

**BULLETIN TEMPLATE: Minnesota Valley Church**  
**Association of Free Lutheran Congregations**  
**Date: Sunday, July 12, 2026**  
**Church Year Date: America's 250<sup>th</sup> Celebration**

*Thank you, dear musicians, for your dedication to leading us in the worship of our great Savior. Pastor Tom*

Prelude: Rebekah Olson

Hymn #633 "O God, beneath Thy Guiding Hand"

Call to Worship: from Psalm 67

PASTOR: May God be gracious to us

ALL: And bless us and make his face shine upon us,

PASTOR: That your ways may be known on earth,

ALL: Your salvation among all nations.

PASTOR: May the peoples praise you, O God;

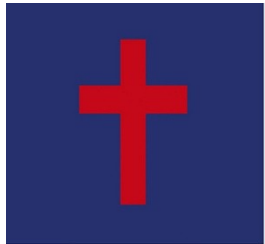
ALL: May all the peoples praise you.

PASTOR: May the nations be glad and sing for joy,

ALL: For you rule the peoples justly and guide the nations of the earth.

Hymn #631 "My Country! 'Tis of Thee"

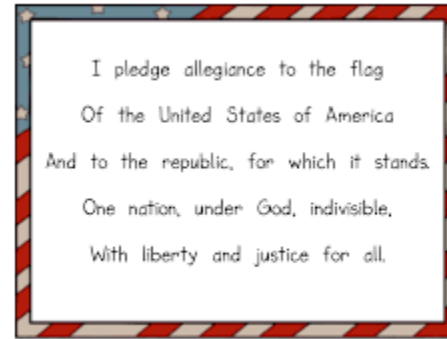
Pledge to Christian Flag:



**I pledge allegiance  
to the Christian Flag  
and to The Savior for  
whose Kingdom it stands.  
One Savior,  
crucified, risen,  
and coming again  
with life and liberty to all who believe.**

Hymn #629 (vss 1&4) "The Star-Spangled Banner"

Pledge to American Flag:



Children's Sermon

Reader: Becky Kruse

Old Testament Lesson: *Isaiah 55:10-13*

*10 As the rain and the snow  
come down from heaven,  
and do not return to it  
without watering the earth  
and making it bud and flourish,  
so that it yields seed for the sower and bread for the eater,  
11 so is my word that goes out from my mouth:  
It will not return to me empty,  
but will accomplish what I desire  
and achieve the purpose for which I sent it.  
12 You will go out in joy  
and be led forth in peace;  
the mountains and hills  
will burst into song before you,  
and all the trees of the field  
will clap their hands.  
13 Instead of the thornbush will grow the pine tree,  
and instead of briars the myrtle will grow.  
This will be for the LORD's renown,  
for an everlasting sign,  
which will not be destroyed."*

Epistle Lesson: *Matthew 13:18-23* "Listen then to what the parable of the sower means: 19 When anyone hears the message about the kingdom and does not understand it, the evil one comes and snatches away what

*was sown in his heart. This is the seed sown along the path. 20 The one who received the seed that fell on rocky places is the man who hears the word and at once receives it with joy. 21 But since he has no root, he lasts only a short time. When trouble or persecution comes because of the word, he quickly falls away. 22 The one who received the seed that fell among the thorns is the man who hears the word, but the worries of this life and the deceitfulness of wealth choke it, making it unfruitful. 23 But the one who received the seed that fell on good soil is the man who hears the word and understands it. He produces a crop, yielding a hundred, sixty or thirty times what was sown."*

Reader: "Here ends the reading of God's Word"

Congregation Sings: "God be praised for His glad tidings."

Confession of Faith: ***John 3:16&17 "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send his Son into the world to condemn the world, but to save the world through him. Amen"***

Gloria Patri: Ambassador Hymnal p. 4 (please put on screen)  
*Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost; As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. Amen, Amen.*

Independence Day Reminder and Prayer

Announcements & Prayer

Praise and Worship Songs: Hannah Carrizales

## **"A BLESSED NATION"**

**Psalm 33:10-22 Pastor Tom Olson, July 12, 2026**

CELEBRATION: Happy Birthday America! 250 years. Very few, if any, nations have lasted this long under one constitution. Jeremy Hunter likes to tease me about my age. I talk to him on the phone most every day. On July 4 he asked me if I remembered America's Bi-Centennial, 200<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1976. I remember it well. I was 15 years old. It is a great joy to my heart that through it all, fifty years later, our nation is still here and still operating

under our great motto that is printed on our money and carved in stone in our capital, "IN GOD WE TRUST."

ISRAEL: Ancient Israel had the same theme that they claimed to live under but they embraced idolatry, false gods, injustice, materialism and immorality and eventually they lost the blessing of God and were eliminated from history, more than once. We need to heed that lesson.

THEME: The text I chose for today is Psalm 33:10-22 which at the heart of it has these powerful words, ***"Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord."*** The Amplified Bible defines the biblical word BLESSED in this way, "Happy, fortunate, prosperous and to be envied." Psalm 33:10-22, A BLESSED NATION

## **I. RECOGNIZES THE SOVEIGNTY OF GOD**

***Psalm 33:10-11 The LORD foils the plans of the nations; he thwarts the purposes of the peoples. 11 But the plans of the LORD stand firm forever, the purposes of his heart through all generations.***

NATIONALISM: There is a lot of talk against nationalism these days. Some people think we should be globalists and not nationalist.

Nationalism should be good. The Bible says that:

- God establishes nations.
- God works with nations.
- God uses nations.
- God deposes nations.
- God sets the boundaries of nations.

CULTURES: Patriotism, nationalism, love of heritage is not bad, it can be very special. I love to meet people from other lands that love their nation and their culture. Countries like Poland and Hungary have worked hard to protect their national heritages, much to the criticism of the other European nations that are quickly losing their unique and rich cultures.

SOVEREIGN: The Bible teaches about the sovereign hand of God among the nations in many places. A good example is *Acts 17:27* where the Apostle Paul discusses this with the Athenians on Mars Hill: He said... ***"From one man he made every NATION of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the TIMES set for them and the EXACT PLACES where they should live."***

Let me repeat: "...*he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live.*"

MISSIONS: God gives men and nations latitude to do what they want. But ultimately the Lord's purposes on earth are accomplished. When a nation follows the Lord and his ways, that nation is blessed. God has raised up America to bring the gospel to the world. AFLC Pastor Kevin Olson and his son Pastor Andrew Olson are vitally involved in bringing the gospel to the remotest corners of the earth. My wife, Sharon, gave 15 years of her life to both train for missionary service and serve in Liberia, West Africa.

MISSIONARIES: America needs to revive to that sacred missionary calling. WAR is about one billion dollars a day. You could support thousands of missionaries for years with the price of one day of war. They could peacefully transform nations with the powerful gospel of Jesus Christ.

APPLICATION: In our own lives we will be blessed if we RECOGNIZE THE SOVEREIGNTY OF GOD and fulfill the mission that he has put us on earth to accomplish. WE ALL HAVE A MISSION FROM GOD. It is rewarding to fulfill it.

SIGNERS: Most of the signers of the Declaration of Independence were devout Christians. Benjamin Franklin struggled with his faith more than most of them. But even Franklin confessed that our nation was built on the sovereignty of God. Here is what he said: *"Here is my Creed. I believe in one God, Creator of the Universe. That he governs it by his Providence. That he ought to be worshipped."*

GOD IS SOVEREIGN AND HE WORKS WITH NATIONS.  
SECONDLY...SECONDLY, A NATION IS BLESSED IF IT...

## II. HONORS THE TRINITY

*Psalms 33:12-15 Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD, the people he chose for his inheritance. 13 From heaven the LORD looks down and sees all mankind; 14 from his dwelling place he watches all who live on earth-- 15 he who forms the hearts of all, who considers everything they do.*

FATHER: The Psalmist says that we are blessed if we honor the LORD. My Hebrew teacher in seminary was the founding pastor of Minnesota Valley, Pastor Tjelta. The word LORD in Hebrew is YHVH. Some say Jehovah, others say Yahweh. It is the name of the God who created the heavens and the earth. God's name is not Budda, Confucious, Baal or Allah. It is YHVH, I AM WHO I AM. He created all things. The first commandment says we should have no other Gods. Only the LORD can ultimately help us.

SON: YHVH has a Son. He is Jesus. Conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the virgin Mary. Jesus reconciles sinners to the Father through his sacrificial death on the cross. Jesus rules from heaven. Jesus is coming back to judge all people and renew the earth. He is coming back to exercise His benevolent reign forever and ever. All who receive him by faith as Savior and Lord will be a part of his forever family. **The more people who come to Christ in our land, the more blessed we will be.**

HOLY SPIRIT: The Holy Spirit is our sanctifier. In verse 15 it says that He, ***"forms the hearts of all."*** The Holy Spirit forms our hearts. When we are filled with the Holy Spirit our lives are transformed.

TURBO: He is the turbo charger on the engine of our soul. He is the comforter. He gives us wisdom. Ask God to fill you with the Holy Spirit. Ephesians 5:18 tells us to ***"...be filled with the Holy***

***Spirit.***” Jesus said that God will give us the Holy Spirit if we ask Him. The Bible tells us that we can grieve the Holy Spirit with our lives and choices. When was the last time you asked the Lord to fill you with His Holy Spirit? The Spirit will give you gifts, and joy, and assurance, and power to do what God wants you to do. In seminary I remember Dr. Monseth saying we need to have fresh fillings of the Holy Spirit many times.

A blessed nation HONORS THE TRINITY... Thirdly, A BLESSED NATION...

### **III. DOES NOT PUT ITS CONFIDENCE IN WEAPONS**

***Psalm 33:16-17 No king is saved by the size of his army; no warrior escapes by his great strength. 17 A horse is a vain hope for deliverance; despite all its great strength it cannot save.***

CENSUS: God gave King David great victory when he was trusting Him. But he started to put his trust in the size of his army and started to add up how many soldiers he had. God was not pleased. In 2 Samuel 24 and 1 Chronicles 21 we read about it. Here is a summary of it: “Driven by pride and a desire to measure his military might, David shifted his trust from God’s protection to the size of his army, ultimately resulting in a devastating plague that killed 70,000 Israelites.”

DAVID: As long as King David walked close to the Lord and trusted Him, He had victory over those who came to destroy Israel. But when He put his trust in his military might instead of God, he suffered great loss.

USA: I often hear we have the greatest military in the world. That may be true. But it is no substitute for trust in the Lord. The conflict in Iran in just 30 days depleted us of major stockpiles of our modern weapons that cannot be replaced quickly. Can you imagine what an ongoing war could do without the aid of other nations?

EMP: If nuclear bombs are unleashed the entire world would be plunged back into the stone age overnight. If we lost electric power in the United States through an EMP attack it is estimated that ninety percent of us would die in one year.

TRUST: Then how can we survive? We exist for one reason alone. It is the grace, mercy and protection of God. We must keep our trust in him. ***Psalm 20:7 "Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the Lord our God."***

A BLESSED NATION: DOES NOT PUT ITS CONFIDENCE IN WEAPONS... Fourthly, A BLESSED NATION...

### **IV. FEARS AND LOVES GOD**

***Psalm 33:18-22 But the eyes of the LORD are on those who fear him, on those whose hope is in his unfailing love, 19 to deliver them from death and keep them alive in famine. 20 We wait in hope for the LORD; he is our help and our shield. 21 In him our hearts rejoice, for we trust in his holy name. 22 May your unfailing love rest upon us, O LORD, even as we put our hope in you.***

***...the eyes of the Lord are on those who fear Him...***

DECLARATION: On July 4 we watched the official commemoration of our Declaration of Independence from Washington D.C, a star-studded program. One of the first parts of the presentation was for the host to quote from the Declaration of Independence written by Thomas Jefferson as follows:

***“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 the Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”***

OMISSION: I instantly detected that he left out three words. Can you guess what they were? ***“...by their Creator...”*** It is subtle but significant. The country that was founded on the motto, “In

God we Trust” leaving God out of the story. Fortunately, the patriotic songs included the Lord.

WASHINGTON: What would President George Washington have thought of leaving God out? Washington said this: ***“It is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the Providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits, and humbly to implore His protection and favor.”***

REAGAN: What would President Ronald Reagan think? Reagan said this: ***“If we ever forget that we are one nation under God, then we will be a nation gone under.”***

The Psalmist concludes with these words: Verse 22... ***May your unfailing love rest upon us, O LORD, even as we put our hope in you.***

QUESTION: Can we expect the unfailing love of the Lord to rest upon us if we don’t put our hope in Him? The answer is No. Our theme verse is ***“Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.”*** That begs the question, what is the nation whose God is not the Lord, whose God is money, power, immorality, sports, Hollywood, and all the “cares of life.” The answer is clear...it is a cursed nation that is filled with strife, division, crime, debt, wars, suicide, family breakdown, disease and the like. I am afraid that may be the direction many Americans heading quickly.

OPPORTUNITY: No nations like America and Israel have had greater opportunity to hear the Word of God. Israel had Jesus and they put him to death. America has had great evangelists like George Whitfield, Dwight Moody and Billy Graham and what has come of it? We leave God out of our quoting of the Declaration of Independence. Thankfully when Vice President Vance quoted the Declaration in another city, he kept God in! It is almost like there are two forces trying to control our land, good and evil. May the good prevail.

A BLESSED NATION:

- RECOGNIZES THE SOVEIGNTY OF GOD

- HONORS THE TRINITY
- DOES NOT PUT ITS CONFIDENCE IN WEAPONS
- FEARS AND LOVES GOD

FUTURE: What hope is there for our future? We must all repent, turn from our sins and return to our Creator and Redeemer. I wish I had time to quote the signers of the Declaration of Independence. Most, if not all, were devout followers of Christ. I leave you with the words of just one representative, John Whitherspoon who said this: ***“I entreat you in the most earnest manner to believe in Jesus Christ, for there is no salvation in any other [Acts 4:12]. . . . [I]f you are not reconciled to God through Jesus Christ, if you are not clothed with the spotless robe of His righteousness, you must forever perish.”***

Let us pray: *We thank you God for this great country you have raised up these 250 years. Please bring spiritual revival to our land so that America can continue to fulfill your good and noble purposes you have for us. In Jesus’s Name. Amen*

Hymn #632 “Battle Hymn of the Republic”

Lord’s Prayer

Benediction

Doxology & Three-Fold Amen

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow, Praise Him all creatures here below, Praise Him above, ye heavenly host, Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. A-men. A-men. A---men.*

Postlude: Rebekah Olson