

'The word vocation is from the Latin verb that means 'to call.' To have a vocation is to have a calling.'



## From Pastor's Desk God's Masks: Vocation and You

By Rev. Jason M. Braaten

When we hear the word *vocation*, we tend to think of our job. We think of what we do for a living, what we get paid for. And that's not all wrong. But it's not exactly right either because it's too limiting, too restrictive.

The word *vocation* is from the Latin verb that means "to call." To have a vocation is to have a calling. We aren't just called by God to work a job. God calls us to be His children, a member of His family in

Holy Baptism. He calls us to be a member of a family when we were born or married. He even calls us to be members of the family of our nation, citizens of the United States.

This is quite a bit more than a job. It is life itself. It encompasses all our activities, the sum total of everything we have done throughout our lives.

Read Ephesians 2:8–9. St. Paul here tells us that our

relationship to God in Christ is not based on our works but His work. And then in verse 10, St. Paul says, "For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." Think about what St. Paul is saying here. God created us for the purpose of doing good works. But He prepared those works for us to do in the first place. That means that any good work that

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we do never was or is ours. It's always His because We are are His workmanship. This is vocation. God working through us to do the works He intends.

Luther called these vocations—who we are as members of the church, the state, and in the home—the masks of God. He calls them masks because God hides himself behind our vocations to serve and provide all those who are around us.

Take, for example, Luther's explanation of "Give us this day our daily bread" from the Lord's Prayer in the Small Catechism: "God certainly gives daily bread to everyone without our prayers, even to all evil people, but we pray in this petition that God would lead us to realize this and to receive our daily bread with thanksgiving. *What is meant by daily bread?* Daily bread includes everything that has to do with the support and needs of the body, such as food, drink, clothing, shoes, house, home, land, animals money, goods, a devout husband or wife, devout children,

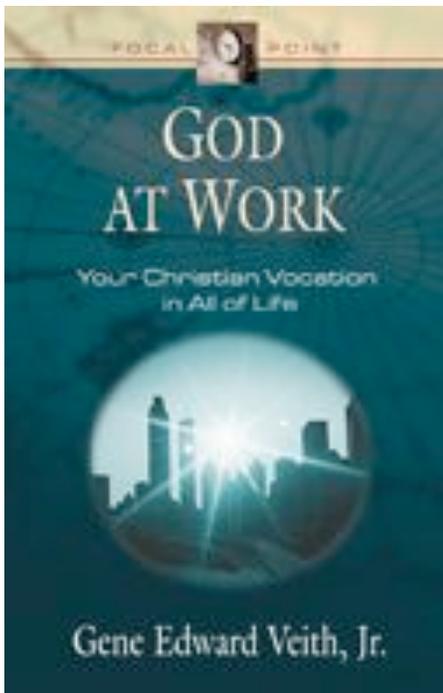
devout workers, devout and faithful rulers, good government . . . ."

Everything in this life is a gift from God, a gift He gives to us. But He doesn't just drop it out of the sky onto our door steps. When He gives gifts, he uses our vocations to do it. So that it is God who feeds us through the farmer, the rancher, the butcher, and the grocer. It is God who heals us doctors, pharmacists, nurses. It's God who protects us through the military, the police, and our parents. It's God who clothes and shelters us through our employer's pay. God hides himself behind these masks to provide. God's providential care is given through vocation, through the our roles as members of the church, the state, and the family. So consider for a moment how God works through you to provide for others.

Are you a father, mother, son, daughter, husband, wife, worker? How does the Lord use you to help and serve your neighbor?

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Pastor Braaten



## The Book of the Month God at Work: Your Christian Vocation in All of Life

When you understand it properly, the doctrine of vocation—"doing everything for God's glory"—is not a platitude or an outdated notion. This principle that we vaguely apply to our lives and our work is actually the key to Christian ethics, to influencing our culture for Christ, and to infusing our ordinary, everyday lives with the presence of God. For when we realize that the mundane activities that consume most of our time are God's hiding places, our perspective changes.

Culture expert Gene Veith unpacks the biblical, Reformation teaching about the doctrine of vocation, emphasizing not what we should specifically do with our time or what careers we are called to, but what God does in and through our callings—even within the home. In each task He has given us—in our workplaces and families, our churches and society—God Himself is at work. Veith guides you to discover God's purpose and calling in those seemingly ordinary areas by providing you with a spiritual framework for thinking about such issues and for acting upon them with a changed perspective.

Go to [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com) to order.

## From the President Death's Precarious Toehold

By Rev. Matthew C. Harrison

In a beautiful treatment of the resurrection of Christ, Luther compares the resurrection to a birth:

Christ, our head, has arisen. But now that the Head is seated on high and lives, there is no longer any reason for concern. We who cling to Him must also follow after Him as His body and members. For where the head goes and abides, there the body with all the members must necessarily follow and abide. As in the birth of man and of all animals, the head naturally appears first, and after this is born, the whole body follows easily. Now since Christ has passed over and reigns above in heaven over sin, death, devil, and everything, and since He did this for our sake to draw us after Him, we need no longer worry about our resurrection and life, though we depart and rot in the ground. For now this is no more than a sleep. And for Christ it is but a night before He rouses us from the sleep (Luther's



**“Sin, death and the devil still pinch toes. They’ve got a toehold to be sure . . . but only a toehold! And not for long.”**

Rev. Matthew C. Harrison

Works, vol. 28, p. 110; Commentary on 1 Corinthians 15).

The hard part is done. The walls of the fortress of death, sadness and gloom have been breached—yes, razed at the foundation! Says Luther, because of Christ’s resurrection, “all the hold death still has on us is by a small toe!” In Baptism, we’ve been united with Christ. So we shall go where He goes. Through cross, trial

and into death? Yes . . . but with Christ through death to life and resurrection (Rom. 6:1ff.).

That’s the secret to a joyous life, come what may. Read the Book of Acts, and you will quickly find that the powerful evangelistic preaching of the apostles was very simple. This Jesus is the Christ, foretold by the prophets (Acts 2:25ff). “You crucified and killed [Him] by the hands of

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lawless men” (Acts 2:23). “God raised Him up, loosing the pangs of death, because it was not possible for Him to be held by it” (Acts 2:24).

It was a straightforward message of (1) prophecy fulfilled; (2) stinging Law directed full force, right between the eyes; and (3) sweetest Gospel. Believe and be baptized for the forgiveness of your sins. By faith, all that is Christ’s is yours. In Baptism, you are connected with Him, and both His death for sin and resurrection to life are yours. We depart from this type of evangelistic preaching (Scripture/Law/Gospel/Resurrection/Baptism) at our own eternal peril, to the detriment of the Church.

Too simple? Hardly. It’s God’s apostolic outline for preaching—for reaching the lost and forgiving and empowering the baptized (however creatively applied!). And note how utterly objective it is! Notice who the actor is! God promised this Christ in the Scriptures! God’s Law damns you! God’s Gospel of the resurrection—of Christ put to death for our transgressions and raised for our justification (Rom. 4:25)—forgives you! The hard part is done! “It is finished” (John 19:30). Believe it, and it’s yours! There is nothing to do. Only receive! Joy!

This is the resurrection source of the apostles’ joy—a joy that would not wither, even under the whip (death’s toehold). “They beat them and charged them not to speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. Then they [the apostles] left . . . rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer dishonor for the name” (Acts 2:41). “Reconciled by His death,” “saved by His life,” “we rejoice in God!” (Rom. 5:9ff). Trials (pinched toes) push us to repentance, which is the path to joy (Psalm 51). And so the apostles and prophets bid us rejoice in trials (1 Peter 1:3–6). They point us to Jesus in every tribulation, all purposefully sent by God for our good (Rom. 8:37ff), “who for the joy set before Him, endured the cross” (Heb. 12:1–2). The apostles invite the baptized to “suffer together” and “rejoice together” (1 Cor. 12:26) for a more fulsome joy!

The very resurrection of Christ—come home to us in Baptism (Col. 2:12)—frees us to breach the walls of pride and hatred and envy. We are freed to not expect those around us to be anything but sinners in need of Law/Gospel and love, just like we are (1 Tim. 1:15)! We are freed to rejoice in family and friends. We are freed to face death, even death, with the resurrection resolve that has



**“Reconciled by His death,” “saved by His life,” “we rejoice in God!” (Rom. 5:9ff)**

grabbed hold of us in Christ. He’s been through it all. He knows the way. He is the way.

Sin, death and the devil still pinch toes. They’ve got a toehold to be sure . . . but only a toehold! And not for long.

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# Education Corner

## Not Enough Time To Read the Bible? Oh Bologna!

The pace of life today makes reading the Bible as a family difficult sometimes. Probably every one of us has either thought or said they we are too busy at least once. And why not? The last thing anyone needs is one more “to-do” crammed into the daily schedule.

The fact is, however, that we make time for things that are important to us. Seldom does a day go by when you forget to eat something because, “I don't have time.” You may take a break from work and go out for lunch, or you may have to grab a quick bite on the run, but you find a way to get at least a couple meals in during the day.

You may need to get creative in finding time to read the Bible. Here are just a few ideas to get you thinking:

- Read while sitting in a waiting room at the doctor's office, at a client's office, or the DMV.
- Listen to the Bible on your iPod while working around the house.

- Forgo looking at Facebook during breakfast and read a chapter of the Bible instead.
- Have one of the kids read a chapter aloud before everyone gets up from the dinner table.
- Start simple and work within your already established routine. It only takes a few minutes to read a Psalm or a even a chapter.

We tend to create barriers by biting off more than we can chew. Our eyes are bigger than our . . . well, you get the picture. We think we have to read from cover to cover every day. We make it too complicated, too cumbersome to sustain. This is what the devil wants. He want more than anything to keep you from praying and meditating on God's Word. He'll use anything, even our own piety.

If you want to learn more about prayer, mediation, and spirituality, come to the Midweek Bible Study. It begins on Wednesday, August, 31 at 7:00 p.m. (after choir).

**“The Spirituality of Prayer,” a midweek Bible Study begins on Wednesday, August 31 at 7:00 p.m.**





**Our chaplains will continue to follow the Military Chaplain guidelines as approved by the Synod. While we recognize the service of ELCA personnel, we can no longer commend our LCMS military personnel to ELCA chaplains without increasing and grave reservations.**

Rev. Matthew Harrison

## In the News

# LCMS Breaks from ELCA on Chaplaincy Training and Mercy Work

The LCMS recently endorsed a new document from the Commission on Theology and Church Relations (CTCR) that offers more detailed theological criteria for assessing the Synod's involvement in human care efforts carried out in cooperation with the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and other church bodies or entities.

The LCMS and the ELCA support human care efforts through several cooperative agencies as well as 125 Recognized Service Organizations (RSOs) that involve the Synod, its districts or congregations in some form of cooperative service or mercy ministry, including nursing homes and senior care, adoption agencies, housing for low-income seniors, food banks, international relief, immigration and refugee services, etc.

The issue of “cooperation in externals” arose at the convention because of the sexuality decisions made by the ELCA at its 2009 Assembly. The ELCA resolved to recognize “publicly accountable, lifelong, monogamous, same-gender relationships” as morally acceptable and to remove any denominational obstacles for their ordination into the pastoral ministry of individuals who are living in such relationships.

LCMS President Dr. Matthew C. Harrison also announced that the LCMS and the ELCA would no longer train their military chaplains together for the same reason. “Beginning in 2012, and for the foreseeable future, the LCMS will conduct its chaplain training

conferences unilaterally,” Harrison wrote in a letter released to all rostered church workers.

“In garrison or in the field, Lutheran chaplains will continue to minister to all Lutherans in uniform and exercise proper pastoral discretion on a case-by-case basis in the administration of Word and Sacrament ministry, taking into account the individual circumstances of each case,” wrote Harrison. “Our chaplains will continue to follow the Military Chaplain guidelines as approved by the Synod. While we recognize the service of ELCA personnel, we can no longer commend our LCMS military personnel to ELCA chaplains without increasing and grave reservations.”

For more on these significant decisions, go to [www.lcms.org](http://www.lcms.org).

# Facts and Figures; Dates and Times

## Greeters List

- 3 Jul Harold & Irene – West  
Donna & Gunnar Campbell – East
- 10 Jul Jim Dyer – West  
Joan Vukelich – East
- 17 Jul Ruth Sims – West  
Laverl Byers – East
- 24 Jul Becky Kappes – West  
Tim & Teri Pollock – East
- 31 Jul Harold & Irene Wattjes – West  
Donna & Gunnar Campbell - East

## Coffee Committee

- Jul Harold & Irene Wattjes
- Aug Pastor & Lauren Braaten
- Sep Laverl Byers
- Oct Harold & Irene Wattjes
- Nov Jerry & Joyce Alexander
- Dec Pastor & Lauren Braaten

## Altar Committee

- Jul Dolores Ford & Becky Kappes
- Aug Janice Arthur & Janet Stumeier
- Sep Wanda Long & Irene Wattjes
- Oct Theresa Fields & Sharon Allen
- Nov Ann Hilgendorf & Carol Munson
- Dec Ann Carroll, Holly Wikoff,  
Sherrie Hoel & Tonia Timlin

## Bi-Monthly Missions

- 7 Aug EIU & UofI Campus Ministries
- 2 Oct LWML
- 4 Dec Christmas Bureau

## Elder On Duty – Communion

- 3 Jul Dave Slaughter
- 17 Jul Greg Nau
- 31 Jul Greg Nau
- 7 Aug Greg Nau
- 21 Aug Geof Danielson
- 4 Sep Geof Danielson
- 18 Sep Geof Danielson
- 2 Oct Jack Appleby
- 16 Oct Jack Appleby
- 30 Oct Jack Appleby
- 6 Nov Dave Slaughter
- 20 Nov Dave Slaughter
- 23 Nov Dave Slaughter
- 4 Dec Greg Nau
- 11 Dec Greg Nau
- 18 Dec Greg Nau
- 24 Dec Geof Danielson
- 25 Dec Geof Danielson
- 31 Dec Geof Danielson

ATTENDANCE			OFFERINGS		
Date	Saturday	Sunday	General	Missions	Building
3 July	17	82	\$3,381.75	\$0.00	\$0.00
10 July	22	56	\$1,518.00	\$0.00	\$0.00
17 July	16	60	\$2,424.27	\$0.00	\$20.00
24 July	24	76	\$1,575.46	\$650.00	\$10.00
Subtotal	79	274	\$8,899.48	\$650.00	\$30.00
Total	353		\$8,899.48	\$650.00	\$30.00

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Immanuel's stained glass window in the Narthex.