

What is your vocation?

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We often think the word has something to do with our profession or job, and you would not be wrong, but the word's root is much broader, especially in the context of what we call "vocational wellness." The word comes from the Latin word "vocare", meaning "calling." In Church life, our pastors are not just given a job, but the congregation extends a "call" to them, suggesting that they are in the role because both God and the community of faith have called them into ministry.

As we enter this month of emphasis on vocational wellness, we hope to challenge you to rethink your purpose on this earth, or how God is calling you to use and develop your skills, follow your passions, and respond to the conditions and opportunities you find yourself in. Martin Luther's tenet of the "Priesthood of All Believers" was foundational in honoring the work of every person as capable of serving God through their daily activities. Luther understood that the work of growing and providing food, securing people's safety, building shelter, caring for animals, raising children, caring for the infirm, and providing livelihoods all constitute serving God even as we serve and help people. Paul also spoke about God providing all of us gifts that would uplift the community.

During this month of vocational wellness, we encourage each of us to examine how God is using us, or more importantly, calling us, to serve one another, our Church Community, and the community at large. It is a time to reflect on how we are using the gifts and passions God has provided us, or to consider if God is calling us to some new expression of ministry.

Several activities will help you as you reflect on this:

- Visit the Wellness Board to take the three-minute Vocational Vibe Quiz, or be reminded of Spiritual Gifts and take advantage of resources that might help you network.
- Watch Dave Thomas' testimony about how God was preparing him, providing opportunities, and calling him to find a new way of serving.
- Bring an item associated with your vocational identity as an offering as we re-dedicate our daily work and activities to God's service.

Labor Day Offering:

While Labor Day is intended to celebrate the gains won by the labor movement that helped build protections for workers and benefits we take for granted like a 40-hour work week or health benefits, it is also a day to celebrate how God uses all our labors to benefit one another and to honor the gifts given us

that allow us to labor. This year, we are taking a special offering on Labor Day. We are celebrating how God both calls us to use our gifts and passions and to remember that we are called to give ourselves to God in all we do.

On Labor Day Weekend, September 5-6, we are asking everyone to bring a symbol of our labors and activities that occupy our Mondays through Saturdays. For a gardener, it might be a seed package, and for a new parent, a diaper. For a student, a crayon, a symbol of your school mascot, or a binder. It might be a nail for a builder or a vial for a lab technician, or boots for a firefighter. It might be a business card or a pen with my company logo on it. Be creative. If nothing else, a piece of paper identifying your identity through your labor or activity is.