr. Brene Brown. While I am working to get the full copy of each message posted to our website, I thought it might be helpful to print on-going practices that we each can use to increase our shame resilience. Listed below are some definitions of the gifts of imperfection, and the guideposts that Dr. Brown shares as methods of getting to the place of celebration of who we are and of not being ashamed. When we get to that place, we are practicing Wholehearted Living. I don’t know about you — but that sounds really good to me! Please look for the full copy at the website soon, and I encourage you to get your own copy of the book for on-going reading and practicing!

The Gifts of Imperfection:

1. **Courage:** “to speak one’s mind by telling all one’s heart” —ordinary courage is the willingness to be vulnerable/show and share our vulnerability with others
2. **Compassion:** “to suffer with” — this is not our default setting. Our first response to pain is to self-protect. We do this by looking for someone to blame. Compassion is not a relationship between the healer and the wounded. It should be a relationship between equals. Compassion becomes real when we recognize our shared humanity. We all suffer pain. Let’s meet one another in it.
3. **Connection:** “the energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship”
4. **The power of love, belonging, and being enough:** I am worthy *now*. Not *if*. Not *when*. Worthy *now*. *Just as I am*.



The Guideposts to Celebrating the Gifts of Imperfection

1. Cultivating Authenticity and Letting Go of What People Think:

Get Deliberate: Find a mantra, word, or saying that grounds you! Saying this mantra helps to remember not to get small so other people are comfortable and not throw armor up to protect yourself.

Get Inspired: Get inspired by everyone you know who shares their work and opinions with the world. “you have to be brave with your life so that others can be brave with theirs.”

Get Going: Make authenticity your number one goal when going into a situation that makes you feel vulnerable. If authenticity is your goal and your feelings get hurt, you will rarely feel shame. When acceptance or approval of others is your goal, and it doesn't work out, that can trigger shame. If the goal is authenticity you might feel disappointment, frustration, or even grief, but you will be okay. If the goal is being like, and they don't like you, then you're most likely in real trouble emotionally.

2. Cultivating Self-Compassion and Letting Go of Perfectionism

Get Deliberate: Check out Dr. Neff's Self-Compassion Scale at www.self-compassion.org It's a short test that measures the elements of self-compassion (self-kindness, common humanity, and mindfulness) and the things that get in the way (self-judgment, isolation, and overidentification).

Get Inspired: There is a line from Leonard Cohen's song “Anthem” that is a reminder when you get in that place where you're trying to control everything and make it perfect. The line is: “There is a crack in everything, that's how the light gets in.” Our imperfections are NOT inadequacies; they are reminders that we're all in this together. Imperfectly, but together.

Get Going: Wake up in the morning and use Dr. Brown's line: “Today, I'm going to believe that showing up is enough.”

3. Cultivating a Resilient Spirit and Letting Go of Numbing and Powerlessness

Get Deliberate: Use this wonderful intention-setting reminder inspired by Twelve-Step meetings. It's called the Vowel Check: AEIOUY.

A - Have I been **A**bstinent today? (However you define that — abstaining from TV binging, food Binging, etc. — anything that numbs you)

E — Have I **E**xercised today?

I — What have **I** done for myself today?

O — What have I done for **O**thers today?

U — Am I holding on to **U**nexpressed emotions today?

Y — **Y**eah! What is something good that's happened today?

Get Inspired: A quote from Elisabeth Kubler-Ross: “People are like stained-glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in, their beauty is revealed only if there is a light within.” Nurture and encourage your “light within”.

Get Going: Daily meditation and prayer.

