



Christian Fellowship Church Of Eldora



**July/August
2026**

A Newsletter of the
Christian Fellowship Church
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Freedom: What is it Good For?

Pastor Susan Schnieders

This year, America celebrates its 250th birthday, aka Independence Day. Americans prize the ideas of independence and freedom; a longing for such things inspired our nation's beginnings. But over time, we've come to widely perceive freedom only as independence *from* rather than *for* something. And as we've seen, freedom as license to do whatever we want, whenever, wherever, however, and to or with whomever we want, doesn't necessarily lead to human good and flourishing. In fact, it typically creates suffering and conflict.

Laws exert some pressure on our behavior and interactions with one another; without them we would really behave badly. For the same reason, God gave the law of Moses to Israel. Rejecting God's sovereignty in the garden changed our condition; we became subjects in a world where our souls' enemy has power, as does our now sinful nature. Those forces - the flesh, the world, and the devil - have lots of influence over us; we're not really "free," as Paul laments in Romans 7:15-20. In-dwelling sin hinders us from doing the good we want to do. That's why Paul refers to humans as "slaves to sin" (Romans 6:20-23) and in Romans 7 calls the law good for those not free to do good by their own will; it helps mitigate the damage sinful "free" creatures wreak on everything and everyone around them.

In Acts 13:39 (and echoed in Romans 6), Paul preached, "Through him [Jesus] everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses." Jesus himself said "to the Jews who had believed him, 'If you hold to my teaching, you are really my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and *the truth* will set you free'" (Jn 8:31-32). And what did Jesus say about himself? "I am the way, *the truth*, and the life (Jn 14:6). So, holding to Jesus's teachings in lively and interactive relationship with him leads us to the truth (Jesus) that (who) sets us free.

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So why would Paul declare to the Romans (6:18), “You have been set free from sin and have become *slaves* to righteousness”? How are we, as Christians, both slaves and free at the same time? Some forms of slavery in the Bible were chosen; sometimes temporary when people sold themselves into it to pay off a debt; sometimes permanent when impoverished families sold children into servitude for their survival.

As created creatures, we can never be fully autonomous. But God, in his generous grace, gifted us “free” will; the capability to choose our master. We can either be slaves to sin or slaves to God and righteousness. ***Our realest and truest freedom is our freedom to choose our destiny by choosing to whom (or what) we submit.*** As Paul instructed the Romans (6:23), “The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” [read, ruler or king].

Dorothy Day, a Catholic activist dedicated to the urban poor in New York, said, “What a world problem, this authority and freedom, and the tension between the two! And how we Americans have held on to the Christian ideas of freedom and the dignity of human personality while forgetting that *freedom is based on complete submission, complete meekness to God*” (italics mine).

While celebrating our cultural freedom this summer, let us also remember the call and purpose of our more precious freedom in Christ, for “You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love” (Gal 5:13). Following our Lord’s example, let us use our freedom in slavery to God and others so that they, too, may be truly free in him.



Around 15-18 women from around the area comprise EWOW (Eldora Women of the Word), a women’s Bible study that has been meeting almost two decades. They’re currently studying John 17.

Members present: Trista Nelson, Pastor Susan, Pastor Pat, Jim Johnson, Dave Dunn, Steve Foster, Rosanne Foster, Vic Reist, Mary Swartz, and Scott Swartz. Rick Soesbe attended for Valerie.
 Dave Dunn called the meeting to order, and Pastor Susan led with devotions.
 The minutes were reviewed. Trista Nelson moved to accept last month's minutes; Jim Johnson seconded. Motion carried unanimously.

TRUSTEES – The weed situation in the flower beds was discussed. It will get handled.

FINANCE – Scott Swartz gave the financial report. Year to date income was \$74,864, total expenses, \$68,046. The donations for Ukraine church camp to date is \$3,360.00. Thank you to everyone! Steve Foster made the motion to accept the financial report, Pastor Susan seconded. Motion carried.

NEW BUSINESS – There was a discussion on purchasing cameras for the east and west doors. Scott Swartz is going to look into what would be best for the church.

New communion stewards are needed. Jim Johnson is going to retire. It will be mentioned during church and also the need for members for other committees.

Scott and Steve will replace the burned-out light in the elevator.

We are going to update the church directory with the new members.

Steve reported that there has been some discussion about changing the cloth that is behind the cross in the sanctuary.

Right now, they are looking for feedback and will be getting ideas. Stone veneer was strong choice.

The lights on the outside west outside of the church are on again. Scott will figure out how to get them off. Scott also mentioned that one of the lights in the parking lot needs fixing.

Pastors will be gone August 16 and September 27.

OLD BUSINESS – The leaking pump for one of the boilers has been removed and is being repaired by Rob's.

Randy Tjaden has been informed that the roof leaked during the next rainstorm.

The west side planters are in!!

The Alternative Pregnancy Center is doing very well. They are very excited and are thinking that they may need to go from two hours once a month to the whole day.

Scott will check with Carstens to get a second estimate on replacing the water heater in the parsonage. Steve made the motion to allow Scott to make the decision between Rob's and Carstens when he gets the second estimate. Trista seconded. Motion carried.

Scott will also inform Randy that there are a couple shingles missing on the church.

Someone will check with Lynnette to plan on when the next church potluck will be scheduled.

Scott made the motion to adjourn. Dave adjourned the meeting.

May 2026 Summary Report



NON-BUDGET ITEMS	YTD	
Misc Designated Income	\$7,335	\$4,340
Community Meal		
HOPE expenditures	\$580	\$660
Benevolence Giving	\$2,825	\$4,340
Misc projects (Boilers)	\$17,983	\$500
Trust Fund Income		
HOPE income		
Trust money used		
Estate bequest		
Donations toward building fund Boiler	\$4,600	
rummage sale income	\$1,572	
Donations toward trust		
as of 5/31/26		
General Fund Balance	\$37,809	\$42,403
Outstanding bills	\$0	\$0
real balance	\$37,809	\$42,403
Fund Balances		
Building Fund	\$5,766	\$12,683
HOPE Fund	\$3,961	\$3,757
Savings Account	\$6,624	\$7,018
Memorial Fund	\$12,743	\$13,911
Youth Fund	\$9,348	\$9,435
Mission and Nurse Funds	\$4,663	\$2,717
Trust Fund	\$131,570	\$128,006
Davison Scholarship Trust	\$75,842	\$76,936



July Birthdays

July 06 - Layne Nelson
 July 09 - Scott Humphrey
 July 09 - Mary Kosanke
 July 10 - Harold Newton
 July 10 - Sue Shaw
 July 11 - Eric Minter
 July 12 - Michelle Budweg
 July 12 - Bryce Izer
 July 13 - Levi Prosser
 July 17 - Anita LaVelle
 July 18 - Neal Titus
 July 20 - Daniel Minter
 July 23 - Cindy Drake
 July 25 - Mary Prosser
 July 25 - Carol Strait
 July 25 - Aaron Swartz
 July 26 - Kella Minter
 July 28 - Brody Clemons
 July 30 - Pastor Susan

Sunday, July 5
Communion/Bread of Life
 9:30 Worship Service
Thursday, July 9
VA Van

Sunday, July 12
 9:30 Worship Service
Sunday, July 19
 9:30 Worship Service
Wednesday, July 22
 9:30 am Women's Coffee
Thursday, July 23
 3:00 pm Prayer Ministry
Sunday, July 26
 9:30 Worship Service



Sunday, August 2
Communion/Bread of Life
 9:30 Worship Service
Sunday, August 9
 9:30 Worship Service
Sunday, August 16
 9:30 Worship Service
Sunday, August 23
 9:30 Worship Service
Wednesday, August 26
 9:30 am Women's Coffee
Sunday, August 30
 9:30 Worship Service

August Birthdays

Aug. 01 - Lisa LaVelle
 Aug. 01 - Ashely McEwen
 Aug. 02 - Curtis Hobson
 Aug. 02 - Nick LaVelle
 Aug. 02 - David Lloyd
 Aug. 02 - Loretta Reinertson
 Aug. 03 - Jay LaVelle
 Aug. 05 - Harper Lloyd
 Aug. 07 - Blaire Donaldson
 Aug. 09 - Harper Minter
 Aug. 09 - Kaleb Roling
 Aug. 10 - Les Raisch
 Aug. 12 - Joan Riskedahl
 Aug. 15 - Rick Shaw
 Aug. 25 - Braden Nelson
 Aug. 27 - John Hess
 Aug. 29 - Haylee Lloyd



Missionary Baptist Church of Chernihiv

Crossroads Ministry, Ukraine

Ministry Newsletter | June 2026

I hope you and your family are doing well.

On behalf of our church, I want to sincerely thank you—and everyone who continues to stand with Ukraine, pray for us, and faithfully support the Ukrainian people.

We thank God that we are alive and able to continue living in our homeland, serving Him, and sharing the Gospel with those who do not yet know Christ. Although war may take away our peace, our clear skies, or even our lives, nothing can separate us from God or take away His love and His blessings.

Jesus said:

"My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me. And I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; neither shall anyone snatch them out of My hand." | John 10:27–28 (NKJV)

Life in Ukraine continues to become more difficult. Enemy attacks are increasing, yet people have not lost hope and still believe that justice will prevail. We continue to pray for a just peace, for the end of the war, for the release of our prisoners of war, and for the liberation of our occupied territories. Please continue to pray together with us.

It has now been four months since our last ministry update (February 2026). During this time, the Lord has continued to work in many lives, and we would like to briefly share what He has been doing.

Ministry in the Communities of Chernihiv Region

From March through June 2026, we visited several villages throughout the Chernihiv region, where we were able to encourage people both spiritually and practically by providing much-needed humanitarian aid.

On June 14, we visited the village of Dniprovske, located near the border with Belarus. According to local residents, just one day before our visit, numerous attack drones and several missiles flew over the village. By God's grace, however, the day of our visit was relatively calm.

We held a worship service in the local church, where both believers and unbelievers from the village and surrounding communities gathered together. Most people in this area travel either on foot, by bicycle, or with the assistance of walkers.

During the service, church members participated in the Lord's Supper and were encouraged through God's Word, while all those present heard the message of the Gospel. At the conclusion of the service, every family received a food package.

During these past few months, we also visited several schools in the villages where we had the opportunity to spend time with children, share the Gospel with them, and give them small gifts.

Nearly every week, our church in the city of Chernihiv holds evangelistic services attended by many unbelievers as well as people who are just beginning to explore Christianity and church life. During some of these meetings, we also distribute humanitarian aid in the form of food packages and hygiene supplies.

Discipleship and Baptism Preparation

Our small groups continue to meet regularly, helping believers grow in their faith while providing a relaxed environment where seekers can ask questions and learn more about God.

Our deacons are also meeting with several new believers who are preparing for the baptism. Lord willing, we plan to hold a baptism service together with Bethany Baptist Church in Chernihiv in August 2026.

Church Building Renovation

In May, we began preparing for repairs to our church's heating system. The most significant project involved replacing the underground pipes that supply hot water to the heating system of our church building. By God's mercy, this work was successfully completed in June. Praise the Lord!

At the same time, construction continues on our new church sanctuary. Tile is currently being installed in the restrooms. Progress is slower than we would like, but step by step the work continues. We pray and believe that one day this facility will open its doors to many people who will hear God's Word there and place their faith in Jesus Christ as their Savior.

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Summer Camp Preparation

In April, we began actively preparing for our first summer children's camp, which, Lord willing, will take place July 6–11, 2026.

In reality, it will be two camps in one. During the first half of each day, we will host a program for children ages 6–13, and in the afternoon, we will have a separate program for teenagers and young people ages 13 and older.

We have already received permission to use the local school's bomb shelter during air raid alerts, and we are currently waiting for final approval from the Chernihiv City Military Administration.

Because of the constant air raid alerts and the ongoing threat of attacks, planning this camp has been especially challenging. We simply do not know what conditions will be like during the week of camp, so we especially ask for your prayers.

Prayer Requests

Please pray:

- that the Lord would bless the final stage of preparation and the camp itself;
- that He would protect the children, parents, volunteers, and our entire team from every danger;
- that God would prepare the hearts of the children and teenagers to receive the Gospel;
- that nothing would prevent this special week from taking place, allowing these children—who so desperately need love, joy, and hope—to experience it.

We also ask you to pray for the financial resources needed to continue all areas of our church's ministry, including evangelism, humanitarian outreach, children's camp ministry, and the ongoing renovation of our new church sanctuary.

Thank you very much for every prayer, every word of encouragement, and every act of support. We deeply appreciate your love and your partnership with us in God's work.

May the Lord richly bless you!

With prayers for you,

Roman Bevz

Leader of Crossroads Ministry

Communications Department at MBC of Chernihiv

P.S. Today, June 27, as I was writing this email, our city came under yet another drone attack. More than 15 attack drones were launched toward Chernihiv. Some were intercepted by air defenses, while others struck various locations across the city.



Special Blessings



Youth Connection
Mary & Scott Swartz, Kaden Strait,
Levi Tidman, Lexie Tidman,
Pastor Pat (hiding at the edge)



Abby Swartz Bradley
Signing for the service



Carol Humphrey, Lexi Tidman, Sue Kramer
Some May Birthdays



Healing Threads



Christian Fellowship Church of Eldora
1415 12th Street
Eldora, Iowa 50627

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Clara planting hostas.



New Planter



New Planters
At CFC

p	f	r	f	r	r	y	q	k	c	m	m	w
d	j	f	y	j	q	e	k	q	x	v	f	q
l	r	f	o	c	o	q	d	c	d	o	x	g
w	b	m	n	u	a	t	r	l	o	h	e	d
d	f	b	n	f	n	e	n	l	i	g	w	a
d	j	w	i	s	s	d	i	i	x	u	s	b
i	v	j	g	u	j	s	a	m	x	o	b	c
v	m	x	o	m	h	a	u	t	p	t	z	e
k	i	h	p	o	h	s	m	x	i	r	h	c
a	p	e	r	o	b	e	y	n	r	o	z	b
e	n	e	t	s	i	l	a	x	u	f	n	u
l	g	q	m	x	y	w	m	x	m	e	m	p
w	c	c	d	e	s	t	r	o	y	e	d	u

Listen
Obey
Foolish
Builder



House
Foundation
Destroyed
Tough