

It's July! And you know what that means...July 4th and all the events that go along with that. I was amazed when I first moved to Minnesota at the number of events Spicer holds in celebration of July 4, especially for such a small town. However, I appreciated the recognition of a day where we celebrate the independence of our country, as well as honoring all that it took to make that happen. As many of you may know, I served in the military (U.S. Navy) during the first Desert Storm, and it was one of the proudest moments of my life. I served alongside others in my family; my paternal great-grandfather who served in World War I and whose picture still hangs in my home, and my maternal grandfather who served during World War II. And yet, I am always careful about conflating my patriotism with my Christianity, which has the potential to turn into something dark and dangerous if left unchecked.

Some of you may be familiar with the term "Christian nationalism," or perhaps you've heard it used in the media or on social media. This term is best described as the ideology that to be a "true American" you must be Christian, or to be a Christian, you must be American. This is very dangerous ideology, because, especially as United Methodists, we know we have Christian siblings all over the world. So, this ideal that to be "truly" Christian you must be an American, flies in the face of what we as Methodists know to be true. In fact, Scripture tells us that Jesus' command to the disciples before his final departure from earth, what we know as the "Great Commission", was to go and make disciples of *all nations*.

If we are to be known as Christians, "followers of Jesus Christ," we need to understand that our allegiance first and foremost must be to God, and our allegiance to our country comes second.

I know there are many churches in our country where crosses are scarce but American flags are everywhere. I have personally been in some of these buildings. But this is not what Jesus taught; in fact, the first of the Ten Commandments tells us that we should not worship any other than the Lord our God and have no idols. I think for some who claim the name of Christ, this is simply not the case. The American flag for many Christians has become an idol, because we are more concerned about it and the state of it than we are the state of our spiritual lives and the lives of those in our faith communities, and especially more concerned for the flag than for those who Jesus specifically commanded us to care for: the oppressed and marginalized, the poor, the widows, the orphans, those in prison, and those who are sick.

Some of you might be uncomfortable right now reading this article, because you are thinking to yourselves, "I don't know anyone like that" or "I am not that kind of Christian" and you might be right. You may not be that kind of Christian, but if you are honest with yourself, I am sure you do know someone like this. You may not believe the actions of "a few" who engage in such behavior negatively affects the faith we hold. But silence is complicity, and when we remain silent in the face of such dangerous rhetoric, we become complicit in the actions of those "few." Our inaction aids those who would use our faith in their own pursuit of earthly power.

In reality, there is nothing Christian about the ideology of Christian nationalism. Patriotism is defined as the "devotion and support for one's country." This is what we should be showing on days like July 4, and every day, but patriotism also means we must stand up against those in power when that power is harming the majority, much like Jesus stood up to the Jewish leadership in his day when their understanding of the law hurt those outside the realm of religious power. Patriotism should not force us to sacrifice our Christian beliefs, but this is precisely what "Christian nationalism" does. It elevates patriotism to a role closely aligned with God. As Christians, we are called to a public witness that serves God by seeking to shape our nation according to the vision of the Kingdom of God, knowing that God's vision recognizes no border or clan. Focusing on the Kingdom, we are charged to recover the uncomfortable truths of our past history, and, as loving critics and critical lovers of our country, to chart the path to a different and shared future.

So celebrate July 4, and honor and respect our country and the flag, but do not allow any of these dates, events, or objects to become more important in terms of your beliefs than the cross and Jesus Christ.

Peace,

Pastor Leslie

The Compass



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Social and Small Group Gatherings

The pandemic isn't over, but social gatherings have made a resurgence. We're gathering for birthday/anniversary celebrations after church on a monthly basis, we had a potluck to celebrate our confirmands, we had a celebratory cake with our graduates, etc. Twice each month, well over a dozen people have been gathering for coffee on Wednesday mornings. Most exciting, plans are underway for a resurrected Boutique, scheduled for October 8.

In our visioning discussions, a top priority was having social gathering and getting together outside of church. A small (but mighty) group met at Goat Ridge Brewery and participated in Beer Choir. Pastor Leslie and Don are coordinating a monthly kayak/canoe ride on local lakes. (This newsletter will come out after the June 26 event but we're going to assume that it was fun!)

If you have an idea for a gathering of any kind, put it in play! It doesn't have to be fancy or detailed. How about a bonfire? How about a group gathering at Rockin' Robbins concerts? (They are free to the public.) How about a trip to a winery? How about meeting for dinner? How about going to a movie together? It doesn't matter what we do, the important part is doing it together! There might not be large numbers participating, or perhaps there might be. How will we know until we try?

Feeling part of the church doesn't just happen on a Sunday morning. Being together as a faith community, unified in our love for Christ, makes us feel like we belong. If there's ever an activity and you want to go along, reach out to the coordinator!

Remember the words from Matthew 18:20 - "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them."

Hope to see you at SOMETHING this summer outside of worship!

Pat Solheid, Admin Team Chair

Mission & Outreach

For July, Missions and Outreach will focus on Meals On Wheels delivery! Our congregation will be responsible for the New London route for the entire month of July (Monday-Friday) beginning at 11:00. The route should take no more than an hour.

We still have 6 days which need volunteers (July 5, 7, 8, 22, 27, & 29)

To sign up, please contact Pastor Leslie.

Thank you in advance!!

Together we are the hands and feet of Christ serving God by serving others.



Birthday Cards for Tiffany Row

Tiffany Row will be turning 18 on July 6 and could use some love and support. Tiffany attended our church when she was younger. Please consider sending her a birthday card. Even if you don't know her, a birthday card would still be appreciated.

Cards can be sent to:

Tiffany Row
Jacobson House
925 Porter Ave
Des Moines, IA 50315

Boutique Update

Attention crafters, wood-workers, and bakers. Please note that we are ready to receive items for the Fall Boutique. There is a room designated near the Fellowship entrance. There are two types of price tags available too.

If you aren't a crafter, wood-worker or baker, but want to support the event, we can always use helping hands or cash to cover some expenses!!

All proceeds of this event go towards Missions & Outreach ministries. If you have questions, please reach out to Jenny Daby (320) 479-0518 or jennydaby5@gmail.com.

July Celebration Bash

Our next Celebration Bash will be held on Sunday, July 3 following worship service, Cake and coffee will be provided. Please join us in celebrating our congregation's July's birthdays and anniversaries!

Coffee Corner

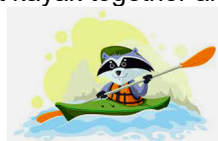
Wednesday July 6th and Wednesday July 20th, both starting at 9:00 am.

Our Cross Roads Coffee Corner group meets the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of each month for anyone who would like to drop in and visit. Nothing is needed other than a desire for coffee and fellowship. We hope you will stop by sometime and say hello!



Cross Roads Kayakers!

Our kayaking and canoeing group will be meeting once a month at a different lake location to just kayak together and fellowship. The next date is Sunday, July 24th, 4-6pm. We will be kayaking on Diamond Lake. All are welcome!



July Birthdays

Warren Gerdes 7th
Jenny Daby 9th
Mike Duke 11th
Mitchell Duke 11th
Lylas Boonstra 12th
Dwight Ryks 15th
Taylee Pahl 18th
Vernon Dean 25th
Kent Springman 26th

July Anniversaries

Mike & Jodii Evenson 13th
Duane & Jenny Daby 15th
Nick & Judy Zachariason 20th
Richard & Robbie Johnson 21st
Alan & Wanda Zaske 22nd



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If we have missed your special day, please let the office know.

A note from one of our Compassion Children...

March 5th, 2022

Dear friends, it's a pleasure for me to greet you and tell you that I had a great Christmas time since we went for a trip to the beach, in this place there are many cabins where we stayed for three days, we swam, made a campfire. At night we sang all together, they were spectacular days and I would love to repeat that. I want to tell you that my mom's birthday will be soon and my brother and I are going to throw a surprise party, I just hope she doesn't notice the surprise that we have prepared for her that day, with our savings we have bought some things and my father is going to help us with whatever is needed. Take care. God bless you. Please pray for my family. I would like to ask you, who do you live with?



Lina
February 2022

 **Compassion**

LINA

AGE: 12

BIRTHDATE:
April 13, 2009

CENTER NAME:
Heraldos de Panamá

REGION NAME:
Narino

COUNTRY:
Ecuador

You've been providing hope and love to Lina as her sponsor since **February 2017!**



**Cross Roads Community
United Methodist Church**

3400 113th Ave NE
Spicer, MN 56288

320-796-2339
www.crossroadsspicer.com

July 2022

Christian radio stations in the area:

K-Love 90.9

KTIS 92.7 & 98.5

Spirit 92.9

The Cross Roads Mission

To help everyone find joy in their journey by:

Inviting everyone to walk with Jesus,

Growing together as His disciples,

Serving others we meet along the way

And Joyfully Celebrating the Journey