

## Celebrating Freedom of Religion

This week we celebrate the birth of our nation with the 4<sup>th</sup> of July. My hope and prayer is that the day can be just that, a celebration of our nation. We are certainly not perfect as our headlines tell us each and every day. Yet we have got one thing right, at least for now, the freedom to worship as we see fit without any government authority telling us what to believe or how to worship.

Few realize this but studies show that Christians are more persecuted than any other faith group in the world. Today our brothers and sisters in Christ in places like the Middle East, China, Pakistan and North Korea literally feared for their lives as they gathered to worship. None of us who gathered here today even thought about that. Why? We live in America, the land of the free.

That is something to be thankful for! As we approach our time of offering I thought of Psalm 107:21-22 that says, "Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! And *let them sacrifice the sacrifices of thanksgiving*, and declare His works with rejoicing." Let's do that this morning with our offering. Let's give as an act of thanksgiving celebrating our freedom of religion.

Remember, every gift you give today helps us continue the life changing work we are able to do one person at a time!