

## **FIRST AND CENTER**

Pastor's Blog

August 30, 2018

The technical word we use to describe what happens in a worship service is "liturgy." It comes from a Greek word, "leitourgeia," which translates loosely as "the work of the people." What happens in a worship service is the people's work, not the work of religious professionals like clergy or musicians only. Worship is something we do together.

This weekend, I'm thinking about how you can flip that over a bit. Monday is Labor Day: A day we remember and celebrate the work of people who make so much of our lives possible and better. What if we thought of work in general as liturgy, holy, worship. What we do in our everyday lives: at paid work, in our homes and kitchens, taking care of our children or grandchildren, in volunteer settings, anything we think of as "the work of people" is worship. We praise God by whatever we do, using gifts God has given us, loving one another as we have been loved, loving God, and loving neighbor as we love ourselves. You get the idea.

How does it change our lives to think of work as worship, as something in which God participates, whether you enjoy that work or not? How might it change how we think of the work of other people around us, from co-workers to baristas and how they should be honored and treated justly by both their employers and us?

The people of Israel had been taken into exile in Babylon, and the prophet Jeremiah wrote them a letter of prophecy from God that went something like this:

"Seek the welfare of the city in which you have been placed. Work, raise families, live your lives knowing that you still have a mission from God even though you are not in the holy city and even though you cannot worship at the Temple."

Seek the welfare of the city, which is holy work, the work of the people, worship, liturgy.

Blessings for rest and work as we celebrate Labor Day this year.

~ The Rev. Shelly Stackhouse  
Transitional Pastor

