

# THE IOWA FRIEND



September/October 2024

## SMALL AND SIGNIFICANT

Manny Garcia, IAYM General Superintendent

Most of us are likely familiar with the idiom “good things come in small packages.” I have always been a fan of this saying because, well I’m 5’7” tall and no one will ever confuse me with being “big”. I like to think that even though I am small, I have plenty to offer the world. After attending the Center for Rural Ministry Conference last weekend, I have been eager to remind each of our churches in Iowa Yearly Meeting of the same. None of us are going to make the list of largest churches in the US, in Iowa, or even in our own counties or towns. But that does not reduce the significance of your ministry. As a matter of fact, in many ways what you do is even more vital.

Rural churches, unlike many of their urban counterparts, are so much more than places of worship; they are pillars of sustainability in areas that are economically disadvantaged and geographically isolated. This is not a knock to churches in cities, that kind ministry certainly comes with its own challenges. But the churches that serve small towns and rural areas often don’t have access to the kinds of services that urban areas do. Rural and small-town churches are on the front lines of brokenness like addiction, abuse, poverty, loneliness, and the like. Not to mention that churches like the ones that make up Iowa Yearly Meeting serve as community centers where people can gather, not just for a sermon, but for meals, outreach programs, local initiatives, and fellowship that transcends membership lists.

Hebrews 10 reminds us of the importance of community, “. . . let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another – and all the more as you see the Day approaching.” In rural areas and small towns, this act of gathering and encouraging one another takes on a deeper meaning as churches become more than a congregation; they become a family. Each one exhibiting all the beauty and quirkiness that our families of origin often have, including the crazy uncle! You know every small church has one!

Spiritually, our churches hold immense spiritual value. They nurture generations of believers, providing foundational teaching, encouragement, and accountability. The size of many small-town churches affords them the ability to offer intimacy and personal relationships that would be a struggle to maintain in larger areas. Members are much more than attenders; they are essential to the day-to-day ministry that happens through these churches.

More than anything, I want you to hear that your work is not in vain. You may not see a visitor for months, but the fact that you show up, commit to growing in your faith, and are open to being the hands and feet of Christ to anyone that might have need in your area makes you of inestimable worth to the kingdom of God and its mission. And when you get discouraged, when you doubt, when you feel alone in the work, and you likely will, I hope you will remember that God often does his best work when we feel small, when we feel defeated, when we feel outnumbered. Like Gideon, who the Lord chose to lead Israel out of the hands of Midian, we might say, “Pardon me, my lord . . . but how can I save Israel? My clan is the weakest in Manasseh, and I am the least in my family.” And then we will hear our Lord remind us, “I will be with you . . .”

The health of small-town and rural churches is of great importance, which means the health of our Iowa Yearly Meeting churches is of great importance. We are committed to serving, empowering, equipping, and undergirding the work that each of our churches is doing. Even as we continue to see churches like the ones that make up IAYM declining, we are more committed than ever to investing in what you are doing. It matters. You matter.

Therefore, we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away, yet inwardly we are being renewed day by day. . . So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

**2 Corinthians 4:16 & 18**

**THE IOWA FRIEND**

# 2024 FALL CALENDAR

## OCTOBER

- 3-5 FUM General Board | Richmond, IN
- 12-13 Winneshiek Quarterly Meeting |  
Valton Friends Church, Valton, WI
- 25-27 Fall Pastor & Spouse Retreat |  
Lied Lodge, Nebraska City, NE

## NOVEMBER

- 02 Board on Coordination |  
First Friends Church, Marshalltown, IA
- 8-9 Young Adult Retreat |  
Camp Quaker Heights, Eldora, IA
- 13-15 International Friends Church Planting Conference |  
Multiple Locations
- TBD Pleasant Plain/Salem Quarterly Meeting |  
Woolson Friends Church, Richland, IA

## DECEMBER

- 14-15 Live Nativity |  
Grinnell Friends Church, Grinnell, IA



# STEEP

YOUNG ADULT RETREAT 2024  
NOVEMBER 8 - 9

## Registration Open!

Get ready for an weekend of spiritual growth, community, and fun. Join us for inspiring sessions, camp games, a cozy campfire, a chance to serve, and beautiful surroundings, with childcare provided for your little ones. Don't miss this opportunity to reconnect and recharge—register early to secure your spot and join us for a memorable retreat!

Get more information at  
[iaym.org/young-adults-retreat/](http://iaym.org/young-adults-retreat/)



**WORLDVIEW FORUM**  
WILLIAM PENN UNIVERSITY

Co-sponsored by William Penn Campus Ministry

# **PACIFISM & JUST WAR: PATHWAYS TO PEACE?**

**SEPTEMBER 25, 2024 | 6:30 PM - 8:30 PM**

GEORGE DAILY AUDITORIUM | OPEN TO THE PUBLIC | FREE ADMISSION

6:30 Guest Speakers Respond to Moderator Questions | 7:25 Intermission | 7:30 Audience Q&A

## **Missions Thanksgiving Offering**

The Mission Board has chosen Mesquakie Friends as our Thanksgiving Project. Specifically, these funds will be used to purchase an aerator for the pond on the property. It would provide more oxygen to the water which the fish need to survive and thrive. Aeration also works to remove excessive nutrients found at the bottom and surface of the water, keeping the water cleaner and smelling fresher. This has been needed and desired for some time. The Mesquakie Board hopes funds will also cover the materials to get power to the pond to run the aerator and any labor costs needed to get it up and running.

General Updates: Kyle shared that the Celebrate Recovery substance abuse program is ready to roll. Word has been out on Facebook, but people have not yet come. Flyers are being made and Miles will emphasize it in his newsletter that goes to the Settlement, hoping that will help bring in people. Miles has been holding Bible studies with spotty attendance. Again, they feel that the word hasn't gotten around enough.

A Open House is being planned which should be a benefit toward this end and for supporters to see what is going on as well.

Both Kyle & Miles have been able to speak at several churches and are willing to visit others. Pray for Kyle who is busy with a job, yard and garden work and classes for his bachelor's degree in business. Pray for Miles as he reaches out to those in the Settlement and seeks to change lives.

Please send your Thanksgiving offerings to Quakerdale Business Services who are taking care of the Mesquakie mission books.

Address: P.O. Box 8,  
New Providence, IA 50206

Kyle Chyma's: [Kyle@iaym.org](mailto:Kyle@iaym.org) (303) 386-0682

Miles Davenport: [Miles@iaym.org](mailto:Miles@iaym.org) (641) 750-6332

## **Mesquakie Open House**

**Sunday November 3 | 2-4pm**

IAYM mission finances are now under Quakerdale Business Services. Send all checks for missions to QBS, PO Box 8, New Providence, IA 50206.

Please share this with your church treasurer.

# THOUGHTS FROM MICHAEL SHERMAN, FUM

**Matthew 25: 37-40: Then the righteous will answer Him, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You something to drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? When did we see You sick or in prison and visit You?' And the King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me.'**

The passage addresses and invites us to think about our relationship with the world around us. Do I see folks who are hungry and thirsty? Do I encounter a stranger or people who need clothing? Are there those around me who are sick? It's not just a conversation about awareness, but also an invitation to respond. Am I offering hospitality and care for those in need? The king says at the end of our passage "whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of Mine, you did for Me."

This summer I spent much of the month of July with Oscar, Miriam and Noa Mmbali. These are folks who have come to understand what it means to feed the hungry, give water to those who are thirsty, welcome and stranger, clothe the naked and care for the sick.

## MINISTRY CONFERENCE 2025

*Save  
the  
Date*

**7.24.25 - 7.27.25**

The four of us made the drive from central Indiana to participate in Iowa Yearly Meeting's Ministry Conference. During the car ride we talked about our perspective calls to ministry; how God had reached out to each of us and invited us into ministry. Oscar and Miriam see the people described in Matthew 25 every day in Belize.

Folks in Belize are sick, hungry, thirsty, needing hospitality and needing clothing. While we would love to be able to take all those problems away, solving all those issues with love and dignity; the truth is we cannot at this moment. Desmond Tutu said: "There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream and find out why they're falling in." This moment FUM Belize finds itself trying to stand in two important places at the same time; upstream where people are falling in and downstream pulling people out of the river. We need your help reaching out.

To keep bridging the gap of possibilities, we need your financial contributions to continue to completion the work God began years ago in Belize City. Most of all we need your prayers, lifting up the people answering the call with the entirety of their being.