



Our Redeemer Lutheran Church
10 Johnson Road, Chestnut Hill Estates
Newark, DE 19713
302-737-6176
www.ourredeemernewark.org
Rev. Dr. John Rickert, Pastor

OUR REDEEMER'S VOICE

AUGUST 2018



In Praise of God's Work

by Dr. Gene Edward Veith

[This article first appeared in the September issue of The Lutheran Witness, 2010. It is presented here in its entirety.]

We often talk about recovering the true meaning of Christmas or the true meaning of the Fourth of July. What, though, is the true meaning of Labor Day?

That national holiday, observed on the first Monday of September, has become little more than the last day of summer vacations—a last chance to grill out, go to the beach, or enjoy a day off work before the autumn grind takes over again.

The first Labor Day was held on Sept. 5, 1882, in New York City. It was an activity of the local labor unions, back in the early days of the industrial revolution when unions were first getting organized to combat subsistence wages and miserable working conditions.

It became a national holiday in 1884 when President Grover Cleveland pushed a bill to that effect through Congress. President Cleveland was atoning for his decision earlier that year to send federal troops to break up the Pullman strike, in which 13 railway car builders were killed. That tragedy created a backlash of political sympathy for the unions, so Congress unanimously passed the proposal for a new holiday honoring the dignity of labor.

That is the history of the holiday, but, again, what does it mean? The connection between the 13 dead strikers and having the last picnic of the season remains obscure. Fewer than 9 percent of Americans belong to labor unions these days. Most people who enjoy the Labor Day holiday probably have no idea what they are celebrating or commemorating. And what does "the dignity of labor" even mean today?

Christians, and Lutherans in particular, are in a position to revitalize Labor Day. The early church took over pagan holidays and gave them a distinctly Christian meaning. Christians today can do the same with Labor Day, turning it into a holiday that honors, celebrates, and reflects upon the doctrine of vocation.

God's Labor and Our Labor

"Only let each person lead the life that the Lord has assigned to him, and to which God has called him" (1 Cor. 7:17). The word *vocation* comes from the Latin word for "calling." It means that God assigns us to certain courses of life and then calls us to different tasks, offices, and avenues for service.

The doctrine of vocation is Luther's theology of the Christian life. It has to do with how Christians are to live in the world, how they exercise their faith, and how their ordinary lives are charged with meaning.

More specifically, vocation addresses how God works through human beings. He gives us our daily bread through the vocation of farmers, millers, and bakers. He protects us by means of the governing authorities. He grants healing by means of the medical vocations. He creates works of beauty by working through artists and musicians. He creates new life and cares for children by means of mothers and fathers.



God is at work in all of the people who do things for us—the ones who built our houses, made our clothing, prepared our food, picked up our trash, designed the technology that we enjoy, worked in the factories to manufacture what we need, gave us services to make our lives easier—and He is at work through us. Luther goes so far as to say that vocation is a "mask of God," that behind the server in the restaurant who brings us our food, behind the shopkeeper, behind the business executive, and behind us in the things that we do for others, God Himself is hidden.

Luther writes, "What else is all our work to God— whether in the fields, in the garden, in the city, in the house, in war, or in government—but just such a child's performance, by which He wants to give His gifts in the fields, at home, and everywhere else? These are the masks of God, behind which He wants to remain concealed and do all things. . . . He could give children without using men and women. But He does not want to do this. Instead, He joins man and woman so that it appears to be the work of man and woman, and yet He does it under the cover of such masks. . . . God gives all good gifts; but . . . you must work and thus give God good cause and a mask" (*Commentary on Psalm 147*; Luther's Works 14:114 AE).

When we thank God for our meals and for all of our other blessings, we are acknowledging His labor that is manifested in human labor. Vocation is another example of the Lutheran principle that God works through means. In His spiritual kingdom, God works through the Word and Sacraments. In His earthly kingdom, He works through vocation to care providentially for all of His creation.

Being conscious of vocation makes us appreciate all the people through whom God serves us, helping us see in every laborer the presence of God.



VOCATION

The spirituality of
ordinary life

by Gene Edward Veith

Laboring in God's Estates

Contrary to today's usage, the word *vocation* does not just mean "job." Each Christian has multiple callings that can be categorized into what Luther describes as the three estates that God has established for human life: the church, the household, and the civil government (*Large Confession 1528*; Luther's Works 37).

All Christians have been "called by the Gospel" and, by virtue of their Baptisms, are made part of the Church. God calls pastors through whom He proclaims His Word and administers His Sacraments. When the pastor, "as a called and or-

dained servant of the Word," forgives us our sins in the stead of and by the command of Christ, Jesus Himself is forgiving us through the pastor's word of absolution. Laypeople, too, have callings in the Church, as they serve each other in the ordinary work of the congregation: singing in the choir, serving on boards and committees, passing out bulletins, and taking part in the church's ministries.

God has also called us into families, into the vocations of the household. Fathers and mothers, husbands and wives, sons and daughters are all, in the words of Luther's Small Catechism, "holy orders" in which God has placed us. Luther classifies the work by which we make our livings for ourselves and our families—the modern sense of vocation—within the estate of the household, thus subordinating work to family. One might wonder why on Labor Day, we don't work on a day that honors work. For Luther, spending time with our families is one of the most important vocations that we have.

God has also called us into a civil society—into a community, a nation, a culture. Thus, we have the vocation of citizen. Christians should thus exercise the duties of citizenship, which for Americans include voting, deliberating on the issues of the day, and actively participating in the culture where God has placed us.

Luther on Labor Day

Christians have good reason to celebrate Labor Day, which, in light of vocation, can be an occasion to thank God for His gifts and His presence in the work that He gives us to do and in the work through which we are blessed by others.

Luther wrote centuries before the institution of Labor Day, but he sums up well the true meaning of the holiday:

If you are a manual laborer, you find that the Bible has been put into your workshop, into your hand, into your heart. It teaches and preaches how you should treat your neighbor. Just look at your tools—at your needle or thimble, your beer barrel, your goods, your scales or yardstick or measure—and you will read this statement inscribed on them. Everywhere you look, it stares at you. Nothing that you handle every day is so tiny that it does not continually tell you this, if you will only listen. . . . All this is continually crying out to you: "Friend, use me in your relations with your neighbor just as you would want your neighbor to use his property in his relations with you." (*The Sermon on the Mount and the Magnificat*; Luther's Works 21:237).

But the holy orders and true religious institutions established by God are these three: the office of priest, the estate of marriage, the civil government.



Martin Luther
Great Confession Concerning the Holy Supper

About the Author: Dr. Gene Edward Veith serves as provost at Patrick Henry College, the director of the Cranach Institute at Concordia Theological Seminary, and is the author of *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life*.

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The Lutheran Witness — Providing Missouri Synod laypeople with stories and information that complement congregational life, foster personal growth in faith, and help interpret the contemporary world from a Lutheran Christian perspective.



Digging In The Nicene Creed First Article, Part 4

I believe in one God, the Father Almighty, maker of heaven and earth, and of all things visible and invisible.

Last month we considered briefly the title "Father" as it is used in the Church's confession. "Father," like all the "names" we have for the Divine, is not God's name. We do not know God's name. In fact, one might argue that God does not have a name. That is what Justin Martyr argued in his *Hortatory Address to the Greeks*:

God cannot be called by any proper name. Names are given to mark out and distinguish their subject matters because these are many and diverse, but no one existed before God who could give him a name, nor did he see any need to name himself, since he is one and unique, as he testifies by his own prophets, saying, "I am the first, and besides me there is no other God" [Isaiah 44:6]. For this reason, when God sent Moses to the Hebrews, he did not mention any name but taught the people by using a participle that he is the one and only true God. He says, "I am who am" [Exodus 3:14], obviously contrasting himself with the gods who do not exist. He did this so that those who had previously been deceived might see that they had been worshiping not beings but things that had no being.

The Bible is actually full of these descriptive "names" for God. "Almighty," "Savior," "Lord," "Wonderful Counselor," "Prince of Peace," "Everlasting Father," "Fear of Isaac," "Rock of our Salvation," and so on. Considering these names would be a natural way to introduce some of the various attributes of God.

Everything that exists has "attributes." An attribute is, therefore, how we know whatever it is that has this or that attribute. So, for example, all humans share certain attributes that help distinguish them from the rest of creation. However, not all humans are the same. Some have attributes that mark them off as males while others have attributes that mark them off as females. (This, of course, flies in the face of our contemporary culture that claims gender is a choice, but our culture is wrong.)

Any list of the attributes of God will be incomplete, no matter how long it might be. However, it is valuable for us to know at least some of these attributes so that we might not be deceived by an imitation. For example, God is Triune. That is to say, there are three "persons" (Father, Son, Holy Spirit) in the One Divine essence (Genesis 1:26; Matthew 28:19; Matthew 3:16-17; 2 Corinthians 13:14; Deuteronomy 6:4; Mark 12:29, 32; Deuteronomy 4:35). This is one of the great mysteries of the Christian Faith. There is no real good analogy for it in nature. God is completely unique. One faulty analogy is a triangle for the three sides are independent, yet it takes all three sides to make the one triangle. Another is three interlocking circles. There are three independent circles that connect into one design. However, these analogies are incomplete, for all of the Divine Essence is in the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, yet there are not three Gods or three Divine Essences, but only one God and one Divine Essence, even though the three persons of the Divinity are distinct. I have said it before and I'll say it again: the best "short" treatment of this mystery is the Athanasian Creed. Other passages that reveal the Trinity in one fashion or another include: Exodus 3:14; Psalm 33:6; Proverbs 8:33-36; Isaiah 6:3; 44:6; 48:12, 16-17; 61:1 Matthew 1:20/Luke 1:31-32

(considered together); John 10:30; 14:16-17, 26; 15:26; 17:3; Acts 5:3-4; 10:38; Romans 8:9, 14-17; Galatians 4:6; Ephesians 2:33; 3:14-17; 4:3-6; Revelation 3:5-6, 21-22. (Of course, this list could be enlarged.)

It is fashionable in some circles to say that the Bible does not teach the Trinity. While Scripture does not use the word "Trinity," that doesn't mean the Bible doesn't teach the doctrine of the Trinity. As the above passages demonstrate, the Bible absolutely does teach the Trinity. Just because the word "Trinity" isn't in the Bible doesn't mean the Bible doesn't teach the doctrine. The word "Trinity" is simply a single word, coined by humanity, to express the mystery of the nature of God as revealed in God's own word.

Other attributes of God include that he is a *spirit* (John 4:24; Genesis 1:2), *eternal* (Deuteronomy 33:27; Psalm 9:7; 1 Timothy 1:17), *immutable* [never changes] Exodus 3:14; Psalm 90:4; Romans 1:23; James 1:17), *almighty* [omnipotent, all-powerful] (Genesis 17:1; Psalm 115:3; Mark 10:27; Romans 4:21), *all-knowing* [omniscient] (1 Kings 8:39; Matthew 10:30; 1 Corinthians 2:10-11), *omnipresent* [present everywhere, ubiquitous] (Psalm 139:7-12; Ephesians 1:23); *holy* [separated from sin, sinless] (Isaiah 6:3; 1 Peter 1:15-16), *fair* [impartial] (Deuteronomy 32:4; Romans 2:11), *faithful* [keeps his promises] (Genesis 6:18; Titus 1:2), and *merciful* [forgives our sins for Jesus' sake] (Exodus 34:6-7, Ephesians 4:32).



To reject such things is to reject what the Bible teaches about God. More precisely, what God has revealed about himself in the Bible about himself. It is one thing not to understand. In fact, we cannot fully comprehend God. To say, "I don't understand how this or that is just or merciful" is different from saying, "God isn't just or merciful." When we take our inability to understand something as an indictment against God and claim he isn't just, merciful, or whatever the Bible tells us about him, then we are moving towards idolatry. In Isaiah 55:8, God himself reminds us that there will always be times we will be befuddled by his ways: "For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD." When we confess that we believe in One God, the Father Almighty, we confess a faith in the God revealed in the Bible, even though he is beyond our comprehension.

Next month we will continue with our consideration of the First Article of the Nicene Creed. Until then, may "the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all" (2 Corinthians 13:14). Amen.

A Devotion From LHM:



With God I Can Do Many Things — Rev. Klaus

As ambassadors of the kingdom of God on this earth, God always tells us to do works of servanthood wherever we are placed. That is the point Paul eloquently made in Ephesians 2:10: "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them."

Often we feel inadequate to that task and desire to give up.

In so doing, we forget that when the Lord commands, He has already equipped us with everything to accomplish His purpose. Indeed, God's people have the Holy Spirit who empowers them to the tasks they have been given.

At LHM-Indonesia we have seen many blessed and powerful examples of the power of the Lord to transform and strengthen hearts. We have seen the Lord's frightened people became courageous ambassadors of the kingdom of God.

I remember a woman by the name of Tien. She is a wife and mother of two children. She and her husband have a clothing business in Banjarmasin, South Borneo. Until 2016 they served in their church as mentors of youth. It was their passion to see young people grow in faith and have a closer relationship with God. Faithfully, they fought against the decline of morality in our nation's youth.

Even as she worked with the youth, Tien realized she had a deep passion to reach out to help people know Jesus. Her great problem was this: she doubted she was capable of reaching out to Muslims.

There was a reason for her hesitation.

Tien knew she was different. Being of Chinese descent, she was in a minority. Moreover, she had different skin color, flat eyes, and a different rhythm in the way she spoke to people. Her husband was even more worried about such things than she was.

Tien became connected to LHM-Indonesia when she heard about our Equipping the Saints (ETS) program. She became very excited when she heard that we were going to conduct a seminar on "How Ordinary Christian Church Members Can Reach Out to Muslims."

She told herself she must go and attend the two-day seminar.

During the training, the team asked the participants to practice what they would say when they reached out to people. Tien did as she was asked. She started by visiting the hospital, rehab, and other places. Soon Tien had established a nice line of communication with her charges, the majority of whom were Muslim.

It was so amazing and awesome for her! It felt like a burden had been lifted.

No longer was she controlled by fear and worries alone. With her call to the Lord, she rejoiced at the seminar which had opened her eyes and taught her to really trust in the Savior whose life had been given to forgive, transform, and save the world.

Today the Holy Spirit has given Tien confidence in her witness to the Redeemer.

In spite of her imperfections, she knows the Lord can work through her and help her point to the Savior who wants to call people out of darkness into the light of salvation.

Arlen D. Besel – Ambassador

Through The Worship Window



September Completes Pentecost:

The Gospel lessons for September continue the Lord's teaching and healing work while the Epistle lessons also focus on the actions of the church body. The first mention of Jesus' coming death and resurrection is shared. And the lessons include teaching from James that highlights our actions must be based on our faith to be deemed good works. The Gospel continues to remind us that we must serve others.

Jesus' ministry continues to be revealed to show His divine mission of preaching, healing, and showing the love of God the Father.

James continues to speak of the actions of true believers, which demonstrate their faith as proof of the salvation Christ provides.

The Old Testament lessons begin with Moses' exhortation for obedience to the statutes he provided by God's hand. The exhortation includes the promises that come from obedience and the wrath that will follow violations.

The next word comes from Isaiah where he promises the return to Zion of Israel. The message includes a promise of the obedient Servant which foretells the Messiah.

Jeremiah expands on the judgement message to a rebellious nation which reminds Israel of their future if they do not turn back to God.

Take advantage of the worship services in September to refresh your faith and further your understanding of the Lord's message to each one of us.

Arlen D. Besel – Worship

Walking & Talking – Part 2



So the woman left her water jar and went away into town and said to the people, "Come, see a man who told me all that I ever did. Can this be the Christ?" They went out of the town and were coming to him. ... Many Samaritans from that town believed in him because of the woman's testimony, "He told me all that I ever did." ... And many more believed because of his word. They said to the woman, "It is no longer because of what you said that we believe, for we have heard for ourselves, and we know that this is indeed the Savior of the world." John 4:28-29, 39, 41

What an awesome story of the power of God's Word! Jesus visits with a woman who was an outcast among Jews, and an outcast from her own people for a wayward life. After her discussion with Jesus, this woman is convinced that He is who he says He is and can grant her forgiveness and eternal life.

What is her immediate response? She runs off to the village that has rejected her and tells them all about the Christ of God who know all, forgives all, and restores everyone who believes in Jesus to everlasting life! What is the result of this walking and talking about Jesus? People believe, come to hear God's Word, and become convinced themselves that Jesus is the Christ! Wow!!

Let us remember all the great things God has done for us in His Son, Jesus Christ. Let us be so excited about His love and mercy that we tell everyone we meet, everyone we know, how great and awesome is the only true God! The weather is still nice, so let's walk our neighborhoods and share the incredible news that life and peace and rest are found in Jesus, and that they can all come and hear about it at Our Redeemer!

Kitty Rickert, Evangelism Chair



Our Redeemer Annual Church Picnic Sunday, September 9, 2018

We will be having our annual picnic on Sunday, September 9th, following the service at the church this year. Congregational Life will supply the hamburgers, hot dogs, beverages, rolls, and place settings. A signup sheet for names, number attending, and food donations will be on the bulletin board in the entry way (if you wish to participate). If the weather permits some tables will be set-up outside. You may also wish to bring some folding chairs for relaxing and fellowship. Volunteers will be needed for managing the grills, cooking and setup. If you are interested please contact me by phone (302) 737-3234 or e-mail at wbesteder@aol.com. Hope to see everyone there. All our welcome!

Lina Besteder, Congregational Life



Bulletin & Newsletter Information Dates

Please have all information for the bulletin into the office no later than Tuesday of each week. Newsletter info is due no later than the 20th of each month to ensure its inclusion. Thanks!



Neighborhood Garden Planning Meeting

We had to postpone our initial meeting with Carrie Murphy, the Ag Extension liaison from UD, but immediately rescheduled this all-important meeting. We will meet here at church on **Tuesday, September 18th, at 7:00 p.m.** We need a core group to launch this neighborhood outreach, so come to this meeting! Refreshments will be served. As you anticipate this planning meeting, there are copies of "Why Every Church Should Plant a Garden...and How" available in the narthex. Please read it; it is a well-done publication and will give us a good head start on this meeting. Everyone's invited! See you on 8/14!!

Church Directory Updating

Please use the attendance cards in the pews to update your address, email, phone numbers, etc., or email this info to secretary.orlcde@outlook.com. If you are new to our church family & would like to be included in the directory, please fill out the attendance card completely & place it in the offering plate. I would like to have this available by October, so please get the info in to me. Thanks!



BIRTHDAYS

6 Jessie Hartwig
9 Eleanor Petik

ANNIVERSARIES



If your birthday or anniversary is incorrect or missing from this list, please email your information to me at: secretary.orlcde@outlook.com.

Would you like to experience a Sight & Sound show? Now playing is "Jesus" and it runs till the end of the year. If you are interested in going as a group sometime between now and December, please speak with Ruth Hewlett.

Come Walk With Us!

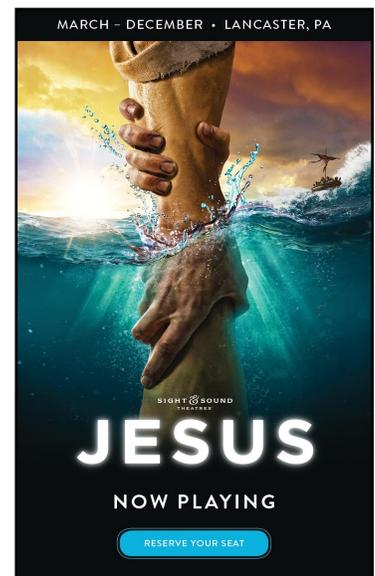
Who: You, your kids, grandkids, dogs, neighbors...

What: Neighborhood Walk

Where: ORLC, 10 Johnson Rd.

When: Last Saturday of every month, 9 a.m.

Why: To get to know our neighbors, get outdoors, etc.



September Bible Readings

1	1 Chronicles 29:10-13 Job 31-33	16	Psalm 100 Ecclesiastes 4-6
2	Psalm 86 Job 34-36	17	Psalm 101 Ecclesiastes 7-9
3	Psalm 87 Job 37-39	18	Psalm 102 Ecclesiastes 10-12
4	Psalm 88 Job 40-42	19	Psalm 103 Song of Solomon 1-4
5	Psalm 89 Proverbs 1-3	20	Psalm 104 Song of Solomon 5-8
6	Psalm 90 Proverbs 4-7	21	Psalm 105 Jeremiah 1-3
7	Psalm 91 Proverbs 8-10	22	Psalm 106 Jeremiah 4-6
8	Psalm 92 Proverbs 11-13	23	Psalm 107 Jeremiah 7-9
9	Psalm 93 Proverbs 14-16	24	Psalm 108 Jeremiah 10-12
10	Psalm 94 Proverbs 17-19	25	Psalm 109 Jeremiah 13-15
11	Psalm 95 Proverbs 20-22	26	Psalm 110 Jeremiah 16-18
12	Psalm 96 Proverbs 23-25	27	Psalm 111 Jeremiah 19-22
13	Psalm 97 Proverbs 26-28	28	Psalm 112 Jeremiah 23-25
14	Psalm 98 Proverbs 29-31	29	Psalm 113 Jeremiah 26-28
15	Psalm 99 Ecclesiastes 1-3	30	1 Chronicles 29:10-13 Jeremiah 29-31

