

*This prayer was written by the Rev. Matthias Ratz of the Evangelical Church in the Rhineland. Pastors there are invited to share the prayer during worship on July 4 and 5. The Evangelical Church in the Rhineland is a longtime partner of the Wisconsin Conference.*

Loving God,

On this Independence Day weekend, we pray for our fellow believers in the United States of America, especially for our partners in the United Church of Christ. In a time of social tension and deep divisions, strengthen those who build bridges. Grant unity where division grows, openness where mistrust prevails, and a willingness to engage in dialogue where people have become strangers to one another. Help us to recognize diversity as a gift and to uphold respect for the dignity of every human being. Strengthen all who work for tolerance, understanding, and peaceful coexistence.

Give your church courage and steadfastness. Protect it from subordinating the Gospel to the interests of power, money, and ideology. Strengthen all who oppose Christian nationalism and bear witness that your love extends to all people—regardless of origin, language, or life story.

Bless the preachers of your church. Grant them the freedom and courage to proclaim your Word faithfully, without fear of pressure or the expectations of the political spirit of the times. Let the liberating message of Jesus Christ continue to be heard.

Bless the fellowship between our churches on both sides of the Atlantic. Deepen trust, friendship, and mutual encouragement. May we learn from one another and bear witness together to justice, peace, and hope.

We ask this through Jesus Christ, our brother.

Amen.

Written by Matthias Ratz