

# Christ Lutheran Church

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July 2018

July 4<sup>th</sup>, Independence Day, is one of the favorite holidays for many Americans. It commemorates the adoption of the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, when the thirteen colonies declared that they were no longer under the unjust rule of King George III and Great Britain. Americans value our independence and those "certain unalienable Rights" including "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." No wonder we celebrate so grandly with parades, ceremonies, fireworks, barbecues, concerts, baseball games, you name it. We treasure our freedom to live apart from tyranny and oppression, a freedom which has been bought and maintained with the price of blood. Perhaps the song by Lee Greenwood expresses the patriotism many feel:

... I'd thank my lucky stars to be livin' here today  
'Cause the flag still stands for freedom and they can't take that away.

And I'm proud to be an American, where at least I know I'm free.  
And I won't forget the men who died, who gave that right to me.  
And I gladly stand up, next to you and defend her still today.  
'Cause there ain't no doubt I love this land, God bless the USA.

Independence is good, but only when it is used according to God's design and to honor Him. Unfortunately, the sinful nature that dwells in us all likes to take something good and twist it into evil. Adam and Eve sought independence by eating the forbidden fruit; but instead of finding freedom, they found alienation from God and each other, they found death. Sometimes as children grow up, they seek independence from parents through forbidden paths; but instead of finding freedom, they find alienation from loved ones, they find bad company and trouble lining their way. How many Americans seek independence by demanding their "unalienable Rights" to abort their children, to live immoral lifestyles, to redefine marriage; but instead of finding true "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness," they find guilt, sexually transmitted diseases, divorce, and life without meaning apart from the design God intended. How many times haven't we all sought independence after the way of our sinful nature with its "me first" attitude – selfishly forsaking the needs of others around us, including our children, our aging parents, and our neighbor who needs to hear about Christ; but instead of finding true freedom, we have found the burden of guilt, loneliness, and a lack of godly purpose in life. Independence is good, but only when it truly honors God. Apart from His intended design, our lives could only come to the opposite of what is good in "Death, Bondage to Satan, and eternal Unhappiness."

Above the spirit of patriotism in relation to our American citizenship, we can celebrate and thank God that He has set us spiritually free. He has freed us from our former bondage under the tyranny of sin, death, and the devil. By His grace, He has given us true and lasting freedom in His heavenly kingdom. To paraphrase that verse by Lee Greenwood we might say: "I'm glad to be a child of God, for in Christ I know I'm free. And I won't forget the Man who died, who gave that gift to me." That Man, of course, is the eternal Son of God who valiantly fought the devil, gave His life on the cross for our sins, and rose again to give us forgiveness, freedom, and eternal life with God. As we sing in the hymn:

Lord Jesus, we give thanks to Thee That Thou hast died to set us free;  
Made righteous through Thy precious blood, We now are reconciled to God.

God bless our native land... with Your Gospel's Declaration of eternal Life, Liberty,  
and Happiness in Christ!

Pastor Smith



# Liberty, Freedom, & Independence

(A newsletter of our evangelical Lutheran Synod's Board for Home Outreach)

People in Brazil celebrate it on September 7<sup>th</sup>. Canadians celebrate it on July 1<sup>st</sup>. The French celebrate it on July 14<sup>th</sup>. Mexicans celebrate it on September 16<sup>th</sup>. On July 4<sup>th</sup> we Americans join together in celebrating our "Independence Day."

Countries all over the world have designated special holidays where their people join together to celebrate their liberty and freedom. This goes to show that liberty, freedom, and independence are principles and virtues that are appreciated and cherished everywhere – the world over.

Nobody wants to be oppressed, tyrannized, or burdened. Such things are universally recognized as bad and evil. We desire the opposite. We want liberty, freedom, and independence from such torment. And so, on "Independence Day" we celebrate the fact that those who went before us were able to cast off the burdensome chains of such evil so that we might have things better!

The Bible also speaks about the importance of having liberty, freedom, and independence. In fact, a love of these principles and virtues is why Christians believe what they do! The Christian understands that he is one who is naturally oppressed, tyrannized, and burdened. It is something that all people can feel and relate to because all people understand what guilt feels like. Consciences are heavy and troubled. We know what we have done to hurt and harm those that we should instead be loving. The burden of a heavy conscience only gets worse when we recognize that our own attempted solutions and our efforts to correct things only end in failure, continued distress, and despair!

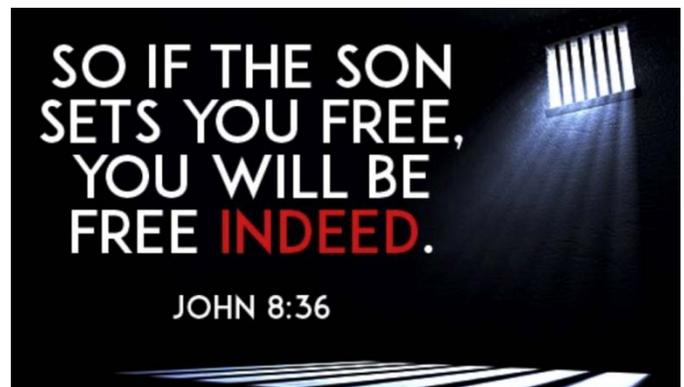
Where can we turn for liberty, freedom, and independence of our guilt and sin? The Christian finds relief in Him who said: "*Come to Me all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest*" (Matthew 11:28). We find comfort in the One who proclaims: "*Take heart! Your sins are forgiven*" (Matthew 9:2). We find liberty, freedom, and independence of our guilt and sin in Jesus Christ.

Jesus is the answer to being spiritually oppressed, tyrannized, and burdened. He who came with the power of God, proving Himself to be the very Son of God, trustworthy and true, points people everywhere to Himself and says: "*If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed!*" (John 8:36).

You are invited to celebrate your liberty, freedom, and independence over sin and guilt! You are invited to celebrate these things forever in a place where there will be unending happiness and joy! Jesus is providing YOU with spiritual liberty, freedom, and independence!

Jesus provides us with liberty, freedom, and independence with His holy, righteous life, lived for us. Where we have sinned and feel the burden of guilt and shame, Jesus lived perfectly. There was never any burden upon Him. But He willingly took *our* burden upon Himself as He went to suffer and die upon the Cross. There, Jesus took the sin and guilt that should oppress, tyrannize, and burden us and He made it His own while His liberty, freedom, and independence, He gave to you and to me! By simply trusting in Jesus' life, death, and resurrection, we "*shall not perish but have eternal life*" (John 3:16).

When we begin to feel oppressed, tyrannized, and burdened by our consciences, when we feel the weight of our sin and guilt, Jesus invites us again and again to come to Him. He wants us to hear His words that tell us He has set us free. And He invites us to celebrate the fact that through Him, we have spiritual liberty, freedom, and independence.



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<b>1</b> <i>6<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</i> Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> <i>Independence Day</i>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>8</b> <i>7<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</i> Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	<b>9</b> <i>Happy Anniversary                      Steve &amp; Mandy Hunter</i>	<b>10</b> <i>Happy Birthday                      Micah Smith</i>  Council Meeting 4:30 PM	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>  CLWMS Activity at Rogue River Place 2:30 PM	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> <i>Happy Birthday                      Isaac Smith</i>
<b>15</b> <i>8<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</i> Worship with Communion 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> <i>Happy Birthday                      Kara Bednar</i>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> <i>Happy Birthday                      Michael Ore</i>  <i>Happy Birthday                      Rev. Glenn Smith</i>	<b>21</b>
<b>22</b> <i>9<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</i> Worship 9:30 AM Sunday School & Bible Class 10:45 AM Worship at Crystal Terrace 1:00 PM	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b> <i>Happy Birthday                      Richard Howard</i>  <i>Happy Birthday                      Randy Bednar</i>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>29</b> <i>10<sup>th</sup> Sunday after Pentecost</i> Worship 9:30 AM	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>				
<p><i>"If the Son sets you free,                      you will be free indeed!"                      (John 8:36).</i></p>						