



John Omerod,
Pastor



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THE PARISH VISITOR JULY 2026

FROM THE DESK OF PASTOR JOHN

This pastor's column is unusual this month because it comes at a time of the celebration of America's 250 years of existence as a democracy. In the midst of spectacular festivities, we are in the middle of national social and political upheavals. The welfare of society and politics should concern all of us. Our faith guides us through these trying times as we, the church, work tirelessly to reach out in compassion to the frightened, the marginalized, and the powerless. Duty is to our faith practices that reflect our priorities as Christians, to let our voices be heard. Systems that allow the continuation of poverty, violence, fear, exploitation, and despair do not reflect Christian values. These systems exist not as a result of compassion but for the excesses of secular power. They have no quarter in the church. There is no Liberty in them.

The Declaration speaks of liberty as though it were accomplished. The prophets speak of liberty as a continual calling. We aren't there yet. We need to understand that Democracy is not merely a political system but also an ethical practice. It means listening to people unlike ourselves. It means seeking the common good, and making room for every voice. In Scripture, Paul had an image of the church as one body with many members (1 Corinthians 12). The measure of the health of a community and of a country that practices patriotism is how its many members fare—how the least of human beings are treated.

The Biblical prophets were voices of patriotism for their time. They criticized Israel, not because they hated it but because they loved it. Amos denounced economic injustice. Nathan confronted King David for his sins. Jeremiah wept for Jerusalem. Their criticisms indicated their love of country, not their hatred for it. We Christians resist any hint of the old mantra of "Love it or Leave It." We must not fall victim to asking the simplistic question "Can we return to a better America?" but rather, "What kind of nation are we still becoming?"

(continued on next page)

It's a question of hope. The next question we want to ask has everything in common with our Biblical imperatives for justice and compassion, reconciliation, and an improving future: Should our country not mirror the ideals of mercy and integrity rather than fall prey to insensitive exclusion and political expediency?

As we go forward, may we love our country not because its perfect, but because the Holy Spirit "continues to call it toward greater justice, deeper mercy, and wider welcome" (UCC online). We must never honor power that confuses its secular strength with holy righteousness. Instead, Biblical imperative bends toward honoring all human dignity. The church is in a position to lead by declaring that it belongs first to God's kingdom and to a nation second. God isn't just on the side of America. Repeatedly, God has proven to be on the side of all humanity and creation. May we comprehend God's holy guidance as embodied by the life practices and astonishing teachings of the Resurrected Jesus.

CHANGE-UP SUNDAY OFFERINGS

Next Change Up collection is on July 5th

As we have done in the past, we will continue to collect the Change-Up Sunday offerings during the summer months. As always, your small change can make a huge difference!! The upcoming collection dates are:

July 5th

October 4th

August 2nd

November 1st

September 6th

December 6th



UPCOMING PIZZA NIGHTS

July 3rd and August 7th

Our next Pizza Night with LifeSpring Women's Shelter will be on Friday, July 3rd at 6:00 p.m. We can always use volunteers to help provide drinks, desserts and/or salads. We meet at LifeSpring at about 5:50p.m. It is located at 517 College Avenue in Aurora. If you plan to attend or provide any of the items requested, please contact Melissa Peters (630-918-8784). Thank you!





Annual Potluck Church Picnic Sunday, August 23rd Fellowship Hall

Mark your calendars for this annual event!
This will be a potluck picnic with the church providing the meat. A sign-up sheet will be available soon for the additional salads, sides and desserts needed.

Items are being collected now for the Raffle Table at the Picnic!



Why do we do a raffle at the Picnic?

Because it is the easiest way to earn money while keeping costs down; that's why we ask for prizes by way of donation.

Gifts such as: gift certificates, gourmet dinners, electronics, travel packages, sport team items, etc...are always favorites.

Are you crafty? Please consider donating handmade items for the raffle. Everyone enjoys the variety donated of these items.

Perhaps you have "like new" items that others would enjoy. Do you have extra scrapbook supplies that you could donate? What about 'How-To' books, DVDs, CDs, or a good novel that you no longer need, but someone else might enjoy?

***PLEASE BRING YOUR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE CHURCH
ON SUNDAY OR DURING OFFICE HOURS.***

VOLUNTEERS FOR JULY

**July 5th
10:15 am**

**Sacrament of
Communion**
Change Up Sundaes

Ushers: The Ashby and Peters Families
Liturgist: Amy Ashby
Coffee: Volunteers are needed

Communion Servers: Operations, Nurture, Teaching and Learning

Lock-up: Worship

**July 12th
10:15 am**

Ushers: The Ashby and Peters Families
Liturgist: Amy Ashby
Coffee: Volunteers are needed

Lock-up: Youth

**July 19th
10:15 am**

Ushers: The Ashby and Peters Families
Liturgist: Amy Ashby
Coffee: Volunteers are needed

Lock-up: Moderator

**July 26th
10:15 am**

Ushers: The Ashby and Peters Families
Liturgist: Amy Ashby
Coffee: Alan and Lavon Nehring

Lock Up: Vice Moderator



July 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3 Worship Ministry Meeting at 9:30am Pizza Night at LifeSpring in Aurora at 6pm	4 
5 Worship Service 10:15am Communion Change Up	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 Worship Service 10:15am	13	14	15	16	17	18 Distribution of Food Drive bags in Big Rock
19 Worship Service 10:15am	20 Executive Council Meeting at 6:30pm	21	22	23	24	25 Pickup of Food Bags for Food Drive 
26 Worship Service 10:15am	27	28	29	30	31	



You Can Make A Difference!

**FOOD DRIVE COLLECTION IN BIG ROCK
BY ENGLISH CONGREGATIONAL UCC**

BAGS WILL BE DISTRIBUTED ON SATURDAY, JULY 18th

PICK UP OF THE BAGS WILL BE DONE ON JULY 25th

**IF YOU ARE ABLE TO HELP DISTRIBUTE AND/OR PICK
UP FOOD BAGS, PLEASE CONTACT MELISSA PETERS.**

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**"A FAMILY OF BELIEVERS,
A COMMUNITY OF SERVICE"
2026 VISION STATEMENT**

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