



**BY GEORGE – JULY 2017**  
**R. Hess**

**Happy 4<sup>th</sup>!**

This year our celebration of Independence Day has special meaning. We are in a time of continued divisions and stress for our nation. Our own congregation has a variety of political viewpoints within it. How can we give a united witness as followers of Jesus Christ? How can we find spiritual support in a time of anxiety?

Independence Day is a good time to focus on some basic principles from the Bible. The first is that God is Lord of all the nations, as creator of the world and all peoples. As followers of God, our commitment is to share God's love and justice for everyone. Every nation is accountable to God for how we treat others. Second, God has a special heart for the vulnerable and powerless. In the scripture, this is expressed by saying that God cares for the alien, the orphan, and the widow – those who have no one to care for them. God calls us as his followers to work to support those who are vulnerable in our own day. Third, God has come among us in Jesus to show God's love and to suffer with us. God is not "out there" somewhere, but lives with us.

As followers of God and citizens of the United States, we give witness to these principles. In word and action, we proclaim that God loves all people around the world. We call on our leaders to do all possible to care for those who are downtrodden and vulnerable in our nation and in other parts of the world. As members of St. George's, we work to help those in need in our own community. We also give witness to the love of God incarnate in Jesus, that God is present with us and with all people. We find support for ourselves in this love. No matter what our race, culture, or political background, we are noticed and loved by God in Jesus.

These principles may sound very basic, but they make all the difference in the way to see our nation and the world. We have a wonderful tradition of freedom and democracy in our nation. We celebrate this gift that our nation brings to the world, and we give thanks for God's love for us and for all peoples of our world.

I wish everyone a wonderful and safe Independence Day!

***In Jesus' love,  
Father Ray***