

The Parish Voice

St. Thomas Lutheran Church — Streetsboro, Ohio

July 2019

Because Independence Day, July Fourth, kicks off the month, July is considered by some to be the most patriotic month. It certainly can be a time when we give some thought to what it means to be patriotic — the emotions, the behaviors, the sacrifices, the heritage that falls under the banner of patriotism.

This presents a certain dilemma for the Church (or at least for this Pastor in this church), since patriotism is not exactly a theological or religious category. I did a careful word search of the Bible; the terms “patriot” and “patriotism” appear nowhere. The term “citizenship” shows up twice: once when Paul asserts that he is Roman citizen at trial, thus assuring his fair treatment under Roman law; the other reference is Paul’s assertion that we are citizens of heaven. Hardly seems to fit the theme of Independence Day.

There are places in the Bible where the role of a citizen is brought up. Paul writes, “... *one must be subject [to authority], not only because of wrath but also because of conscience*” [Romans 13:5], which emphasizes that we don’t obey laws just because we might get punished, but because it’s the right thing to do.

Peter also insists: “*For the Lord’s sake accept the authority of every human institution, whether of the emperor as supreme, or of governors, as sent by him to punish those who do wrong and to praise those who do right. For it is God’s will that by doing right you should silence the ignorance of the foolish*” [1 Peter 2:13-15]. Here also the emphasis is on doing God’s will, not just observing human laws.

As Americans, we rather approve of Peter’s next point, “*As servants of God, live as free people,*” but we may not be so sure what to do with the rest of the passage: “*yet do not use your freedom as a pretext for evil.*” What does he mean, and what would that look like for us? Then he tells us, “*Honor everyone. Love the family of believers. Fear God.*” That we think we can do. But this last one? “*Honor the emperor.*” where does that fit into our lives? Some may accuse our authorities of imperialism, but we do not have an emperor to honor. Will a mayor do?

It can all get rather confusing. Is it a Christian virtue to vote? A duty? Should a Christian seek public office, or shy away? One assumes it is a Christian value to obey the law. What if you morally or ethically disagree with the law? Do you follow the counsel to obey, or are you bound, in some manner, to protest? Should you work behind the scenes for change, or openly commit acts of civil disobedience? Throughout this nation’s history, Christian citizens have struggled with these very questions (and it is hardly limited to this nation). Being a good Christian citizen is not simple.

One thing should be clear, however: Patriotism is no substitute for faith. The Christian’s first allegiance is to Christ; all other loyalties must give way to that essential, life-giving relationship. If in any way the demands, requests, obligations, or duties to our country conflict with our unity with and in Christ, Christ has first priority — always!

Within the Christian community we may disagree about governmental policies, legislative actions, bureaucratic decisions, and basic political philosophies. We may virulently disagree with one another about candidates, platforms, and issues. One thing we must always agree on as citizens: our love for each other in Christ cannot be compromised by anything so petty as a political squabble.

BLESSED INDEPENDENCE DAY!

Our Worship This Month



July 7 — Pentecost IV

Sermon: *"Before Faith Came . . ."*

Texts: Isaiah 65:1-9; Psalm 32; Galatians 3:23-29; Luke 8:26-39

Paul speaks of the Law's roll before Christ — but there is so much more to the bounty we have been given with the gift of life-changing faith.



July 14 — Pentecost V

Sermon: *"And If I Follow . . . ?"*

Texts: 1 Kings 19:15-16, 19-21; Psalm 16; Galatians 5:1, 13-25; Luke 9:51-62

We hear the invitation to follow the calling of God. What do we get if we follow? What do we miss if we do not?



July 21 — Pentecost VI

Sermon: *"Marching Orders"*

Texts: Isaiah 66:10-14; Psalm 66:1-11, 14-18; Galatians 6:1-16; Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

Jesus sends out seventy followers with specific mission instructions. Was that it, or did He intend us to learn something about our mission?



July 28 — Pentecost VII

Sermon: *"Right Answer! Right Understanding?"*

Texts: Deuteronomy 30:9-14; Psalm 25:1-9; Colossians 1:1-14; Luke 10:25-37

Jesus tells the story of the Good Samaritan as a way to illustrate what love means. We think we know what it means; do we follow through?

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1 + 1 + 1 giving

We, along with other English District congregations, are raising money to help our missionaries spread the good news of Jesus. 1+1+1 means \$1 per member each Sunday. There is a plastic box in the narthex under the bulletins for you to place your \$1 each Sunday. Because of the break-in we are now emptying the box each Sunday. It will be posted each Sunday in the Offering List. Thank you for your donations!

Also being collected are bottle caps for the Campfire Girls and can tabs for Thrivent and cancelled postage stamps for an organization in Kent. Thank you for your donations!

WEBSITE

If you haven't checked out our church website yet, please do and let Del Groff know how you like it or if there is something you would like to see added. The website is **www.stthomasstreetsboro.com**

Our July-September Portal of Prayers devotionals are available now. You can find them on the table by the door.

Council will be meeting in July on the 14th at 11:30 in the fellowship hall. All members are welcome to sit in on the meeting. New ideas are always appreciated.

Contact Person: Please call Pastor Just at 216-789-6688 or Council President Steve Hlava at 330 422-1959 for any emergencies or questions. Pastor Just is in the office on Thursdays from 8:00-4:00.

HAPPY 4TH OF JULY!

Jesus said, "If you hold to my teaching, you really are my disciples. Then you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." John 8:31-32; 36

Please stay safe and enjoy your day!

REMEMBER IN PRAYER

Abigail Ayers	Madeline Ayers	Trudy Ayers	Jeanette Doerfler
Deb Earle	Cory Hautmann	Linda Hautmann	Pastor Just
Lorene Kozar	Joe Lenno	Ken Nicely II	Ken Nicely III
Kenny Nicely IV	Carol Poston	Heather Poston	Amy Rohaley
Ron Stenglein	Agnes Whinnie	Rory Wolff	Barb Alcorn
Roger Black	Michael Brooks	Warren Burgess	Franklin Conn
Scott Corban	Tom Corban	Christine Combs	Dan Crile
Chuck Defer	Billy Earle	Martin Goss	Hanna & Zane
Karen Groves	Mr. Joe	Steve Kolar	Brad Kozar
Sharon Kress	Suzanne Latham	Bob Mandau	Pastor Mark
Frank Manijak	Art Robinson	Deb Rosenlib	Mildred Slanina
Dylenn Szcaks	Tara Vargo	Jon Yenulonis	Sam, Denise & Delilah

Mr. Steve Gerhard
The Gardens of Western Reserve
9975 Greentree Parkway
Streetsboro, OH 44241-4328

Mrs. Audrey Holland
4552 Aspen Lake Road
Apartment 102
Brunswick, OH 44212-4582

Mrs. Eunice Haschak
Avenue at Macedonia
9730 Valley View Road
Macedonia, Ohio 44056

Our High School Graduates—Abigail Ayers, Corey Hautmann and Joanna Nicely
Our College Student—Grace Rohaley who is doing an internship in Florida
Our College Graduate—Stephen Nicely

If there is anyone you would like to add or delete from this list, please let Marla Manijak know. You can reach her at 330-626-5120 or fill out one of the cards in the pew and put in offering plate.

FLOWER AND CANDLE CHARTS

Please check the bulletin board to purchase Altar Flowers for \$25 or Vigil Candles for \$3.00. Please mark them in memory of a loved one or in celebration of a special family member or friend.

JULY BIRTHDAYS

Birthdays

20-Bob Earle



JULY BAPTISM BIRTHDAYS

Baptism Birthdays

2-Diane Lee
20-Jodi Earle

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PRAY FOR US MISSOURI SYNOD CALENDAR

Remember God's work in Lutheran schools as you pray: 1. for the children attending Lutheran schools, that their eyes, ears, hearts and minds would be open to God's Word. 2. for Lutheran school teachers, that they would correctly divide and deliver Law and Gospel to students through real-life applications each day. 3. for Lutheran school principals, who lead people to passionately embrace the witness our schools provide to the community. Pray that pastors, principals, directors and teachers would work together in Godpleasing unity. 4. for pastors, who champion the Kingdom work happening in our schools. Pray that pastors would be excited to be an integral part of their school's ministry and the teaching of the children. 5. for the ability of Lutheran schools to serve every child in their care. Ask that the Lord would provide the means to help schools serve children who have disabilities, who have experienced trauma or who come from families with limited resources. 6. for Lutheran schools that are struggling to fill empty seats. Pray that God would revitalize their ministries, energize their staff members and bring more children through their doors. 7. for parents who support our Lutheran schools with their time, talents and treasures. Give thanks for their dedication to the mission of the school. 8. for daily opportunities for our teachers and staff to show God's mercy, love and forgiveness both inside and outside of the classroom. Pray that God would maintain our ability to practice our faith in Lutheran schools. 9. for church members who tell the story of their Lutheran school, that their recommendation might lead more students through the school's doors. 10. for the many non-Christians and exchange students who are coming to our schools. Pray that God would work through the Gospel that they will have faith in Jesus. 11. for first-year teachers, that they may apply their gifts to demonstrate grace and mercy. Pray that God would give them strength and patience. 12. for our early childhood centers that introduce young families to the saving love of Jesus. Pray that they are a faithful witness to the littlest of God's children and their families. 13. for courageous Lutheran schools willing to take calculated risks that will result in significant rewards for students. Give the leaders of these schools wisdom in their decisions. 14. for comfort and healing for school faculty and students during times of injury, illness and loss. 15. for God to raise up wise and gifted leaders who are willing to serve in administrative roles at Lutheran schools. Remember God's work through LCMS U as you pray: 16. for the 200-plus LCMS U chapters around the country, that they would receive the support they need to effectively reach out to America's college students. 17. that more congregations and individuals would become involved with their local LCMS U chapters or start new ones. 18. for the growth of LCMS U on urban campuses and at community colleges, two fertile mission fields. Pray that the Lord would open doors to the spread of His Word in these places. 19. for all the dedicated staff and volunteers involved in campus ministry, that God would energize them for their work and use them to plant seeds of faith that will continue to grow. 20. for students starting their first year of college, that they would find a church to attend, Christian friends and make good decisions while living away from home for the first time. 21. for the parents of college students, especially those who have an empty nest for the first time. Pray that they would find joy and contentment in the midst of life's changes. 22. that Lutheran college students would be bold witnesses to their faith in Jesus Christ, even when faced with pressure from peers and professors. 23. that young people would hunger for the certain truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ and not be deceived by the halftruths and lies of Satan. 24. for the 800,000-plus foreign students studying at American colleges and universities. Many come from countries where the Gospel is not freely preached. Pray that their time in the U.S. would provide the opportunity for them to learn about Jesus. 25. for the international students who came to faith while studying abroad. Ask the Lord to provide support so that they can continue to grow in their faith after they return home. 26. for busy college students, who are pulled in many directions with the demands of school, work, friends, family and other activities. Pray that they would make God a priority by setting aside time for worship, Bible study and Christian service. 27. for the development of campus-ministry programs at institutions of higher education around the world. 28. that God would bless and guide the work of all students involved in mission work and volunteer opportunities both at home and abroad. Pray that this time would be a blessing to them and others. 29. with thanksgiving for a new school year. Pray that students and campus-ministry workers would return refreshed and with renewed dedication. 30. for recent college graduates, that they would find gainful employment as well as a church home where they can learn about God's holy Word in all of its truth and purity. 31. for all students, that God would protect them and provide people to share with them the Word of God.

St. Thomas Evangelical Lutheran Church
P.O. Box 2247
9042 State Route 43
Streetsboro, OH 44241

Change Service Requested

THE PARISH VOICE NEWSLETTER

Office: 330-626-4945

Pastor Just office hours—Thursdays 8:00-4:00

Cell Phone (216) 789-6688 Email: doctorjust@gmail.com

Web Site: www.stthomasstreetsboro.com

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

TRADITIONAL WORSHIP SERVICE 10:00 A.M.