

A close-up photograph of several pink flowers, likely Canna lilies, with green leaves and stems. The flowers are in focus, with some showing dew drops.

DECORAH FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

August 2026

A stylized logo featuring a black cross with a flame-like shape on the left side.

The Tower

Welcome to August!

I was flipping through *The Upper Room* for July and August one morning. I don't always read them in order or by the date.

Sometimes the devotions from a different date catch my attention so I read the devotional out of order. This particular morning, I was feeling a bit worked up, as the schedule for the day was packed.

I had so much to get done and I'll admit, I was hurrying through my morning devotional time. One page caught my attention though. It was called "*The Prayer Tree*". It was written by a man from Indonesia. He had gone to visit a friend in a nearby village.



Continued on next page



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He relays that his friend took him one rainy day to a large banyan tree near a wooden chapel. “The local people, he was told, gather at The Prayer Tree to share their struggles and joys and to listen for God’s guidance.” * He recalled watching as an older woman raised a basket with rice stalks up for all to see and thanked God for the rain that saved her crops. The ordinariness of her story and the gratitude that he could feel struck him. And as he took his own time beneath the Prayer Tree, he contemplated his own prayer life.

This devotional reminded me that I sometimes do not take the time to truly listen for God’s response when I pray. We get so busy and rushed at times, we might lift up our prayers and move on without taking time to listen for that still quiet voice. The villagers gathering around that sacred tree remind me to slow down a bit and to bring my whole self to prayer. To quote the author of the devotional, “...prayer isn’t just about asking – it is about being still enough to hear God’s answers in unexpected ways.”

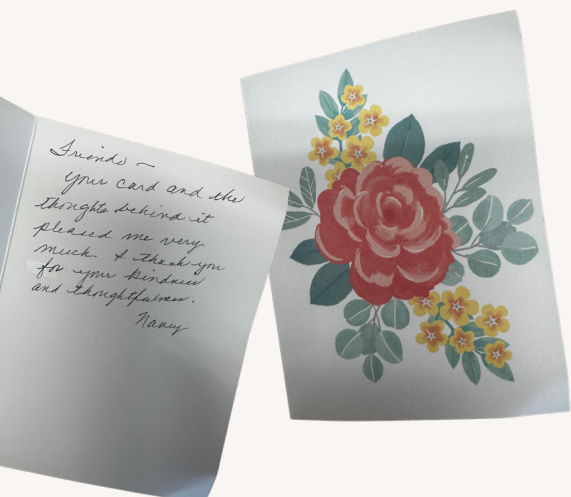
Let us take our time in the rush of our busy days to pause and breathe. To bring our whole selves, our fears, and hopes, and gratitude to God. Let us take the time to listen for those answers which may come in different and surprising ways.

Rev. Cat Stokes

**The Upper Room – “The Prayer Tree” by Fendy s. Tulodo, p.59*



A Thanks from Nancy Shadwick



The church received a “thank you” card from Nancy Shadwick in July, which is viewable on the front office door.

The card reads:

“Friends-

Your card & the thoughts behind it pleased me very much. I thank you for your kindness & thoughtfulness.”

Front Office Volunteers Needed

Cerrisa will be taking a vacation from **Monday, September 14th - through Thursday, September 17th**. If you are available to volunteer to staff the front office for any of the following dates, please contact the front office. Normal office hours are from **9 a.m. - 1 p.m.**, but if there is a day where a partial shift might be a fit for you, just let us know. *Thanks to everyone for your consideration!*

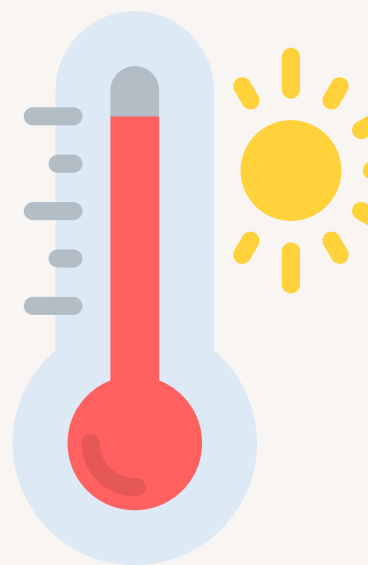
stay safe from the heat

We’ve seen some dangerous temperatures this summer, which is likely to continue throughout August. Please be aware that on days where the heat index hits 100 degrees or higher, the church will be open from approximately 8 a.m. - 7 p.m. as a cooling shelter.

All are welcome. Please feel free to pass this information along to folks who might benefit. We have notified the local radio stations. You can also feel free share this information from our Facebook page.

summer music

We are extremely grateful for everyone who has pitched in to make music for summer services possible. Thanks to organizing efforts by Syd Stephenson, Drew Pellett, & Du Huang, and to guest accompanists David Geenen & Paul Bruvold for lending their talents to DFUMC. Let’s all welcome Du back state-side!



SUMMER BRAILLE PRESENTATION BY MICHELLE AMDAHL

Please enjoy these photos
of Michelle Amdahl's
summer presentation on the
topic of braille in our
Fellowship Hall.

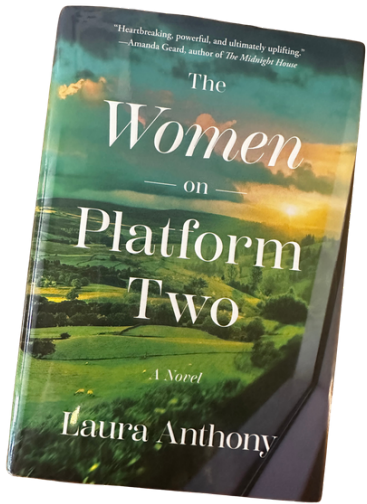
Big thanks to Michelle & all
who attended.



UW FAITH NOTES

From Syd:

Reminder our **August 5th** meeting will be at **Phelps Park** at **9:30 a.m.** Bring your own coffee/tea. At 11 a.m. or so, we'll have a book discussion. This month's book is *The Women on Platform Two* by Laura Anthony. Hope to you there!



Coming in September, our scheduled program will be by Patience Duhnke sharing wellness tips for seniors, including Tai Chi, chair yoga, etc.

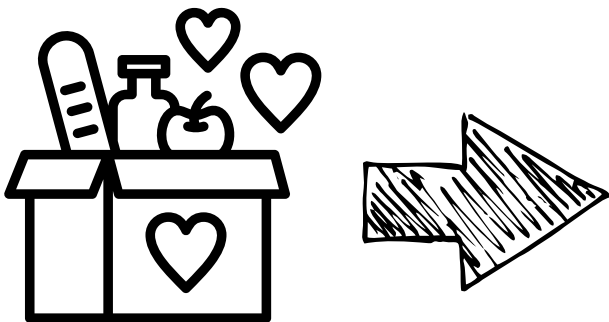
Please plan to attend our **UWFaith meeting at 1 p.m. on Sept 2nd.**

Mat Weaving:

Wednesday, August 19
10:00 - Noon

Join us to help weave mats from plastic shopping bags.

No experience necessary!



FOOD PANTRY UPDATE



The Congregational Campaign is going well! We have collected nearly 200 pounds of donations so far!

\$540 has been given to the Farmers Market Coupon program. Your thoughtfulness is greatly appreciated by our neighbors utilizing the pantry.

One of the great things about our pantry is its effort to help reduce food waste. In 2025, we rescued almost 239,000 pounds of food from our local retail partners.

Though these items could no longer remain on store shelves, most were still perfectly safe to consume for several days or suitable for freezing.

Our morning volunteers collect the rescue food and sort what the pantry can use and compost what is not salvageable.

This amazing effort helps our clients get nutritious fresh food choices and keeps thousands of pounds out of our landfill. "We can't address the issue of food insecurity without addressing the issue of food waste."

If every adult (18+) in Winneshiek County reduced 1 pound of food waste per month we would keep over 80 tons of food waste out of our local landfill.

Thanks very much for all that you provide!



BOOK CLUB

From Jane:

For the month of August, the book club will be reading *The Women on Platform Two* by Laura Anthony.

We will be meeting at **1:30 pm** on **Thursday, August 20th** at Candace Arp's home.

If you would like to join the group please contact Jane Hardy at **563-382-5316** or email **jhardy3333@aol.com**.



Birthdays

4th: Virginia Leidahl

4th: Alan Lerstrom

4th: Tyler Shedinger

8th: Adam Knight

18th: Lyn White

19th: Beverly Nelson

21st: John Gipp

21st: Kathy McKinney

22nd: Tucker Young

27th: Leila Johnson

29: Deborah Bishop

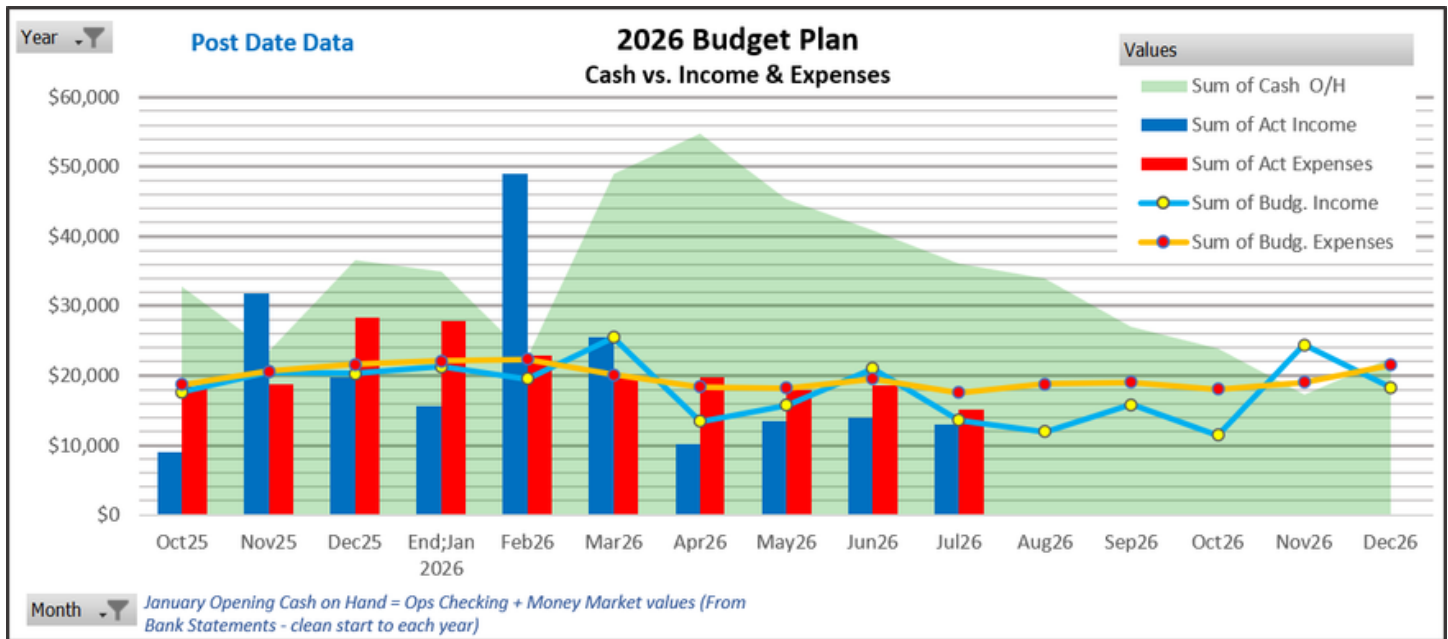
30th: Phyllis Wasta

31st: Micala Folkedahl



TREASURER'S *corner*

Here is our "typical" reporting for the August Tower, with July being a few days short of completion. So please take this information as "directionally correct."



As you can see from our standard chart, income lagged expenses again in July; though income did come in very close to plan, and expenses landed a bit short of plan. Here are the basic stats:

- Income coming in at \$13K
- Expenses coming in at \$15K
- Our working cash is (as of 7/27):
 - Checking = just over \$14K
 - Money Market = just over \$20K
- I did have to move \$9K out of Mmkt into checking this month
- Benevolent payouts will occur in the next day or two, with our all activity belonging to the Decorah Food Pantry Coupon program (\$540)

Just a quick comment on how our solar panels are helping this year...we've had approximately \$4,700 in gross billing with offsetting savings of \$1,300, a 28% savings!

Please let me know if you have any questions regarding our operational financial activity/status for our church.

Peace and Blessing,

Steve Rarick, Treasurer - Decorah 1st UMC
(847) 830-9891 mobile

Thank you to our August liturgists & coffee servers

Flower Chair: Drew Pellett



COFFEE SERVERS

August 2nd

Connie & Bill Bergstrom

August 9th

Cheryl & Drew Pellett

August 16th

Deb Tekippe

August 23rd

Nancy Ruen /
Phyllis & Wayne Wasta

August 30th

Syd Stephenson & Nancy Ruen

LITURGISTS

August 2nd

Mark Landas

August 9th

Linda Watson

August 16th

Syd Stephenson

August 23rd

Nancy Ruen

August 30th

Deb Tekippe

UPCOMING EVENTS

Peer to Peer Support Group for individuals who have lost loved ones to suicide:

This free & open group meets the 2nd
Thu. of each month from
5-6:30 p.m.

Counseling Associates
(806 Commerce Drive)

Grief Support Group:

This free & open group meets the
2nd Mon. of the month at 5:30
p.m.

Boardroom at The Highlands
(607 Highland Dr.)

UWF August Coffee at Phelps Park

Wed., Aug. 5th, 9:30 a.m.

In the event of rain or too much heat,
meet here at the church
Bring your own coffee

Book discussion at 11 a.m for The
Women on Platform Two by Laura
Anthony

Community Meal

Thu., Aug. 6th, 5 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.

*Decorah Lutheran Church
(309 Winnebago St.)*

Mat Weaving:

Wed., Aug. 19
10:00 - Noon