

INDEPENDENCE DAY WEEKEND



Freedom in Christ

July 7, 2024

AS WE GATHER

Today is the 248th anniversary of our declaration of freedom from Great Britain. Just as in the exodus, the people who fought for freedom were scared. There were times, like Valley Forge, when the situation looked hopeless, just like the situation looked hopeless when Jesus lay in the tomb for three days. However, Jesus was raised from the dead and offers us freedom—not from a mortal enemy but our worst enemies: sin, death, and the devil himself. May we rejoice every day in the freedom He gives us in Holy Baptism.

✘ Welcome and Announcements ✘

HYMN 8:00 AM "Son of God, Eternal Savior" 842
11:00 AM "Lord of All Nations" 844
(to the tune for 'I Know That My Redeemer Lives')

INVOCATION *based on John 3:16; 8:36; Romans 5:1*

Pastor: In the name of the Father,

People: **who loved us and sent His Son to set us free.**

Pastor: In the name of His ✘ Son, Jesus,

People: **whose sacrifice gives us freedom and peace.**

Pastor: In the name of the Holy Spirit,

People: **who brings us to faith and sustains our faith through the working of water and the Word. Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES *Psalm 118:24, 26–27*

Pastor: This is the day that the LORD has made;

People: **let us rejoice and be glad in it.**

Pastor: Blessed is he who comes in the name of the LORD!

People: **We bless you from the house of the LORD.**

Pastor: The LORD is God,

People: **and He has made His light to shine upon us.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION

Pastor: Almighty and eternal God, You have blessed us with a free land, having rights and privileges others dream about. We live in a land where liberty is given to us. With freedom also comes temptation to misuse our freedom.

People: **Forgive us, Lord, for misusing freedom in selfish ways. Keep us from squandering the precious opportunities You have given to us by the many freedoms we have.**

Pastor: For these sins and all sins, sins of thought, word, and deed; by what we have done or failed to do,

People: **we stand before You now, asking Your forgiveness, and for the help of the Holy Spirit to amend our sinful lives.**

Pastor: Hear the Good News! God has heard your confession. He has sent me, a called and ordained servant of our King, to deliver this message to you: your sins are forgiven because of the cross of Christ. Receive that forgiveness in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

People: **Amen! Thank You, Lord, for forgiving me. Help me, by the aid of Your Holy Spirit, to relish the freedoms You have given us as Christians and as a country.**

(Share the Peace of Christ with those around You)

HYMN OF PRAISE “Before You Lord We Bow” 966

SALUTATION

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

Pastor: Let us pray.

Almighty and gracious God, You have given our country a precious gift—the gift of freedom. As we celebrate that gift from You today, help us, by Your Holy Spirit, to remember the greater gift of freedom in the cross and empty tomb of Jesus, who gives us freedom now and eternally, with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, one Lord, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

OLD TESTAMENT READING *Exodus 12:10–28* (God saves Israel through the waters of the Red Sea.)

And you shall let none of it remain until the morning; anything that remains until the morning you shall burn. In this manner you shall eat it: with your belt fastened, your sandals on your feet, and your staff in your hand. And you shall eat it in haste. It

is the LORD's Passover. For I will pass through the land of Egypt that night, and I will strike all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, both man and beast; and on all the gods of Egypt I will execute judgments: I am the LORD. The blood shall be a sign for you, on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you, and no plague will befall you to destroy you, when I strike the land of Egypt.

“This day shall be for you a memorial day, and you shall keep it as a feast to the LORD; throughout your generations, as a statute forever, you shall keep it as a feast. Seven days you shall eat unleavened bread. On the first day you shall remove leaven out of your houses, for if anyone eats what is leavened, from the first day until the seventh day, that person shall be cut off from Israel. On the first day you shall hold a holy assembly, and on the seventh day a holy assembly. No work shall be done on those days. But what everyone needs to eat, that alone may be prepared by you. And you shall observe the Feast of Unleavened Bread, for on this very day I brought your hosts out of the land of Egypt. Therefore you shall observe this day, throughout your generations, as a statute forever. In the first month, from the fourteenth day of the month at evening, you shall eat unleavened bread until the twenty-first day of the month at evening. For seven days no leaven is to be found in your houses. If anyone eats what is leavened, that person will be cut off from the congregation of Israel, whether he is a sojourner or a native of the land. You shall eat nothing leavened; in all your dwelling places you shall eat unleavened bread.”

Then Moses called all the elders of Israel and said to them, “Go and select lambs for yourselves according to your clans, and kill the Passover lamb. Take a bunch of hyssop and dip it in the blood that is in the basin, and touch the lintel and the two doorposts with the blood that is in the basin. None of you shall go out of the door of his house until the morning. For the LORD will pass through to strike the Egyptians, and when he sees the blood on the lintel and on the two doorposts, the LORD will pass over the door and will not allow the destroyer to enter your houses to strike you. You shall observe this rite as a statute for you and for your sons forever. And when you come to the land that the LORD will give you, as he has promised, you shall keep this service. And when your children say to you, ‘What do you mean by this service?’ you shall say, ‘It is the sacrifice of the LORD's Passover, for he passed over the houses of the people of Israel in Egypt, when he struck the Egyptians but spared our houses.’” And the people bowed their heads and worshiped.

Then the people of Israel went and did so; as the LORD had commanded Moses and Aaron, so they did.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

EPISTLE *Romans 6:1–11* (In Holy Baptism, we are set free from sin, death, and the devil and given freedom in Christ.)

What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? By no means! How can we who died to sin still live in it? Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.

For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we shall certainly be united with him in a resurrection like his. We know that our old self was crucified with him in order that the body of sin might be brought to nothing, so that we would no longer be enslaved to sin. For one who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we have died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. We know that Christ being raised from the dead will never die again; death no longer has dominion over him. For the death he died he died to sin, once for all, but the life he lives he lives to God. So you also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.

Lector: This is the Word of the Lord.

People: **Thanks be to God.**

VERSE *Galatians 5:1*

Pastor: Alleluia. For freedom Christ has set us free;

People: **stand firm therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.**
Alleluia.

HOLY GOSPEL *John 8:31–36* (Only in Jesus do we find true freedom.)

Pastor: The Holy Gospel according to St. John, the eighth chapter.

People: **Glory to You, O Lord.**

So Jesus said to the Jews who had believed in him, “If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.” They answered him, “We are offspring of Abraham and have never been enslaved to anyone. How is it that you say, ‘You will become free’?”

Jesus answered them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave to sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the son remains forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.”

Pastor: This is the Gospel of the Lord.

People: Praise to You, O Christ.

HYMN "O Mother Dear Jerusalem"
(sing to the tune for 'America the Beautiful')

O mother dear, Jerusalem, when shall I come to thee?
When shall my sorrows have an end, Thy joys when shall I see?
O happy harbor of God's saints, O sweet and pleasant soil!
In thee no sorrow can be found, Nor grief, nor care, nor toil.

Thy gardens and thy lovely walks continually are green,
Where grow such sweet and pleasant flow'rs, As nowhere else are seen.
And through thy streets, with silver sound, Thy living waters flow,
And on the banks, on either side, The trees of life do grow.

Those trees forevermore bear fruit, And evermore do spring;
There evermore the angels are, And evermore do sing.
Jerusalem, my happy home, Would God I were in thee!
Would God my woes were at an end, Thy joys that I might see.

No murky cloud o'ershadows thee, Nor gloom, nor darksome night;
But ev'ry soul shines as the Sun, For God Himself gives light.
O my sweet home, Jerusalem, Thy joys when shall I see,
And Jesus sitting on thy throne For all eternity.

SERMON "Freedom In Christ" Romans 6:1-11

CREED *Nicene Creed*

**People: I believe in one God,
the Father Almighty,
maker of heaven and earth
and of all things visible and invisible.**

**And in one Lord Jesus Christ,
the only-begotten Son of God,**

begotten of His Father before all worlds,
God of God, Light of Light,
very God of very God,
begotten, not made,
being of one substance with the Father,
by whom all things were made;
who for us men and for our salvation came down from heaven
and was incarnate by the Holy Spirit of the virgin Mary
and was made man;
and was crucified also for us under Pontius Pilate.
He suffered and was buried.
And the third day He rose again according to the Scriptures
and ascended into heaven
and sits at the right hand of the Father.
And He will come again with glory to judge both the living and
the dead,
whose kingdom will have no end.

And I believe in the Holy Spirit,
the Lord and giver of life,
who proceeds from the Father and the Son,
who with the Father and the Son together is worshiped and
glorified,
who spoke by the prophets.
And I believe in one holy Christian and apostolic Church,
I acknowledge one Baptism for the remission of sins,
and I look for the resurrection of the dead
and the life \times of the world to come. Amen.

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

Pastor: Lord Jesus Christ, Your death on the cross has set us free from our worst enemies—
sin, death, and the devil. In Holy Baptism, You made us Your own, and gave us not
only the forgiveness of sins but also Your Holy Spirit. Help us live in that freedom.
Lord, in Your mercy,

People: **hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Almighty God, You have given us a great gift in the freedom we have as a country and
as individuals. Grant that we always use our freedom to advance Your kingdom, and
never to bring harm to anyone. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: **hear our prayer.**

Pastor: Father in heaven, as we celebrate our independence on this day, grant that we might find joy in the parades, the barbeques, the gatherings, and the fireworks. As we enjoy these things, grant that we have a bigger picture of freedom in mind—freedom in Christ. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: While we celebrate our national freedom today, there are those who are not free because of their faith in You. They are imprisoned, beaten, tortured, and some will die for Your name. Give them strength by Your Holy Spirit to remain faithful unto death and receive the crown of life. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: We also lift up those not free today because of illness, [*especially . . .*]. According to Your gracious will, release them from illness, pain, and suffering, using doctors, nurses, medicines, and miracles if it be Your will. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: We also remember those who are not free: the marginalized, the poor, those addicted to drugs, the homeless, and those suffering from fear. Show compassion to them and help them in their hour of need. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: We are called by Your Word to remember our leaders. We remember those who lead our nation: our president, our Congress, those who lead at the state and even local levels. Give them wisdom to govern this great land that we might always be free. We also ask that You would give every leader in authority in our world a desire for peace and not war. Lord, in Your mercy,

People: hear our prayer.

Pastor: We lift these and the petitions of our hearts up to You, gracious Father, knowing that You will both hear and answer us. We pray in the name of Jesus, who set us free to be Your people; who with You and the Holy Spirit reigns, now and forever.

People: Amen.

OFFERING

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

PREFACE *2 Timothy 4:22*

Pastor: The Lord be with you.

People: **And also with you.**

Pastor: Lift up your hearts.

People: **We lift them to the Lord.**

Pastor: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

People: **It is right to give Him thanks and praise.**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross, giving us the greatest freedom of all.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD *Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24;* *Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25*

Pastor: Our Lord Jesus Christ, on the night when He was betrayed, took bread, and when He had given thanks, He broke it and gave it to the disciples and said: "Take, eat; this is My ✠ body, which is given for you. This do in remembrance of Me."

In the same way also He took the cup after supper, and when He had given thanks, He gave it to them, saying: "Drink of it, all of you; this cup is the new testament in My

✠ blood, which is shed for you for the forgiveness of sins. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.”

PROCLAMATION OF CHRIST *1 Corinthians 11:26; Revelation 22:20*

Pastor: As often as we eat this bread and drink this cup, we proclaim the Lord’s death until He comes.

People: **Amen. Come, Lord Jesus.**

Pastor: O Lord Jesus Christ, only Son of the Father, in giving us Your body and blood to eat and to drink, You lead us to remember and confess Your holy cross and passion, Your blessed death, Your rest in the tomb, Your resurrection from the dead, Your ascension into heaven, and Your coming for the final judgment. So remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

LORD’S PRAYER *Matthew 6:9–13*

People: **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.**

PAX DOMINI

Pastor: The peace of the Lord be with you always.

People: **Amen.**

AGNUS DEI “Alleluia, Jesus is Risen” 474 vs. 1,2”

DISTRIBUTION HYMNS (8:00 AM only)

“Let All Mortal Flesh” 621

“We Walk By Faith” 720

“Thine the Amen” 680

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

Pastor: Let us pray.

Lord Jesus Christ, You have given us a taste of freedom in Your true body and blood.

As we celebrate our country’s freedom today, keep us always mindful of the greatest freedom of all You have given us, namely the forgiveness of sins. Grant that we always remember in Baptism we have become Your own people, free to worship and serve You, with the Father and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

People: **Amen.**

BENEDICTION *Numbers 6:24–26*

Pastor: The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.

The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.

People: Amen.

HYMN “God Bless Our Native Land” 965

Creative Worship for the Lutheran Parish, Series B, Quarter 3.

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