



First United Methodist

Become a part of God's family at First UMC

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*Vision: Hamilton First: a growing extended family sharing Christ's love
in the heart of the city (A United Methodist Congregation)*

Mission: To Know Christ and Make Him Known in the World

September 2, 2010

Dear Friends,

It is Labor Day weekend. It is a good time to stop and give thanks for all those who "labor" for us. What do you do special to celebrate this day? Do you remember why Labor Day started?

Labor Day, the first Monday in September, is a creation of the labor movement and is dedicated to the social and economic achievements of American workers. It constitutes a yearly national tribute to the contributions workers have made to the strength, prosperity, and well-being of our country. The first Labor celebrations were celebrated by cities, then adopted by states. By 1894, 23 states had adopted the holiday in honor of workers, and, on June 28 of that year, Congress passed an act making the first Monday in September of each year a legal holiday in the District of Columbia and the territories. (From the US Department of Labor.)

This holiday has been around for a long time. I would guess that most of us think of it as having come later in our development when most of the people who worked, worked in factories. Back in 1894 the majority of workers were probably farmers. Yet even then there was a need for lots of other occupations, many that used people's physical ability more than their mental ability. You could see muscles ripple as men used sledge hammers to set the railroad tracks. You could see strain as they dug ditches. You could see arms get tighter as they used hammers to build houses. You could see work.

In this past century there has been a shift from that physical labor to more mental labor. Even many of the traditionally physically demanding jobs are done by machines. There are power nailers now so that building does not take as much physical labor. The cable company came out to the parsonage to put in new wire and instead of digging a trench, they ran a machine over the yard and when it was finished you could almost not see where they had been.

How we labor has shifted. That we labor has not. It is still appropriate to stop and give thanks for all the labor that has been accomplished in the past year. It is also important to give thanks for the many people who have labored their whole life and now find themselves in a new situation of no longer having the job that supported their families. Now they are looking for work. Their contribution has been great and we need to say thanks.

When I was a child, Labor Day always meant a shared project for the good of the community. As soon as I was old enough, I was handed a paint brush and asked to contribute my part in this project. I still look at buildings and think that I helped paint it.

As we approach Labor Day, I pray that you might have favorite memories that you will share with your family. I hope that you might pause sometime during the day and give thanks for all the people who have labored to make our life easier. Then I hope you will pause to give thanks to God, who is the one behind all those labors, in that it is God who created the world in which we live. It is God who gave us bodies for labor. It is God who gave us brains for innovation and invention.

Let us not forget the most important labor that we can do, which is the labor of loving one another. May you give someone an unexpected smile and tell them how much God loves them this Labor Day. Have a good holiday with God this week.

Grace and Peace,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Peggy".

Rev. Peggy