May 2026

The Salt Shaker

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH NEAR ELY
11100 Spanish Road, Ely, Iowa 52227
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319-848-4624 office@elypres.org

FROM THE PASTOR

In May 2025, I began a sabbatical, made possible by a generous grant from the Clergy Renewal Program at the Lilly Foundation. The experience, though long anticipated, seemed to pass in the blink of an eye. Now, looking back, a year has gone by since. I am deeply grateful to the church family for your care and support for me and my family throughout this journey. Your kindness and support means so much—thank you. While I was away, I prayed that God would surprise and inspire you through the worship leadership and the various scheduled activities. Upon returning, it was uplifting to hear your stories and witness how God has been at work in your lives.

One of my sabbatical projects involved researching and experiencing my ancestral history. I dedicated many hours to using online resources, tracing family lines, gathering documents, collecting dates, and pinpointing places on maps. This journey led me to discover ancestors who lived in the colony of Pennsylvania and fought against King George III in the Revolutionary War. As a result, I applied to the Daughters of the American Revolution, and after a six-month process, I was accepted in March. This connection to our nation's history is personally meaningful and enriching for my family.

This year marks the anniversary of the Semiquincentennial. On July 4, 2026, as a nation, we will commemorate 250 years since the signing of the Declaration of Independence, which listed 27 grievances against the British monarchy. This historic milestone invites us to pause and reflect not only on our past but also on what these events mean for us today and for future generations.

In celebrating our nation's anniversary, let us remember our ultimate allegiance to the everlasting King of Kings and Prince of Peace—Jesus Christ. As we honor our country's past, let us also seek to grow in our discipleship, committing ourselves each day to faithfulness and spiritual growth. This is an opportunity to reaffirm our dedication, allowing our faith to guide us as we navigate the challenges and opportunities of the present and future.

In Christ,
Pastor Julie

WORSHIP & PROGRAM

MAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

May 3: John 14:1-14, But, Lord?
Liturgist: Misti Huedepohl
Ushers: Fred & Sarah Harris
Greeters: Les & Sue Feyerabend

May 10: Mothers' Day. 1 John 5:1-6, Good Coaching
Liturgist: Sarah Harris
Ushers: Jim & Judy Serbousek
Greeters: Markham & Karasel Harris and family

May 17: High School Senior Recognition. John 17:1-11, Still in the World
Liturgist: Dan Chadima
Ushers: Markham & Karasel Harris and family
Greeters: Karen Zacek

May 24: Pentecost. Holy Communion. Music Appreciation. Acts 2:1-21, The Spirit's Influence
Liturgist: Janet Holland
Ushers: Bob & Jean Kolek
Greeters: Nora Fetter
May 31: 2 Corinthians 13:11-13, Sleep Lightly
Liturgist: Jim Serbousek
Ushers: Larry & Deb Krohn
Greeters: Eleanor Burke

MAY HYMNS OF WORSHIP

There are several meaningful hymns coming up this month. Below is a bit of background on two well-known and beloved hymns of our faith.

It Is Well with My Soul

This beloved hymn was written by Chicago attorney Horatio Spafford in 1873, following a series of profound losses. After the Great Chicago Fire significantly impacted his finances, Spafford arranged for his wife and four daughters to travel ahead of him to Europe while he remained behind on business. During the voyage, their ship collided with another vessel and sank. His wife, Anna, survived, but all four daughters were lost.

As Spafford later traveled to meet his grieving wife, tradition holds that he wrote the words to this hymn near the place where his daughters had perished. Whether composed entirely at sea or completed later, the hymn emerged from deep personal sorrow and remarkable faith.

Set to music by Philip Bliss, the hymn does not deny grief or suffering. Rather, it bears witness to a peace grounded in trust in God, even in the midst of unimaginable loss. This may be why its words have brought comfort to generations facing hardship, illness, and mourning.

A line worth noticing:
"When sorrows like sea billows roll…"

Knowing this story, the words "It is well with my soul" may sound less like sentiment and more like testimony.

Breathe on Me, Breath of God

This hymn, written in the 19th century by Edwin Hatch, is a simple and deeply personal prayer for renewal by the Holy Spirit. Its language draws on some of the most ancient and powerful images in Scripture, where God's breath brings life, most notably in Genesis 2:7, and again when the risen Christ breathes on his disciples in John 20:22.

Unlike more triumphant hymns about the Spirit, this one is quiet, almost like a whispered prayer:

> "Breathe on me, Breath of God,
> Fill me with life anew…"

It is less about dramatic moments and more about ongoing transformation, asking not only for comfort, but for the reshaping of the heart and will.

A Pentecost Thread

As we move toward Pentecost, this hymn gently prepares us. Pentecost is often associated with wind, fire, and bold proclamation, but this hymn reminds us of another dimension of the Spirit's work:

- Not only power, but presence
- Not only movement, but renewal
- Not only the church sent out, but the soul made new

SCHOLARSHIP FORMS

Scholarship forms are available starting April 1st for members of our congregation seeking to continue their education. There are 3 Scholarship Funds. Each Fund has separate guidelines and application forms. All applications and accompanying essays are due June 1st, whether for summer 2026 session, fall semester 2026 or spring semester 2027. Scholarship information and forms are available at church through any Scholarship Committee member (Phil Huedepohl, Pat Kilberger, Jeff Reist or Penny Serbousek) or by email to pat.kilberger@gmail.com

CHURCH BUSINESS

FINANCIAL UPDATE as of 31-Mar-2026 (25% through the year)

March ran about an $8,000 deficit between the donations and expenses. The church averages about $18,000 in monthly expenses.

The overall expenses are on track for the year at 27% of budget. The overall income is slightly ahead at 32% of the budget.

The LIFE Center income was $1,838 in March. It is worth noting that the Life Center annual budget is $2,350 and the revenue through March is $3,800.

Account	Comments
1105 · General Fund	ending month balance of $8,953.84
4110 · Regular Offering - Pledged	28.1% of budget (YTD actuals of $29,725.00 on a budget of $105,795.00)
4116 · Regular Offering - Non-Pledged	37.7% of budget (YTD actuals of $22,956.58 on a budget of $60,855.00)
Total Income	31.9% of budget (YTD actuals of $67,382.37 on a budget of $211,055.00)
Total Expense	26.5% of budget (YTD actuals of $55,931.82 on a budget of $211,055.00)

PATRIOTIC PROGRAM

Join musicians from First Presbyterian Church near Ely and St. John Lutheran Church for a community musical program to celebrate our nation's 250th anniversary. The program will be held at the Ely American Legion at 2:00 p.m., Sunday, June 14. If you are interested in participating, please contact Stephanie Buonadonna or Sharon Furler.

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 April, June, 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

FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR AWARD ANNOUNCEMENT

We are thrilled to share that Sophia Chadima has been awarded a Fulbright Scholar Award to the Czech Republic for the upcoming 26-27 academic year — one of the most prestigious academic honors in the world. Fulbright Scholars are selected for their excellence, leadership, and commitment to building understanding across cultures.

Sophia will be an English Teaching Assistant at a Secondary Agricultural School in Tábor, Czechia. The school has approximately 310 students, around 75% of whom are female.

One of the most unique aspects of this placement is the school's strong practical and hands-on approach to education. Students are actively involved in work on the school farm, in the botanical garden, and in a variety of agricultural and environmental activities. Extracurricular opportunities include horseback riding, caring for horses and domestic animals, beekeeping, forestry work, welding, and even driver's training for both passenger cars and tractors. The botanical garden also hosts exhibitions, lectures, and musical evenings throughout the year.

The school is excited to involve Sophia in many aspects of school life, whether through activities on the school farm, workshops outside regular classes, lectures, excursions, or helping organize seasonal events such as Halloween celebrations and other community activities during the school year. They are also eager to introduce Sophia to the local cultural scene and the international community in Tábor.

Given Sophia's background in environmental policy, her previous experience with horses, and her enthusiasm for working in an agricultural school environment, the school is excited about the possibility of having someone whose interests align so naturally with their programs and activities.

Please join us in congratulating Sophia on this outstanding honor!

FROM THE BOHEMIAN HILLS

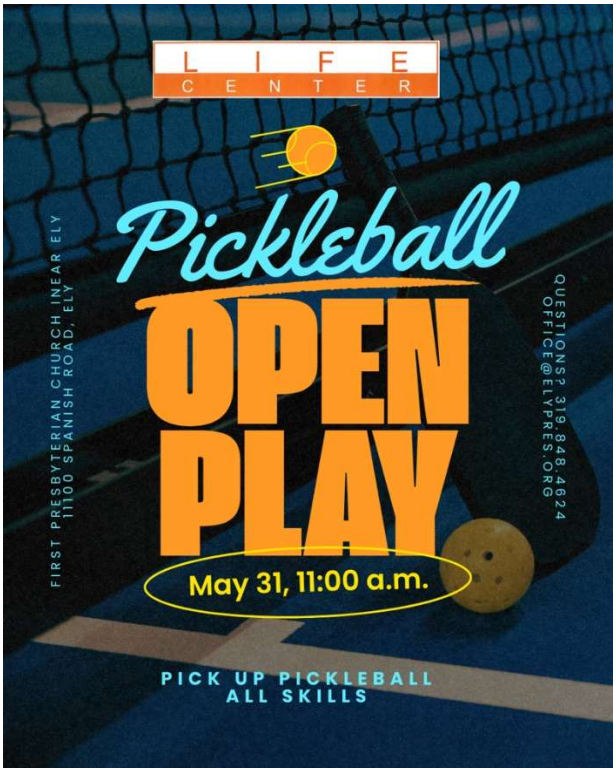
Randy Reyman will be in the area talking about his book, From the Bohemian Hills.

On Friday May 15, 6:00 p.m., he will be appearing at the Swisher Library joined by Linda Hey who will discuss some history of the region.

The next day, Saturday, he will be doing a "meet and greet" at Next Page Books in Cedar Rapids from 12:00 to 2:00 p.m.

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 May 29, 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!



FAITH DEVELOPMENT

WEDNESDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY

Wednesday Bible Study: Marys. We are examining each Mary recorded In the Bible during Bible study at 9:30 a.m. on Wednesdays.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Sunday School continues at 10:45 a.m. with a children's class and a youth class.

2026 EASTER LILIES

Easter morn with lilies fair
Fills the church with perfumes rare,
As their clouds of incense rise,
Sweetest offerings to the skies.
Stately lilies pure and white
Flooding darkness with their light,
Bloom and sorrow drifts away,
On this holy hallow'd day.
Easter Lilies bending low
in the golden afterglow,
Bear a message from the sod
To the heavenly towers of God.
-Louise Lewin Matthews

The Youth Group would like to thank you for honoring and remembering loved ones through Easter lilies. The lily is a beautiful trumpet-like symbol of purity, hope, and life.

Christal Bressler In Honor of Les & Sue Feyerabend; Al Bressler

Christal Bressler In Memory of Sandy Bressler

George & Joanne Chadima In Memory of Lillian & Milton Chadima

George & Joanne Chadima In Memory of Joe & Esther Cerveny

Joan Cross In Memory of James Cross and Gervase Driscoll

Bob Zvacek, Todd, Alyson, Morgan & Makenna Eadie In Memory of Marilyn Zvacek

Jan & Sharon Furler & Family In Memory of Lumir & Lenore Biderman

Ted and Becky Grenis In Honor of Myleena Grenis

Ted and Becky Grenis In Memory of Emily Grenis

Ted and Becky Grenis In Memory of Marvin and Esther Larimer

Ted and Becky Grenis In Honor of The Bestees Friends

Ted and Becky Grenis In Memory of Bill Rockafellow

Larry & Theresa Harder In Memory of Karren Harder

Larry & Theresa Harder In Memory of Janice & Wally Hootman

Darla and Alivia Meyer In Memory of Barb Zahradnik

Sharon Novak In Memory of Donald Novak

Sharon Novak In Memory of Sierra Mitchell

Jeff & Diane Reist, Lauren & Ryan, Hailee & Chance In Memory of Edwin & Martha Buresh

Jeff & Diane Reist, Lauren & Ryan, Hailee & Chance In Memory of Charles & Emily & Steve Reist

Jeff & Diane Reist, Lauren & Ryan, Hailee & Chance In Memory of Richard & Eutona Buresh, Scott Buresh, Dale & Dennis Buresh

The Schuetts In Memory of Gene Anderson

Shirley & Kevin Bailey & Family, Jim & Judy Serbousek & Family, Bill & Penny Serbousek & Family In Memory of Wes & Lillian Serbousek

Bill & Penny Serbousek & family In Memory of Curly & Lillian Ware

Marjorie Thirkettle & Joan Peck In Memory of Leonard & Mildred Peck

Marjorie Thirkettle & Joan Peck In Memory of William & Ruth Thirkettle

Norm & Terry Zahradnik In Honor of Our Lord Jesus Christ

Norm & Terry Zahradnik In Memory of All Our Loved Ones

Karen Zacek In Memory of Tony Zacek, Chas & Adeline Koss, Chuck & Wayne Koss

YOUTH GROUP

Hello from Youth Group!

Thank you to all who have supported YG with redeemable cans and bottles! Remember, water and Gatorade bottles and anything without carbonation cannot be redeemed; These items can certainly go into your own recycling at home!

Also, if, and 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 - please recycle BOOT boxes as they are too big for OCC.

In April, youth helped out at church by raking the rocks back into the driveway by the white fence. **Thanks to Jim and Judy S** for guiding this team of young people to help keep our church grounds looking great!

Youth also continued the **Bible-in-a-Year** reading plan in April, and **All are welcome to join us - jump in anytime!** An email is sent out with the weekly reading plan. Each week of reading starts on a Monday. Please let Angie know your email address, and I'll send the reading plans direct to your email inbox!

Midweek Mash is meeting weekly at 6:30pm, with dinner followed by activities and playing in the LIFE Center - All are welcome to join us for dinner and fun!

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

YOUTH SCHEDULE: MAY 2026

Saturday, May 2nd:
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Help with Labyrinth at church, lunch provided

Sunday, May 3rd:
9:30 a.m. Worship
10:30 a.m. Youth Group Sunday School

Wednesday, May 6th:
6:30 p.m. Midweek Mash at the LIFE Center

Sunday, May 10th: MOTHER'S DAY
9:30 a.m. Worship
NO Sunday School or Youth Group

Wednesday, May 13th:
6:30 p.m. Midweek Mash at the LIFE Center

Saturday, May 16th:
9:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. Help with Labrinth at church, lunch provided

Sunday, May 17th:
9:30 a.m. Worship
10:30 a.m. Youth Group Sunday School

Wednesday, May 20th:
6:30 p.m. Midweek Mash

Sunday, May 24th: Memorial Day Weekend
9:30 a.m. Worship
10:30 a.m. Youth Group Sunday School

Wednesday, May 27th:
6:30 p.m. Midweek Mash at the LIFE Center

Sunday, May 31st:
9:30 a.m. Worship
10:30 a.m. YG Sunday School Ice Cream Social

Wednesday, June 3rd:
6:30 p.m. Midweek Mash at the LIFE Center

Sunday, June 7th:
9:30 a.m. Worship

Wednesday, June 10th:
6:30 p.m. Midweek Mash at the LIFE Center

First Presbyterian Church near Ely Calendar, May 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 9:00-12:00 Office Hours	**2** 9:00 Labyrinth Build
3 Food Pantry Sunday 7:00 Sonrise Service 7:45 Breakfast 9:30 Worship 10:30 Fellowship	**4** 10:00 Chair Yoga	**5** 9:00-12:00 Office Hours	**6** 9:30 Bible Study 11:30 Chair Yoga 6:00 Comm. Choir Practice 6:30 YG MW Mash	**7** 9:00-12:00 Office Hours	**8** 9:00-12:00 Office Hours	9
10 Mother's Day 9:30 Worship 10:30 Fellowship 10:45 Sunday School	**11** 10:00 Chair Yoga	**12** 9:00-12:00 Office Hours	**13** 9:30 Bible Study 11:30 Chair Yoga 6:00 Comm. Choir Practice 6:30 YG MW Mash	**14** 9:00-12:00 Office Hours 6:30 Session Meeting	**15** 9:00-12:00 Office Hours	**16** 9:00 Labyrinth Build 5:30 Potluck 6:00 Card Club
17 Grad Recognition 9:30 Worship 10:30 Fellowship 10:45 Sunday School	**18** 10:00 Chair Yoga	**19** 9:00-12:00 Office Hours	**20 Newsletter deadline** 9:30 Bible Study 11:30 Chair Yoga 6:00 Comm. Choir Practice 6:30 YG MW Mash	**21** 9:00-12:00 Office Hours	**22** 9:00-12:00 Office Hours	**23**
24 Music Recognition 9:30 Worship 10:30 Fellowship 10:45 Sunday School	**25** 11:00 Memorial Day Service at Rogers Grove Cemetery	**26** 9:00-12:00 Office Hours 6:00 LMNOP	**27** 9:30 Bible Study 11:30 Chair Yoga 6:00 Comm. Choir Practice 6:30 YG MW Mash	**28** 9:00-12:00 Office Hours	**29** 9:00-12:00 Office Hours	**30**
31 Noisy Can Sunday 9:30 Worship 10:30 Ice Cream Social 10:45 Sunday School 11:00 Pick Up Pickle Ball						

First Presbyterian Church Near Ely

11100 Spanish Road
Ely, Iowa 52227

Daniel S. and Laurelei H. receive scout patches

Volunteers work at Green Square Meals

Volunteers work at Green Square Meals