

JULY 2025

PEW ECHO

FIRST REFORMED CHURCH

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The One True Superpower

Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

~ Ephesians 3:20-21

Happy birthday to our home! Our nation celebrates its Independence Day on the 4th of July, as we declared our independence from England, who was the world's superpower at the time. It was a bold and daring declaration, for no other nation had a more expansive empire or a more controlling influence upon the seas than the British. And yet our eventual victory in the Revolutionary War would set in motion the growth of a new nation eager to fulfill its promise and potential. Many years later, during and after World War 2, the United States would emerge as a superpower, exerting military, economic, and political influence around the world. Soon after, during the Cold War years, the USA and the USSR became competing superpowers in a struggle between East and West, communism vs. capitalism. Today, following the collapse of the Soviet Union, we are considered the world's one true superpower, though China is emerging as a potential rival superpower.

Yet when it comes to this world, and the One who made it and rules over it, there is no rival to the one true superpower. The Bible declares in Psalm 66:3-4, "Say to God, 'How awesome are your deeds! So great is your power that your enemies cringe before you. All the earth bows down to you; they sing praise to you, they sing praise to your name.'"

Later this month, we will start a new sermon series on the book of Ephesians called "Immeasurably More." A theme verse for the series is found in Ephesians 3:20, which reminds us that God is "able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us." The word "power" is used more times in Ephesians than almost any other New Testament epistle (with the exception of Romans and 1 Corinthians). This power, the same power that raised Jesus from the dead, is available to all who believe (Eph. 1:19-20). This, then, is what could truly be called the world's one true superpower: the power of God at work in and through the people of God for the glory of God, in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever.

Grace and Peace in Christ,
Pastor Brad



JULY BIRTHDAYS

2	Mary Ann Otte
3	Stephanie Veenendaal
4	Nathan Wagner
12	Luella Justinger
13	Nora Halverson
	Beth Steffen
	Betty DeRuyter
	Vern Heidenreiter
15	Valerie Halverson
17	Lin Wilterdink
19	Tom Van Haveren
22	Hannah Steffen
23	Sara Born
24	Bernice Buehler
25	Dennis Beach



JULY ANNIVERSARIES

3	Travis & Morgan Steffen	(22)
9	Steve & Sharon Crivello	(49)
10	Steve & Lynette Stoffregen	(44)
19	Howard & Bernice Buehler	(67)
26	Gary & Janice Ten Haken	(50)



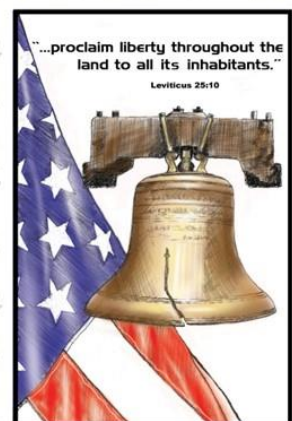
How Will We Use Our Freedom?

In 2000, Cornealious Anderson was sentenced to 13 years for robbery. The 23-year-old was released on bail and told to await orders to show up to prison. But due to a clerical error, those orders never came. Some people might have taken advantage of such freedom and committed more crimes. But Anderson started a business, coached youth football and volunteered at church, earning respect in his community.

Thirteen years later, when Missouri officials discovered the error and put Anderson behind bars, an online petition called for his release. A judge agreed that Anderson was a changed man and, again, he was freed.

What would you do with such undeserved freedom? What do we do with the unmerited freedom God grants us despite our sin, and with the freedoms we celebrate on July 4? May we follow Anderson's example and use our freedoms — social *and* spiritual — to serve others.

—adapted from *Homiletics*



THE PASTOR IS IN

Every Tuesday morning on New York City's Upper East Side, Gregory Fryer sits in a *Peanuts*-style booth offering prayer and a listening ear to passers-by. Initially the pastor wanted to draw attention to his church, but instead he ended up noticing all the "hungry hearts" in the neighborhood. Fryer has been pleasantly surprised by all the people who open up to him. "I think they like the idea of a pastor being on the sidewalk," he says.

Although a sign on the booth reads "Spiritual advice 5¢," the pastor keeps a plate of nickels handy if people want to put one in his jar. Some people donate much more — and some even pray for Fryer.

The pastor says he was inspired by *Peanuts* character Lucy van Pelt, who has the "audacity, the courage to brazenly sit there out in public and offer to deal with important matters."



Read More: <https://tinyurl.com/pastorisin>

EMBRACING INDEPENDENCE

At its core, the Fourth of July commemorates the birth of a nation founded on the ideals of freedom, equality, and justice for all. These principles are not only enshrined in the founding documents of the United States but are also echoed throughout the Bible. As Christians, we believe in the inherent dignity of every human being, created in the image of God, and endowed with certain unalienable rights.

The Bible teaches us about the importance of freedom, both spiritual and temporal. In Galatians 5:1, we read, "It is for freedom that Christ has set us free. Stand firm, then, and do not let yourselves be burdened again by a yoke of slavery." Through His sacrifice on the cross, Jesus Christ has liberated us from the bondage of sin and death, offering us the ultimate freedom in Him.

As we celebrate Independence Day, we also reflect on the blessings of liberty that we enjoy as citizens of a free nation. However, we recognize that true freedom is not merely the absence of external constraints but the presence of righteousness and justice. In Micah 6:8, we are reminded, "He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God."

As we gather with family and friends to celebrate Independence Day, let us remember that our ultimate allegiance is not to any earthly kingdom but to the Kingdom of God. May we use our freedom responsibly, as instruments of God's love and grace in a world that is longing for redemption.

USHERS FOR JULY



Dale Wingert

Mark Kappers



**USHER
SCHEDULE**

GREETERS FOR JULY

July 6—Praise in the Park

July 13

Doug & Katie Fabian

July 20

Duane & Lori Gumm

July 27

Marlys Van Wyk

Karen Rooker





Dana & Brian Phipps

Please pray for our new friends to be discipled well.



The Greek government has granted **Efe** a **student visa interview**! This is a huge answer to prayer. Our plan is to send Efe (on the right) to the Greek Bible College in the fall. In connection with Efe, please remember **the big picture**... 18 months ago, we appointed Nur and Sinan (in the middle) as full-time ministry assistants.

We will add Efe to the team once his Bible training is complete. Our hope is that Efe will eventually become a pastor.

Many Gospel workers are being asked to leave Turkey these days. Please pray that we are able stay.

In July, Dana and I will celebrate **30 years of ministry** in Turkey! Wow! Praise God for two baby boys and five church plants over three decades. And today Brian received a **full year extension** on his residence permit. So, we are confident that God has even more work for us in Turkey.

To celebrate 30 years with us, would you please consider **giving a gift** to our ministry? We are particularly seeking funds for Bible training for Efe. We hope that Efe will pastor our church someday. Thank you. Please visit www.avantministries.org



Nur and Furkan got married!

It was a wonderful civil ceremony, and no one gave them grief for their faith in Christ. Their Christian wedding ceremony with our church family is this Saturday.

Love,

Brian and Dana

Avant

[10000 N Oak Trafficway](http://10000%20N%20Oak%20Trafficway%20Kansas%20City%2C%20MO%2064155)
[Kansas City, MO 64155](http://Kansas%20City%2C%20MO%2064155)
www.avantministries.org

KID'S PAGE

Q: In what language was most of the Old Testament given?

HEBREW



Make this candle to keep uninvited insects from your outdoor summer meals.

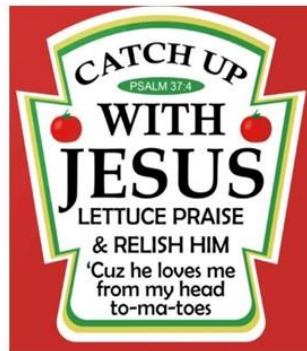
What you need:

- Lime
- 10-20 whole cloves
- Birthday candle
- 4 toothpicks
- Adult help



What you do:

1. Have an adult slice the lime in half. Cut off the rounded end of one half so it can stand without rolling.
2. Insert 10 cloves into the cut sides of each half.
3. Stand the bottom half on a plate. Insert the candle in the center.
4. Insert the 4 toothpicks in the cut side of the bottom half. Then place the other half atop the toothpicks.
5. Before dinner, have an adult light the candle that's between the two lime halves. The flame's heat will warm the lime and create a smell that insects don't like.
6. Supervise the flame. Blow it out when it reaches the bottom lime.



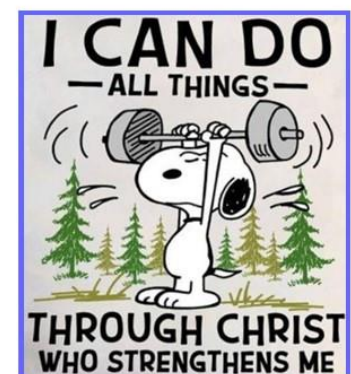
BOOKS OF THE BIBLE

OLD TESTAMENT	2 CHRONICLES	HOSEA	NEW TESTAMENT	1 TIMOTHY
GENESIS	EZRA	JOEL	MATTHEW	2 TIMOTHY
EXODUS	NEHEMIAH	AMOS	MARK	TITUS
LEVITICUS	ESTHER	OBADIAH	LUKE	PHILEMON
NUMBERS	JOB	JONAH	JOHN	HEBREWS
DEUTERONOMY	PSALMS	MICAH	ACTS	JAMES
JOSHUA	PROVERBS	NAHUM	ROMANS	1 PETER
JUDGES	ECCLESIASTES	HABAKKUK	1 CORINTHIANS	2 PETER
RUTH	SONG OF SOLOMON	ZEPHANIAH	2 CORINTHIANS	1 JOHN
1 SAMUEL	ISAIAH	HAGGAI	GALATIANS	2 JOHN
2 SAMUEL	JEREMIAH	ZECHARIAH	EPHESIANS	3 JOHN
1 KINGS	LAMENTATIONS	MALACHI	PHILIPPIANS	JUDE
2 KINGS	EZEKIEL		COLOSSIANS	
1 CHRONICLES	DANIEL		1 THESSALONIANS	REVELATION
			2 THESSALONIANS	

LAW - HISTORY - POETRY & WISDOM - MAJOR PROPHETS - MINOR PROPHETS
GOSPELS - HISTORY - LETTERS OF PAUL - GENERAL LETTERS - PROPHECY

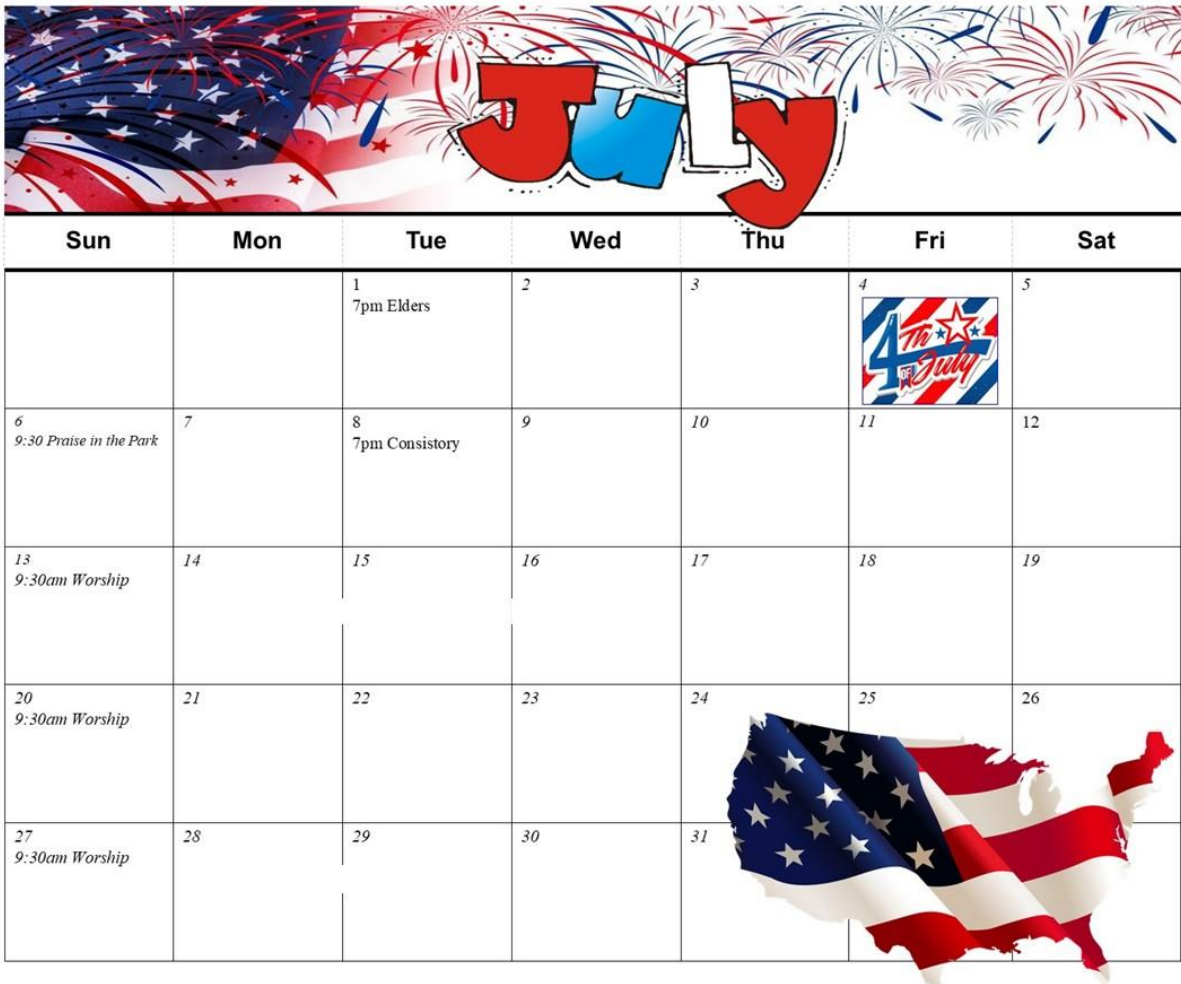


WOULD YOU
RATHER...
HIDE SPIES IN
YOUR HOUSE OR
HIDE A BABY
FROM
PHAROAH?



Q: What does Jesus say is the first and greatest commandment?
A: Love God with all your heart, mind, soul, and strength.

Q: Which human author wrote the most words in the Bible?
A: Moses wrote 125,139 words



A little boy opened the big and old family Bible with fascination, and looked at the old pages as he turned them. Suddenly, something fell out of the Bible, and he picked it up and looked at it closely. It was an old leaf from a tree that had been pressed between the pages.

'Momma, look what I found,' the boy called out. 'What have you got there, dear?' his mother asked.

With astonishment in the young boy's voice, he answered: 'I think it's Adam's suit!'

