

MMU – July 6, 2026

Note from Lisa – Who I am

Two days ago, the United States celebrated the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence. It took 12 years of war and deliberation for the Constitution to be written and signed, another year for it to be ratified, and, finally, in 1789, to come into operation. The two documents complement one another. The first identifies the need for independence from tyranny, and the second, the way to govern ourselves to prevent future tyranny. Both documents are beautiful and flawed. They have inspired others and continue to inspire all of us.

Several years ago, I confirmed my oath as an officer in the United States Air Force to support and defend the Constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign and domestic. It began my career as a military chaplain and helped me understand my obligations to the people who lived and worked in the United States. In addition, the National Conference on Ministry to the Armed Forces, an umbrella group that included PC(USA) chaplains, required adherence to a standard of conduct and ethics that encompassed the spiritual care and support of all people, regardless of their religious affiliation.

For over 30 years, I served the people of the United States Air Force and other members of the military, advised politicians, provided spiritual support, and led worship services to maintain the free exercise of religion. I was privileged to baptize babies, children, and adults, to officiate weddings, and to bury those who gave their lives in service. I served at bases throughout the United States and around the world and was deployed to several countries in Africa and the Middle East. I helped to provide medical and humanitarian support to refugees.

My allegiance to the United States is strong because it is where I was born and where I have served. But my allegiance to Christ is stronger because it guides my life and faith. I am a citizen of the United States, but more importantly, I am a citizen of the Kingdom of God. God's kingdom does not have national boundaries and does not require oaths to remind

me of my fealty. God's Kingdom is something that will come in its finality when Jesus returns, but it surrounds us, and we see glimpses of it when we see acts of love and justice in this world, when peace overcomes war, and when people walk with God. Followers of Jesus are citizens of God's Kingdom, regardless of where we were born, the color of our skin, or the culture we grew up in. We need to remember this. We celebrate it every Sunday, not with parades and fireworks, but with prayer and song.

I am a citizen of the Kingdom of God. I am a Presbyterian. And I am from the United States. I celebrate my country's independence, but more importantly, I yearn and look forward to our final independence from our current suffering to the glorious gathering at the throne of the Lamb in the New Jerusalem.