



March 2025 Singing Tower

“Where You Belong”

Prayers Gifts Presence Service Witness



**The Newsletter
of the West Branch
United Methodist Church**

Our Lent Journey

When the world feels heavy—divided and uncertain—our hearts ache, minds seek peace, and souls hunger for hope. In these moments, while many search for a way forward, the bread of life reminds us of abundance. There is enough love, grace, and hope for all. A gift that Jesus gives freely so we may give to others.

As we journey through Lent, from the wilderness to the shorelines of Galilee, we will find the sacred in the ordinary— like bread, simple yet essential. Our Lenten Series, Bread of Life, highlights how Jesus fed people—not just their bodies but their souls—with good news, redemption, and stories of God’s kingdom. From wedding feasts to eating with tax collectors to feeding thousands, people left Jesus’ presence with full hearts and bellies.

The Bread of Life lives within us. As a church, we have come to know those elements as part of our ritual life of faith. Bread is part of church. But what is the connection between the physicality of bread and the spiritual preparation of Lent? Join us during Lent as we discover these answers.

Ash Wednesday

Imposition of Ashes and short worship service for All Ages- **7pm in the Sanctuary**

***Regular Wednesday night activities for youth group will commence following this service*

Lenten Study

I invite you to join me for a Lenten book study each Thursday during Lent. We will be reading and discussing the book, 'Cooked' by Michael Pollen (available on Kindle and in paperback at all major booksellers). We will continue the discussion on the connection between food and community, possibly sharing our favorite recipes each week (or as the group chooses). Begins March 13.

Contact the church office to sign up.

~Pastor Beth Graham



Lent and Holy Week Schedule



Ash Wednesday, March 5th Worship @ 7pm, WBUMC

Palm Sunday, April 13th Worship @ 10am, WBUMC

Confirmation during Palm Sunday Worship

Maundy Thursday, April 17th Worship @ 7pm, Springdale UMC

Good Friday Devotional Breakfast, April 18th @ 9:30am, WBUMC

Good Friday, April 18th Student-Led Worship @ 7pm, WBUMC

Easter Sunday, April 20th Worship at 10am, WBUMC

Lent Mission Project

The Missions Committee hopes to support TWO missions during Lent this year (Ash Wednesday Mar 5 - Easter Apr 20)

1. Heifer International with the goal to raise \$480 to purchase 4 goats.

The gift of a goat provides milk, cheese and butter for nourishment. On small farms, goats are often the key to a family's survival. This donation also funds training for their care, boosts income through sales of extra milk, helps produce better crop yields by creating fertilizer, and benefits entire communities through "Pass on the Gift" (the first kid is given to another needy family). This truly is the gift that keeps on giving. Please put in the memo line Heifer Int and watch our 'white goats' transform into 'brown goats' as funds are raised.

2. The local West Branch Food Pantry.

With area food pantries having greater needs and the freeze on grants, HACAP is not able to supply as much as in the past. WBUMC will help fill that need. We plan to use a Lenten devotional with a Food Pantry item each day to be 'given up' during Lent. Please place these items in the box in the back of the sanctuary. The Devotional will be available by March 2. If you would rather make a monetary donation, please put in the memo line WB Food Pantry and the Missions Comm. will purchase needed items.

A few of the most needed Food Pantry items are: Toilet Paper, Canned Chicken, Eggs, 1 lb pkg. Hamburger, Sliced Bread, Juice, Taco Shells (hard or soft), Toothpaste, Baby Wipes, Sugar, Laundry Soap, Ketchup, Boxed Mexican Meal Mixes, Ramen Noodles, Soup & Pasta. A more complete list will be in the back of the Lenten devotional. Please only bring perishable items to the church on Sundays.

Missions Committee: Bob & Rosamond Cumings, Connie Tisinger, Linda Albrecht, Barb Wilcox, Beth Johannsen and Shirley Patrick.



Ham Balls & Cheesy Potatoes



9x13- \$45

8x8- \$35

Just in time for your Easter dinner!

Order by March 23rd and pick up your order on Palm Sunday. All items will be frozen and ready to bake at your convenience. This is a fundraiser for UWF.

Table of Grace

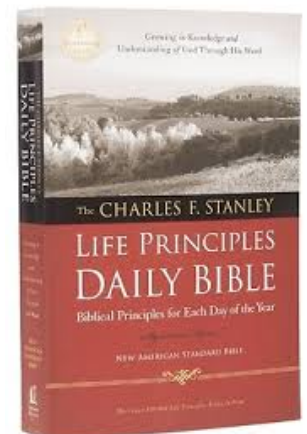
On April 27th at the Wesley House in Iowa City, WBUMC will be providing the meal for Table of Grace. A pulled pork dinner will be prepared at WBUMC and transported to Iowa City. This Table of Grace meal is provided once a month to the unhoused and those with food insecurities in Iowa City through this ministry started at Iowa City First UMC. Donations of hamburger buns, side salads, mac and cheese, a large bag of ice, baked goods and chips will be needed. Please let Ashley know @ westbranchumc@gmail.com if you can help with these items.

9AM SMALL GROUP

What are you doing right before worship on Sunday mornings?

The 9am small group invites you to join a new book study with them! They are reading Charles F Stanley "Life Principles Daily Bible" Biblical Principles for each Day of the Year. Meet in the library Sunday mornings before worship.

Coffee always on ☺



Wednesday Night Discipleship

We've been having so much fun on Wednesdays! AND the fun is only growing during Lent!

Intergenerational Prayer Partners begin on March 5th! On Wednesdays during supper at the card table you can draw/write a card to your prayer partner and pick up cards from your prayer partner. We're having fun getting to know our WBUMC family all during Lent!

Remember to pray for your prayer partner and write them cards through Easter!

Ash Wednesday is March 5th! Everyone is encouraged to come to a short Ash Wednesday service following supper at 7:00pm. J8:11 will meet right after service.

Also, during Lent, the WND students will have a chance to participate in the **mission project** that WBUMC is taking part in! Heifer International is a nonprofit organization that works to end hunger and poverty through sustainable agriculture. They provide livestock, training, and resources to smallholder farmers in developing countries. Each student will get an arc bank and calendar that they can use to remember to bring in donations each Wednesday during Lent. WND will be raising money for Hope Baskets while the adults will be working towards Goats. **Hope Baskets** include rabbits and a starter flock of chickens, along with training and education on their care to a family in need. Please remember to bring in your donations during Lent!

If you would like to help out with kitchen/supper help on Wednesdays please Contact
Jennifer Herring

No K4C or J8:11 on March 19th. Have a Safe and Fun Spring Break!

Wednesday Night Schedule:

5:30pm - PreK-6th Grade Class Time

6:30pm- Supper for ALL! (Parent Required)

7:00pm – 8:00pm – 7th – 12th+ Class Time

United Women in Faith

Mini Retreat on March 3rd at 6:00pm in the Library.

We'll be meeting on March 29th & Apr. 5th for Ham Ball fundraiser workdays.

Please let Katie know if you can help out!

Orders for Ham Balls are required by March 23rd

Good Friday Devotional Breakfast- April 18th at 9:30am

Lent Prayer Partners

Have you prayed for your prayer partner today???

Youth and Adults alike are having fun exchanging cards, getting to know each other, and of course praying for each other!

If you are looking to write your card on Wednesday nights, there is a card table set up in Fellowship Hall. The rest of the week, there is a card table set up in the Library. To pick up your cards, check the buckets on the card table.

If you have questions or concerns, please contact Katie Sabourin. If you aren't a prayer partner, please pray for this important ministry. Thank you to all who are making Lent Intergenerational Prayer Partners possible!

Contact Katie with any questions or concerns

Contact Ruth Blayer if you would like to volunteer to help at the Prayer Partner Table at Wednesday Night Discipleship.



Sign up for the adventure of a lifetime! Have questions or concerns? Ask Katie
[Iowa Conference: Camping & Retreats \(iaumc.org\)](http://iaumc.org)

Need a Space to Unwind?

You are invited to join us on March 3rd at 6:00pm for our mini retreat. Come open for some rest and cup filling activities. Please bring a reusable cup to be filled. Everyone is Welcome! Questions or to RSVP, please contact Katie Sabourin.

Church Leadership Nominations 2025

The Board

Pastor: Rev. Beth Graham

Chair: Ruth Blayer (2025)

Vice Chair: Nancy Lathrop (2026)

SPRC:

Jennifer Herring (Chair) (2025)

Jeff Johannsen (2026)

Lori Waters (2027)

Trustees:

Al Tisinger (2025)

Dennis Albrecht (2026)

Linda Stoolman (2027)

Finance:

Connie Tisinger (2026)

Gloria Scharnweber (2027)

Finance Secretary: Holly Searson

Treasurer: Ashley Kaalberg

Lay Leader: Barb Wilcox

Lay Member to Annual Conference:

Ruth Blayer

Alternate to Annual Conference:

Barb Wilcox

UWF/Youth Rep: Katie Sabourin

Non Board Positions

Nominations:

Pastor Beth Graham

Margaret Wick (2025)

Shirley Patrick (2026)

Amanda Rushton (2027)

Historian - Shirley Patrick

Mission - Bob Cumings

Resource/Asset Manager - Chris Kofoed

Ministry & Event Coordinator -

Ruth Blayer & Nancy Lathrop

****To be voted on at the March 24th board meeting*

WBUMC's Financials

General Fund Account Balance as of January 31, 2025

\$36,139.46 (Checking and Savings combined)

January

Income: \$19,406.00

Expenses: \$23,093.41



THANK YOU for giving to "Warming the Unhoused" of Iowa City! In addition to the items given in Dec 2024, the following was delivered last week: 1 pair insulated coveralls, 4 winter coats, 1 vest, 1 heavy sweater, 1 winter hat, 20 pr heavy socks, 15 fleece scarves, a pair of gloves, several grocery items and multiple totes.

ONGOING GROUP DATES FOR YOUR CALENDARS:

If you would like more information on these groups below, visit this link on our website:

[Ministry-Menu-Brochure-2025](#)

- LIFE GROUP - Thursday evenings
- C.U.P.S. - meets each Tuesday 9:30-11 am
 - Thursday Bible Study meets weekly at 7pm
- West Branch Seniors Potluck - 3rd Monday of every month, 12-1pm
 - Prayers and Squares meets the 4th Tuesday of each month at 1:30pm
- Mary/Martha Fellowship meets the second Thursday of the month at 1:30pm
 - BedMats meets the 2nd & 4th Monday of the month at 1:30pm
 - 9am small group meets every Sunday morning prior to Worship
- Sermon discussion group meets each Sunday after fellowship at 11:30
- Sunday Fellowship -fellowship hall after 10 am worship **ALL are invited!**
 - United Women In Faith meets the first Monday of the month @6:30pm

JOYS, PRAYERS AND CONCERNS

CONCERNS AND THOSE NEEDING PRAYERS:

Vincent family in the death of Nancy Vincent
Ken and Jan Mather and family
Mark Scharnweber health and chemo
Bette Potter adjusting to move to N.Liberty
John-(Bev Spencer's brother) loss of wife and recent health issues
Galen Patrick, Lynn's brother treatment for leukemia
Anne Weinard health concerns
Patrick family in the passing of Neil, Lynn's brother
Cousins' family member cancer
Maggie Mowery's friend Angela
Maggie Mowery and her parents
Todd Stoolman
Jodi Havill, her father & son Jordan
Sharon Castelda, Ron Cousins' sister
Katie Herring's health
Amanda Polson-Tinebra, Patrick's granddaughter

Those who are caregivers
Those walking the road of recovery
Those grieving for loved ones
Family members going through transition
Volunteers: school, community, and church

New members & Our Church Family
Students and teachers
Board, Staff and Pastor
Confirmation Students

OUR NATION AND WORLD:

Those affected by Natural Disasters
Those affected by violence
Those struggling with mental health
Missionaries
All in conflicts and countries in crisis
Ukraine, Israel, Gaza and Lebanon
Civil unrest in our country
Our National, State, and Local governments
Safety of servicemen, women & their families

SENIORS WITHIN OUR CHURCH COMMUNITY:

Crestview: Audrey Kofoed, Laura Slach and Dick Stoolman
Tipton: Clarence Crew
West Liberty Simpson Home/Heath Manor: Lucine Morrison, Ken and Jan Mather
Bridgewater: Phyllis Langenhan and Chris Rushton

Prayer Cards are located in your pews.

Please share your joys with us along with your concerns.

Be sure to note if this request is to be kept confidential or if you would like it to be shared with CUPS, Prayer Team and/or added to the prayer list.

Please have received permission for a name to be shared.

Contact Ashley to add and remove individuals.

All requests will automatically be removed after 6 months unless Pastor Beth is contacted directly.

Happy Birthday!

1	Rob Herring	9	Connie Tisinger	21	Kathy Knoop
2	Mike Andrews	11	Stacy Waters	24	Carol Jones
3	Mitchell Knoop	11	Joseph Heithoff	24	Linsie Anderson
4	Rhonda Myrvik	17	Karen Suchomel	24	Dana Shultz
4	Bethany Harms	17	Kelly Staker	24	Brian Neuberger
5	Tammy Mather	18	Gary Slach	24	Cooper Burger
7	Bob Shortt	18	Travis Wolf	27	Joey Fowler
8	Megan Hoffman			30	Kaleb Sexton
9	Audrey Kofoed			31	Kristian Nalan

Your Church Staff & Contact Information

Office #: 319-643-5489

Pastor: Pastor Beth Graham
580-279-2430

PastorBethGraham@gmail.com

Youth Ministry Coordinator:

Katie Sabourin 319-530-3963



Office Administrator:

Ashley Kaalberg

Westbranchumc@gmail.com

Music Director:

Maggie Mowery 319-321-5178

Or Visit our website at www.westbranchumc.org

OFFICE HOURS:

Ashley's office hours Wednesdays 9am - 1pm

She can be reached at Westbranchumc@gmail.com anytime!

Pastor Beth's office hours: Monday & Tuesday 1pm-3pm

Wednesday & Thursday 9am-Noon

In Person Blended Worship Service @10:00 am Sundays

Watch online live or at your convenience!

<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCMuP-ZY4cXONtAp5t6lHFkq>

WBUMC - 203 N. Downey St - PO Box 750 - West Branch, IA 52358