

# On Eagle's Wings



St. John's Monthly Newsletter – July/Aug. 2026

## Pastor's Paragraphs

“Semiquincentennial” is a word I’ve had to add to my vocabulary as we come upon the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It is certainly a mouthful to say! As we come upon this milestone of United States history, let’s remember that the first decade of the nation was a mess. It wasn’t until September 17, 1787 that the current constitution came to be. Then the nation as we know it began to take shape.

I make that distinction because having the correct information, and *all* of the correct information, is essential for a democracy to flourish. The question is, are we flourishing? I never would have dreamed that the runup to the semiquincentennial anniversary would have the population so filled with anger, vitriol, and distrust towards each other. We don’t just disagree with each other, we aim to morally annihilate each other. We impute all sorts of nasty qualities on those we with whom we disagree. We say they’re driven by: greed, ignorance, laziness, racism, sexism, or what have you.

I am not a sociologist. But I do know that issues of human society are immensely complex. The biggest weakness of sociology is that it is always possible to select just those portions of the truth that suit your purpose. Then you just ignore the rest. Here’s an example:

Many people say that America was founded as a Christian nation. Is that correct or not? The answer is messy. Those who answer no cite that the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution make no overt reference to Christianity. Also, the First Amendment prohibits a state religion. They further cite that while many of the founders had church affiliations, they were actually “theists” and not specifically “Christians”.

All of this is technically true, but all alone it is a highly misleading truth. The worldview of the founders, plus the Declaration of Independence, and the Constitution, are highly dependent upon the tenants of Protestant Christianity; specifically the theology of John Calvin. You’ll remember that Calvin’s ideas gave rise to the Presbyterian Church, the Reformed Church, Congregational Churches, and influenced Anglican Churches and branches of the Methodist Church. No other religious framework has the possibility of giving rise to America. (Lutheran theology influenced John Calvin, but a nation founded specifically on Lutheran

theology would look very different.)

Take Calvinist theology out of America and America cannot exist. It was a fundamental assumption of the founders that Protestant Christian theological ideas were correct and should be dominant.

So, is America a Christian nation? The answer is immediately complicated. Answering either yes or no does not do the situation justice.

Building on the idea that America has depended upon Protestant ideas for 250 years, here is what I conclude. Protestantism believes that people are made good by God and therefore have fundamental value that must be honored. There is no room for debate on that. At the same time, we believe that humans will turn away from God and towards themselves. Thus, despite being made good by God, human motives are flawed and essentially self-serving. Never blindly trust those who have power. (Notice that the Constitution does not expect anyone to be nice or good. The “separation of powers” into executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government puts each branch in tension with the others so as to keep each other’s power in check.) So, a truly patriotic American will always honor others *and* keep a critical untrusting eye on the government. The nation is founded on the expectation that its citizens will always demand proof of the government’s trustworthiness.

Patriotism like this is not easy. It requires knowing the truth, and the *whole* of the truth. It requires honoring others and not seeking their moral annihilation. America has never been a perfect place. It has done good and it has done bad. For 250 years it has counted on its people to do the hard work of democracy. Let’s not underestimate how hard that work is. Easy answers and quick solutions are very seldom right. By the grace and power of God may we have many years ahead and always do the hard work for the good.

Blessings,  
Pastor Jon

## Church Lawn Mowing

Thank you to everyone who has signed up to mow the lawn this summer. Most weeks are covered but some are still open. If you are able, please consider signing up to mow the lawn some week. The mowers are very easy to use and training is available.

## July Worship Assistants

	July 5	July 12	July 19	July 26
Greeters & Ushers	Greg and Mary Zuege	John and Linda Thompson	Helen Crown	Linda Flood
Acolyte	Alyssa Young	Charlotte Stroup	Elijah Young	Alyssa Young
Altar Care (10:30)	Linda Thompson		Linda Thompson	
Communion Assistants	Emma Deibler		Janice Lockwood	
Counters				
Coffee Hour	Apple Pie & Homemade Ice Cream			

## August Worship Assistants

	August 2	August 9	August 16	August 23	August 30
Greeters & Ushers	Janice Lockwood	Rob Stroup	Tom and Carol Urbanic	Bruce & Connie Stevenson	Greg and Mary Zuege
Acolyte	Charlotte Stroup	Elijah Young	Alyssa Young	Charlotte Stroup	Elijah Young
Altar Care (10:30)	Gary Boisseau		Gary Boisseau		
Communion Assistants	Allyn Itterly		Gary Boisseau		
Counters					
Coffee Hour			Watermelon		



### Worship Readings for July and August

We're looking at Hebrews this summer. It's a quiet biblical book that we're apt to overlook. Nevertheless, it has its place in scripture and influences our faith. Since July 5 is close to Independence Day, we're swinging to Romans 13, which gives us an understanding of government.

- July 5 – Romans 13:1-10
- July 12 – Hebrews 3:7-4:11
- July 19 – Hebrews 4:12-5:10
- July 26 – Hebrews 5:11-6:12
- August 2- Hebrews 6:13-7:10
- August 9 – Hebrews 7:11-28
- August 16 – Hebrews 8
- August 23 – Hebrews 10
- August 30 – Hebrews 11



### Worship In-person and Zoom

10:30 is in-person worship in the sanctuary and also by Zoom. The Zoom link for 10:30 is emailed weekly. If you cannot connect to the 10:30 service with a computer you can still hear and participate in the service with any phone.

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/82790182949?pwd=kWc27H9b1VhTH4f1yIbb4ObrouDVtO.1>

Meeting ID: 827 9018 2949

Passcode: 131540

By phone:

1 929 436 2866 US (New York)



- Thank you to everyone who helped with mowing the lawn in June.
- Thank you to everyone helped with planting in the church garden.
- Thank you to the Young family for assembling the weekly worship bulletins.



### Prayer Requests

- Alex Clark, friend of the Shulers. He is a 38 year old father who was recently diagnosed with stomach and intestinal cancer.
- Paul Huber as he receives additional treatments to help with bone strength.
- Patty Anderson, niece of Bruce Stevenson, who has congestive heart failure, declining kidney function, and diabetes.
- Artorius DeRuyter, son of Whitney (Stevenson) DeRuyter who is two months old and has a heart condition which will be addressed with surgery in a few months.
- Lewey Emoge, nine-month-old acquaintance of Marci Zavacki, who has been diagnosed with cancer.
- Anne Stromstad as she recovers from a fall.

### Finances (through 5/31/26)

YTD Income \$78,538  
 YTD Expenses \$77,118  
 Difference \$1,416

Thank you to you for your support this far through the year. Our expenses are a bit lower than expected and cash flow remains tight.

### School Supply Drive

We're collecting school supplies for The Spot, which will help local school children. There will be a collection box at church from July 26 to August 30. A flyer for the collection will be passed out at church. Items are: Backpacks (17" or larger), Expo dry erase markers, wide ruled notebooks, crayons, markers, colored pencils, #2 pencils, glue sticks, kid scissors, 1" and 1.5" three ring binders w/pockets, Ply Folders w/prongs, block erasers, socks and underwear. Contact Burdie Gillern for more information.



### Garden Project 2026

The potatoes, pumpkins, and sweet corn are all doing okay in the garden. But so are the weeds! If you're able to help with driving the tractor for cultivating, running a rototiller, or doing hand weeding please let Pastor Jon know.

### June Council Highlights

Church council held its monthly meeting on June 8.

Major items on the agenda were:

- Distributing letters to the surrounding neighborhoods
- Ongoing website review and rebuilding
- Review of committee actions and needs
- Possibly acquiring an AED



### June Bible Trivia Questions

1. In what town was Jesus when the woman came and anointed him with an extravagant amount of ointment? Answer: Bethany (Matthew 26:6-7)
2. The disciples say the ointment in Question 1 should be sold and the money used for what purpose? Answer: Given to the poor (Matthew 26:9)
3. Who does Judas go to when he offers to betray Jesus? Answer: the chief priests (Matthew 16:15)
4. The builder of all things is who? Answer: God (Hebrews 3:4)

### July/August Bible Trivia Questions

Hint: All of the answers may be found in the Bible readings chosen for worship in July and August.

1. What king of Salem (with a strange name) met Abraham as he was returning from a battle?
2. According to Hebrews, there is no forgiveness without what?
3. Why is Jesus able to sympathize with our weaknesses?
4. The word of God is sharper than what?

# July 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1  7:00 Alcoholics Anonymous	2	3 <u>Thomas, Apostle</u>	4 <u>Independence Day</u>
5 <u>6<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost</u> 8:30 Outdoor Service of the Word 10:30 Holy Communion	6 <u>Jan Hus, Martyr</u>	7	8  7:00 Alcoholics Anonymous	9	10	11
12 <u>7<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost</u> 8:30 Outdoor Holy Communion 10:30 Service of the Word	13	14	15  7:00 Alcoholics Anonymous	16	17  4:00 Peppermint Days Worship in Lyons Park	18
19 <u>8<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost</u> 8:30 Outdoor Service of the Word 10:30 Holy Communion	20	21	22 <u>Mary Magdalene, Witness of the Resurrection</u>  7:00 Alcoholics Anonymous	23	24	25 <u>James, Apostle</u>
26 <u>9<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost</u> 8:30 Outdoor Holy Communion 10:30 Service of the Word	27	28 <u>J.S. Bach, Musician</u>  7pm Property Committee	29  7:00 Alcoholics Anonymous	30	31	

# August 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<b>2</b> <u>10<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost</u> 8:30 Outdoor Service of the Word 10:30 Holy Communion	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>  7:00 Alcoholics Anonymous	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> <u>11<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost</u> 8:30 Outdoor Holy Communion 10:30 Service of the Word	<b>10</b>  6:00 Church Council	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>  7:00 Alcoholics Anonymous	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b> <u>Mary, Mother of Our Lord</u>
<b>16</b> <u>12<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost</u> 8:30 Outdoor Service of the Word 10:30 Holy Communion	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>  7:00 Alcoholics Anonymous	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b> <u>13<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost</u> 8:30 Outdoor Holy Communion 10:30 Service of the Word	<b>24</b> <u>Bartholomew, Apostle</u>	<b>25</b>  7:00 Property Committee	<b>26</b>  7:00 Alcoholics Anonymous	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>30</b> <u>14<sup>th</sup> Sunday After Pentecost</u> 8:30 Outdoor Service of the Word 10:30 Service of the Word	<b>31</b>					



# St. John's Lutheran Church

## Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

*We are a community of faith  
committed to living and sharing the love of God.*

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*Address Service Requested*

**July/August Newsletter**