

WORSHIP KIT

# AMERICA

*the Beautiful*

A SERVICE FOR A NATIONAL HOLIDAY

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### About “America the Beautiful”

Here is a complete order of service for all, or any, of the national holidays of the summer and fall—Memorial Day, Independence Day, Labor Day and Veterans Day. God has blessed us with a beautiful country in which to live, work and serve. Our lives as citizens and as Christians should always focus on the beauty all around us and the wonders of our Beautiful Savior. The digital files include the hymns “America the Beautiful,” “Beautiful Savior” and “My Country 'Tis of Thee,” along with readings, sermons, children’s sermons and prayers for all your national holiday needs. Kits are not returnable.

The digital files include a .pdf of the entire services, text of the entire services in .rtf (rich text format), a list of contemporary music song suggestions and PowerPoint documents of the services (with a copyright release) for use on screens.

# AMERICA

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### Complete Script For Independence Day

- This theme verse can be read by the pastor alone or by the congregation aloud in unison or silently before the service:

*Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice, and let them say  
among the nations, "The LORD reigns!" 1 Chronicles 16:31*

- The service opens with the hymn **America the Beautiful**, sung by the congregation to the tune Materna CMD:

O beautiful for spacious skies, for amber waves of grain,  
For purple mountain majesties above the fruited plain!  
America! America! God shed his grace on thee  
And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea!

O beautiful for pilgrim feet, whose stern, impassioned stress  
A thoroughfare for freedom beat across the wilderness!  
America! America! God mend thine ev'ry flaw,  
Confirm thy soul in self-control, thy liberty in law!

O beautiful for heroes proved in liberating strife,  
Who more than self their country loved and mercy more than life!  
America! America! May God thy gold refine,  
Till all success be nobleness, and ev'ry gain divine!

O beautiful for patriot dream that sees beyond the years,  
Thine alabaster cities gleam undimmed by human tears!  
America! America! God shed his grace on thee  
And crown thy good with brotherhood from sea to shining sea!

- The service continues with the **Confession and Absolution**, read by the congregation and pastor:

**C** You have blessed us, Lord Jesus, with beautiful land and many beautiful things in this country and in our lives. Yet, we have done what is evil and ugly in thy sight—through the sins we have committed and the acts we have failed to do on your behalf to glorify your name. We come to you now confessing our many misdeeds and beg for your forgiveness.

*(Observe a moment of silence for self-examination.)*

**P** Listen now to this beautiful news: your sins are forgiven you. God has given us a new and glorious life of freedom through the life, death and resurrection of his Son, Jesus. And as his Son so eloquently taught us, we have the privilege of spreading Christ's great love and forgiveness to others, which we have so graciously received. And even more glorious, the beauty of heaven now awaits us all who believe and trust in him. All praise be to God.

**C** Amen.

- The service continues with the **Psalm Responary** of Psalm 33:1-12, read responsively by the pastor and the congregation:

**P** Shout for joy in the LORD, O you righteous!

**C** Praise befits the upright.

**P** Give thanks to the LORD with the lyre;

**C** make melody to him with the harp of ten strings!

**P** Sing to him a new song;

**C** play skillfully on the strings, with loud shouts.

**P** For the word of the LORD is upright,

**C** and all his work is done in faithfulness.

**P** He loves righteousness and justice;

**C** the earth is full of the steadfast love of the LORD.

**P** By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,

**C** and by the breath of his mouth all their host.

**P** He gathers the waters of the sea as a heap;

**C** he puts the deeps in storehouses.

**P** Let all the earth fear the LORD;

**C** let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him!

**P** For he spoke, and it came to be;

**C** he commanded, and it stood firm.

**P** The LORD brings the counsel of the nations to nothing;

**C** he frustrates the plans of the peoples.

**P** The counsel of the LORD stands forever,

**C** the plans of his heart to all generations.

**P** Blessed is the nation whose God is the LORD,

**C** the people whom he has chosen as his heritage!

- The **Prayer of the Day** is read by the pastor:

**P** Dear Jesus, as we celebrate our independence as Americans in this beautiful country, we rejoice, too, that we have been made free in you as well through your suffering, death and resurrection. Free from sin, we are able to say and do those things which glorify you. Free from the devil's schemes, we are able to listen more fully to the will of God and do it. And free from the power of death, we are able to live more abundantly for you for all eternity. In your beautiful name, we pray. Amen.

- The service continues with the Hymn of Praise, **All Things Bright and Beautiful**, sung by the congregation to the tune Royal Oak 76 76 and refrain:

All things bright and beautiful,  
All creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful,  
The Lord God made them all.

Each little flow'r that opens,  
Each little bird that sings,  
He made their glowing colors,  
He made their tiny wings.

All things bright and beautiful,  
All creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful,  
The Lord God made them all.

The purple-headed mountain,  
The river running by,  
The sunset and the morning,  
That brightens up the sky.

All things bright and beautiful,  
All creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful,  
The Lord God made them all.

The cold wind in the winter,  
The pleasant summer sun,  
The ripe fruits in the garden:  
He made them every one.

All things bright and beautiful,  
All creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful,  
The Lord God made them all.

He gave us eyes to see them,  
And lips that we might tell,  
How great is God Almighty,  
Who has made all things well.

All things bright and beautiful,  
All creatures great and small,  
All things wise and wonderful,  
The Lord God made them all.

- The **Old Testament Reading, 1 Chronicles 16:23-34**, is read by the pastor or other worship leader:

☞ Sing to the Lord, all the earth! Tell of his salvation from day to day. Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples! For great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, and he is to be feared above all gods. For all the gods of the peoples are worthless idols, but the Lord made the heavens. Splendor and majesty are before him; strength and joy are in his place. Ascribe to the Lord, O families of the peoples, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength! Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; bring an offering and come before him! Worship the Lord in the splendor of holiness; tremble before him, all the earth; yes, the world is established; it shall never be moved. Let the heavens be glad, and let the earth rejoice, and let them say among the nations, "The Lord reigns!" Let the sea roar, and all that fills it; let the field exult, and everything in it! Then shall the trees of the forest sing for joy before the Lord, for he comes to judge the earth. Oh give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; for his steadfast love endures forever!

- The **Epistle Reading, Philippians 4:4-9**, is read by the pastor or other worship leader:

☐ Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, rejoice. Let your reasonableness be known to everyone. The Lord is at hand; do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. What you have learned and received and heard and seen in me—practice these things, and the God of peace will be with you.

- The **Gospel Reading, John 1:1-16**, is read by the pastor or other worship leader:

☐ In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made. In him was life, and the life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. He came as a witness, to bear witness about the light, that all might believe through him. He was not the light, but came to bear witness about the light. The true light, which gives light to everyone, was coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through him, yet the world did not know him. He came to his own, and his own people did not receive him. But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only Son from the Father, full of grace and truth. (John bore witness about him, and cried out, "This was he of whom I said, 'He who comes after me ranks before me, because he was before me.'") For from his fullness we have all received, grace upon grace.

- The **Children's Sermon** for Independence Day is delivered by the pastor or other worship leader:

*(Item needed: a picture of fireworks)*

☐ Hello, boys and girls! We are celebrating Independence Day this weekend. It is a day when we think about when a group of bold and courageous people signed the Declaration of Independence on July 4, 1776, and made America the Beautiful a country of its own. Every year since, we have marked the 4th of July as a holiday because it is the birthday of our nation.



Now on your birthday, what normally happens? (*Allow the children to respond.*) That's right! You might have a party. You probably have cake. You certainly have some presents. Maybe you go someplace special to eat.

On the birthday for America the Beautiful, we do some different things than we would on a birthday for you or me. What do we do? (*Allow the children to respond.*) That's right! We have parades. We have picnics. We have concerts with bands that play rousing music. But what is the biggest thing that happens on the 4th of July? (*Hold up the picture of fireworks, and allow the children to respond.*) That's right! We light fireworks, don't we? We oooh and aaah at the beautiful colors and shapes of bursts of light that explode in the air in the night sky. It is a glorious display of the excitement and joy that we have as citizens of America the Beautiful.

But long before fireworks were even invented, God put very special lights in the sky, didn't he? What do we call these light? (*Allow the children to respond.*) That's right! We call them stars. Stars are like fireworks from God. They remind us that he created the whole universe and he created you and me. We celebrate every day of our lives, not just on the 4th of July that we are citizens of his Kingdom, too, and his Kingdom is more bright and beautiful than any here on earth. His Kingdom in heaven is all-glorious. The Bible reminds us that we will one day shine like stars in the beauty of heaven forevermore (see Daniel 12:3). Let us pray:

O Jesus, thank for you for America, this land that we love, and thank you for your Kingdom, which bursts forth like fireworks in our lives and brings us awe in your amazing love for us. Help us to light up the world with our excitement and joy in you. Amen.

- The service continues with the hymn **Beautiful Savior**, sung by the congregation to the tune *Schönster Herr Jesu* 557 558:

Beautiful Savior, King of creation,  
Son of God and Son of Man!  
Truly I'd love thee, truly I'd serve thee,  
Light of my soul, my joy, my crown.

Fair are the meadows, fair are the woodlands,  
Robed in flow'rs of blooming spring;  
Jesus is fairer, Jesus is purer;  
He makes our sorr'wing spirit sing.

Fair is the sunshine, fair is the moonlight,  
Bright the sparkling stars on high;  
Jesus shines brighter, Jesus shines purer  
Than all the angels in the sky.

Beautiful Savior, Lord of the nations,  
Son of God and Son of Man!  
Glory and honor, praise, adoration,  
Now and forevermore be thine!

- The **Sermon** for Independence Day is delivered by the pastor:

☐ Grace, mercy and peace to you, my dear friends. What a joy it is to gather in the Lord's house on this Independence Day weekend to freely worship our God as the Founding Fathers had envisioned. This is a beautiful thing that we get to do in this country, which we should never take for granted.

In this house of God, we are able to listen to his Word, confess our sins, receive his forgiveness, sing his praises, rejoice with each other and pray to him. Each one of these things is like a mini-firework in our lives. Each is a blessing that has a powerful impact on us and spreads across every aspect of who we are.

The Psalmist says, "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path" (Psalm 119:105). The words of Scripture serve as beacons of brightness in a world darkened by sin. Listen to these words from the Word of God, and think of them like a firework display, shooting off explosion after explosion of Good News. Consider the following blasts of blessings:

*"When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, and the son of man that you care for him? Yet you have made him a little lower than the heavenly beings and crowned him with glory and honor. You have given him dominion over the works of your hands; you have put all things under his feet..." (Psalm 8:3-6).*

Kapow! What a good and gracious God we have to create us and to give us a special place in his Kingdom.

*"And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ" (Philippians 1:6).*

Boom! What a great God we have who will not abandon our work for him in this beautiful land, but will make sure that our work is accomplished, by the strength of Christ.

*"But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light" (1 Peter 2:9).*

Bang! What a loving God we have who has put us in places of honor in his Kingdom and given us the opportunity to shine in our faith.

One of the things that frees us to live out our faith in Christ is the forgiveness we receive through him each time we confess our sins and sincerely repent of what we have done to disobey his commands. Each word of forgiveness from our Lord is like a firework of excitement to our souls that we can leave the past behind and move forward in our lives freed of guilt and shame. Stand in awe of the following amazing story about Jesus that can make us shutter with pure joy in his stunning mercy toward us:

*And when they could not get near [Jesus] because of the crowd, they removed the roof above him, and when they had made an opening, they let down the bed on which the paralytic lay. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, "Son, your sins are forgiven" (Mark 2:4-5).*

Wow! Even when obstacles get in the way between us and Jesus, Jesus still is able to forgive us wherever he may find us. Listen to these loving words from Jesus:

*"Therefore I tell you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven—for she loved much. But he who is forgiven little, loves little." And he said to her, "Your sins are forgiven." (Luke 7:47-48).*

Pow! Jesus understands the plight of the very sinful so much that he knows the force his forgiveness will have.

*Jesus stood up and said to her, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." And Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you; go, and from now on sin no more" (John 8:10-11).*

Flash! Jesus forgives when others want to condemn and gives us a chance to go forth in a new light.

The joy we have in our hearts over the beautiful blessings we have in Christ through his suffering, death and resurrection for our salvation pour out in songs of praise to him:

*Praise God, from whom all blessings flow;  
Praise him, all creatures here below;  
Praise him above, ye heav'nly host;  
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.*

Commonly called the Doxology, this song of praise is perhaps the closest thing that we as Christians have to a national anthem of sorts, since it acknowledges in whom we put our trust every day as the Church, a spiritual nation of believers.