

West Branch Friends Meeting

June 2021

“Growing”

Ah, the “lazy, hazy days” of summer. Such a beautiful time, when it feels like we are invited to stop. To take a pause. To linger just a little longer than we used to. It is good, I think, to listen to that invitation and to give it a try. Slow your pace a bit. Use your senses more. Revel in the natural world, in the people around you, in a different sense of time...



Summer is also a season of growing. We are just wrapping up Spring — a time for planting seeds. We are several weeks away from Fall — and harvesting what we have grown. I know growing sounds like a direct contrast to the invitation I presented of slowing down and enjoying, but really, I think that just might be the best way that we grow.

A slower pace, sharper use of all of our senses, intentional appreciation for all that surrounds us, all of these can lead us deeper — into a deeper relationship with God, a deeper sense of spirituality, a deeper honoring of ourselves, our world, the people around us. We simply need to take the time. Intentional time. Time spent “doing nothing” may be the best time spent in all the world. Let’s try it this summer. Let’s grow our hearts and our spirits and our connections. Think of the harvest that will yield!

I leave you with a poem by Chelan Harkin that I’m pondering right now... not thinking too hard, mind you, but simply savoring as I seek to live life and grow my connection to spirit. What are you growing this season?

In Riotous Joy,

Pastor Chris

It's a Good Day

This life

is but one mighty day.

We’ve been spinning around the sun
dipping into darkness and rising
around and around.

In this one big, beautiful day,
of gathering love
in all its shades

we get to be both children
and elders,

we get to be playful,

we get to be part of beauty,

we become kneaded with meaning,

This one day is spinning us all

into lovers of this great light

that the immense brilliance of the sun

is only hinting at —

it’s a good day.



May Anniversaries, Birthdays, and Upcoming Events

Birthdays

June 1: Gwen Senio

June 6: Justin Kane

Mary Malcom

June 7: Erin Senio

Greg Humrichouse

Betsy VanderStel

June 8: Lisa Baum

June 15: Judy Ellyson

June 16: Tony Senio

June 17: Laura Scott

Keith Hemingway

June 21: Don Swartzendruber

June 22: Eric Alvarez

June 28: Mirri Glasson-Darling

Simon Meren-Fuchtman

June 29: Jim Glasson

Anniversaries

June 19: Jane Cadwallader & Geery

Howe

June 26: Ben & Judy Clark

Upcoming Events

June 1: M&C meeting 7:00 pm

June 6: Pre-Worship Discussion

June 13: Peace Sunday

June 20: Father's Day

Monthly Meeting for Business 11:45 am

June 22: Stewardship meeting 7:00 pm

June 27: Special Offering for DVIP

June 29: Trustees Meeting 7:00 pm

Gathering Music each Sunday 10:25 am

Meeting for² Worship Sunday 10:30 am

Prayer Group Mondays 9:30 am at the meetinghouse

Meet Our New Friends!

This month's new friend: Robin Jindrich

Robin Jindrich has lived in West Branch her entire life. In fact, she has lived in the same place in West Branch her entire life (3 miles north of town). Except... except for a “short stint” (a few months) in town. Life was too noisy “in town” in West Branch, keeping Robin awake at night. So, she moved back to that spot 3 miles north and built her house next to her parents on the family farm. They all still live there today. Robin appreciates living out on the farm surrounded with folks who get the wonderful “little things” about living where they do.

Robin's work life has also been incredibly stable. She has been with Pearson Education for over 30 years. Like most of us, she has been working at home for the past year, and is hopeful that working at home will continue, even as the business opens up again post-Covid.

Robin has known some of the Friends at West Branch her entire life. However, she became acquainted with Jim Glasson through the Cedar County Democrats, and he invited her to “check out” the meeting. Worshipping online was actually a benefit when Robin first joined us. It allowed her the opportunity to sit back, be “a fly on the wall” and see what Friends are all about. Robin shares that she truly loves the opportunity for peace and personal reflection that meeting for worship provides. She is also thoroughly enjoying being a prayer partner. Robin has 1 son, and so she celebrates the opportunity to get to know two young women and shower them with prayer and attention!

Robin is active in several employee resource groups at Pearson focused on Diversity and Inclusion. Speaking out and fighting for equal rights for persons of color and the LGBTQ community are her passions. In her spare time, Robin loves to cook — especially on her smoker. She also enjoys reading recipe books and gardening — particularly planting flowers. She is a fan of NASCAR, the Minnesota Vikings, and describes herself as a diehard Cubs fan.

Even though online worship was a welcoming place for Robin, and a comfortable way to get to know us, she is looking forward to meeting in person, shaking hands, chatting, and most of all — potlucks! So, be sure to look for Robin when we gather for worship. Welcome!

BLESSINGS AND PRAYERS

Our Senior Friends

Larry Reiner

Lois Semotan

Marvin and Fran Fritz

Nancy Stacks

Ed and Maria Denmead

Mildred Torkelson



Joys & Blessings

- Celebrating the life of Roscoe Millett with a memorial service at the meeting house
- Moving back to the meetinghouse for worship and maintaining our Zoom worship
- Katy Meren-Fuchtman interviewing for teaching positions
- Blake Winder moving into his first home
- Lyn's grandson Harper using his new communication device
- Tom and Lois Long completed their move to West Branch
- New friends joining us in worship
- The joy of gifts shared in worship: our pianists, special music, and children's messages
- Friends helping each other in times of need
- For all those who have received their COVID vaccine
- Celebrating in-person visits with family and friends
- Celebrating all of our birthdays and anniversaries

Requests for Prayer

- Deborah Dee's Uncle Jim dealing with serious heart issues
- Lyn's friend Menouch with on-going health issues
- Prayers for Ben for finding a new place to live in New York and for a non-stressful move!
- For Addie as she wrestles with depression and treatment and for her parents Julie and Jim as they continue to provide support on her journey
- Diane who continues with cancer treatment
- Racial injustice particularly praying for Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders at this time
- On-going prayers for the Israeli-Palestinian conflict
- Mental health and the lack of funding for needed services
- Continuing gun violence in this country
- The smooth distribution of COVID vaccine

I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

Isaiah 43:19

Recently, our meeting voted to become affiliated with the New Association of Friends. I thought I would include some information on the association in this month's newsletter. Below you can find their welcome statement, and a history of the association, both taken from their website. I encourage you to check out the website on your own to learn more: newassociationoffriends.org

Welcome.

THE NEW ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS IS A VOLUNTARY ASSOCIATION OF MONTHLY MEETINGS, CHURCHES AND INDIVIDUALS THAT SUPPORT WORSHIP, MINISTRY AND SERVICE THROUGH THE CULTIVATION OF CHRISTIAN FAITH IN THE QUAKER TRADITION.

Our congregations can currently be found in Indiana, Iowa, Michigan and Ohio.

THE HISTORY OF THE NEW ASSOCIATION OF FRIENDS

Fifteen Quaker meetings (church congregations) departed as a group from the Indiana Yearly Meeting of Friends in 2013, and these fifteen meetings joined together as the New Association of Friends. A major reason for the formation of the New Association was that these meetings had a different conception of the way that authority should be exercised within an association of church congregations than did the other meetings in Indiana Yearly Meeting. The New Association recognizes both a legitimate role in the Association speaking for, and acting from, the combined membership, and also the freedom of the individual church congregation (meeting) and the validity of their prophetic voices, as described in Ephesians 5:21, where Christians are urged to submit to one another out of reverence for Christ Jesus.

New Association Friends are proud of their roots in Indiana Yearly Meeting, a church organization founded in 1821. In their earliest decades, many Indiana Yearly Meeting Friends were a strong part of the anti-slavery movement and other reform movements. Levi Coffin, known as "the President of the Underground Railroad" and a Quaker from Newport, Indiana, (now Fountain City), was a member of Indiana Yearly Meeting. In succeeding decades, Indiana Yearly Meeting partook in many renewal and revival movements, from varying evangelical, holiness Christian, and modernist perspectives. All of these spiritual movements also affected the 15 meetings that formed the New Association of Friends. The New Association of Friends has no creedal statement to which its members must adhere.

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New Association of Friends, cont.

It identifies strongly as Quaker, and it is a member of the Friends United Meeting, an international association of Quakers made up of 30 yearly meetings around the world, and committed “to energize and equip Friends through the power of the Holy Spirit to gather people into fellowships where Jesus Christ is known, loved, and obeyed as Teacher and Lord.”

One meeting that was part of Indiana Yearly Meeting, West Richmond Friends Meeting, of Richmond, Indiana, approved in 2008 a welcoming and affirming minute that affirmed gay and lesbian persons, among many others. Other meetings in Indiana Yearly Meeting objected to this minute from West Richmond, feeling it to be contrary to a statement of the yearly meeting as approved in 1982, which had declared the practice of homosexuality to be sinful. As Indiana Yearly Meeting wrestled with this issue, and, in 2011, adopted a process of “reconfiguration,” many Friends felt that the way yearly meeting authority was exercised was a critical issue. Some felt that a monthly meeting like West Richmond should be free to utilize its prophetic voice to adopt a minute on an issue where other Friends do not necessarily agree. The 15 meetings that joined the New Association, set off in 2013 from Indiana Yearly Meeting as a result of this reconfiguration process, have united around the freedom of meetings like West Richmond to be prophetic in this manner, not around the content of West Richmond’s minute in itself. There is much more detail on this recent history in articles written by Stephen Angell in the online journal *Quaker Theology*, issues 18 to 24: <http://quaker.org/quest/QT-Issue-list.html>

The NAF is also affiliated with Friends United Meeting, Friends World Committee for Consultation, and Friends Committee on National Legislation.

The World We Seek: A Statement of Legislative Policy by Friends Committee on National Legislation

We seek a world

free of war and the threat of war

We seek a society

with equity and justice for all

We seek a community

where every person’s potential may be fulfilled

We seek an earth restored