

OCTOBER 2025

NOTES FROM FRIENDS

The monthly newsletter of West Branch Friends Church



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Micah 6:8 NRSV

– **“He has told you, O mortal what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God?”**

This verse is very important in my spiritual life. I have recently begun an “examination” of how my life reflects these words. I am reflecting on my worship, on my spiritual growth and devotional life, my community-building, and loving my neighbor in tangible and active ways.

Will you join me?

In Riotous Joy and Firm Resolve,
Chris



Query for the Month

Simplicity

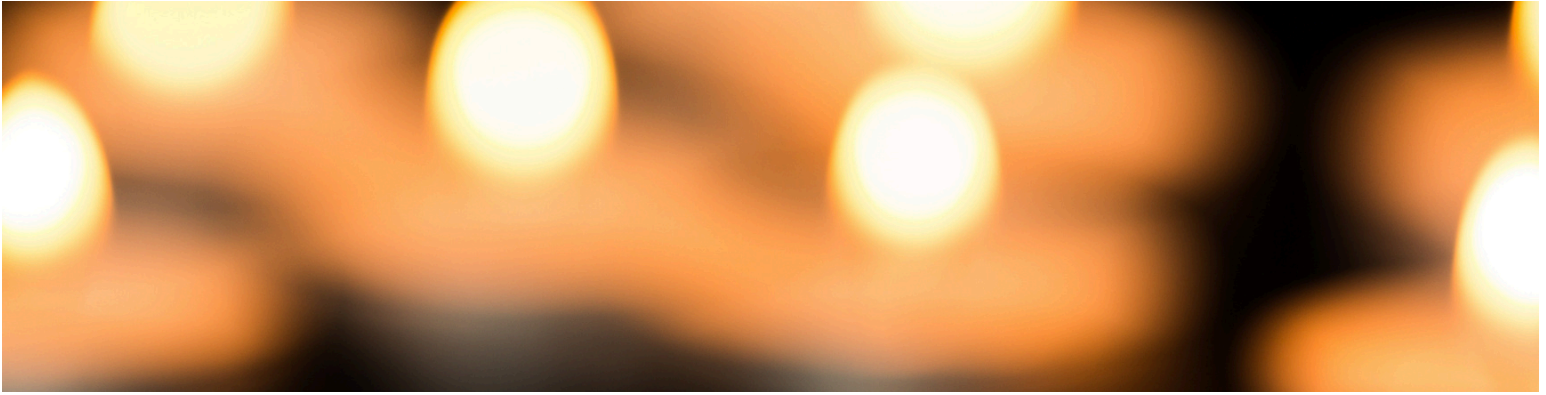
The Freedom of an Uncluttered Life

“Rather than ‘What is easiest?’ Simplicity asks, ‘What is most important in life?’ Once answered, it works to winnow away all that complicates or distracts from giving our utmost attention to the things that matter.”

Toward a Testimony of Simplicity **Questions for Further Reflection**

1. What obligations or distractions most interfere with my attentiveness to the presence of the Divine in my life?
2. Where do I spend most of my time? Am I present and invested with the people and purposes that matter most to me?
3. Am I able to say “no” when demands on my time or resources place me in positions that are untenable with my convictions?
4. Are my purchases based on need or driven by advertising? Am I most influenced by quality and value or status?
5. Are there segments of my life that consistently overwhelm me? How can I simplify my life with regard to their impact?

Time for Prayer



Pray for Our Elders

*Darlene Baum
Pat Bradley
Maria Denmead
Fran Fritz
Mary Humrichouse
Pat Langrehr
Donna Mortenson
Larry Reiner
Lois Semotan
Nancy Stacks
Mildred Torkelson*

Joys & Concerns

- *The Bowers Family following Bill's death*
- *Allan & Teresa as Allan goes through treatment*
- *Fran, as she moves to an assisted living facility*
- *Joan's son Jonathan*
- *Anita's Aunt Carol*
- *Raghu moving to Des Moines and looking for a new job*
- *Pascual Pedro, Jorge Gonzalez, and Dr. Ian Roberts and all those working to bring them home*
- *Ramallah Friends School during this time of war and famine*

Ecumenical Prayer Cycle for October

Sept. 28-Oct. 4: Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Peru

Oct. 5-Oct. 11: Colombia, Ecuador, Venezuela

Oct. 12-Oct. 18: Costa Rica, El Salvador, Nicaragua, Panama

Oct. 19-Oct 25: Belize, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico

Prayer for October

"Gracious God, as the leaves change and the days grow shorter, we give thanks for the beauty of autumn. Guide us to embrace this season of change with open hearts, trusting in Your eternal presence. Help us to walk in gratitude, spreading kindness and love as we prepare for the harvest ahead".

National Day for Truth and Reconciliation/Orange Shirt Day

September 30 is the National Day for Truth and Reconciliation in Canada. While this commemoration has not come about in the United States, we do well to take a look at the work done, and being done, by our neighbors to the north.

This day has been set aside by the Canadian government to honor the children who never returned home, survivors of residential schools, as well as their families and communities. Public commemoration of this tragic and painful history and the ongoing impact of the residential schools is a vital component of the ongoing reconciliation process.

Orange Shirt Day – also September 30 – is a commemorative day led by Indigenous communities to raise awareness about the intergenerational impacts of residential schools on children, families, and communities. It honors Indigenous children who were lost in the residential school system. The orange shirt symbolizes the loss of culture, freedom, and self-esteem that many Indigenous children experienced. This day reminds us that “Every Child Matters”.

I highly recommend reading *The Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Report* (Canada) as well as *The 94 Calls to Action*. These documents are life-changing and if the government in this country has been slow to respond to the need for truth and reconciliation in our relationships with the Indigenous people of this land, it doesn’t mean *we* have to be. These documents provide ample material for deep thinking, discussion, and calls to action.

Canadians view this day not as a holiday, but an opportunity. This day is an invitation to build relationship, and to continue the collective story on these lands in a better way. In commemoration of this day, and in recognition of our own needed work, I share the following list of books by Indigenous authors. They provide opportunities to hear a story, to understand an experience that is different than your own and different than the dominant story most of us have known all of our lives. I received this list from author Sarah Bessey. This is a list of spiritual books – please also consider exploring Indigenous history, poetry, political perspectives, children’s books, memoir, and fiction.

****See the list on the following page**

10 Spiritual Books from Indigenous Leaders

1. **First Nations Version: An Indigenous Translation of the News Testament** *and First Nations Version: An Indigenous Translation of Psalms and Proverbs* (just released). – Led by Terry M. Wildman (Ojibwe/Yaqui) and a council of twelve from various tribal heritages.
2. **Shalom and The Community of Creation: An Indigenous Vision** by Randy S. Woodley *and Journey to Eloheh: How Indigenous Values Lead Us to Harmony and Well-Being* by Randy and Edith Woodley
3. **Native: Identity, Belonging, and Discovering God** by Kaitlin Curtice. Curtice also has a new book which will release on October 7. It is called: **Everything is a Story: Reclaiming the Power of Stories to Heal and Shape Our Lives**
4. **Becoming Kin: An Indigenous Call to Unforgetting the Past and Reimagining Our Future** by Patty Krawec.
5. **Braiding Sweetgrass: Indigenous Wisdom, Scientific Knowledge, and the Teachings of Plants** by Robin Wall Kimmerer.
6. **We Survived the End of the World: Lessons from Native America on Apocalypse and Hope** by Steven Charleston (retired Episcopalian bishop and Choctaw Elder)
7. **Unsettling The Word: Biblical Experiments in Decolonization** edited by Steve Heinrichs. This is a collection of essays from more than 60 different Indigenous and Settler authors who are grappling with the Bible.
8. **Rescuing the Gospel from the Cowboys: A Native American Expression of the Jesus Way** by Richard Twiss.
9. **Unsettling Truths: The Ongoing, Dehumanizing Legacy of the Doctrine of Discovery** by Mark Charles and Soong-Chan Rah.
10. **Wearing a Broken Indigene Heart on the Sleeve of Christian Mission** by Carmen Lansdowne.

Events and Organizations to Note

Underground Railroad Retrospective

The Centerdale Women's Club invites the public to attend the "Underground Railroad Retrospective", a stationary "tour" of historic sites in the West Branch and Springdale area where local citizens participated in assisting freedom seekers along the Underground Railroad and other abolitionist activities. Docents in period costume will share stories and photos to bring local history to life. This event will be held at **2:00 pm on Wednesday, October 8th at The Black Rose Bookstore in West Branch.**

Wild Church Opportunity

Do you enjoy contemplative time in nature?
Interested in getting to know your natural non-human neighbors?
Looking to "re-wild" your soul?
Then Wild Church is for you!

Friends of the Wild – a Wild Church group - meets the second Sunday of each month at the Boy Scout Shelter in Hoover Park. Worship includes reflection, a query, and solo walking (or sitting) Open Worship with your neighbors in nature. We re=gather after Open Worship to share insights with one another. We look forward to engaging in service projects connected to this land we call home, as well as land recognitions – acknowledging that we are the first to live on, enjoy, work, and benefit from this place we call home. If you are looking for a different experience of Spirit, and a different experience of "church", we hope you will join us Sunday, October 12, at 4:00 pm – and feel free to bring a friend!

Issues with Immigration and Current Policy? Here's a Way to Get Involved

Escucha mi Voz Iowa (based in Iowa City) is a faith-based, immigrant-led community organization that envisions a world of love thy neighbor by building the power of working-class, immigrant and refugee communities to fight and win dignity and justice in society.

The organization is involved in a variety of activities and offerings including English classes, assistance with citizenship processes, human rights and civil liberties, community development, poverty, Know Your Rights/Direction Action Training, migrant accompaniment to immigration hearings and others.

Want to get involved? Check out their Facebook page or email info@escuchamivozia.org