

# WEEKLY **NEASSLEIGER** JUNE 29, 2023

#### Pastor Rev. Sharon Kichline

Music Ministry Lamar Fitzgerald

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#### A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR THE PERFECT BIRTHDAY GIFT

#### Dear Church,

Next week we will celebrate our nation's birthday. It will be a time of parades, watermelon, and sparklers.

This morning, I am thinking about this big birthday party from a theological perspective. Where is God in the midst of a distinctly secular celebration? How does our national pride fit into our faith?

I am reminded that in seminary we were taught that the Sanctuary of a church is meant to represent the Kingdom of God, where God, not the President (or the Queen-or whoever runs your country), presides. It is therefore meant to be a place where the pursuit of justice and righteousness is palpable; where grace and mercy are found in abundance. It is not red. It is not blue. When one steps into God's House, we leave our national, political, and public affiliations behind. It is meant to be a place where radical welcome and equality reign, where diversity is honored, even while unity is cherished. That is why the American flag has been removed from many sanctuaries. The flag of our nation champions unity through our patriotic affiliation, rather than unity through our faith in Jesus Christ. In God's Kingdom there are no flags, only a table of abundance where all peoples are ultimately gathered, and there is enough for everybody.

God is not American. Nor is God Russian or Scandinavian. God is above all those limiting human constructs. Still, there is a proud, American flag-waving, nation-loving patriot that lives in me, and maybe in you, too. If we are not waving flags, pledging allegiance, or singing the National Anthem at church, how will we celebrate our nation and all our many freedoms?

- We will pray for our country, for our President, for all our leaders. We will pray that God's Holy Spirit will move in their lives, and they will be receptive to her leading, over the pulsating noise of public opinion, or the alluring song of personal power.
- We will remember. We will remember the sacrifices of those who have protected us from harm and our country's early mothers and fathers who reasoned and then fought this country into being.
- We will give thanks for those who have served our country in the past; for their sacrifices made to keep us safe. We will ask God's protection for those who wear the uniform today with courage and honor.

These gifts, wrapped in love and respect, will be the perfect offerings.

Grace & Peace + PASTOR SHARON



# PRAYER CONCERNS

Tom Pacatte

Joyce Simpson

Traci Stuart

Meagan Day

Margaret Christensen

**Becca Stevens** 

Ilene Denzin and Nancy Heinze

(Marcia Kennon);

Lenore Sarich (Denny Sarich);

Randy Turmen (Lettie Morse);

Alta Kopetzky and her daughter Linda (Marcia

Kennon);

Natalie (Traci Stuart);

Mark Guillermo's Family (Beth Gewinner);

and for meaningful gun control laws.

### ANNA TKACZ our new director of children's and youth ministries



Hello everybody! My name is Anna Tkacz and I am the new Director of Children's and Youth Ministries. I am a St. Louis city native and currently live in the Bevo neighborhood with my fiance and our two friendly pups, Sophia and Jack. I have worked with children and youth in some capacity for the past 10 years, starting as a babysitter when I was 17. I am a graduate of Fontbonne University, where I earned my Bachelor's in Education, along with teacher certifications in both Early Childhood (Birth-Grade 3) and Middle School English and Social Studies (Grades 5-9).

When I was a homeroom teacher, I taught Middle School Writing and Grammar, along with Social Studies, to students in 6th - 8th grades. Most recently, I worked with the Early Childhood team at Villa Duchesne to help cover a vacant position for a semester. I sincerely enjoy working with children, youth, and their families! I am excited to be in a position that allows me to be creative and use my teaching skills outside of a classroom. I look forward to getting to know everyone in the WUM community. Please pray for me, the children, and the youth group as I start this new position!

### YOUTH MINISTRY

#### We welcome our new Youth Director, Anna Tkacz!

#### SUNDAY, JULY 2

Outdoor games and zombie tag 5:30-7:30 pm SUNDAY, JULY 9 Mission trip meeting

at 5:00 pm Youth group following



## BAPTISM

Together with parents Traci Stuart and Sandy Reesor, and with hearts bursting with love, we celebrated the baptism of Sophia Michelle and Anthony (Tony) Keith on June 25th. Welcome into the family of Christ, little ones!



#### NEW MEMBERS JENNY WATTS AND HER SON LUCAS JOINED ON JUNE 4

Jenny, a children's educator, transferred her membership from Concord Trinity UMC. She has lived on both coasts, and is pleased to be in the Midwest. Lucas loves electronics and figuring out how things work. He wants to be an inventor when he grows up. Welcome Jenny and Lucas!



#### CREATION CARE: RESOURCES FOR REDUCING YOUR IMPACT ON THE PLANET

Part of what deters us from doing our utmost to reduce our impact on our environment is the feeling that we are so small: what we do can't really make a difference, can it?

However, if you imagine the cumulative effect of doing your little part, multiplied across our region, it could indeed have a significant effect.

We've written in the past about reducing plastic consumption. Some manufacturers have begun shifting their packaging from plastic to compostable materials. Another option for us as individuals is to support local stores that sell in bulk or package-free. There are two in Webster Groves: one called <u>Dharma & Dwell</u>, the other is <u>Kind Soap Company</u>. There's another in Kirkwood called <u>The Refill Effect</u>. Take a little field trip and pay them a visit. Click <u>here</u> to read a recent piece in the Ladue News about eight different local stores that you can support and do your part. It might help you change your consumption lifestyle.

(From the Justice Team-Debbie Lund)





#### NEWSLETTER ARTICLE DEADLINE

All articles and submissions must be sent to <u>secretary@websterum.org</u> by Tuesday at 12pm to be in that week's newsletter.