

The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

Independence Day Worship and Canada Day Worship

July 3, 2022

One of the greatest concepts in the Bible is the Kingdom of God. Misguided believers in both the Old and the New Testaments confused the Kingdom of God with an earthly kingdom to be established with Jerusalem as its capital city.

In fact, King Jesus does already rule the universe by His almighty power (Eph. 1:15-23). However, He has no interest in a political kingdom. He spoke these words to Pilate, **“My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, My servants would fight to prevent My arrest by the Jews. But now My kingdom is from another place”** (John 18:36).

Jesus directed His disciples to proclaim, **“The kingdom of God has come near to you.”** **God’s kingdom comes to us today through the Word and Sacraments. In His kingdom, Jesus brings peace and forgiveness. We enter His kingdom by faith.**

The thief on the cross called out to Jesus, **“Remember me when You come into Your kingdom.”** We look forward to the day when our sojourn through this sinful world comes to an end and we are with the Savior forever in His eternal kingdom of paradise in heaven.

In addition, we rejoice in the freedoms that we enjoy in our nation. Many have sacrificed for our benefit. Yet not everything in our country is in accord with God’s holy word, therefore we do not forget that we must obey God rather than men. It is important for Christian citizens to exercise their rights in a God-pleasing way.

God Bless Our Native Land

Lutheran Service Book 965, Lutheran Worship 497, The Lutheran Hymnal 577



1 God bless our na - tive land; Firm may she ev - er stand
2 So shall our prayers a - rise To God a - bove the skies;



Through storm and night. When the wild tem - pests rave, Rul - er of
On Him we wait. Thou who art ev - er nigh, Guard - ing with



wind and wave, Do Thou our coun - try save By Thy great might.
watch - ful eye, To Thee a - loud we cry: God save the state!

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L In the name of the Father and the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

G Amen.

L We worship God, the Father,

C Who created heaven and earth, who created our nation and every nation, who makes His sun rise on the evil and on the good, and sends rain on the just and on the unjust, who is worthy to be praised for the bounty of the land, who loved the world so that he gave his only begotten Son.

Genesis 1:1; Matthew 5:45; Ps. 65:9; John 3:16

L We worship God, the Son,

C The lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, who died for the nations, and gives life to all who believe.

John 1:29; John 11:51,52; John 5:24

L We worship God, the Holy Spirit,

C Who is sent by the Father and the Son to work through baptizing and teaching to make disciples of all nations.

John 14:15; John 15:26; Matthew 28:18-20

L Lord, of the nations, to you our country we commend.

C Be her refuge and her fortress, her everlasting friend.

Ps. 91:2

P Out of the depths I cry to you, O LORD;

C O Lord, hear my voice. Let your ears be attentive to my cry for mercy.

P If you, O LORD, kept a record of sins, O Lord, who could stand?

C But with you there is forgiveness; therefore you are feared.

Ps. 130:1-4

C Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, Judge of all people and nations, we admit and confess our sinfulness. We have turned away from you and each other in our thinking, speaking, and doing. We have done the evil you forbid and have not done the good you demand. Especially do we confess that we have failed as citizens of your kingdom and as citizens of this nation in which we live. We do repent and are truly sorry for these our sins. Have mercy on us, kind Father, because of the obedience of our Brother, Jesus Christ, your Son. Forgive us all that is past, and with the power of the Holy Spirit move us to serve you faithfully. Have mercy on us and set our feet upon the new path of life, and build your kingdom here through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

L Almighty God, merciful Father, in Your holy Church, You daily and richly forgive us our sins and grant us new life through Your Spirit. Be in our midst, enliven our faith, and graciously receive our prayer and praise; through Your Son, Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C Amen.

Introit Psalm 19:2, 4–6; antiphon Psalm 19:1

L The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

C Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.

L Their measuring line goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.
In them he has set a tent for the sun,

C which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.

L Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them,
and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

C Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.

- L** The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

Kyrie

- | | | | |
|----------|-----------|----------|--------------------------|
| L | O Lord, | C | Have Mercy on us. |
| L | O Christ, | C | Have Mercy on us. |
| L | O Lord, | C | Have Mercy on us. |

Gloria in Excelsis ~ Glory to God in the Highest

- L** Glory to God in the highest, and peace to his people on earth.
C **Lord God, heavenly King, almighty God and Father: We worship You, we give You thanks, and we praise You for Your glory.**
L Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, You are Lord and God, You are the Lamb of God:
C **Lord Jesus Christ, You take away the sin of the world; have mercy on us.**
L Lord Jesus Christ, You are seated at the right hand of the Father; and we ask you to graciously receive our prayer.
C **For You alone are the Holy One,
You alone are the Lord,
You alone are the Most High, Jesus Christ,
with the Holy Spirit, in the glory of God the Father. Amen.**

Collect of the Day

- L** Let us pray: Almighty God, You have built Your Church on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. Continue to send Your messengers to preserve Your people in true peace that, by the preaching of Your Word, Your Church may be kept free from all harm and danger; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C **Amen.**

Prayer for Independence Day and Canada Day

All: Lord of all nations, we thank and praise you that You created us for freedom and that you recreated us for freedom in Your holy Gospel. We pray for strength to live up to our obligations in a nation where you have given us great civil and religious freedoms. Help us as people free in Christ to encourage those freedoms throughout the world to open the way for the hearing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Isaiah 66:10–14

- ¹⁰“Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her,
all you who love her;
rejoice with her in joy,
all you who mourn over her;
¹¹that you may nurse and be satisfied
from her consoling breast;
that you may drink deeply with delight
from her glorious abundance.”

- ¹²For thus says the LORD:

“Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river,
and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream;
and you shall nurse, you shall be carried upon her hip,
and bounced upon her knees.

¹³As one whom his mother comforts,
so I will comfort you;
you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.

¹⁴You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice;
your bones shall flourish like the grass;
and the hand of the LORD shall be known to his servants,
and he shall show his indignation against his enemies.”

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Gradual Romans 10:15b, 18b; Isaiah 52:7b, alt.

L How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the good news,

C **who publish peace and bring good news of salvation.**

L Their voice has gone out to all the earth,

C **and their words to the ends of the world.**

Psalms 66:1–7

L ¹Shout for joy to God, all the earth;

C ²**sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise!**

L ³Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds!

So great is your power that your enemies come cringing to you.

C ⁴**All the earth worships you and sings praises to you; they sing praises to your name.”**

L ⁵Come and see what God has done: he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man.

C ⁶**He turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the river on foot.**

There did we rejoice in him,

L ⁷who rules by his might forever, whose eyes keep watch on the nations—

C **let not the rebellious exalt themselves.**

Galatians 6:1–10, 14–18

¹Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. ²Bear one another’s burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. ³For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. ⁵For each will have to bear his own load.

⁶One who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches. ⁷Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. ⁸For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. ⁹And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. ¹⁰So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. . . . ¹⁴But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation.

¹⁶And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

¹⁷From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

¹⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

L This is the Word of the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

Verse of the Day: Luke 10:5b, 9b

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Peace be to this house! Alleluia.

C Alleluia, Alleluia. The kingdom of God has come near to you. Alleluia.

Luke 10:1–20

L The Holy Gospel according to St. Luke, the 10th chapter.

C Glory to You, O Lord.

¹After this the Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them on ahead of him, two by two, into every town and place where he himself was about to go. ²And he said to them, “The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest. ³Go your way; behold, I am sending you out as lambs in the midst of wolves. ⁴Carry no moneybag, no knapsack, no sandals, and greet no one on the road. ⁵Whatever house you enter, first say, ‘Peace be to this house!’ ⁶And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest upon him. But if not, it will return to you. ⁷And remain in the same house, eating and drinking what they provide, for the laborer deserves his wages. Do not go from house to house. ⁸Whenever you enter a town and they receive you, eat what is set before you. ⁹Heal the sick in it and say to them, ‘The kingdom of God has come near to you.’ ¹⁰But whenever you enter a town and they do not receive you, go into its streets and say, ¹¹‘Even the dust of your town that clings to our feet we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near.’ ¹²I tell you, it will be more bearable on that day for Sodom than for that town.

¹³“Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. ¹⁴But it will be more bearable in the judgment for Tyre and Sidon than for you. ¹⁵And you, Capernaum, will you be exalted to heaven? You shall be brought down to Hades.

¹⁶“The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.”

¹⁷The seventy-two returned with joy, saying, “Lord, even the demons are subject to us in your name!” ¹⁸And he said to them, “I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. ¹⁹Behold, I have given you authority to tread on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall hurt you. ²⁰Nevertheless, do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven.”

L This is the Gospel of the Lord.

C Praise to You, O Christ.

C I believe in God, the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth.

And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate,
was crucified, died and was buried.
He descended into hell.
The third day He rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven

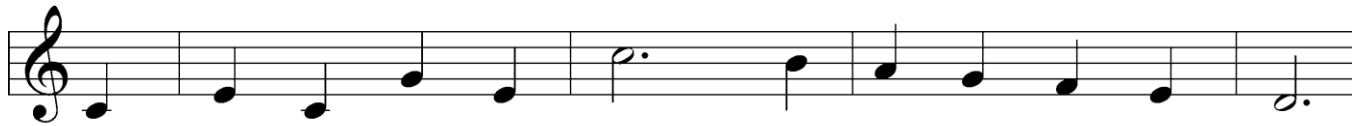
and sits at the right hand of God the Father
Almighty.

From thence He will come to judge the living
and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the holy Christian Church,
the communion of saints,
the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body,
and the life everlasting. Amen.

Before You, Lord, We Bow

Lutheran Service Book 966, Lutheran Worship 575, The Lutheran Hymnal 500



1 Be - fore You, Lord, we bow, Our God who reigns a - bove
2 The na - tion You have blest May well Your love de - clare,
3 May ev - 'ry moun - tain height, Each vale and for - est green,
4 Earth, hear your Mak - er's voice; Your great Re - deem - er own;



And rules the world be - low, Bound-less in pow'r and love. Our thanks
From foes and fears at rest, Pro - tect - ed by Your care. For this
Shine in Your Word's pure light, And its rich fruits be seen! May ev -
Be - lieve, o - bey, re - joice, And wor-ship Him a - lone. Cast down



we bring In joy and praise, Our hearts we raise To You, our King!
bright day, For this fair land—Gifts of Your hand—Our thanks we pay.
'ry tongue Be tuned to praise And join to raise A grate - ful song.
your pride, Your sin de - plore, And bow be - fore The Cru - ci - fied.

5 And when in pow'r He comes,
Oh, may our native land
From all its rending tombs
Send forth a glorious band,
A countless throng,
With joy to sing
To heav'n's high King
Salvation's song!

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Devotional thoughts:

It's odd how things happen. The number 72 caught my attention as I read the Gospel lesson for this week. I recently traveled to Canada. To enter Canada, you have to register online or with their app 72 hours in advance. (Actually, no more than 72 hours. I know. I tried.)

How many are 72 hours? Let's see. $72/24=3$. Oh, 72 hours is three days. But they actually mean 72 hours. The app would not allow me to register 73 hours in advance! (Well, it turned out that our flight was delayed and I got to Canada late.)

What else can you do with the number 72? At the beginning of Luke 9, Jesus sent out the 12. $72/12=6$. Here at the beginning of Luke 10, Jesus is increasing His outreach efforts by a factor of 6! As He travels to Jerusalem for the final time, it is urgent for His message to reach more and more people!

But even 72 are not enough. In commissioning them, He said, "The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray earnestly to the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."

We still pray that prayer today. The harvest is still plentiful. The laborers are still few.

Out of curiosity, I researched the population of the world at the time of Jesus. According to an article at NIH National Library of Medicine¹, 300 million people lived on earth in the year A.D. 1. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, the population of the United States is almost 333 million² and the population of Canada is almost 39 million³. Indeed the harvest is plentiful! Can we be any less concerned today?

God has blessed me by placing me in a family with many pastors and teachers who have answered the call to church work with the words, “Here am I, send me, send me!” But this account from Luke 10 tells us that Jesus didn’t just rely on the 12 Apostles to work in the harvest. He sent out 72 more. They were not called to be Apostles. They were simply called to go into the harvest. Every baptized believer in Jesus has received a similar call today.

This Sunday falls between Canada Day, July 1, and Independence Day, July 4. We have received a great many blessings in our two countries. I know that gasoline prices are high and inflation seems to be out of control but most of us live lives of luxury compared to even the wealthiest people of Jesus’ day. We have hot and cold running water. We have heat in the winter and air conditioning in the summer. We have microwaves, cell phones, and automobiles. We eat exotic foods from faraway places.

Both the United States and Canada enjoy freedoms that were won and protected through the great efforts of generations past. While we still experience racial tensions, slavery ended more than 150 years ago through the bloodiest war in American history. We have much to thank God for in our neighboring countries.

But on this holiday weekend, we are reminded that these things are temporal. Living for a few score years in the most blest nations on earth is nothing compared to eternity. Many of our fellow citizens are still wandering in the darkness of sin and death. They need the peace of God that surpasses all understanding. They need the freedom that was won for us on the cross through the forgiveness of sins.

Our national holidays are a time to celebrate freedom. We do this in magnificent ways with fireworks and band concerts, picnics and family gatherings.

But there is a greater freedom for us to share and celebrate. Jesus said, “If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed” (John 8:36). We all have neighbors and friends that are slaves to sin and death. God has given us the Gospel of salvation to bring true freedom and eternal life to them. Let us answer the call.

The task is not easy but it brings great rewards. Jesus told the 72 that going out in His name was like being “lambs in the midst of wolves.” That is still true today. Many in our nations oppose the truth of God’s word and His plan of salvation. But that should not discourage us from bringing the message of Jesus to those who are desperately waiting to experience the Kingdom of God for time and eternity.

Do not become discouraged if some reject you. Jesus told the 72, “The one who hears you hears me, and the one who rejects you rejects me, and the one who rejects me rejects him who sent me.”

Working in the Lord’s harvest brings its own reward. Luke records that the 72 returned from their mission with joy. Jesus told them, “Rejoice that your names are written in heaven!”

Through the years, God has granted me occasions to observe people coming to faith. As I reflect on my ministry, in a small way, I know how those 72 felt.

I have told more than one confirmation class that the reason we did so much study and I invested so much time in their instruction is because I plan to be in heaven with them someday.

You can participate in this wonderful work. “If you cannot preach like Paul, you can tell of the love of Jesus, You can say He died for all. If you cannot rouse the wicked with the judgment’s dread alarms, you can lead the little children to the Savior’s waiting arms.”

God’s richest blessings to you in Christ.

“Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with

¹<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/12288594/#:~:text=By%201%20A.D.%2C%20the%20population,for%20the%20species%20to%20survive.>

² <https://www.census.gov/popclock/>

³ <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/71-607-x/71-607-x2018005-eng.htm>

thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus” (Philippians 4:4-7).

L O Lord of the harvest, at Your Son’s instruction we pray that You would continue to send laborers into Your vineyard, that the plentiful harvest may be gathered into the peace of Your kingdom. Move men and women to answer the call to serve wherever You may need them.

C Amen.

L O God of mercy, make our homes places where Your peace dwells, that husbands and wives love and honor one another, children are nurtured in fear and faith toward Your name, and Your kingdom comes among us. Move your people to be agents of peace in a world of division and strife.

C Amen.

L Almighty God, govern the kingdoms of this world according to Your holy and gracious will. We thank you on the anniversary of the founding of our nation for every good gift that You have granted to us. Protect those in harm’s way because of the war in Ukraine that continues to cause innocent men, women, and children to suffer.

C Amen.

L Almighty God, send Your holy angels to watch over all of our loved ones, especially those who live in distant places. Strengthen all those who serve us in the medical field. Give Your comfort and peace to all who are suffering from illness. Be with those who mourn. Grant to them the hope and assurance of a blessed reunion in heaven.

C Amen.

Prayer for Our Country

C Almighty God, you have given us this good land as our heritage. Grant that we remember your generosity and constantly do your will. Bless our land with honest industry, truthful education, and an honorable way of life. Save us from violence, discord, and confusion, from pride and arrogance, and from every evil course of action. Make us who came from many nations with many different languages a united people. Defend our liberties, and give those whom we have entrusted with the authority of government the spirit of wisdom that there may be justice and peace in our land. When times are prosperous, let our hearts be thankful; and in troubled times do not let our trust in you fail; through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

C I thank You, my heavenly Father, through Jesus Christ, Your dear Son, that You have kept me this night from all harm and danger; and I pray that You would keep me this day also from sin and every evil, that all my doings and life may please You. For into Your hands I commend myself, my body and soul, and all things. Let Your holy angel be with me, that the evil foe may have no power over me. Amen.

C Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

L Let us bless the Lord.

C Thanks be to God.

L The Lord bless us, defend us from all evil, and bring us to everlasting life.

C Amen.

Hark, the Voice of Jesus Crying

Lutheran Service Book 826, Lutheran Worship 318, The Lutheran Hymnal 496



1 Hark, the voice of Je - sus cry - ing, "Who will go and work to - day?
2 If you can-not speak like an - gels, If you can - not preach like Paul,
3 If you can-not be a watch-man, Stand - ing high on Zi - on's wall,
4 Let none hear you i - dly say - ing, "There is noth-ing I can do,"



Fields are white and har-vests wait-ing— Who will bear the sheaves a-way?"
You can tell the love of Je - sus, You can say He died for all.
Point - ing out the path to heav-en, Of - f'ring life and peace to all,
While the mul - ti-tudes are dy - ing And the Mas-ter calls for you.



Loud and long the Mas-ter call-eth; Rich re - ward He of - fers thee.
If you can - not rouse the wick-ed With the judg-ment's dread a - larms,
With your prayers and with your boun-ties You can do what God com-mands;
Take the task He gives you glad-ly, Let His work your plea-sure be;



Who will an-swer, glad - ly say - ing, "Here am I, send me, send me?"
You can lead the lit - tle chil-dren To the Sav-ior's wait - ing arms.
You can be like faith-ful Aar-on, Hold - ing up the proph-et's hands.
An - swer quick-ly when He call-eth, "Here am I, send me, send me!"

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Service Notes:

One person may serve as Leader or this may be shared with a number of individuals.

Read one or more of the lessons. Hymns may be sung or read. Use as much or little of this service as you would like.

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Enhancing Your Worship

Meditating on God's Word and Works

I will meditate on your wondrous works. Psalm 119:27
My eyes are awake through the night watches,
That I may meditate on Your word. Psalm 119:148 NKJV

The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

July 4 – July 9, 2022

Introduction

Most modern forms of mediation turn a person inward. Biblical meditation turns a person outward toward what God has said and done especially what He has said and done through Jesus for our salvation.

Each Sunday has its own special theme directing us to meditate on God's word and actions. This theme is found in the Propers of the Day (the parts of the service that change week to week). From Advent through the Easter season these themes focus our attention on the life of Jesus from His birth to His death and resurrection. There is always much more in the propers than can be covered in any Sunday service. God willing, I will use the propers for Sunday to provide you with a devotion each day to help you meditate on what God has done for you.

Monday – Independence Day

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
- C** Amen.

Introit Psalm 19:2, 4–6; antiphon Psalm 19:1

- L** The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.
- C** Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.
- L** Their measuring line goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.
In them he has set a tent for the sun,
- C** which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber,
and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy.
- L** Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them,
and there is nothing hidden from its heat.
- C** Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Spirit;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and will be forever. Amen.
- L** The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.

Verse of the Day: Luke 10:5b, 9b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Peace be to this house! Alleluia.
- C** Alleluia, Alleluia. The kingdom of God has come near to you. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Take a moment. Go outside. Look up at the sky.

“The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork” (Psalm 19:1).

Whenever you look at the sky whether in the daytime or at night, it is declaring to you the glory of God!

Nature has a way of touching our souls. On this Independence Day, we are reminded that God has blessed us with a magnificent land in which to live.

From the mountains to the prairies
To the oceans white with foam
God bless America, my home sweet home.

There are many natural wonders in our country that I have been privileged to see. I’ve been to the Bad Lands, Yellowstone, and Mount Rushmore. I live near the Great Lakes. I’ve visited the Everglades and been to the Rocky Mountains. I’ve been on a boat traveling on the Mississippi and toured a portion of Chesapeake Bay. Yet there is much more in our great country that I would like to see. Every natural wonder proclaims God’s handiwork. That is the theme of the first half of Psalm 19.

But that is only half the story. Learning about God from nature is like reading the first half of a novel. You never get the whole picture.

The second half of Psalm 19 tells us about God’s word and how it revives the soul. Learning about God from nature is like trying to get to know an artist by only looking at his paintings. Reading God’s word is like meeting the artist.

Golf courses are beautiful. Watching the sunrise over the lake in a fishing boat is awe-inspiring. But they are both inadequate. Neither of these experiences teaches you about God’s love.

I hope that I will never experience the fury of a hurricane. But storms and earthquakes teach us about God’s power. But nothing in nature can teach us about Jesus!

Jesus sent out the 72 in our Gospel lesson this week. They took the message of salvation to people in need. At some time and place, someone brought the message of salvation to you! You learned of Jesus’ love and the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation.

On this birthday of our nation, we are moved to sing:

O beautiful for spacious skies,
For amber waves of grain,
For purple mountain majesties
Above the fruited plain!
America! America!
God shed His grace on thee
And crown thy good with brotherhood
From sea to shining sea!

We thank God for our land and the spectacular beauty that surrounds us. But an even greater blessing that He has given us in our country is the freedom to worship Him and share the message of salvation with everyone we meet.

Prayer for Independence Day

C Lord of all nations, we thank and praise you that You created us for freedom and that you recreated us for freedom in Your holy Gospel. We pray for strength to live up to our obligations in

a nation where you have given us great civil and religious freedoms. Help us as people free in Christ to encourage those freedoms throughout the world to open the way for the hearing of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Tuesday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Luke 10:5b, 9b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Peace be to this house! Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. The kingdom of God has come near to you. Alleluia.

Kyrie

- L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

- L** Let us pray: Almighty God, You have built Your Church on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. Continue to send Your messengers to preserve Your people in true peace that, by the preaching of Your Word, Your Church may be kept free from all harm and danger; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.
C Amen.

We live in uncertain times. But looking back through my lifetime, I realize that we always live in uncertain times. My parents endured the Great Depression and WWII before I was born. Some have called the 1950s a time of innocence but in reality, they were filled with anxiety at the possibility of nuclear war. The 1960s brought the upheaval of the Vietnam War, the “Hippie Culture,” and rioting. The list goes on.

Only one thing remains certain, God’s word! In every age and in every culture, God has sent messengers to proclaim His word of truth and life. It never changes. It is always the same.

The Church is built on the solid rock of Jesus Christ and Him crucified for the forgiveness of sins, life, and salvation. This will never change.

Politicians come and go. The economy heats up and cools down. Pop stars come into view and are soon forgotten. But one thing remains. God’s word endures forever.

My hope is built on nothing less
Than Jesus’ blood and righteousness;
No merit of my own I claim
But wholly lean on Jesus’ name. Refrain
On Christ, the solid rock, I stand;
All other ground is sinking sand.

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Let us pray: Almighty God, You have built Your Church on the foundation of the apostles and prophets with Christ Jesus Himself as the cornerstone. Continue to send Your messengers to preserve Your people in true peace that, by the preaching of Your Word, Your Church may be kept free from all harm and danger; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Wednesday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Luke 10:5b, 9b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Peace be to this house! Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. The kingdom of God has come near to you. Alleluia.

Psalm 66:1–7

- L** ¹Shout for joy to God, all the earth;
C ²**sing the glory of his name; give to him glorious praise!**
L ³Say to God, “How awesome are your deeds!
So great is your power that your enemies come cringing to you.
C ⁴**All the earth worships you and sings praises to you; they sing praises to your name.”**
L ⁵Come and see what God has done: he is awesome in his deeds toward the children of man.
C ⁶**He turned the sea into dry land; they passed through the river on foot.**
There did we rejoice in him,
L ⁷who rules by his might forever, whose eyes keep watch on the nations—
C **let not the rebellious exalt themselves.**

Kyrie

- | | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|
| L O Lord, | C Have Mercy on us. |
| L O Christ, | C Have Mercy on us. |
| L O Lord, | C Have Mercy on us. |

Psalm 66 is twenty verses in its entirety. I am sure that you will enjoy reading them all. These first seven verses give us a taste.

Some years ago, I was a chaplain for a men’s retreat at Camp Arcadia in Northern Michigan. The weekend was filled with Bible study, worship, golf, softball, and fellowship.

On Saturday afternoon, many of us gathered around an old-school large-screen television to watch the University of Michigan football game. At the end of the game, it appeared as though all was lost. It would take a miracle for Michigan to win. Then it happened.

The Michigan quarterback threw a pass to the end zone and the receiver made an unbelievable catch. Joy erupted in that room full of men.

I remembered that afternoon as I read these verses of Psalm 66. One of our number was not watching the game. He was watching us watch the game. At the very moment when the pass was caught in the end zone, he snapped a picture.

There I am in the middle of the crowd. He caught me in a mighty leap of a few inches off the ground as I shouted for joy! If I can shout for joy like that when my team is victorious, how much more should I shout at the victory God won for me in Jesus?

Read Psalm 66. Think of all the awesome things God has done for you and His Church. If you need a reminder, read Luther’s explanation of the three articles of the Apostles’ Creed.

Let us pray: O Lord, move us to shout for joy at Your awesome deed of salvation through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen

Thursday

- L** In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Luke 10:5b, 9b

- L** Alleluia, Alleluia. Peace be to this house! Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. The kingdom of God has come near to you. Alleluia.

Kyrie

- L** O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Isaiah 66:10–14

- ¹⁰“Rejoice with Jerusalem, and be glad for her,
all you who love her;
rejoice with her in joy,
all you who mourn over her;
¹¹that you may nurse and be satisfied
from her consoling breast;
that you may drink deeply with delight
from her glorious abundance.”
- ¹²For thus says the LORD:
“Behold, I will extend peace to her like a river,
and the glory of the nations like an overflowing stream;
and you shall nurse, you shall be carried upon her hip,
and bounced upon her knees.
¹³As one whom his mother comforts,
so I will comfort you;
you shall be comforted in Jerusalem.
¹⁴You shall see, and your heart shall rejoice;
your bones shall flourish like the grass;
and the hand of the LORD shall be known to his servants,
and he shall show his indignation against his enemies.”

Isaiah is a wonderful book. It contains many prophecies of the coming Savior and the plan of salvation that we cherish. But before we read the promise of comfort, Isaiah is clear that judgment awaits those who reject God and His word.

Isaiah began his work while Israel was prosperous. As is so often the case, wealth and prosperity caused many to abandon God and His word. It was Isaiah's task to call God's people to repentance. To do this, he was required to predict the coming destruction of Jerusalem.

But Isaiah was also given the blessed task of looking beyond the Babylonian captivity to the time when God would restore Jerusalem. Not only would God restore the earthly Jerusalem, but He would also send a savior to restore all of humanity and grant us eternal life in the New Jerusalem in the eternity of heaven.

God comforts His repentant people with forgiveness. He removes our pain and gives us life eternal. For this reason, we rejoice and are glad.

Prayer: O Lord, thank You for Your word of comfort. May we always find comfort in the cross of Jesus and the resurrection of the dead as we look to the day when we will live with You forever in the heavenly Jerusalem through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Friday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.
C Amen.

Verse of the Day: Luke 10:5b, 9b

L Alleluia, Alleluia. Peace be to this house! Alleluia.
C Alleluia, Alleluia. The kingdom of God has come near to you. Alleluia.

Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.
L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

Galatians 6:1–10, 14–18

¹Brothers, if anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted. ²Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ. ³For if anyone thinks he is something, when he is nothing, he deceives himself. ⁴But let each one test his own work, and then his reason to boast will be in himself alone and not in his neighbor. ⁵For each will have to bear his own load.

⁶One who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches. ⁷Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. ⁸For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. ⁹And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. ¹⁰So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. . . . ¹⁴But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. ¹⁶And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God.

¹⁷From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus.

¹⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

Paul writes, "Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ." While reading these words, the image of a statue at Boys Town in Nebraska came to mind. Here is the story behind the statue from the Boys Town website by Father Steven Boes, President and National Executive Director of Boys Town.

"He ain't heavy, Father... he's m' brother."

Those iconic words have symbolized the spirit of Boys Town for decades. But many people don't know how it originated.

Back in 1918, a boy named Howard Loomis was abandoned by his mother at Father Flanagan's Home for Boys, which had opened just a year earlier. Howard had polio and wore heavy leg braces. Walking was difficult for him, especially when he had to go up or down steps.

Soon, several of the Home's older boys were carrying Howard up and down the stairs.

One day, Father Flanagan asked Reuben Granger, one of those older boys, if carrying Howard was hard.

Reuben replied, "He ain't heavy, Father... he's m' brother."

But the story doesn't end there.

In 1943, Father Flanagan was paging through a copy of Ideal magazine when he saw an image of an older boy carrying a younger boy on his back. The caption read, "He ain't heavy, mister... he's my brother."

Immediately, the priest was reminded of a photo of Reuben carrying Howard at a Boys Town picnic many years before. Father Flanagan wrote to the magazine and requested permission to use the image and quote. The magazine agreed, and Boys Town adopted them both to define its new brand.

Nearly 75 years later, the motto is still the best description of what our boys and girls at Boys Town learn about the importance of caring for each other and having someone care about them.⁴

Bearing one another's burdens is the essence of Christian living. It began with Jesus. He bore all the burdens of our sins when He went to the cross. We are now free to bear the burdens of others.

I once was rudely criticized by a woman. It was painful. However, on that day, God gave me the grace to listen. Before long, I discovered that everything in her life was collapsing. She was hurting and I just happened to be a convenient target for her pain.

I learned a valuable lesson. Whenever I am confronted by someone who is unreasonably angry or hurtful, I try to remember that woman. It may well be that their burden is too heavy and they need some help.

May God grant us the grace to bear one another's burdens.

Prayer: Thank You Lord that Jesus went to the cross to bear my burden of sin. Give me the compassion and wisdom to help bear the burden of a brother or sister today through the same Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

Saturday

L In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C Amen.

Gradual Romans 10:8b, 10

L The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart,

C the word of faith that we proclaim.

L For with the heart one believes and is justified,

C and with the mouth one confesses and is saved.

Verse of the Day: Luke 10:5b, 9b

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Kyrie

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Christ, **C** Have Mercy on us.

L O Lord, **C** Have Mercy on us.

⁴ <https://www.boystown.org/blog/Pages/story-behind-aint-heavy.aspx>

Galatians 6:6–10, 14–18

⁶One who is taught the word must share all good things with the one who teaches. ⁷Do not be deceived: God is not mocked, for whatever one sows, that will he also reap. ⁸For the one who sows to his own flesh will from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit will from the Spirit reap eternal life. ⁹And let us not grow weary of doing good, for in due season we will reap, if we do not give up. ¹⁰So then, as we have opportunity, let us do good to everyone, and especially to those who are of the household of faith. . . . ¹⁴But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. ¹⁵For neither circumcision counts for anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creation. ¹⁶And as for all who walk by this rule, peace and mercy be upon them, and upon the Israel of God. ¹⁷From now on let no one cause me trouble, for I bear on my body the marks of Jesus. ¹⁸The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with your spirit, brothers. Amen.

Pastor Haake, my vicarage supervisor, would remind me that Galatians 6:6 means, “Pay your preacher!” Let that suffice for now and move on to verse 14.

Paul writes, “But far be it from me to boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ.” I’ve often said, “There will be no one in heaven with a sprained shoulder from trying to pat himself on the back.”

It is our sinful human nature that boasts. When it comes to salvation, no one can boast. Every bit of salvation is an undeserved gift of grace!

A few years back, I heard a famous talk show personality say, “I believe in forgiveness but not everyone deserves it.” As you might guess, this woman was not a Christian. If forgiveness is deserved, it’s not forgiveness. If I pay off my debt then my debt isn’t forgiven. None of us deserves forgiveness. It was paid for by Jesus.

Prayer: Almighty God, thank You for granting me forgiveness through faith in Jesus. Take away all boasting and sinful pride that I may humbly rest secure in Your grace through the same Jesus Christ my Lord. Amen.

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