

✠ THE ORDER OF SERVICE ✠

July 4 & 5, 2026

PRELUDE

INVOCATION

P In the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

OPENING SENTENCES *Psalm 29:2; 33:12, 22; 115:1; 145:10; 147:5*

P Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; His understanding is beyond measure.

C **All Your works shall give thanks to You, O Lord, and all Your saints shall bless You!**

P Ascribe to the Lord the glory due His name; worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness.

C **Not to us, O Lord, not to us, but to Your name give glory, for the sake of Your steadfast love and Your faithfulness!**

P Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people whom He has chosen as His heritage!

C **Let Your steadfast love, O Lord, be upon us, even as we hope in You.**

CONFESSION AND ABSOLUTION *Psalm 116:1; 124:8; Hebrews 4:16*

P I love the Lord, because He has heard my voice

C **and my pleas for mercy.**

P Our help is in the name of the Lord,

C **who made heaven and earth.**

P Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

C **Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, mighty Judge of all people, we admit and confess our sinfulness. We have not lived up to our calling as Your faithful people. So often we have done the evil You forbid and too many times have not done the good You demand. We do repent and are truly sorry for our sins in thought, word, and deed. Have mercy on us, merciful Father, for the sake of Jesus Christ, Your Son. Forgive us all that needs Your forgiving grace, and with the power of the Holy Spirit, direct us to serve You faithfully all our days, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.**

P God has promised His merciful forgiveness to those who repent of their sins and turn to Him in confession. In His stead and by His command, therefore, I forgive you all your sins in the name of the Father and of the ✠ Son and of the Holy Spirit.

C **Amen.**

P May our God keep you in His grace by the Holy Spirit, lead you in ways of faith and obedience, and finally bring you to live with Him forever, through Jesus Christ, our Lord.

C **Amen.**

PRAYER OF THE DAY

P O God, the author of peace and lover of concord, You have blessed our nation over many years. Graciously continue to watch over this land, that we may rejoice in Your abiding protection and serve You with gladness of heart; through Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and rules with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

CELEBRATION SEQUENCE

P Today we thank God as we celebrate 250 years of God's blessings on the United States of America. The psalmist writes: "Praise the Lord! For it is good to sing praises to our God; for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting" (Psalm 147:1). As part of our celebration this day, we sing our thanks for living in what truly is a God-blessed land.

A We thank God for the land that is our home—a land of mountains and seashores, of rivers and forests. This is a rich and fruitful land, a land that has supplied generations with its bounty. The psalmist writes: "Let the redeemed of the Lord . . . thank the Lord for His steadfast love, for His wondrous works to the children of men" (Psalm 107:2a, 21). Together we sing our thanks through the stanzas of the well-loved hymn "We Praise You, O God."

HYMN #785, v 2 "We Praise You, O God"

2 We worship You, God of our fathers, we bless You;
Through trial and tempest our guide You have been.
When perils o'ertake us, You will not forsake us.
And with Your help, O Lord, our struggles we win.

A We bless God for the peace that our nation has known on its shores for two and a half centuries. And we give our thanks for the generations of military men and women who have lived devotedly and even died sacrificially to keep the freedoms that we enjoy and to maintain the peace that we know here in our land. King David wrote in one of his psalms: "But You, O Lord, are a shield about me, my glory, and the lifter of my head" (Psalm 3:3). In the words of a devotional hymn text, we lift up our military people in prayer as we sing "Eternal Father, Strong to Save."

HYMN #717 "Eternal Father, Strong to Save"

1 Eternal Father, strong to save,
Whose arm hath bound the restless wave,
Who bidd'st the mighty ocean deep
Its own appointed limits keep:
O hear us when we cry to Thee
For those in peril on the sea.

4 O Trinity of love and pow'r,
Our people shield in danger's hour;
From rock and tempest, fire and foe,
Protect them where-soe'er they go;

**Thus evermore shall rise to Thee
Glad praise from air and land and sea.**

A We give glory to God for the United States that each of us knows, no matter what location in this vast country we call home. In a heartfelt exclamation centuries ago, King David the psalmist wrote: “May the Lord give strength to His people! May the Lord bless His people with peace!” (Psalm 29:11). Peace and prosperity have been blessings from God in these United States for two and a half centuries. Confident of future blessings and with true thankfulness, we can echo the words of Psalm 126, which summed up the sentiment of God’s people: “The Lord has done great things for us; we are glad” (verse 3). With glad hearts and joyful voices we sing “Now Thank We All Our God.”

HYMN #895, v 1 “Now Thank We All Our God”

**1 Now thank we all our God
With hearts and hands and voices,
Who wondrous things has done,
In whom His world rejoices;
Who from our mothers' arms
Has blest us on our way
With countless gifts of love
And still is ours today.**

OLD TESTAMENT *1 Samuel 2:6–10* (God’s power is known in His actions on earth.)

⁶The Lord kills and brings to life;
he brings down to Sheol and raises up.
⁷The Lord makes poor and makes rich;
he brings low and he exalts.
⁸He raises up the poor from the dust;
he lifts the needy from the ash heap
to make them sit with princes
and inherit a seat of honor.
For the pillars of the earth are the Lord's,
and on them he has set the world.

⁹“He will guard the feet of his faithful ones,
but the wicked shall be cut off in darkness,
for not by might shall a man prevail.
¹⁰The adversaries of the Lord shall be broken to pieces;
against them he will thunder in heaven.
The Lord will judge the ends of the earth;
he will give strength to his king
and exalt the horn of his anointed.”

L This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

EPISTLE *Romans 13:1–10* (Living as honorable subjects to governing authorities)

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. ² Therefore whoever resists the authorities resists what God has appointed, and those who resist will incur judgment. ³ For rulers are not a terror to good conduct, but to bad. Would you have no fear of the one who is in authority? Then do what is good, and you will receive his approval, ⁴ for he is God's servant for your good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword in vain. For he is the servant of God, an avenger who carries out God's wrath on the wrongdoer. ⁵ Therefore one must be in subjection, not only to avoid God's wrath but also for the sake of conscience. ⁶ For because of this you also pay taxes, for the authorities are ministers of God, attending to this very thing. ⁷ Pay to all what is owed to them: taxes to whom taxes are owed, revenue to whom revenue is owed, respect to whom respect is owed, honor to whom honor is owed.

⁸ Owe no one anything, except to love each other, for the one who loves another has fulfilled the law. ⁹ For the commandments, "You shall not commit adultery, You shall not murder, You shall not steal, You shall not covet," and any other commandment, are summed up in this word: "You shall love your neighbor as yourself." ¹⁰ Love does no wrong to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfilling of the law.

L This is the Word of the Lord.
C **Thanks be to God.**

VERSE *Psalms 147:12–14*

P Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem!
C **Praise your God, O Zion!**

P For He strengthens the bars of your gates;
C **He blesses your children within you.**

P He makes peace in your borders;
C **He fills you with the finest of the wheat.**

HOLY GOSPEL *Mark 12:13–17* (Jesus' teaching on the civic responsibility of paying taxes)

P The Holy Gospel according to St. Mark, the twelfth chapter.
C **Glory to You, O Lord.**

¹³ And they sent to him some of the Pharisees and some of the Herodians, to trap him in his talk. ¹⁴ And they came and said to him, "Teacher, we know that you are true and do not care about anyone's opinion. For you are not swayed by appearances, but truly teach the way of God. Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not? Should we pay them, or should we not?" ¹⁵ But, knowing their hypocrisy, he said to them, "Why put me to the test? Bring me a denarius and let me look at it." ¹⁶ And they brought one. And he said to them, "Whose likeness and inscription is this?" They said to him, "Caesar's." ¹⁷ Jesus said

to them, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's.” And they marveled at him.

P This is the Gospel of our Lord.

C **Praise to You, O Christ.**

HYMN LW #501 “God of Our Fathers”

1 **God of our fathers, whose almighty hand
Leads forth in beauty all the starry band
Of shining worlds in splendor through the skies:
Our grateful songs before Your throne arise.**

2 **Your love divine has led us in the past;
In this free land by You our lot is cast;
Oh, be our ruler, guardian, guide, and stay;
Your Word our law, Your paths our chosen way.**

3 **From war’s alarms, from deadly pestilence
Make Your strong arm our ever sure defense.
Your true religion in our hearts increase;
Your bounteous goodness nourish us in peace.**

4 **Refresh Your people on their toilsome way;
Lead us from night to never-ending day;
Fill all our lives with heav’n-born love and grace
Until at last we meet before Your face.**

Text: Daniel C. Roberts, 1841–1907, alt. Public domain

SERMON

CREED 1st Article and Meaning

P I believe in God, the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth. What does this mean?

C **I believe that God has made me and all creatures; that He has given me my body and soul, eyes, ears, and all my members, my reason and all my senses, and still takes care of them. He also gives me clothing and shoes, food and drink, house and home, wife and children, land, animals, and all I have. He richly and daily provides me with all that I need to support this body and life. He defends me against all danger and guards and protects me from all evil. All this He does only out of fatherly, divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness in me. For all this it is my duty to thank and praise, serve and obey Him. This is most certainly true.**

PRAYER OF THE CHURCH

P Let us pray for the whole people of God in Christ Jesus and for all people according to their needs.

Let us pray for the whole Christian Church, that through it the will of God may be done among us upon earth and that in it we may rejoice in hearing the Good News of the Gospel, and let us also pray for our nation, where we celebrate the freedom to gather for worship in the name of the Lord. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Let us pray for peace and tranquility in our country, asking the Lord’s blessing on the agriculture and commerce of these United States, and let us also pray for the armed forces of our nation, that those who serve in them may find satisfaction in their given duties and a sense of accomplishment in the protection of our nation and its people. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Let us pray for our nation, that it may shine as a beacon of hope to the world, and let us pray for our communities, that kindness, goodness, and mercy may be the hallmarks of our lives together. Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Let us pray for our congregation, that it may reach out with the love of Christ, and let us also pray for the Gospel, that it may be proclaimed without hindrance throughout our land. . Lord, in Your mercy,

C hear our prayer.

P Let us pray that our nation may continue as “one nation, under God, with liberty and justice for all” for this present time and for generations yet to come. In Jesus’ name, we pray.

C Amen.

OFFERING

SOLO God Bless America [Cindy Vessichio]

✠ SACRAMENT ✠

PREFACE 2 Timothy 4:22

P The Lord be with you.

C And also with you.

P Lift up your hearts.

C We lift them to the Lord.

P Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

C It is right to give Him thanks and praise.

PROPER PREFACE

P It is truly good, right, and salutary that we should at all times and in all places give thanks to You, O Lord, our God, whose love daily blesses our nation and supports and strengthens us as we dwell in this land. Grant us Your Spirit, gracious Father, that we may worthily receive the bread and

wine—that is, the true body and blood of our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ—as a gift, guarantee, and pledge of the full salvation He has won for us. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. Unite us with all who gather with us at Your Table here and with all in Your glorious presence who now feast at Your eternal Table in the courts of heaven. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

HYMN #507, v 1 “Holy, Holy, Holy”

**1 Holy, holy, holy! Lord God Almighty!
Early in the morning our song shall rise to Thee;
Holy, holy, holy! merciful and mighty!
God in three persons, blessed Trinity!**

PRAYER OF THANKSGIVING

P Blessed are You, Lord of heaven and earth, for You have had mercy on those whom You created and sent Your only-begotten Son into our flesh to bear our sin and be our Savior. With repentant joy we receive the salvation accomplished for us by the all-availing sacrifice of His body and His blood on the cross.

Gathered in the name and the remembrance of Jesus, we beg You, O Lord, to forgive, renew, and strengthen us with Your Word and Spirit. Grant us faithfully to eat His body and drink His blood as He bids us do in His own testament. Gather us together, we pray, from the ends of the earth to celebrate with all the faithful the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom, which has no end. Graciously receive our prayers; deliver and preserve us. To You alone, O Father, be all glory, honor, and worship, with the Son and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C Amen.

LORD’S PRAYER *Matthew 6:9–13*

P Lord, remember us in Your kingdom and teach us to pray:

C **Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven; give us this day our daily bread; and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us; and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen.**

THE WORDS OF OUR LORD

Matthew 26:26–28; Mark 14:22–24 Luke 22:19–20; 1 Corinthians 11:23–25

PAX DOMINI

P The peace of the Lord be with you always.

C Amen.

HYMN #550 “Lamb of God”

**1 Your only Son no sin to hide
But You have sent Him from Your side
To walk upon this guilty sod
And to become the Lamb of God.**

Refrain

**Oh Lamb of God, Sweet lamb of God
I love the Holy Lamb of God
Oh wash me in His precious Blood
My Jesus Christ the Lamb of God**

**2 Your gift of love they crucified
They laughed and scorned Him as He died
The humble King they named a fraud
And sacrificed the Lamb of God (refr)**

**3 I was so lost I should have died
But You have brought me to Your side
To be led by Your staff and rod
And to be called a lamb of God (refr)**

DISTRIBUTION

(after all have received the Sacrament)

Dismissal

P The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen and preserve you in body and soul to life everlasting. Depart ✠ in peace.

C **Amen.**

POST-COMMUNION THANKSGIVING

A Let us pray. Gracious God, our heavenly Father, You have given us a foretaste of the feast to come in the Holy Supper of Your Son’s body and blood. You have blessed our nation and by Your grace have brought us to this time and place. Keep us firm in the true faith throughout our pilgrimage that, on the day of His coming, we may, together with all Your saints, celebrate the marriage feast of the Lamb in His kingdom which has no end; through Jesus Christ, Your Son, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

C **Amen.**

BENEDICAMUS

A Let us bless the Lord.

C **Thanks be to God.**

BENEDICTION *Numbers 6:24–26*

P The Lord bless you and keep you.
The Lord make His face shine on you and be gracious to you.
The Lord look upon you with favor and ✠ give you peace.
C **Amen.**

HYMN #965 “God Bless Our Native Land”

1 **God bless our native land;
Firm may she ever stand
Through storm and night.
When the wild tempests rave,
Ruler of wind and wave,
Do Thou our country save
By Thy great might.**

2 **So shall our prayers arise
To God above the skies;
On Him we wait.
Thou who art ever nigh,
Guarding with watchful eye,
To Thee aloud we cry:
God save the state!**

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