



I know that there is nothing
better for people than to be happy
and to do good while they live.
That each of them may eat and
drink, and find satisfaction in all
their toil - this is the gift of God.

Ecclesiastes 3:12-13

Labor Day

September 6, 2020

Introduction

Invitation

Call to Worship: (from the Presbyterian Church)

L: God said, "Six days you shall labor and do all your work,

P: But the seventh day is a Sabbath to the Lord."

L: Jesus said, "Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden,

P: And I will give you rest."

L: We come in the name of the Spirit, resting from our labors,

P: Let us worship God this day!

Hymn: "For the Bread Which You Have Broken"

Reading the Word: Ecclesiastes 3:12-13, 22

Message: "A Life of Service"

Rev. Dr.. Deb Hanson

Prayer:

(written by Rick Morley)

Lord Jesus, we give thanks for work, and for the many works you have given us to do. Hear our prayers on this day of rest and strengthen us for the week ahead. We pray that you would be present with those who work by day, and those who work by night; those who work near, and those whose work carries them far away; and we pray for those who in this uncertain time have no job. We pray all of this knowing that your labors on our behalf never cease and that your yoke is easy, and your burden is light.

The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

A Service of Holy Communion

Hymn: "Forth in Thy Name, O Lord"

Blessing

Ecclesiastes 3:12-13, 22

I know that there is nothing better for them than to be happy and enjoy themselves as long as they live; moreover, it is God's gift that all should eat and drink and take pleasure in all their toil.

So I saw that there is nothing better than that all should enjoy their work, for that is their lot; who can bring them to see what will be after them?





SERMON TRANSCRIPT
GIVEN BY
Rev. Dr. Deb Hanson

Message “A Life of Service”

Rev. Dr. Deb Hanson

This is Labor Day weekend, and even though I have heard some of the history about how it began, I went to the US Department of Labor website to learn a little more. They wrote:

“Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions that workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country.”

Perhaps celebrating Labor Day this year during this pandemic seems a bit ironic at times because so many people have lost their jobs and have been forced to go on unemployment. Yet, for decades, workers seek jobs, look for ways to care for themselves and their families, are laid off, or forced to work two or more jobs to make ends meet.

On the other hand, we have people who have climbed the ladder of success and have good jobs that have made them wealthy or at least financially secure. Then, of course, there are many people who work diligently, live happily, enjoy their work, and are also productive members of society.

No matter what our situation, God has called us, as the scripture passage for today says, to enjoy the fruits of our labor. As God’s children, we live so that whatever we do and however we do it, we point to God and glorify God. While that certainly isn’t easy, it is a goal we set for ourselves. Even in our work, we behave and interact with others as we reveal the presence of Christ in our lives.

Labor Day offers the opportunity to recognize all workers in whatever situations, and to offer a prayer for their work. So, today, I would like to share a prayer of intercession for Labor Day with you. It was written by Tom Cheatham and adapted for our use.

God our Maker, in the beginning, you called men and women to be stewards of the earth you created and gave them meaningful work to do—naming animals, tending your garden, using their imaginations, observing the world, fulfilling their vocation as those who bore your image and likeness. And today you still call us to do your work and bless us in our activities. We praise you when we find meaning for life as well as the means to our daily bread in our jobs and careers. We thank you for the variety of our vocations, that add richness to society and fill needs in our communities, our nation, and our world. Give your grace to all who labor in our land and across the globe, so they may glorify you through what they do.

We pray particularly that you look with favor on...

...those who care for people at the beginning and at the end of life;

...all who help others cope with crises;

...men and women who put themselves in harm's way

to ensure the safety and security of others;

...people who inspire our imaginations and touch our hearts through their work;

...those who do dirty and dangerous jobs that are necessary,

but no one else wants;

...first-time teen workers and workers who have retired after long years of service;

...all who contribute to the common good in any way by working.

Yet even as we praise you for the provision you make for our livelihoods through our daily activities, we remember and ask your grace for...

...all who work hard, but cannot make ends meet

or provide security for themselves and their families;

...those who live hand to mouth, with no savings,

so they are one unexpected or new expense away from financial ruin;

...young adults who are strapped and burdened by debt

and older adults struggling to live on fixed incomes;

...men and women who are unemployed and cannot find work;

...those whose jobs have been made irrelevant or obsolete

by technology and a changing culture;

...workers who have been victims of downsizing, outsourcing, and cutbacks;

...people whose jobs are a drudgery

and who dream of something better but find nothing.

We know, too, that there are some who do their work in an unworthy and godless way.

To bring their repentance and salvation, call to accountability all those who are...

...bullies in the workplace;

...bosses and anyone else who take credit for someone else's ideas and work;

...executives, managers, and any in the workplace

who are not held accountable for unethical and immoral behavior;

**...any who produce little or nothing but expect large salaries and perks;
...those whose work exploits, abuses or destroys others for profit or pleasure;
...all in power who use their positions
to steal from their organizations or other people,
to lie, to advance their personal agendas, and to hurt others.**

Even as we pray for workers on this Labor Day weekend, we ask your help for all who are sick and grieving, troubled and lonely, hurting and helpless. Especially today we bring your neighbors and friends who are on our hearts, whom we name now before you....

God, you have taken care of your people through the ages. Continue your covenant faithfulness to us gathered here and grant our prayers, even as you help us by your Spirit to turn them into compassionate action. And we will give you the glory. Through Christ, we pray. Amen.*

May we continue to find joy in our work, whatever it may be, and may we have hope for all those who still seek work. May we be part of making our world a place where others see God at work in and through us. Amen.

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