

# West Branch Friends Church

November 2024

*He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you?*

*To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God. Micah 6:8*

So, how are we to do this and be God's church in the world? As our banner out front proclaims: "Protect the environment. Care for the poor. Forgive often. Reject racism. Fight for the powerless. Share earthly and spiritual resources. Embrace diversity. Love God. Enjoy this life!" A tall order, but one we embrace as best we can with God's guidance and strength!

We meet in joyful worship on Sundays at 10:30 AM in person and on Zoom. We share a call to worship, announcements, welcome our Zoom folks, enjoy hymn singing with the piano, scripture, a children's message, sharing of joys and concerns, and open worship after the manner of Friends. Pastor Chris brings inspirational and challenging messages. We have also enjoyed messages from our own Sue McCracken, Julie Tallman, and from Conservative Friend Geery Howe. This year we have also savored special music from Gwen Senio, Julie Tallman, Elaine Wedeking, Mary Denmead, Nina Torkelson, Lucas McCracken, and Jim Glasson.

Our prayer group meets faithfully on Mondays at 9:30 AM to lift our joys and concerns in corporate prayer. This was Lyn Kane's ministry as promised to Doris Hinkhouse years ago which we are faithfully continuing in love.

Pastor Chris provides compassionate care for all who seek it. She is also starting a Friends of the Wild worship opportunity and a women's ecumenical group (see detailed information at the end of this letter for details on attending these events). We strive to make a difference in our wider community as well as in the lives of our beloved members and attenders by hosting community events such as the Everything Sale, the Hymn Sing and Pie and Ice Cream Social (fundraising for the Domestic Violence Intervention Program) as part of Hoover Hometown Days, and the free Community Brunch as part of the West Branch Christmas Past events. We support our college-aged Friends by sending Valentine care packages. Singers from our meeting joined others in the community in providing music for our citywide MLK celebration in January at the Town Hall.

We donate to many Friends organizations, as well as special collections for CommUnity in Iowa City (which maintains a food bank and offers crisis intervention for individuals and families in need), the West Branch/Paws Food Pantry, our Love Fund, and the Domestic Violence Intervention Program which covers our eight county area. We were pleased to be able to offer the Peace Scholarship and the James Thompson Scholarship to Nina Torkelson, a member of the congregation.

We were grateful to be invited by West Branch Conservative Friends to observe and participate in an Arapaho ceremony at the West Branch Cemetery in honor of two American Indian youth who died while at the West Branch Industrial School many years ago while under the care of Friends. We are glad to support Mary Denmead of our meeting who will be joining Friends Bringing Hope in February as they work with widows in Kenya who are rebuilding their houses and lives.

We greatly grieve the passing this year of Diane Painter, Stan Hinkhouse, and Lyn Kane. Our hearts go out to their families and friends who mourn their loss. We miss Diane's artistry and her passion for life, Stan's quiet (yet colorful!) presence and faithfulness, and Lyn's card ministry and her deep care for others. We are reminded with their passing to be grateful for each day given to us.

As members of the Society of Friends in our sometimes contentious world we continue to work to be living examples of the historic Quaker testimonies of simplicity, peace, integrity, community, equality and stewardship (SPICES). We do enjoy hearing from Friends all over the world and hope that you will join us for worship in person or via Zoom. As we say in closing at the end of worship every Sunday, "God is love, all the time, and all the time, God is love."

Gwen Senio, Monthly Meeting Clerk  
Maxine Koepp, Ministry and Council Clerk

## **Mark Your Calendar!**

**Sunday Worship:** 10:30 AM Central Time, Zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83099850145>

**Friends of the Wild:** Held outside, contact Pastor Chris Humrichouse at [deaconchris411@gmail.com](mailto:deaconchris411@gmail.com) for details on location and schedule

**Ecumenical Women's Group:** First Thursday of every month at 6:30 PM Central Time, contact Pastor Chris Humrichouse for Zoom link

## **CHRISTMAS EVENTS:**

*December 6<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM:* Bells and Voices of Christmas, in the Meeting House; Zoom option will be available: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83099850145>

*December 7<sup>th</sup> from 10 AM until the food runs out!:* Community Christmas Brunch

*December 22<sup>nd</sup> at 5 PM:* Christmas Program, with soup supper and fellowship following the program. Zoom option will be available: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83099850145>

## ***Contributions to the Meeting***

Contributions can be made to the meeting in the following ways:

By mail:

West Branch Friends Church  
P.O. Box 153  
West Branch, IA 52358

Online:

<https://givebutter.com/tjP1g>