



**Redeemer Lutheran Church of Leisure World and
St. Theodore of Canterbury Episcopal Church**
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Message from the Interim Pastor:

Freedom

Saint Paul wrote: “*For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.*” Galatians 5:1

The Apostle Paul wrote a number of times about “freedom” in his letters to the Romans, Corinthians, and Galatians. He was writing about freedom from the slavery of sin that tempts us away from God. He wrote about freedom from laws and codes that would only condemn humanity and yoke us with shame and guilt. He wrote about freedom from the judgment of others. He was talking about the freedom we have through the love of God and sacrifice of Jesus to live as forgiven and redeemed people of faith. Jesus said, “***So if the Son makes you free, you will be free indeed.***” (John 8:36) Freedom has a wide range of understandings and dimensions... spiritual, personal, individual, social, national, historical, and more.

This month we observe the 249th anniversary of our nation’s independence as we became a people freed from the rule of British kings and parliaments. Last month we observed on Juneteenth the freedom in this country of a people who had been brought to the Americas in chains and enslaved for 246 years, from 1619-1865. While we enjoy these freedoms today, we know there are still people who do not feel free or live freely. Some find it difficult to believe they are forgiven and set free by the grace of God. Some continue to be victims of racism and bigotry. Some live in fear each day that their liberties and rights will be taken from them. Some are oppressed by nations warring against them and destroying their lands and lives. Freedom is a precious but oftentimes fragile gift.

God intended all of the people God created to be free—free to live with God today and forever as a people reconciled to God through the life and sacrifice of Jesus. God intended that we would be free to live and to love God with heart, soul, and mind, and free to then love all of our neighbors as we love ourselves. God intended us to live in peace with those both near and far. God has given the world abundance and calls upon us to share and distribute that bounty so all people may freely live without hunger and poverty. God intends us all to be free in every dimension of freedom.

Freedom is a wonderful gift. God has done God's part. We have made some significant strides, and yet we still have a long way to go. We give thanks that God has set us free, and we pray that we will live and share in that freedom with all.

+Pastor Murray D. Finck

The Rev Murray D. Finck, Bishop Emeritus