

West Branch Friends

December, 2019

Christmases Past

When I saw this picture recently, it reminded me of the past 69 Christmases I have been a part of, more specifically my Christmases as a child. I loved the lights and many decorations on all the streets and in the stores; I loved the smells of the delicious fudge, cookies, and other decadent goodies Mom always created; and, of course, I loved the anticipation each Christmas eve, wondering what new gifts might be under our tree when we ran down the stairs on Christmas morning.



I often hear others my age also reminiscing, usually about the things they miss about the past: the closeness of families gathering around the table for meals, the Sundays after church spent with neighbors and friends, especially in more rural, farming communities. And I wonder...was the past, as seen in this photo, really so much better than our current time?

I think about my grandchildren and how much fun it is to watch them grow and enjoy their Christmases; I think about all the conveniences we take for granted that have made our lives so much easier....microwave ovens, cell phones, heat at the touch of a thermostat (no more chopping wood, stoking the fire, etc.), and the ability to find anything you might want or need on a website!

So no, I don't want to return to my childhood days, even though they hold many wonderful memories. But I do want to create new ones, this time memories around things I might do to bring joy to others: a visit to someone who won't have much to celebrate if I don't share what I have, or opportunities to volunteer in food pantries or any other places that need extra help this time of year. So enjoy the past, but celebrate the present with all that life has to offer, if only we are willing to be God's hands and feet and do the work Jesus asks us to do - to be a servant to others.

Merry Christmas!! Pastor Sue



December Birthdays, Anniversaries And Upcoming Events

Anniversaries:

December 26: Ed and Tanya English

Birthdays:

December 06: Tanya English

December 12: Kathleen Darling

December 12: Larry Reiner

December 19: Dusti Cermak

December 24: Doug Rasmussen

December 25: Katy Meren Fuchtmann

December 29: Jane Cadwallader Howe

Upcoming Meeting Events:

December 01: Decorate the meeting house for Christmas, 5 PM; pizza party to follow

December 04: Bells rehearsal, 7:00 PM

December 06 and 07: West Branch Christmas Past celebration

Friday evening: Bells perform from 6:30 – 7:00 PM

Saturday: Free breakfast from 8:30 AM – 10:30 AM

Bells perform from 10:00-10:30 AM

December 12: Crestview Service with Ruth Blayer, 2:00 PM

December 15: Christmas program and Soup and Bread supper, 5:00 PM

December 18: Choir rehearsal, 7:00 PM

December 24: Christmas Eve Service, 7 PM

Upcoming Yearly Meeting Events:

See the information from Iowa Yearly Meeting further in this newsletter.

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"To the American People: Christmas is not a time or a season but a state of mind. To cherish peace and good will, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas. If we think on these things, there will be born in us a Savior and over us will shine a star sending its gleam of hope to the world." ~**Calvin Coolidge**

Which West Branch Friend Am I

???????

My favorite food is: *Mashed Potatoes*

The best book (other than the Bible) I ever read was:

Out on a Limb

My favorite hymn is: *"It is Well With my Soul"*

I spent my early years in: *The great state of Illinois!*

I have *two* children. *They were always embarrassed of me. I liked to have fun in costumes.*

My favorite color is: *turquoise*

The scripture most meaningful to me is: *Let today's troubles be enough for today.*

My favorite season is: *Spring...or is it fall? Both are wonderful!*

My favorite thing about West Branch Friends Meeting is:

A wonderful group of good people, eager to share their spiritual gifts and welcoming all.

Who Am I?

The answer is found at the end of this newsletter.

Caring Calendar

December 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Sue McCracken 5:00 Tree Trimming & Pizza	2 Alan Bohanan & Sally Peck	3 Ryan & Lauren Ted, Ben, Lucas, Eli Bowers	4 Liberty English # Matt Scott # 7:00 Handbells	5 Eddie & Anita Starr	6 Tanya English # 6:30 Handbells	7 Lisa Baum 8:30-10:30 Free Breakfast 10:00 Handbells
8 Scott Bradley & Jonny Stax	9 Diane Painter	10 Margaret Hurst	11 Jim & Ruth Blayer	12 Kathleen Darling # Larry Reiner # 2:00 Crestview	13 Mike Torkelson & Mary Denmead, Sam, Nina	14 Andrea, Benjamin Lewis
15 Roscoe Millett 5:00 Christmas Prog/Soup Supper	16 Ben Clark #	17 Jennifer Peck	18 Dick & Anji Hinkhouse 7:30 Choir	19 Dusti Cermak #	20 Gwen Senio	21 Thad Piegors
22 Lois Semotan	23 Bill & Hilda Bowers	24 Doug Rasmussen # 7:00 Christmas Eve Service	25 Christmas Katy Meren Fuchtmann #	26 Ed & Tanya English *	27 Chris & Jen Reece *	28 Tony & Erin, Si'iva, Kainoa Senio
29 Jane Cadwallader Howe # Spec. Offering for Love Fund	30 Carolyn Meisner	31 Carolyn Hansen				KEY: Birthdays # Anniversaries *

Gathering Music – 10:20 am

Meeting for Worship – 10:30 am

Prayer Group – Mondays 9:30 am at the Meetinghouse



Reminiscing with Roscoe

An interview between Roscoe and his pastor!

What is your favorite Christmas Hymn?

"I think 'Silent Night' would be pretty close" (and then he proceeded to whistle it for me :)!

What is your favorite Christmas Carol?

"Jolly Old St. Nicholas" is about as good as I can come up with. I don't tend to pick favorites, really....they're all some that I know and can sing and whistle."

Were you ever in Christmas programs at Springdale Friends? *"Oh, well, yes. There was always a nativity scene, but I don't remember what part I ever had."*

What was your favorite gift as a child?

"We didn't give many store bought gifts when I was a child, but Dad made me something – some kind of a little wheeled cart, a tricycle of some kind, all made of wood, even the wheels. I don't know how he made the wheels round, like they should be, but I was pretty young and that was something that really took my eye."

Favorite gift as an adult? *"As an adult, I've been around a long time and just having the family at home was a big deal. I think that was the best gift since our family got scattered, like when I was in high school; and just having everybody home was the best. Of course there were always ties, shirts, and socks, you know!" (said with a laugh).*

Did you always have a Christmas tree? *"We always had a Christmas tree; sometimes it was the darn cedar tree from the pasture or ditch, but we always had some kind of tree. The cedar trees weren't the nicest, by a long shot. Helen and I had about a six-foot high artificial tree about the last 15 years of our life together. Same one, of course!"*

What part of the Christmas Story in the book of Luke do you connect with the most? *"The babe in the manger, of course....the cattle are lowing, the poor baby wakes...no crying he makes. Just the calm setting."*

Do you have a favorite Christmas decoration? *"The star, of course, which is the Light which I follow."*

Do you have any good advice for the best gifts parents might give their children? *"Clothing and boots don't seem like gifts to a lot of kids, but warm clothing and boots – something that's useful and durable and will last longer than just through the holidays would be the best things. And give your clergy a hug!" (Said with a laugh and a grasp of my hand!)*

Christmas Blessings! Roscoe (and Sue)



97 years young Roscoe Millett

December Worship Team Volunteers



December 1

Greeter: Hilda Bowers
Facing Bench: Gwen Senio
Special Music: Volunteer?
Children's Message: Gwen Senio
Children's Teacher: Micheala Wolfram
Pianist: Julie Tallman
Gathering Music: Volunteer?

December 8

Greeter: Margaret Hurst
Facing Bench: Jim Glasson
Special Music: Bell Choir
Children's Message: Henry and Priscilla
Children's Teachers: Micheala Wolfram
Pianist: Gwen Senio
Gathering Music: Volunteer?

December 15

Greeter: Stan Hinkhouse
Facing Bench: Maxine Koepf
Special Music: Volunteer?
Children's Message: Theresa Arn
Children's Teachers: Micheala Wolfram
Pianist: Jonny Stax
Gathering Music: Volunteer?

December 22

Greeter: Sally Peck
Facing Bench: Tanya English
Special Music: Choir
Children's Message: Henry and Priscilla
Children's Teacher: Michaela Wolfram
Pianist: Julie Tallman
Gathering Music: John Yapp

December 24 (Christmas Eve Service)

Greeter: Sue McCracken
Leader: Jim Glasson
Special Music: TBD
Pianist: TBD

December 29

Greeter: Lisa Baum
Facing Bench: Pastor Sue
Special Music: Volunteer?
Children's Message:
Theresa Arn
Children's Teacher:
Theresa Arn
Pianist: Jonny Stax
Gathering Music: Gwen Senio

Favorite Meeting Recipes
The Best Steak Ever!
By Larry Reiner

- ***One porterhouse steak, 1 ¼ inch thick***
- ***Lightly sprinkle with salt and pepper.***
- ***Rub both sides with olive oil and store in a bag at least 2 hours before cooking (and could be overnight in the refrigerator).***
- ***Before cooking, rinse both sides of the steak and pat with paper towels to dry.***
- ***On a screaming hot grill, place the steak; turn after 4 minutes.***
- ***Closely monitor the steak and when the top surface appears to be becoming slightly moist, remove the steak from the grill.***
- ***Place the steak on a platter and let stand ten minutes before carving.***
- ***And that's my favorite recipe!!***



Prayer and Praise Notes

Prayers for our Senior members:

Roscoe Millett

Larry Reiner

Lois Semotan

Marvin and Fran Fritz

Wayne* and Nancy Stacks

Ed* and Maria Denmead

*recent hospitalizations

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Prayers for other friends and family:

Diane P., cancer treatment

Anita S., back and neck spasms

Jonny S., and Scott B.'s Play

John Y.'s nephew Steven

Lisa B's friend John R., cancer

Jennifer P., job opportunities

All those who will be traveling over the
holidays

Sue's friend Renee, surgery



Our seniors in worship: Larry Reiner,
Roscoe Millett, and Lois Semotan.

Sadly, we lost Doris Hinkhouse on
June 8, but we will always remember
her as our meeting's prayer warrior!

Praise Notes:

Wonderful family Thanksgiving gatherings; Ed Denmead is now in rehab;
Scott's show is a smashing success; Jennifer's safe arrival from Boulder;
wonderful music from the choir and bell choir; bountiful harvest; the joys of
Christmas.

Prayer of St. Francis for our nation and the world:

***Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me
sow love. Where there is injury, pardon;***

***Where there is doubt, faith; where despair, hope; where there is darkness,
light. And where there is sadness, joy.***

***Oh divine master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to
console; to be understood as to understand;***

to be loved, as to love. For it is in giving that we receive;

***It is in pardoning that we are pardoned; And it is in dying that we are born
to eternal life.***

Iowa Yearly Meeting News

Calendar of IAYM Upcoming Events

- January 25, 2020: **BOC Zoom Meeting**
- Feb 22, 2020: **Quaker Men's Winter Banquet** with Van Harden (from WHO radio) as speaker
- March 28: **Spring Body Meeting @ Grinnell Friends**
- March 30-April 3: **Beane Lecture & Pastor's Short Course**
- April 4; **CQH Spring Work Day**
- May 16; **CQH Cookie Day**
- Summer Quaker Camp Dates:
 - June 12-14 Little Fry
 - June 14-18 Middle School
 - June 19-24 High School
 - June 24-28 Elementary
- July 12-18, 2020: **FUM Triennial** in Kisumu, Kenya
(<https://www.friendsunitedmeeting.org/connect/triennial>)

Prayer Requests

Remember **Len Masselli**, pastor of Fairfield Friends Church. His mother recently passed away unexpectedly.

*Remember **Chip Daleske**, director of Camp Quaker Heights, as he recovers from a fall he took a couple weeks ago cracking several ribs, bruising a lung, and lacerating his kidney.*

Remember **Nancy Bontempo**, pastor at Sturgeon Bay Friends. She has been diagnosed with breast cancer. She will be continuing treatment in the Chicago area (Cancer Treatment Center). Nancy has begun chemotherapy treatments and your prayers would be appreciated! She has a Facebook page (not sure if it is public or private??) she set up to keep people updated on her progress (<https://www.facebook.com/amightysling/>)

Grace Showalter, daughter of superintendent Tom Showalter, was recently found having a very low blood platelet count. Normal is 150,000-400,000. Hers began at 5,000:**11-19-19 Update:** The doctor was encouraged by her blood platelet numbers (I believe they were 328,000). She will continue the two-a-day injections for another several weeks. The doctor lifted restrictions and said Grace could return (and was encouraged) to return to "normal" routines, etc. There will still be more appointments to keep an eye to see if other illnesses (specifically they are watching for Lupus) develops, but these appointments would not be as frequent.

Pray for the health of **Mary Glen Hadley** as she battles cancer
Pray for our **churches seeking pastoral candidates:** Bear Creek and Earlham

F.U.M. Missions News

A portrait of Nikki Holland, a woman with dark hair and glasses, smiling. She is wearing a blue top. The background is a soft-focus outdoor scene with yellow and green foliage.

Nikki Holland

Belize Friends Ministries Director

*Love distances anger; Love meets needs.
—1 Corinthians 13:4*

Friends
United
Meeting

Hello, Friends!

As I write this letter, October is coming to an end. My wonderful boss Eden is here for the week. We are planning a flurry of meetings and joyous conversations. We are getting ready for the bittersweet departure of our extraordinary Living Letters volunteers, Adrian Bishop and Rosalie Dance (bitter because we have to say goodbye – sweet because they will get to see people they miss). We are all well into the rhythm of the school year, and we're enjoying those few weeks in the fall semester between settling down from the many Belizean holidays in September and the impending excitement of Christmas projects.

In this moment, I'm sitting in my office, listening to a songbird twittering a melody over the bass line of an idling truck engine, punctuated with occasional passing vehicles. I can hear the kids from our school laughing and talking while they enjoy their morning snack (provided by USFWI). The window is open – the air coming through is cool after a much needed downpour this morning. My children are at their school, my husband is at home working at his company remotely.

Two things rise to my mind when I think of the month that has passed. One is the amazing outreach event that we hosted last weekend. The other is the work that Adrian and Rosalie have done. (Continued on next page)

Outreach Project

Oscar, the pastor here and my colleague at Belize City Friends Center, wrote an engaging and thorough description of the outreach event in his recent newsletter, which you can read by [clicking on this link](#). Here I will give you a quick sketch of the event from my perspective.

On October 19, Belize City Friends Center hosted an outreach event held by Belmopan Nazarene Church. The group came from Belmopan, the capital of Belize, which is about an hour from Belize City. They brought lawyers, counselors, a medical team (including doctors, a nurse, and a pharmacist), groceries, clothing, and shoes. The day ended with an enthusiastic streetside worship service. Teams of people went into the neighborhood in the morning to let people know what was happening, and a steady stream of people came all through the day to access the holistic services the group provided.

It was really amazing for me to see a group from a different city in Belize come to benefit our community. I'm grateful to them for coming and to Oscar for coordinating with the group for the use of our space. Oscar went out with one of the teams that walked through the Southside neighborhood to publicize the event. It was an unusually hot day, and Oscar told me that people in many of the homes he visited offered him cold water. "What could be better on a hot day?" he said. I love that our neighborhood was ministering to this group, even while the group was ministering to our neighborhood.



Scattergood Holiday Wreath Fundraiser

Our friends at Scattergood School are having a fundraiser featuring wreaths that are handmade with mixed greens and natural décor foraged from Scattergood's campus. They are 22" across and range from \$30-\$45 depending on type of ornaments, bows, etc.



To order on-line go to

<http://scattergood.square.site>

I Go to Sing By Lindy Thompson

I might be exhausted and the children might be cranky,
but I will be going to church on Sunday.
Don't know who is preaching, doesn't matter –
the sermon may be helpful or not, holds my attention or doesn't –
it's the singing.
I go to sing.

I get up,
get clean,
get dressed,
possibly get mad (at not-ready kids, at empty coffee pot, at traffic)
get going,
get there,
get seated,
get comfortable,
get focused

and when the music starts,

get saved.

It's the singing.
I go to sing.

It's the willingness to *stand if you are able*,
the common agreement on page number,
the voluntary sharing of songbooks with people on your row,
even ones you rode there with –

but most of all,
it's the collective in-breath before the first sound is made,
the collective drawing upon the grace of God,
the collective, if inadvertent, admission
that we are all human,
all fragile,
all in need of the sustaining air, freely dispensed,
all in need of each other to get the key right and not sound discordant --

Cont.

it's the hidden life-celebration
in the act of making a joyful noise,
all together.

We don't even have to sound that good.
Singing together still brings home
the *we*-ness of worship,

the *not-alone*-ness of life in God,
the best of all we have to offer each other.

When we are singing, I think that I might actually be able to forgive you
for being so terribly human,
and you might be able to forgive me
for being so terribly not there yet,
and we might be able to find peace *now*,
not postpone it for some heavenly hereafter
but live and breathe it today,
drawing in the grace of God,
voicing out our need and hope and gratitude and longing.

When we are singing, I can feel the better world coming,
and if I get to be a part of it, you do too . . .

so sing with me,
and we'll make our way down that blessed road together,
collectively better
than we ever thought
possible.

This month's mystery friend is: Lisa Baum