

The fourth of July is an iconic American holiday. All across the US families and friends will gather for grilling, picnics, and fireworks. Each Fourth of July, my mind always wanders back to my childhood where we lit sparklers, made s'mores, and ended the night watching fireworks together as a family.

The Fourth of July is about American independence, pride, and exceptionalism. We celebrate together the casting off of our status as colonies and laying claim to our own future. We celebrate all those times we have risen up against aggressors and fought for the safety and freedom of other people around the world. The Fourth of July is certainly about our freedoms as a nation, but also about freedom for people still under oppression around the world.

For people of faith, this holiday also provides us an opportunity to reflect on what it means to be citizens in this world and where our allegiance lies. Sociologists have identified what is called American Civil Religion. This theory argues that the symbols and meaning and importance we give to being an American looks similar to the symbols, meaning, and importance people give to other faith traditions. They point out that our heightened sense of American exceptionalism borders on religious adherence.

When Jesus was asked if it was lawful to pay taxes, Jesus, sensing their trickery, asked to see a coin. He asked them, "Whose face is on it?" The answer, of course, was Caesar. "Then give to Caesar what belongs to Caesar and to God what belongs to God," Jesus says. In talking about wealth in Matthew 6, Jesus also says, "You cannot serve two masters; either you will hate the one and love the other or you will be devoted to one and despise the other."

So, can Christians serve two masters—both God and country? When we participate in the rituals of celebration and symbolism that surround national holidays, are we somehow acting contrary to our faith?

I don't think so. We can love and celebrate the things about this country that are great—freedoms

that are enjoyed in few other places on this planet. We can celebrate that men and women have fought, and died, to secure and defend the freedoms we enjoy.

At the same time, we should also acknowledge that freedoms and rights are not equal across the globe, or even here within our own country. We are not perfect, and this is not yet the world God is actively creating through Jesus and the Holy Spirit. There is a long way to go, and God's Kingdom cannot be brought by human means. As people of faith, we continue to pray God's Kingdom come and actively participate with the Holy Spirit in making the Kingdom known in this world.

So, by all means, enjoy this holiday with your family. Remember the sacrifices made to secure our freedoms in the US. And offer prayers to God. Pray that God's Kingdom come, and come quickly, that all people, in all places, know the forgiveness, mercy, and love of God in Christ Jesus.

Peace,  
Pr. JonPaul

### **Announcement:**

This summer, we will be doing an adult book study. We will meet each Sunday after worship to discuss how people of faith are called to engage in the world in which we live.

We will be reading the book "God's Politics: Why the Right Gets it Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get it" by Jim Wallis. You can order the book from Amazon (e-book or physical), a local bookstore, borrow from the public library, or talk to Pr. JonPaul about getting a copy.

We will be discussing the Introduction and our reading schedule. Even if you don't have a chance to read, you are welcome to join us and participate in the conversation. Together, we will discover how God might be calling us to engage with the issues that our society is facing in a way that doesn't align with divisive partisanship and is faithful to the message of Jesus.

Pr. JonPaul

## **Pleasant Valley Lutheran Church Council June 7, 2022**

The meeting was called to order at 6:11 by President Randy Sands. Pastor JonPaul was home sick so we did not have a devotion.

**NON-AGENDA** – There were no non-agenda visitors or items to discuss.

The secretary's report was read by members.

The treasurer's report was read by members. We were \$461.64 in the red for the month of May. We are \$1898.03 in the red for the year at the end of May. The May Mission Offering, which went to New Life Recyclery, totaled \$236.00. The Recyclery has a Go Fund Me page, but since they charge 15% on transactions, Roxie will deliver the check to them.

The Pastor's report was read by the members.

Steph made a motion to accept the reports. Second by Roxie. Motion carried.

**Education** – Bibles were given to Teegan and Trygve Johnson as new members.

As far as we know, Pastor has not asked parents about first communion. When he finds out about the interest, he will plan a class or classes in the fall to instruct the youth about communion.

A date has not been set to confirm Kyle and Kasey. We will recognize Kyle's graduation at the same time.

The Luther Park registrations are in. Parents will need to reimburse the church for their part of the cost.

**Worship** – The prayer/communication list is complete. We have phone numbers for several attendees at our services. We will correct any numbers that are incorrect and ask a couple families if they want to be included in the prayer concerns or just the communication. Ruth will send the rough draft to the council members.

There has been some problem with the FM transmitter delivering the last two church services to the cars and the park. We will check that the transmitter is working each Sunday.

**Building** – The new furnace will be installed.

We have sent the \$400 for the lift maintenance agreement for the year 2022. All Star sent a man out to assess what is needed to get the lift up and running. They have not sent us an estimate as yet.

The yearly payment has been made to cover the mowing of the park.

Dave will check the landscape lighting to see why it isn't coming on in the evening.

Sealing the blacktop was not mentioned.

### **UNFINISHED BUSINESS**

As to Pastor JonPaul's recommendations for worship; on days that are too stormy or inclement, we will have indoor worship, including social distancing, with masks suggested. So that we have a chance for a social time, coffee will be provided on these days, with pre-packaged treats, and we will have one person sign up for homemade treats. On days with nice weather, we will have outdoor services in the park with coffee and treats. Ruth will make coffee and clean up through the summer. Steph will check on purchasing non-Styrofoam coffee cups. Ruth will make a sign-up sheet for treats.

However, even nice days can be too cold to have hot coffee in the park. Since the coffeepot used to make coffee won't keep it hot in the cool weather, it needs to be made in the church and put in already hot carafes to be brought up to the park. That all takes about an hour lead time. I wondered if people are going to be willing to do that in the fall, when I will no longer be making coffee.

The \$13.87 left on the Thrivent card that was given to us for the Easter breakfast has been spent for lemonade, etc.

The Pastor's contract with the church is open ended. However, there was a question as to whether a new contract should be signed yearly to show increase in salary and other benefits. Pastor has not gotten back to us with the Synod's response.

### **NEW BUSINESS**

We discussed the using of the outside faucet by bicyclists. Randy has checked with Hastings Mutual, our insurance company, to see where we stand on the liability, both when people are using the park and the water. A sign is posted as to water quality. The insurance agent said that as long as we are not negligent, both with the water quality and with the park usage, we are covered with insurance.

Rhonda Hoverson would like to reserve the park and the tables for August 20. This has been done. This brought up a question – When people use the park, are they also able to use the bathrooms in the church. They will not be able to use the

bathrooms, and will need to rent a port-a-potty to use in the park.

The white tablecloths have been taken from the church and are in the process of being washed and ironed. There were mouse droppings on the tops of all the tablecloths, so the rest will need to be washed and ironed before being used. We have an electronic mouse deterrent in the quilting room.

Mission Sundays – June – Bob and Trisha Pichla – Bob needs out-of-state therapy for a spinal injury. Trisha is a special education aide in Eleva/Strum Schools.

July – Luther Park

August – Eleva/Strum

Backpack Meals Program

September – Mondovi

Backpack Meals Program

### **Other**

At the Annual Meeting, concern was raised as to politics coming from the pulpit and the thought that that was driving members away.

Pastor JonPaul will be leading a Bible/book study in the park using God's Politics – Why the Right Gets It Wrong and the Left Doesn't Get It, by Jim Wallis. The study will start on June 12, and we will ask people to contact Pastor JonPaul if they need a copy of the book – or e-book.

Next council meeting will be Tuesday, July 12, 2022, at 6 p.m.

At 7:52 p.m. a motion was made by Ruth to adjourn the meeting. Seconded by Steph. Motion carried.

We closed with the Lord's Prayer.

Respectfully submitted,

Ruth Poore, Council secretary

Members present: Stephanie Kuehl, Randy Sands, Roxie Ulness, Dave Vlcek, Corissa Sands, and Ruth Poore.

### **Praise Team News**

The Praise Team will play in worship on July 24 and 31. The group will also lead worship at the Chippewa Valley Correctional Treatment Facility on those evenings. Practices are on Wednesday evenings at 6:30--come join the fun!

## **Treasurer's Report**

### Summary of Offering and Expenses

	Offering	Misc. Income	Expenses
Y-T-D	\$24,552.64	\$822.00	\$28,017.14
April	\$4,854.00	\$0.00	\$4,390.08
May	\$3,802.16	\$822.00	\$5,085.80
June (thru 6/19)	\$2,123.00	\$0.00	\$2,867.47

Offering Over Expenses – Apr – \$463.92

Offering Under Expenses – May - \$461.64

Offering Under Expenses – June- \$744.47 (through 6/19)

Y-T-D Offering Under Expenses – \$2,642.50

#### Mission Offerings:

April – Bolton Refuge House - \$250.00

May – New Life Recyclery - \$236.00

#### Memorials:

##### General Fund:

In memory of Henry Karnatz and Emily Horban, from Randy & Kay Sands

Delaine Anderson and Selmer Anderson, from Dale & Sharon in honor of Father's Day

##### Building Fund:

In memory of Bob Herzberg, from Randy & Kay Sands

Respectfully submitted:

Roxie Ulness, Treasurer

## **Outreach at Cleghorn Harvest Fest**

The Outreach Committee will have a booth at the Cleghorn Harvest Fest on Saturday, September 10. There will be free games and prizes for kids and raffle tickets will be sold for the Fall Bazaar. Contact Kim Vlcek or Ruth Poore for more Information.

### **July 16**

Community Picnic begins at 3:00 and Overnight Camping in Olson Park

## TEXTS FOR JULY

*We will be meeting in Olson Park during good weather and in church during inclement weather.*

### **Fourth Sunday after Pentecost – 3<sup>rd</sup>**

Isaiah 66:10-14  
Psalm 66:1-8  
Galatians 6:(1-6)7-16  
Luke 10:1-11, 16-20

### **Fifth Sunday after Pentecost - 10<sup>th</sup>**

Deuteronomy 30:9-14  
Psalm 25:1-9  
Colossians 1:1-14  
Luke 10:25-37

### **Sixth Sunday after Pentecost – 17<sup>th</sup>**

Genesis 18:1-10a  
Psalm 25: 1-10  
Colossians 1:15-28  
Luke 10:38-42

### **Seventh Sunday after Pentecost -24<sup>th</sup>**

Genesis 18:20-32  
Psalm 138  
Colossians 2:6-15, (16-19)  
Luke 11:1-13

### **Eighth Sunday after Pentecost – 31<sup>st</sup>**

Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23  
Psalm 49:1-12  
Colossians 3:1-11  
Luke 12:13-21



## WE INVITE PRAYERS FOR:

**Bob Peterson** – Spine injury; healing; Crystal's Cousin

**Don & Barb** – Serious traffic accident; hospitalized at St. Mary's in Rochester; Mariah's Aunt and Uncle

**AnnaMae Stone** - Marianna's cousin – breast cancer

**Lenny Odegard** - Sadie's husband - liver cancer

**Lee & Amy Marsh** - liver cancer and chemo; neighbors of the Gilbertson's

**Ashly Marie** – Kari's friend – Covid 19

**Karl Bahr** – continue healing

**Gwen Chubb** – Monica's cousin - cancer; is holding her own

**Martha McCourt** – Marianna's mother, living with dementia

**Shelby Hill and family** - missionaries living in France

**Keyla Lisbeth** - the Sharing the Dream recipient, student in Guatemala

**All our service men and women:**

**Alex Bauer** stationed in England

**Duane Vlcek and Ayla Hakes and family**

**Inmates at CVCTF** – and Chaplain Hull

**All those who are missing a loved one**

**Those on our visiting list:** Bob Dutter & Gary and Sharon Hazen



## Thank You

To Pleasant Valley Lutheran Church Women of the ELCA,

Thank you for supporting the ministries of the Women of the ELCA with your recent gift of \$285.00

Thank you for your generosity. Together, thanks to your support, we'll get through this. Thank you Your giving really does make a difference. Thank you

With gratitude, Linda Post Bushkofsky  
Executive Director

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“Draw nigh unto my soul.”

Psalms 69:18

“Some days I guess I need your nearness more than other days.”

By the light of the Psalms by Chris Shea



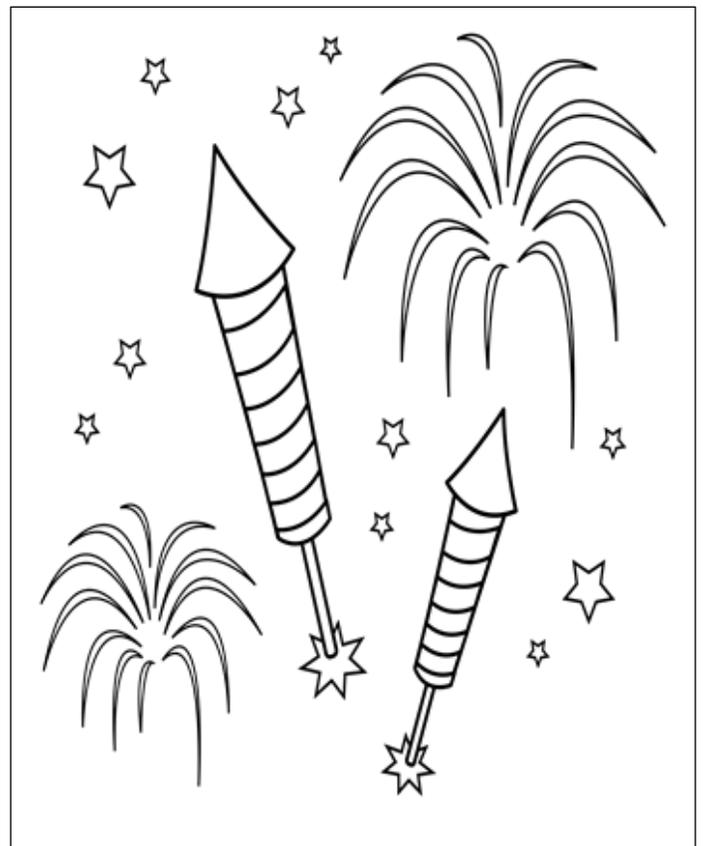
## Kids Coloring page



## Blurb form the Synod

Prepare for “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday with new resources

On Sunday, Sept. 11, congregations of the ELCA will join together for “God’s work. Our hands.” Sunday, our dedicated day of service. As you explore opportunities to participate, visit [ELCA.org/DayOfService](http://ELCA.org/DayOfService) for planning resources including a toolkit, worship material, videos, posters, social media graphics and a special hymn for the day. As we continue our tradition of service to our neighbor, we remember the words of Martin Luther: “Our faith is a living, busy, active, mighty thing.”



*Pleasant Valley Lutheran Church  
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*"That all May come, Serving all the People of God"*

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