



Hope Ev. Lutheran Church

5218 Neosho St, St. Louis, MO 63109 • 314-352-0014

www.hopelutheranstl.org



✠ THE HOPE LUTHERAN ✠

Vol. 99, No. 1

February 2022

Called in the Workplace and the Economy

This month we consider our calling in the workplace and the economy. Through our work we make money, provide for our families and ourselves, and offer goods and/or services to others. We do serve our neighbor in our places of employment and in our economic activity.

God's Call for Workers

In his "Table of Duties" in the *Small Catechism* Luther draws from Ephesians 6 to exhort both workers and employers. First, we consider God's Word and will for workers:

To Workers of All Kinds

Slaves, obey your earthly masters with respect and fear, and with sincerity of heart, just as you would obey Christ. Obey them not only to win their favor when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free. (Ephesians 6:5-8)

Instead of disregarding these passages because they mention slavery, we take them as God's instruction for workers, employers and economic activity. In Paul's day, as well as Luther's, "servants" and "masters" were more akin to what we call "workers" and "employers."

Christian workers are called to practice holy living first by honoring their employers and second by doing their work with honesty and integrity. Whatever our jobs and wherever we're employed, God calls us to perform our duties as if He were our "boss" or "supervisor." He gives us our work and He gives us our employers and managers. Thus, whatever we do,

in word or deed, we do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus (see Colossians 3:17).

This means, for example, that we do not steal from our company or employer, whether goods, money, or time. Instead, we respect and promote our employer's product or service because it helps other people and improves their lives. We honor the profits our supervisor makes through our labors, knowing that when our employer benefits, so do we. We work diligently, not only to "get paid" for putting in the time, but also knowing that our labor is really for our Lord, whether we're caring for sick patients, running a company, or hauling trash.

Dr. Robert Kolb comments on this Christian view of our work. Many may whine and complain, "I only work here." But there is a better way, especially for us Christians. "Employees also bear responsibilities for the entire firm through the exercise of assigned functions." Kolb then explains: "This means faithful service to the needs of the entire firm, its stockholders, and its managers as well as one's fellow workers. It means using our jobs as vehicles of expressing and displaying our concern for the needs of others, as we supply them with the staples and the luxuries of life, with food and clothing, education and medicine, recreation and entertainment."¹

God's Call for Employers

Now let's look at God's Word and will for employers, supervisors, and managers:

To Employers and Supervisors

Masters, treat your slaves in the same way. Do not threaten them, since you know that He who is both their

¹ Robert Kolb, *Teaching God's Children His Teaching* (Concordia Seminary Press, 2012), 146.

Master and yours is in heaven, and there is no favoritism with Him. (Ephesians 6:9)

God calls Christians who are employers to treat their employees and workers with dignity, respect, and fairness. Employers and supervisors, especially when they are Christians, are to love their employees—their neighbors—as themselves.

Dr. Gene Edward Veith points out that this passage from Ephesians 6 went against the trends of cruel working relationships in the ancient world. Thus, St. Paul's exhortation to employers and supervisors means:

Masters are not to threaten those under their authority. They are to remember that they too have a Master. If they mistreat their servants, they will be held accountable to their Master in heaven. They must realize that they too are under authority, the source of their own, but that He, unlike the social system, shows no partiality.²

Dr. Veith then connects St. Paul's instructions for both workers and employers in living out our callings:

In the workplace, whether on a road crew or in a corporate office, the passage from Ephesians applies as Christians live out their vocations: Subordinates must do their work, as instructed by their superiors. In doing so, they find themselves serving Christ in serving their boss. Bosses, in turn, must make their employees do the work they are supposed to do, but in the way they treat them, they must remember their own accountability to Christ.³

Holy Calling for the Economy

We hear much about the economy, especially when unemployment is high and prices on goods and services seem to skyrocket. We also suffer from a very shortsighted view of how the economy works, or rather how we as God's children contribute to the function of the economy. Too often we think of the economy and economic news only in terms of what we can get out of it—how much we must spend on a gallon of milk or gas; how much we get paid; how many goodies we can buy for ourselves, etc.

What does our Christian faith have to do with the economy? The Gospel of Jesus Christ not only brings us forgiveness and salvation with God; it also gives us a different way of looking at all of life. As Christians

we learn to view our jobs and the economy in terms of loving and serving our neighbor. We live our new life in Christ in the freedom of seeking opportunities for giving and serving.

Dr. Kolb calls this "economic responsibility." He specifies two overall factors for this responsibility.

First, all economic activity falls under God's control and is designed by God to meet human needs. The use of economic responsibility in a defensive, selfish, self-serving way disrupts human life and brings judgment upon those who think they are building their own security by taking advantage of others. Second, all economic activity should be conducted for the welfare of all affected, employers and employees, and also of consumers and those from whom the raw materials for production are received—even if they live half the globe away. Exploitation by deception or power ruins the lives of all even though the exploiters may deceive themselves into thinking that no one really suffers from the employer's getting by with paying low wages or buying raw materials at undervalued prices.⁴

This "economic responsibility" begins at home for all of us. The Greek word from which we get the term "economy" refers to how we govern and organize the home. As Christians we serve our neighbors and bear witness to the life-changing Gospel of Jesus by doing simple things: get out of debt and stay out of debt (see Proverbs 22:7); manage well the money God gives us; give to support the Gospel of Jesus Christ and His Church; take care of needs (food, clothing, shelter, retirement, etc.) before wants; and use our money and goods to help those in need around us.

As God's children we are called to live out our new life in Him by loving and serving our neighbor. This applies to our "holy callings" in our workplaces and in the economy as a whole. Not only does our Lord Jesus Christ give us newfound identity, security and meaning by rescuing us from sin and death. He also works through our simple labors in the work, commerce, and industry of our daily lives. It's all part of His "good and gracious will."

✠ Pastor Randy Asbury

email: rasbury@hopelutheranstl.org

Blog: <http://rasburrypatch.blogspot.com>

Hope's Website: <http://www.hopelutheranstl.org>

On Facebook: www.facebook.com/hopelutheranstl

² Gene Edward Veith, Jr., *God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life* (Crossway Books, 2002), 73.

³ Veith, 73.

⁴ Kolb, 145-146.

Notes from the Kantor

In the past month we've celebrated several big festivals, including Christmas Eve and Day and Epiphany. Many thanks to the choir members and instrumentalists that enhanced our worship so beautifully. We truly are blessed with a tremendous amount of God-given musical talent in our congregation.

Thank you to all those members and guests that gave to the Epiphany offering. In all there was over \$500 raised to support the Kantorei's music ministry. Many thanks to Hope's continued support of this ministry through the years!

This month we celebrate the Transfiguration of Our Lord. The Google definition of the word "transfigure" is "transform into something more beautiful or elevated." This is certainly what happened to Jesus on that mountain top with Peter, James, and John. Christ was transformed into his full heavenly beauty. This month let's take a look at the Hymn of the Day for that Sunday.

The Hymn of the Day for Transfiguration Sunday is *O Wondrous Type! O Vision Fair* (LSB 413). You know it's going to be a good one when the title includes an exclamation point! The following commentary comes from "The Word in Song: Hymn of the Day Studies for Epiphany" available at lcms.org.

We could use strobe lights, halogen headlamps and staring at the sun at midday (not a good idea!) to help us imagine just what Peter, James and John saw on the mountain of transfiguration. The point is that Jesus was seen in His heavenly glory. Also, prophets Moses and Elijah met with Him to discuss what would soon happen at Jerusalem. We have the promise by the grace and mercy of Christ Jesus that we will one day see God's glory unendingly.

This hymn comes to us in Latin written by an unknown author in 1495, just before the dawn of the Reformation. The first examples of it were found in Salisbury, England. The Englishman John Mason Neale (1818-1866) gave us a fine translation of this hymn. His brilliance as a Greek and Latin scholar served us well, since he translated over 200 hymns from those two languages into our own. Two of his best-known translations are "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" for Advent, and "All Glory, Laud, and Honor" for Palm Sunday.

The joyous melody of this hymn and the clearly told

facts of the transfiguration make it memorable. The very title of the hymn gives us a word that must be understood in its biblical sense — "type." A type is a preview of what was fulfilled in Christ Jesus. So, Melchizedek (Gen. 14:17-24; Ps. 110:4) was a type of Christ. In the transfiguration, the radiant glory of Jesus, Moses, and Elijah was a type (again, preview) of heaven.

In stanza 2, Neale translates for us that "the incarnate Lord holds converse high." "Incarnate" means to have flesh, just as we do, and this flesh Jesus shares with us.

In stanza 3, we have the promise of heavenly glory, where the writer indicates we shall all not only witness but also be a part of heavenly glory when we steadfastly "joy in God with perfect love."

Stanza 4 is written to give us hope, we who walk so often in "the valley of the shadow of death" (Ps. 23:4). Despite life's tragedies, we sing hymns like this to spite Satan and the troubles he sends us.

Finally, stanza 5 is our closing prayer that our Triune God might bring us to the reality of eternal life.

This grand hymn anticipates the joy of heaven even as it looks forward to the imminent shame of the cross. Both are manifestations of the glory of God. St. Peter referred to this extraordinary transfiguration event to show that the facts of the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus were not myths.

Jesus gave a preview, a type, of glory before the face of Peter, James, and John so that we might realize that He is indeed the Chosen One, the Messiah, the King of the Jews. He then bore our sins on the cross with the approval of the Father and the Holy Spirit in order to fulfill the prophetic witness of Moses and Elijah.

Prayer

O God, in the glorious transfiguration of Your beloved Son You confirmed the mysteries of the faith by the testimony of Moses and Elijah. In the voice that came from the bright cloud You wonderfully foreshowed our adoption by grace. Mercifully make us co-heirs with the King in His glory and bring us to the fullness of our inheritance in heaven; through the same Jesus Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with You and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever. Amen.

Together in CHRIST,
Kantor Janssen

LCMS Stewardship Ministry

Newsletter Article – January 2022

'Tis More Blessed to Give Than to Receive

“In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” (Acts 20:35)

And indeed, it is. Does this not strike a chord that resonates in us all? Which of us can't recall the look of surprise and thanks for the Christmas gifts that we labored to give to those whom we love? And the joy written on their face when that gift is received with thanksgiving means more than all the gifts we have received. It is more blessed to give than to receive.

Our Lord knew this because He practiced it. He gave of Himself – sparing not even His life in death – in order to give us back to our Father in heaven. He knew that in giving you get more because joy is multiplied in giving. The one who receives and the one who gives both rejoice in what is given and received. And, what is more, the one who receives only wants to give back to the one who gave so generously in thanksgiving.

So it is with our tithes and offerings in church. We want to give because we have received from God all that we are and all that we have. Our giving does not originate in what we must do to earn God's favor. We have God's favor because of His gift of His Son, given through Word and Sacrament. Thus, we are made free from the compulsion of giving so that our tithes and offering are freely given in thanksgiving for what God has so generously given to us.

Why then does the church struggle to make budgets? Why does the church always seem stretched so thin when it is the place where God continually gives us His forgiveness of sins? Why does the church struggle when God, out of love for us, generously pours out His grace and mercy?

It is because we are sinners. Our fallen nature makes us selfish and miserly. It leads us to believe that we can have our cake and eat it, too. Because of sin, we want God's grace and mercy; we want His blessings of body and soul. But we don't want to share it with those around us. We want to remain comfortable in our own self-contained, neat, and tidy lives – without the headaches of loving those around us by helping them in their time of need.

“Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, ‘It is more blessed to give than to receive.’” Remember that God has placed you in a church, not only to receive His grace and mercy, but to press His eternal and temporal blessings into service to your neighbor.

Your tithes and offerings ensure that those around you have a pastor to preach the life-saving and life-giving Word of God. They ensure that the lights, heat, and air-conditioning are working. They ensure there is water for Holy Baptism as well as bread and wine for Holy Communion. They even ensure that your pastor has food and clothing and presents for his own family. The gifts of God are immeasurable. They multiply and redound to everyone's good as the fish and loaves in the feeding of the five thousand.

So, remember the words of the Lord Jesus: “It is more blessed to give than to receive.” And remember the joy that attended the gifts you gave at Christmas. This same joy attends your gifts to the church.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry:
lcms.org/stewardship

LCMS Stewardship Ministry

Newsletter Article – February 2022

God in Man Made Manifest

The season of Epiphany focuses on how God was made manifest in the flesh of Jesus. The church spends time hearing of the miracles, signs, and wonders of Jesus in the world. And this made plain to all that Jesus really is who He said He was. He is the Second Person of the Holy Trinity, the only begotten Son of the Father, in the flesh. For “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us” (John 1:14).

It is revealed for all the world to see that Jesus is God in the flesh. It is made manifest by His words and His work, by what He said and by what He did. And these belong together, for “the Word became flesh and dwelt among us.” Jesus is the Word and will of God in the flesh, that is, He is the walking, talking enactment of God’s Word.

It is no different for us. We are called not just to believe in God in hearts but also to trust in God in word and deed. As James wrote: “But be doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves” (James 1:22), and again, “What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? ... So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. ... Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. ... For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead” (James 2:14, 17–18, 26).

Our faith is lived out in works for our neighbor. Our trust in the Word and will of God is lived out not in word only but also in deed and in truth. In other words, the Epiphany of the Lord creates in us an epiphany of our faith in our works of obedience to God who commanded them. By this, our faith is made manifest to the world. It is, as Luther wrote of faith:

Faith is a divine work in us. It changes us and makes us to be born anew of God (John 1). It kills the old Adam and makes altogether different people, in heart and spirit and mind and powers, and it brings with it the Holy Spirit.

Oh, it is a living, busy, active, mighty thing, this faith. And so it is impossible for it not to do good works incessantly. It does not ask whether there are good works to do, but before the question rises, it has already done them, and is always at the doing of them.

He who does not these works is a faithless man. He gropes and looks about after faith and good works and knows neither what faith is nor what good works are, though he talks and talks, with many words about faith and good works.

Faith is a living, daring confidence in God’s grace, so sure and certain that a man would stake his life on it a thousand times. This confidence in God’s grace and knowledge of it makes men glad and bold and happy in dealing with God and all His creatures. And this is the work of the Holy Spirit in faith. Hence a man is ready and glad, without compulsion, to do good to everyone, to serve everyone, to suffer everything, in love and praise to God, who has shown him this grace.

And thus it is impossible to separate works from faith, quite as impossible as to separate burning and shining from fire. Beware, therefore, of your own false notions and of the idle talkers, who would be wise enough to make decisions about faith and good works, and yet are the greatest fools. (*Preface to the Book of Romans*)

So, then, let our faith be active by God’s power in the Word through the Holy Spirit. And let then our faith be made manifest to the world by what this faith does: serving our neighbor – in church, in the family, and society – with the works of faith in time, talents, and treasures.

– LCMS Stewardship Ministry:
lcms.org/stewardship

"All ceremonies should serve the purpose of teaching the people what they need to know about Christ" (Augsburg Confession, 24:3). We have been in the Epiphany season and hearing God's Word on how Christ is the Savior for all nations. As we go through February, we will approach Lent, the time of preparation for our Lord's Crucifixion (Good Friday) and Resurrection (Easter Sunday). The month of February brings us to this "time of transition." This month we come to a time called "Pre-Lent" – the so-called narthex in which we Christians pause for three Sundays before we begin our spiritual pilgrimage to Calvary in the great 40 days of Lent:

Date	Day in Church Year	Gospel Reading	Gospel Focus (Theme of the Day)
February 6	Transfiguration	Matthew 8:1-13	Jesus reveals Himself as the Savior of the Nations. Not only the world of humans but also the world of nature (groaning and subject to vanity because of man's sin) is included in His salvation.
February 13	Septuagesima ("About 70 Days")	Matthew 20:1-16	Wages and Grace – The laborers in the vineyard and the grace of the Father, who calls unworthy sinners and makes them rich. The "wages" of those in the vineyard is but a gift of <i>grace</i> , not of their own earning.
February 20	Sexagesima ("About 60 Days")	Luke 8:4-15	The Fourfold Field – The parable of the sower and the four kinds of ground on which the good seed is cast. God sows His vibrant, life-giving Word in various "soils" of people who receive it in different ways.
February 27	Quinquagesima ("50 Days")	Luke 18:31-43	Up to Jerusalem – Christ opens our eyes to see Him as God's Lamb on the way to Jerusalem. As the blind man begged for Jesus' mercy, we also learn to beg for and rely on His mercy.

ALTAR FLOWER DATES

A flower calendar for the year is in the church narthex. If you would like to place flowers at the altar on a particular date, in memory or honor of someone, write your name on the date you would like to do this, place your name, information about the reason for placing the flowers, and your payment in an envelope by the calendar and drop it in the contribution basket. Each vase is \$25, you can place one or both vases. The flowers are yours to take home after the service. If any questions or wish to reserve a date, you can call Carol at 314-752-0525 or 314-691-3619. Open flower dates are February 6, 13, 20, and 27. Flowers are not placed on the altar during Lent. Therefore, no flowers during March.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR KINDNESS

Both charities we sponsored this year through the "Giving Tree", Our Little Haven and Lydia's House, have sent letters thanking members of Hope for their generous gifts this Christmas. These gifts helped foster children and abused women and their families experience a Christmas of love and caring. Thank you for your participation in the "Giving Tree".

**YOU HAVE APPEARED, O CHRIST, THE
LIGHT OF LIGHT! TO YOU THE MAGI
BRING GIFTS! ALLELUJA · ALLELUJA!**



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February 2022

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
Elder: 6 – Chad Rolland 13 – Scot Kinnaman 20 – Kevin Robson 27 – Scot Kinnaman	Altar Guild: 6 Spyers/Truebe 13 Asburry/Bergdolt 20 Brown/Patton 27 Keller/Janssen	1	2 5:00 Kantorei rehearsal	3	4	5 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
6 Transfiguration 9:00 Divine Service 10:15 Coffee hour 10:30 Bible Class/ SS 11:30 Schola/Confirmation	7	8	9 5:00 Kantorei rehearsal	10	11	12 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
13 Septuagesima 9:00 Divine Service 10:15 Coffee hour 10:30 Bible Class/SS 11:30 Schola/Confirmation	14 7:00 Board of Elders	15	16 5:00 Kantorei rehearsal	17	18	19 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
20 Sexagesima 9:00 Divine Service 10:15 Coffee hour 10:30 Bible Class/ SS 11:30 Schola/Confirmation	21	22	23 5:00 Kantorei rehearsal	24	25	26 <i>Pastor's day off</i>
27 Quinquagesima 9:00 Divine Service 10:15 Coffee hour 10:30 Bible Class/ SS 11:30 Schola/Confirmation	28					