

Based on Our Nation's History and Lutheran Service Book 966

AMERICA

Let Us See and Acknowledge God's Blessings!

Sunday, July 6 at 9:00 + Monday, July 7 at 7 PM

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost / Third Sunday after Trinity – 2014

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: Last Friday was the 238th anniversary of our independence! So, today, let's learn more about ♦the age of nations, ♦America's history, ♦our need for repentance, and ♦our reasons to praise!

1. **The Age of Nations:** The average nation is 159 years old. Japan is the oldest, at 2,674; South Sudan is the youngest at 3; and the USA is the 22nd oldest at 238.¹ Even though many deny God's existence, the Bible tells us that God is the One who establishes every nation ([Rom 13:1](#))!
2. **America's History:**
 - a. "During the American Revolution, the legal separation of the Thirteen Colonies from Great Britain occurred on July 2, 1776, when the Second Continental Congress voted to approve a resolution of independence... After voting for independence, Congress turned its attention to the Declaration of Independence, a statement explaining [their] decision... Congress debated and revised the wording of the Declaration, finally approving it on July 4.
 - b. [Regarding July 2], John Adams had written [this] to his wife Abigail: The second day of July, 1776, will be the most memorable [era] in the history of America. I...believe that it will be celebrated by

¹ <http://motherboard.vice.com/blog/how-old-is-the-average-country>

succeeding generations as the great anniversary festival. **It ought to be [remembered] as the day of deliverance, by solemn acts of devotion to God Almighty.** It ought to be [celebrated] with pomp and parade, with shows, games, sports, guns, bells, bonfires, and illuminations, from one end of this continent to the other, from this time forward forever more."² Even though we focus on the 4th rather than the 2nd of July, *let us give all credit to God Almighty for all of our blessings!*

3. **Our Need for Repentance:** Throughout history many have begun in repentance and humility – ♦seeing their sins, ♦being sorry for their sins, ♦trusting in Jesus as Savior, and ♦relying on God Almighty for every need☺! However – *as God blessed, time moved forward, and life was good* – repentance turned to impenitence **and** humility to pride. The results we see today are ♦blindness to sin, ♦lack of sorrow, and ♦trust in self☹!
 - a. Our nation **began** with God's blessing and **continued** with God's blessing, but now our connection with God is merely for show☹! In our nation's capital there are many inscriptions to God, even our money says: "In God we trust," yet we deny Him by ☹electing godless leaders, ☹murdering preborn children, ☹legalizing sexual perversion, and so much more!
 - b. So, *by God's grace*, let us be like the wicked city of Nineveh *after* Jonah's preaching: [See Jonah 3:4-10](#).
4. **Our Reasons to Praise:** The patriotic hymn: **Before You, Lord, We Bow** (LSB, 966), by Francis Scott Key (1779-1843) (he also wrote our nation anthem, The Star-Spangled Banner):

² [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independence_Day_\(United_States\)](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independence_Day_(United_States))

a. Stanza 1:

- i. **Before You, Lord, we bow, Our God who reigns above, And rules the world below, Boundless in pow'r and love.** // Since our God is the True God, *ruling over the whole world with incomprehensible power and extraordinary love*, let us bow before Him!
- ii. **Our thanks we bring, In joy and praise, Our hearts we raise, To You, our King!** // When we know Jesus as our Savior, then we see God to be the source of every blessing. For all who know Him, *let us praise Him!*

b. Stanza 2:

- i. **The nation You have blest, May well Your love declare, From foes and fears at rest, Protected by Your care.** // So much we were blessed as a nation – ✓ our enemies defeated and ✓ our fears replaced with peace. But now, *as a rejecting nation*, ☹ our enemies are growing stronger and ☹ our peace is being replaced with fear. So let us → pray for repentance and, *again*, → declare God's love to the world!
- ii. **For this bright day, For this fair land—Gifts of Your hand—Our thanks we pay.** // Even as we move inch by inch away from the Lord, many blessings remain; so *let us stop moving away and be thankful!*

c. Stanza 3: **May ev'ry mountain height, Each vale and forest green, Shine in Your Word's pure light, And its rich fruits be seen! May ev'ry tongue, Be tuned to praise, And join to raise, A grateful song.** // As God's remnant, *true believers*, let us praise

the Lord! May He also lead many others to join us in ♦*praise now* and ♦*blessings forever thru Jesus!*

d. Stanza 4:

- i. **Earth, hear your Maker's voice; Your great Redeemer own; Believe, obey, rejoice, And worship Him alone.** // Note the key words: **hear**—*pay attention*, **believe**—*don't doubt*, **obey**—*live the Word*, **rejoice**—*you are saved*, and **worship**—*honor your Maker and Redeemer!*
- ii. **Cast down your pride, Your sin deplore, And bow before, The Crucified.** // Since blessings can so easily lead to pride, let us ♦be cautious, ♦abhor our sin—*the sin for which Jesus died*, and ♦trust in Him!

e. Stanza 5: **And when in pow'r He comes, Oh, may our native land, From all its rending tombs, Send forth a glorious band. A countless throng, With joy to sing, To heav'n's high King, Salvation's song!** // Eventually Jesus will come—*maybe soon!* I can imagine many *from the earlier years of our nation* rising to eternal life, yet what about those who live among us today? May the Lord transform many lives—*before it is too late!*

Conclusion: Our nation is staggering *but it has not yet fallen*; therefore, let us be diligent in praying for God to +lead many people to repentance and +return our nation to being a beacon of **light** and **truth** to our fallen world! **Amen!**

For Much More: www.BethlehemLutheranChurchParma.com

Having been saved thru Jesus, let us live for Him and share the good news!
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