



INDEPENDENCE DAY

July 4th commemorates the day in 1776 that our nation declared itself to be an independent nation, and no longer a colony of England. On that date, a number of our leading citizens signed what is known as the Declaration of Independence, stating our determination to become a free country.

Our independence did not come easily; only after several difficult years of war would it finally be won. Nor were our first years as a nation free from problems and controversies (as is still true). But our forefathers were determined to establish a free and democratic system of government, and the Declaration of Independence (together with our Constitution and the Bill of Rights) became the foundation for this. They have stood the test of time, and on July 4th we give thanks for the wisdom and faith and courage of those leaders.



Although it is not a religious holiday like Christmas or Easter, for many Americans July 4th is a time to reflect on God's goodness to us as a nation. Molded into the Liberty Bell in Philadelphia (which proclaimed our independence) are these words from the Bible: "Proclaim liberty throughout all the land unto all the inhabitants thereof" (Leviticus 25:10, KJV). Our legal system reflects our Judeo-Christian roots.

While we look with gratitude to the past on this July 4th, may we also look in faith to the future, and commit it and our lives to God and His will. The ancient words of the Psalmist are still true: "Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord" (Psalm 33:12).

From the Chair — Listening to Others



Proverbs 18:2 tells us that “A fool takes no pleasure in understanding, but only in expressing his opinion.” Are you sometimes guilty of not really listening to those who talk with you?

Also, in Proverbs 18:13 it says, “If one gives an answer before he hears, it is his folly and shame.”

We often elevate ourselves in relation to others. To become a better listener, don’t start thinking of your response before others are finished talking to you. It is dangerous to act like you are listening, when in reality you are only reloading to speak when they are finished.

I believe that we can be guilty of this, both with each other, as well as our meditation and prayers with God. People will share with you who they really are, and so will God. If you are not ready to hear who is speaking to you— either God or someone else— then you will certainly miss out on a better relationship with who is speaking. You may not hear clearly the words they say, and God may not speak to you in hearable words, but if you are planning your next response, you certainly will miss out.

Proverbs 17:28 says, “Even a fool who keeps silent is considered wise; when he closes his lips, he is deemed intelligent.”

Dennis Smith

July 2021

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 12pm AA	2 12pm AA	3 9am Men's Breakfast 10am AA
4 Independence Day 10:30am Worship LWML MITES Breadbasket	5 12pm AA	6 12pm AA	7 12pm AA	8 12pm AA	9 12pm AA	10 10am AA
11 10:30am Worship	12 12pm AA	13 12pm AA	14 10am Avenues Bible Study 12pm AA 1:30pm Kaffee Klatsch	15 12pm AA	16 12pm AA	17 10am AA
18 10:30am Worship	19 12pm AA	20 12pm AA	21 12pm AA	22 12pm AA	23 12pm AA	24 10am AA
25 10:30am Worship	26 12pm AA	27 12pm AA	28 10am Avenues Bible Study 12pm AA	29 12pm AA	30 12pm AA	31 10am AA



Pastoral Transition Information

(Revised: January 8, 2021)

Points of Contact for Saint John Hattiesburg during the Pastoral Transition:

Dennis Smith 601.329.6806	General administration of the congregation. Oversight of property, programs, maintenance, supervision of paid and volunteer staff not otherwise delegated.
Mark Keyl 601.466.0200	Oversight of the call process and chair of the Pastoral Call Committee. Point of contact with Interim Pastor Gary Weier.
Nancy Kaul 601.307.5127	Coordination of worship schedules and services. Point of contact for members in need of spiritual care, delegating to other elders and spiritual care-givers.
Rev. Gary Weier	Interim Pastor serving onsite two or three Sundays per month. Other worship services will be conducted by lay members of our fellowship or other pastors as coordinated by Nancy Kaul under Pastor Weier's supervision. Pastor Weier will provide home and hospital visitation as time allows in addition to other elders and members.
Church Office	The necessary functions of the church office will be coordinated for the next several weeks by John Karle and Dennis Smith. Several individuals will be helping locally and remotely so that the core activities of the congregation continue as best possible. Email and phones will be monitored on a daily basis. There are no set onsite hours for office staff.
Continuing Business	Pastor Karle plans to make monthly visits for the next three months to advance landscaping, building repair, and administrative projects already underway and provide operational support as needed. The visits will be in the middle of selected weeks. He will provide background support for bulletin preparation on an as needed basis. Most of the basic preparation work for the next three months has already been completed and is in place.
All Other Roles	All other roles – such as Altar Guild, The Avenues Bible Study, LWML – will continue in an orderly way as they have been. Other programs will be resumed post-Covid.

Serving June

Interim Pastor

Gary Weier

Music Director

Jason Sims

Altar Care Team

Jane Kersh and Christina Keiper

Live Streaming of Worship Services — www.saintjohnhattiesburg.com.

Portals of Prayer for July-August-September are available at the lobby mailboxes. Copies will be gladly mailed to homebound or distant members by request to the church office.

August Newsletter Deadline — Monday, July 26th at 10am.

Kaffee Klatsch — Meets Wednesday, July 14th at 1:30pm in the Fellowship Hall.

About Tithes and Offerings — As followers of Jesus, we are convinced that the continuation of Christ's work — both in this place and to the ends of the earth — depends on each of our generosity of our life's passions, priorities, and provisions. As partners in Jesus' Gospel mission, we thankfully dedicate a part of our income to the Church's larger work. Financial tithes and offerings may be given Sunday mornings during worship in the offering plate, via the regular mail, or online at the congregation's website by clicking on the 'Give' button. Thanks!

BOD Announcement — The Board of Directors reviewed our current practices when in the building, regarding Covid protocols. Since a majority of our folks are seniors with compromised immunity systems, and some of us may not yet be vaccinated, we felt the best course of action is no action for the time being. We will strongly suggest all folks entering the building wash/sanitize their hands, wear a mask, and practice social distancing when choosing where to sit. We will continue to monitor the situation as things may change. Thank you for your understanding and adherence to these practices.

Men's Breakfast — After many months of not meeting, the men's club has resumed breakfast on the first Saturday of the month. The next meeting is on July 3rd at 9AM. We will meet for breakfast and fellowship at Chesterfields located at 4646 Hardy Street. Bring a friend, your appetite, and a smile. See you there!

Weekday Growth Group for Adults

The Avenues Study Group — (Even Week Wednesdays) Meets the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month at 10am at Saint John. They are studying Hope When Your Heart Breaks: Navigating Grief and Loss, a book of Hope when your heart breaks. The next meeting will be July 14th.

Pastoral Call Process

Progress Report — The Call Committee has received the Call List from the District President, as was announced on Sunday, May 2, 2021. Since then, the Call Committee has diligently and prayerfully studied the potential candidates and have begun the process of selecting the candidates whom the committee will contact and determine whether they are open for a call and would agree to an initial interview. Once this step is completed, the committee will prayerfully discuss and determine second interviews, potential site visits, and recommendations to the congregation. Should you have any questions concerning the process, please feel free to contact Mark Keyl. The committee requests your continued prayers as they go about their deliberations.

Duty Roster — Those serving on the Call Committee are: Mark Keyl (chair), Christina Jimenez, Wayland Johnson, Nancy Kaul, Jane Kersh, Steve Lawrence, Christopher Longman, Shawn O'Connor, Ethan Potesta, Pat Potesta, and Dennis Smith.



From the Altar Guild

Gratitude

Too often, we think we need items and events to occur before we can feel genuine gratitude for something. Actually, we do not need things, events, or special reasons to feel grateful, we can “just feel it.” We simply allow ourselves to feel grateful; simply allow our cups to runneth over with gratitude. In these moments, love for others and self, the peace that Jesus places in our hearts, and the power and intelligence of the Holy Spirit manifests through us.

Practicing Gratitude

Yes, practicing! We know musicians, actors, and athletes must all practice, practice, practice to become accomplished in their craft. Having a grateful heart requires practice as well. We are surrounded by so many earthly treasures, whether we’ve surrounded ourselves with them, the treasures were given to us, or it is a combination of both. There is nothing wrong with this, but too often what happens is that we take our treasures for granted, even becoming complacent or bored with it all. To avoid boredom or complacency, we must look at things and at life with refreshed and refocused views. We need to hit that “refresh” button regularly.

Most people have heard the expression “An Attitude of Gratitude.” That’s how we must embrace all things. Our lives are generally a mix of what we call either good or bad, but we can choose to believe each experience benefits us in some way. Here’s where our faith and trust in the Lord come in as we often are not able to see our good or our growth at the moment these experiences are happening, but rather sometime afterward.

When we live with an attitude of gratitude, it is much easier to see that good is everywhere around us. We will know that our lives are filled with goodness and abundance. Through Jesus, there is comfort in knowing we don’t have to do anything to earn love and blessings. Imagine living in a state of grace and giving thanks for moments of joy! This in itself is an important role that we contribute to the whole of God’s glorious universe.

Gratitude is also good medicine that helps relieve the stress in our busy lives. Do take the time to observe activities that surround you—festive celebrations, loving acts of service, the beauty of people sharing and caring for one another—and know this grace and truth comes through Jesus Christ.

Independence Day:

The Fourth of July—also known as Independence Day or July 4th—has been a federal holiday in the United States since 1941, but the tradition of Independence Day celebrations goes back to the 18th century and the American Revolution. On July 2nd, 1776, the Continental Congress voted in favor of independence from Great Britain, and two days later delegates from the 13 colonies adopted the Declaration of Independence, a historic document drafted by Thomas Jefferson. From 1776 to the present day, July 4th has been celebrated as the birth of American independence, with festivities ranging from fireworks, parades and concerts to more casual family gatherings and barbecues.

Let us celebrate our freedom and independence with grateful hearts. Let us ever be grateful for and dependent on our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ.

Christina Keiper

Altar Guild Chair

601-550-1050 ckeiper511@gmail.com

Lutheran Women's Missionary League

LWML MITES collected on Sunday, June 6, 2021, totaled \$137.71. Praise God!!! I am so thankful that we have been able to continue supporting the Mission Grants selected in Convention by the Gulf States District and National LWML by mail during this time of the Covid-19 Pandemic. MITES will be collected next on Sunday, July 4, 2021.

(JEREMIAH 29:11 NCV) "I say this because I know what I am planning for you", says the Lord, "I have good plans for you, not plans to hurt you. I will give you hope and a good future."

If you are like me, sometimes we get all excited about our plans for our future, and forget the importance of trusting God in our journey here. This Scripture in Jeremiah gives hope to His people in exile and to all Christians now. In the past year or so, the church has faced many challenges with Covid-19 Pandemic; especially with the isolated, sick, elderly, homeless, and those who do not know the saving grace of Jesus, our Savior.

God has placed us here at Saint John Lutheran Church in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, to serve the Lord according to His Will, and share the Love of Jesus at every opportunity. Thank you, Jesus, for the Hope we all share!

By the time you read this article, the 39th Biennial National LWML Convention in Lexington, Kentucky, June 24-27, 2021, will be a memory. I will fill you in on all the details in the August Newsletter. Thank you to all who participated with their prayers and donations to the Gifts from the Heart and for our travel and safety during our time at convention.

Coming. . .September 5, 2021 (Labor Day weekend), the first LWML Business meeting of the year, immediately following the worship service in the Community Room for members able to attend. We need a quorum of 7 people. Plans for the Magnolia Zone Fall Rally, Oktoberfest, etc. Hopefully, we will be able to meet safely by then.

LWML MITES will be collected next on Sunday, July 4, 2021. If you are unable to attend worship, you may make your checks out to Saint John Lutheran LWML and mail them directly to Christina Noffke at 108 Ramblewood Drive, Hattiesburg, MS 39402.

Until Next Time..... Serve the Lord with Gladness!!!

Shirley Thone
President LWML



Oktoberfest Opportunities 2021

Planning is underway for Saint John's 42nd annual Oktoberfest celebration scheduled for Saturday, October 2, 2021. This is the primary fundraiser for money allocated for missions annually. The entire congregation must get involved in the effort; seasoned members, as well as new members are welcome to pitch in.

This year we will have a combined Deli, which includes baked goods, homemade jellies and jams, German mustard, bratwurst and other sausage items, and all the items on our Oktoberfest menu in family style quantities. The deli will be in the fellowship hall, so we can have adequate space for visitors. We will serve mostly take-out orders from outside food lines. Weather permitting, we plan on some limited dining outside in the parking lot area. This celebration is totally dependent upon individual preparation of food prior to Oktoberfest day and help on October 2, 2021.

We will schedule food preparation at your convenience, to allow more participation. We need people to help set up and clean up on the day of Oktoberfest. Please offer your assistance if called upon to help, or if that is not possible, we would appreciate a contribution toward the mission fund. It is a great time to meet new people, enjoy good fellowship, and enjoy the Lutheran tradition of eating when more than one come together in service.

Should you like to join us, the next committee meeting will be held after worship on July 11, 2021. Please expect a phone call asking for your help. For questions, please contact Mark Keyl or Brenda Hesselgrave. Thank you for your service.

Oktoberfest Committee



Birthdays in July

Grey Jordan July 1	Julia Hagen July 2	Dennis Smith July 3
Ethan Noffke July 4	Nancy Kaul July 6	Lillian Smith July 7
Bridgette Lee July 10	Cheyenne Thiel July 16	Robert Meyer July 21
Jesse Cubley July 22	Patrice Lovdahl July 22	Debbie Geroux July 27
Lorhetta Lawrence July 27	Colin Cubley July 29	Joyce Coll July 30



Anniversaries in July



Brandon & Bridgette Lee, 15yrs July 10
James & Renee Elledge, 37yrs July 14 Steve & Lorhetta Lawrence, 19yrs July 27
Norbert & Trenia Thiel, 27yrs July 30

Baptisms in July

Christina Noffke July 2	Elaine Kersh July 10	Jerry Hagen July 19
Patrice Lovdahl July 20	Jesse Cubley July 26	Cheyenne Thiel July 27
	Donna Blair July 28	

Surprise the World!
Love. Like. Jesus. + Hope for the City.



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