



## “On Labor . . .”

by Rev. Thomas Chryst



In 1894 the United States recognized a new national holiday: Labor Day. This was after 38 states had already started recognizing such a day. It was a response to the Labor Movement of the late 1800s. For many today, it seems the day has lost most of its connections to labor unions and such – and is more widely seen as the “unofficial end of summer”.

But perhaps it’s a good time for the church to pause and reflect on the concept of labor from a scriptural perspective, and to contrast the ideas of “work” and “labor”.

In the Bible, the first “work” that is done is by Yahweh – in his work of creation. In 6 days he creates, out of nothing, everything that exists. And then Genesis tells us, *“So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.”* (Genesis 2:3)

But God also created Adam with the intention for him to work: *“The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it.”* (Genesis 2:15). Thus we see that work, in and of itself, is part of God’s good order of creation. Work is something that existed even in paradise – yes, before the fall into sin. Therefore work is a good thing.

Only after sin came did work become “labor”, that is arduous and bitter. See what God says to the woman: *“I will surely multiply your pain in childbearing; in pain you shall bring forth children.”* (Genesis 3:15) The work of giving birth is still today known as “labor”. And then to the man, *“cursed is the ground because of you; in pain you shall eat of it all the days of your life; thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you; and you shall eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your face you shall eat bread...”* (Genesis 3:17-19) For man, the work of “bread-winning” is no longer sheer joy, but like everything else in the world, tainted by sin. Work becomes laborious, sweat-inducing, and painful.

And yet, even in creation’s fallen state, work remains for us as a good and proper thing to do. Work continues as a command of God and a blessing from him. Consider Paul’s encouragement to the Colossians, *“Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are*



### Inside this Issue:

Stewards Under the Cross	3
Church Council Corner	5
North Texas Giving Day	6
2020 Confirmands	8

*That you may believe that Jesus is the Christ,  
the Son of God, and that by believing  
you may have life in His name. —John 20:31*

serving the Lord Christ.” (Colossians 3:23-24) He tells the Christians at Ephesus: *“Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labor, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.”* (Ephesians 4:28) And perhaps more pointedly, the Thessalonians: *“If anyone is not willing to work, let him not eat.”* (2 Thess. 3:10)

In terms of the Catechism, we might look to the Seventh Commandment, which teaches us not only to “not steal”, but also to avoid laziness. For to be lazy at work is, in a sense, to “steal time” from your employer. We could consider the table of duties, and all the various “works” required of Christians in various vocations. Even Luther’s Morning Prayer is followed with the little encouragement, *“Then go joyfully to your work...”*

Of course, a major point of doctrine for Lutherans is the proper place of good works: that they do not merit salvation but are a fruit of true faith. Apart from God, even our best good works are like filthy rags (Isaiah 64:6). Good works count for nothing toward salvation, and yet they remain as a command for us to do. Consider Ephesians 2:8-10, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.”*

And what scriptural discussion of work can be had without reference to the most important work – the work of Christ for our salvation!? We can think of his work in two ways. First, his work of active obedience. That is, Christ fulfilled the law of God perfectly, obeyed all the commandments (always!) and earned a perfect righteousness before God. This righteousness he shares with us. We are covered in it. Secondly, Christ’s work included his passive obedience. This is really his submitting to his suffering and death on the cross. This is his offering himself as a sacrifice for sin. You might say that by his passive obedience he takes away our sin, and in his active obedience he gives us his righteousness. The great exchange – his work for us, our debts, for him.

And not to be left out, the Holy Spirit is credited with the work of sanctification – that is, he makes us holy. He also establishes the church and works forgiveness of sins, calls sinners to faith by the Gospel, and is the Lord and Giver of Life. The Spirit works through the Word of God and the Sacraments to bring great blessings to the church – forgiveness, life, and salvation.

So a happy and blessed Labor Day to you, Christian. We can and should give thanks for God’s gift of work. And all the more, for the work of God – Father, Son, and Holy Spirit for us, and the blessings God’s work brings to us. Now may he ever increase in us good works of love for our neighbor, until he who has begun a good work in us brings it to completion at the day of our Lord

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## ***Bible Studies this Fall***

Board of Education

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**Men’s Breakfast Bible Study** will resume **Saturday, September 19 7am**, at **Sunny Street Café** in Keller. This group will continue to meet the **1st and 3rd Saturdays** each month.

**JOY group** will resume meeting on **Tuesday, September 8 at 9:30am** in the Fellowship Hall

A new **Pastor’s Class** will begin on **Thursday, September 17 at 6:30pm**. This is a class of basic teachings of Scripture according to Luther’s Small Catechism. It is te introductory class for new members or those interested in exploring Lutheran doctrine. It also serves as a “refresher” and is open to those who’ve been around for a while too. Please share this class with anyone who may be interested!

**Confirmation 1** will continue to meet on **Sunday during the Sunday School hour**. **Confirmation 2** will begin meeting on **September 22** after an Orientation meeting the previous **Tuesday, September 15 at 7pm**.



## **STEWARDS UNDER THE CROSS**

**Newsletter article – September 2020**

“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might” (Eccl 9:10).

God bids us to be faithful in the tasks He calls us to do. He calls us to be members of a family (husbands and wives; fathers and mothers; sons and daughters). He calls us to be members of society (those who govern and those who are governed). And He calls us to be members of His family, the Church (those who preach and teach and those who hear and learn). Each of these callings from God places a duty on us.

As members of a family, husbands are given the duty to die for their wives as Christ gave His life for His bride, the Church; while wives are given the duty to respect their husbands and submit themselves to them as the Church does to Christ. Fathers and mothers are to raise their children in the fear and admonition of the Lord, teaching them the Ten Commandments, the Creed, the Lord’s Prayer, and the Scriptures concerning Baptism, Confession, the Office of the Keys, and the Lord’s Supper. Children are to honor their parents throughout their lives, and even when their parents are no longer alive, serving and obeying them, loving and cherishing them, and speaking well of them.

As members of society, God calls those who govern to bear the sword, that is, to punish those who do evil (those who live contrary to God’s will) and to reward those who do good (those whose lives are lived in conformity with God’s will). Those who are governed are to obey their leaders as to the Lord Himself, for their leaders bear the sword of God’s temporal justice for a purpose.

As members of God’s own family, the Church, He calls those who preach and teach to do so in faithfulness to His holy Word. To preach and teach the Law of God to convict the hearts of hearers of their sin and to encourage, admonish, and exhort them to do good works in accordance with God’s will. They are to preach and teach the Gospel, the full forgiveness of their sins accomplished by Christ and received through faith, not by works. They are to administer the means of grace in accordance with the Gospel and the Word of God. They do all this for the young and old alike, for those who are near and far off. Those who hear and learn are to submit themselves to their preachers and teachers. They are support them by their prayers and their gifts.

Each of these callings from God place a duty on us. They make a claim on our presence; on our prayers; and our time, talents, and treasures. So, “Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might” (Eccl 9:10). Pray for your family, your government, and your church. Give of yourself by means of your time, your talents, and your treasures to your family, your government, and your Church. That is what it means to be faithful in the tasks that God has given us. That is what it means to do it with all your might.



Thank You to Kris Carter and Grover Downing and everyone who helped install the new Ninja Warrior Course! It looks amazing!!



The course will be officially dedicated on Friday, September 18 at 3:45pm after school is out for that day. Please join us if you can.

Highlights from our August 27<sup>th</sup>, 2020 meeting:

**Pastor Chryst** – August was a quiet month. Many activities are resuming in September. Church attendance has been surprisingly strong lately. Lots of positive signs around the congregation.

**Treasurer's Report** – So far this fiscal year The church received \$61.6K in offerings and with releases, a total of 87k to cover 99k in expenses. This yields a loss of 12k mostly in the Trustees repairs. The School has a total income of 48k, to cover 48.5k in expenses.

## **Boards:**

**Education** – Searching for a new Sunday School Superintendent and working to resume activities.

**Elders** – Organ project completed. Sound system may be updated. Continuing to monitor COVID situation and consider worship service changes. Handbells have been refurbished. Updating Benevolence Policy.

**Evangelism** – Swaddling Clothes is now serving by appointment – 22 families in August. Working on guidelines for supporting church workers, missionaries, and other outside missions.

**MLCA** – School has re-opened August 19. Enrollment at 62, down from last year, but many hopeful signs for increase throughout the year. Continuing to receive inquiries and give tours. “Classical Ninja Warrior” course almost complete – many thanks to Kris Carter and Grover Downing.

**Stewardship** – Continuing to monitor investment account (monies from Heidorn estate). Currently valued at \$191,000

**Trustees** – Ongoing repairs (toilet, ceiling leak, sprinkler system)

## **Other Items of Business:**

1. Some discussion of changes to the Constitution/Bylaws that may be presented at the October Voters Assembly
2. Annual election of employee health insurance plan option.
3. Council will be updating the church “Recurring Calendar”





## **MESSIAH LUTHERAN CLASSICAL ACADEMY**

### **NOW ENROLLING FOR THE 2020-2021 SCHOOL YEAR**

- FIVE-DAY TRADITIONAL K THROUGH 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE
- THREE AND TWO-DAY COLLABORATIVE LEARNING PROGRAM K THROUGH 8<sup>TH</sup> GRADE
- PRESCHOOL 2'S THROUGH PRE-K

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### ***North Texas Giving Day***

by Rachel Koreski—MLCA Executive Assistant

**Save The Date!**  
**9.17.20**



MLCA is hoping to raise \$12,000 for classroom & facility updates to include our P.E. programs and other educational support needs.

MLCA embraces the development of the whole child by supporting them spiritually, intellectually, and improving their physical development.

[www.northtexasgivingday.org/messiah-lutheran-classical-academy](http://www.northtexasgivingday.org/messiah-lutheran-classical-academy)



## Young Adult/College Age Conference

by Vera Sweet

Pastors, presenters and participants joined us for our first regional College / young adult conference, 37 people in attendance. The conference theme was: *"How to get your bearings in this changing world."* The following congregations were represented: Messiah, Keller; Holy Shepherd, Haslet; Beautiful Savior, Arlington; Redeemer, Fort Worth; St. Mark, Waco; Our Savior Lutheran Church, Houston; Faith, Plano; Faith, Wylie; Lord of Life, Plano; Immanuel, Fairview; Our Redeemer, Dallas; Cross of Christ, DeSoto; Victory in Christ, Newark; Elizabeth Anne Seaton (RC), Keller; and two other congregations.



Our next College / Young Adult Event is scheduled for **Saturday, September 5, 2020**. Join us to visit the gardens and museums of Fort Worth. Meet at Messiah at 8:30am or contact Vera Sweet to coordinate a meeting place downtown.

The **Texas State Wide College / Young Adult Conference** is on **Saturday, October 17, 2020** at St. Paul Lutheran Church in Austin, Texas. Featured Teacher: Pastor Bryan Wolfmueller.

For information please contact Vera Sweet – [vsweet328@gmail.com](mailto:vsweet328@gmail.com) or 817 988 3521



## 2020 Confirmands

Congratulations to our 2020 Confirmand

Ashley Brewer



### Messiah Lutheran Church & School

*The Lutheran Church-Missouri Synod*

1308 Whitley Rd. Keller, TX 76248

Church Office: (817) 431-2345

Academy Office: (817) 431-5486

Sunday Worship: 8:00 a.m. & 10:45 a.m.

Sunday School & Adult Bible Class: 9:30 a.m.

Rev. Thomas Chryst, Pastor

[www.messiahkeller.org](http://www.messiahkeller.org)



Please keep these young people in your prayers as they begin a new chapter in their life of faith as a confirmed member of the Lutheran church.

