



Freed to Serve

This weekend, flags will fly and banners will wave. Fireworks will light up the sky, and celebrations will commence. And rightfully so. Despite all of the problems and vices that plague our nation, we are blessed in so many ways to live in this country. The freedoms we enjoy and the health and wealth that we have access to as citizens of America are things people have literally risked their lives for.

But we have even greater freedom than those civic freedoms we enjoy in America. It wasn't on a Thursday (July 4, 1776) in Philadelphia, but on a Friday in Jerusalem about 1750 years earlier, that we were declared free from the greatest tyrant in history. It was a declaration of independence only three words long (one word in Greek): "It is finished" (John 19:30). It was signed not in ink, but in the blood of the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Now we are truly free. Free from our slavery to sin, the devil, and his destructive power. Free from guilt that wrapped us in chains we couldn't escape. Free from fear of the God who should lock us up forever for rebellion against the highest authority. Free from the pressure to earn God's favor or win his love. Each and every one of those freedoms is a reason to celebrate!

What will we do with that freedom? St. Paul writes: "You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love" (Galatians 5:13).

Our freedom in Christ is not a freedom to do as we please. It is not a freedom to serve ourselves and satisfy every appetite and urge. It is a freedom to love as we have been loved, to serve as we have been served, to give as we have received.

We use our freedom when we notice those in need around us and go out of our way to meet those needs. We use our freedom when we are willing to set aside our "rights" in order to do everything we can to show and share the love of Christ with others. We use our freedom when we joyfully and willingly serve the Savior who has set us free and the people he puts in our lives.

So, celebrate your freedom as a citizen of the USA. But all the more, celebrate your freedom as a citizen of

God's Kingdom. Cherish and use your freedom to come and hear and celebrate the freedom you have in Christ. Then go, use your freedom to serve one another humbly in love.

Yours in Christ,
Pastor Tim Wagner

Ministry News

➤ Welcome Newly Elected Board Members

Peter Wolfgramm	Treasurer
Mark Raschka	Secretary
Bob Becker	Missions/Charities Coordinator
Dustin Winsor	Time/Talents Coordinator.
Dan VandenHeuvel	Parsonage Coordinator

➤ Sunday Bible Study

Idols We Never Knew We Had

A wood-carved animal figurine. A chiseled stone statue. A golden goddess. Do you have an idol-worship area set up in your home? We would say "Definitely not! I don't bow down to idols!" But sometimes we do worship idols and make them our gods, not even realizing they are there. A cross-generational Bible study to be held Sundays, from 9:15-9:45 am, beginning July 11, will bring to light these idols that hide themselves so easily in our homes and hearts, and through God's guidance and power we'll get help to avoid worshiping these false gods. Come, bring your family, and study God's Word with us.

➤ Board of Spiritual Growth Notes

- We have Bible studies Monday afternoons and Thursday evenings. A cross-generational study will be offered Sundays at 9:15 am.
- We are gathering contact information about recent high school and college graduates to be able to encourage them in each stage of life. Contact the church office, if you have info.
- We thank Gary Cox and Zach Belter for their service on our board over the past years.

➤ **Board of Evangelism Notes**

- Mentors are being assigned to all new members to help them connect to their new church family.
- Vacation Bible School will be supplemented with a S.T.E.M. Camp and an Art Camp this summer.
- We are planning to participate in an “Everyone Outreach” initiative in 2021-22.

➤ **Board of Lay Ministry Notes**

- A Board of Elders is working on reaching out to straying members.
- We’ve developed plans for a gradual return to “normal” worship practices.
- A “God’s People Gather” Celebration Sunday is being planned for August 22, including a special worship service and church picnic. All members are encouraged to attend.
- We thank Dan Vanden Heuvel for his service on our board over the past years.

➤ **Board of Church Properties Notes**

- Floor waxing will take place beginning on July 19th through at least July 30th. **Please note there will be sections of the building that will be inaccessible during that time.** Please contact the church office if you need to get in the building during this time.

➤ **Riverview VBS & Summer Camp Registration**
Now Open!

Registration is now open for our 2021 Vacation Bible School and our new S.T.E.M. and Art Camps.

- Our "Splash Canyon" VBS will be held July 12-15, from 9:00-11:30 am, for children age 3 to entering grade 2.



Our S.T.E.M. Camp and Art Camp will be held July 27-29, from 9:00-11:30 am, for children entering grades 3-6. These are great opportunities to invite unchurched **friends and neighbors** to come and learn about our Savior! Whom will you invite? Space is limited, and pre-registration is required. Find more information and register at www.RiverviewLutheran.org/Camps.



It's not the same, is it?

COVID-19 changed everything for our congregation. We learned how to worship online from home. We used virtual ways to stay connected to each other—to maintain our sense of Christian community. We also adapted how we serve each other and our neighbors while remaining socially distanced. But it's just not the same, is it?

When we look at the blessings from the pandemic, one of the biggest is that we were reminded in so many ways of the joy we experience when God's people gather. There is just no replacement for it. Now it's time to celebrate! Let's celebrate being able to gather together again. Let's celebrate the joy we experience as a family of believers when we worship together—fellowship with each other—serve together—and take the Lord's supper side by side. **On Sunday, August 22 at 8am & 10:30 am, and Monday, August 23 at 6:30 pm, we are going to celebrate as a church family and praise God on a very special celebration Sunday, as we re-gather after time apart.** Psalm 26:8 says, “I love the house where you live, O LORD, the place where your glory dwells.” This is why we gather.

In addition to special worship services with holy communion, a church picnic is planned. Look for more details coming soon about Celebration Sunday. It will also be the perfect opportunity to reach out to others with a personal invitation to join us as we gather and praise God for all of his blessing.

➤ **Year to Date Offerings - 7/1/2020-5/31/2021**

	Actual	Budget	Difference
General	\$607,418.40	\$580,820.12	+\$26,598.27
Building	\$144,340.91	\$121,427.02	+\$22,913.89
Synod	\$26,657.48	\$34,881.11	-\$8,223.63
FVL	\$15,305.26	\$21,865.36	-\$6,560.10
TOTAL	\$793,722.05	\$758,993.62	+\$34,728.43

➤ **Average Weekly Attendance**

	Worship		Bible Study
	In Person	Online (worship cards)	
February	152	78	15
March	180	56	11
April	255	40	14
May	235	33	11
June	200	29	15