

West Branch Friends Meeting

May 2024

“Living in Eastertide”

“Easter rolls the stone — and nothing can be shut anymore!”

— Maren C. Tirabassi

Branches of faith that follow a liturgical calendar know (or think they know) that Easter is not just a day, but a season. Usually referred to as “Eastertide” this is the season between Easter Sunday and Pentecost (the gift of the Holy Spirit and the “birth” of the church).

However, I don’t think you need to observe a liturgical calendar to observe, participate — or better yet — get caught up in Eastertide. To me, Eastertide is the understanding that new life is always possible. Living in Eastertide, for me, means going through this life — and this world — with open hearts, open minds, open ears and open doors. All the time. Not just for a day, or even just for a season. I want to be an Easter person all the time!

One of the resources that helps me stay in touch with this is a blog I follow called “The Listening Church”. It has helped me remain in the mindset of being the church rather than attending church. This week, that blog has really captured my attention and I am doing a lot of pondering, praying, and listening for Spirit around the subject matter. I have copied it into our newsletter this month (it’s on the next page). I hope you will read it. I hope you will ponder it in your own way and in your own time. And then, I hope you will share the thoughts and feelings and hopes that it conjures up for you. Drop me a line at deaconchris@peculiarpilgrimage.org or give me a call at 319-210-4038; or let’s have coffee (tea for me!). I would love to hear what’s on your hearts and minds and your hopes for our meeting.

In Riotous Joy,

Pastor Chris



The Listening Church

Listen to God. Listen to Your Neighbor.

Empathetic Design

Luke S. Edwards

A few years back, a church in the Western NC Conference was hoping their dinner church could connect with more neighbors. They set aside a day to prayer walk the neighborhood. When they wrapped up they noted that most of the immediate neighbors of the church were businesses that were open 8am-5pm. Their dinner church met at 6pm. They switched the next dinner church to noon (I guess it was a lunch church now) and their numbers jumped up. By walking the neighborhood, they were able to put themselves in their neighbors' shoes. — and realized they were work shoes.

What is Empathetic Design?

Empathetic design (also known as empathic design) is the process of deepening your understanding of your users' feelings and needs so that you can improve our product. It requires setting aside your own opinions and being open to hearing another perspective. A book published by the University of Art and Design Helsinki argues this:

“In empathic design, the designer has to go through some degree of role immersion, and an attempt to seriously keep her data-inspired imagination in check with empirical data. Research inevitably inspires her, but her research creates more than inspiration: it also creates an empathic understanding that helps her to choose between hunches and concepts.”

All of this research gets us insight into the users' perspective and allows us to design something they would be interested in.

Conclusion

In my experience with church leadership, we design church with our current members in mind, but rarely consider those who are not yet a part of our church. What would happen if we prioritized our neighbors in the design of our properties, our calendars, and our budgets? It could be transformational. One thing is for sure, this shift would require a great deal of listening.

BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS

Our Senior Friends

Darlene Baum

Pat Bradley

Maria Denmead

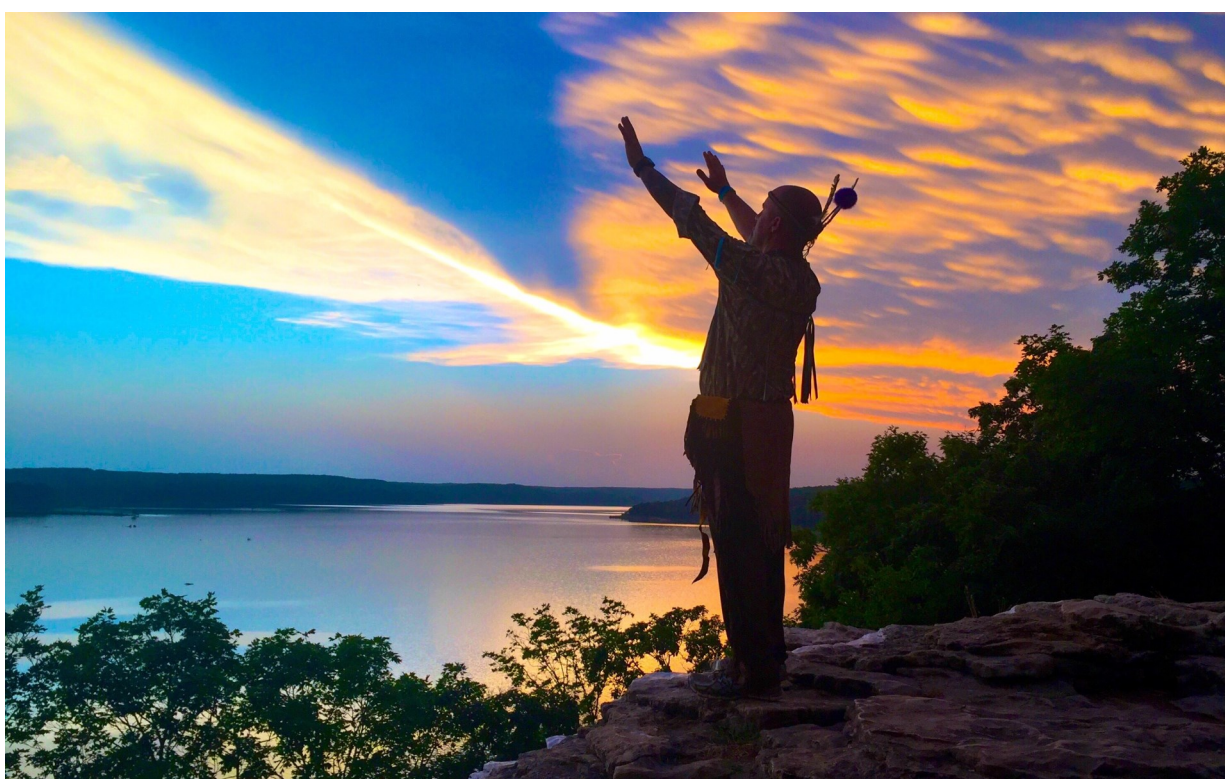
Fran Fritz

Donna Mortenson

Larry Reiner

Lois Semotan

Nancy Stax



A Prayer for May

MAY PEACE PREVAIL ON EARTH

We are thankful for the start of a new month! We come to you and ask your blessing upon the month of May. May we see each good thing as a gift from you. May we embrace the new opportunities you give us, and serve you with great devotion. Amen.

Joys & Concerns

Allan has finished chemo!

Diane, who has stopped treatment and entered hospice care

Erick and Shawn as they care for Diane

Lois, in hospice care

Joan, recovering at home after surgery and rehab

Lyn, awaiting appointment with liver specialist

Raghu as he deals with health issues

Elaine's friend Kevin

The people of Israel and Gaza as war continues

The people of Ukraine and Russia as war continues

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle for April

April 28-May 4: Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan

May 5-May 11: India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka

May 12-May 18: Bangladesh, Bhutan, Nepal

May 19-May 25: Indian Ocean Islands: Comoros, Madagascar, Maldives, Mauritius, Seychelles

May 26– June 1: Angola, Mozambique



April Anniversaries and Birthdays

Birthdays

May 1: Blake Winder

May 4: Elaine Wedeking

May 11: Mary Denmead

May 15: Anita Starr

May 16: Bob Arn

May 17: Gordon Edgar

May 18: Wade Bowers

May 21: Sally Peck

May 27: Henry Alvarez

May 28: Lauren Bowers

Anniversaries

May 18: Lucy Hansen & Jim Kasper

May 21: Robin Jindrich & Mike Cecil

Upcoming Events

May 7: M&C 7:00 pm

May 12 Mother's Day

May 14: Endowment

May 19: Potluck & Monthly Meeting for Business

May 26: Special Offering for Operation Backpack Program

May 27: Memorial Day

Gathering Music each Sunday 10:20 am

Meeting for Worship Sunday 10:30 am

Prayer Group Mondays 9:30 am