

“CONNECT: BUILDING UP OUR LIFE TOGETHER”
“Connecting Through Our Work”

We begin our new sermon series, “Connect: Building up our Life Together.” Over the next few weeks we will examine our life together and what connects us to one another and to God. To help with our focus and our prayer, each week we will be given a “building block” in a particular color. This week we also receive the bag and the prayer card that goes with it. We begin with the color orange as the color of adventure and enthusiasm. It is also Labor Day weekend. We will pray for the adventure that is our work both paid and unpaid. Sometimes our work is called vocation which comes from the Latin word vocare, which means to call and the work to which an individual is called. Certainly, there are many voices calling each of us to different kinds of work. The struggle for us is to discern the will of God and where our work and energy can point to God. Frederick Buechner once wrote that our call and our vocation is *“The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world’s deep hunger meet.”* May these words reflect our work this week.

Things I’d like to remember from today’s sermon: **“Connecting Through Our Work”**

Daily prayer: *Dear Creator, I pray that I may be of service to you and your people. I ask for courage in times of uncertainty and self-doubt. I surrender to you my old notions of who I thought I should be or could be. May I trust in your plan. Lead me safely on this journey so that I may be your instrument. Amen .*
(written by Tessa Lemos Del Pino)

This week’s sermon may be viewed at <http://sundaystreams.com/go/firstwichita>

Study Guide

Monday, September 2, 2010 Romans 12: 1-2

Happy Labor Day! In a way this three-day weekend is the official end of summer, even though the autumn equinox is not for another few weeks. Traditions abound; camping, trips to the lake and barbecues grace many calendars. Although the Romans reading listed above was not read in worship, it sets up nicely the words that were read. Offering ourselves as a “living sacrifice” is one way of speaking of how our lives are offered each day through the work we do, whether paid or unpaid. How we discern the “will of God—what is good and acceptable and perfect” is reflected in our actions and in our lives. *How does your work, whether a job or volunteer work show your faith in Christ? How does your work connect you to God and to others? Use the building block as your pray that your work might build upon the work of God in the world.*

Tuesday, September 3, 2019 Romans 12: 3-8

In this passage Paul describes his understanding of the community of faith. All are called and all have gifts to share with each other and the world. For Paul, the challenge was not to believe one gift, or one ministry was more important than another. Perhaps Paul’s experience as Pharisee drove this deep need to clarify that “all” were members of Christ and one another. Each gift has its place and is necessary for the functioning of the community of faith. If you look to the list in verses 6-9, each gift and ministry supports and challenges the community of faith. Believers can have more than one gift. It also connects the ministry of faith together as they work together for the betterment of the community of faith and for the transformation of the world. *Which gifts resonate in your heart and spirit? Which gift is a challenge to you? Using your orange block as your prayer focus, how can you enthusiastically offer your gifts to connect with God and the community?*

Wednesday September 4, 2019 Romans 12: 9-12

If we “love what is genuine” it allows us to find contentment at work, at home and in everything we do. If we love one another and show honor to one another it creates a work environment that is beneficial to all. It connects us to God, to one another and can connect us to the world. Our service, our work becomes a witness to our faith in Christ and our work is part of the transformation that God is doing in the world. *How do we “serve the Lord”? List some ways that you serve God with all that you are and all that you have. With your orange block as a reminder: Say a prayer of thanks to God for the work you do, paid or unpaid.*

Thursday September 5, 2019 Romans 12: 13-18

In these verses, Paul is encouraging the church at Rome in their spiritual life and in their work as faithful followers of Christ. Take care of each other and take care of others, outsiders. This balance of “taking care of those at home” and “taking care of those elsewhere” is still a good model for today. The next part thought is the hardest: blessing people who are harassing us, considering everyone our equal, not thinking too highly of ourselves and not retaliating against those who have hurt us. In our culture of instantly responding to whatever offends on social media, these are challenging words. And yet, what better way to show how we are connected to God and to the community of faith, than through our choices to live “peacefully with all.” *List some ways you live in hope and how your prayer life helps you respond to the needs of others and to live as people in peace with all people as far as it depends on you. How do your connections help you live out that faith and that challenge?*

Friday September 6, 2019 Ecclesiastes 3: 9-13

This “old preacher” tends to look at things cynically. Tradition has it that it was King Solomon who wrote this book, and considering how much Solomon saw, the cynicism can be understood. The old trope, “been there, done that, got the t-shirt” is indictive of the reign of Solomon. Solomon had it all, did it all....and is it any wonder he might have written, *“Everything is vanity, pointless.”* And yet, this same author notes there is time for everything and finishes that statement with these words, “there is nothing better than to enjoy ourselves, to eat, drink and enjoy the results of your hard work.” Often, we do not get to see the long-term effects of work and our effort, but we do get to connect in many ways to each other and to God. *Using your orange building block, think through the ways you connect to God and others through the work you do. Ask God to bless as we continue to focus connections Sunday, this time through generational ties.*