



DECORAH FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

October 2026

he Tower

Welcome to October!

This past month I have been considering a change in furniture in the master bedroom at my house. Specifically, I have two chairs—one a recliner that has seen better days but still has some life in it, and the other, a chair bought off Amazon a while back. Both are both sitting in my second garage. I was looking out the window one day and thought how nice it would be to have one of those chairs in the bedroom next to the window so that during the late fall and this winter I can read and watch out the window. And so can the cat and the beagle.

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So, I went out to the second garage to see which chair would work best. As I was going to open the door, another thought popped into my mind and being who I am, I followed the new thought. I started to look at the overgrowth that is between the two garages, which continues for a bit behind and down the other side of the second garage. It was gravel when I moved in, but nature does its thing and keeping gravel weedless is a lot of work. Now it is mostly grass that I let grow too long sometimes. As I examined the overgrowth, I noticed something and I had to laugh. A tree.

A squirrel must have forgotten where they buried their nut and since I don't pay much attention to the area it was "planted" and a strong, healthy tree has begun growing. (It is about the same height as me.) As I stood considering what to do, since I don't really want to cut it down (but given it's too-close proximity to one of the garages), I began to hum a favorite hymn:

Hymn of Promise:

In the bulb there is a flower; in the seed, an apple (in my case a walnut) tree; In cocoons, a hidden promise: butterflies will soon be free! In the cold and snow of winter there's a spring that waits to be, unrevealed until its season, something God alone can see.

Fall is upon us and soon there will be snow on the ground and the trees will be without leaves, the flowers buried beneath the ground, just waiting for spring and new life. As I sat with what I experienced that day, I was reminded that God sometimes plants a seed where we least expect it. For now, the unexpected walnut tree still grows where it was planted by those pesky squirrels and God. Perhaps next spring with a few phone calls, a YouTube video or two, and a shovel, that tree will be moved to a better location for it and for me. I can't wait to see the tree thrive and become a place where I and others in the future can sit beneath it and enjoy the day.

Where will God plant the seeds next?

Rev. Cat

Pride Parade

The Pride Parade is on **Saturday, October 10 at 1 p.m.**

We will join the ecumenical group “Decorah Christians United in Celebrating Pride”

Please let Nancy Ruen know if you are interested and able to participate!



From the Music Corner

The Church choir regular season is in full swing.

Rehearsals are **Wednesdays at 7:30pm**, and on **Sundays** we have a warm-up rehearsal at **8:30am**.

We welcome new singers!

We have two Luther student musicians helping with piano accompaniment this year: Hugh Spann and Connor Sandman. Thanks Hugh & Connor!

Charge Conference

Our Charge Conference will be held in West Union this year, at the West Union UMC (301 Hansen Blvd., West Union).

Everyone interested is welcome & encouraged to attend on **Sunday, October 18th at 6 p.m.**

Food Pantry Update



The 5th Annual Food Walk is **Sunday, October 18th at 1 p.m.** Meet at the Pantry at 110 Railroad Street for a brief gathering. Suggested donations of food or cash as you are able. No fee is required to participate. We will walk up Washington Street to Water Street & then down Mechanic Street, returning to the Pantry. Join us for a cup of warm soup & some sweet treats together when the walk is complete. The Pantry Board of Directors utilizes this opportunity to create awareness of food insecurity in our community.

Thanks very much for all that you provide!

Sister Parish Weekend

From Emily Young-Johnson:

The Sister Parish Community of Decorah will be hosting a joint breakfast and service on **Sunday, October 18th**.

We hope all can join!

Our FUMC Sister Parish community joined with the UCC church a few years ago and we have enjoyed this union on many levels, including our last trip to Potrerillos in May of 2025.

Sister Parish Board will be in Decorah for the weekend weekend. Brunch and worship will be a time to interact with the board members.

In solidarity with our sisters and brothers in Potrerillos and in an effort to booster our own local ties and relationships, the Sister Parish group proposed a joint service.

Hopefully there will be more to come in the future!

We hope everyone from both congregations will join for the following:
(There will be no individual services at each church that day)

More details will be coming but here are the basics:

October 18, 2025

- 9 a.m.: Breakfast at FUMC fellowship hall
- 10 a.m.: Church service at FUMC

The choir will be singing that Sunday and anyone from each congregation is invited to join! If you are interested, come to rehearsal at FUMC on Oct 14 7:30-8:30 p.m.

We will have sign up sheets for people to help in the kitchen- those who can bring an egg bake or muffins or fruit.



Silent Saturday Retreat

A message from Sara Hopkins:

Hello Friends!

Greetings from the Contemplative Circle. We are a group of six spiritual directors trained in Christian contemplative practices. You may recall we offered a half day Silent Saturday retreat for the broader Decorah community in April 2026.

We are planning an Autumn Silent Saturday offering on **Saturday, November 14th**, at Decorah United Church of Christ **209 W. Broadway Street**. This will be a time of quiet reflection and prayer starting at 8:45 a.m. and will last until noon. Sign-in will begin at 8:30 a.m. Attendees are asked to **arrive by 8:45 a.m.**

During this retreat, attendees will be able to explore:

- Centering Prayer, a Christian meditative practice, or silent prayer of your tradition
- A reflective labyrinth walk with guidance provided
- Lectio divina (holy reading), a way to go deeper into scripture
- Quiet spaces for personal prayer, art, reading, or journaling.

We hope this notice gives you time to hold space on your calendars and your worshipping community's calendars for this opportunity of quiet reflection and prayer. Please feel free to share this date and time with others in your community and outside your worshipping community.

During early October we will be emailing additional information for you to include in your community newsletters, bulletins or other ways you communicate in your community of faith. We will also have legal pad size posters available for you, if you would like one of those.

We will be back in touch soon with additional information.

Blessings on the journey,

Sara Andreasen Hopkins
641 831 3883
sahopkins1@gmail.com



From Syd:

UW Faith October Meeting

Wednesday, Oct 7

- Exec Meeting at noon
- General Meeting at 1:00 with program by David Scott

Followed by Coffee and treats and short meeting

Mat Weaving Wednesdays:

Oct 7th & 21st, 10 a.m. – Noon

Quilters will meet each Tuesday morning at 9 a.m.

David Scott to Speak at UW Faith General Meeting

UW Faith is happy to welcome Dr David Scott as a guest speaker at our October general meeting. David grew up in our congregation and returned to Decorah with his family several years ago.

He will share insight and information about his position with the United Methodist Church as Executive Director of Mission Theology and Strategic Planning at Global Ministries and Higher Education & Ministry. He has written several books and is also the blogmaster for the UM & Global website –

UmgGlobal.org

Please join us **Wednesday, October 7th at 1 p.m.** to hear from David.

Pie Prep:

Watch for in November pie prepping & sales. Do you have extra apples or know someone that would like to share for a good cause?

Let Syd or Cerrisa know! We plan to prep apple pies the first week of November. We will be taking pie order starting in mid October.

Veteran's Care Day:

Our UWF has been furnishing granola bars for the local VA Clinic to provide patients a snack during their appointment – many times they may have had to fast for tests prior to arriving. On **Sunday, Nov 8th**, we will be collecting donations, either cash or granola bars for this important cause.

Virginia Leidahl will see that they get delivered as needed.

A “*Thank You*” from Sara & Steve Luse

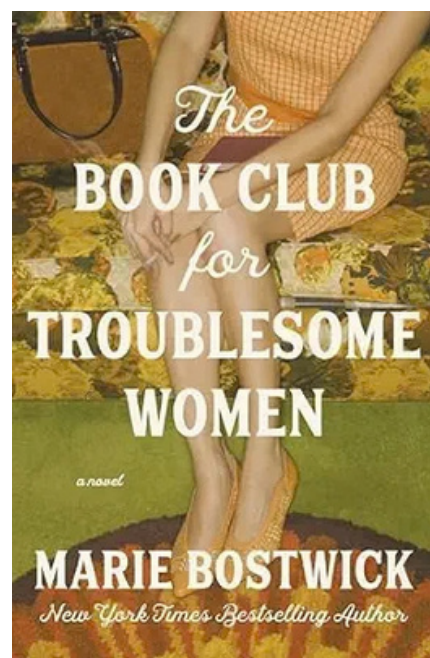
"Steve & I thank you dear friends and loved ones!

Your cards, messages, kind deeds, love and prayers are appreciated and received with gratitude. After Steve's stroke and hospital time, he is at home, working on recovery and receiving physical therapy.

He is doing well and we are most grateful for God's love & care and all your prayers and kindness.

Blessings & love,
Sara & Steve (Luse)"





BOOK CLUB

From Jane:

Our October book discussion will be on *The Book Club for Troublesome Women* by Marie Bostwick. We will be meeting at 1:30pm on **Thursday, Oct. 15th** at Cynthia Peterson's home located at **703 Decorah Ave.**

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

Birthdays

3rd: Britt Rhodes

4th: Nick Rissman & Ron Taylor

7th: Andy Van Der Maaten

9th: Scott Zierath

12th: Chandler Dawley

13th: Nina Taylor

16th: Olivia Ann Rissman

21st: Alice Holdiman

26th: Shirley Dynes

27th: John Carver

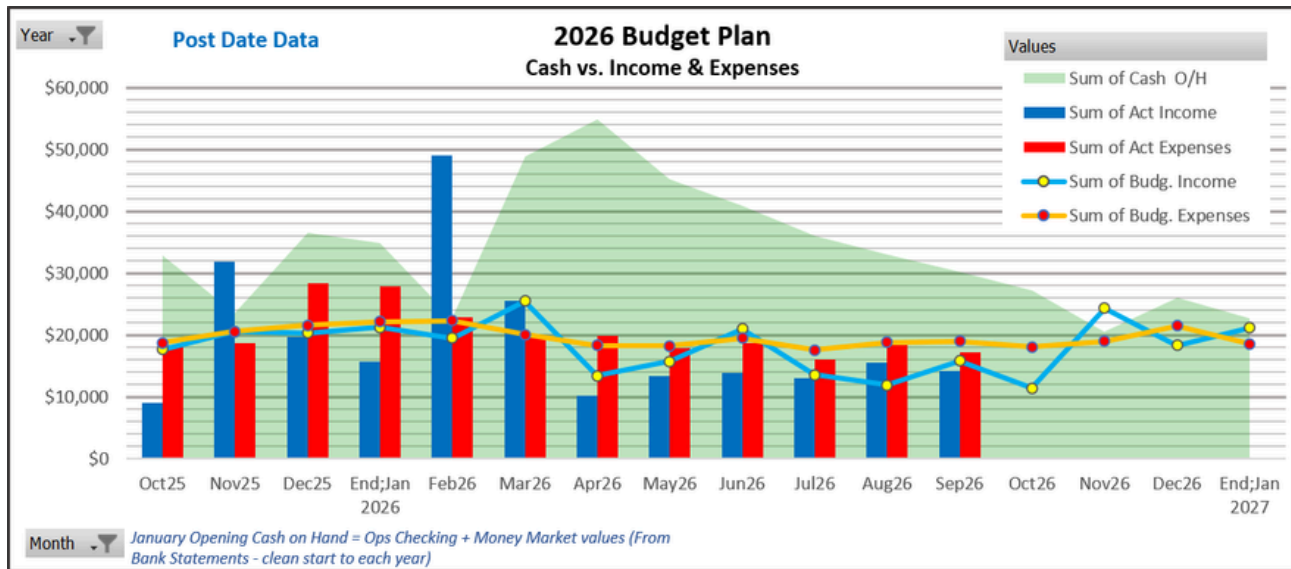
29th: Spence McKinney



TREASURER'S *corner*

We've got another couple of days in September, but we're directionally close.

As is typical, this report for October will only include the "booked" transactions for September. We have some employee payroll yet to pay out and some small, earned interest credits to post.



As you can see from the chart above, income again lags expenses and also comes in less than planned. Expenses, also, project to be a bit less than planned, the numbers so far:

- Income (currently) is \$14.3K on a plan of \$15.8K
- Expenses (currently) are \$17.3K on a plan of \$19.0K
- Our working cash-on-hand (as of 9/28/26):
 - Checking = \$12.7K (available...includes today's deposits)
 - MMkt = \$16.2K
 - Projected End-of-Year closing balance = \$22.8K (\$12 less than what we started with this year! Dangerously low...our average monthly expense run is \$19.5K/mo for the last 4 years).
- Finance has completed our 2027 Budget recommendation...a 5th consecutive deficit budget; Ad Council is yet to approve this budget (on Oct. 11th), but the situation is far more critical than in recent years. We will be sharing more information with you as we obtain final approvals.
- Benevolent activity remains "soft" for this time of year, which is typical.
 - Income pulled in \$320.00
 - \$100 for Backpack (peanut butter) program
 - \$220 for Decorah Food pantry
 - The Food Pantry check will be mailed on 9/29
 - The Backpack program is a "retained savings" account to be used as needed

Please let me know if you have any questions.

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



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.)*

Community Meal

Thu., Oct. 1st, 5 p.m. - 6:15 p.m.

*Decorah Lutheran Church
(309 Winnebago St.)*

UW Faith Meeting w/ Speaker David Scott

Wed., Oct. 7th

- 12:15 Executive Meeting
- 1 p.m. Group meeting

Pride Parade

Sat., Oct. 10th, 1 p.m.

Quilting: Each Tuesday Morning at 9 a.m.

Mat Weaving Wednesdays: Oct. 7th & 21st at 10 a.m.

Birthdays & additional event information on calendar.

Bingo at Wellington

Tues., Oct. 13th, 12:30 - 2 p.m.

*We will need two or three
volunteers and two pans of bars
for treats. Please let Syd know if
you can help.*

Sister Parish Weekend

Fri., Oct. 16th - Sun., Oct. 18th

(See page 4 for more details)

Charge Conference

Sun., Oct. 18th at 6 p.m.

*(W. Union United Methodist,
301 Hansen Blvd., West Union)*

Decorah Food Pantry 5th Annual Food Walk

Sun., October 18th, 1 p.m.

After Coffee Speaker:

Sun., Oct. 25th: Deb Tekippe
Topic: Safe Storage of Medication

Glenwood Lutheran Lutefisk & Meatball Dinner w/ Silent Auction

Sun., October 25th, Noon - 3 p.m.

*Glenwood Lutheran Church
(1197 Old Stage Rd., Decorah)*

Thank you to our September liturgists & coffee servers

Flower Chair: Virginia Leidhal



COFFEE SERVERS

October 4th

Sherry & Brian Schilling

October 11th

Deborah Bishop &
Sharon Rossman

October 18th

Sister Parish Potluck

October 27th

Emily Young-Johnson &
Sweet Young

LITURGISTS

October 4th

Mark Landas

October 11th

Syd Stephenson

October 18th

Sister Parish Members

October 27th

Ann Duder