



April 2025 Singing Tower



“Where You Belong”

Prayers Gifts Presence Service Witness

The Newsletter of the West Branch United Methodist Church

The Beauty of Holy Week

Growing up, I don't remember the entirety of Holy Week. I recall the excitement of Palm Sunday, when a certain veterinarian in the church would bring in a donkey and parade it around the church as us children waved our palm fronds shouting, "Hosanna!" I recall the excitement of Easter Sunday...because that was the only Sunday of the year my breakfast was chocolate eggs. Finally, I recall the big flower filled cross my church decorated each year.

While I grew up United Methodist, I don't recall if that same church offered the typical Lenten services like Ash Wednesday, Maundy Thursday, or Good Friday. I don't even recall talking about the season of Lent or even the use the term "Holy Week". As far as I knew, Lent was a much bigger "thing" that only my Catholic friends talked about.

The first time I ever experienced one of the services was years later once I entered seminary. I remember going to my first Good Friday service and being in awe of the raw emotion that I felt after seeing the altar stripped, the last words of Jesus spoken, and the words of the hymn "Were You There" ringing in the sanctuary. I also remember the service ending in darkness, with no "hope" to be offered.

Was it pleasant? Not really. But it was necessary. More importantly, I remember experiencing Easter Sunday in a way I never had. What a celebration! What started as darkness and silence on Friday was now joy and light on Sunday morning. This is the beauty of Holy Week. Experiencing the journey of Jesus' last days on earth. Celebrating the sacrament of holy communion on Maundy Thursday, experiencing the darkness of Good Friday, and the joy and triumph that comes with Easter Sunday. I find that my own Easter experience isn't complete without the events of Holy Week that lead up to it!

Holy Week starts with Palm Sunday, which is this April 13. That week in worship we are continuing our sermon series Bread of Life as we journey into Jerusalem and encounter Jesus' triumphal entry. Additionally, we are confirming the faith of three incredible students. I invite you all to join us! I encourage all of you to consider making all of the events of Holy Week a part of your own Easter experience.

Sunday is coming!

~Pastor Beth Graham



Lent and Holy Week Schedule



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

This service is for a time of reflection and quiet contemplation. Remember Jesus' last day while enjoying cinnamon rolls and coffee. This service isn't suitable for children.

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

All are invited for a traditional tenebrae service led by the youth. Join us on April 18th at 7:00pm in the WBUMC sanctuary. If your youth is helping lead, please have them to church by 6:30pm.

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

Lent Mission Project

We have already reached our goal of 4 Goats for Heifer Int.!!!! Please continue to support the West Branch Food Pantry through giving items as suggested in the Lenten Devotional. A Shopping List is available on the table in the back of the Sanctuary.

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.

The Memorial committee extends a very sincere **THANK YOU** to Josh Sabourin and Al Tisinger for their expertise in installing the new handicap door openers on the lower entrance. It's a wonderful help and convenience for all!

ANNUAL MISSIONS GARAGE SALE

Garage Sale season is rapidly approaching. Our annual WBUMC Garage Sale will be held Saturday, April 26th 8-Noon.

Please do not bring any items before Monday April 21st as several events are being held during that time frame. Items may be put in the room downstairs with the bell near the elevator.



Your help would be greatly appreciated Wednesday evening, Thursday, Friday or Saturday. We will need help with set up, clean up, sorters and pricing. Thank you!

Missions Comm: Bob & Rosamond Cumings, Shirley Patrick, Linda Albrecht, Barb Wilcox, Connie Tisinger.



EASTER LILIES If you would like to purchase and dedicate a lily for the sanctuary in memory of, or in honor of a loved one, please order by Sunday, April 6th. \$14 each.

Ham Balls & Cheesy Potatoes

Thank you to everyone who ordered! Please pick up your order on Palm Sunday after worship. All items will be frozen and ready to bake at your convenience. Checks to WB United Women in Faith.

Fabric Needed

HELP is needed to find material for the school bags we send off to Midwest Missions every year filled with school supplies. Our source for free upholstery material is no longer available. We can use denim, corduroy, sailcloth, med.-heavy drapery fabric, or tightly woven upholstery material. NO double knit. A piece of material 20x32" will make 1 bag. If you have any remnants please let me know. Thank you Holly

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 needed 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!

Wednesday Night Discipleship

We've been having so much fun on Wednesdays! AND we're on the home stretch!

Intergenerational Prayer Partners continue through Easter (April 20th)! 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!

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!

Everyone is invited to our All Church Picnic on April 30th! Check out the article in this Newsletter!

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

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

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 at the back of the Sanctuary.

To pick up your cards, check the buckets on the card table. Final week is April 20th!

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 or 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)

All Church Picnic

Who: Everyone

When: April 30th at 6:00–7:00 pm

Where: WBUMC Backyard (*Fellowship Hall if raining*)

Why: To celebrate another amazing year of WND and to kick off the summer

What: Join us for an evening of fun, food, & yard games! Bring a chair or blanket and come enjoy the fun.

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

Coach: open

Non-Board Positions

Nominations:

Margaret Wick (2025)

Shirley Patrick (2026)

Amanda Rushton (2027)

Historian - Shirley Patrick

Mission - Bob Cumings

Resource/Asset Manager -

Chris Kofoed

Ministry & Event Coordinators -

Ruth Blayer & Nancy Lathrop

YOU ARE INVITED! OPEN FINANCE MEETING

SUNDAY APRIL 27TH @6:30pm

This meeting is to answer any questions that you may have!

WBUMC's Financials

General Fund Account Balance as of February 28, 2025

\$33,667.59



January

February

Income: \$19,406.00

Income: \$12,236.00

Expenses: \$23,093.41

Expenses: \$14,820.98

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 loss of Nancy Vincent
Mather family in the loss of Jan Mather
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 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!

2	Sydney Lamont	8	Natalie Hays	22	Jerry Radford
2	Mark Scharnweber	8	Anne Weinard	23	Jack Dragovich
2	Janice Hesse	8	Brad Wasion	23	Laurie Dauber
4	Lou Pine	12	Hattie Haganman	24	Will Bridges
4	Jessica Kusick	13	Margaret Wick	25	Dennis Albrecht
5	Jesse Lumpa	13	Libby Taylor	26	Al Tisinger
7	Alice Scott	16	Chelsee Shortt	26	Creed J Charbon
7	Braden Dlhly	16	Jerry Sexton	28	Nancy Lilienthal
7	Clarence Crew	20	"Manny" Holmes	29	Janlyn Slach
7	Terri Henning	20	Bette Potter	30	Brady Verlo

Your Church Staff & Contact Information

Office #: 319-643-5489

Pastor: Pastor Beth Graham

580-279-2430

PastorBethGraham@gmail.com

Office Administrator:

Ashley Kaalberg

Westbranchumc@gmail.com

Youth Ministry Coordinator:

Katie Sabourin 319-530-3963

Music Director:

Maggie Mowery 319-321-5178



[Or Visit our website at www.westbranchumc.org](http://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-ZY4cXONtAp5t6lHFkg>

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