

From: [John Hunter](#)
To: [Clerk](#)
Subject: Public Comment 4/20/21
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Good evening – John Hunter -- Bingham Township – District 2

So there is no misunderstanding I'll start like this:

I acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. I attended Sunday school, catechism, was confirmed and served as an acolyte through most of high school. In later years I was asked to join the Vestry but I politely declined. I have faith, I pray, and I give thanks daily to my Creator. My spiritual journey is personal, ongoing, and at times a wonderment. The religion I belong to can lay claim to more Presidents of the United States than any other.

According to the Encyclopedia of Wars, out of all known and recorded historical conflicts, almost 7% had religion as their primary cause. Matthew White's 'The Great Big Book of Horrible Things' lists religion as the cause of 11% of the world's 100 deadliest atrocities. All fighting and killing in the name of their supposedly superior God. The very same God of Love and Peace that many of us seek out for guidance and comfort. An undetermined number of wars have also been started by a belief in a racial superiority. These are just historical facts. One would like to think we are more civilized now.

I do not mean to imply Chairman Bunek's prayer resolution will lead us down a similar path. He has every right to support and vocalize for his religion – as a private citizen. How he chooses to observe and celebrate his holy days right down to a vanity license plate for his car is his business. Nor do I ask him to leave his religious beliefs at the door, as many of us are stronger for them – BUT his continuing religious proselytizing before the Board of Commissioners and attempting to set county policies based on his religious viewpoints must stop and remain outside of the government center.

This is the 2nd time Chairman Bunek has crusaded on behalf of his religious beliefs. You may remember the 1st where he aligned with the men's group Opus Dei in an attempt to pass a Right To Life Resolution curtailing women's health and reproductive choices in Leelanau County, while also trying to issue a Certificate of Recognition to a group of parochial students echoing those same views. And now he has 2 men's groups supporting his prayer resolution.

It may well be that Chairman Bunek's religious adherence overrides his belief in science as evidenced by his refusal to wear a mask around his fellow commissioners. His previous effort to gather votes on behalf of his resolution endorsing The Great Barrington Declaration and attempting to fully open our county was extremely misguided, especially as COVID-19 cases have recently sharply risen in Michigan and hospitals are again experiencing an overtaxed infrastructure. It also highlighted his possible inherent racial insensitivities. I foresee similar problems if his prayer resolution is affirmed.

God is well represented throughout Leelanau County. There are many varied faiths represented by numerous places of worship, most are conventional but some may not be, as being religious (or not) in any form is a personal choice. Every dollar in the wallet or coin in the pocket of every person in attendance or viewing from home is stamped "In God We Trust" – and I do – but not so much in Chairman Bunek. As reported in the Enterprise, this appears to be a classic case of gaslighting by Chairman Bunek and I quote "If we can't lower taxes I think we can at least say a prayer for our county."

Never have I heard such a reason given to justify the offering of prayer. Never have I heard a greater deflection away from actual county business.

The Leelanau County Government Center is a public building and you commissioners are basically public employees. Public schools, concerts, sporting events, county parks and any other public venues do not mandate prayers before their activities and neither should the Board of Commissioners. Public prayer might best be viewed as going out to your favorite restaurant for dinner. When your meal is served, if you want to say "grace" that is your right – but you do not have the right to an expectation that every other diner will stop and say grace with you.

As for me, when the health crisis is over and I resume going to government center on commissioner day (or night), I will stand, remove my hat, place my hand over my heart, recite the Pledge of Allegiance and observe a moment of silence – but whenever an invocation begins I'll immediately take a seat.

I suspect Chairman Bunek and those who proclaim to be more religious or patriotic than most fully intended and anticipated this type of wedge issue and divisiveness between Leelanau County residents from the very beginning.