



July 4, 2026

...the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations." (Rev. 22:2)

Major anniversaries are opportunities for Christians to reflect, give thanks, and see where God has been working and moving in our lives and communities. As July 4 approaches, there are two anniversaries on the minds of many in the Diocese of West Texas this year.

This July 4 is the first anniversary of the devastating flood that claimed so many lives along the Guadalupe River last summer. As we approach this anniversary, we do so with feelings of both sorrow and gratitude. On this first anniversary, we mourn with those who lost family members and dear friends, neighbors and fellow parishioners, children and grandchildren, homes and a way of life. We pray with and for those who are heart broken. We also give thanks for the incredibly generous outpouring of love, financial contributions, prayers and hours of ministry which continue to bring healing, relief and hope to the Hill Country. Jesus taught, "blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted." (Matt. 5:4). We pray that pausing to remember this anniversary in our congregations and homes will bring some small comfort to those who mourn, and remind us all that the God of Hope is with us.

This July 4, America celebrates the 250th Anniversary of the declaration of her independence and the birth of our nation. We give thanks for those founders who had a vision of a country that could be, "one nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all." We give thanks for the countless men and women in every generation who ventured much for the liberties we now enjoy: those who served in our Armed Forces; local, state and national political leaders; Civil Rights workers and Judges.

When a people have a big dream, they constantly live between the present and the "not yet." While America is a great nation, the American dream is not yet fully realized and fully experienced by all people. We have deep political divisions which need healing. Poverty still imprisons some. And we sometimes fail to live-into the truth that all people are created equal. We have work to do to realize the vision described by our founders, and the dream cast by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. America cannot rest until all experience the opportunities, freedoms, justice and peace for which every generation of Americans has aspired. This year we celebrate our 250th birthday, give thanks and recommit ourselves to obtain that beautiful vision for all people.



In the Revelation to John, the author is given a vision in which God makes God's home among mortals in a new Jerusalem. John describes that in this city runs a river, and on its bank grows the Tree of Life, whose leaves "are for the healing of the nations." This July 4, let us pray for the healing of those who still grieve the tragedy of last summer's flood, and for the power to continue to work for their relief. May we give thanks for God's abundant blessings on our nation, the courage of those who made it possible, and the strength to continue to strive for liberty and justice for all.

Peace,

+David Read

+Angela Cortinas

PRAYERS FOR JULY 4, 2026

Heavenly Father, your Spirit moved over the waters in the beginning of creation, and your Son Jesus was baptized in the River Jordan: Send your Holy Spirit to comfort all those impacted by the floods of last summer. Give us strength when we still struggle; comfort us as we still mourn; and give us grateful hearts for the outpouring of love and prayers. Remind us daily that our hope is found in you, and you are with us and those we love to the end of the ages. This we ask through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

O Judge of the nations, we remember before you with grateful hearts the men and women of our country who in the day of decision ventured much for the liberties we now enjoy. Grant that we may not rest until all the people of this land share the benefits of true freedom and gladly accept its disciplines. This we ask in the Name of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen. (BCP, p. 839)

Lord God Almighty, in whose Name the founders of this country won liberty for themselves and for us, and lit the torch of freedom for nations then unborn: Grant that we and all the people of this land may have grace to maintain our liberties in righteousness and peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, for ever and ever. Amen. (BCP, p. 242.)