

JULY



Wednesday, July 15th

## Trip to Ohio Star Theatre to see Elijah: Prophet of Fire

We will enjoy lunch at Dutch Valley buffet at 11:30 and then see the 1pm showing of Elijah: Prophet of Fire. **Ticket Cost (includes lunch): \$68**

Please sign up in the Gathering Space by June 30th as all reservations will be made on July 1st.

## THE VOICE

July 2026

Good Shepherd Lutheran Church

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Mark Your Calendars for Lunch Away at

The Nook

12356 Millersburg Rd SW, Massillon

Wednesday, July 29th at Noon

Sign up in the Gathering Space



## *Notes From Pastor Eli!*

### **Guilt Free Leisure**

My friend, I am probably like you, I love the summer time. It is the time most of us spend outdoors enjoying the warmth, the green grass, the blue sky, an occasional thunder storm, and getting away on vacation. This is great, except I often can't relax. How about you?

Why do we feel guilty when we allow ourselves to relax? How should we be filling our non working hours? Shall we fill it carelessly, merely seeking diversion that will allow us to escape from boredom? Shall we fill it with more work in hopes of earning respect, wealth and God's blessing?

A big problem for many of us is that we become inseparable from our work. We are not working to live, but living to work. We may be working because we need to prove ourselves, or because we feel insignificant if we are not "making a contribution." Or we may be working to earn God's favor. In each of these, work has become a way of justifying our existence. As long as we have attitudes like these, any real leisure will be very difficult for us.

According to Webster's New World Dictionary, "leisure" is defined as "free and unoccupied; spare: as leisure time. Having much leisure; not working for a living." It sounds like leisure is free time, time that is not encumbered by the "have-to's" or the "ought-to's." For many of us, we desperately need this. But, is that all? Isn't there something more to leisure than just "nothing to do"?

I looked up the term for leisure in the Greek language and guess what the Greek word is for leisure? I was surprised to find it is the word "schola"--the root word from which we get our word "school" is derived. I wish I would have known that when I was in high school because I never associated school as leisure. Oh, maybe I did.

For the Greeks, school meant freedom to learn. Only persons who had leisure were free to learn. To have leisure was to have freedom. For the Greeks, leisure was the furthest thing from what idleness is. Leisure is the use of our time to become more alive, more vital. To be idle is to fail to look at the world, to fail to appreciate and enjoy it, and to fail to let the world influence me in healthy ways.

If leisure is so good then, why do I feel so guilty when I'm engaged in it? I think a lot has to do with our attitude. Many of us believe that unless we are doing something useful in immediate terms, we are idle. slothful and sinful. If we think and act this way, we will see recreation as only of value if it makes us more efficient, and the only purpose for playing is that we will be more productive. This is not how the Greeks saw leisure. This is not being more alive, more vital.

I remember someone taking the word "recreation" and dividing it: "re-creation" or "re-create" This is the idea: to regain life, aliveness, vitality. I believe this is what our Creator had in mind when He created us and breathed the breath of life into us and we became living beings.

My friend, enjoy your summer, your re-creating time.—*Eli*

## *From Our Council President, Lei Fahrner*

### **God Bless America...Yes, God Has!**

Dear Friends,

It's July and we really don't have a lot going on so I have been left with a shortage of pages in our newsletter. I decided that I would try to find a Fourth of July poem to fill something, but after much searching, nothing seemed to even pique my interest. Instead, I thought that I might share with you a personal story.

A number of years ago we asked our then much younger kids where they wanted to go on vacation. I don't remember which one of them decided, but I remember one of them saying that they wanted to see the Liberty Bell. That would mean a trip to Philadelphia, which at the time had some very high crime statistics. Two younger kids, crime stats, big city...I just wasn't sure. But we went and I am so happy we did.

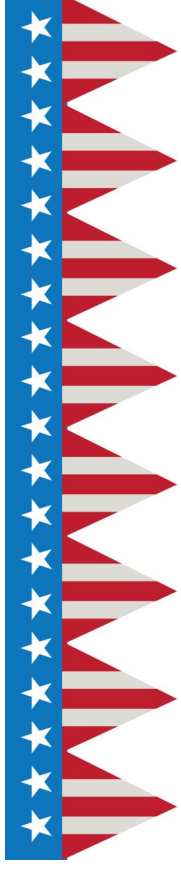
I do remember most of the trip, but what impressed me the most was Independence Hall. Walking into the "room where it happened", as the musical *Hamilton* likes to sing, is beyond breathtaking. It's not beautiful, ornate or anything overly exciting, but to know that in that room a bunch of our founding fathers hashed out and wrote out and debated the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution of the United States. These men knew that signing the Declaration of Independence was akin to a death sentence if they were caught, but they did it anyway because they believed that this new country should be free of the tyranny of King George III.


Running any organization is no easy task. Now I realize that I have faced no decisions that come anywhere close to the ones being made in 1776, and I truly do thank God that I have a council that will talk things out, agree, disagree or play devil's advocate. I can only imagine those men holed up in Independence Hall fully realizing that their decisions would cost relationships, friendships and even lives after the fighting was over. Signing their names was an act of bravery that we truly can't understand. I'm sure more than one of them returned home afterwards and spent sleepless nights agonizing over whether they made the right decision.

This year America celebrates her 250<sup>th</sup> birthday. Sure, she has had growing pains, a number of black eyes and bruises, but she boasts of significantly more successes. So many successes that even at her worst moments others still have a desire to come and be a part of a country that is like no other. Politics aside, America was an experiment that worked and will continue to work far into the future. But between the cookouts and fireworks, perhaps take a few moments to reflect about the men who signed their lives away to create the dream that became our America.— *Lei*

P.S. Totally unrelated, HUGE THANKS go out AGAIN to Linda Lautenschlager, Donna Jakmides and Lorelei Lopick for their help with Donuts for Dad. You ladies are amazing and your help is so greatly appreciated!

# July 2026



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			<b>1</b> AA 7pm	<b>2</b> Yoga 10am	<b>3</b> Crafts & Con- versations 10am	<b>4</b> 
<b>5</b> Pastor Eli Worship 9:15am	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b> Dominoes 7pm	<b>8</b> AA 7pm	<b>9</b> Yoga 10am	<b>10</b> Crafts & Con- versations 10am	<b>11</b>
<b>12</b> Lei Worship 9:15am	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b> Dominoes 7pm	<b>15</b> AA 7pm Trip to Elijah 10:30am	<b>16</b> Yoga 10am	<b>17</b> Crafts & Con- versations 10am	<b>18</b>
<b>19</b> Pastor Eli Worship 9:15am	<b>20</b>	<b>21</b> Dominoes 7pm	<b>22</b> AA 7pm	<b>23</b> Yoga 10am	<b>24</b> Crafts & Con- versations 10am	<b>25</b>
<b>26</b> Lei Worship 9:15am	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b> Dominoes 7pm	<b>29</b> AA 7pm Lunch at The Nook— 12pm	<b>30</b> Yoga 10am	<b>31</b> Crafts & Con- versations 10am	