

**FROM THE
PASTOR'S DESK**

As we celebrate the Fourth of July, it is a good time to recall what the Bible says about government:

- ★ **Government is established by God.** Contrary to popular belief, government is not a human invention. God himself has established government for our good. As St. Paul writes in Romans 13:1-2: "There is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God" (NIV).
- ★ **Government is to maintain order.** This is the main purpose for which God established government. St. Paul says of our rulers in Romans 13:4: "He is God's servant to do you good. But if you do wrong, be afraid, for he does not bear the sword for nothing. He is God's servant, an agent of wrath to bring punishment on the wrongdoer" (NIV).
- ★ **God commands us to honor our governmental leaders.** Those who serve in government are deserving of our honor and respect, as St. Paul tells us in Romans 13:7: "Give everyone what you owe him . . . if respect, then respect; if honor, then honor" (NIV).
- ★ **God commands us to obey our rulers.** St. Paul explains in Romans 13:1-2: "Everyone must submit himself to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, he who rebels against the authority

is rebelling against what God has instituted" (NIV). And St. Paul writes to the young pastor Titus: "Remind the people to be subject to rulers and authorities, to be obedient, to be ready to do whatever is good" (Titus 3:1 NIV). Likewise, St. Peter says: "Submit yourselves for the Lord's sake to every authority instituted among men" (1 Peter 2:13 NIV).

- ★ **We may—and must—disobey when the government directs us to act contrary to God's Word.** This is the only exception to God's command to obey the government. When the government ordered the disciples not to preach about Jesus, the Book of Acts reports: "Peter and the other apostles replied: 'We must obey God rather than men!'" (Acts 5:29 NIV).
- ★ **It is our duty as Christians to pay taxes.** St. Paul directs in Romans 13:7: "Give everyone what you owe him. If you owe taxes, pay taxes" (NIV). And when Jesus was asked about paying taxes to the Roman Empire, he replied: "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's" (Matthew 22:21 NASB).
- ★ **God wants us to pray for our rulers.** St. Paul writes in 1 Timothy 2:1-2: "I urge, then, first of all, that requests, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for everyone—for kings all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior" (NIV).

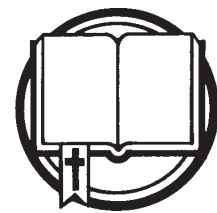
So as you celebrate Independence Day, give thanks to God for our government, and pray that our rulers may be blessed with godly wisdom.

Pastor Kevin Vogts

**Pastor Vogts
Appointed to
National LCMS Board**

The Board of Directors of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod has appointed Pastor Vogts to a three-year term on the Synod's national Board for Communications Services. In this role he will help oversee the Synod's communications and marketing efforts, including *The Lutheran Witness, Reporter* and other publications, media productions, public relations, advertising campaigns, and related efforts.

Pastor Vogts was selected for this position because of his previous experience as Director of Communications at Concordia University Wisconsin. After being installed in September, he will travel to St. Louis for a few days several times a year for board meetings.



Messages for July

July 4

"God Bless America"

1 Timothy 2:1-3

July 11

"The Fruits of the Spirit"

Galatians 5:22-23

July 18

"Something to Boast About"

Galatians 6:14

July 25

"A Life Worthy of the Lord"

Colossians 1:10-14