

July Whispers 2026

Hope United Church of Christ

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Dear Friends,

When Shakespeare wrote, “What’s in a name? That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet,” he was essentially saying that it doesn’t really matter what someone or something is called; the material essence of a thing matters more than its name.

In some cases that may be true, but not always. According to Scripture, names do matter, and they have great significance, since they stand for something or reveal something about one’s nature or character.

The names of God, as He has unveiled them in Scripture, should be particularly noteworthy to us because they reveal who He is, as well as aspects of His character, promises, authority, and power. And because God is so great, one name is not enough to fully portray all of who He is. But we will focus on one here—His very own personal name.

Does God want us to know Him intimately and call Him by name?

Most definitely!

In fact, knowing His name today is a fulfillment of the prophetic Scriptures that in these last days God’s people will know His name: **"My people will know My name;** therefore, in that day they will know that it is I who foretold it." (*Isaiah 52:6*)

The Bible also tells us that in these last days, those who call upon God’s name will be saved: **"The sun will be turned to darkness and the moon to blood before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord. And everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."** (*Joel 2:31-32*)

Just as those who know God’s name will be saved in the last days, God’s name was involved in the deliverance of the Jewish People from Egypt. When God sent Moses on a Divine mission to liberate the nation of Israel from the oppression of slavery in Egypt, the first thing Moses wanted to know was God’s name. He said to God: "Suppose I go to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your fathers has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' Then what shall I tell them?" (*Exodus 3:13*)

Moses knew that he could not go to the children of Israel in his own name. Even though he had been raised in Pharaoh’s court, he did not have that kind of power or authority. But if he came in the majestic name of God, the Israelites would know that the God of Israel was about to set them free from Egypt, even if Pharaoh opposed them.

When Moses stood before God at the Burning Bush inquiring about His name, God understood how important it was that Moses was able to reveal to the Israelites this important piece of information. In response, God told Moses, **Ehye Asher Ehye (אֶהְיֶה אֲשֶׁר אֶהְיֶה) or simply Ehye (אֶהְיֶה).** In most English Bibles this name is translated as **I Am Who I Am** or simply **I Am**. “God said to Moses, **I AM WHO I AM**. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: **'I AM** has sent me to you.' " (*Exodus 3:14*)

As in all the names that God uses to reveal Himself, this key name of God tells us some essential information about who God is. The Hebrew alphabet gives a clue to the meaning behind this name.

The fact that it begins with **Aleph (א)**, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, is indicative of the future tense. Therefore, this name can be translated **I Will Be Who I Will Be**.

This should give us confidence and encourage us since we can understand that God is not only with us right now, but God goes ahead of us into our future, which may be unknown to us but is completely known to God.

He is faithful and will be whatever we need, not only now, but also in any situation that we will face in the future. God is saying, “I will be whatever I choose to be in this circumstance: healer, deliverer, provider, protector. I will be that for you.”

In its essence, this name conveys a sense of both the timeliness and timelessness of God—the God who was, and is, and is to come (*see Revelation 4:8*).

“God also said to Moses, ‘I am the **LORD [YHVH]**. I appeared to Abraham, to Isaac, and to Jacob as **God Almighty [El Shaddai]**, but by My name the **LORD [YHVH]** I did not make myself known to them.” (*Exodus 6:2–3*)

In Scripture, God reveals His sacred, four-letter proper name, you’ll see it written **YHWH or YHVH (יהוה)** --often referred to as the Tetragrammaton, meaning the 4 Letters. This sacred Tetragrammaton comprises the four Hebrew letters: **yud, hey, vav, hey—YHVH (יהוה)**. Since the original Hebrew text did not use vowels, it is impossible to determine the exact pronunciation of this name. Which makes little difference, since most Jewish people will not speak this personal name out of reverence for His holiness and fear of transgressing the command that forbids using God’s name in vain (*Exodus 20:7*). Instead, the term **Adonai (my Lord)** or **Hashem (The Name)** is substituted.

Therefore, it has been the subject of much speculation and controversy. It is often transcribed in English as **Yahweh** or **Jehovah**. Instead of using one of these English variations, many English Bible translations print the word **LORD** (in all caps or small caps to distinguish it from other Hebrew words that are translated Lord). They do this out of tradition or respect for the name of God.

Because, it was immediately after telling Moses to say to the Israelites that “**I AM** has sent me to you” that God also tells him, “Say to the Israelites, ‘The **LORD [YHVH]**... has sent me to you’,” many scholars believe that this **YHVH** Tetragrammaton is actually derived from the Hebrew verb “**to be**” (**היה**) and, therefore, related to **I AM**, or **I Will Be (אֶהְיֶה)**.

God's personal name is so closely associated with God’s very being that God wants every generation to know and remember it:

“This is My name forever, the name by which I am to be remembered from generation to generation.” (*Exodus 3:15*)

When God revealed His proper, personal name to Moses, He transformed the relationship between Himself and His people. We can liken it somewhat to suddenly being on a first-name basis with someone after calling him or her Sir or Madame for an extended period of time. Even though God called Abraham His friend (*Isaiah 41:8*), He didn't reveal His personal name to him, nor to Isaac or Jacob (later named Israel). But God did reveal it to the nation while at Mount Sinai, and we may also use it if we wish today.

Although some people may foolishly put their trust in their own resources or abilities, those who know the God of Israel can put their trust in His name, knowing there is safety, power, protection, healing, and refuge in the **name of God**. “Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God.” (*Psalms 20:7*)

He is YHVH — the great I AM! Which makes it all the more incredible that when challenged about his authority, Jesus’ response was: “I tell you the truth, before Abraham was born **I AM**.” (John 8:58)

Peace and blessings,
Pastor Gene



This month we will celebrate the 250th birthday of our nation. Yet, there is so much more to the story than that singular July 4, 1776 event. We pick up our story, June 7, 1776.

The Continental Congress has gathered in the Pennsylvania State House. The windows are shut against eavesdroppers despite the summer heat. Richard Henry Lee of Virginia rises from his chair.

Lee knows how to hold a room. They call him the American Cicero. Years before, a hunting gun had exploded in his hands and taken the fingers of his left hand clean off — and ever since, he has worn a wrapping of black silk over the ruin. He has learned to use it. When he speaks, he lifts that shrouded hand and lets the dark silk fall, and every eye in the room follows it.

Today he lifts it, and he reads three sentences.

The first is the one that changes the world: "Resolved, That these United Colonies are, and of right ought to be, free and independent States, that they are absolved from all allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain is, and ought to be, totally dissolved."

He is not asking a question. He is proposing that thirteen colonies stop being British.

John Adams seconds it before Lee has fully returned to his seat.

And then — nothing happens.

This is the part almost everyone forgets. There was no roar, no signing, no leap. Congress looked at what Lee had just put on the table and flinched. They voted to wait. Several delegations had no authority from home to take so enormous a step. Some men wanted alliances and a plan of confederation settled first. And some were simply afraid. They called a recess so the delegates could ride home and ask their people the unaskable question: are we ready to commit treason together?

Because that is what it was.

Every man who would eventually say "aye" understood the arithmetic exactly. There was no legal independence yet, no nation, no army that had won anything decisive. There was only a king with the largest military on earth and a very long memory. If the war was lost, the document they were debating became a confession. The punishment for that confession was a rope.

They knew it. They debated anyway.

The next day, Congress appointed a small committee to draft a statement explaining the decision, should they ever find the nerve to make it — Jefferson, Adams, Franklin, Sherman, and Livingston. They handed the pen to the quiet Virginian, Thomas Jefferson. The famous parchment we frame on walls and read aloud every Fourth of July was, in a sense, the footnote. It exists to justify Lee's motion. The motion came first.

And here is the detail that ought to be carved somewhere.

When the final vote on independence finally came, on July 2 (not July 4), 1776 — Richard Henry Lee was not there.

Lee's wife had fallen ill. Virginia was building itself a new government and needed him home. So the man who stood up and proposed American independence climbed onto a horse and rode away before the question he'd asked was ever answered. Adams stood in for him and carried the argument across the line.

Richard Henry Lee had proposed independence, but he couldn't cast the vote for it.

He never seemed to mind who got the credit.

The resolution passed on the second of July. John Adams was so certain that date would be remembered forever that he wrote home predicting Americans would celebrate it for all time with bonfires and parades. He was off by two days. We kept the fourth — the day the explanation was approved — and let the seventh, the day a man first dared to say it out loud, slip quietly out of the calendar. Nor do we remember August 2, 1776, the day most of the delegates return to finally sign the parchment.

But the courage was never really in the parchment.

The courage was in being first. In standing up in a closed room, lifting a maimed hand, and reading three sentences that made you a traitor the instant they left your mouth — with your name attached, in front of witnesses, before a single other colony had promised to stand with you. Then trusting that strangers would find the same nerve, and finish what you'd started, even if you weren't in the room to see it.

Note, that is just the beginning. Independence didn't come because we declared it. It also had to be fought for. It would be October 19, 1781, after five grueling years of war, with more defeats than victories, before Lord Cornwallis, trapped on the Yorktown peninsula, would run out of food and ammunition and be forced to sign the Articles of Capitulation. Then it would be two more years before the Treaty of Paris officially ended the war and granted the 13 original colonies their independence on September 3, 1783.

What existed then wasn't the United States we know today either. According to the Articles of Confederation which had been adopted during the war (November 15, 1777) and even then, not the law of the land until fully ratified on March 1, 1781, there was no federal government. There was no president, no army, no national currency. Every state, acting like an independent country, had one vote at Congress, printed their own money, and decided what their own laws would be as completely sovereign states. When rebellion occurred within it, and it did in the form of Shays' Rebellion, there was no way to respond to it, for any changes had to be agreed upon by all the states unanimously.

On May 25, 1787, a convention as held to tweak the existing Articles of Confederation, but they soon realized they needed a whole new start. They worked through the summer and by September had the document you and I know as our Constitution, creating a brand-new country. 39 of the 55 delegates signed it September 17, 1787, recognized as Constitution Day and probably more important to our country than July 4, but it would be June 21, 1788 before New Hampshire would become the ninth state to sign it, thus giving enough support to officially ratify the Constitution and make it the new law of the land. The new government was supposed to start running on March 4, 1789, but bad weather and terrible road conditions prevented many from arriving in New York on time, so that they couldn't complete the counting of electoral votes until April. (I wonder how that would go over today?) George Washington was finally sworn in on April 30, 1789.

4,710 days (12 years, 10 months, 23 days) since Richard Henry Lee had stood declaring the independence of the United Colonies until George Washington would be sworn in as the first president of the United States. A whole lot had to happen in between to make the dream come true, but the first and most important of those was someone who was willing to stand up.

So, when the fireworks go up, you might think of an earlier evening. A hot day in June. A man who had already lost part of himself, raising what was left of his hand and betting his life that other people would be brave enough to agree with him. The question he asked that day was never really about Britain. It was the same question every generation eventually must answer for itself: when the right thing is also the dangerous thing, and someone has to say it first — would it have been you?



Hope Happenings

Debbie Mader, Worship Committee

*"You can keep a faith only as you can keep a plant:
By rooting it firmly into your life, tending to it,
And helping it grow day by day."*

C.M. Fisher, editor, *The Wisconsin Shopper*



What have you been doing to nurture your faith? I've been attending Bible Study.

Pastor Gene has done a great job in preparing the material, and I've been learning so much from the personal stories and historical context he's been sharing. A couple of my neighbor

friends have been coming along with me, and they seem to be getting a lot out of these sessions as well. I would love to see more of you taking advantage of this opportunity to enrich your faith. Come join us Tuesdays from 4:00 to 5:00 p.m., and feel free to bring a friend or two!

As we celebrate the nation's 250th anniversary this year, I asked AI (Gemini) to provide me with some ways to connect Christian faith to this milestone and came up with the following...

"A grounded, mature faith balances deep gratitude for American religious freedom with an honest acknowledgment of historical shortcomings."

- **Celebrating Religious Freedom:** Christians can give thanks for the First Amendment, which has allowed a diverse landscape of churches, ministries, and faith traditions to thrive without state interference.
- **Acknowledging the Past:** A faithful perspective acknowledges where the American church historically fell short, such as defending slavery or failing to protect Native American populations.
- **Moving Forward in Grace:** This dual perspective allows believers to celebrate the nation's founding principles while actively working to ensure those principles apply to everyone."

July 5th -

Liturgist: Autumn Bailey

Usher: Katrina Dering, Dennis Vogt

July 12th -

Liturgist: Kerry Welch

Usher: Gordie Vong

July 19th -

Liturgist: Allison Gleisner

Usher: Ben Bodoh

July 26th - Worship in the Park at Wolf River Crossing Park, Fremont

Mark your calendar!

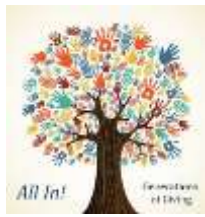
Worship in the Park:

July 26th, 10:15

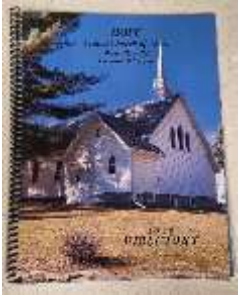
Wolf River Crossing Park, Fremont

Held in conjunction with First Presbyterian Church, Weyauwega. Special music by Shepherd's Quarter. Picnic lunch provided by the Worship Committee.

Bring a salad or dessert if you wish.



Stewardship



Our New Church Directories are DONE~ If you have not received your copy, stop by the church during office hours to pick up your copy or grab one on Sunday after worship.

AV Project Update

As a member of the AV committee, I would like to update everyone about the status of the AV project. The equipment has been ordered, and you will begin to see and hear the results of its installation. I would like to take this time to thank you for your generous donations that are above and beyond the support of the General Fund. The AV Fund stands at \$41,635, which is over halfway to the goal. Let's keep up the good work and reach that goal as soon as possible.



Also remember that it is not only financial help that's needed. Please consider becoming an AV volunteer and donate your time and talents in the operation of this new equipment. The more people we have trained to operate this new technology, the more effectively we can use the system to enhance our worship and overall ministry.

Hope Church was established 152 years ago. In that time, we have had countless councils, committees, fundraisers, and congregations that have met every challenge to improve our church for this generation as well as generations to come. I am truly proud of this church and every member that takes on these challenging tasks.

Sincerely,
Bryan Hahn
AV Committee Member

Double Your Impact: The July A/V Match Challenge!

We are so close to our goal, and now your generosity goes twice as far! Thanks to your incredible support, our congregation has already raised an amazing **\$41,635** toward our **\$63,000** A/V improvement goal. We are entering the home stretch, and an incredible opportunity has just paved the way to get us across the finish line.

An anonymous donor has stepped forward with a thrilling **Matching Gift Challenge for the entire month of July!** Every single dollar you give to the A/V fund through the end of July will be matched dollar-for-dollar, up to a total of **\$5,000**.

This means your impact is instantly doubled:

- **\$25 becomes \$50**
- **\$50 becomes \$100**
- **\$250 becomes \$500**

If we maximize this matching gift together, we will add **\$10,000** to our fund in July alone, bringing us to over **\$51,600** and unlocking the modern, high-quality audio and video capabilities our congregation voted for.

Whether you are giving for the first time or feel moved to give a little more to take advantage of this unique blessing, now is the perfect time to leap forward. Let's maximize this gift together!



Rummage Sale 2026 in the Books!!!

Thanks to everyone who donated items for the rummage sale. Also, Thank you to the guys who helped take down the chairs and set up more tables after church prior to the sale. We received so many donations that it took 5 of us most of the week to unpack, sort and organize everything!!

Special thanks to Kerry, Jackie, Sherry, Edna, Sharon, Eileen, Wendy & Diane for taking turns on Friday and Saturday during the sale. We made close to \$1000.00!!

Thank you to all who helped pack up the leftovers and haul them away. We loaded 3 cars with boxes and took them to St. Vincent De Paul. Special thanks to Art who helped us load all the boxes. There were still some larger items left and a big shout out to whoever hauled them away. If we have missed anyone who graciously donated their time, we

Thank you!!!



THINKING AHEAD--We are hoping to host a Thanksgiving Dinner this year! **Would you like to take the lead??** Depending on the response we receive, will determine if we are able to host one this year. Please consider lending us your time & talent!

Circle of Hope donated several quilts to the Veterans at the Wisconsin Veterans home in King.

Thanking them for their service & sacrifice





**Sunday School & Youth Group
is on summer vacation.....
See you in September!**

Birthdays

Kaitlyn Gilbert	7/05
Joseph Arndt	7/08
Andrew Mielke Jr	7/17
Gus Mathwig	7/18
Jenna Mathwig	7/18
Madalyn Mathwig	7/18
Katrina Dering	7/19
Gordie Vong	7/19
Sharon Welch	7/21
Michael Jones	7/27
Tim Hoewisch	7/28
Kelsey Gilbert	7/29
Cindy Kohl	7/22
Ann Mathwig	7/25
Tim Hoewisch	7/28
Kelsey Gilbert	7/29



Anniversaries



Kris & Nicole Steiger	7/04/2009	17 years
Michael & Renee Hosket	7/18/1998	28 years
Jeff & Diane Zwiers	7/29/1989	37 years

**BY
THE
NUMBERS**

	Income	Expenses	Avg. Attendance
Mthly			
<u>Beginning Balance</u>	\$155,752.43	\$160,560.66	
January	\$ 7,037.88	\$13,292.17	49
February	\$23,706.33	\$12,452.81	51
March	\$7,750.12	\$12,127.30	44
April	\$11,373.10	\$8,883.62	53
May	\$7,011.63	\$20,446.71	57



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4 
5 Family Worship 10:15	6	7 Bible Study 4-5 pm	8	9	10	11
12 Family Worship 10:15	13 Church Council meeting 6:30pm Kris on vacation	14 Bible Study 4-5 pm Worship Committee Mtg 5:30pm	15 Kris on vacation	16 Kris on vacation	17	18
19 Family Worship 10:15	20 Whispers Deadline	21 Bible Study 4-5 pm	22	23	24	25
26 Worship in the Park 10:15@ Wolf River Crossing Park	27	28 Bible Study 4-5 pm	29	30 Kris on vacation	31	
	Aug 3rd Kris on vacation					