



# The Salt Shaker

March 2024

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEAR ELY  
11100 Spanish Road, Ely, Iowa 52227  
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## REV. JAN DUS VISIT

Rev. Jan Dus from the Czech Republic gave a presentation on the Camino humanitarian mission to the people of war-torn Ukraine on February 12, 2024 at the National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library. His words inspired the twenty-five people gathered together representing different churches within the Cedar Rapids area.

Camino supports these missions:

1. House of Mercy caring for misplaced persons in Ukraine who fled the eastern regions of the country. It is located at a farm that raises 1000 chickens and 100 hogs.
2. Rebenok and Father's House are two orphanages that have moved out of Ukraine to Poland.
3. Mirne Nebo is a meal preparation mission in the cities of Kharkiv, Izium, and Kupiansk that prepares thousands of meals per day.
4. Development and Social Justice of Ukraine focuses on helping individuals injured during the war.

Rev. Dus emphasized that all the Camino team are volunteers, none receive a salary.

Participants at the presentation were encouraged to consider ways to share their learnings, inspiration, and continue donating to the projects.

Rev. Dr. Julie A. Schuett presented three monetary donations from the Presbytery of East

Iowa for \$2000, the First Presbyterian Church near Ely for \$750, and a personal gift to Rev. Dus to help with travel expenses.

George and Joanne Chadima hosted Rev. Dus overnight and sent him on to Des Moines to continue his missionary sharing tour.

Handouts are available at church and will be included in a future Salt Shaker newsletter.



## BOOK EXCHANGE

Thanks to all who brought items for our book exchange. Items were expanded to include puzzles, DVDs, magazines, etc. The amount donated at the church and the Half Price Books amount totaled \$47.85 which will be deposited in the General Fund of our church. Every little bit helps. Joanne Chadima



# WORSHIP & PROGRAM

## WALKING THE ROAD EACH SUNDAY IN LENT

**March 3:** Mark 4:1-20

Liturgist: Barb Horak

Ushers: Buonadonna Family

Greeters: Carl Zahradnik



**March 10:** Mark 4:21-41

Liturgist: Jodie Chadima

Ushers: Zacek Family

Greeters: Phil & Misti Huedepohl

**March 17:** Mark 5:1-20

Liturgist: S Buonadonna

Ushers: Theresa & Jim Grieder

Greeters: Bob & Jean Kolek

**March 24, Palm Sunday:** Mark 11:1-11

Liturgist: Theresa Harder

Ushers: Larry & Becky Modracek

Greeters: Janelle Benish

**March 28, Maundy Thursday:** Mark 13:12-Mark 14

**6:00 p.m.** Meal

**7:00 p.m.** Worship

**March 31, Easter:** Mark 16:1-8

**7:00 a.m. Sunrise Service**

Ushers: Fred & Sarah Harris

Greeters: Bell Ringers

**9:30 a.m. Easter Worship**

Liturgist: Joanne Chadima

Ushers: Dan Chadima Family

Greeters: Bill & Penny Serbousek

## DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME



March 10, Daylight Savings Time begins. Move your clock one hour earlier.

## 46 DAYS BEFORE EASTER

### Are you getting ready?

Easter and Christmas are our faith's most Christian celebrations. What would you be doing 46 days before Christmas? Probably lots of things – baking cookies, sending out Christmas cards/letters, buying presents, decorating your home, planning family gatherings? Waiting with anticipation and Joy of a baby born. Easter has such a different set of emotions – hearing the stories of Jesus's last days on earth. Ash Wednesday sets off the 46 days of waiting – being marked as a Christian, time of personal reflection, perhaps making a change in our lives during Lent, rejoicing on Palm Sunday only to be thrown through the trials of Holy Week, Maundy Thursday, Gethsemane, betrayal, arrest, torture, and then the crucifixion. BUT – we have Easter – resurrection, triumph over death, mystery, the most joyous Good News. This time - we can celebrate the death of the Man, who promises everlasting life and proves it through His resurrection.

So – what can you do to get ready for Easter?

- Attend our church services to hear the story right from the Bible from our Pastor Julie.
- Fill a fish bank for One Great Hour of Sharing.
- Participate in the Multigenerational Lenten Pretzel Making on March 3.
- Order an Easter Lily to honor or remembrance of a loved one.
- Wave a palm on Palm Sunday celebrating the Triumphal Entry of Jesus into Jerusalem.
- Bring beef stew to join in supper and Communion together on Maundy Thursday.
- Personally reflect on Good Friday.
- Attend Easter Sunrise Service or Easter Worship Service or both - with a casserole breakfast between.
- SHOUT - He is Risen! He is Risen Indeed!

## FISH BANKS ARE FOR EVERYONE!



Each season of Lent, our congregation participates in the One Great Hour of Sharing special offering. You may remember the cardboard banks shaped like a fish used to collect donations usually given to kids to fill with coins.

This Lent, everyone can go fishing! Anyone who wants a bank is welcome to take one, fill it with coins, currency or both, then return it to church on Sunday, March 24, Palm Sunday. (Banks are available on first come first served basis.)

To make it FUN, we will weigh the fish to determine the HEAVIEST FISH. All are encouraged to give their fish a name (write it on the bottom of the bank) and decorate it any way you like. It will be fun to see a school of colorful fish, each one unique and appreciated. Each with filled with a donation to help people in need of food, sanitary water, education, disaster relief and more.

Happy Fishing!

Respectfully,  
Misti Huedepohl, Mission Elder



### Life on the brink of disaster

*Gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing help Middle East Council of Churches restore hope and health to Syria's most vulnerable.*

by Emily Enders Odom

Bernadette thought that she had seen the worst of it.

For well over a decade, she and her family had unflinchingly withstood Syria's ever-worsening

humanitarian and economic crisis, the country's ongoing localized hostilities and its collapsing infrastructure.

But now — following the devastating 7.8-magnitude earthquake that struck Syria and Turkey in February 2023 — the longtime school supervisor's own home began crumbling beneath her very feet.

"The building we live in had cracks, and in the apartment above us, five pillars had cracked," she said. "In our apartment, there were cracks in the beams and columns and the wall."

And yet, despite the significant damage to their home and the danger to their family, they stayed.

Although most of their neighbors had quickly left the unsafe apartment building to seek refuge with relatives, Bernadette's family remained in their home because they had no choice. Not only did they have no other family to take them in, but they also simply couldn't afford to pay the escalating rent costs elsewhere. Between her meager salary and her husband's — even lower than hers — their combined income is barely sufficient to meet the family's basic needs.

"I have a daughter who recently got married, and a son in his final year at the Faculty of Computer Engineering," Bernadette said. "My husband and I financially support our son and my brother, who is 72 years old, suffers from diabetes, and recently had his leg amputated due to gangrene caused by high blood sugar. Our economic situation is very bad. We can only buy essential food items like bread, rice, bulgur and vegetable oil on a daily basis in small quantities."

In the midst of such dire conditions — families pushed to the brink, many without access to water, shelter, education, medical care and other essential services — the Middle East Council of Churches (MECC), a long-term partner of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), works around the clock to alleviate the suffering of the Syrian people.

"What we offer can really bring hope and show a certain solidarity," said Samer Laham, regional director of Diakonia, the branch of MECC that administers its social, humanitarian and development services programs. From 2004–05, Laham also served

as an International Peacemaker through the Presbyterian Peacemaking Program.

“Whenever people are unable to secure basic needs, some families adopt negative coping mechanisms, such as reducing meals, resorting to child labor, or, as a last resort, many simply find a way to leave Syria,” he added. “What the MECC does, in cooperation with our partners, is continually seek to support the people of Syria. We have aided families like Bernadette’s, whose homes were damaged by the earthquake in Aleppo, working to ensure that they live in a stable building where their children can sleep safely.”

The humanitarian mission of the MECC is made possible, in part, through a grant from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA), which is in turn supported by Presbyterians’ generous gifts to One Great Hour of Sharing.

For 75 years, the Offering’s purpose of helping neighbors in need around the world remains constant, giving the PC(USA) and other Christian denominations a tangible way to share God’s love. In addition to PDA, One Great Hour of Sharing also benefits the ministries of the Presbyterian Hunger Program and Presbyterian Committee on the Self-Development of People (SDOP).

“The PC(USA)’s relationship with MECC dates back to the council’s beginnings in 1974,” said Dayna Oliver, associate for International Program Administration for PDA. “It is because of our longtime association with MECC not only in the area of disaster relief, but in other areas as well, that we are able to most effectively implement PDA’s mission and activities with local partners who are on the ground.”

Laham explained that to best address the humanitarian crisis in the earthquake-ravaged areas of Aleppo, northern Syria and in some parts of the coastal area, the MECC undertook an ecumenical approach to avoid any duplication in funding or intervention with the people living in the affected areas.

In Syria, around 90% of the people live below the poverty line while more than 50% of families are food insecure.

“Some workers are earning less than \$8 U.S. per month, whereas only a few months earlier they were

earning \$18 U.S.,” he added. “This means families can hardly afford one meal a day.”

Because of the sheer magnitude of Syria’s crisis, the MECC’s interventions were very strategic in nature, designed to contribute to the overall well-being of the most vulnerable — consistent with the goals of the Matthew 25 movement.

“We weren’t only traditional by just distributing food or hygiene kits, which are very important, but at the same time what we did was to establish a special engineering committee to assess the damage of buildings affected by the earthquake,” explained Laham. “The committee then classifies them by different categories to see which flats or buildings need emergency intervention to retrofit them to make them safe to live in again. They also determine which buildings need to be demolished completely because they can’t be retrofitted.”

Bernadette, for one, is grateful that her building could be stabilized, and her apartment rehabilitated.

“Now that we have our living place safe again and our son can enjoy safety, we can only offer our prayers and thanks first to all who have given so generously,” she said. “Our prayers likewise go out to all who stand by us and collect the Offering to ease our economic burdens and encourage us to stay in our country and continue witnessing to our Christian faith.”

## CHURCH BUSINESS

### ELEVATOR UPDATE

As you can see, the overhead shelter is in place for the outside elevator door. This was graciously donated by Betty Buresh, daughters, and families in memory of Dale Buresh. This grew from a simple overhead awning to a full enclosure to lessen the wind resistance when the door is opening and closing. Installation was completed with the work from our carpenters at TD Builders who also revised that door frame to fit the new elevator. This will enable the outside door to operate a little smoother; and also make it easier to see where the elevator car is located without the sun glare through the small door window. Just press and hold the correct button for up or down movement - or press and release a button if the

elevator car is already at the outside level. The outside entryway was made a little wider to accommodate any walking aids; and new cement will be added soon to replace that particular portion of gravel. Tentative spring clean-up day will be scheduled early April. Looks like we have a lot of gravel to remove from the grass in multiple places. Also, some sod needs to be smoothed/replaced after the winter as the ground was not frozen when the snow was removed. If anyone feels ambitious to start early, feel free to do so as the weather is already pretty nice outside. The new building groundbreaking is scheduled for early April. Going to be some exciting times ahead this summer for our congregation!!

### **...concerning impersonation scams...**

I received another one last week—a notice from the bank “concerning impersonation scams.” By email, by text message, by phone call. Each one is designed to convincingly deceive and steal.

Over the last couple of years, you may have received what looked like a text message from me seeking gift card numbers. Always check the phone number if a text message. Always check the email address if by email. They even use pictures easily found online.

Scammers are using a spoofed version of Pastor Julie’s email address to request recipients purchase gift cards. This is a fraud! Please beware of emails coming from [pastorjulie.elypres@gmail.com](mailto:pastorjulie.elypres@gmail.com) or another email other than the real address that the church has for Pastor Julie: [pastorjulie@elypres.org](mailto:pastorjulie@elypres.org), and notify the church office if you receive any of these emails. The real office email is: [office@elypres.org](mailto:office@elypres.org)

Outside of reporting this to authorities, there isn’t much we can do as an organization. *You can do the most—be careful!*

Pastor Julie



## **NOTES FROM SESSION MEETING January 18, 2024**



1. Joint Session and Deacon meeting devoted time to praying for the church and the spreading of the Gospel.
2. Clerk’s Report December attendance at worship (in person/live streaming): December 3: 44/5; December 10: 51/1; December 17: 57/6; December 24: 177/9 (57/5 in AM; 125/4 in PM); and December 31: 62 (Count not taken – estimating 5.) Communion December 24, 2023: served 122. Average Sunday Attendance = 83 (includes Christmas Eve service)
3. Membership as of December 1, 2023 = 177
4. Treasurer’s Report: The General Fund ending year balance was \$5,798.06. Motion approved the 2024 General Fund budget.
5. Funds Report: Motion approved to transfer \$20,000 of bank account Memorial Fund money to the Fund Account. Motion approved to purchase a Certificate of Deposit with the Tom Vavra annuity account and combine with an upcoming maturing CD.
6. The winter mission project will conclude February 13th with Families Helping Families.
7. Property: Snow removal – Casey and Jim doing a great job. Boiler inspected. Replaced seal on back door. The fireplace was relit. The Youth room thermostat terminal was cleaned up terminal. Parking lot and new build considerations taking place.

Todd & Stephanie Parker

March 7

# FAITH DEVELOPMENT

## BEAR CREEK CAMP

Discount pricing for summer camp is before March 15. Also, family discount of \$25 for additional children. Also, bring three friends who have never attended before and receive 50% discount. Finally, the church offers partial scholarships for students.

Summer may seem a long way off, but, get camp on your calendar early means you get your first choices!

## WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday Bible Study continues at 9:30 a.m. with refreshments, coffee and discussion. Upcoming topical Bible studies will be in the Gospel of John, chapters 17+.

## CONFIRMATION CLASS



Confirmation class continues with plans to meet with Session April 18. Confirmation Sunday scheduled for April 28 with reception following worship.

# COMMUNITY AND OUTREACH

## SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarship forms will be available starting April 1st for active members of this congregation seeking to continue their education. We have 3 scholarship funds: Pokorny Scholarship Fund, Motycka Scholarship Fund, and Wilhemina Anna Skalsky Carson Scholarship Fund. Be sure to read each application carefully as each fund has separate guidelines. All applications are due June 1st whether for the fall semester 2024, the spring semester 2025 or the summer session 2025.

Questions and applications are available through Pat Kilberger at church, by phone 319-846-2418, or pat.kilberger@gmail.com.

## OUR CHURCH DEMONSTRATES LOVE & CARE FOR FAMILIES

The Winter Mission Project has come to a close. The project was dedicated to supporting the clothing closet at Families Helping Families, an organization that aims to provide care for adopted children and foster care families. On Valentine's Day, donations were delivered and their closet grew by 308! Thank you so much for all who have shopped, donated, and prayed for children in our community who will benefit from your loving support and caring prayers.

For those who appreciate the details, this is how your donations added up:

- 1 car seat
- 3 backpacks
- 3 pajama sets
- 4 children's books
- 4 pairs of slippers
- 4 pairs of shoes
- 7 coats/jackets
- 7 blankets
- 12 sweatshirts
- 13 hats
- 17 reusable bags
- 20 pairs of gloves/mittens
- 20 pairs of pants/jeans
- 42 shirts/tops
- 63 pairs of socks
- 88 undergarments



**308 Items = Our church family's love for children and families. Thank You!** ❤️

## MORE ON CAMINO PRESENTATION BY JAN DUS

February 12 brought Jan Dus to The National Czech and Slovak Museum and Library to tell us about his mission in Ukraine. His video presentation and talk were sobering, but showed evidence that money given to this Mission is making a difference. Camino joins other groups to bring food, clothing, building materials, and general help to so many in need on the front lines

of the Russian Invasion. He works with orphanages, the elderly, displaced women and children, building bomb shelters for schools, and supporting self-sustaining businesses that serve a community. There are even classes for land mine detection and what to do when a mine is found. Jan is passionate about his Mission and grateful for our prayers and monetary gifts. Several thank yous need to be mentioned: Pastor Julie for working with the Czech Museum and applying for the Presbytery grant, the Czech Museum staff, Bill and Penny Serbousek for covering some of the costs for the meeting, to the Presbytery for allowing grant money to go to Camino, to our congregation for donations, and for the allocation of Mission money through our budget. George and Joanne Chadima were happy to host Jan at their home – he is family to us since he guided us through the Czech Republic for two weeks last summer. Joanne Chadima

## **MARJ NEJDL: MASTER FOLK ARTIST at The National Czech and Slovak Museum January 27 – April 21, 2024**

Marj NejdI learned to decorate eggs in the traditional Czech style at an early age. Continuing the tradition was important because NejdI knew egg decorating was a skill that had been passed down for more than 2,000 years. NejdI was also a natural-born artist. She studied commercial art in Chicago before beginning her family. Beyond her work with egg decorating, she has kept busy over the years with various art forms including painting folk scenes on a variety of media including wood, ceramics, and stationery. She also illustrated many books published by the Museum Guild of the National Czech & Slovak Museum & Library, and designs an annual Christmas ornament for the Museum Store.

The exhibit features examples of NejdI's folk art including decorated eggs, a quirky birdhouse, aprons, book illustrations, paintings and Christmas ornaments.



Hello from Youth Group!

Happy Spring! Through this season of Advent, I pray you see God in everyday moments: grass turning green, leaf buds on trees, warmer days, and through your own personal journey this the season of Lent.

Thank you to everyone who joined us in February for the Pancake breakfast and Souper Bowl of Caring! We pray you enjoyed our youth leading parts of worship, and the skit with the appearance of Souper Can! **With your help, we gathered 40 food items and \$358.41 in our soup pot collection to "Tackle Hunger" locally!** All was donated to the Linn Community Food Bank.

Thank you to families who made sure youth were present for the events, and **BIG THANK YOUs to Darla M, Jeri and Casey H, and James S** for guiding the youth with food preparation and serving the breakfast. Thanks to Dawn Z for help with the coffee pots!

Also in February, our sledding event was not meant to be (no snow this time) so instead youth had a pizza lunch and went Ice Skating. As of the writing of this article, Scout Sunday is upcoming, and all Youth who were / are Boy Scouts or Girl Scouts are encouraged to wear uniforms and participate in worship.

In March, Youth will have a Game Night and Snack Potluck on the evening of the 3rd - we will play Burning Down the House. Extended families and church friends are welcome and encouraged to attend - bring a snack to share! Contact Angie for more details and questions about this event.

March is Easter time, and Youth will again be taking orders for Easter Lilies to decorate the sanctuary on Easter morning, March 31st. If you are interested in ordering Easter lilies for \$20 each, you can dedicate them in Honor of or in Memory of loved ones. Please see the order form in this newsletter or any Sunday bulletin to order, and **orders will be due Sunday March 10th.**

Also, Thanks to so many of you who bring redeemable cans and bottles to be redeemed by the youth group for activities and fun events. So far in 2024, we have collected and redeemed \$34.60. We will continue to collect these, and donations can be brought to church, left in the Youth Room, or call Angie for pick up or delivery.

Please let me know if there are any questions about youth programming, and thank you for your continued support!

Blessings~

Angie Zahradnik Ehle

**Youth Schedule:  
March 2024**



**Sunday March 3rd:**

9:30 a.m. Worship  
10:30 a.m. Sunday School/Confirmation  
6:00 p.m. Youth Group GAME NIGHT, ALL Ages

**Sunday, March 10th:**

9:30 a.m. Worship - LILY ORDERS DUE!  
10:30 a.m. Sunday School/confirmation  
6:00 p.m. Youth Group

**Sunday, March 17th:** St. Patrick's Day

9:30 a.m. Worship  
10:30 a.m. Sunday School/Confirmation  
12:00 p.m. Youth Lunch and Roller Skating  
NO Youth Group

**Sunday, March 24th:**

9:30 a.m. Worship- Palm Sunday  
10:30 a.m. Sunday School/Confirmation  
6:00 p.m. Youth Group

**Sunday March 31st:** EASTER Sunday

9:30 a.m. Worship  
10:30 a.m. No Sunday School  
NO Youth Group

**Sunday April 7th:** Holy Humor Sunday

9:30 a.m. Worship  
10:30 a.m. Sunday School/Confirmation  
Youth Group TBA



## First Presbyterian Church near Ely Calendar, March 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 <b>Word Day of Prayer</b> 9:00-12:00 Office Hours	2
3 <b>3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday Lent</b> <b>Food Bank Sunday</b> 9:30 Worship with LS 10:30 Coffee Hour 10:45 Multigen SS, Conf. 6:00 YG Game Night	4 10:00 Chair Yoga	5 9:00-12:00 Office Hours	6 9:30 Bible Study 11:30 Chair Yoga 6:15 Handbell Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir	7 9:00-12:00 Office Hours	8 9:00-12:00 Office Hours	9
10 <b>4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Lent</b> <b>DST Begins</b> <b>Lily Orders Due</b> 9:30 Worship with LS 10:30 Coffee Hour 10:45 Adult SS, Conf. 6:00 Youth Group	11 10:00 Chair Yoga	12 9:00-12:00 Office Hours	13 9:30 Bible Study 11:30 Chair Yoga 6:15 Handbell Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir	14 9:00-12:00 Office Hours	15 9:00-12:00 Office Hours	16 5:30 Card Club Potluck 6:30 Card Club
17 <b>5<sup>th</sup> Sunday Lent</b> <b>St. Patrick's Day</b> 9:30 Worship with LS 10:30 Coffee Hour 10:45 Adult SS, Conf. 12:00 YG Lunch, Skating	18 10:00 Chair Yoga	19 9:00-12:00 Office Hours	20 <b>Mr. Rogers Day</b> 9:30 Bible Study 11:30 Chair Yoga 6:15 Handbell Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir	21 9:00-12:00 Office Hours 6:30 Session Meeting	22 9:00-12:00 Office Hours	23
24 <b>Palm Sunday</b> 9:30 Worship with LS 10:30 Coffee Hour 10:45 Adult SS, Conf. 6:00 Youth Group	25 10:00 Chair Yoga	26 9:00-12:00 Office Hours 6:00 Ladies' Night Out	27 9:30 Bible Study 11:30 Chair Yoga 6:15 Handbell Choir 7:30 Chancel Choir	28 <b>Maundy Thursday</b> 6:00 Dinner and Worship	29 <b>Good Friday</b>	30
31 <b>Easter</b> 7:00 Sunrise Service 7:30 Casserole B'fast 9:30 Easter Worship						



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WORD SEARCH

C	F	N	C	T	V	Y	J	E	A	K	L	H	E	Y	Z
T	E	S	A	G	B	X	T	G	L	M	D	T	N	G	K
M	O	K	G	N	E	E	U	G	F	E	A	N	C	T	X
H	Q	H	I	T	A	T	B	S	Y	U	I	X	D	V	T
I	T	Q	N	I	Y	P	R	G	O	A	A	U	H	D	B
C	Q	R	A	R	J	V	O	C	S	U	Q	A	F	U	U
L	G	I	R	O	B	H	F	E	L	M	Y	T	R	E	B
J	L	R	C	E	C	R	L	A	Q	B	Y	R	I	E	B
X	R	P	S	E	W	F	O	O	N	D	Y	S	P	N	L
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Q	I	S	X	A	H	O	X	S	O	F	L	S	I	Z	G
Z	J	N	T	P	S	I	L	L	I	F	X	U	T	O	
E	V	M	M												

APRIL	CHOCOLATE	FAMILY
BASKET	DECORATING	FLOWERS
BOWS	EASTER	FRIENDS
BUNNY	EGG HUNT	HOP
CANDY	EGGS	SPRING