July & August 2026

# The Salt Shaker

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEAR ELY
11100 Spanish Road, Ely, Iowa 52227
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## FROM THE PASTOR

As our nation celebrates 250 years of the Declaration of Independence from Great Britian, we celebrate the blessings of our history and faith in the years before us.

Something that speaks to us that twelve out of the fifty-six signers of the Declaration of Independence were Presbyterian. That is one in five! Presbyterians have long held civil office and influenced the organization, conduct, and representation of the people in our nation.

Our music ministry at church brought together a wonderful program with the St John Lutheran music ministry on June 14 at the Ely Legion. Thank you to all the musicians and to our director Stephanie Buonadonna and accompanist Sharon Furler and to our hosts at the Ely Legion and the Auxiliary Club for providing refreshments. If you were unable to attend it is on YouTube at https://youtu.be/Z3CLVBld6aQ.

The Declaration of Independence is a reason to celebrate, and I encourage each person to take the time and thought to read it through in this year of historic remembrance. It begins and ends with the importance of God's natural laws and providence as well as the importance of being one people in solidarity of our lives, fortunes, and honor.

The Declaration begins:

> *The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America, When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.*
>
> *We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.-- That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed …*

And it ends:

> *And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.*

You can find the full text at https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript

May we always seek ways in our community and civic lives to faithfully live with thanksgiving as we seek to carry out the mission Jesus calls us to.

Our 2018 version of the *Book of Common Worship* lifted up this prayer which we will share on July 5 during worship:

> *Lord, keep this nation under your care.*
> *Bless the leaders of our land,*

*that we may be a people at peace among ourselves*
*and a blessing to other nations of the earth.*
*Help us elect trustworthy leaders,*
*contribute to wise decisions for the general welfare,*
*and thus, serve you faithfully in our generation,*
*to the honor of your holy name;*
*through Jesus Christ the Lord. Amen.*
[Book of Common Worship (WJK, 2018), 629]

Blessings to you in Christ,
Pastor Julie

## WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday Bible Study meets at 9:30 a.m. in July and August (exception on August 5.) The group will finish Esther in early July and begin the Gospel according to John.

The Gospel of John is the fourth book of the New Testament. It is different than the synoptic gospels Matthew, Mark, and Luke because its key theme is Jesus' divine identity as the Son of God.

The historical author, John, the beloved, was likely the youngest of the circle of disciples. He was the only one who died naturally of old age rather than being martyred.

The purpose of the gospel is stated in John 20:31: that readers may come to believe Jesus is the Messiah and have life in His name.

Historically, John is symbolically depicted as an eagle who has fantastic vision and soars high above. It is one of the highest fliers. The eagle figuratively connects the earth to the heavens.

# WORSHIP & PROGRAM

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

July 5
Liturgist: Jim Serbousek
Ushers: Nora Fetter
Greeters: Janet Holland

July 12
Liturgist: Misti Huedepohl
Ushers: Kevin & Shirley Bailey
Greeters: Les & Sue Feyerabend

July 19
Liturgist: Craig Andrle
Ushers: Beau & Tate Andrle
Greeters: Craig & Becky Andrle family

July 26
Liturgist: Janet Holland
Ushers: Blake & Rob Kilberger
Greeters: Bob & Carol Andrle

August 2
Liturgist: Volunteer(s) Needed
Ushers: Volunteer(s) Needed
Greeters: Janelle Benish

August 9
Liturgist: Dawn Zacek
Ushers: Phil & Misti Huedepohl
Greeters: Bonnie Fencl

August 16
Liturgist: Blake Kilberger
Ushers: Volunteer(s) Needed
Greeters: Janet Holland

August 23
Liturgist: Monica Bailey
Ushers: Ted & Becky Grenis
Greeters: Eleanor Burke

August 30
Liturgist: Janet Holland
Ushers: Bonnie Fencl and Karen Zacek
Greeters: Bob & Carol Andrle

## SPECIAL EVENTS AT WORSHIP

July 5: Holy Communion
August 2: Guest worship leader Rev. Melody Oltmann
August 23: Backpack Dedication Sunday

## LADIES' AND MEN'S NIGHT OUT FOR PRESBYTERIANS (LMNOP)

LMNOP will be held at 6:00 on Tuesday, July 28 at Emil's Hideway, 222 Glenbrook Drive SE, Cedar Rapids. The August meal will be held on August 25 at Pizza Ranch, 1355 Hayes Lane, North Liberty. Contact Dawn Zacek for more information.

## SAVE THE DATE: ANNUAL CHICKEN NOODLE SOUP & KOLACH SUPPER

The 2026 Annual Chicken Noodle Soup & Kolach Supper will be held on October 9 and 10, with kolach baking and soup making to occur on September 12, 18, and 26, October 3 and 8-10. Additional preparation dates will be added as needed. Look for announcements in the coming months for specific areas needing help. Let's make it another successful year!

## HYMN REFLECTIONS

### Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Few hymns express quiet confidence in God's care as beautifully as *Great Is Thy Faithfulness*. Written by Thomas O. Chisholm in 1923, the text was inspired not by dramatic life events, but by the steady, everyday faithfulness of God. Chisholm drew his words from Lamentations 3:22-23:

"Because of the Lord's great love we are not consumed... great is your faithfulness."

The hymn reminds us that God's faithfulness is not measured only in extraordinary moments. It is found in the changing seasons, daily mercies, answered prayers, and the sustaining grace that carries us through both joy and hardship. The familiar refrain celebrates God's unchanging character:

*"Morning by morning new mercies I see."*

As we sing this beloved hymn, we are invited to reflect on the countless ways God has been faithful throughout our lives and to trust that the same faithfulness will continue to guide us in the days ahead.

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### My Country, 'Tis of Thee

Also known as *America*, this patriotic hymn was written by Samuel Francis Smith in 1831. The text was set to a melody already familiar to many as the tune of "God Save the King."

The hymn celebrates the freedoms and natural beauty of the United States while expressing gratitude for the blessings of liberty. For generations, it has been sung at civic gatherings, schools, churches, and national celebrations.

When sung in worship, however, the hymn takes on an additional meaning. Christians give thanks for the nation in which they live while remembering that our ultimate allegiance belongs to God. Patriotism and faith need not compete; rather, gratitude for our country can inspire us to seek justice, compassion, and service to our neighbors.

As we gather during the month that includes Independence Day, this hymn offers an opportunity to thank God for our freedoms and to pray for wisdom, unity, and peace for our nation.

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### O Beautiful for Spacious Skies

Few hymns paint a more vivid picture of America than *O Beautiful for Spacious Skies*. The text was written by Katharine Lee Bates after a trip to the summit of Pikes Peak in 1893. Inspired by the breathtaking view, Bates penned words celebrating both the beauty of the land and the ideals to which the nation aspires.

Unlike many patriotic songs, *America the Beautiful* is also a prayer. It asks God to bless the nation with wisdom, grace, selflessness, and moral strength:

*"America! America! God shed His grace on thee."*

The hymn acknowledges that the work of building a just and compassionate society is never complete. Each generation is called to pursue the ideals of freedom, unity, and care for one another.

As we sing this hymn, we celebrate the beauty of God's creation, give thanks for our nation, and ask for God's continuing guidance as we seek to live faithfully together.

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### Did You Know?

*Great Is Thy Faithfulness* became widely known after being championed by evangelist Billy Graham during his crusades. Today it remains one of the most-loved hymns in churches around the world, cherished for its simple but profound message: God's faithfulness never fails.

*"Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow."*

# CHURCH BUSINESS

## FINANCIAL UPDATE as of 31-May-2026 (42% through the year)

- May ran about a $3,300 deficit between the donations and expenses, which has turned the General account negative. The church averages about $18,000 in monthly expenses.
- The LIFE Center income was $1,940 which was higher than April due to graduation party rentals.
- The overall expenses are slightly ahead for the year at 46% of budget.
    - This is due to the scout project reimbursements. The majority of project donations were received in 2025, but the spending is in 2026. The total through May deficit is $3,800 for 2026 and there is $200 remaining in the budget to be reimbursed for the project.
- The overall income is slightly ahead at 44% of the budget.

| Account | Comments |
|---|---|
| 1105 · General Fund | ending month balance of $(4,721.59) |
| 4110 · Regular Offering - Pledged | Pledged 40.9% of budget (YTD actuals of $43,255.00 on a budget of $105,795.00) |
| 4116 · Regular Offering - Non-Pledged | 49% of budget (YTD actuals of $29,836.76 on a budget of $60,855.00) |
| Total Income | 44% of budget (YTD actuals of $92,852.63 on a budget of $211,055.00) |
| Total Expense | 45.6% of budget (YTD actuals of $96,147.77 on a budget of $211,055.00) |

# COMMUNITY & OUTREACH

## GREEN SQUARE MEALS

*Serving those in need, one meal at a time, offering not only nourishment, but also a sense of belonging and community fellowship.*

Cedar Rapids is a major global location for food processing with Quaker Oats (Crunch Berries), General Mills (Cheerios), Ingredion (sweeteners), ADM (corn syrup), Cargill (vegetable oils), Red Star Yeast, Heinz (frozen, ready-to-heat food) all located in the area. In Iowa the number of cows is equal to the number of people, pigs outnumber people 7 to 1 and chickens outnumber people 16 to 1. Iowa is ranked #1 in corn, soybean, pork and egg production.

Yet in Cedar Rapids and Iowa 12% of people are facing hunger for many different reasons. Roughly 1 in 6 children face hunger. Many that are dealing with hunger do not qualify for SNAP. Hunger can happen to anyone, but it is often children and seniors who experience this for various reasons including income, expenses, access to affordable health care and other barriers to accessing food.

Green Square Meals is the only evening meal program in Cedar Rapids. They serve approximately 30,000 meals a year. Their doors are open to any person in need of a good hot meal.

Again, this year we are volunteering to help with serving the evening meal in July and September. If you would like to volunteer, please sign up at church or at the link below.

https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080C4BAFAE22AA8-62486390-green

# FELLOWSHIP & CHURCH COMMUNITY

## WILMA CARSON SCHOLARSHIP ESSAY

**By Cole Huedepohl**

**Who or what influenced your educational goal choice*? How have you prepared for it?***

My educational goals have been shaped by a combination of academic experiences, professional work in industry, and a passion for teaching and mentorship. During my undergraduate studies in Biology at Iowa State University, I built a strong foundation in the sciences while also discovering how much I value helping others learn. As a chemistry tutor, I worked closely with students who often found the material challenging, and I found genuine fulfillment in helping them break down complex concepts into something understandable. Seeing students gain confidence and develop their own problem-solving skills was a defining experience for me, and it sparked my interest in teaching as a long-term goal.

My interest in scientific research deepened during my Master of Science in Biomedical Sciences, where I explored gene therapy approaches to Alzheimer's disease. This experience strengthened my curiosity about biochemical mechanisms and the ways in which molecular-level understanding can drive innovation in human health. However, it was my professional experience in laboratory settings that most clearly shaped my decision to pursue a Ph.D. in Biochemistry.

Through my work in industry, I have gained extensive hands-on experience with a wide range of biochemical and analytical techniques. These roles have strengthened my technical skills, attention to detail, and understanding of quality control and reproducibility. At the same time, they have also revealed a gap in my knowledge that I am motivated to fill. While I have become proficient in executing complex protocols, I have found myself increasingly drawn to the underlying principles behind them and as to why certain methods work, how they were developed, and how they can be improved or adapted. This shift from focusing on application to seeking deeper mechanistic understanding is what drives my pursuit of a Ph.D. in Biochemistry.

My long-term goal is to work in academia, where I can lead my own research laboratory while also teaching and mentoring students. Through my program, I will have the opportunity to mentor undergraduate students and serve as a teaching assistant for undergraduate courses, allowing me to begin developing these skills early in my training. I am eager to build on these experiences as I work toward a career that integrates research and education.

I am particularly motivated by the opportunity to contribute to both the generation of new knowledge and the education of future scientists. My experience as a chemistry tutor demonstrated the impact that effective teaching can have on student confidence and understanding. I hope to create a similar environment that encourages curiosity, critical thinking, and persistence in my own classroom and laboratory.

I have prepared for this path through a combination of academic training, professional experience, and a commitment to continuous learning. My laboratory work has developed my ability to analyze data, troubleshoot experiments, and maintain rigorous documentation, while my teaching experience has strengthened my communication skills and adaptability. Together, these experiences have not only clarified my educational goals but have also provided me with the skills and perspective needed to pursue a Ph.D. and ultimately build a career that integrates research, teaching, and mentorship.

**Dads and other grown ups join their kids for children's time on Father's Day.**

## SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

The Session received the Scholarship Committee recommendations and approved the following scholarships:

- The Pokorny and Vavra Scholarship is awarded to Sarah Chadima
- The Wilma Carson Scholarship is awarded to Cole Huedepohl
- The Motycka Scholarship is awarded to:
    - Sarah Chadima
    - Cole Huedepohl
    - Ian Klemm
    - Jacob Manders

We wish these students all the best.

## POOL PARTY!!!

The Zaceks will be hosting a pool party for families (including grandparents) of children birth - 6th grade on July 25. The party will be from 3:00 - 5:00 p.m. at Matt & Dawn Zacek's home. Note that this is an outdoor pool so the party will be weather dependent. Also, the pool is not zero entry so most young children will not be able to touch the bottom. Please be aware of this and provide floaties and life jackets as needed. Feel free to bring a snack to share. You may also bring drinks but no glass is allowed at the pool. Please RSVP to Dawn by July 22.

## OPEN GYM

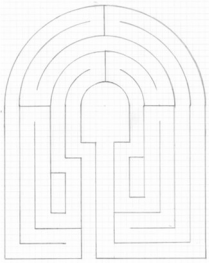
Open gym continues at the LIFE Center on July 19 following worship. A pickleball tournament will be held on August 30 at 11:00 p.m. We will have a sign up for this in advance, with more info to come. If you are interested in participating, please speak with Pastor Julie or Dawn Zacek.

## CHURCH COOKBOOK POTLUCK

We will have a church potluck in connection with Grandparent Sunday on September 13. Please provide a dish that is included in one of the church cookbooks. Maybe you can even make it with your grandparent? Grandchild? Enjoy!

## LABYRITH ENCOUNTER

A special children's event will be held on August 23 at 11:00 a.m.



After morning worship, Daniel Schuett will lead a spiritual experience at the labyrinth out by the playground equipment. All children can use the labyrinth. Parents are welcome to participate too.

## FIND YOUR PEOPLE BIBLE STUDY

Join us for a light meal in the Fellowship Hall with the youth at 6:30 p.m. and stay for Bible Study in the Living Room two Wednesdays a month, June through September. Our study will focus on our relationship with God and His plan for us to thrive as a community. You do not need to have read the book, *Find Your People* to participate in the Bible study. If you are unable to attend on Wednesday evenings but would like to complete the Bible study, please pick up a workbook in the Living Room.

Session 1 June 24
Session 2 July 15
Session 3 July 22
Session 4 August 5
Session 5 August 19
Session 6 September 2
Session 7 September 16

**The Ladies' Auxiliary provided a beautiful cake for the June 14 musical celebration.**

LIFE
CENTER
Pickleball
TOURNAMENT
August 30
11:00 a.m. - 1:30 p.m.
LIFE Center
@ 11100 Spanish Road, Ely
First Presbyterian Church near Ely
3 match guarantee(Each match 2 sets, assigned partners)
Limit 24 participants
Maid-rite lunch included
$15 adults / $10 students
Sign up by August 23
Final Fundraiser
for the Labyrinth

# YOUTH GROUP

Hello from Youth Group!

The Youth Group met each week on Wednesdays in June, combining one Wednesday evening with the "Find Your People" book study group for dinner! Midweek Mash will keep going throughout the Summer. **Activities on any given Wednesday will expand to include dinner, Bible Study, crafts, movies and of course, playing in the Life Center.** Parents: Please watch your email for information about special events and times when extra helpers may be needed. **Midweek Mash is for all youth and Youth Group Alumni.**

Youth and Parents: Please check your emails concerning Mission Projects and our Mission Trip.

**Thank you to all who continue to support Youth Group with redeemable cans and bottles!** Remember, water and Gatorade bottles and anything without carbonation cannot be redeemed; these items can go into your own recycling at home!

Also, whenever you have **shoe boxes to donate for Operation Christmas Child**, please bring them to church and put them in the youth room. Summer is a great time for wrapping these in preparation for the packing event in November. Please bring SHOE Boxes, but recycle BOOT boxes as they are too big for OCC.

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

Blessings~
Angie Zahradnik Ehle

**Handbells pose at the June 14th musical celebration.**

## YOUTH SCHEDULE: JULY & AUGUST 2026

**Wednesday, July 1:** 6:30 p.m. Midweek Mash

**Sunday, July 5:** 9:30 a.m. Worship

**Wednesday, July 8:** 6:30 p.m. Midweek Mash TBA

**Sunday, July 12:** 9:30 a.m. Worship

**Wednesday, July 15:** 6:30 p.m. Midweek Mash TBA

**Sunday, July 19:** 9:30 a.m. Worship

**Wednesday, July 22:** 6:30 p.m. Midweek Mash

**Sunday, July 26:** 9:30 a.m. Worship

**Wednesday, July 29:** 6:30 p.m. Midweek Mash

**Sunday, August 2:** 9:30 a.m. Worship

**Wednesday, August 5:** 6:30 p.m. Midweek Mash

**Sunday, August 9:** 9:30 a.m. Worship

**Wednesday, August 12:** 6:30 p.m. Midweek Mash

**Sunday, August 16:** 9:30 a.m. Worship

**Wednesday, August 19:** 6:30 p.m. Midweek Mash

**Sunday, August 23:** 9:30 a.m. Worship

**Wednesday, August 26:** 6:30 p.m. Midweek Mash

**Sunday, August 30:** 9:30 a.m. Worship

**Marlene M. and Tina E. pose with the cake at the June 14th musical celebration.**

# First Presbyterian Church near Ely Calendar, July 2026

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | **1**<br>9:30 Bible Study<br>11:30 Chair Yoga<br>6:30 YG MW Mash | **2**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | **3**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | **4**<br>**HAPPY INDEPENDENCE DAY!!!** |
| **5 Food Pantry Sunday**<br>**Holy Communion**<br>9:30 Worship<br>10:30 Fellowship | **6**<br>10:00 Chair Yoga | **7**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | **8**<br>9:30 Bible Study<br>11:30 Chair Yoga<br>6:30 YG MW Mash | **9**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | **10**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | **11** |
| **12**<br>9:30 Worship<br>10:30 Fellowship<br>11:00 CROP Walk Meeting | **13**<br>10:00 Chair Yoga | **14**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | **15**<br>9:30 Bible Study<br>11:30 Chair Yoga<br>6:30 YG MW Mash<br>6:30 Bible Study | **16**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours<br>6:30 Session Meeting | **17**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | **18**<br>5:30 Potluck<br>6:00 Card Club |
| **19**<br>9:30 Worship<br>10:30 Fellowship<br>11:00 Open Gym | **20 Newsletter deadline**<br>10:00 Chair Yoga | **21**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | **22**<br>9:30 Bible Study<br>11:30 Chair Yoga<br>6:30 YG MW Mash<br>6:30 Bible Study | **23**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | **24**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | **25**<br>3:00 Pool Party @ Zaceks |
| **26**<br>9:30 Worship<br>10:30 Fellowship | **27**<br>10:00 Chair Yoga | **28**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours<br>6:00 LMNOP | **29**<br>9:30 Bible Study<br>11:30 Chair Yoga<br>6:30 YG MW Mash | **30**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | **31**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | |

# First Presbyterian Church near Ely Calendar, August 2026

| Sun | Mon | Tue | Wed | Thu | Fri | Sat |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | **1** |
| **2 Food Pantry Sunday**<br>**Guest worship leader**<br>**Rev. Melody Oltmann**<br>9:30 Worship<br>10:30 Fellowship | **3**<br>10:00 Chair Yoga | **4**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | **5**<br>11:30 Chair Yoga<br>6:30 YG MW Mash<br>6:30 Bible Study | **6**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | **7**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | 8 |
| **9**<br>9:30 Worship<br>10:30 Fellowship | **10**<br>10:00 Chair Yoga | **11**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | **12**<br>9:30 Bible Study<br>11:30 Chair Yoga<br>6:30 YG MW Mash | **13**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | **14**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | **15**<br>5:30 Potluck<br>6:00 Card Club |
| **16**<br>9:30 Worship<br>10:30 Fellowship | **17**<br>10:00 Chair Yoga | **18**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | **19**<br>9:30 Bible Study<br>11:30 Chair Yoga<br>6:30 YG MW Mash<br>6:30 Bible Study | **20 Newsletter deadline**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours<br>6:30 Session Meeting | **21**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | **22** |
| **23 Backpack Dedication**<br>9:30 Worship<br>10:30 Fellowship<br>11:00 Labyrinth Encounter | **24**<br>10:00 Chair Yoga | **25**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours<br>6:00 LMNOP | **26**<br>9:30 Bible Study<br>11:30 Chair Yoga<br>6:30 YG MW Mash | **27**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | **28**<br>9:00-12:00 Office Hours | **29** |
| **30**<br>9:30 Worship<br>10:30 Fellowship<br>11:00 Pickleball | **31**<br>10:00 Chair Yoga | | | | | |

First Presbyterian Church Near Ely

11100 Spanish Road
Ely, Iowa 52227

**A community musical celebration was held at the American Legion on June 14. Thank you to everyone how attended!**