

# Trinity Tribune

Trinity Ev. Lutheran Church  
Paola, Kansas

## “The Separation of Church and State”

On July 4<sup>th</sup>, we celebrate our nation’s independence from Great Britain. We ought to also celebrate the freedoms and rights that our nation recognizes. The First Amendment to our nation’s Constitution is very well known for protecting two of our rights: our right to freely exercise our religion and our right to speak freely and petition the government by various peaceful means.

Here is what the First Amendment says: “The First Amendment provides that Congress make no law respecting an establishment of religion or prohibiting its free exercise. It protects freedom of speech, the press, assembly, and the right to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.”

One phrase that people often use now to describe the relationship between our nation and religion is that there is a “separation of church and state.” This comes from Thomas Jefferson as he explained the first amendment: “I contemplate with sovereign reverence that act of the whole American people which declared that their legislature should ‘make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof,’ thus building a wall of separation between Church and State” (Jefferson’s Letter to the Danbury Baptists, Jan 1, 1802).

What does this phrase mean though? How deep is the separation between the two? What does the Bible have to say on this matter? These are good questions.

### I. First, What Does the Bible Say?

It’s always important to start with the Bible. Jesus says regarding taxation, “Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s” (Matt 22:21). Jesus indicates that Christians ought to recognize earthly authority and pay taxes that are due. At the same time, we should render to God the honor and praise that are due to Him alone.

St. Peter bids us to “honor the emperor (2:17), and St. Paul tells us to pray “for kings and all who are in high positions” (1 Tim 2:2). St. Paul also encourages Christians to be subject to governing authorities, because they are in place to punish wrongdoers and approve what is good. God has given the state these tasks, which He has not given the Church.

We can also respond to governments with speech and action. The Hebrew midwives hid the births of male babies against the orders of the Pharaoh (Exod 1:19). Daniel asked the Babylonians not to feed him and the Jewish youths food contrary to kosher laws (Dan 1). John the Baptist spoke out against Herod’s adulterous marriage (Matt 14:3).

### II. How Deep Does the Separation Go?

Some in our nation suggest that the church should have nothing to say about political matters, as if “spiritual matters” are confined to the walls of the church. However, there will always be some sort of conversation between church and state.

We all recognize that the church can govern some things about churches. Our churches follow zoning laws, building codes, fire codes, and other such measures intended for the protection of life and ordering of society. Our pastors are not protected from the law if they commit a crime.

Churches can also speak to moral issues of the day, even if they might be labeled “political.” Why? Because the Bible speaks to morality, both public and private. We can be concerned with immorality and evil and speak out about it.

### III. Putting It All Together

The phrase “separation of church and state” is often lobbed at Christians to suggest that religion should not have anything to say about legislation or social issues. However, we should understand this phrase as “the separation of *the institutions* of church state.”

Jefferson did not want a king (or queen) to be the head of the Church, as is still the case in Great Britain. The king could tell his subjects how to worship, and that was the law. America would be different—and we’re thankful for that! Our worship and faith are not dependent on kings or bureaucrats. Also in Great Britain, they still have church bishops sitting in government, in the House of Lords. Imagine if our Senate included some of the church leaders from across America! Speaking as a pastor, I don’t think I want to see that either. We have a different charge from God.

So there’s a lot to be thankful this Independence Day—especially for the religious freedoms that our nation recog-

nizes. Let us exercise that freedom and not take it for granted.

Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Woelmer



- July 1 ..... Emily Wolf
- July 3 ..... Brandy Allen
- July 3 ..... Molly Hermann
- July 3 ..... Karen Windler
- July 3 ..... Every Massey
- July 5 ..... Joshua Bunch
- July 5 ..... Samantha Prothe
- July 6 ..... Ryan Morton
- July 6 ..... Macie Garrison
- July 7 ..... Regan Boyer
- July 7 ..... Shelly D’Amato
- July 7 ..... Kennedy Rakoski
- July 7 ..... Tamara Mitchell
- July 10 ..... Wanda Staggs
- July 11 ..... Ken Debrick
- July 11 ..... Dennis Prothe
- July 12 ..... Joshua Sombke
- July 12 ..... Steve Warner
- July 13 ..... Steve Grother
- July 13 ..... Duane Prothe
- July 13 ..... Don Warring
- July 13 ..... Lennox Wolf
- July 14 ..... Sheryl Holtz
- July 14 ..... Rayden Berry
- July 15 ..... Karen Kaiser
- July 16 ..... David Johns
- July 16 ..... Brittannie Ritch
- July 17 ..... Ann Davis
- July 18 ..... Keith Prothe
- July 18 ..... Madison Snider
- July 19 ..... Clint Kettler
- July 19 ..... Cathy Tesar
- July 19 ..... Janet England
- July 20 ..... Mallory Tharp
- July 20 ..... Norma Peckman
- July 21 ..... Dan Hieber
- July 21 ..... Chance Mueller
- July 23 ..... Lillian Kettler
- July 23 ..... Taryn Jones
- July 24 ..... Zachary Davis
- July 24 ..... Margo Cyphers
- July 24 ..... Marcie Reyelts
- July 25 ..... Shannon Fanning

- July 26 ..... Stephanie Bivins
- July 27 ..... Matthew Barnett
- July 27 ..... Denna Jones
- July 27 ..... Curtis Kettler
- July 27 ..... Marla Prothe
- July 27 ..... Miciah Carter
- July 28 ..... Ben Rakoski
- July 29 ..... Lonnie England
- July 29 ..... Barbara Herrs
- July 29 ..... Cody Weaver
- July 31 ..... Barbie Dillenbeck
- July 31 ..... Colleen Richardson
- July 1 ..... Dannie & Elaine Stewart (51)
- July 7 ..... Andrew & Brianna Chapman (11)
- July 8 ..... Earl & Darleen Medlin (48)
- July 15 ..... Adam & Lorri Jenson (28)
- July 18 ..... Paul & Karen Brack (42)
- July 22 ..... Charles & Kathy Hall (44)
- July 26 ..... John & Kathy Gerken (54)
- July 26 ..... David & Carol Wray (43)
- July 27 ..... Phillip & Morgan Richards (21)
- July 29 ..... Chris & Sherri Webb (34)
- July 30 ..... Justin & Emily Prothe (1)



**Bible Study on Baptism:  
“A Washing of Regeneration”**

Baptism contains so many promises for us! It is a new birth, a first death of our sinful nature, a washing away of sins, and contains promises for life eternal.

Join the Adult Bible Class at 9:00 a.m. on Sundays in the Heritage Room to learn more!

## “July 4th” Service and Potluck at the Shelter House

On Sunday, July 2<sup>nd</sup>, join us at the Shelter House at 10:00 a.m. for our outdoor service. There will be Holy Communion, offered in “continuous distribution.”

Afterwards, join us for a potluck! Bring a dish to share and maybe a lawn chair as we give thanks to God for the ways that He has blessed us through our nation.



---

### NEW PORTALS OF PRAYER

The new quarterly issue of the devotional booklet *Portals of Prayer* for July through September is now available in standard size, large print, or a medium “digest” size (same size as *Reader’s Digest*). A great way to keep close to the Lord!



---

### Lutheran Links

LCMS: [www.lcms.org](http://www.lcms.org)

LCMS Kansas District: [www.kslcms.org](http://www.kslcms.org)

Lutherans for Life: [www.lutheransforlife.org](http://www.lutheransforlife.org)

The Lutheran Hour: [www.lutheranhour.org](http://www.lutheranhour.org)

Issues, Etc. (Talk Radio): [www.issuesetc.org](http://www.issuesetc.org)

KFUO Radio: [www.kfuo.org](http://www.kfuo.org)

## Youth Bonfire Night

Youth and their families are invited to come out to the Shelter House July 2<sup>nd</sup> in the evening. Come at 5 pm, and we'll hopefully be eating by 6. Stay as long as you like. Please bring lawn chairs and yard games! We will also discuss the plans for upcoming youth events over the next year.



---

### COFFEE HOUR



Everyone is invited to stay for Coffee Hour in the Gathering Room following worship. Our thanks to those that provide snacks each Sunday. The signup sheet to provide snacks for Coffee Hour in 2023 is on the counter in the Gathering Room. Consider signing up to honor birthdays, wedding anniversaries, etc. Most of 2023 is open!

---

### Upcoming Council and Voters Meetings

The quarterly meeting of the Voters Assembly will be held following worship Sunday, July 16th. In order to prepare for this meeting the Church Council will meet Tuesday, July 11th at 7:00pm.