



Parish Rebuilder

St. Luke's Lutheran Church - 5150 Wilson Street, La Mesa, CA 91942

www.st-lukes-la-mesa.org

July 2026
Monthly Newsletter
Volume 26 Issue 7

We invite you to attend

St. Luke's Lutheran Church

Please contact Lupita in the office to discuss a visit or to arrange an appointment with Pastor Mark:

619-463-6633 or office-sllc@att.net

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**Congregational meeting
July 26th**

Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of ...

In July, Americans traditionally observe the Fourth of the month as our national Day of Independence. If any of us know any wording from the Declaration of Independence, signed 250 years ago on July 4th, it is typically the phrase, "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."

Our nation's founding fathers were much better politicians and diplomats than they were theologians. Scripture talks plenty of life and of liberty (or freedom), but the "pursuit of Happiness" is sorely lacking in biblical support. Thomas Jefferson never explained why he inserted this phrase, coined in 1759 by Samuel Johnson, into the Declaration of Independence. The idea "pursuit of Happiness" is not only bad theology, but it causes no end of trouble for the human race as a whole.

The "pursuit of Happiness" would be a grand ideal if it were not for the reality of human sin. If we read scripture, even if not so carefully, we nearly always find that the "pursuit of Happiness" guided by human sin leads us not only away from God but also leads us into all kinds of trouble. "Pursuing" something implies that we do not already have something, as if God will not provide for us. Pursuing that which makes "us" happy tends to make "us" instead of God the reference point of our lives. Were not Adam and Eve "pursuing Happiness" when they grabbed a hold of the forbidden fruit?



Nonetheless, we as Americans (and as sinners worldwide) think that we have a God-given right to be happy. We even demand that God must make “us” happy. In that same vein, those called formally to service in the church, however that is defined, must also make “us” happy. If they do not, there is often hell to pay! How much of our “church shopping” in the USA is based on wanting to feel good rather than on the forgiveness of sins as a free gift from God in Christ?

From a biblical perspective, because sinners have continually pursued their own happiness, God has throughout history pursued sinners precisely in order to liberate them from this dead end venture. Jesus gave up his divine freedom and equality with God not to make us happy but to call us holy. God knows when he has declared and made us holy (by creating in us through the gospel justifying faith in Christ) that we are truly liberated for life. Could there be any greater happiness than being united with Christ by faith alone now and into all eternity?

This year, while the rest of the country, and presumably the world, is vainly seeking their own happiness in untold sinful pursuits, let us trust and bear witness that our true independence comes from our total dependence upon the God who gave his son on a cross to make us free (eleutheros in Greek) and thus Lutheran (see John 8:31-38). Scripture calls persons set free by faith alone in Jesus Christ “holy ones” or more familiarly “saints.” If we are not wholly and holy happy with the saint creating faith in Christ alone, the only faith which sets us free from sin, death, and the devil, then we have missed the whole point of the hallowing Christian faith.

- Pastor Mark Menacher

Gently Hugged

I recently heard about a 501(c) non-profit organization called “Gently Hugged” from a fellow crafter. I was so impressed by their activities that in response I made two dozen receiving blankets for their efforts. Then, I hitched a ride to donate the blankets and to see their offices for myself in Rancho Bernardo. Once there, I was shown all the stages of processing donations from inspection, washing, mending (if needed), sizing, sorting, and packing the items into baskets. The baskets are then distributed to social workers at local hospitals.

Imagine a young couple who has little resources and few or no items for their newborn. Then at discharge from hospital, their social worker brings them a basket with 70 other items to support them and their baby for its first year! I was told that recipients often cry while unpacking everything and marveling at the generosity of strangers. What a sweet witness!

I have received a donation to facilitate a drive for “Gently Hugged” with which I will be buying some items at the resale store which supplied our church with its Christmas donations to Crisis House. That store is called Nadeesh’s Nice Price Children’s Resale Store on University in La Mesa.

I will also be collecting new or gently used clothes, such as bibs, blankets, socks, hats, and handmade items, for babies aged preemie to

12-18 months to deliver as a gift from our congregation. All these items need to fit compactly in a basket. So, if you wish to donate, please avoid large items like car seats, strollers, or high chairs.

Throughout July, there will be a wagon in the Narthex to collect your contributions to “Gently Hugged.” If you wish to learn more about this organization and about what types of donations are acceptable for their mission, please visit their website at: www.gentlyhugged.org.

- Cheri Murrell

America 250!

During colonial and the early days of our country, bells – church bells, firehouse bells, town and city hall bells - were used to call people together and to alert them of some important announcement or event. Bells called the people of Philadelphia together to hear the Declaration of Independence read publicly for the first time on July 4, 1776.

On July 4th our nation is celebrating its 250th anniversary. In honor of the occasion, people across the country will be ringing bells at 12:00 noon (local time)! To facilitate congregational member participation in this activity, on Sunday, June 28th I will be making some bells available for our members to help celebrate our heritage and freedoms on this very special 4th of July.

- Cheri Murrell



Vacation Bible School 2026

Despite initial hesitancy, Vacation Bible School (VBS) 2026 is quickly gaining speed. This year's VBS will take place the final week of the month, 27-31 July from 5:00 pm - 8:00 pm. Here is the message from the VBS page on the church website:

“Get ready to pack your bags and set sail for “Tropical Trek VBS 2026,” an island-themed Bible adventure discovering how Jesus came to seek and save the lost. Find out more every evening, July 27th-31st, from 5:00 pm to 8:00 pm. VBS 2026 will feature dinner, singing, lessons, games, and crafts. Preschool, elementary school, and adult learners are welcome.

“Remember: VBS 2026, July 27th - 31st , 5:00-8:00 pm, at St. Luke's Lutheran Church in La Mesa. VBS at St. Luke's is always FREE of charge!”

So, if you know of families with young or elementary aged children, or if you are an adult wanting to participate in the adult VBS lessons, please register via the VBS menu on the church website or by ringing the church office (619-463-6633) or by arriving on Monday, 27 July.

Dear Women of St. Luke's,

How is it already the middle of 2026? Didn't we just celebrate New Year's Day? Wasn't it only recently the Lenten Season and Easter Sunday? In another six months we will already have celebrated the Advent Season and celebrated Christmas Day! In fact, Christmas Day is only 25 weeks from Friday, July 3rd! Incredible – and a bit daunting! That bit of reality sparks so many thoughts and emotions – the anticipation of joy and family gatherings, the anxiety and energy involved in planning and preparation, the awe of what God did for us in sending Jesus to live and die and be resurrected to redeem us! WOW! But only 25 weeks? Yikes?

Since I was a young girl in Sunday School, I have marveled at God's prophecies about Jesus and their fulfillment. God planned and prepared for sending our Savior right from the beginning in the Garden of Eden after sin separated Adam and Eve from full fellowship with God. He stated His plan in Genesis 3:15 – "I will put enmity between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel." Jesus would be born of a woman. Galatians 4:4 states - "But when the fullness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son,



made of a woman, made under the law. " There are prophecies about Jesus being a descendent of Abraham (Gen. 12:3) – fulfilled in Matt. 1:1 – "The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham."

Isaiah talks about His being from the house of David, and Luke 1:32-33 acknowledges this truth. Jesus' birth place, Bethlehem, is prophesied in Micah 5:2 and fulfilled in Luke 2:4-7. Isaiah also declared Jesus' virgin birth in Isaiah 7:14, and Matthew declared the fulfillment of this prophecy in Matt. 1:22-23. There are so many prophecies – about the star announcing His birth, about His being called out of Egypt, about His being a Nazarene, about His being God's son. Matthew 3:17 states, "And lo a voice from heaven saying, This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased!" And so many more!

What has amazed me most is God's meticulous and intentional planning from the very beginning to redeem us, sin-broken humans, to Himself. Such amazing love! Such purposeful declarations of His redemptive plan for you and me!

I too often, unfortunately, find myself mechanically turning the pages on my calendar, day by day, month by month. Time seems to fly by and one day melds into another. Is it sometimes like this for you, too? I want to slow down and savor each day as a gift from God. I want to acknowledge His daily blessings and receive His much needed mercies that are new every morning. He is so purposeful with us. I want to live intentionally, seeking and honoring Him and sharing His amazing grace. These are day to day, often moment by moment choices for each of us.



Let's gather together and celebrate Christmas in July! Our Church Council has purchased a new Christmas Tree for our corporate celebration in December. Our Chrismons, those beautiful white and gold ornaments we use on our tree, need refreshing, refurbishing and renewing. Together we can share in God's blessings of today and do a bit of preparation for our December celebration of Jesus' birth. We can fellowship with each other in July amidst Christmas cookies, Christmas carols and other crafts and fun activities. Watch for coming announcements! Come join in the fun. All are welcome.

In His service,



THANK YOU VOLUNTEERS



Coffee Hour Hosts for July

July 5th — Carol Prior & Stephanie Brown

July 12th — Pending host

July 19th — Debbie Deal & Terry East

July 26th — Lori Ann Linn & Maddie



Thanks to all the men that joined us for the inaugural Men's Chorus on June 14th. We will be having special music throughout the summer and would like to include those who would like to sing, play an instrument or be part of a group.

I am inviting all the women who would like to sing on a one-time basis to stay after the Fellowship Time for a short rehearsal of a familiar hymn. There is no commitment or expectation for you to join anything, just come and enjoy music. We will rehearse for about a half hour on Sunday, July 19th and then sing on July 26th. I am planning on doing a mixed singing group for August, so think about that, too!

If you would like to do a vocal or instrumental solo or possibly a dramatic reading, please see me or call me at 619-871-5133. Hope you have a great summer!

Thanks, Richard

JULY WORSHIP TEXTS

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

— **July 5, 2026**

First Lesson — Zechariah 9:9-12

Psalm 145:1-14

Second Lesson — Romans 7:14-25a

Gospel — Matthew 11:25-30



Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

— **July 12, 2026**

First Lesson — Isaiah 55:10-13

Psalm 65:9-13

Second Lesson — Romans 8:12-17

Gospel — Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Eighth Sunday after Pentecost

— **July 19, 2026**

First Lesson — Isaiah 44:6-8

Psalm 119:57-64

Second Lesson — Romans 8:18-27

Gospel — Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Ninth Sunday after Pentecost

— **July 26, 2026**

First Lesson — Deuteronomy 7:6-9

Psalm 125

Second Lesson — Romans 8:28-39

Gospel — Matthew 13:44-52

Gary Prior	7/5
Judith Dunnigan	7/12
Dan Iverson	7/14
Martha Applegate	7/17
Jennifer Killion	7/20
Sarah Scott	7/22
Cheryl Walczak	7/23
Suzanne Miller	7/26
Mel Horning	7/31



Sheila & Tom Stubbs	7/5
Pete & Karen Mylerberg	7/26
George & Karen Parcells	7/29

JULY'S PRAYER CALENDAR

"How Wide the Love of Christ"

1	Ps 145:13-21	
2	Luke 11:9-13	<i>How wide the love of Christ!</i>
3	John 1:9-18	<i>It knows no class or race</i>
4	Isaiah 25:6-9	<i>But holds our one humanity</i>
5	Ps 23:1-6	<i>Within it's broad embrace.</i>
6	I Cor 1:26-31	
7	Ps 107:1-9	<i>How long the love of Christ!</i>
8	Ps 69:13-16	<i>It's patience will not cease</i>
9	Isaiah 40:27-31	<i>Until this broken world</i>
10	Ps 69:30-33	<i>Is bound in everlasting peace.</i>
11	Ephesians 2:1-7	
12	Ps 94:17-19	<i>How high the love of Christ!</i>
13	I John 4:7-12	<i>Beyond all thought it soars,</i>
14	Isaiah 41:10-13	<i>Yet upon our passing lives</i>
15	Titus 3:1-7	<i>Unmeasured mercy pours.</i>
16	Psalms 100:1-5	
17	Eph 3:14-19	<i>How deep the love of Christ,</i>
18	Ps. 36:5-12	<i>Descending to a cross!</i>
19	Ps. 118:1-7	<i>He bears within his wounded hands</i>
20	John 15:7-11	<i>All human pain and loss.</i>
21	Ps. 103:6-18	
22	Romans 5:6-11	<i>All praise to you o Christ</i>
23	Lam 3:22-26	<i>For love whose depth and height,</i>
24	Ps. 98:1-9	<i>Whose length and breadth fill</i>
25	II Thes 2:13-17	<i>Time and space with endless life</i>
26	I John 5	<i>And light.</i>
27	Ps. 108:1-4	
28	II Thes 3:1-5	<i>Hymn 535</i>
29	Rev. 1:4-8	<i>Lutheran Service Book</i>
30	Ephesians 3:14-21	
31	Matthew 6:7-13	

JULY'S WORSHIP TEAMS

	Reader(s)	<i>Jillian Barnard</i>
	Altar Guild	<i>Terry East</i>
5th	Communion Assistant —bread	<i>Bob Urich</i>
	Communion Assistants—wine	<i>Jillian Barnard & Jennifer Killion</i>
	Greeter	<i>Randy Engel</i>
	Prayers of the People	<i>Pastor Mark Menacher</i>
	Projectionist	<i>Shirley Carrington</i>
	Usher Team	<i>Bob & Cheryl Gray</i>
	Acolytes	
	Sound Tech	<i>Kendrick Jennings</i>
	Counter	<i>Judi Dunnigan</i>
12th	Communion Assistant —bread	<i>Ted Olsen</i>
	Communion Assistants—wine	<i>Laurie Floren & Terry East</i>
	Greeter	<i>JoAnn Hendrickson</i>
	Prayers of the People	<i>Jillian Barnard</i>
	Projectionist	<i>Gail Knippelmeyer</i>
	Usher Team	<i>Laurie Floreen & Randy Engel</i>
	Acolytes	
	Sound Tech	<i>Kendrick Jennings</i>
	Counter	<i>Jennifer Killion</i>
19th	Communion Assistant —bread	<i>Ken Murrell</i>
	Communion Assistants—wine	<i>Richard & Whitney Utley</i>
	Greeter	<i>Laurie Floren</i>
	Prayers of the People	<i>Jennifer Killion</i>
	Projectionist	<i>Shirley Carrington</i>
	Usher Team	<i>David & Kim Emerson</i>
	Acolytes	
	Sound Tech	<i>Kendrick Jennings</i>
	Counter	<i>Judi Dunnigan</i>
26th	Communion Assistant —bread	<i>Judi Dunnigan</i>
	Communion Assistants—wine	<i>Jennifer Killion & Randy Engel</i>
	Greeter	<i>Jillian Barnard</i>
	Prayers of the People	<i>Whitney Utley</i>
	Projectionist	<i>Gail Knippelmeyer</i>
	Usher Team	<i>Gary & Carol Prior</i>
	Acolytes	
	Sound Tech	<i>Kendrick Jennings</i>
	Counter	<i>Jennifer Killion</i>

July 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 10:00 am WSL Bible Study 11:00 am Staff 7:00 pm Service	2 8:00 am Tai Chi 6:30 pm Al-Anon	3 OFFICE CLOSED	4 8:00 am JOY
5 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Ault Sunday School 5:00 pm Al-Anon	6 9:00 am Counters 5:00 pm Al-Anon 6:30 pm AA	7 8:00 am Tai Chi 9:30 am Project Day	8 11:00 am Staff 7:00 pm Service	9 8:00 am Tai Chi 6:30 pm Al-Anon	10	11 8:00 am JOY 10:00 am WSL Story Telling
12 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Ault Sunday School 5:00 pm Al-Anon	13 9:00 am Counters 5:00 pm Al-Anon 6:30 pm AA	14 8:00 am Tai Chi 9:30 am Project Day 6:00pm Council mtg	15 10:00 am WSL Bible Study 11:00 am Staff 7:00 pm Service	16 8:00 am Tai Chi 6:30 pm Al-Anon	17	18 8:00 am JOY
19 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Ault Sunday School 5:00 pm Al-Anon	20 9:00 am Counters 5:00 pm Al-Anon 6:30 pm AA	21 8:00 am Tai Chi 9:30 am Project Day	22 11:00 am Staff 7:00 pm Service	23 8:00 am Tai Chi 6:30 pm Al-Anon	24	25 8:00 am JOY 10:00 am WSL Story Telling
26 9:00 am Worship 10:30 am Ault Sunday School Congregational meeting	27 9:00 am Counters 5:00 pm Al-Anon 6:30 pm AA 5:00 pm VBS	28 8:00 am Tai Chi 9:30 am Project Day 5:00 pm VBS	29 11:00 am Staff 5:00 pm VBS 7:00 pm Service	30 8:00 am Tai Chi 12:00 pm Book club 5:00 pm VBS 6:30 pm Al-Anon	31 5:00 pm VBS	

ST. LUKE'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Dated Material
July 2026

CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

A WARM WELCOME TO ALL

- Sunday Worship: 9:00 am in the Sanctuary
- Sunday School: 10:30 am in the Lower Level
- Wednesday Choir Practice: 5:30 pm in the Fireside Room (Lower Level)
- Wednesday Pericope / Communion Service: 7:00 pm in the Fireside Room

St. Luke's Mission Statement:

We are called as a community of Christians saved by grace
—through faith alone in Jesus Christ—
to spread the Holy Gospel in word, sacrament, and action
solī deo gloria.