



# The Mountain Top Echo

Mt. Moriah Lutheran Church, Byron MN

Reaching Out ... Sharing Christ

JULY 2024

## *A Matter of Life and Death*

**Life..**As you think about the next couple of months of summer with jammed calendars of fun, I want you to ponder a couple of questions that may seem trivial or downright silly to think about now that life is experiencing fun times. Yet, there is a serious note to our lives, and I want you think about, to ponder as you sit by the campfire or drift lazily down the river with baited hook dangling in the water. It is a question that many of us don't want to imagine or even dwell on, we don't want to spoil the party so to speak. The questions revolve around life, not just life in the general sense, but your life in the specific.

Do you view life as something that is filled with the seriousness of work and the fun and frolic of life, not worrying about anything? Or do you view your life as having enough time to provide for your family and enjoy those times at the campsite or the fishing hole or even at the kids and grandkids ball games? Or maybe you are planning the future of maybe taking a cruise, like we just completed, or experiencing the great outdoors before the cold winds of fall and winter return? I really want you to ponder, think about preparing for the last great moments of your life.

**Life...**I just did want I wasn't going to do, spoil the party. Oh well, there is nothing left but to get on with what I want to tell you about. The matter that I want you to think about is where will you spend eternity after this life is over with. Oh, you could come back to me with all the evidence that you are taking care of the body that God blessed you with to enjoy life, eating the right foods, getting enough exercise, and oh yes, getting all the sleep that is necessary to live. Yet, there is something very serious I want you to think about, that is about your spiritual, faith life. Remember what the Apostle Paul wrote in the sixth chapter of his Epistle to the Romans: **"For the wages of sin is death," (Romans 6:23)** We are going to die, there is no way getting around it, death will suck the lifeblood from our physical body. Yet that is not the end of the story of our lives, is it?

**Death...**indeed comes to all of us, whether it is by way of heart attack, cancer, car accident, or by any other means, eventually we will all die. So, why all of sudden am I writing about that morbid, never really talk about, always pushing away, not really wanting to discuss the end of our lives story. The reason is that on Friday, May 31<sup>st</sup> Karen and I ventured to Duluth for a Memorial Service for a cousin of mine that I haven't seen in years. Mark died of cancer in mid-May and his celebration of life was held on that last day of the month of May. The service was held at a church named The Landing, a 67, yet a believer in Jesus Christ. Mark was an individual who was a child of God, yet one who could have been mad at God for allowing his first wife to die so young, left to raise his two children on his own, and a man who strayed away from God. But God didn't leave him alone and was not through with Mark. God did an amazing thing in Mark's life, for he sent an instrument of his to tell Mark about the greatest news he was to hear, about the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ and the fantastic news of life eternal that all who believe in Jesus have at the end of this physical life. Physical death would invade Mark's life and family, but more importantly the Good News is that Mark has never ending life with Jesus and all the company of heaven. What great news for Mark and for you as well, Jesus' resurrection gives all who believe in Him eternal life.

**Life...**is what we celebrate, at the beginning when a baby is born, when that child of God is baptized and brought into the Lord's kingdom, and at the end of life when that baptized, believing child of God dies a physical death. For when we die our life does not end in a dark hole but in the glories of God's heavenly

mansions. What a celebration that will be for all those who believe in the Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. This is the news that we need to share with those around us, those we meet in our daily lives, those who need the Lord Jesus Christ, so all who believe in Jesus have eternal life. Paul writes:

***“but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6:23)*** The Lord’s peace!

God’s richest blessings,

Pastor Scott Fiege

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**The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod**

**LCMS Stewardship Ministry – [lcms.org/stewardship](http://lcms.org/stewardship)**

**Newsletter Article – July 2024 --- The Rewards of Godliness**

It’s no secret that you can’t bribe your way into heaven. No amount of good works will impress God enough to open heaven’s door for their sake. “For the wages of sin is death” (Rom. 6:23) and the person who “keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it” (James 2:10). Rather, salvation is “the free gift of God ... in Christ Jesus” (Rom. 6:23).

So, your good works won’t earn you the reward of heaven. But does that mean that there are no rewards at all? Consider what the Small Catechism says in the “Close of the Commandments”:

What does God say about all these commandments?

He says, “I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, punishing the children for the sin of the fathers to the third and fourth generation of those who hate Me, but showing love to a thousand generations of those who love Me and keep My commandments.” (Ex. 20:5–6)

What does this mean?

God threatens to punish all who break these commandments. Therefore, we should fear His wrath and not do anything against them. But He promises grace and every blessing to all who keep these commandments. Therefore, we should also love and trust in Him and gladly do what He commands. (SC II)

God promises to bless you in keeping His commandments. What might these blessings be? Well, consider what Paul says about keeping the Fourth Commandment: “Children, obey your parents in the Lord, for this is right. ‘Honor your father and mother’ (this is the first commandment with a promise), ‘that it may go well with you and that you may live long in the land’” (Eph. 6:1–3).

And think about what your life would be like if you went around stealing (breaking the Seventh Commandment), telling lies about people (breaking the Eighth Commandment), and generally being cruel to those around you (breaking all the commandments!). That is obviously not a blessed way to live. In fact, you’d be miserable living that way.

And Jesus says more about what is in store for those who make sacrifices for His sake: “Jesus said to them, ‘Truly, I say to you, in the new world, when the Son of Man will sit on His glorious throne, you who have followed Me will also sit on twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel. And everyone who has left houses or brothers or sisters or father or mother or children or lands, for My name’s sake, will receive a hundredfold and will inherit eternal life’” (Matt. 19:28–29). So don’t grow impatient in doing good. Follow the Lord who has freely given you everlasting life.

**Electronic Giving:** Our church invites you to consider our electronic giving program as a way to automate your regular weekly offerings. Electronic giving is convenient for you and provides much needed consistency for our church. If you are interested in participating in this program, speak with financial secretary, Tammy Vosberg. You may also contact Tammy with any questions at 507- 289-2850 or via email at dtvosberg@gmail.com



Please contact Ardi Gibbs regarding LWML meetings.

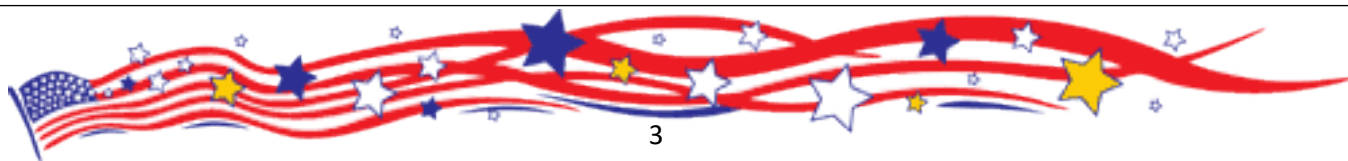


**Prayer Chain:** Ardi Gibbs is our Prayer Chain Leader. Please contact Ardi with your prayer requests or if you would like to join the prayer chain team. (507) 254-6564 / [ardig775@gmail.com](mailto:ardig775@gmail.com)

*In Congress, July 4, 1776*

*The unanimous **Declaration of the thirteen united States of America**, When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.*

*We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.--That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, --That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.--Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. ....*





## Lessons from hiking

Whether I'm hiking an easier stroll or a 20-mile trek, I've noticed parallels to my journey with Christ.

- This is my journey. Too often I waste time comparing my stride, pace, or equipment to that of fellow hikers.
- I don't know what's around each bend, but God does. I can't let anxiety steal my joy.
- It's best to balance hiking in silence with sharing the trail with friends.
- I'll be sore tomorrow, and that's okay. Engaging new muscles leaves a reminder that growth is uncomfortable.
- Being prepared is good; being *too* prepared makes for a heavy backpack. I need to do my due diligence and let God handle the rest.
- It's not a race, so finishing quickly offers no reward. When I'm not in a hurry, I tend to notice more of God's blessings.
- I need to look up, enjoying God's creation as I let him determine my steps. — Janna Firestone



Jason Gibbs  
Charro Coleman  
Judy Coleman  
Bob Schuster

July 6  
July 17  
July 24  
July 26

Bob & Shelly Schuster July 11



Worship Assistant Schedule for July 2024	Altar Guild for Month of July/Kim Amundson
<b>7/7/2024 – 7th Sunday after Pentecost</b> Worship w/Communion - 10:45 a.m. Pastor Fiege	<b>Elder</b> – Don Vosberg <b>Reader</b> – Dave Welsh <b>Music</b> – Dave Welsh
<b>7/14/2024 – 8th Sunday after Pentecost</b> Worship – 10:45 a.m. Pastor Fiege	<b>Elder</b> – Shane Amundson <b>Reader</b> – Verona Kruse <b>Music</b> – Jeff Rehwaldt
<b>7/21/2024 – 9th Sunday after Pentecost</b> Worship w/Communion – 10:45 a.m. by Pastor Fiege	<b>Elder</b> – Don Vosberg <b>Reader</b> – Kristie Hahn <b>Music</b> – Ruth Benning
<b>7/28/2024 – 10th Sunday after Pentecost</b> Worship – 10:45 a.m. Pastor Fiege	<b>Elder</b> - Brant Klepel <b>Reader</b> – Dave Welsh <b>Music</b> – Margaret Karst



# 4TH OF JULY

## Word Scramble

1. ITPCIATOR \_\_\_\_\_
2. MRAEACI \_\_\_\_\_
3. KREISOFRW \_\_\_\_\_
4. TFHRUO \_\_\_\_\_
5. LTEYBRI \_\_\_\_\_
6. GFAL \_\_\_\_\_
7. ERMUMS \_\_\_\_\_
8. CNIEEDNPE \_\_\_\_\_
9. LYUJ \_\_\_\_\_
10. INTREADCOAI \_\_\_\_\_
11. BEUCBRAE \_\_\_\_\_
12. ETSAST \_\_\_\_\_

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# 4TH OF JULY

## WORD SEARCH

T M N W Q J E T A R B E L E C D Y  
 I M T Q H H Y M Q R Q U D U E I A  
 O Q T A W Q M Z Y E X U C C N T D  
 I N D E P E N D E N C E L C J A I  
 A S I O U O R H A M U A A T U Q L  
 N K S A M E R I C A R P S O S O  
 U R P U F U B E E A Y S T R U B H  
 P O A Y D L D W T O E C I N C I P  
 K W R W E A A I L P O E A U E O N  
 F E K H T F O G I A D E U S D I H  
 Y R L I N T R B E M D T N A T L  
 L I E T N P T Z E U R A E T R S C  
 U F R E U S L Q R R U I U A A E  
 J V S O D L K V T S L R O K P J B  
 W I T O E O M O Y B B F I U P J L  
 I A S V Y E M R E D R E M M U S E

America	Fireworks	Independence	Red	United
Blue	Flag	July	Sparklers	White
Britain	Fourth	Liberty	Stars	
Celebrate	Freedom	Parade	Stripes	
Declaration	Holiday	Picnic	Summer	

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# 10 AMAZING Facts for the



**1** Benjamin Franklin wanted the turkey to be the national animal but was out-voted when John Adams and Thomas Jefferson chose the bald eagle.



**2** The stars on the original American flag were arranged in a circle to ensure that all colonies were represented equally.



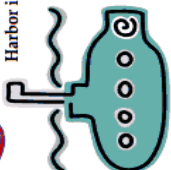
**3** John Hancock was the only person to actually sign the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776. The other 55 signers did not sign it until later.



**4** Thomas Jefferson and John Adams died on the same day: July 4, 1826, the fiftieth anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.



**5** History's first submarine attack took place in New York Harbor in 1776.



**6** There were no fireworks on July 4, 1776, but there were fireworks 1 year later, on July 4, 1777. This was still 6 years before Americans knew whether the new nation would survive the war.

**7** George Washington was the best spy master in American History! He ran espionage rings in British-held areas and he was a genius at misinformation. He constantly befuddled the British by leaking, through double agents, inflated reports of the strength of his army.



**8** Washington was robust man with a seeming immunity to disease and bullets. In one encounter in the French and Indian War, he absorbed 4 bullets in his coat and hat and had 2 horses shot from under him without any injury to himself.



**9** The song "Yankee Doodle" was sung originally by British officers making fun of backwoods Americans.



**10** The United States of America won it's independence despite the fact that the British Army was established, experienced, disciplined, and trained and the American army was not. In addition to this, the British Army had ample quantities of powder, guns, and clothing and the American Army was not well supplied.



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