

Ripples

Stillwater Free Lutheran Church

“Sharing Jesus Christ with Our Neighbors”

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2023

From the Pastor's Desk

July brings us Independence Day – the fourth of July! How many of you have special plans for celebrating?

Patriotism and faith have an interesting relationship. I read the other day that it can be difficult to moderate how much religion should be involved with the governance of countries.

I thought that was an interesting statement considering where we as a nation have come from!

In 1776, fifty men signed a document hand-written by Thomas Jefferson.

That document was the Declaration of Independence signed in congress on July 4th 1776, declaring America's freedom from the oppressive rule of England. And "freedom" has been the battle cry of this country for over 200 years.

The Bible says, "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage" (Psalm 33:12 ESV). The pledge of Allegiance declares without apology that America is "one nation under God." Yet, how far we have come.

Let's suppose that sometime this week you turned on the news and heard these announcements: "The Chief Justice of the Supreme Court has just issued this statement: 'Divine Providence (that's God) has given to our people the choice of their rulers, and it is the duty of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers.'"

Then you heard, "Inquiries by our reporters reveal that almost every state legislature has now passed a law requiring all elected officials to take this oath: 'I do profess faith in God the Father, and in the Lord Jesus Christ His only Son, and I do acknowledge the holy scriptures of the Old and New Testaments to be given by divine inspiration.'"

Then to top it off you hear reports saying, "Legislation was passed today in Congress to affirm that, 'The Congress of the United States approves of and recommends ... the Holy Bible for use in the schools.'"

It's hard to imagine those things being said in the United States today, but they were said. It was John Jay, the first Chief Justice and "father" of the Supreme Court, one of the primary authors of our Constitution, who wrote, "It is the duty of our Christian nation to select and prefer Christians for their rulers."

It was the state of Delaware (along with most of the others) which required officeholders to take an oath affirming their Christian faith before they could take office.

And, not only did Congress in 1782 approve the use of the Bible in our schools, they even paid for them with tax dollars. And, in 1844, when someone sued to remove them, the Supreme Court ruled: “Why should not the Bible, and especially the New Testament, be read and taught as a divine revelation in the schools? Where can the purest principles of morality be learned so clearly or so perfectly as from the New Testament?”

We’ve come a long way from our roots as Americans. Something former President Obama often said is: “We are not a Christian nation; at least, not just.” I have to agree. We are no longer solely a Christian nation. We are a diverse nation consisting of Muslims, Jews, Buddhists, Wiccans, Spiritualist, Catholics, Protestants and atheists. But the fact is—the vast majority of Americans (as much as 75% according to some surveys) still identify themselves as Christians and our nation was built upon Christian ideals and biblical principles. It is our Christian heritage that is slowly slipping away from America.

When Thomas Jefferson and our fore-fathers penned the words of the Declaration of Independence, they recognized certain God-given, “inalienable” rights. Three are mentioned specifically: life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Today, Americans’ understanding of those rights has diminished. At the time, those rights carried great political—and also great spiritual—meaning. If we want the God of the Bible to be the God of this nation, as we have often claimed He is, then we must realize what our founding fathers understood so well—that true life, liberty and happiness can only be found in Him. Let’s consider these inalienable rights with which all men have been endowed by their Creator. The first of which is life.

Jesus said, in no uncertain terms, “I am the way and the truth and the life; no one comes to the Father except through me” (John 14:6 NIV). In other words, real, lasting life can only be experienced through Jesus Christ! In fact, Jesus even said, “I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly” (John 10:10 NKJV). Another translation puts it this way: “My purpose is to give life in all its fullness” (TLB).

Apart from Jesus Christ, this life is no life at all. The founders of our nation understood that—and believed it. Unless we believe in Him and commit our lives into His hands then this life has no real purpose or meaning.

The first President of these United States acknowledged that Jesus is the Christ, the Son God, the source of all life. He knew and believed that it was only through Jesus that sin could be forgiven and eternal life inherited.

The second of our inalienable rights, according to the Declaration of Independence is liberty.

Patrick Henry was a great statesman and a great speaker. He was also a great patriot during the infancy of this nation. As a lawyer, he defended the character under which the colonies were founded in America. He resisted the "Stamp Act" with the words: "Caesar had his Brutus; Charles the First, his Cromwell--and George the Third may profit from their example. If this be treason, make the most of it."

His most famous speech, though, was before the Virginia Assembly in 1775, when British troops were advancing to enforce King George's rule on Virginia. At the conclusion of one of the most fiery speeches ever delivered, Patrick Henry cried, "Is life so dear or peace so sweet as to be purchased at the price of chains and slavery? Forbid it, Almighty God! I know not what course others may take, but as for me, give me liberty or give me death!" And the fire of freedom was lit!

The Statue of Liberty stands across from the Island of Manhattan in New York. Soldiers, on their return from overseas, often speak in awe of the feelings they had as they sailed into the harbor and viewed the "Torch of Freedom" in Lady Liberty's hand. To the Christian, the Statue of Liberty and the Cross of Jesus Christ have kindred meanings. Both symbolize the highest and noblest in freedom and liberty. Both stand as beautiful and glorious signs of a liberated people.

Jesus came into our world on a mission of liberty. He said, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor" (Luke 4:18 ESV).

This country was founded by people who trusted more in the liberty found in Jesus than in the liberty granted even by our own Constitution. What we often forget is that in declaring their independence from England, our forefathers made an equally strong declaration of dependence upon Almighty God. The closing words of their Declaration solemnly states: "With a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our lives, our fortunes, and our sacred honor." It is important that we remember this very basic declaration of their dependence, because the United States today is rapidly forgetting the God of our fathers, the God who gave this nation its birth and its greatness—the only source of true liberty.

Finally, the third inalienable right recognized by our forefathers was the pursuit of happiness.

Happiness comes and goes from day to day. Situations and experiences can make us happy or sad. But in Jesus, our happiness is not dependent upon outside forces. The word often translated blessed in Jesus' Sermon on the Mount actually means happy.

People all across this country will spend their lives pursuing a temporary sort of happiness. But that is all it will ever be—a pursuit. They will never be satisfied. They will never have enough. That empty feeling will never be filled. The pleasures and distractions of this world will never provide lasting joy or happiness. True happiness can only be found in Jesus Christ—and in Him it can never be taken away.

Psychologists tell us that people need three things to make them happy: (1) something to do, (2) someone to love, and (3) something to look forward to. Jesus gives us all three. Jesus gave us something to do, saying, "I tell you the truth, whoever believes in me will do the same things that I do" (John 14:12 NCV). Jesus gave us someone to love, saying, "If anyone loves me, he will obey my teaching. My Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him" (John 14:23 NIV). And Jesus gave us something to look forward to, saying, "When everything is ready, I will come and get you, so that you will always be with me where I am" (John 14:2 NLT).

Only in Jesus can Americans, or anybody else, find genuine, lasting happiness.

So, as we celebrate again the birth of our nation, pray that our country might have a new birth of freedom; not a freedom from God, which ultimately leads to slavery, but rather a freedom built upon God and His Word. Also, may each one of us, as individuals, reaffirm our dependence upon God. And then, as did the Founding Fathers of our country, we will find in Him our life, our liberty, and our happiness!

Happy Independence Day!!!

God Bless

Pastor Craig

Stillwater Youth Groupies

The Youth are committed to serve the community through our strength in Jesus Christ.

Several of our Youth Group and almost as many adult chaperones will leave early Sunday morning, along with a delegation from Faith, in the van heading to the 2023 FLY Convention held at the YMCA Camp in Estes Park, CO. This year's theme is "Restored" Please keep our local group and this convention in your prayers. This event could be a life changing experience for these youth and memories for a lifetime!



AND HE WHO WAS SEATED ON THE THRONE SAID, "BEHOLD, I AM MAKING ALL THINGS NEW." ALSO HE SAID, "WRITE THIS DOWN, FOR THESE WORDS ARE TRUSTWORTHY AND TRUE." AND HE SAID TO ME, "IT IS DONE! I AM THE ALPHA AND THE OMEGA, THE BEGINNING AND THE END. TO THE THIRSTY I WILL GIVE FROM THE SPRING OF THE WATER OF LIFE WITHOUT PAYMENT. THE ONE WHO CONQUERS WILL HAVE THIS HERITAGE, AND I WILL BE HIS GOD AND HE WILL BE MY SON. REVELATION 21:5-7

VBS 2023
AUGUST 7TH – 11TH
9AM - NOON



Annual Conference 2023

Another annual conference is in the books. It was a treat for me to travel with Neila Elgin. She is a treasure for our church family. Beautiful inside and out.

Being in a new location is always a challenge. This year was no exception. In past years, my “teammates,” the WMF board, were able to make the day before conference a work time of sorts. We didn’t have all seven together for the prior days meetings. One had to be early for “Rekindling the Fire” – this is being opened to lay people now rather than solely clergy so that might be a new challenge for preparation. It was also unclear who our point person was since we worked with Chanel and all South Dakota churches planned the event together. The only snag for my portion of the day was that the missionary greeting video would not load for the time we wanted it. And the Ambassador boys got sick so were unable to do special music for our Missionary Festival. Again, thank you all for your prayers as I finish strong. Yes – this is my last year as WMF president. So, thank you for your love and support in this endeavor.

My highlight reel for the actual conference is as follows:

- We have a new youth director selected, Adam McCarlson, gifted musician, and a loving supportive family. We have been praying for his dad, Pastor Mike and the ongoing cancer treatments there. Adam will be attending seminary as he serves as youth director. His desire is to see parent involvement grow stronger.
- The mayor of Sioux Falls is a Christian. His mom played piano for our evening services. He brought a greeting. He says it is his delight to be called upon to pray before the town council meetings when the one asked for an invocation is unable to attend.
- The leader of our Canada AFLC gave a greeting. He apologized for the smoke. His sense of humor was so refreshing, and he asked for prayer going forward. That Canada needed God’s hand upon it.
- The Bible School and Seminary have a strategic plan that looks very impressive. They will offer an AA degree soon.
- The ARC is whittling away on their debt and is well under the \$500,00 amount. So exciting.

- My favorite break out session that I attended was on generational verses traditional ministry. He said, “You are doing Thanksgiving wrong! Why do you have a kids table. In his youth group he asked the oldest guy and his wife to come to the kids’ group and tell some stories.” We need to find ways to involve all ages. He mentioned having a six-year-old on a stool reading scripture, etc.
- The resolutions were passed without a lot of comment. (I have them if you’d like to read through them as well as all the reports) We got held up when one was brought from the floor to resolve that the colloquy committee who in the past has met once in January would serve five years rather than one. It was tabled but not without a ton of comments.
- Gary Jorgenson and Brett Boe were re-elected on the first ballots.

Another special treat was the mission festival and the plaque for Jeremy Crowell who is leaving his pilot and preaching duties in Alaska to go to MATA to train pilots. Our speaker that evening was Pastor Nate Jore and he gave a tear jerker. I think it was taped so you could access it online. It is very powerful. God is good.

Our President Micah Hjermstad gave a loving devotion for our exodus. He used Luke 12: 31 and 32. “Fear not little flock” He said when we meet again we will be in the middle of an election. The last one was close. Not the way we’d like to win an election. It’s better to have a clear winner.

That’s what we have as believers. He pointed back to the theme of this conference – Victory in Christ. From I Cor. 15:57,58. Christ’s victory is yours dear believers. And it was a landslide victory on the hill of Golgotha. Amen!

Plan to come with me next year. It will be at Medicine Lake. I will hand over the baton to a new president and see what the Lord has in store for my “retirement.”

Lavonne West
Retiring National WMF President and Stillwater
Member



Up Coming Events You Don't Want to Miss!



2023

CHURCH PICNIC

Saturday, August 5 12:30 – 3 pm



Come Camp with us at
the church on
Friday, August 4th and
Saturday, August 5th.

OUTDOOR

Worship Service
on the Activity Center Patio

Sunday, August 6th

9:30 AM

New Members

On Sunday, June 11 we welcomed into membership the following friends - (from left to right): Back row - Odin, Simona, Lenka (not pictured) and Nicholas Knutson, Leslie Gibson, Jeanette and Gary Byrer.

Middle row - Meri Putzler, Vickie and John Kruger, Leonard and Carol (not pictured) Hogan, JayCee holding Emily and John holding Lorenzo Krickeberg.

Front row - Nate holding Ben, Ashley and Terrace Dieterich



Movies on the 5th (Sunday)



Come on out at 4 pm on Sunday, July 30th. Bring your lawn chair, if you like, a snack to share and we'll watch Jesus Revolution. Popcorn is provided.

Graduation Quilt Presentation



Boe Mathias Tutvedt

Glacier High School

Boe enjoys mountain biking, golfing and welding; which he discovered in high school at the AG Center. His plan is to attend FVCC for welding/CAD classes so he can pursue his dream of owning his own welding business. He and his brothers have also started a pressure washing business in the valley called **Three Brothers Pressure Wash**.

Building Project Report

It has been suggested we add hanging banners in the activity center to improve acoustics. We will be meeting to discuss this subject as relates to the number of banners, sizes, designs, locations, and related costs. If you have some ideas and/or would like to be involved, please contact Ed or Susan.

Ed Van Scoten: (503) 351-8523

Susan Shea: (406) 871-3546

Holy Baptism

Kaleb Brian Reese and Logan Matthew Reese were brought by their parents Garrison Reese and Megan Tutvedt to receive the eternal blessings of Holy Baptism on Sunday, July 25. The baptismal gowns were made by Evelyn Taylor, their great-great grandma on Brian's side. Also, the water that was used during the baptism is from the original Tutvedt farmhouse. This is the 4th generation to follow this family tradition.



Family members will be the twins' sponsors.

Stillwater Library News



Our selection of books for you to check out continues to grow! Thank you again to our donors for sharing your special 'finds'.

Right now Darryl is keeping his eyes peeled at garage sales for a new bookshelf for our library. Thank you, Darryl!

The following books will be added to our reference section as soon as we have room.

How Full is Your Bucket? by Tom Rath and Donald Clifton, Ph. D., "drew on Gallup research and millions of interviews to argue that this positive give-and-take leads to solid marriages, higher worker satisfaction and productivity, and a happier world." (O, the Oprah Magazine). This is a wonderful book and well worth the time to read. (It's short too!)

Faith Still Moves Mountains by Harris Faulkner is a collection of miraculous stories of the healing power of prayer, "reminding us that God sees and cares when we're struggling; miracles that provide the most visible evidence of God's greatness and grace; proof that prayer isn't just words—it's action." (H. Faulkner)

Wild at Heart by John Eldredge, *Discovering the Secret of a Man's Soul*. "Every man was once a boy. And every little boy has dreams, big dreams. But what happens when they grow up? John Eldredge invites men to recover their masculine heart, defined in the image of a passionate God. And he invites women to discover the secret of a man's soul and to delight in the strength and wildness men were created to offer." (Thomas Nelson Publishers)

The Pursuit of God by A.W. Tozer “His ability to separate the wheat from the chaff, the lesser from the greater, reflects his great vision of God.” (Dr. Erwin Lutzer) “ Those who drink deeply of Tozer’s writings are refreshed and nourished...”(Dr. Stuart Briscoe) “In our ‘information’ age Tozer’s books continue to offer not just information but insight which is relevant and time-tested.” (Dr. Franklin Graham)

Faith Hope and Hilarity, is a collection of faith-filled stories compiled by Ann Spangler and Shari MacDonald. “We hope that Faith Hope and Hilarity will not only add sunshine to your home but to your heart as well, easing your anxieties, giving much needed perspective, and lightening whatever loads you might be carrying.” (Ann Spangler)

Two new additions to our fiction library:

The Lovely Bones by Alice Sebold, “is luminous and astonishing, a novel that builds out of grief the most hopeful of stories. In the hands of a brilliant new writer, this story of the worst thing a family can face is transformed into a suspenseful and even funny novel about love, memory, joy, heaven, and healing.” (Little, Brown, and Co.)

Sweet Tomorrows by Debbie Macomber, is a Rose Harbor novel. “Macomber manages to infuse her trademark humor in a more somber story that focuses on love, loss, and faith. . . . This one will appeal to those looking for more mature heroines and a good clean romance. “ (RT Book Reviews) This is the 5th in a series of novels set in the charming Rose Harbor Inn. If anyone has a copy of the first 4 books, please consider donating them to fill out our Rose Harbor series.

If you want to read one or more of these books and don’t see them on the shelves, please see Meri.

Happy Reading,

Meri Putzler and Susan Shea

Stillwater Book Club



Our next book discussion on July 7, at 10:30 a.m. will be **Trash** by Andy Mulligan. “In an unnamed third world country, in the not-too-distant future, three dumpsite boys make a living picking through the mountains of garbage on the outskirts of a large city.” (Amazon) This book broadens

our view of the not so fortunate life some people live and their struggle to survive. I’ve read other books about this, especially in Guatamala, that this is actually happening. We need to remember these people in prayer.

The following is a list of the books we have scheduled for the rest of the year.

- August 4 Julia’s Hope by Liesha Kelly
- Sept. 8 The Lincoln Conspiracy by Brad Meltzer
- Oct. 6 One Thousand White Women by Jim Fergus
- Nov. 3 The Boys in the Boat by Daniel James Brown
- Dec.1 The Beautiful World by Susan Rohrer

Blessings,

Meri Putzler

Feeding the Flathead



On June 26 we fed 50 people and handed out 32 to-go meals. These consisted of spaghetti, carrot sticks, string cheese, bread, mandarin oranges and cookies. There were also treats of ice cream, donuts, and pop left by others.

Thank you to Lori Switzer for the cookies and oranges. A BIG thank you to my serving crew of Allee, Haylee and Makynlee Meyer, not only did they help serve, but dinner was served on glass plates, so there were lots of dishes and clean-up.

The people are always so grateful for these meals.

Please let us know if you would like to help in the next couple of months.

May God continue to bless this ministry.

Susan Shea (406)871-3546

Lori Switzer (936)443-4390



Women's Missionary Federation

Karen Van Scoten did devotions from Psalm 77.

Karen Berosik did our Bible Study, which was lesson 6 titled "Deborah." We had 12 ladies present.

Our next meeting will be on July 20th at Darlene Askvig's home with Susan Shea as co-host. Early will have a devotion and Susan will lead our bible study, lesson 7, on "Naomi" where you go, I go - A lesson in relationships.

Our July 2nd potluck will have group 3 on set-up, group 2 – serving and group 1 – clean-up.

On June 24th, we had a luncheon for seniors and also to honor Ed Van Scoten, Sr. for all the time and work he did in heading up the construction of the Activity Center. Thank you, Ed, and everyone else who helped on this project.

We have free tickets for July 9th to the movie "Sound of Freedom." Anyone wanting tickets contact Karen Van Scoten, in the church office. These are reserved seats. Should be an interesting movie.

Judy Karboski gave our treasurers report. We have #135.00 in the birthday fund and \$377.68 in the bank. Our monies this month will go to World Missions, which is for the missionaries.

Thank you, Karen Berosik for opening your home for our meeting. We thank Karen B and Darlene for a beautiful lunch. Thank you, Karen, for the tour of your beautiful yard and garden. It was a very nice day. We hope to see you all at our next meeting in July.

Submitted by Elaine Lessor, Stillwater WMF Secretary

After-School Program

WE MADE IT TO SUMMER!!!!

We finished off the school year relatively strong; some had an overload of the “silly bugs” while others of us crawled across the finish line!! We spent the last few days reviewing all the verses we’d memorized throughout the school year, and it was amazing to hear the kids recall the verses learned in the beginning months with as much clarity as the verse in May!!



In June I incorporated a time of organized play before we had snacks, verses and the Bible message as the kids had a ridiculous amount of energy those last few days of school! It worked so well I believe we’ll continue it throughout next year!!

Please continue to keep these little hearts in your prayers as they enjoy their summer vacation!

As a friendly and earnest reminder I am still in need of volunteers for **Tuesdays** and **Fridays** of next year. Volunteers will be needed from 3:30- 5:30! As Pastor stated, we will not be able to run this program if we don’t have volunteers. Please be in prayer and let me know if you can come help next year and make an impact in these little ones lives!!

Thank you all and God's blessing! ~Ashley

Free Concert

The Free Lutheran Bible College Ambassadors
will be visiting Kalispell to present their summer concert titled

"The Light of Life"

at Faith Free Lutheran Church
Wednesday, July 12, at 7:00 PM.

Concert program will include Jesus-focused testimonies, a selection of 5 to 8 trio performances, 2 to 3 congregational songs, and a prelude and postlude to set the tone.

There will be dessert and a fellowship time following the concert.

Job Opening

Trinity Lutheran School in Kalispell serves students and families in preschool - 8th grade. We are currently looking to hire a music teacher for the fall. The position is intended to be full-time, but we have some flexibility to make it part time. Great benefits including tuition discounts for employees and working with an amazing staff. If you would like more information, please contact Laura White at 406-257-6716 or laurawhite@Trinityed.org.

Prayers for July

"Whatever you ask in prayer with faith, you will receive." Matt 21:22

Church Work & Ministry

Sharing Jesus Christ with our Neighbors
Building Project
Church Leaders, Staff & Worship Team
Stillwater Youth Group (FLY Convention)
Stillwater & National WMF
Feeding the Flathead
After School Program
Intervarsity Christian Fellowship
The Gideons
CarePortal

General Prayers

Marriages and Families

- Alan and Lynea West at the passing of Susan
- Brester Family

Our Country and Leaders

Workers in the Harvest Field

Travel Mercies

Caregivers

Military and First Responders

- David Bruyer (Askvig)
- Arron Burns
- James Gelormino
- Jonathan Gelormino
- Gage Triplett



Health Concerns

John Kruger

Ed & Shirley Poe

Art Hanson

Steve Beck (Van Scoten/Scavo)

Cedar Poston (Linda McGrew)

Sherri Scavo

Carol Hogan

Sylvan Herset

Joyce Banzet

Justin Gronley (Joel and Cody Bartholomew's son)

David Creer (Bob and Julie Stanton)