



The Mountain Top Echo

Mt. Moriah Lutheran Church, Byron MN

Reaching Out ... Sharing Christ

JULY 2026

FREEDOM!

FREEDOM! July 4th is almost upon us with parades, picnics, family parties, and fireworks. All celebrating the holiday of Independence, Freedom, and the 250th anniversary of our great country. Have you given the word freedom any thought at all and what it stands for in our lives? You can google the word freedom and discover what that word means to a vast number of definitions and usages of that word. The *Merriam-Webster* online dictionary describes freedom ***“the quality or state of being free: such as the absence of necessity, coercion, or constraint in choice or action. Or “liberation from slavery or restraint or from the power of another.”*** Wow, isn't that a mouthful for someone to describe what we celebrate on July 4th. Are you free?

FREEDOM! Is something that we can grasp as we remember the men and women who fought for our country here at home and around the world. I am not going to name all the conflicts, fights for Independence from tyranny, world wars that we have been involved in over the years because I would miss naming some battle or conflict, yet our cemeteries are filled with the graves of brave men and women who fought for each of us so that we could enjoy freedom. So on special days; Memorial day, July 4th Independence day, and Veterans Day, we remember those individuals who fought so gallantly with parades, flags flying, wreaths laid at graves, and the like. Yet, we still live in fear and anxiety over the loss of that little word which means so much, freedom. Are you free?

FREEDOM! Is something we celebrate each and every day because of the dedication of the men and women of the Armed Forces who fought against tyranny and oppression. We dare not forget the lives lost, imprisoned, maimed, or wounded for our freedom. Yet, as we celebrate with the fireworks and parades, there is something more important for the concept and definition of freedom. We have freedom from the tyranny and oppression that sin has caused in our lives. For our Savior Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary, lived a life of perfection under the law of God, suffered bodily harm, was crucified on the cross, and gloriously rose from the dead to release us from the bond of sin, the temptations of Satan, giving each of us freedom and the knowledge of eternal life and forgiveness of sins are ours this day and always. Are you free?

FREEDOM! Is something that comes with a cost. That cost is not counted in dollars and cents, but in the deaths of many, the ones who have been prisoners of war, and many others who are suffering mentally. The cost of our redemption, salvation came at a cost, the death of our Lord Jesus Christ who rose from the dead to give us the gift of eternal life and forgiveness of sins. Our Lord informs us of remaining in him as John writes our Lord's words: ***“If you abide in my word, you are truly my disciples, and you will know the truth, and the truth will set you free.”*** As we continue to live as the Lord's servants, witnesses, sharers of God's gracious message life in Christ, we are empowered by the Holy Spirit to share that precious message to those around us. As we continue to live and witness for Jesus, we are blessed to be a blessing to others so they too may hear about living in the freedom we have in our Lord Jesus Christ.

In the Peace of Jesus,
Pastor Fiege



LCMS July Stewardship
Newsletter Articles

Go ... Sell All You Have? (Originally published July 2023)

“What must I do to inherit eternal life?” asked the rich young ruler. Jesus said, “You know the commandments.” And he replied, “All these I have kept from my youth.” And Jesus said to him, “One thing you still lack. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow me” (Luke 18:18–22).

When we hear this story, this question comes to mind: is Jesus speaking to us also, or only to the rich young ruler? In other words, is Jesus telling us to sell all that we have and give it to the poor?

As good Lutherans, we answer, “No!” But why? Why should we not sell all that we have and distribute it to the poor? The simplest explanation is this: if we sold everything we have, our wife and our children would be neglected. In other words, to sell everything we have and give it to the poor would ignore, even abandon, those whom God has placed in our care. Our money, everything we have, is not to be used solely for the church. But that doesn’t excuse us from using our money for the purpose God intends.

Everyone has three stations in life, three spheres in which we live and are to be of service to our neighbors. These stations are the church, the family and society. We are members of all three of these by birth. We are born into the church by water and the Word of God, and our duties to others in the church arise from our Baptism into the church. We are born into a family, and our duties to others stem from our birth into that family. Finally, we are born into society, which is simply a further extension of our birth into our family. The duties we have toward other members of society come from either our own birth or the birth of others into the same society.

All that we have and all that we are ought to be pressed into service for the church, the family and society. If we were to sell all we have and give only to one, the other two would be neglected, and we would falter in fulfilling our duties. So, consider your life and all that you have in light of these three stations. You pay taxes to support and help those in society. You save for college for your children, and provide food, clothing and shelter for the members of your family.

But the station that is usually thought of last is the church. Since the needs of the family and society are more immediate, the church is often given what is left over. This is not how it should be. Rather, we are to give of our first fruits, from off the top, the best, even as Abel gave the best of his flock. This requires forethought. It means that you sit down and make a plan of what you will give from the beginning. It means sticking to it even when it seems that there are other more immediate and pressing things.

And this is all the more necessary now as we enter into periods of time where giving is low due to high unemployment or where restrictions on meeting in church limit opportunities to give. If we love God and His gifts of forgiveness given through the Means of Grace, which we receive at church and only at church, then we will support it, just as we love our country and our family. For all that we have and all that we are is given to us by our gracious God. He spared no expense for us and our salvation. He gave up His Son to death so that our sins are forgiven, and we will live. What’s more, He provides for all that we need for this body and life. And our lives in this world, among these three spheres of church, family and society are to mirror the generosity of the one who gave us life in all three at birth.

Don’t let the church, your divine family, be an afterthought or even ignored. It is nurturing you, bringing you up in salvation through Word and Sacrament.



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



The next **LWML meeting** is TBD.

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



Jason Gibbs	July 6
Charro Coleman	July 17
Judy Coleman	July 24
Bob Schuster	July 26



Bob & Shelly Schuster	July 11
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JUNE 24, 2026

LCMS.ORG

LCMS Presidential Election Process Concludes

The Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison, having received more than 50% of the votes cast, is the president-elect of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod (LCMS) for a sixth term.

The result of the third ballot tallied and reported to the secretary of the Synod by YesElections is as follows:

- *Harrison was voted president-elect with 2,524 votes (50.1%);*
- *The Rev. Dr. Joel D. Biermann received 2,414 votes (47.9%); and*
- *The Rev. Benjamin T. Ball received 100 votes (2.0%).*

Hit the Greens, Change A Child's Life.

Enjoy 18 holes of golf at the beautiful **Valleywood Golf Course, Apple Valley, MN on August 10, 2026.** Your contribution will include golf, cart access, a taco buffet, and a drink ticket. There will be chances to win game and raffle prizes. If you're not a golfer, you can be a Hole Sponsor or a Meal Sponsor or just make a kind donation. All contributions are warmly welcomed and are tax deductible. This golf benefit will support Camp Omega Endowment Fund to help send children to Camp Omega and experience the love of Jesus. For more information and to register and/or donate for this benefit, go to www.campomega.org. Thank you for your support and making a change to a child's life.

Deb Vinkemeier
Camp Omega Board of Directors
612-720-7264



“Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction.

We didn’t pass it on to our children in the bloodstream. The only way they can inherit the freedom we have known is if we fight for it, protect it, defend it, and then hand it to them with the well fought lessons of how they, in their lifetime, must do the same.

And if you and I don’t do this, then you and I may well spend our sunset years telling our children and our children’s children what it once was like in America when men were free. “

– Ronald Regan 1961

Save the date:

July 22, Wednesday - Berne Wood-Fired Pizza starting at 5 pm. Come and find Mt. Moriah group. Will try and save tables or bring your own lawn chair. Also, please bring a bag to take home your trash. Each family will receive \$15.00 to help defer costs; the average cost is \$25.00 total.

September 20, Sunday - Four Daughters Vineyard & Winery, near Spring Valley. Appetizers will be provided by the social committee. Come join the fun starting at 1 pm.

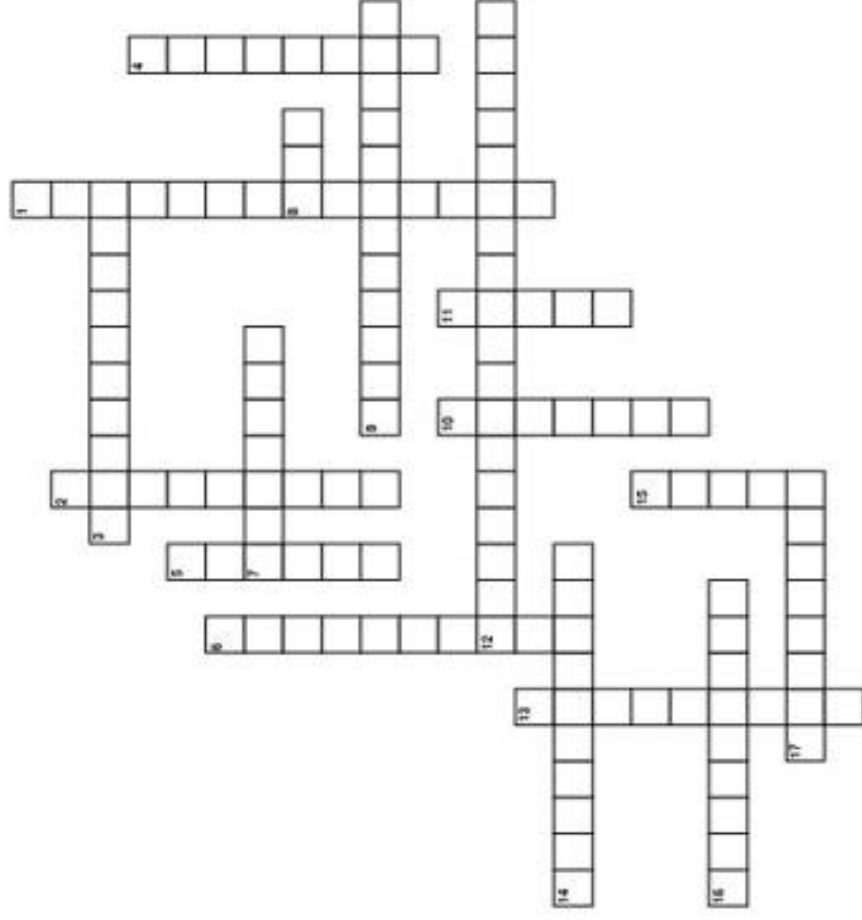
Worship Assistant Schedule for JULY 2026	Altar Guild for Month of July – Kim Amundson
7/5/2026 – 6 th Sunday after Pentecost Worship w/Communion – 10:00 a.m. Pastor Fiege	Elder – N/A Reader – Kristie Hahn Music – Justin Hahn
7/12/2026 – 7 th Sunday after Pentecost Worship – 10:00 a.m. Pastor Fiege	Elder – Don Vosberg Reader – Verona Kruse Music – Dave Welsh
7/19/2026 – 8 th Sunday after Pentecost Worship w/Communion – 10:00 a.m. Pastor Fiege	Elder – Shane Amundson Reader – Kim Amundson Music – Ruth Benning
7/26/2026 – 9 th Sunday after Pentecost Worship – 10:00 a.m. Pastor Fiege	Elder – Brant Klepel Reader – Dave Welsh Music – Margaret Karst

America's History

America 250 Wordsearch

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

ADAMS
AMERICA
ANNIVERSARY
BELL
COIN
DECLARATION
FLAG
FOURTH
FRANKLIN
INDEPENDENCE
JEFFERSON
JULY
LIVINGSTON
PARTY
PHILADELPHIA
SEMICENTENNIAL
SHERMAN
STAMP
STATES
TWO FIFTY
UNITED
USA



Across

- [3] a general in the American Revolutionary War, and the first president (last name)
[7] the county below Canada
[8] Boston _____ party
[9] who America declared their independence from in 1776
[12] the war that freed America from great Britain
[14] famous for his midnight ride to warn about a British attack
[16] first person to sew the American flag
[17] the first man sail to America and tell people about it (last name)

Down

- [1] an infamous American traitor
[2] a general from France
[4] The inventor of the lightning rod and bifocals (Last name)
[5] The country that helped free America from Great Britain
[6] man who said before being hung "I only regret that I have but one life to lose for my country"
[10] first person to sign the declaration of independence (last name)
[11] person who said "Give me liberty, or give me death!" (last name)
[13] the third president of the USA (last name)
[15] first well-known American naval commander in the American Revolutionary War (last name)



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