



Our Saviour's Good News

Volume XII, Issue VII

July 2017

MISSION STATEMENT

Our Saviour Lutheran Church welcomes all people to a safe place to grow in faith and serve the Lord Jesus Christ

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Why do I preach?

How would you answer the question, "Why are you a [insert your occupation or job title]?" Would you answer with, "Oh, I have always had a burning desire to file" or "I really have always enjoyed long meetings" or "I love working 13 hours a day" or "I look forward to answering phone calls and talking to rude people"?

No, of course not! No one actually looks forward to the menial aspects to their jobs and many of us really enjoy our jobs but we often have a difficult time answering why we do what we do for a living.

I was asked this week why I am a pastor. Immediately, many answers popped into my mind including the "Sunday School" answer: Jesus. The answer I gave was that I preach because I care. I care about what people believe, what people think, what is going to happen after this life here on earth ends and I care that Jesus loves us so much that He died for us.

But caring is only a small sliver of being a pastor. Yes, there is the aspect of being held to a higher standard (1 Timothy 3) and I often fall short of that expectation but the real reason I am a pastor is that I live in such a godless time and the need for the Gospel is now. In Paul's second letter to Timothy, he wrote, "For the time is coming when people will not endure sound teaching, but having itching ears they will accumulate for themselves teachers to suit their own passions, and will turn away from listening to the truth and wander off into myths." (2 Tim 4:3-4) The time is now.

We live in an increasingly polarized society. It seems we are forced to be in either one camp or the other, to chose this or that, to be on this side or the other. We see it in politics, in the news, at demonstrations, in school, at work; it is difficult to not see this! But God does not choose sides, He is God! He chooses us! I honestly think this is the good news

that needs to be told and quite honestly no one is better than telling this than you and I. While being a pastor does require discernment, education and prayer, the reality is we are all equipped to share the Gospel. So I think the correct answer to "Why are you a pastor?" is "For the same reasons you are!"

Pastor Pete



Celebrate the 4th by going down to the Court House Square on Sunday, July 2, to list to the Patriotic Piano Concert by Ted Huggins and Sandy Grant at 7:00 pm.

On Tuesday, July 4, enjoy the fireworks at Cloninger Park starting at 6:00 pm.

The Summer Concert Series continues on Saturday, July 8, with a car show followed by The Whiskey Gentry at 6:00 pm at the Court Square.



MONTHLY DEVOTIONAL PAMPHLET

In your newsletter you will receive "Portals Prayer" Devotional pamphlet for the months of July-September. This will be the last "Portals Prayer" you will receive.

Beginning the month of September you will receive "The Upper Room". "The Upper Room" comes out every two months instead of quarterly.

Jesus Is Coming, Walk This Way.

It is widely reported that the 16th-century Protestant reformer Martin Luther once said: "If I knew for sure that Jesus was coming back tomorrow, I'd plant a tree today." Luther wasn't trying to be cute, nor did he think that his words were contradictory. He was simply pointing out that no amount of speculation or confidence or doubt or belief about when Jesus might return should ever undermine the fulfillment of our basic ethical obligations or lead us to abandon the routine responsibilities set forth for us in Scripture.

Sadly, many Christians through the centuries have taken an altogether different and unbiblical approach to this problem. Convinced that Christ was to return very, very soon, they abandoned their daily tasks and embraced a form of hyper-spirituality that served only to bring reproach on the name of Christ and disaster to their own lives. How often have we heard and seen something like this?

The end of all things is at hand. Therefore, let's shave our heads, adorn ourselves in white robes, sell our possessions, and run to the hills!

We are certain that Jesus is coming back before we die. Therefore, let's set a specific date for Jesus' return, then write it up in a best-selling book!

The end of all things is at hand. Therefore, let's abandon the local church and forget about higher education, paying our taxes, getting married, having children and mowing the grass!

Well, not exactly. The Apostle Peter's advice is of a different spirit. "Yes," said Peter. "The end of all things is at hand; therefore be self-controlled and sober-minded for the sake of your prayers. Above all, keep loving one another earnestly" (1 Peter 4:7-8). You should also be hospitable to one another without grumbling about it, and use your spiritual gifts to serve and minister to one another, always seeking the fame of God's name, not your own (1 Peter 4:8-11).

Let's consider how we should react to the reality of Christ's impending return. What kind of person does God want you to be in view of the end of all things (2 Peter 3:11)? Peter provides answers to this question in both of his letters. One might think that the reality of the end would lead Peter to call for extraordinary deeds of great power, works that would capture the attention of the world and gain for us fame and glory. No, in 1 Peter, he emphasizes the simple, basic tasks of everyday life that must be pursued: Praying for one another, loving one another, hosting one another, and serving one another.

The apostle clearly says that our first responsibility, in view of the impending end of all things, is to *pray for one another as mature and level-headed intercessors* (verse 7). Thinking about the end of all things has led some to panic and lose their composure, to forsake common sense, to ignore the Scriptures and to act irrationally. But one can be a faithful and fervent intercessor without losing perspective or composure. Use the nearness of the end as an incentive and opportunity for prayer, but don't lose your head in the process. What we desperately need in today's out-of-control world are self-controlled, level-headed, mature, sober-minded prayer warri-

ors.

Our second responsibility, in view of the impending end of all things, is to *keep loving one another*. Peter here calls for earnest and passionate affection for other Christians in the Body of Christ (1 Peter 4:8). Peter's use of the present tense requires that we translate this exhortation as "keep loving" (ESV), "maintain" love for one another (NRSV), or "hold" love (RSV). Love already existed, was already active and real, and Peter calls for them to retain and sustain their fervency.

As you think about your final days on this earth, as you reflect on the glory and majesty of the return of Christ in the heavens, as you envision the skies above set ablaze by the myriad angels who will accompany Jesus at His return, as you contemplate the destruction of His enemies and the impending inauguration of the eternal state ... love one another.

Our third responsibility, in view of the impending end of all things, is to *graciously and generously host one another*. Peter makes an appeal for *happy* hospitality (1 Peter 4:9). It's really quite shocking to discover how important hospitality is in the New Testament and how essential it is to defining those who are truly followers of Jesus. Hospitality is one of the defining marks of the Christian church (see Romans 12:13; 1 Timothy 3:2; Titus 1:8; and Hebrews 13:2).

This sort of hospitality was especially important in the first century when public lodging could not be afforded or was not available. We often forget that in the first century there was not a Motel 6 or Hampton Inn on every corner. The Christian mission depended on believers providing lodging and food and finances for those traveling with the Gospel (Matthew 10:11, 40; Acts 16:15; 3 John 7-11). I call it "happy" hospitality because of Peter's qualifying phrase, *without grumbling* (verse 9). Hospitality is hard. People can take advantage of you by staying too long ("are they ever going to leave?") and may exploit your generosity. It is easy to begrudge your charity to others.

Our fourth and final responsibility, in view of the impending end of all things, is to *use our spiritual gifts to serve one another*. Peter here calls for grace-empowered, Christ-centered service (verses 10-11) that is pursued for the glory of God through Jesus Christ (verse 11).

In Peter's second letter, he emphasizes the idea that we are to wait for the day of the Lord's coming in holiness, living lives that are "without spot and blameless" (2 Peter 3:14). Sadly, many think of "holiness" almost exclusively in terms of what we *don't* do. Of course, in one sense that is certainly a part of what it means to live a holy life. One cannot indulge in sexual immorality (1 Thessalonians 4:3) or drunkenness (Ephesians 5:18) or lewd speech (Ephesians 5:4) and remain consistent with the Biblical call for a life that is "without spot and blameless."

But holiness begins with the awareness that we have been set apart and consecrated unto God as His unique and treasured possession. From this sense of personal identity emerges a life that is characterized by daily repentance and confident trust in Jesus as our source and supply for every need.

(Jesus is Coming cont'd on page 3)

(Jesus is Coming cont'd from page 2)

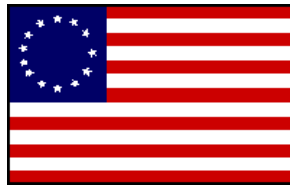
And we certainly can't conceive of holiness apart from the understanding that we are to be "transformed into the same image from one degree of glory to another" (2 Corinthians 3:18). In other words, to be holy, as Peter, Paul and the other New Testament authors envision, is to be increasingly like Jesus: loving what He loves, turning from what He hates, speaking as He would speak, loving and forgiving and bearing with one another as He has with each of us. If people don't see and hear Jesus in us, we have fallen short of what the New Testament means by the word *holiness*.

So, if I may again use the words of Peter from his second epistle, chapter three: *what sort of person* are you going to be as you patiently await the end of all things? The answer provided by the Word of God is unmistakably clear and must be heard by us all. ©2017 Sam Storms

Sam Storms is the lead pastor for preaching and vision at Bridgeway Church in Oklahoma City. He is an author and is president of the Evangelical Theological Society.



Betsy Ross and the American Flag



Betsy would often tell her children, grandchildren, relatives, and friends of a fateful day, late in May of 1776, when three members of a secret committee from the Continental Congress came to call upon her. Those representatives, George Washington, Robert Morris, and George Ross, asked her to sew the first flag. George Washington was then the head of the Continental Army. Robert Morris, an owner of vast amounts of land, was perhaps the wealthiest citizen in the Colonies. Colonel George Ross was a respected Philadelphian and also the uncle of her late husband, John Ross.

Naturally, Betsy Ross already knew George Ross as she had married his nephew. Betsy was also acquainted with the great General Washington. Not only did they both worship at Christ Church in Philadelphia, but Betsy's pew was next to George and Martha Washington's pew. Her daughter recalled, "That she was previously well acquainted with Washington, and that he had often been in her house in friendly visits, as well as on business. That she had embroidered ruffles for his shirt bosoms and cuffs, and that it was partly owing to his friendship for her that she was chosen to make the flag." (

In June 1776, brave Betsy was a widow struggling to run her own upholstery business. Upholsterers in colonial America not only worked on furniture but did all manner of sewing work, which for some included making flags. According to Betsy, General Washington showed her a rough design of the flag that included a six-pointed star. Betsy, a standout with the scissors, demonstrated how to cut a five-pointed star in a single snip.

What do the red, white, and blue of the flag represent?

The Continental Congress left no record to show why it chose the colors. However, in 1782, the Congress of the Confederation chose these same colors for the Great Seal of the United States and listed their meaning as follows:

- Red: Valor and hardiness,
- White: Purity and innocence
- Blue: Vigilance, perseverance, and justice.

According to legend, George Washington interpreted the elements of the flag this way: the stars were taken from the sky, the red from the British colors, and the white stripes signified the secession from the home country. However, there is no official designation or meaning for the colors of the flag.

Why are the stars in a circle?

The stars were in a circle so that no one colony would be viewed above another. It is reported that George Washington said, "Let the 13 stars in a circle stand as a new constellation in the heavens."



Our Saviour Lutheran Church William Trudnak, President May 17, 2017 Council Minutes

Devotions: Pastor Pete Feige

Meeting called to order by President Bill Trudnak.

Members present: Bill Trudnak, Melinda White, Bud Penley, Alice Vlaservich, Robbie Wooten, Becky Messick, Shirlee Marazza, Steve Digh and Pastor Pete Feige.
Absent: Teri Trudnak.

Minutes for April 17, 2017 were reviewed. Motion made by Shirlee Marazza to approve the minutes and a second was given by Bud Penley.

Reception of Petitions and Communications:

None

Report of the Pastor: N/A; Pastor Pete attended Council Meeting.

Report of the Treasurer: Motion by Steve Digh to accept the Treasurer Report and seconded by Melinda White.

Report of the Ministries:

- Property:** Light bulbs need replaced in Activity Building; church grounds to be sprayed with roundup for weed control and also ant killer to be put out on grounds.
- Stewardship and Finance:** No report.
- Worship & Music:** No report.
- Youth Team:** No report.
- Witness:** Cards and prayers continue to be sent out; Opportunities for witness ministry were discussed, i.e., Gaston College, the flea market and the prison ministry. Still open for further discussion.
- Christian Education Team:** VBS is scheduled for 6/18-6/22/17 at Philadelphia Lutheran beginning at 5:30pm with light supper and class will run from 6:15-8:15 pm. OSLC will be serving the meal that week on Tuesday 6/20/17. Seeking volunteers/helpers for VBS. A monthly covered dish is scheduled for the 3rd Sunday of each month as a time for fellowship; Confirmation class to begin in the fall.

Report of Auxiliaries:

Rachel Circle: Met at the home of Marie Robinson for bible study and refreshments. The next meeting will be at the home of Shirlee Marazza.

Old and/or Unfinished Business:

- Report on Upper Room devotional book: The daily devotional book will now be The Upper Room. A motion was made by Becky Messick to trial the new subscription and Alice Vlaservich seconded that motion.
- A draft for the Pastor's agreement was developed and reviewed by Council and Pastor Feige. A final agreement to be presented at the next Council meeting.
- The "Support Committee" for Pastor Feige will be members of church Council.
- Pastor Feige addressed the Council regarding the frequency of communion. His preference is to commune weekly by intinction and commune at the altar on festival Sunday's. Discussion was had and a motion was

made by Steve Digh to trial this communion schedule and Becky Messick gave the second on that motion.

New Business:

Witness committee will honor our graduates in June.

General Information:

- Attendance
- Kids Alive Report.

Adjourned with Lord's Prayer

Next Meeting: June 19, 2017

Devotions: Shirlee Marazza

Prayer of

Saint Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace;

*where there is hatred, let me sow love;
where there is injury, pardon;
where there is doubt, faith;
where there is despair, hope;
where there is darkness, light;
and where there is sadness, joy*

O Divine Master,

*grant that I may not so much seek to be
consoled as to console;
to be understood, as to understand;
to be loved, as to love;
for it is in giving that we receive,
it is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
and it is in dying that we are born
to Eternal Life.*

Amen

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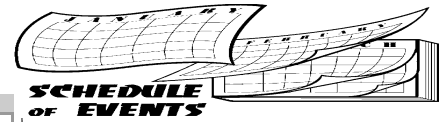
GOOD THING I FOUND YOU GIDEON ... IT SEEMS SOMEONE HAS BEEN HIDING ALL YOUR BIBLES IN HOTEL ROOMS

02-18-2005

July 2017



Sunday School: 9:45 pm
Church Service: 11:00 pm



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 DON'T TAKE A VACATION FROM CHURCH						1
2 4th Sun. after Pent.	3	4	5	6	7	8 Summer Concert
9 5th Sun. after Pent.	10 Team Mtgs.	11	12	13	14	15
16 6th Sun. after Pent.	17 Board Mtg.	18	19	20	21	22
23 7th Sun after Pent	24	25	26	27	28	29
30 8th Sun after Pent	31					

- **July 2**— 4th Sunday after Pentecost
Patriotic Piano Concert by Ted Huggins and Sandy Grant. 7 pm
- **July 4**— INDEPENDENCE DAY
4th Celebration at Cloninger Park 6 pm
- **July 8**—Summer Concert on the Square p 12
- **July 9**— 5th Sunday after Pentecost
- **July 10**— Team Meeting: 6:30 pm Youth
7:00 pm Other
- **July 11**—Prayer Group at Shirlee Marazza at 1 pm
Wake Up Church (see p 8)
Gaston Together (see p 8)
- **July 15**— Church workday. (see p 8)
- **July 16**— 6th Sunday after Pentecost
COVERED DISH LUNCHEON
- **July 17**—Board Meeting 7:00 pm
- **July 23**—7th Sunday after Pentecost
- **July 30**—8th Sunday after Pentecost
Hunger Sunday.



Birthdays

16	Stephen Digh	Anna Digh
18	Joe Finger	Chas Messick
19	Henry Clemmer	Bo Messick
21	Nation Finger	Chris Messick
21	Jason Spurrier	Yvonne Finger
31	Libby Bickley	Garrett Lowery



BAPTISMAL ANNIVERSARY

Holy Communion Schedule:

July 2 4th Sunday of Pentecost



Worship Service Assistance:

<u>Altar Guild:</u>	July Digh Denise Traveria
<u>Acolyte:</u>	Nick Vlaservich
<u>Crucifer:</u>	Nick Vlaservich
<u>Communion Asst:</u>	Becky Messick
<u>Lay Reader:</u>	Becky Messick/Pastor
<u>Worship Asst:</u>	Betty Clemmer/ Alice Vlaservich
<u>Greeters:</u>	OSLC Members
<u>Ushers:</u>	OSLC Members

Board Devotions July 17: Melinda White



Grow in Christ



Nursery Guardians Schedule

July 2	Anna Cole
July 9	Emma Dease
July 16	Teri Trudnak
July 23	Julie Digh
July 30	Melinda White



FOOD FOR THE MONTH:

Crackers, Instant Potatoes, Soup



NO Choir practice in July

FLOWERS

Flower Schedule:

July 2	Nick Vlaservich
July 9	Open
July 16	Wayne Ann Penley
July 23	Denise Traveria
July 30	Joann Scarbrough

Please sign up to place flowers on the altar in the glory of God and in honor or memory of your love ones.



725 Gastonia Technology Parkway
 Post Office Box 475
 Dallas, North Carolina 28034
 Phone: 705-922-4648
 Email: oslcdallas@aol.com
 Website: oslc-nc.org

OUTREACH MISSION

SHUT-INS
NURSING HOME RESIDENTS

Please remember our church members who are shut-ins or reside in a nursing home* and visit them.

Marilyn Finger*
 1150 Meadow Way Dr., Dallas

Ralph Summey*
 1612 Dallas-Cherryville Hwy., Dallas

Jerri Presley*
 2604 Ole Home Trail, Dallas



EVENTS
for
Agrape/Kure Beach

Contact Camp Agapé:
 Telephone: 919-552-9421
 e-mail: agape@agapekurebeach.org

Contact Kure Beach Lutheran:
 Telephone 910-458-0783
 e-mail: kurebeach@agapekurebeach.org

Web site: www.agapekurebeach.org

Directions to Camp Agapé are on the web site.

Please see calendars and other information on the bulletin board or go on-line

Events For
Lutheridge -
Lutherock-
Lutherspring-
Lutheranch

Web site: www.NovusWay.com



Food Collection

Help fill the pantry
 at the
 Dallas-High Shoals Christian Ministry.

Food items they need for the month are crackers, instant potatoes and soup. Let us over fill the basket in the hallway. This is a great outreach program.

God will bless you for your generosity



July 30 will be the 5th Sunday of the month
 and

You are asked to help the
 Dallas-High Shoals Christian Ministry
 with a financial donation to help those
 that are not blessed as we are.



GO OUT ON A LIMB
GET INVOLVED

BE A WORSHIP ASSISTANT
 Positions are still open.

Participate in the service of the Lord and sign
 Sign up sheets
 for the 2017 calendar year are on the
 wall in the Education wing.
 THANK YOU!

YOUR HELP IS NEED.
WE DO NOT HAVE ANY
WORSHIP ASSISTANCE
FOR
AUGUST, SEPTEMBER, OCTOBER
NOVEMBER AND DECEMBER.



A Stewardship Minute

There is a moving prayer in the July issue of *Stewardship*. I think you might find it inspiring also:

“O God, our loving Creator and giver of all our good gifts, bless our church, strengthen our faith and grant us the spirit of Christian stewardship so that we may give of our time, talent, and money to the spread of your kingdom here in our church and throughout the world.

This we ask this through Jesus Christ, your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit now and forever. Amen.”

Now I call that a moving prayer. It moves me to want to be serious about stewardship. It compels me to take inventory of my life. Do I take care of my God-given body? Do I exercise daily? Do I make sure it is groomed rightly? Do I eat wisely? And do I educate my brain so that I use it to do God's will? I could go on and on examining what kind of steward I am of my God-given body. And to be honest some improvements could probably be made!

The prayer I read asked the Lord to: “Grant us the spirit of Christian stewardship so that we may give of our time, talent, and money to spread your kingdom in our church and throughout the world.” It seems to me that moving prayer is asking God to use our body, mind, and soul to

spread God's kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

Now that is a tall order. But is it not what we pray for every Sunday? Remember these words: “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.”

Prayer: Holy and loving God, please help all of us to be serious followers of Jesus Christ our Lord. May we see evidence of your Kingdom, however small it may be, “on earth as it is in Heaven.” **Amen**



GOD BLESS AMERICA!

We must continue to pray for our nation, that we will continue to be united as a people. We must pray this country will uphold God in everything they do. We must pray for our national, state, and local leaders.

After September 11, 2015, all across our great nation, American rallied behind the effort to make it know to outsiders that our nations is still untied. We are patriotic nation, and we have a great love and devotion to our country. American was founded on Godly principles, and we will continue to uphold the Godly principles.



Let us bow our hearts in prayer now.

Dear God, not to us, O Lord, but to You goes all the glory. We depend on you. You gave birth and breath and determine our days. You make every nation and set every boundary. We exist by your power.

We exist for your glory. Showcase you power through this land. Display your justice in our courts, wisdom in our governments, guidance in our schools, and love in our homes.

Have mercy upon our sins. We have disrespected your word, disregarded your gifts, and discarded your children. We are sorry. Forgive us, dear Father.

We pray for those countries whose people are being persecuted for their faith. Please keep missionaries safe as they serve you.

Great strength to all our leaders, may they serve you first and honor you most. Remind us of the brevity of this life and the beauty of the next. Prepare our souls for the day we meet You in eternity.



Church News



WAKE-UP CHURCH
WILL MEET IN THE ACTIVITY BUILDING
6:30 PM
JULY 11th

GASTON TOGETHER'S CLERGY & CITIZENS COALITION
July 11, 2015
8:30 to Noon
Clinton Room, Gaston Memorial Hospital
Breakfast before meeting, if you wish

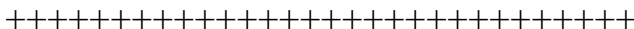


COVERED DISH LUNCHEON after Church service on July 16th.
So bring your favorite dish and a friend.



July 15th, 8-12 am.

Trimming, weeding, gutter-cleaning, work on the inside of Activity Building (painting) etc. So bring your tools and brushes. Clean sign at



If you need a Pastor,
please contact Pastor Pete Feige at 704-516-2805
or our office at 704-922-4648.

CLW/RACHEL GROUP

*The CLW/Rachel Group will not meet again
until August. Have a safe summer!*



LET US PRAY... *"Are any among you suffering? They should pray...The prayer of faith will save the sick, and the Lord will raise them up."* (James 5:13-15)



MARGARET Addington (friends of the community), SUSAN Aderholt, SETH Alexander, AMANDA (friend of the Penley's), MARVIS Anderson, KELLY Ballard (friend of Shana Dease), ADDISON Blanton (friend of Dease's), KATHY Bohanan (cancer), KAREN Braddy, ANN Digh (Steve Digh's mother-colon cancer HUNTER Digh (Steve and Julie Digh's nephew -cancer), MARILYN Finger, LEVI Friday (Joan Scarborough's nephew) CHARLIE Fox (friend of the Ratchford's), ROBERT Gentile (friend of Shirlee Marazza-heart attack), ANNA Harbour (CDIFF-Shirlee Marazza's granddaughter), JEAN Huffstetler, LESLIE Hunsucker, JOHNNY Lineberger (friend of the community), MARY Johnson (Pastor Feige's mother-in-law), ELAINE Kanupp (friend of the Digh's—colon cancer), BOB Lewis (friend of Shana Dease), HALEY Mauney (brain blockage- daughter of Julie Digh;s co-worker), ROBERT L. McCanless, Jr. (failing health - Charles McCanless' father), GARY Neal, (friend of Caleb Dease), NANCY Parker (friend of Marie Lingle-ALS), EDITH Paysour, LAWRENCE Paysour (friend of Ratchford's), RIVER Peedin (Ursela Peedin's great-grandson- leukemia), SONDRA Phillips (friend of Melinda White) JERRIE Presley, BERNICE—Leon Rawlinson's mother, LEIGH Sellers (college friend's daughter of Libby Bickley), RALPH Summey, KIM Tucker (friend of Joann Scarborough-heart surgery) GARY Turner (father of Jason Murray), SHERREE B Turner (mother of Jason Turner),



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

Get involved—workers are needed to make repairs or improvements at Lutheridge.

Work day will be 1n August 25 followed by Church on 26th

From Franklin Graham: First Step for Religious Freedom

“I believe that the Lord has given us a brief window of opportunity in this nation to turn our hearts back to Him.”

I recently had the privilege of attending remarkable events in our nation’s capital that dealt with the most pressing issue facing our nation and our world—our religious freedom.

On May 4, I was in Washington, D.C., for the annual National Day of Prayer, where my sister Anne Graham Lotz was one of the featured speakers. It was a wonderful time to spend with fellow Christians from across the country interceding for our troubled nation and seeking God’s direction and wisdom for our leadership.

Not only did we join with tens of thousands of Christians from coast to coast in asking God to heal our land and restore our hearts, but we were able to visit with President Donald Trump and Vice President Mike Pence and witness the Rose Garden ceremony with the president’s signing of an executive order to help protect our religious liberties.

We will not allow people of faith to be targeted, bullied or silenced anymore,” the president declared.

The executive order counters the chilling effect on the speech of churches and charities. The president wants to protect the freedom of pastors and church leaders to address political issues and candidates. The order is also designed to help protect religious organizations from being forced to include abortion-inducing drugs in their health plans. “We are giving our churches their voice back,” the president said.

The past decade has seen a precipitous moral decline on a scale that I did not believe possible.

Our religious freedoms have been under relentless assault by the liberal-progressive agenda. The past administration not only refused to support such freedoms but actively worked to restrict and suppress them.

Who would have ever thought that the former president of the United States would staunchly support same-sex marriage and Planned Parenthood, even going so far as to light up the White House in the rainbow colors of the gay/lesbian coalition? Who would have ever dreamed, just a few years ago, that Christian businesses would be prosecuted simply because they followed their Biblically informed consciences on the sanctity of marriage?

By signing the religious liberty executive order, President Trump has made a solid first step to reverse the hostile and dangerous environment fostered by his predecessor.

However, there is still more to do to protect Christian businesses from being targeted by the gay and lesbian lobby and their liberal-progressive allies. Same-sex marriage advocates have gained much ground over the past decade, and those who hold Biblical convictions on the sanctity of marriage must be protected from undue harassment and prosecution.

With this executive order, along with the appointment of conservative justice Neil Gorsuch to the U.S. Supreme Court, the president has fulfilled two of his prominent campaign pledges that I hope and pray will serve to restore and defend our religious liberties.

Just one week after the National Day of Prayer, the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association held a historic gathering in Washington, D.C., to highlight the plight of persecuted Christians worldwide.

While believers in this country experience growing discrimination and intimidation from our culture and our authorities, it certainly hasn’t been on the scale of persecution abroad. Worldwide, it is estimated that 90,000 men and women who confess the Name of Jesus Christ were persecuted in the past year simply because of their Christian faith. There is no other group of people in the world today who live under such physical, social and emotional distress and are mistreated so brutally.

More than 600 believers from 130 nations attended our World Summit in Defense of Persecuted Christians. Many of them had been forced to hastily flee their native countries because they were followers of the Lord Jesus Christ. A number have been beaten, bloodied and imprisoned for their faith. Many more have experienced severe economic and social oppression from hostile governments and neighbors.

They have harmed no one. They have mistreated no one. They have broken no laws except those imposed by totalitarian governments or by Islamic Sharia law, where Christians are branded as “infidels” and face dismemberment and death if they refuse to bow to Allah.

When I walked through the charred remains of a church near Mosul not long ago, I saw the ugly reminder of the hate that Islamic radicals have toward Christians. Written on the wall in graffiti meant to desecrate the already shattered ruins was, “You love life, we love death. We have come to drink your blood.”

(Freedom cont’d on page 10)

(Freedom cont'd from page 9)

This was in a village that had been predominantly Christian for millennia and now was empty of any Christian presence. It's a story that has been repeated in hundreds of communities across the Middle East, some of which have seen more than two-thirds of Christians flee in the past decade due to persecution.

We were honored that Vice President Pence came and addressed this extraordinary summit meeting of God's choice servants. The vice president is a committed Christian who prays for those who suffer for the sake of the Gospel, and I know he will be a staunch advocate for persecuted believers around the world.

I believe that the Lord has given us a brief window of opportunity in this nation to turn our hearts back to Him. Throughout our history, we have seen seasons of great revival in the church that have tremendously influenced our communities, schools and government. If we repent of our sins and call on His Name, that can happen once again.

The Bible tells us that "all who desire to live a godly life in Christ Jesus will be persecuted" (2 Timothy 3:12).

For those who live under the dark shadow of repressive regimes and militant religions that despise the Name of Jesus, their reward in Heaven is great. They endure relentless suffering, even to the point of death, but they boldly confess Jesus as Lord. They are not only heroes of the faith, but my heroes as well.

We have not reached that point—not yet—in this great country, but we must remain vigilant and prayerful, not being conformed to this world, but being transformed by the power of God (Romans 12:2).

"Be watchful, stand firm in the faith, act like men, be strong" (1 Corinthians 16:13). ©2017 BGEA

Scripture quotations are taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. Article from Decision Magazine



The below appeared in the Beetle Bailey's comic strip in June 13, 2010, for Flag Day. I do not know if you saw it but I think it is worthy while showing what it was. Our National Anthem is about **OUR FLAG** and the comic strip is about **OUR FLAG**.

Beetle Bailey, along with another soldier, were watching Plato write something on a wall. Beetle exclaims, "*You'll get in trouble writing graffiti on that wall, Plato!*" The other soldier saw the General coming and said, "*Oh-oh! Here comes the General!*" The General comes up to the wall and reads what was on the wall. He then orders, "*Tear that wall down!*" Then it shows the General carrying the **OUR FLAG** and the other soldiers carrying the **WALL**.

The below is what Plato wrote on the wall.....

THIS FLAG

This Flag... The symbol of the hopes of man.
 This cloth of dreams for Freedom, Justice, and Opportunity.
 Its Stars are like beacons guiding us through
 the shoals of adversity.
 Its Red Stripes like wounds of struggle.
 The Good in it cannot be had for nothing....
 Like any garden, it must be tended....
 Like any loved one, it must be held.
 Hold **THIS FLAG** high and keep its promise bright,
 For in it lies the best hope for all of us.

The Story of Independence Day and America's Birthday

Independence Day is the national holiday of the United States of America commemorating the signing of the Declaration of Independence by the Continental Congress on July 4, 1776, in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.

At the time of the signing the US consisted of 13 colonies under the rule of England's King George III. There was growing unrest in the colonies concerning the taxes that had to be paid to England. This was commonly referred to as "Taxation without Representation" as the colonists did not have any representation in the English Parliament and had no say in what went on. As the unrest grew in the colonies, King George sent extra troops to help control any rebellion. In 1774 the 13 colonies sent delegates to Philadelphia Pennsylvania to form the First Continental Congress. The delegates were unhappy with England, but were not yet ready to declare war.

In April 1775 as the King's troops advanced on Concord Massachusetts Paul Revere would sound the alarm that "The British are coming, the British are coming" as he rode his horse through the late night streets.

The battle of Concord and its "shot heard around the world" would mark the unofficial beginning of the colonies war for Independence.

The following May the colonies again sent delegates to the Second Continental Congress. For almost a year the congress tried to work out its differences with England, again without formally declaring war.

By June 1776 their efforts had become hopeless and a committee was formed to compose a formal declaration of independence. Headed by Thomas Jefferson, the committee included John Adams, Benjamin Franklin, Robert R. Livingston and Roger Sherman. Thomas Jefferson was chosen to write the first draft which was presented to the congress on June 28. After various changes a vote was taken late in the afternoon of July 4th. Of the 13 colonies, 9 voted in favor of the Declaration, 2 - Pennsylvania and South Carolina voted No, Delaware undecided and New York abstained.

To make it official John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress, signed the Declaration of Independence. It is said that John Hancock signed his name "with a great flourish" so "King George can read that without spectacles!"

The following day copies of the Declaration were distributed. The first newspaper to print the Declaration was the Pennsylvania Evening Post on July 6, 1776. On July 8th the Declaration had its first public reading in Philadelphia's Independence Square. Twice that day the Declaration was read to cheering crowds and pealing church bells. Even the bell in Independence Hall was rung. The "Province Bell" would later be renamed "Liberty Bell" after its inscription –

Proclaim Liberty Throughout All the Land Unto All the Inhabitants Thereof

And although the signing of the Declaration was not completed until August, the 4th of July has been accepted as the official anniversary of United States independence. The first Independence Day celebration took place the following year - July 4 1777. By the early 1800s the traditions of parades, picnics, and fireworks were established as the way to celebrate America's birthday. And although fireworks have been banned in most places because of their danger, most towns and cities usually have big firework displays for all to see and enjoy.



GREAT SEAL OF THE UNITED STATES

On July 4, 1776, the Continental Congress passed a resolution authorizing a committee to devise a seal for the United States of America. This mission, designed to reflect the Founding Fathers' beliefs, values, and sovereignty of the new Nation, did not become a reality until June 20, 1782.



In heraldic devices, such as seals, each element has a specific meaning. Even colors have specific meanings. The colors red, white, and blue did not have meanings for the Stars and Stripes when it was adopted in 1777. However, the colors in the Great Seal did have specific meanings. Charles Thompson, Secretary of the Continental Congress, reporting to Congress on the Seal, stated:

"The colors of the pales (the vertical stripes) are those used in the flag of the United States of America; White signifies purity and innocence, Red, hardiness & valour, and Blue, the color of the Chief (the broad band above the stripes) signifies vigilance, perseverance & justice."

The obverse front of the Great Seal—which is used 2,000 to 3,000 times a year—authenticates the President's signature on numerous official documents such as treaty ratifications, international agreements, appointments of Ambassadors and civil officers, and communications from the President to heads of foreign governments. The design of the obverse of the Seal, which is the U.S. coat of arms, can be shown on coins, postage stamps, passports, monuments and flags, and in many other ways. The American public sees both the obverse and less familiar reverse, which is never used as a seal, every day when exchanging the \$1 dollar bill.

The American bald eagle is prominently featured supporting a shield composed of 13 red and white stripes (pales) representing the Thirteen Original States with a blue bar (chief) uniting the shield and representing Congress. The motto of the United States, E Pluribus Unum (meaning out of many, one), refers to this union. The olive branch and 13 arrows grasped by the eagle allude to peace and war, powers solely vested in the Congress, and the constellation of stars symbolizes the new Nation taking its place among the sovereign powers.



The pyramid signifies strength and duration: The eye over it and the motto, Annuit Coeptis (meaning He, [God has favored our undertakings]), allude to the many interventions of Providence in favor of the American cause. The Roman numerals below are the date of the Declaration of Independence. The words under it, Novus Ordo Seclorum (meaning a new order of the ages), signify the beginning of the new American era in 1776.



2017 Court Square Summer Concert

(presented by the Town of Dallas and the Gaston County Museum of Art & History)

Held on the Dallas Historic Court Square, from 6:00—8:30 pm, each FREE concert will feature amazing talent (rain or shine). Enjoy the car show along Main Street and local craft beverage from Ole Dallas Brewery. For more information contact Jason Luker, Assistant Director of the Gaston Museum, at 704-922-7681 ext. 105 or Jason.luker@gaston.gov.com.

- ◆ **Saturday, July 8, 6:00 pm—The Whiskey Gentry**, out of Atlanta, is set to release its third full-length studio album entitled *Dead Ringer* this spring. The husband and wife duo of Lauren Staloy and Jason Morrow and bandmates incorporate deep country, Americana, honky-tonk, bluegrass and stiff shot of gritty rock' n' roll in their music.
- ◆ **Saturday, August 12—Almost Vintage**
Morganton based, classic-rock groove-maters **Almost Vintage** begins the feeling of a carefree Woodstock afternoon to any venue they play! Steeped in the sound of the 60s, 70s and 80s, they transport listeners to a simpler time when music spoke for a generation.
- ◆ **Saturday, September 9—The Catalinas**
Since its creation in 1957, over 60 accomplished guitarists, keyboardists, trumpet players, drummers, bass players and singers have been part of The Catalinas. The band owner, Gary Barker of Statesville, has performed with the band since 1965 and attributes its long success to the ongoing popularity of beach music and the tunes the band has composed, particularly *"Summertime's Calling Me"* in the 70s.

CRISIS PREGNANCY CENTER

OF GASTON COUNTY, INC.

We pray! The ministry at CPC doesn't just happen. We prayise - a lot. In the thirty years of serving this community, prayer + praise = prayise has been crucial to any and all that has been done here.

At each location we have a prayise book where we detail our requests, thanksgivings, supplications and praises in writing and then we lift them up before the Lord. If it is one person or many, we don't attempt to do the Lord's work here without addressing the ONE whom we are serving.

The opportunity to step aside for prayise each day is a humbling experience, but a necessary one. Staff get paid to call upon the name of the Lord in this setting because our Maker's instructions are vital to this recipe of success. Here are some samples of our prayiseing.

- At CP East last year, Sherry was concerned that in 2015 only 3 clients had accepted Christ. She prayed for God to double that in 2016. There were 15 decisions for Christ in 2016.
- Often we have abortion minded clients who are scheduled for an ultrasound. It is flat out spiritual warfare for them to show, thus one of our frequent prayises is "God send someone across their path who will encourage them to choose life."
- Finances. Frequently our praying pastors will address the need for God to meet all of our financial needs. In the last 20 years we have never failed to meet our budget.

You could join us at any of our settings. We would be so encouraged to have you call any of our settings and see what time we set aside to be in His presence.



SALVATION ARMY

The Salvation Army began in 1865 when William Booth, a London minister, gave up the comfort of his pulpit and decided to take his message into the streets where it would reach the poor, the homeless, the hungry and the destitute.

His original aim was to send converts to established churches of the day, but soon he realized that the poor did not feel comfortable or welcome in the pews of most of the churches and chapels of Victorian England. Regular churchgoers were appalled when these shabbily dressed, unwashed people came to join them in worship. Booth decided to found a church especially for them - the East London Christian Mission. The mission grew slowly, but Booth's faith in God remained undiminished.

In May 1878, Booth summoned his son, Bramwell, and his good friend George Railton to read a proof of the Christian Mission's annual report. At the top it read: THE CHRISTIAN MISSION is A VOLUNTEER ARMY. Bramwell strongly objected to this wording. He was not a volunteer: he was compelled to do God's work. So, in a flash of inspiration, Booth crossed out 'Volunteer' and wrote 'Salvation'. The Salvation Army was born.

ONE ARMY: We see a God-raised, Spirit-filled Army for the 21st century - convinced of our calling, moving forward together: We will...deepen our spiritual life, unite in prayer, identify and develop leaders, increase self-support and self-denial

ONE MISSION: Into the world of the hurting, broken, lonely, dispossessed and lost, reaching them in love by all means : We will...emphasize our integrated ministry, reach and involve youth and children, stand for and serve the marginalized, encourage innovation in mission

ONE MESSAGE: With the transforming message of Jesus, bringing freedom, hope and life

We will... communicate Christ unashamedly, reaffirm our belief in transformation, evangelize and disciple effectively, provide quality teaching resources.

The local chapter of Salvation Army is located: 107 South Broad Street, Gastonia, NC 28052-4101. Their motto: Doing the most good.

Open letter from: Mark Hunter, Corps Officer, Salvation Army, Gastonia, NC

One of my favorite songs as a youngster was *Jesus Loves Me*. Those three simple words assured me that if I was frightened, He would look out for me. If I was lonely, He would be by my side. If I was confused, He would guide me. If I made a mistake, He would forgive.

Though I've kept that song in my heart all my life, it was especially important to me as I struggled through the challenges and frustrations of adolescence. Today, the number of boys and girls I meet who are lonely, frightened and confused because they don't know about God's Love saddens me. They don't believe anyone cares for them. That is why Salvation Army in the Gastonia area does everything possible to demonstrate God's Love, protection, and direction to disadvantaged children. Through the year, we open our doors to young people of all ages.

During the summer, we offer camp activities at Camp Walter Johnson that help 25 youngsters develop their talents and self-confidence, as well as strengthen their relationship with Christ. And during the year, The Salvation Army's Boys and Girls Club provides 100 kids every day with supervised alternatives to going home to an empty house while their parents are still at work. Our Club has educational programs in areas such as literacy (through our R.E.A.C.H. program – reading, education, attendance, conduct, honors), health, the arts, careers, leadership development and athletics. We also make sure children are receiving the food, clothing and care they need to be healthy and strong.

Like all of our services for the poor, our children's programs are possible only because others care. Little ones are searching for something to believe in and cling to. Together, we can help them grow in the knowledge that Jesus Loves them, and will instill a lasting song of hope in their hearts. Hundreds of boys and girls will participate in our programs this year alone. We believe that the camp experience makes a difference in the lives of underprivileged boys and girls who need a safe place to explore and learn while strengthening their faith in God. Your support is very important.

OUR SAVIOUR'S MISSION EMPHASIS FOR JULY is Salvation Army of Gaston County. This is an opportunity for us to pray for them, to volunteer, and give to a mission in our own area. They are helping the poor and disadvantaged in many ways. Their emphasis for this summer is to help children get to their summer camps. For those who would like to give through Our Saviour Lutheran Church, you can put a check in the offering any Sunday during July.

2016 is half way done. Have you participated in some of the Mission Emphasis opportunities? Some of us have. Some of the opportunities are in our own area and other opportunities are for ministries around the world. Be encouraged to seek the Lord as to how you can participate this month and each month.

THE STARS SPANGLED BANNER

I know we all sing the first verse of "*The Stars Spangled Banner*" but have you ever sung the other verses or even read it? Printed below is our NATIONAL ANTHEM in total. Please read them.....note "*In God Is Our Trust*" is included.

Oh, say, can you see, by the dawn's early light,
 What so proudly we hail'd at the twilight's last gleaming?
 Whose broad stripes and bright stars, thro' the perilous fight,
 O'er the ramparts we watch'd, were so gallantly streaming?
 And the rockets' red glare, the bombs bursting in air,
 Gave proof thro' the night that our flag was still there.
 O say, does that star-spangled banner yet wave
 O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave?

On the shore dimly seen thro' the mists of the deep,
 Where the foe's haughty host in dread silence reposes,
 What is that which the breeze, o'er the towering steep,
 As it fitfully blows, half conceals, half discloses?
 Now it catches the gleam of the morning's first beam,
 In full glory reflected, now shines on the stream:
 'Tis the star-spangled banner: O, long may it wave
 O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!

And where is that band who so vauntingly swore
 That the havoc of war and the battle's confusion
 A home and a country should leave us no more?
 Their blood has wash'd out their foul footsteps' pollution.
 No refuge could save the hireling and slave
 From the terror of flight or the gloom of the grave:
 And the star-spangled banner in triumph doth wave
 O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave.

O, thus be it ever when freemen shall stand,
 Between their lov'd homes and the war's desolation;
 Blest with vict'ry and peace, may the heav'n-rescued land
 Praise the Pow'r that hath made and preserv'd us a nation!
 Then conquer we must, when our cause is just,
 And this be our motto: "***In God is our trust***"
 And the star-spangled banner in triumph shall wave
 O'er the land of the free and the home of the brave!



