



Sharing the Light



The mission of First Lutheran Church is to grow together in Christ through prayer, worship, and education and to spread the love of Christ to our community.

July 2026

Publication of First Lutheran Church, Temple City, CA

From the Pastor's Desk

Summer is here, vacations and barbecues and swim parties. Let's have a great summer but don't forget who we are and whose we are. Life is short but He is always there.

Pastor Frank Matthews

Our First Freedom

By Rev. Tim Singleton, Mt. Olive Lutheran Church, La Crescenta

"The counsel of the LORD stands forever, the thoughts of his heart to all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom he has chosen as his heritage." (Psalm 33:11-12)

Two and a half centuries ago in Philadelphia, delegates to the Continental Congress declared independence from Britain, appealing to "the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God" and holding as self-evident the truth that we are "endowed by [our] Creator" with the "unalienable" right to life, right to liberty, and right to pursue happiness. As American Citizens and Lutheran Christians, we pause to give thanks to God for the remarkable blessings of liberty that we enjoy in this land of the free, and especially for the principle that stands as the primary foundation of American civics, society and culture: that is, The Freedom of Religion (our "First Freedom").



The great First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution begins not with the freedoms of speech, press, or assembly, but with the freedom of religion and religious expression: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof." Our founders placed religious freedom at the top of the list, first and foremost, because they understood that this right is the root from which all other liberties grow (including speech, press and assembly). When the human heart is free to respond to God's call to righteousness and piety, the whole society flourishes. Remove that foundation, and even the best-written constitutions eventually become empty words. Religious liberty is not just one freedom among many; it is the soil in which our American Republic was planted.

Continued on next page.



This truth resonates deeply for our Lutheran confession. Martin Luther taught that the gospel of Jesus Christ must be proclaimed freely, that faith is a matter of our human conscience transformed by the Word of God freely shared and heard, and that the Church and the State each have their proper God-given spheres. So, generations of Lutherans have not only valued the many economic opportunities afforded by our industrious nation but also the freedom to confess, profess and assemble “in accordance with the divine Word” (Augsburg Confession). Here, under the protection of our First Freedom, our congregations have been able to baptize, teach, worship, and serve, without fear of interference or forced conformity by the State.

Moreover, freedom of religion has shaped our national character far beyond the church doors. It fostered a culture that values the dignity of the individual, encourages free association and voluntary charity, and insists that government itself is under God (in a general non-sectarian sense). It has allowed people of every creed and religion (or none) to contribute their best gifts of citizenship while protecting all from coercion by the State in matters of the spirit.

In a nation of diverse ethnicities and traditions, our First Freedom has been the principal foundation that makes “E Pluribus Unum” possible without tyranny of conscience and soul. In fact, every single totalitarian system (such as Marxism) always targets the free exercise of religion for destruction, because a people who look to a higher power and authority than the State is a people who cannot be subjugated.

As we mark this coming Semiquincentennial (or Quarter-Millennium as I prefer to say), let us commemorate this national anniversary with deep gratitude for our imperfect yet exceptional and laudable nation. Additionally, let us observe it with heartfelt prayer and good citizenship. For the Holy Scriptures declare:

“First of all, then, I urge that supplications, prayers, intercessions, and thanksgivings be made for everyone... and all who are in high positions, so that we may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godliness and dignity” (1 Timothy 2:1-2).

Consequently, giving thanks to God for the liberties we enjoy, we pray for our leaders and our fellow citizens. And we resolve to use our freedom rightly as it says in Galatians:

“For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters, only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for sin, but through love become enslaved to one another... If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another” (Galatians 5:13-15).

On Sunday, July 5th, many congregations of the Church of Jesus Christ throughout our country will gather for worship with national songs and patriotic hymns. May these celebrations be marked by joyful thanksgiving, recognizing that *“every good and perfect gift”* — including the gift of our First Freedom under the Constitution of the United States — comes *“from the Father of lights” (James 1:17).*

May the Lord continue to preserve this First Freedom for generations yet to come, that the good news of Jesus Christ may be freely proclaimed and that we may serve our nation as Christ’s Kingdom Ambassadors in a world that still groans for the ultimate freedom from enslavement to death and decay (see Romans 8:18-23).



These are the Lectionaries for the month of July.

	<u>First Reading</u>	<u>Psalm</u>	<u>Epistle</u>	<u>Gospel</u>
<u>July 5</u> Sixth Sunday after Pentecost	Zech. 9:9–12	Psalm 145:1–14	Rom. 7:14–25a	Matt. 11:25–30
<u>July 12</u> Seventh Sunday after Pentecost	Isaiah 55:10–13	Psalm 65:9–13	Rom. 8:12–17	Matt. 13:1–9, 18–23
<u>July 19</u> Eighth Sunday after Pentecost	Isaiah 44:6–8	Psalm 119:57–64	Rom. 8:18–27	Matt. 13:24–30, 36–43
<u>July 26</u> Ninth Sunday after Pentecost	Deut. 7:6–9	Psalm 125	Rom. 8:28–39	Matt. 13:44–52

Worship Opportunities

Rev. Frank Matthews:
Sundays, July 5, 12, 19 and 26 at 8:30 a.m.

Bible Class and Sunday School Time:

Every Sunday, 9:45 to 10:45 a.m.

Ushers: Craig Boehne, Dave Lassanske, and Don Lammerts

Readers: July 5: Richard Swanson July 19: Jo Tschopp
July 12: Christine Geltz July 26: Christine Geltz

Greeters: July 5: Connie Kean July 19: Norma Boehne
July 12: Diane Oberlander July 26: Sharon Corey



Vicki Trepanier 7/15

If you are unable to attend worship, you may:

- Listen to the Lutheran Hour sermon at any time you choose – Just go to lhm.org/guide.
- View Worship Anew at 8:30 a.m. on Sundays on DirectTV, Channel 377 from our Fort Wayne Seminary in Indiana. Or you can view it any time at <https://worshipanew.org/by-type/watch?>.
- Access and/or review First Lutheran sermons online by going to: <https://firstlutherantc.org/Media>.

Upcoming Events

First Friday Soup & Sandwich Luncheon
Friends In Deed Delivery (FID closed 6/27-7/3)
Volunteer at Friends In Deed
National Ice Cream Day Celebration
Friends & Family Sunday

July 3, Friday, noon
July 4, **Saturday**, 9:00 a.m.
July 18, Saturday, 8:00 a.m.
July 18, Saturday, 4:00 to 6:00 p.m.
August 9, Sunday, 8:30 a.m. followed by brunch

Please Keep These Loved Ones in Prayer



Judy Gunther: Please continue to pray for her healing.

Pat Grabowski: Pat's condition is very slowly improving. She is working with physical therapists to regain control of her throat muscles so that the feeding tube to her stomach can be removed. Pat remains at the Claremont Manor Care Center, 621 West Bonita Ave. Claremont CA 91711 and enjoys visits and phone calls (840) 208-8537. Pray for her improvement and healing.

Oberlander Family: We hold this family in our prayers as they mourn the sudden passing of Diane's daughter-in-law, Jennifer Oberlander.

Perry Singleton, Jen and Keith Edmunds: Please continue to pray for Pastor Frank Matthews' friends Perry and Jen, and for his cousin Keith.

Rachel Markham, former teacher at First Lutheran School. Rachel needs prayer for healing infection after surgery on her left foot, and for patience during the long recuperation process. Prayers also for her husband Phil as he cares for her and manages the household.

News from the Mission Development Team

Celebrate National Ice Cream Day on Saturday, July 18, 4:00 to 6:00 p.m. Tables, chairs, and lots of ice cream will be available on the front lawn of the church. We hope to meet some of our neighbors and community as we cool off with America's favorite treat that afternoon.



Begin now to think of friends and family you can invite to our **August 9 Friends & Family Worship Service**. Food and fellowship will follow the service.



School Supply Backpack Project:

The Sunday School class will be using their offering money to purchase school supplies for children being ministered to by Lutheran Border Concerns ministry. They are planning to fill 40 string backpacks which have already been purchased. Congregation members can help by giving monetary gifts to purchase the needed supplies or you can have fun shopping for the requested supplies listed below. There will be a box in the narthex for your gifts.

- 70 sheet spiral notebooks of wide or college-ruled paper approximately 8x10
- 30-centimeter rulers, or a ruler with centimeters on one side & inches on the other.
- pencil sharpeners which capture the shavings • blunt scissors • pencils, no logos or advertising
- black or blue ballpoint pens • boxes of 16 or 24 crayons • boxes of colored markers



Community Prayer Box Update

What do Luther's Small Catechism and the Bible say about prayer? Sometimes it is good to review what we learned decades ago and continually try to implement in our lives today. So, reflect back on learning the Lord's Prayer in the catechism.

Luther asks: *What privilege and command does God give to those who believe in Jesus Christ?* God commands and invites believers in Jesus Christ to pray.

Matthew 7:7-8 "Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened."

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 "Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."

New Selections in Our Little Free Library



An amazing brand-new book wrapped in its cellophane wrapper was donated to our Little Free Library. The book has a two-page informational spread for each of the 64 countries that participate in the World Cup. The book is published by Victory Beyond the Cup which exists to equip believers to leverage the World Cup for Kingdom impact by creating spaces that deepen relationships, spark meaningful conversations, and point people to lasting hope. If you like soccer or want to learn more about the World Cup, grab this book before it is taken.

First Friday Soup and Sandwich Luncheons

Friday, July 3 we will celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Declaration of Independence. Wear your red, white and blue, and be prepared for a special luncheon and activities celebrating our nation. Please invite friends and neighbors.

Friday, August 7 we will have an informative and interesting presentation by Tony Reyes from ACTS Thrift Stores. He is looking forward to sharing ACTS thrift model and how they give God all the glory. As senior citizens we often have accumulated too much stuff and don't know what to do with things that were very helpful and useful in the past.

Friday, September 4 our guest will be Detective Michael Janetzke, from the Brea Police Department. He will be speaking about scams, identity theft, and safety online.



The Spirit of Friends In Deed: Not Just in Resources, but in Bringing Joy

by Rabbi Joshua Levine Grater
President and CEO, Friends in Deed

The line outside the Friends In Deed Food Pantry moves steadily, but it still takes time. For the more than 700 households we serve each week, waiting is part of the visit. Recently, the wait came with a soundtrack.

Russell and Mika, the husband-and-wife musical duo behind The Nextdoors, showed up twice to play live music on the sidewalk out front. They set up and played for the community gathered outside, sharing crowd-pleasing music while neighbors waited their turn.



Photo credit: Friends In Deed

Music touches just about all of us in some way. For many, it touches deeply. On those days when Russell and Mika were here, you could see it on people's faces. Feet tapping. Smiles exchanged. It is a small thing, maybe, in the grand scheme of what we do. But dignity is in the details. A morning spent waiting in line feels different when someone has shown up to make it a little brighter. Russell and Mika didn't have to come. They came because they wanted to give something to this community, and this community felt it.

That is the spirit that makes Friends In Deed what it is: not just resources, but joy, wherever we can bring it.

Why and When Do We Use Three Different Creeds in Our Worship?

Source: Lutheran Church Missouri Synod website

The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod accepts and confesses three ancient, ecumenical (universal) creeds. The Church did not accept them because they are equal to Scripture, but because they confess the truth of Scripture. They are statements that summarize the Christian faith and are used as faithful and accurate interpretations of the Bible. These creeds serve as a foundational source of unity for all Christians in accordance with the Holy Word.

The word “creed” comes from the Latin “credo” meaning “I believe.” Each creed was written to respond to various issues of its day. Below is some historical background and why and when we use each in our worship.

The Apostles' Creed

- **Purpose:** The Apostles Creed confesses the truth of the Triune God in whom we are baptized. It serves as a confession of faith used in daily prayers and baptismal rites.
- **Focus:** It summarizes the basic tenets of the Triune God: God the Father (Creation), God the Son (Redemption), and God the Holy Spirit (Sanctification).
- **Usage:** This creed is commonly used in regular Sunday worship services and LCMS educational materials.

Continued on next page.

The Nicene Creed

- **Purpose:** The Nicene Creed clearly confessed Christ in response to the heresy of Arianism, an early teaching that denied the full divinity of Jesus Christ, asserting that He was a created being rather than co-equal or co-eternal with God the Father. It was drafted at the Council of Nicaea (325 A.D. in what is now Turkey) and expanded in 381 A.D. to address this and other heresies.
- **Focus:** This creed affirms the full deity of Jesus Christ, stating He is "begotten of His Father before all worlds" and is "of one substance with the Father."
- **Usage:** We confess this creed during the Communion service and on major church festival days.

The Athanasian Creed

- **Purpose:** The Athanasian Creed proclaims the Scriptural truth of the Triune God while emphasizing the important truth of Christ's two natures. It explains orthodox Christian doctrine in response to theological controversies. It is named in honor of Athanasius of Alexandria, an influential 4th-century bishop who defended Trinitarian orthodoxy. Scholars agree he did not write the creed, but it owes its existence to his influences. It emerged in modern France more than a century after his death in 373 A.D.
- **Focus:** This creed emphasizes the mystery of the Holy Trinity (one God in three persons) and the dual nature of Jesus Christ (fully God and fully man).
- **Usage:** Our congregation customarily recites it once a year on Trinity Sunday.

An interesting article on the website of Trinity Lutheran Church of Whittier gives more detail on the history and theology of our creeds. You can find it at trinitywhittier.org/creeds.

Prayer Request from Our Missionaries in Papua New Guinea

Through our tithe and prayers, our congregation supports missionaries Matt and Emily Terhune's work in Papua New Guinea with Wycliffe Bible Translators.

Emily Terhune asks prayer for the upcoming Trauma Healing workshop she'll be helping with along with four Papua New Guinean teachers. The dates are July 5-11. "The workshop will be at a Bible college in Lae, which is about 3 or 4 hours by road," she says. "Please pray for safe travel, for health, that all our families (including mine!) would be fine while we're away, and that the workshop would go really well!"



A big praise is that Starlink satellite-based communications network was approved in Papua New Guinea after being caught up in the court system for ages. "Matt and all of the translation teams are really thankful," Emily reports. "This will make internet access much more reliable across the country."

Not Receiving Email Special Announcements and/or Prayer Requests?

Email Newsletter: If you would like to receive the newsletter and prayer requests by email, please share your email address with Christine Geltz, Newsletter Editor, at cgeltz@firstlutherantc.org. You may also send her news and story ideas at that address.

Printed Newsletter: If you prefer to have a newsletter hard copy mailed to you, please call Kathy Janetzke at (626) 437-2509.

Pastoral Care: Please contact Pastor Frank Matthews at (213) 247-8838 or no1redder@gmail.com.



FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
9123 Broadway
Temple City, CA 91780

**ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED
DATED MATERIAL**
July 2026

[]

[]

FIRST LUTHERAN CHURCH
9123 Broadway
Temple City, CA 91780
Office Phone: (626) 287-0968

E-Mail: admin@firstlutherantc.org
Website: <https://firstlutherantc.org>

8:30 a.m. Traditional Worship
Holy Communion every first & third Sunday
9:45 a.m. Sunday School / Bible Study
Every Sunday