

# West Branch Friends Meeting

November 2021

## “Gathering In”

It’s that time of year — bringing in the crops, gathering in groups of family and friends to share in the store of the land and revel in gratitude for all that we’ve been given. It’s also a time to remember that not everyone lives in this state of abundance. Way too many go hungry. Way too many find themselves alone at holiday time. Way too many are sick. Way too many have strained relationships that either prohibit a visit, or make a visit a potentially volatile and hurtful time. What are the ways that we can “gather in” this season — for ourselves and those we love, but also for those whose daily existence is much different?



Recent hunger projects — the Hoover Hunger Project and the Boy Scout Halloween Food drive are two examples — shed light on the needs of our area and our world. All over eastern Iowa, food banks and pantries work hard to make certain that no one need go hungry. Countless numbers of us are working on access to mental health services, racial justice, economic disparity, climate justice, peace — all in the name of improved relations among all living things. All of these things are important to be working for in our neighborhoods and all over the world.

One thing that we can all address is something that is a bit less concrete — our attitudes and general outlook on life. Steeping ourselves each day in gratitude and hope not only make us happier and healthier, it stimulates the growth of compassion — compassion for ourselves and one another. One of my favorites — Peter Mayer — has a song that I try to play regularly this time of year. It helps me spend good time in these practices of gratitude and hope, and it brings me joy — riotous joy that I can’t help but try to share. The name of the song is “Bountiful” and it is my pledge and intention to try to spend a little of each day with the Spirit in Bountiful. It helps make me a better, more compassionate human. Will you join me?

In Riotous Joy,

Pastor Chris

“Bountiful”

You don’t just say grace ♦ before you dig in ♦ you stand and dance and sway ♦ around the kitchen ♦ and feast your eyes, astounded by ♦ what you’ve been given ♦ before you even ♦ sit down ♦ in Bountiful. And when you alle-mande ♦ with the pans and the cupboards ♦ you lapse into a trance ♦ and dance like a lover ♦ till dinner time has slipped your mind ♦ and you can’t recover ♦ like a drunkard ♦ stumbling around ♦ in Bountiful. And when you fold your hands ♦ you laugh ♦ because the words escape you ♦ so when you pray ♦ you shut your mouth ♦ in Bountiful. The harvest moon is high ♦ in late September ♦ And life’s in great supply ♦ of the sweet and the tender ♦ but it’s the whole ordeal before the meal ♦ you will remember ♦ if you ever ♦ make it down ♦ to Bountiful

# BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS

## Our Senior Friends

Larry Reiner

Lois Semotan

Marvin and Fran Fritz

Nancy Stax

Maria Denmead

Mildred Torkelson

Darlene Baum



## Joys & Blessings

- Katy's first semester as French teacher at Muscatine High School — loving her new job
- The opportunity to travel a bit and to see family and friends after being separated for some time
- New technology — sound and cameras helping to improve the quality of our Zoom worship and the tech committee and Zoom hosts for their dedicated work
- Priscilla & Henry visiting and sharing a children's message with us
- The gifts of pianist Elaine Wedeking who was able to worship with us in person
- The musical gifts of the quartet: Gwen Senio, Mary Denmead, Hilda Bowers, Sue McCracken

## Requests for Prayer

- Eddie Starr continuing dialysis
- Lois Semotan recovering at home after a TIA and hospitalization
- Robin's sister Jodi, fighting an autoimmune disease
- Diane who continues with cancer treatment — and all those journeying with cancer
- Erick, back home in Missouri
- Maxine's brother-in-law undergoing dialysis and his daughter being tested for a possible transplant match

## The Ecumenical World Prayer Cycle for November

**October 31-November 6:** Canada and United States

**November 7-13:** Oceania: American Samoa, Cook Islands, Fiji, French Polynesia (Maohi Nui), Kanaky, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Micronesia, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, Vanuatu

**November 14-20:** Aotearoa New Zealand, Australia

**November 21-27:** East Timor (Timor Leste), Indonesia, Philippines

**November 28-December 4:** Brunei, Malaysia, Singapore



## November Anniversaries, Birthdays, and Upcoming Events

### Birthdays

November 4: Isaac Scott

November 5: Peter Espensen

November 7: Si'iva Senio

November 10: Theresa Arn

November 13: Anji Hinkhouse

November 14: Ruthie Tippin

November 15: Linzee Espensen

November 16: Camilla Meren-  
Fuchtman

November 19: Tyler Cermak

November 20: Mike Torkelson

November 21: Alisha Jeddelloh  
David Ray

November 27: Maxine Koepp

Malia Senio

### Upcoming Events

November 2: M&C meeting 7:00 pm

November 9: Endowment 7:00 pm

November 21: MMFBWATB 11:45 am

November 23: Stewardship 7:00 pm

November 25: **Happy Thanksgiving!**

November 28: Special Offering for  
CommUnity Crisis Center

November 30: Trustees 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

## ***The Daily Examen — In the Manner of Friends?***

*As Spiritual Director of the Jesuits, St. Ignatius of Loyola taught a spiritual practice referred to as the Daily Examen. It is an opportunity to sit with the Spirit and reflect on our day. The “steps” are as follows:*

**Give thanks:** Begin by expressing gratitude for things in your day. Let your mind wander as you reflect on the ways God has blessed you on this particular day — big and small.

**Ask for the Spirit:** Next, we want to look at the moments in my day when we did not act quite as we would like. Before doing so, ask God to fill us with God’s Spirit so that Spirit can lead us through our soul-searching.

**Review and recognize mistakes:** Look back at the day and ask Spirit to point out moments that were not handled in the manner we might wish.

**Ask for forgiveness and healing:**

**Pray about the next day:** Ask God to show you how tomorrow might go. Imagine the things you’ll be doing, the people you’ll see and the decisions you may be mulling over.

This is a great practice — one that brings good insight and discernment. But it started me thinking... what if I tried the Daily Examen with a more “Quaker lens”? As someone who is becoming a Friend, this practice is proving helpful to me. Here are the “steps” I’m trying out:

**Ask for the Spirit:** Center down and wait in silence for the Spirit to speak.

**Review the day**

**Listen for how I have lived this day according to the tenets of our faith:** I use SPICES (Simplicity, Peace, Integrity, Community, Equality, Stewardship) in this step. Usually, I pray/reflect on one each day, but you could review how you lived each of these in a single day.

**Give thanks and ask for forgiveness for stumbles**

**Pray about the next day**

Since I am using this practice at the end of my day, I try to close with a quick check to see if my heart is truly free, or if there’s more to examine. Sometimes, that’s a simple query, sometimes I need a spoken “closing” prayer to truly shut down the process and sleep. Experiment and see how this practice can bring closure to your day and a peaceful night’s rest.

I would love to hear how this goes for you! Drop me a line at [deaconchris@peculiarpilgrimage.org](mailto:deaconchris@peculiarpilgrimage.org)