



Teach | Equip | Serve

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SUNDAY WORSHIP SCHEDULE

9:00 am Worship Service

10:30 am Adult Bible Study

(meets in Fellowship Hall)

No Kids Summer Sunday School

No Senior Potluck Luncheons or Men's Group Breakfasts during the summer. They will resume in September.



Pastor Todd will be out of the office from July 27 – August 3 attending the LCMS National Convention in Milwaukee and from Aug. 4 – 13 visiting family. In case of an emergency, please contact the office at 509-943-4967 or Pastor Meyer at 509-582-5368.

THE COST OF FREEDOM

On July 4, 1776, the thirteen colonies in America declared their freedom from Great Britain in the Declaration of Independence. July is a month when Americans are especially grateful for the privilege of living in this country. Much blood was shed and many lives lost, and, at this time of year, we take time to honor those who fought to liberate us. We recognize that our freedom has been won at great cost, and we take time to honor those who fought to liberate us.

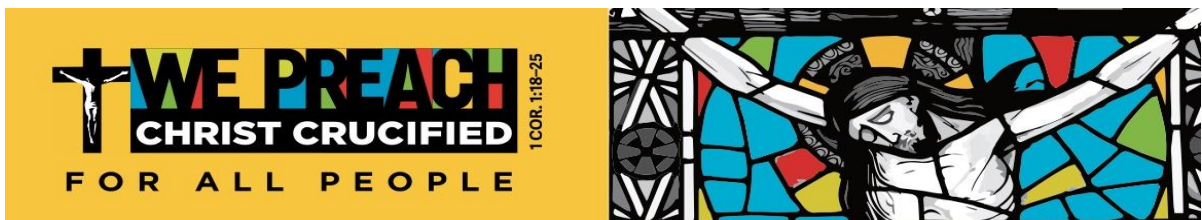
Our spiritual freedom, too, was won at great cost. We were slaves to the Law which we could never fulfill, but Christ satisfied its requirements for us. He shed His blood and gave His life to pay the penalty for the sin we incurred, for the freedom we now have as we live in Him.

Yes, we are truly blessed to live in this country, and we should thank God daily for this blessing and ask Him to guide, direct, and protect our leaders as well as give wisdom to citizens to choose their leaders wisely.

On the other hand, even those who do not experience political freedom can experience the freedom we have in Christ, for the freedom He brings is not dependent on or bound by our circumstances. And the battle for this freedom never has to be refought, unlike our earthly battles. Jesus promised, *"Heaven and Earth will pass away, but My words will never pass away"* (Matthew 24:35).

Let us honor Him as we express our gratitude by sharing with others the message of our freedom in Christ.

Pastor Todd



2023 SYNOD CONVENTION NATIONAL OFFERING

"We preach Christ crucified" (*1 Cor. 1:23*). We chose this simple statement as the theme for our upcoming LCMS convention in Milwaukee. As I have prepared for the convention, these words have resonated in my mind. These words describe our church. We, the LCMS, preach Christ crucified along with the apostles and the whole Christian church throughout the world.

Not only do we enjoy fellowship with every Christian of every time and place, but we also seek to reach all people with the Gospel, for not all have heard. One thing that diminishes our ability to share the Good News with all people is language. Since the tower of Babel in Genesis 11, people have spoken different languages. Yet as we learned in Acts 2, the message of the Gospel unites people into the one Body of Christ.

Therefore, we have designated our 2023–2026 LCMS National Offering, "We Preach Christ Crucified for All People," for the translation of solid biblical Lutheran resources into languages that lack such materials. Whatever you generously contribute to this offering will enable this vital work. We thank God for all those who have labored to translate the Scriptures. You will help provide instructional and doctrinal resources LCMS congregations can use to reach and instruct non-English speakers in His Word.

Pray for those who translate Lutheran resources, that their labor would produce faithful and beneficial materials for those who use them. Pray for those who receive their work. Pray for our international church partners. Pray for all those who do not know Jesus. Join me in daily prayers, for our Lord has graciously invited us to bring before Him all our concerns, all through Jesus Christ crucified and risen. We preach Christ crucified — for all people.

Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison
President, The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod

Collection Days: Sunday, July 2, 9, 16th - Make check payable to Redeemer, and in the memo line, write "national offering." There will be some envelopes in the narthex for those making cash donations.

ELDERS CORNER – JULY 2023

July is the month we celebrate our country's independence. The Declaration of Independence was signed on July 4, 1776. This piece of literary history contains the following words of wisdom: "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." We are all created in God's image. Do you ever think about that when you look in the mirror in the morning? If we did, our day would start on a more positive note. We are God's children that He has promised to bless. Yes, we will suffer a level of tribulation during our lives, but we know God is always with us. He has overcome the world. Trust Him. Remember, God loves us so much that He gave His one and only Son to suffer and die for us, and then rose in victory over death.

The founders of this country, for the most part, were very religious people, who were fleeing religious persecution in their homeland. They knew God's love! So when you celebrate Independence Day this year, thank God for His many unending blessings so graciously provided to each and every one of us. Enjoy the holiday and show God's love to all you meet.

We would be remiss if we did not say something about the division and unrest in this country. What can we do about it? The second greatest commandment is to "love our neighbors as ourselves". This is not easy, but God is with all of us. Look to Him for faith, guidance, and strength. The words below from 1 John 4:7-19 tell us everything we need to know about love.

God's Love and Ours

⁷Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹This is how God showed his love among us: He sent his one and only Son into the world that we might live through him. ¹⁰This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. ¹¹Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another. ¹²No one has ever seen God; but if we love one another, God lives in us and his love is made complete in us. ¹³This is how we know that we live in him and he in us: He has given us of his Spirit. ¹⁴And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Savior of the world. ¹⁵If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. ¹⁶And so we know and rely on the love God has for us.

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. ¹⁷This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. ¹⁸There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. ¹We love because he first loved us.

May God bless you today and always,

Rick Stutheit, Redeemer Elders.

YOU ARE INVITED TO A SHOWER FOR MOMS AND BABIES sponsored by Lydia Guild to benefit YouMedical (formerly Tri Cities Pregnancy Center) with guest speaker Kristi Davenport, Monday, August 14 at 10 am in the Fellowship Hall. Shower items needed are:



- Newborn baby clothes – 3/6/9 months
- Muslin swaddling blankets for newborns
- Wipes – any kind
- Baby laundry detergent
- Bath gift sets – soap, lotion, etc.
- Pacifiers
- Teethers
- Diaper rash cream (any brand)

They also have a baby registry on Amazon.
Scan QR code to access Amazon registry.



The presentation by Kristi is open to the congregation. If you are unable to attend but would like to donate, please bring your items to the church by Sunday, August 13. Look for the collection box in the Narthex.



LUTHER SENIOR CENTER will have a fall clothing giveaway in September for their residents. If you have gently used fall/winter clothing that you would like to donate, please bring to the office.



SALADS NEEDED FOR LUTHER SENIOR CENTER LUNCHEON on July 12. Six salads of various kinds are needed. Please contact Ginny Wendland at 509-946-6983 if you are willing to provide a salad of any kind.



Compassion Kitchen is going strong, we have been operating for 1.5 years! We are so blessed by all the wonderful members who volunteer each week. A huge THANK YOU to everyone who has volunteered their time, prayed for Compassion Kitchen, donated to Compassion Kitchen, or offered support. Most of our guests each week are people from the church neighborhood, church members, high school students, and people who saw our sign in the front of the church or saw our posters in the community. Steve Gano has done a wonderful job with our advertising. We invite and encourage you to come join us for lunch on Tuesdays. Even better, invite a friend and bring them to lunch on Tuesday. Everyone is welcome!



Are you looking for a new way to serve? Altar guild is looking for a few women and men to help prepare the altar for Sunday service. This opportunity to serve consists of light dusting, preparing communion and setting it out on the altar and cleaning up communion after the service. Total time commitment is 1.5-2 hours each week and we would like you to serve a minimum of once every 2 months, more often if you would like. Please prayerfully consider serving on the altar guild and helping prepare our church for worship on Sundays. We will train you and work with you until you are comfortable serving on your own. If you are interested in volunteering or need more information to see if this is right for you, please contact Dian Mauth at 509-539-9475 or talk to me after Sunday service.

LCEF 4.5% note available

Lutheran Church Extension Fund's six-month term note earning a 4.5% interest rate is still available. Investments can be made for a limited time for this rate online at lcef.org or by calling LCEF at 1-800-843-5233.

Investing with LCEF supports the mission of the Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod and earns the investor a 4.5% return on the investment for the term. The investment gives benefits to the investor and the church.

LCEF is a nonprofit religious organization, therefore LCEF investments are not FDIC insured bank deposit accounts. This is not an offer to sell investments, not a notification to buy. LCEF will offer and sell its securities only in states where authorized. The offer is made for a limited time solely by LCEF's Offerings Circular. View lcef.org for details.

STEWARDSHIP CORNER

Richard Halverson had this to say about money referenced in the Bible: "Jesus Christ said more about money than about any other single thing, because, when it comes to a man's real nature, money is of first importance. Money is an exact index to a man's true character. All through Scripture there is an intimate correlation between the development of a man's character and how he handles his money." Jesus had a purpose for talking so much about money. He saw in money a very dangerous and threatening obstacle to those who are called to be His followers. He said it was more difficult for a rich man to go to heaven than a camel to go through the eye of a needle (Luke 18:25). By the frequency with which Jesus talks about money we realize that we need to be careful about the effects money can have on our lives. As the Apostle Paul wrote, "*The love of money is a root of all kinds of evils*" (1 Timothy 6:10).

July Birthdays

- 4 Ken Wendland, Taylor Gant
- 5 Dick Jaquish, Ronda Frank
- 6 Ray Boecker
- 7 Marlene Paris-Ufkes
- 8 Kathy Fisher
- 9 John Schug
- 10 Karl Mundt
- 11 Paul Mellick
- 13 Ona Meyer
- 14 Shirley Bigelow, Valarie Milbrath, Bernie Simpkins, Anthony Frank,
Riley Yarbrough, Amelia Rebic
- 15 Angela Landrum, Stephanie Milbrath
- 17 Kylie Landrum
- 19 Jody Schug
- 20 Lonnie Turner
- 25 Roland Niemuth, Denise Rogers
- 26 Ginny Wendland
- 29 Ashleigh Beach
- 30 Kim Dykeman

Anniversaries

- 1 Ed & Beth Ruff
- 3 Thom & Judy Nash
- 7 Brian & Stephanie Milbrath, Howard & Jamie Young
- 10 Will & Angela Landrum
- 12 Vic & Heather Garza
- 15 Robert & Elsa Beppe
- 16 Axel & Mary Gruen
- 18 Rick & Ramona Engelmann
- 25 Riley & Kelsey Yarbrough
- 28 Jon & Natalie Guymon
- 29 Paul & Deb Werner, Bart & Mackenzie Wanot
- 31 Pastor Laurence & Ona Meyer

August Birthdays

- 1 Elaine Kutrowski
- 3 Barbara Swears
- 6 Pearl Raabe
- 7 Marsha Eirich
- 10 Linda Einspahr
- 13 Elmer Petersen, Charlotte Uhrich
- 14 Scotty Van Buren, Heidi Rebic
- 15 Bill Clarkson
- 16 Peggy McDorman, Axel Gruen
- 18 Laurette Beitz
- 19 Angie Pitman
- 20 Val Wegener
- 21 Eileen Stein, James Bond
- 24 Ed Ruff, Greg Romaniuk, Helen Bonham-Petersen
- 25 Susan McCoy, Ronda Wolfe, Weston Uhrich
- 26 Gail Kroll, Ethan Ritzmann
- 27 Howard Young
- 28 Grant Bepple, Ken Dobbin, Natalie Whitten
- 30 Kendra Frank

Anniversaries

- 4 Scotty & Carly VanBuren, Bret & Kara Uhrich
- 5 Rich & Shirley Vance
- 6 Det & Val Wegener
- 7 Paul & Shirley Mellick, Dan & Kim Riordan, Rick & Margaret Gartner
- 9 Joe & Heidi Rebic
- 11 Myrl & Linda Briggs
- 14 Taylor & Jordan Gant
- 21 Don & Bev Darsow
- 27 John & Terry Strege
- 28 Wayne & Sandy Guymon, Elmer & Helen Petersen
- 31 Ken & Carla Thieme

Neither Snow Nor Rain Nor Sabbath: Supreme Court Delivers a Victory to Christian Postal Worker

Update: Justices unanimously side with an evangelical who argued for accommodation of his Sabbatarian beliefs.

[Daniel Silliman](#) June 29, 2023 10:00 AM



Update (June 29, 2023): The Supreme Court ruled unanimously in favor of a Pennsylvania postal worker who lost his job for refusing to take Sunday delivery shifts due to his Christian observance of the Sabbath.

The court's [opinion](#), written by justice Samuel Alito, held that accommodating Gerald Groff's religious practice did not provide an "undue burden" on postal operations, which expanded to Sundays for Amazon delivery.

"An employer who fails to provide an accommodation has a defense only if the hardship is 'undue,'" the court stated on Thursday. "Faced with an accommodation request like Groff's, it would not be enough for an employer to conclude that forcing other employees to work overtime would constitute an undue hardship."

Groff's counsel with the law firm First Liberty [celebrated](#) the ruling as a victory for religious liberty, and Groff said in a statement, "I hope this decision allows others to be able to maintain their convictions without living in fear of losing their jobs because of what they believe."

Maybe if Gerald Groff had only asked for one Sunday off, that would have been okay. Or he could have just asked for part of Sunday, shifting his schedule to deliver the mail after church, and that would have been fine too.

But Groff was a Sabbatarian, refusing to deliver mail any Sunday or any part of a Sunday. According to solicitor general Elizabeth B. Prelogar, that meant it was “unwarranted” and “inappropriate” for him to ask the United States Postal Service to accommodate his ongoing, every-week religious commitment.

“It’s about the nature of the accommodation,” Prelogar told the US Supreme Court during oral arguments in *Groff v. Dejoy* on Tuesday. “You’re just excusing someone from doing part of their job.”

The attorney representing the evangelical postal worker protested that wasn’t the right way to think about religious accommodations. The mail carrier wasn’t shirking. There were just limits on his time, because of his faith.

“It’s not a get-out-of-work free card,” attorney Aaron Streett said. “He offered to work Saturdays and non-Sunday holidays.”

The court will now have to consider when an employer has to accommodate an employee’s religious practice. In the Equal Employment Opportunity Act of 1972, Congress said that employers have to be accommodating—as long as that doesn’t cause “undue hardship” to their businesses. A few years later, in *Trans World Airlines v. Hardison*, the Supreme Court [ruled](#) that a “hardship” meant anything “more than a *de minimis* cost,” using the Latin for “minimum” or “trifling.”

The nine justices and two lawyers debated that 46-year-old ruling for more than an hour, questioning whether that standard was good and whether the court should even make that call.

“For decades, this has been the rule,” justice Elena Kagan said. “Congress has had that opportunity to change it. Congress has not done so.”

Some of the justices indicated that out of respect for precedent, the standard for religious accommodations should be left alone. The attorney representing Groff countered that the court had made a mess of the “undue burden” standard, and now it is the court’s job to clean it up.

The “*de minimis* test makes a mockery of the English language,” Streett argued. “The court can and should construe ‘undue hardship’ according to its plain text to mean significant difficulty or expense.”

The justices did not seem convinced, however, that just clarifying the linguistic formulation of the rule would really solve the problem. One said the court could not provide “a full manual” dealing with every situation. Another pointed out that

“hardship” would look different for different businesses, depending on the company, its size, and the specific request. Even paying employees an extra \$1 an hour to cover for Groff on Sunday shifts could shut the post office down, the justices said.

“What’s clear to me after all this discussion,” Justice Sonia Sotomayor concluded, “is that as much as we might want to provide absolute clarity, there is none we can give, is there? Because it’s all contextual.”

[Mail carrier was committed to keeping his Sabbath](#)

When Groff started working as a fill-in mail carrier in Quarryville, Pennsylvania, in 2012, just south of Lancaster, the context didn’t require Sunday mail delivery at all. The post office didn’t deliver on Sundays. It [hadn’t](#) for 100 years.

Groff nonetheless let his bosses and coworkers know he was a committed Christian who had seriously considered becoming a missionary. On Sundays, he and his family attended the Lancaster campus of a multisite nondenominational church. The rest of the week, he drove his Honda CR-V from mailbox to mailbox, hitting 500 to 800 a day, depending on the route.

“I just really enjoyed the job from the very beginning,” Groff [told](#) the Associated Press. “You get to be out in the countryside, in the fresh air. ... It’s a beautiful place to live and work and I just really enjoyed it and planned to make a career of it unless God called me back to the mission field somewhere.”

Things changed in 2013, when Amazon asked the USPS to deliver its packages on Sundays. The company, which started as an online marketplace for books, had expanded into what one journalist that year named “[The Everything Store](#).” Amazon earned \$274 million in 2013 and was touting the successes of streaming video, an updated e-reader, and the web services that it provided to everyone from Instagram to the CIA.

But the tech giant also kept delivering packages. In fact, it was shipping more than ever to more and more people. CEO Jeff Bezos noted in his 2013 [annual report](#) to shareholders that through the Prime membership program, Amazon promised two-day delivery to millions across the country and tens of millions around the world. Amazon was developing bike messenger corps in India, experimenting with drone deliveries in the US, and asking for a special delivery deal with the USPS. The company got what it asked for.

“It’s a good time to be an Amazon customer,” Bezos [said](#). “You can now ... have packages delivered to your door even on Sundays.”

Change didn't come to middle Pennsylvania immediately. Groff continued delivering mail during the week and taking Sundays to honor the Sabbath, and no one asked him to change until 2016. Then the postal hub in Lancaster started making Sunday deliveries. At first it was voluntary, according to court records. But there weren't enough carriers, and soon everyone was assigned to Sunday shifts on a rotating basis.

Groff could see there was going to be a problem, so he asked to transfer to a more rural post office. He was reassigned to Holtwood, Pennsylvania, an unincorporated township on the Susquehanna River about 50 miles south of Harrisburg.

It didn't matter. Amazon kept expanding—even to Holtwood. In 2017, the mail carriers there were told they too would have to work on Sundays. Groff made a deal with another postal worker to take all his Sunday shifts, so he could practice his faith. But when the coworker got hurt in mid-December that year, no one else wanted to cover for Groff every single weekend.

According to court documents, Groff formally requested a religious accommodation to allow him not to work on the day he considered the Sabbath.

The head of the post office offered to let Groff start later, so he could go to church in the morning, but Groff said that wouldn't work. He had to rest the entire day on Sunday. The post office head, according to the subsequent lawsuit, also said Groff could take another day as his Sabbath if he wanted. Groff said it had to be Sunday. He wouldn't work on Sunday.

He was scheduled to deliver mail that day anyway. He chose not to show up and filed another request for religious accommodation.

The "requests were never formally granted or denied," Groff's lawyer noted in the subsequent lawsuit, "but in practice, they were denied."

This caused some turmoil in the post office. One mail carrier quit. Another filed a grievance through his union, complaining of unfair treatment.

A reporter asked Groff outside the Supreme Court on Tuesday what he would say to the coworkers who felt burdened, having to cover for him. They probably wanted to go to church too, or maybe their kids' Little League games. How would he respond to them?

"What I would say is, I honestly don't know," Groff said.

In January 2018, Groff was suspended for seven days. He was told it was discipline for his misconduct. He still refused to show up on Sundays and was suspended for two full weeks. After that, he resigned and filed suit.

“We really can’t go back and change what happened to me,” Groff told the AP. But people “shouldn’t have to choose between their job and their faith” and a court ruling could help others in that kind of situation.

Religious minorities hit hardest

There are others in the US who struggle to win religious accommodations. And they are not, for the most part, white evangelicals.

“Such discrimination disproportionately affects minority communities,” lawyers representing Sikhs and Muslims [wrote](#) in a friend-of-the-court brief filed with the Supreme Court on behalf of Groff’s case. “The issues at stake in this case relate directly to the right of practitioners of minority faiths in America to avail themselves of employment opportunities on equal terms.”

In one federal case, a company said it couldn’t hire a Sikh man because it might make customers uncomfortable. That was considered sufficient, under the current standard.

A Muslim employee wasn’t allowed to take a meal break at sunset during Ramadan, to break his fast, because the accommodation could cause other employees to resent him. The company didn’t offer any evidence for this assertion, but just argued that the religious accommodation could, hypothetically, impact morale. That was also considered acceptable by federal courts.

In the 1990s, Sears refused to hire Seventh-day Adventist technicians, saying that Saturday was the busiest day for appliance repairs. Religious liberty lawyers [pointed out](#) that Sears records showed the busiest day was actually Tuesday. According to the federal court, the factual inaccuracy about the expected hardship of hiring Seventh-day Adventists did not undercut the company’s claim there would be some hardship. The court ruled Sears didn’t have to hire Sabbatarians.

[According](#) to a Jewish legal group, “The reported litigated cases are a small tip of a huge iceberg.”

The solicitor general argued to the Supreme Court on Tuesday that the few cases cited by religious minorities didn’t give the full picture. Lower courts don’t always side with employers against religious employees, she said, and while each case is

specific and the case law is complicated, authorities have done a good job over the last 46 years “drawing the right lines.”

“It’s just incorrect to say that there’s not a substantial amount of protection” for religious workers, Prelogar said.

Some legal groups filing friend-of-the-court briefs in the case went even further, arguing that any change to the religious accommodation rules would be unfair to businesses. American Atheists urged the justices to respect the rights of the “employer to organize an effective and efficient shift schedule to meet its staffing needs.”

The group also [claimed](#) that any accommodation for religious observances undermined the First Amendment guarantee that Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion.

The Freedom from Religion Foundation warned that if the post office accommodates a mail carrier who doesn’t want to work on Sunday, then other businesses will have to accommodate all sorts of unreasonable demands.

“This includes religious claims related to employees denigrating LGBTQ+ persons, ingesting controlled substances, proselytizing in the workplace, sharing opinions on abortion, [not] transporting alcohol, and [not] working with someone of the opposite sex,” the group [wrote](#). “The list is endless and will continue to evolve over time.”

The court is not, however, considering requiring accommodation for every religious practice in every workplace. The justices have to decide on the rule for determining when accommodations should be required. Is any hardship more than a minimum or a trifle too much?

Justice Neil Gorsuch, who has been the deciding vote in a number of close cases the past few years, suggested the simplest thing to do might be to reject the “*de minimis*” language the court used in 1977, and return to the language of “undue hardship.”

“Some courts have taken this *de minimis* language and run with it ... and that’s wrong. And we all agree that’s wrong,” Gorsuch said. “Maybe we could do a good day’s work and put a period at the end of it by saying that that is not the law.”

The Supreme Court is expected to rule before the justices recess for the summer.

PRAYERS – Please let the office know of any changes to the prayer page by calling 943-4967 or emailing office@richlandredeemer.org. *Indicates friends/family.

HOMEBOUND:

Pearl Raabe
Ruth Shook
Reta Siefken
Bernie Simpkins
Eileen Stein
Eileen Stixruud

CANCER:

Deanna Snider
Barbara Connell*
Rev. James & Ann Gier*
Kevin Raabe*
Cappy & Sandi Sheeley*

HEALTH CONCERNS:

Bob & Cheryl Evenson
Sally Grego
Elaine Kutrowski
Pearl Raabe
Ruth Shook
Reta Siefken
Bernie Simpkins
Eileen Stein
Eileen Stixruud
Bobbie Van Buren
Bev Wetzler
Gregg Lee*
Jody Schug*
Phillip Turner*

MILITARY:

Sam Willhoite
Darion Woodall
Brandin Bunch*
Jacob Cagle*
Brandon Gano*
Byron Gano*
Matthew Gano*
James Hare*
Sean Williams*

