

The Master's Message

The Newsletter of the Church of the Master

July/August, 2026

Virtual Adult Bible Study
Wednesday, 7:00 PM
Saturday, 12:00

2783 Lafayette Avenue
Bronx, N.Y. 10465
718-597-6298

Sunday Worship
Sunday 10:00 am

WWW.COTMBRONX.ORG

Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden, Pastor



"AMERICA"

*(Quote from John Adams, taken from
Alistair Cooke's "America")*

"The second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable epoch in the history of America. It ought to be commemorated as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty. It ought to be solemnized with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward, for evermore."



"God and Freedom"

(Our Daily Bread, July, 1994)

"When members of the Second Continental Congress approved the remarkable document known as *The Declaration of Independence*, they plainly declared their belief in God. The

drafters of this noble proclamation knew that the sweeping freedoms they were proposing could work well only in a society where the Creator is acknowledged. They affirmed that God has "endowed" all people with the right to "life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness" because He values each of us.

Thomas Jefferson, often erroneously called an agnostic, was distressed by the injustice and sin he saw. He wrote, "I tremble for my country when I reflect that God is just." If he trembled then, he would have a violent seizure now!

America has been blessed because it was founded on biblical principles. But we are gradually losing our Godgiven freedoms because society is denying that the Lord is God. With a growing refusal to acknowledge Him, it's no wonder violent crime in the United States has climbed more than 75 percent during the last 20 years!

True freedom can never be enjoyed by people who refuse to fear God. Let's pray for our nation and recommit ourselves to living as God's people should.

"Know that the Lord, He is God; it is He who has made us; and not we ourselves; we are His people." Psalm 100:3.

SPECIAL DATES

- U.S. Independence Day, July 1st

News From the Pews



Continue praying for:
Allen Ford, Carole Mahon,
Loretta Byrd, John Bruno,
Alice & Alex Rivera

Our **Online Bible Study** meets
Wednesday at 7:00 PM and Saturday at 12:00.
Contact Ron Rivera (917-716-8273)
for information on joining

Our Sunday morning worship attendance has fallen below 10, and that includes the Pastor and the members who join us remotely. Please make it a priority to attend church on Sunday morning and bring your weekly offerings along with the offerings for the Sundays you've missed. Our financial outlook is bleak. If you are a member and haven't yet paid your assessment amount (\$137 for the year, \$34.25/quarter), we would greatly appreciate your help. Our next payment is due by the end of June.



On giving and getting

British author Elizabeth Bibesco said, "Blessed are those who can give without remembering and take without forgetting."

Can we follow her advice? Do we really need to keep a mental account of our sharing? Of course, we must keep financial records for tax purposes, but why dwell on our generosity? That might cultivate the sin of arrogant pride.

Instead, keep the good feeling derived from giving. Dwell on that joy rather than on the amount or the service given. Never forget what others have done for you. A grateful heart blesses you as well as the people you help.

CHURCH CHUCKLES

Timmy and Michael raced to the old swimming hole on Grandpa's farm that their dad had been telling them about. Sure enough, there was a big tire hanging from an old oak tree, and the brothers began to argue over who would swing into the cool water first. Grandpa saw this as a good teachable moment.

"You know, Jesus would have wanted the other person to go before him, to experience the joy first," he told them.

"That's right, Grandpa," Timmy nodded in agreement. "Our Sunday school teacher tells us that Jesus was always doing things for others."

Grandpa smiled, pleased that Timmy understood him.

Then Timmy leaned over and said quietly, "Mikey, today I am going to let you be Jesus first."

When little Eloise went to visitation for her great aunt who had just passed on, she was startled to look in the casket and see the departed holding a Bible in her hands. "I knew Auntie prayed a lot and went to church all the time," she commented to her mother, "But that's really something that she was holding the Bible when she died!"

On vocation? Use GPS!

Many vacationers rely on a global positioning system to get them easily to a destination. But in every season of life God sends us on *vocation* — following his call to both feed our passions and serve others. Our "calling," Frederick Buechner said, is "where [our] deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."

But is there a GPS for *vocation*? It's not as detailed or predictive as we'd like. It doesn't name our destination at the outset, and it offers general instructions rather than specific directions. And we may end up "recalculating" our life route more often than our vehicle GPS recalculates our vacation route.

Even so, we travel in safety. This "GPS" might stand for *God's Peace and Strength*, or *Gospel Promises Sustain, God Provides Salvation* or *Go! Proclaim! Serve!* The GPS guiding our vocation speaks to us through Scripture, worship, trusted Christian friends, life events and the silence of our hearts. Listening, we hear our Guide's calm voice and continue our vocation.

—Heidi Mar

"Keep On Swimming"

The following bit of humorous verse conveys a lesson about the reward of perseverance:

Two frogs fell into a deep cream bowl;
The one was wise, and a cheery soul.
The other one took a gloomy view
And bade his friend a sad adieu.
Said the other frog with a merry grin,
"I can't get
out, but I won't
give in;
I'll swim
around till my
strength is
spent,
Then I will die
the more
content."
And as he
swam, though ever it seemed,
His struggling began to churn the cream
Until on top of pure butter he stopped,
and out of the bowl he quickly hopped.
The moral, you ask? Oh, it's easily found!
If you can't get out, keep swimming
around.



Reverse economy

In *Love Does* (Thomas Nelson), Bob Goff describes his childhood interactions with a storekeeper. Goff would choose some candy, spread his change on the counter and let the man count out what was owed. One morning, judging by the man's face Goff could tell there wasn't enough money.

"We're one penny short," the storekeeper said. After a long pause, he took one of Goff's pennies, rubbed it with some vinegar and revealed a coin that looked brand new. Returning it to the pile, the man said, "In my store, shiny pennies are worth double."

Goff says that was an important lesson about Christians' role in Jesus' economy, where the poor are rich and we must give to receive: "We get to decide that people, including ourselves, are worth more than others might figure and that following Jesus means doing the math differently sometimes," he writes. "Because actually we're all on the same side of the counter when it comes to needing a little help and grace and a shiny penny now and then."

Communing with God

After Apollo 11 landed on the moon on July 20, 1969, pilot Buzz Aldrin requested via radio that people pause to give thanks for the achievement in their own way. When his broadcast ended, Aldrin read a verse from the Gospel of John and took communion, which his church had sent to space with him.

"It was interesting for me to think: the very first liquid ever poured on the moon, and the very first food eaten there, were the communion elements," the astronaut said. "At the time, I could think of no better way to acknowledge the enormity of the Apollo 11 experience than by giving thanks to God."





Beginning Sunday, July 5th through Sunday, September 6th, our worship service will begin at 10:00AM, following Prayers and Praises which will begin at 9:50 AM.

Expectant waiting

When we shoot an arrow, we look to the fall of it; when we send a ship to sea, we look for the return of it; and when we sow seed, we look for a harvest; and so, when we sow our prayers into God's bosom, shall we not look for an answer? ... A sincere Christian will pray and wait and strengthen his heart with promises out of the word, and never leave till God [gives] him a gracious answer.

—Richard Sibbes



Closer and closer

The progression — Father, Son, Spirit — represents a profound advance in intimacy. At Sinai, the people shrank from God and begged Moses to approach him on their behalf. But in Jesus' day, people could hold a conversation with the Son of God; they could touch him and even hurt him. And after Pentecost the same flawed disciples who had fled from Jesus' trial became carriers of the Living God. In an act of delegation beyond fathom, Jesus turned over the kingdom of God to the likes of his disciples — and to us.

—Philip Yancey, *Disappointment With God*

I'm Not Old...I'm Merely Mature!

Today at the drug store, the clerk was a gent
From my purchase, this chap took off ten percent.
I asked for the cause of the lesser amount
And he answered, "Because of the Senior Discount."

I went to the corner for a burger and fries
And there once again got quite a surprise
The clerk poured some coffee, which he handed to me
He said, "For you Seniors, the coffee is free."

Understand - I'm not old - I'm merely mature
But some things are changing - temporarily, I'm sure.
The newspaper print gets smaller each day
And people speak softer - can't hear what they say.

My teeth are my own (I have a receipt)
And my glasses identify the people I meet.
Oh, I've slowed down a bit - not a lot, I am sure
You see, I'm not old - I'm merely mature.

The gold in my hair has been bleached by the sun
You should see all the damage that chlorine has done
Washing my hair has turned it all white
But don't call it gray - saying "blonde" is just right.

My friends all get older - much faster than me
They seem much more wrinkled, from what I can see
I've got "character lines," not wrinkles, for sure
But don't call me old - just call me mature.

The steps in the houses they're building today
Are so high they take your breath all away
And the streets are much steeper than ten years ago
That should explain why my walking is slow.

But I'm keeping up on what's hip and what's new
And I still think I can dance a mean boogaloo
I'm still in the running - in this, I'm secure
I'm not really old - I'm only mature.

Originally

(Submitted by Marion Ford)



PARTING THOUGHTS:

The Church cannot function
at its best on the mere good
wishes of its people.



**Don't Take
a Vacation
from Church**

Grand Avenue





July-August 2026 Newsletter Article

This Independence Day, our great nation will celebrate its 250th Anniversary and Founding! We will mark this historic anniversary at a time when our country is divided as never before. We will mark this historic anniversary at a time when there are two separate wars going on between Russia and Ukraine and between the United States and Israel against Iran. The price of groceries and gasoline have increased as a result of the impacts from the war in Iran. One might think what with these plethora of problems confronting our country and I dare say the world that we will be hard-pressed to celebrate and give thanks for this great nation and our democratic experiment that has endured for 250 years. But I say, this is not the case. For, we have so much to be thankful for that we are living in the United States of America! And, if it be God's will let us pray that it will continue to endure for another 250 years or more! But as we celebrate this fourth of July and enjoy our summer vacations into August, let us join together and pray for our nation and our leaders as never before. I have included for your consideration and meditation, in this July and August Newsletter, a reprint from the 2023 National Day of Prayer. I ask that you will all join me and Church of the Master as we pray for our great nation! The United States of America, while not perfect, must continue to strive to be a more perfect Union. I am encouraged by the preamble and words of that great founding document, the Declaration of Independence that was written in Congress on July 4, 1776, that says, in relevant part,

“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.”

As our country strives to live up to these words, let us pray and give thanks to Almighty God that we live in the United States of America where we can freely worship God in spirit and in truth

because there are so many countries in the world where they are not free to worship God and are persecuted for the cause of the Gospel of Jesus Christ! May God continue to bless America, the land of the free and the home of the brave from sea to shining sea!

Happy 4th and Happy 250th Birthday!

Shalom to you now,

Rev. Dr. Melva J. Hayden, Pastor
Church of the Master Reformed Church

National Prayer For America¹

We come with fervent hearts to praise You Lord.

You are The Word, the Way, Truth and Life.

The Alpha and Omega, Lion of Judah, Almighty God

who was, and is, and is to come. You clothed

Yourself in flesh and dwelt among us, to remove

our sin and clothe us in Your righteousness that

we might dwell with You forever and ever.

With broken, humbled hearts we repent of our

sins. Confessing to You our faithlessness,

prayerlessness, and disobedience. Forgive us for

our doubt, our prideful and quarrelsome words

that reveal our unclean hearts. Cleanse us and

¹ Reprint from the 2023 National Day of Prayer which is observed the first Thursday in May. However, we need not limit prayer for the United States of America, our nation and country to one particular month or day. Let us all pray that God continue to shed His Grace on Thee, and crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea ("America the Beautiful").

renew a right and steadfast spirit within us we
pray.

With grateful hearts we thank You fervently for
the blessings in our life and throughout
America; they are more than we are able to
count. We will remember Your grace and testify
to Your goodness in all generations. Help us to
refrain from complaining, but instead be
prompted to pray faithfully in every
circumstance. Teach us to have a content heart
knowing You are always enough for our every
need.

As the Church we commit to pray and love our
neighbor and nation as You loved us, that our
reputation in this world would be rooted in Your
love. Holy Spirit work and overflow through us
in every prayer, thought, word, and deed. May
our character, conversations, and conduct
reflect the righteousness in which You clothed
us and command us to live.

With an obedient heart we put on the full armor
of God; Your breastplate of righteousness
guards our heart from which flows the springs of

life. We pray fervently for our communities and country; the people who are in the Church, Family, Education, Business and Workplace, Military, Government, Arts, Entertainment and Media. Every person is Your workmanship, fearfully and wonderfully created and loved.

With hopeful hearts we pray that all would choose to receive Your love and follow You. We pray that America would confess, "Jesus is Lord" and reflect Your righteousness in every sphere of influence, and every aspect of our lives. We ask that heavenly hope would flood our hearts, silence hate, and that You will heal our land.

Believing You; all You are, all You said, and all You have promised, we pray fervently in righteousness and avail much. In Jesus Name we pray, Amen!

Kathy Branzell

President, National Day of Prayer Task Force
