

# THE TOWER

## JULY 2025

DECORAH FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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### Some clarifying questions we were asked, and I ask you to consider include:

Who could my church begin building relationships with?

Are there any people within my church or community that I label as “them”?

How do we increase our understanding of one another?

How might worship, fellowship, or small groups need to change to create space for those who are not already part of our community? \*

Take some time to consider this core value and what it means or how it might look, or even how it DOES look here in Decorah. Talk to each other. Let ideas flow and fly. Let us live into this core value together.

Welcome to July. The first half of the year 2025 is behind us and the future is before.

Last month was the Annual Conference in Iowa. While there, we were introduced to the core values that came out of the town hall meetings across Iowa last year with the bishop and her team. These are values that arose in conversations across the state that we as United Methodists strive to live into and that we United Methodists across the state have stated are who we are. There are six total core values for our conference that came out of those conversations. I would like to share one a month for the rest of the year with you along with the questions we were asked to discuss at our tables during the conference.

The first core value is Belonging and building relationships. “We nurture belonging by emphasizing the importance of building relationships rooted in love and shared faith within a supportive Christian community.” If we look at this through the Wesleyan quadrilateral we see support for this core value.

**Scripture:** Ephesians 4:1-6 “... Conduct yourselves with all humility, gentleness, and patience. Accept each other with love and make an effort to preserve the unity of the Spirit with the peace that ties you together. You are one body and one spirit, just as God also called you in one hope...”

**Tradition:** “[Jesus] commands us to ‘build up one another.’ ... [A]ccording to the judgment of our Lord and the writings of his apostles, it is only when we are ‘knit together’ that we ‘have nourishment from him’, and ‘increase with the increase of God’.”

– John Wesley New Testament Notes on 1 Cor 15:47

**Reason:** We know that individual humans have varying talents or ways of functioning. We also know that social groups tend to cluster into “we” and “they.” However, God designed us to need one another and calls us to break down barriers and fears to live as one Body of Christ.

**Experience:** The connection between Immanuel UMC and Immanuel Gospel Fellowship started as a simple space sharing arrangement when IGF needed a new place to call home. Over time, relationships began to form that led to IGF members formally joining the UMC and support for six individuals becoming candidates for ministry.

Blessings,

Rev. Cat

(\*all info comes from the conference brochure available on the conference website or upon request of Rev. Stokes)

## Decorah Community Food Pantry: 110 Railroad St.

Thanks for your generosity toward our Congregational Campaign Summer Drive. Nancy Ruen has made a couple of trips to the pantry with our Donations and have contributed about 200 pounds for the month of June! Nancy is hoping that we might be able to double that amount this month! As of June 22, we have collected \$465 towards the Farmers Market Coupon program! You are all amazing! Help yourself to a shopping list from the cart in the back of the sanctuary or a table in the fellowship hall. Don't forget that you can drop off any of your extra garden produce directly at the pantry Monday-Friday 8:00 am-3:00 pm. Here is a list of items that are popular during the summer months:

\*Ketchup \*Mustard \*Mayonnaise \*Salad dressing \*Baked Beans \*Salt \*Graham Crackers \*Cooking oil  
\*Cereal \*Elbow Macaroni \* Spaghetti \*5# bag Sugar \*5# bag Flour \*Tin foil



## Keeping Landan Folkedahl in Our Prayers



These are a couple of photos from our Blessing Service before Landan was deployed for his service in the National Guard. We pray that he stays safe as he continues serving our country with his strength and kind and loving spirit. We long for the day when he can join us back in our sanctuary.

## July Birthdays

1<sup>st</sup>: Johanna Beierle  
2<sup>nd</sup>: Lynne Kephart  
3<sup>rd</sup>: David Scott  
5<sup>th</sup>: Lawrence Jensen  
6<sup>th</sup>: Sharon Rossman  
7<sup>th</sup>: Kiana Folkedahl  
9<sup>th</sup>: Elaine Thompson  
11<sup>th</sup>: Avryn Sibley  
13<sup>th</sup>: Kim Bosworh  
15<sup>th</sup>: Cheryl Pellett  
16<sup>th</sup>: Bob Watson  
19<sup>th</sup>: Syd Stephenson  
21<sup>st</sup>: Elsa Johnson  
23<sup>rd</sup>: LeRoy McClintock  
23<sup>rd</sup>: Steve Ransom  
25<sup>th</sup>: Jerry Thompson  
26<sup>th</sup>: Jim Dale  
26<sup>th</sup>: Barb Johnson  
26<sup>th</sup>: Deanna McClintock  
30<sup>th</sup>: Linda Watson

## July Book Club

The FUMC Book Club will meet on Thursday, July 17<sup>th</sup> at 2:00pm to discuss *A Great Country* by Shilpi Gowda. We will be meeting at the home of Jan Heikes located at 300 ½ W. Water St. in Decorah. If you would like to attend, please contact Jane Hardy at 563-382-5316 or email [jhardy3333@aol.com](mailto:jhardy3333@aol.com).



**July Altar Flowers will be provided by Syd Stephenson. If you would like to help with an arrangement, contact Syd at 563-379-5420.**



## Summer Music / Hymn Sing

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of the month through the summer, the congregation is invited to participate in a hymn sing. If you have a favorite hymn, write it down on a piece of paper and put it in the basket that's been placed on the bulletin table. Over the course of the summer before choir starts up again after Labor Day, we'll try to sing as many as you wish. You're also invited to participate on any Sunday with your own contribution to the summer music be it instrumental, voice, poem, whistle a happy tune, story, or share something special in your life. Please contact Sally Stromseth in church or call 563-382-4088 if you are interested.

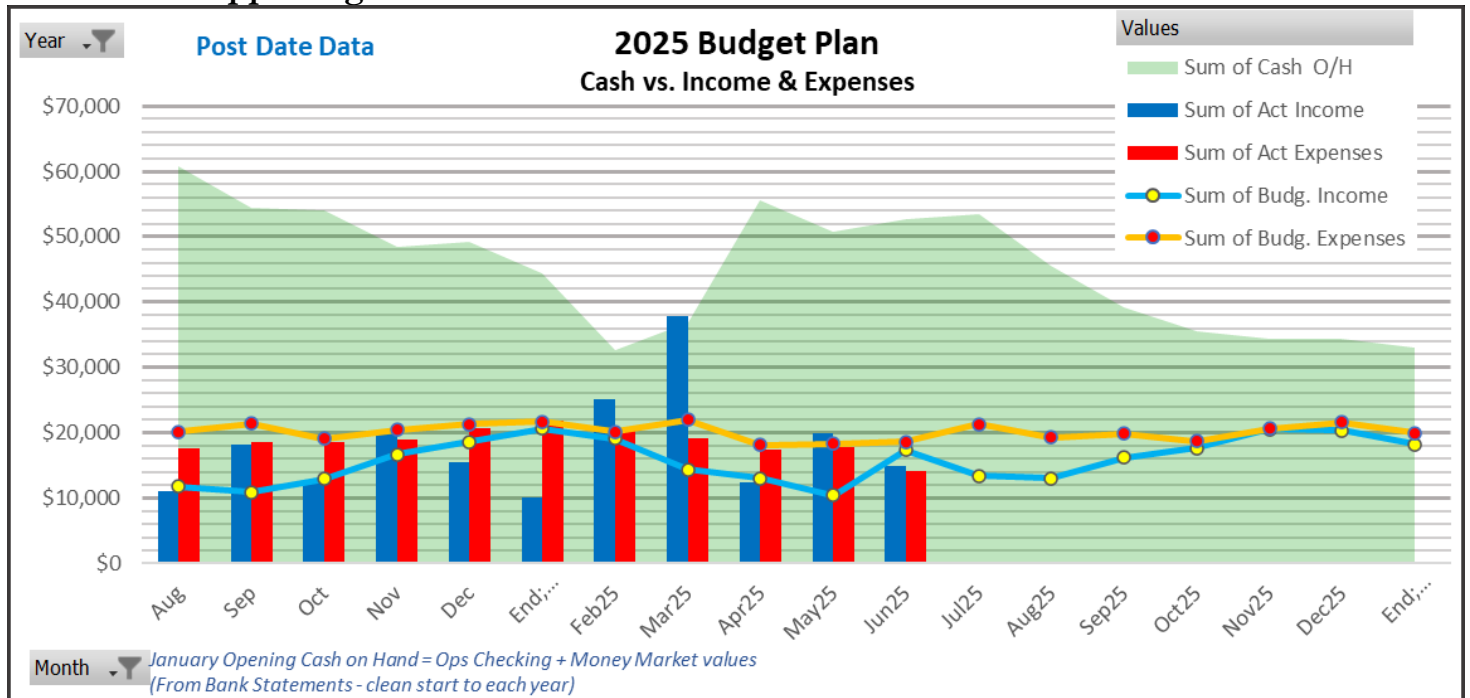
## Treasurer's Corner

Hot enough for you yet? It's Iowa remember... 😊

So, for July we're going to call this "Directionally Correct" since I need to publish this before our last week of deposits and billing (mostly salaries). The numbers presented here are only the actual numbers I have so far for the month of June:

- Income is currently at \$15K out of a plan of \$17K; recall that we had a late May deposit that drove much higher than expected income for that month, so we're probably seeing an "offset" this month.
- Expenses are currently at \$14K out of a plan of 19K. Even with our "average" outstanding salary amounts, we should come in under the \$19K budgeted amount...fingers crossed.
- The year-end operational cash position has now lifted above the \$30K level (easily seen in the chart below). This is a very welcome situation!

Here is the supporting Chart:



Notice the large income over-delivery in May and what appears to be a corresponding "offset" in June...however, the net effect is still extremely positive! The forecasted trends are pretty much the same as what we have been calling all year.

This positive outcome allowed us to avoid having to tap into the Trustees' "stop-gap" apportionment funding once again...and as I mentioned last month, if these positive trends continue, we should be able to avoid needing those dollars in the future.

Now that summer is upon us, I'm guessing that some of you would like to know how our solar panels are performing...well I do track the monthly savings, so here is our current YTD results: (see next page)



## Treasurer's Corner (Con't)

<b>Alliant Savings History</b>				
<b>Bill Date</b> ▼	<b>Gross</b> ▼	<b>Savings</b> ▼	<b>Net Bill</b> ▼	<b>% Savin</b> ▼
1/16/2025	\$ 643.00	\$ 6.33	\$ 636.67	1%
2/18/2025	\$ 601.10	\$ 12.95	\$ 588.15	2%
3/18/2025	\$ 517.53	\$ 44.95	\$ 472.58	9%
4/18/2025	\$ 373.96	\$ 222.83	\$ 151.13	60%
5/19/2025	\$ 358.73	\$ 267.58	\$ 91.15	75%
6/17/2025	\$ 331.29	\$ 257.34	\$ 73.95	78%

It's pretty clear that when the sun is out in force, our savings accelerate!!

No new information on the Stewardship campaign...so I probably won't touch on this again until something new comes along.

### For the Capital Campaign:

- Just a simple update this time - Gary was able to make another principal payment of \$10K in June so our principal balance is now down to \$36,110! Wonderful progress...remember if you are able to advance your commitments (pay early) or add to them (above and beyond) this would be a tremendous blessing for our church.

As always, thanks to each of you for your diligent support of Decorah First UMC!

Blessings to all,  
 Steve Rarick, Treasurer - Decorah 1<sup>st</sup> UMC  
 (847) 830-9891 mobile

## United Women of Faith Corner

Wednesday, July 2 at 9:30

Join us for a relaxing morning at Phelps Park, shelter # 1. Bring your own coffee and a brown bag lunch if you'd like. Book discussion about 11:00, Michelle Obama's "The Light We Carry".

The book for our August meeting will be from the UWFaith reading list, "The Book Woman's Daughter" by Kim Michelle Richardson. We've ordered several copies and will have them available during coffee time as soon as they arrive.

Bingo!

We will be hosting bingo at Wellington July 29 at 1:00. Please arrive about 12:30 to help set up.

Quilters will meet Tuesday mornings 9:00.

Mat weaving on Wednesday morning July 16 from 10:00 – noon.

## Announcements:

- ❖ Ellie (secretary) will be out of office from July 22<sup>nd</sup> - August 1<sup>st</sup>. If anyone is interested in volunteering in the office to answer phones and greet people, please contact the office.
- ❖ The People's Park - Resistance through Celebration at Effigy Mounds. Sunday, July 6th from 10 - 2:00. Live music, face painting, button making, and lots of interactive learning! All are welcome!
- ❖ Singing for Justice. Water Street Plaza. Join others in a short round of "Singing for Justice" this Saturday and the 2nd Saturday of the month, July 12, August 9, and September 13. Hosted by "Grieving for Gaza". All are welcome!
- ❖ Center for Belonging Folk School presents Song Writing Workshop & Campfire Singing with Paul Vasile. Jul 12<sup>th</sup> – register for one or both events:
  - 1-4pm: Song catching workshop
  - 6:30pm-onward: Campfire Singing with PaulNo musical training required! Find more info and register at [centerforbelonging.earth](http://centerforbelonging.earth).
- ❖ Again, this year the courthouse churches are working together to host the Hygge Hut during Nordic Fest. We are looking for volunteers and Decorah Lutheran has set up a sign-up link for us to use. If you are willing and able to volunteer, any amount of time or snacks, etc. please sign up so we know you are helping out. It would be greatly appreciated as this allows us to provide a place for families to rest and cool off while also enjoy some family friendly activities and get to know the courthouse churches better. Here is the link:  
<https://forms.office.com/r/nK7b29dBvx>

## Leisure

By W.H. Davies

What is this life if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.

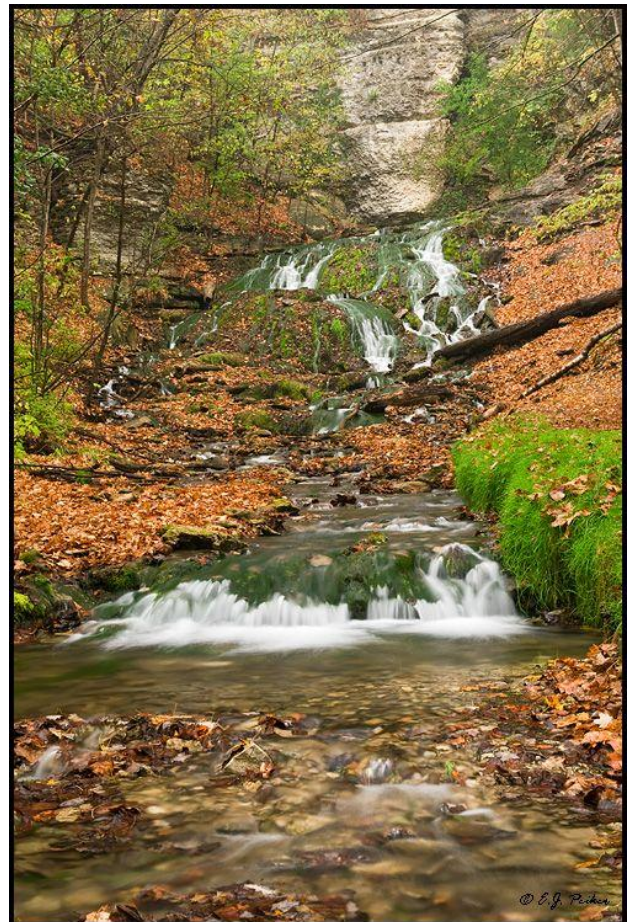
No time to stand beneath the boughs  
And stare as long as sheep or cows.

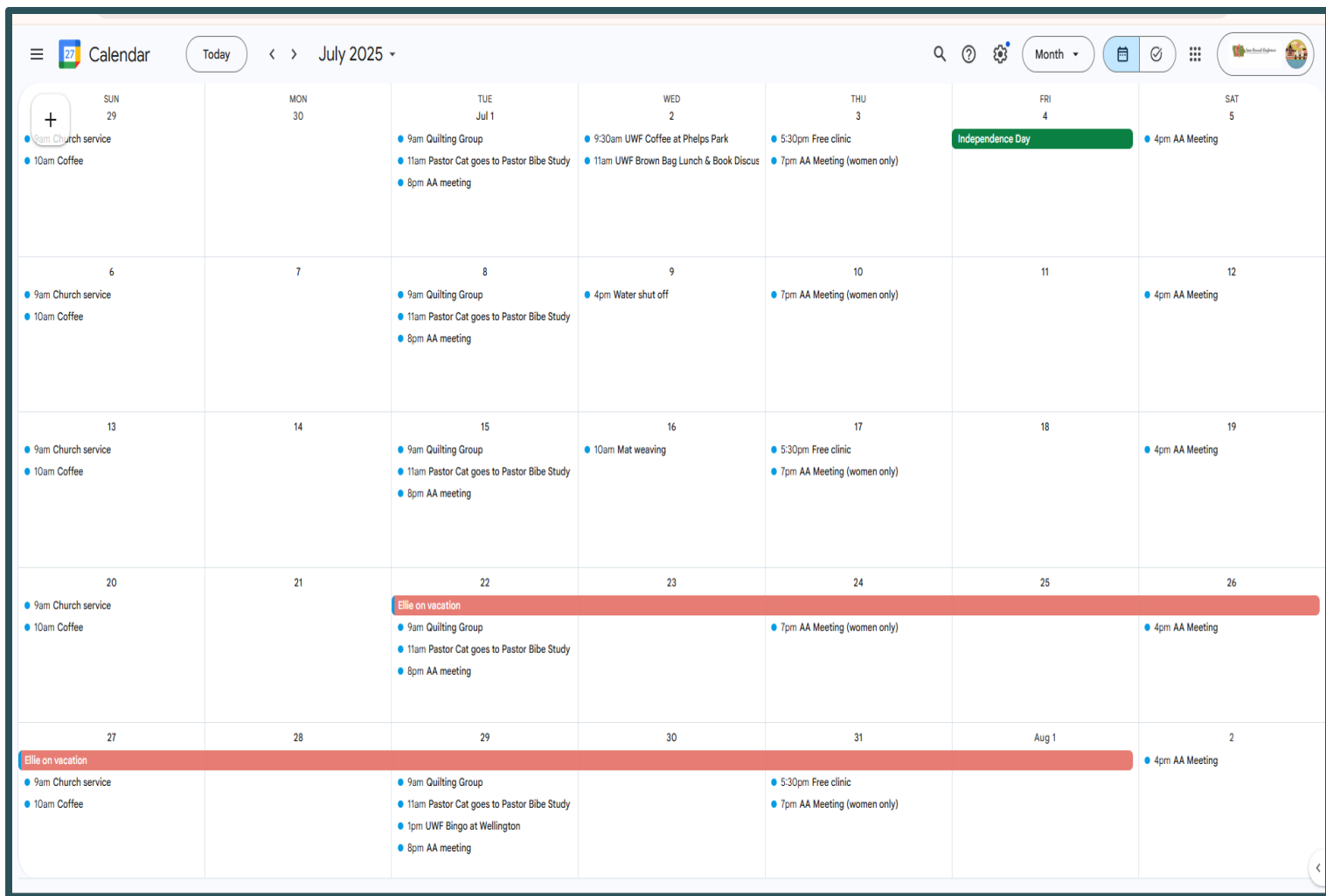
No time to see, in broad daylight,  
Streams full of stars, like skies at night.

No time to turn at Beauty's glance,  
And watch her feet, how they can dance.

No time to wait till her mouth can  
Enrich that smile her eyes began.

A poor life this is if, full of care,  
We have no time to stand and stare.





## July Worship Leaders

### Coffee Servers:

**July 6**

Sharon Folkedahl & Deb Tekippe

**July 13**

Candace & Dave Arp

**July 20**

Sherry & Brian Schilling

**July 27**

Syd Stephenson & Nancy Ruen

### Liturgist:

Mark Landas

Steve Luse

Barb Dale

Deb Tekippe