



### **Worship Service Theme: Security**

(This service commemorates U.S. Independence Day, July 4. If you are in another country, substitute that country's history and stories where highlighted.)

#### **Helpful Elements:**

Green table covering (Ordinary Time)  
(optional) Small national flag(s) for the table

**Welcome:** Welcome! It's so good to be together to celebrate faith and community today. My name is \_\_\_\_\_ and I'll be leading our worship time today.

This week in the United States, we're celebrating the Fourth of July, reminding us of the Revolutionary War that established this country. Around the world, countries celebrate their beginnings at different times of the year. Any country's independence day is time to give thanks in humility for the amazing gifts God grants us, including freedom and security. So we'll be thinking more about **security** today and giving thanks for God's eternal security.

Please pray with me as we open our time together.

**Opening Prayer:** O God, we lift up our hearts to you and rejoice with all those who share in the great dream of freedom and dignity for all, because we are all made in your image. We honor those who have sacrificed that we might have the chance to live in freedom to worship you and to serve humanity with our God-given gifts. As we deny all prejudice a place in our hearts, may we also clearly declare our intention to work for the time when all people are granted equal freedom, dignity, and worth. We praise you, our eternal security, the One in whom we place our trust. Amen.

**Opening Hymn: Doxology**

**Statement of Faith:** Let us affirm our statement of faith by reciting Psalm 23 together:

The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

<sup>2</sup> He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.

<sup>3</sup> He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.

<sup>4</sup> Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me.

<sup>5</sup> Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

<sup>6</sup> Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life: and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

**Suggested Hymns:**

**For the Beauty of the Earth**

**Savior, Like a Shepherd Lead Us**

**Amazing Grace**

**First reading:** “How Prayer Underpinned the American Revolution,” by Stephen Lynch, Franciscan Friars<sup>1</sup> (edited) [If you're not in the U.S., substitute a brief history of your country here]

The First Continental Congress met for the first time in September 1774. In a letter to his wife, John Adams described the spiritual backdrop as the colonies were about to launch the Revolutionary War for independence. John Adams wrote:

“When the Congress met, a motion was made to open with prayer. But the motion was opposed by [other delegates] because we were so divided in religious sentiments — some Episcopalians, some Quakers, some Anabaptists, some Presbyterians, and some Congregationalists.

“Mr. Samuel Adams arose and said that he was no bigot, and could hear a prayer from any gentleman of piety and virtue who was at the same time a friend to his

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<sup>1</sup> <https://hnp.org/history-reflection-for-4th-of-july-how-prayer-underpinned-american-independence/>

country. He moved that Mr. Duche, an Episcopal clergyman, might read prayers to Congress the next morning. The motion was passed.

“Accordingly, next morning the Rev. Duche appeared with his Episcopal vestments and read the 85th Psalm. I never saw a greater effect produced upon an audience. It seemed as if heaven had ordained that psalm to be read on that morning.

“George Washington was kneeling there, alongside him Patrick Henry, James Madison, and John Hancock. By their side there stood, bowed in reverence, the Puritan patriots of New England .... They prayed fervently for America, for Congress, and [for the colonies.]

“And who can realize the emotions with which they turned imploringly to heaven for divine help. It was enough to melt a heart of stone.”

#### **Suggested Hymns:**

**Holy, Holy, Holy**

**Jesus Loves Me**

**Second reading:** Psalm 85. (This is part of the psalm read to the U.S. Congressional Congress in 1774.) Notice the themes of humility and turning to God for correction and guidance.

<sup>1</sup> Lord, you were favorable to your land;  
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

<sup>2</sup> You forgave the iniquity of your people;  
you covered all their sin. ...

<sup>4</sup> Restore us again, O God of our salvation ...

<sup>6</sup> Will you not revive us again,  
that your people may rejoice in you?

<sup>7</sup> Show us your steadfast love, O Lord,  
and grant us your salvation.

<sup>8</sup> Let me hear what God the Lord will speak,  
for God will speak peace to his people, to his saints;  
but let them not turn back to folly.

<sup>9</sup> Surely God's salvation is near to those who fear him,  
that glory may dwell in our land.

<sup>10</sup> Steadfast love and faithfulness meet;  
righteousness and peace kiss each other.

This is the word of the Lord; thanks be to God.

**Suggested Hymns:**  
**Softy and Tenderly**  
**Leaning on the Everlasting Arms**

**Interactive Homily:** Let's pause for a moment and think a little bit more about security.

- What does the word "security" mean to you? How do you feel when you are secure?
  - Safe, peaceful, not worried, calm
- What keeps us secure in this world? What sorts of things and what kind of people do we tend to rely on for security?
  - Material well-being: wealth, prosperity, way of life
  - Our country's protective branches: police, fire fighters, coast guard, doctors, nurses, all emergency workers
  - Our armed forces and military strength
- How reliable are these groups of people? *Why* are they reliable?
  - They have a lot of training!
  - Even more: they have taken an oath to protect the people, and we enjoy the fruits of that dedication and duty every single day.
- How much do we rely on these people – police, firefighters, medical workers, military – for security?
  - A lot! The service of those who protect us is something we often take for granted.
  - Are these people perfect? No – they are human. They can't protect us perfectly.
- What does the Bible say about security? Let's look at more scripture:

Psalm 33: 16-20

<sup>16</sup> The king is not saved by his great army;  
a warrior is not delivered by his great strength. ...

<sup>18</sup> Behold, the eye of the Lord is on those who fear him,  
on those who hope in his steadfast love,  
<sup>19</sup> that he may deliver their soul from death ...  
<sup>20</sup> Our soul waits for the Lord;  
he is our help and our shield.

Psalm 118: 6-9

<sup>6</sup> The Lord is on my side; I will not fear.  
What can man do to me?...

<sup>8</sup> It is better to take refuge in the Lord  
than to trust in man.

<sup>9</sup> It is better to take refuge in the Lord  
than to trust in princes.

- So according to the scriptures, what—or, better, Who—holds our eternal security? Who is the only one who can truly save?
- Can we rely eternally on our own or others' goodness or might, or our own way of life and its many blessings, for security?
  - No—our final hope is in God alone. We continue to place ourselves in God's hands, to correct, guide, and save.

Let's take a moment to silently pray and reflect on the blessing of God's security, as our ultimate help and shield.

**(Silent Prayer)** ... Lord, hear our prayers. Now let us pray the Lord's prayer together:

**Lord's Prayer:** Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever, Amen.

**Suggested Hymns:**

**This is My Father's World**

**It is Well with My Soul**

**Standing on the Promises**

### **Third Reading:** Quotes on Security

They who can give up essential liberty to obtain a little temporary safety deserve neither liberty nor safety. –U.S. founding father Benjamin Franklin

The good we secure for ourselves is precarious and uncertain until it is secured for all of us and incorporated into our common life. — Jane Addams, 1860-1935, first American woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize; called the “Mother of Social Work” in America

Where does your security lie? Is God your refuge, your hiding place, your stronghold, your shepherd, your counselor, your friend, your redeemer, your saviour, your guide? If He is, you don't need to search any further for security. – writer and missionary Elisabeth Elliot

Nothing in this world compares to the comfort and security of having someone just hold your hand. –author Richelle E. Goodrich

### **Suggested Hymns:**

**Come, Thou Fount of Every Blessing**  
**Shall We Gather at the River**

**Fourth Reading:** [If you're not in the U.S., substitute an excerpt of your country's founding document here] These are the final paragraphs of the U.S. Declaration of Independence, signed on July 4, 1776. Again, it's interesting to note how the writers turned to God in their hour of great need:

“We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, *appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions*, do, in the Name, and by the authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare: That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States ... And for the support of this Declaration, *with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence*, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes, and our sacred Honor.”

### **Suggested Hymns:**

**Blest Be the Tie that Binds**

## **I Need Thee Every Hour**

**Closing Blessing:** (Strike bell as you say the word “Lord”)

The Lord bless you and keep you; the Lord make his face shine upon you, and be gracious unto you; the Lord lift up his countenance upon you, and grant you peace. In the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

**Closing Hymn: Doxology (Reprise)**