



Grace Tidings



A Newsletter of Avalon Grace Church

September - October 2025

A Day to Celebrate Labor

As we all know, we celebrate Labor Day on the first Monday in September. But do we really know why we celebrate Labor Day in the United States?

Wikipedia states that the holiday "honors the American labor movement and the contributions that workers have made to the strength, prosperity, laws and well-being of the country." But its origins happened during the trade union movement in the late 1800s; it was suggested that there be a holiday to celebrate the laborer. Shortly thereafter, in 1887, the first state to make it a public holiday was Oregon.

Over the next seven years, thirty states began to celebrate Labor Day, and it was deemed a Federal Holiday in June, 1894 by President Grover Cleveland.

Certainly, believers celebrate the many social reforms that came out of the labor movement, which resulted in establishing child labor laws, guaranteeing more livable wages and safer working conditions for all. It should be obvious to Christians that this movement was biblically appropriate, considering the Lord's concern for the least, the lost, and the last.

Solomon observes in Proverbs

29:7 that the righteous care about justice for the poor: *"The righteous considereth the cause of the poor: but the wicked regardeth not to know it."* This verse highlights a key difference between righteous and wicked individuals: the righteous are concerned with justice for the less fortunate, while the wicked are indifferent to their plight. This implies that Christians should speak up for those who cannot speak for themselves, defending the rights of the poor and needy. (Please also see Proverbs 31:8-9).

WORK MATTERS BECAUSE IT MATTERS TO GOD

There are hundreds of Bible verses that address some aspect of work. In Genesis, we see, in the creation story, that God is a worker. He calls humans to work with Him to expand His handiwork. We also see the downside of work, where Adam's sin brought a curse on work, making it unnecessarily difficult and resulting in sweat, unfruitfulness, and disharmony among workers.

In Old Testament narratives, we read about well-known men and women who

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Pastor Phillip McClellan, Jr.
Pastor Emeritus Arthur Sims
(Newsletter Editor Kathleen Smith)

All Are Welcome!

Sunday Worship 10:30 AM
(Sunday messages available on our website)
www.avalongracechurch.com and YouTube
Children's Sunday School 10:45 AM

**"And to make all men see
what is the fellowship of the mystery,
which from the beginning of the world hath been
hid in God, who created all things by
Jesus Christ: . . ." - Ephesians 3:9**

A Day to Celebrate Labor (continued from Page 1)

successfully integrated their faith in God at work - Moses, Joseph, Ruth, David, and Nehemiah. We also read about ordinary people such as Bezalel and Oholiab, who were called and gifted to work with God in the construction of the tabernacle. We find principles on how we should work from the OT writings (Psalms, Proverbs, and Ecclesiastes). In the New Testament, we read what Paul wrote about labor in his epistles.

WORK MATTERS BECAUSE GOD BRINGS PURPOSE THROUGH OUR WORK

Our Creator sustains His creation mostly through human labor. God created us as His coworkers with various talents so that He could meet all of the complex physical, mental, social, and spiritual needs of human beings. God loves people through human work. The late Tim Keller confirms this in his book, *Every Good Endeavor*. He reminds us, "God's loving care comes to us largely through the labor of others. Work is a major instrument of God's providence; it is how he sustains the human world."

Isaiah 28:23-29 supports this concept too: *"Give ye ear, and hear my voice; hearken, and hear my speech. Doth the plowman plow all day to sow? Doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat and the appointed barley and the rie in their place? For his God doth instruct him to discretion, and doth teach him. For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing instrument, neither is a cart wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. This also cometh forth from the LORD of hosts, which is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working."*

In this passage, the prophet describes how a farmer does the work of God as His coworker. God provides the wisdom needed and instructs the farmer how to do the work the right way to cultivate the field, gather the harvest, and process the grain so that His people can eat. He emphasizes that all of this ultimately comes from God.

WORK MATTERS BECAUSE THROUGH IT GOD BRINGS BLESSINGS TO HIS PEOPLE

Through work God meets the needs of people who are of eternal value to Him (Please read Psalm 104:10-31).

Through work God meets our needs and our family's needs

(1 Thessalonians 4:11-12). "And that ye study to be quiet, and to do your own business, and to work with your own hands, as we commanded you; that ye may walk honestly toward them that are without, and that ye may have lack of nothing."

Through work, God provides extra money so that we can give some of it to those in need (Ephesians 4:28). Through work, we love God and neighbors by serving them both (Leviticus 19:18; *"Thou shalt not avenge, nor bear any grudge against the children of thy people, but thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself: I am the LORD."*)

God's blessings on his children take on a variety of forms of labor. God created the universe; and made man in His own image. Certainly Adam was created to be a worker, or rather a co-worker with God. We - you and me - were also created by God for a purpose. Each of us is given the appropriate gifts, skills, abilities, and desires to be able to perform various functions for His glory.

Just think about how much of your heart, soul, and mind might go into your work, your talent, or your position in life. Imagine, then, as you apply yourself at that task, being able to say, 'I'm here to do something that God wants done!' It could be raising a family, leading a bible study, helping a neighbor in need, or giving someone a ride to the airport. Whatever it is, do it for the glory of God and have a very blessed Labor Day weekend!

Pastor Phil

GRANDPARENTS DAY - SEPTEMBER 7, 2025

Did you know that the "Forget Me Not" flower is the official national flower of "Grandparents Day"? Yet the delicate blue flower only blooms in Northern regions. In Florida, they are best treated as cool-season annuals or short-lived perennials.



"One generation shall praise thy works to another, and shall declare thy mighty acts." - Psalm 145:4



- Grandparents -

Grandparents bestow upon their grandchildren the strength and wisdom that time and experience have given them. Grandchildren bless their Grandparents with a youthful vitality and innocence that help them stay young at heart forever. Together they create a chain of love linking the past with the future. The chain may lengthen, The chain may be broken but it will never part. . .



~Author Unknown~



Quotes for the Wise & Young at Heart . . .



This publication is an excerpt from Pastor Ricky Kurth's book, "More Rightly Divided Answers to Frequently Asked Questions" September 2019

"When thou cuttest down thine harvest in thy field, and hast forgot a sheaf in the field, thou shalt not go again to fetch it: it shall be for the stranger, for the fatherless, and for the widow: that the **LORD** thy God may bless thee in all the work of thine hands." - Deuteronomy 24:19 KJV

"The days may not be so bright and balmy - yet the quiet and melancholy that linger around them is fraught with glory. Over everything connected with autumn, there lingers some golden spell - some unseen influence that penetrates the soul with its mysterious power." - Northern Advocate

"My biggest moment was winning the World Series because everyone in my town was able to feel they were world champions." - Johnny Bench

"Money says earn me
Calendar says turn me
Time says plan me
Future says win me
Beauty says love me
But Jesus simply says,
Follow me." - Anonymous

"As for man, his days are as grass: As a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; And the place thereof shall know it no more."
- Psalm 103: 15-16 KJV

"All labor that uplifts humanity has dignity."
- Martin Luther King, Jr.

The most beautiful people we have known
are those who have known defeat,
know suffering, know struggle, know loss,
and have found their way
out of the depths.

These persons have an appreciation,
sensitivity and an understanding of
life that fills them with compassion,
gentleness, and a deep loving
concern for others.

Beautiful people do not just happen.

~ Elizabeth Kubler-Ross

Three men died and went to heaven, where St. Peter met them and said, "We only have one rule here in heaven: "Don't step on a duck! Ducks are God's favorite creation, so don't step on any."

But there were ducks everywhere, so it wasn't long before one of the men stepped on a duck.

Out of nowhere, St. Peter reappeared and chained the one man who stepped on a duck to an angry, contentious, brawling woman - you know the kind that the Bible says it's best to stay clear of: "It is better to dwell in a corner of the housetop, than with a brawling woman in a wide house." - Proverbs 21:9

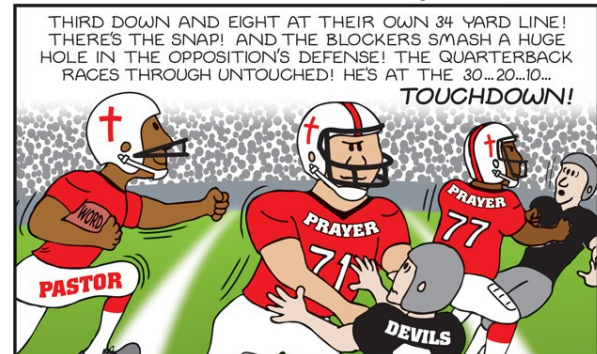
St. Peter announced, "Your punishment is to be chained to this woman forever."

Now, the second man was so shaken by this that he took a step backward—and he too stepped on a duck. And he too found himself chained to an equally contentious, loud, complaining woman.

Seeing this, the third man naturally decided to be extremely careful wherever he stepped. A couple of months later, St. Peter showed up and chained him to a very pleasant woman. She was so kind and sweet that the man asked, "Wow, what did I do to deserve this?" To which the woman replied, "Well I don't know about you, but I stepped on a duck."

PRAYER BLOCKERS

A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters



Withal praying also for us, that God would open unto us a door of utterance, to speak the mystery of Christ, ... That I may make it manifest, as I ought to speak. — Col. 4:3-4 KJV

September - October Reflections . . .

WOMAN TO WOMAN

By Diana Kresnye, The Berean Searchlight,
AUGUST 2025

BEYOND LABELS: LIVING OUR IDENTITY IN CHRIST AS WOMEN

For generations, society has dictated to women who we should be, changing the rules every few years just to keep things interesting. In the 1980's, an Enjoli perfume commercial boldly declared, "I can bring home the bacon, fry it up in a pan" (apparently, proving our worth requires both a paycheck **and** a perfectly crisped breakfast)!

More than four decades later, the expectations haven't eased; we're still expected to do it all. But Scripture offers a different answer, one that frees us from the pressure to perform. Our identity isn't found in gender, achievements, or shifting cultural expectations, but in Christ alone.

Our Identity Is Secure in Christ: Colossians 3:3 reminds us, "For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God." Society's expectations shift, but God's truth doesn't.

Instead of striving to fit into cultural molds, we're called to embrace our identity as members of the Body of Christ, fully accepted and secure in Him, not because of what we accomplish, but because of what He achieved.

Christ, Not Culture, Defines Us: In today's world, the definition of womanhood is constantly shifting, almost by the minute. But as believers, we're called to embrace God's unchanging truth, where our worth isn't rooted in roles or achievements, but in our identity as those redeemed by Christ.

Rejecting the "Battle of the Sexes" Mentality: Secular thinking frequently fosters tension between men and women, distorting God's original purpose for both. Yet Galatians 3:28 declares that in Christ, there is "**neither male nor female**," because our standing before God isn't based on gender but redemption. This affirms that our worth and purpose aren't determined by societal hierarchy but by our identity in Him.

Freedom from External Labels: Feminism often encourages women to define ourselves by career, power, or self-sufficiency, yet this focus leads to pressure, comparison, and exhaustion! Rather than chasing validation through external achievements, we can rest in the assurance that our true purpose is found in Him, regardless of the roles, labels, or positions we fulfill.

The Freedom of Grace: The world urges us to prove our worth, whether through success, beauty, or influence. Yet this endless pursuit only breeds insecurity.

2 Corinthians 5:17 declares that when we are in Christ, we are "**a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.**"

As believers, we're fully accepted in Christ. There's no need to measure ourselves against others. Instead of chasing approval, we can live in the freedom of grace - fully accepted, fully secure, and fully at rest in Him!

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. - Ephesians 2:10

I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being imperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them. How precious also are thy thoughts unto me, O God! how great is the sum of them! - Psalm 139: 14-17

A bright September morn,
Turned dark by sudden sorrow.
Towers fell, a nation mourned,
Hearts united, facing tomorrow.

Never Forget the Heroes' Call

When terror struck, and shadows fell,
Heroes rushed where danger soared.
Their selfless acts, a story to tell,
Courage etched, forever adored.

United in Spirit, Strong and True

From dust and despair, a spirit rose,
A nation joined, hand in hand.
Love and resilience, everyone knows,
We stood together, a united land.

Echoes of Loss, Hope's Gentle Light

Though pain remains, a memory stark,
Hope flickers, a beacon bright.
From the ashes, a new future we mark,
Remembering,
and moving towards the light.

Anonymous





... September - October Reflections

TRICK OR TREAT ON HALLOWEEN?

BY KATHLEEN SMITH

The month of October ushers in a cooler season of weather; pumpkin spiced food and warm earthy, autumn colors.

If you have lived up north, Autumn means waking up to crisp, cool September and October mornings with dew on the ground, reaching for a sweater or sweatshirt before venturing outside. The landscape is beautiful with falling yellow and crimson leaves everywhere making a blanket of spectacular color on front lawns that eventually die off and need to be raked! Yet, it's a lovely time of the year where God's majesty is displayed by His creation gently shedding its 'greener' finery – leaf by leaf – for another year as trees slowly go to sleep for a long winter's night.

In Florida, we see several variety of trees and shrubs that shed their leaves and many flowers change or fade as Southwest Florida also heads into slightly cooler, less humid days! But no matter where you live we, all embrace the warm colors and traditions of Autumn!

October also brings the arrival of Halloween. While the celebration provides an outlet for costume creations and candy consumption, for many Christians the question remains: Should Christians celebrate Halloween?

The answer: it depends.

God desires, by His grace, faithfulness no matter the time of year. For Christians, Halloween, just like any other holiday, offers the opportunity to model grace and discernment in our decision-making by sharing the gospel in unique ways despite the worldly culture surrounding us. Halloween is an opportunity to share a sweet treat and a tract about Jesus Christ!

It's safe to say Halloween is one of the most marketable, profitable, and culturally popular celebrations in October raking in millions of dollars for local and national TV advertisers, stores, vendors, franchises, and online venues selling costumes, decorations, linens, lights, candles, candy, and on and on. Just walk into Hobby Lobby, Michaels, Home Goods, or the local dollar store in late July, early August. There are literally aisles of displays of beautiful festive fall decorations, linens, paper plates . . . you name it! However, every holiday throughout the year is just like that, not just Halloween.

Most of the debate surrounding the celebration of Halloween for believers focuses on an unhealthy fascination with evil. But is there anything inherently evil about allowing your children to dress up as Spider Man or Cinderella?

No, of course not!

On the other hand, is there something inherently evil about costumes promoting Satan, witches, ghosts, or evil cartoon and movie characters? Maybe. Satan and his fallen angels are real . . . so why glorify them with costumes that exalt their existence as funny or good? So then, is it a sin to Celebrate Halloween? Again, it depends.

The Bible contains no direct references to Halloween by name. In 1 Corinthians 10:31, Paul writes, "Whether therefore ye eat, or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God."

". . . Whatsoever ye do . . ." What did our apostle Paul mean?

Our obedience to God requires a discerning spirit and understanding of how much God cares about our choices and what we do. In deciding whether to participate in Halloween, believers should consider how their actions align with God's Word, the Bible.

God sees and understands the motives of our hearts whether they are for good or evil. "I the LORD search the heart, I try the reins, even to give every man according to his ways, and according to the fruit of his doings."
- Jeremiah 17:10 KJV

Little children dressing up in costumes and going door-to-door for candy is not evil. For these little ones, it is so much fun! In fact, the LORD delights in the innocence of little children; and pretending to be Super Man or Snow White on October 31st is not a sin. Just as it wouldn't be a sin to dress up as Santa Claus on Christmas Eve.

It all comes down to this: How we portray Jesus in our choices and behavior matters and how we interact with people matters just as costume choices on Halloween matters to God. 🍎

Fun Facts about October

- National Fire Prevention Week falls during the week of October 9 each year. It commemorates the Great Chicago Fire of 1871.
- October in the Northern Hemisphere is similar to April in the Southern Hemisphere.
- The World Series for Major League Baseball generally takes place during October.
- The NBA, National Basketball League, and the NHL, National Hockey League, both begin their seasons in October.
- There are many health observances that have October as their national month. These include Healthy Lungs, Breast Cancer, Lupus, Spina Bifida, Blindness, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome (SIDS).



Looking Ahead . . .



Every year, Avalon Grace Church participates in Samaritan's Purse worldwide ministry, "Operation Christmas Child." Our small fellowship is a part of a worldwide ministry in bringing joy to children at Christmas with the good news of Jesus Christ! This year's National Collection Week is November 17 - 24.

Every shoebox that is filled with toys and practical gifts, the gospel message is included. We never know how God will use His Word to reach a young child's heart - or even their parent's heart - but we do know that God's Word will never return void. (Isaiah 55:11). God is surely working in the lives of these little ones by hearing the good news of Jesus and His love for them; and that He died for them and rose again to bring them to heaven one day. Thank

you for participating in this wonderful ministry with your monetary gifts and little toys, stuffed animals, coloring books, and more to gladden a young child's heart. Please see Janet McClellan with any questions you may have. Thank you! Pastor Phil



They sowed fields and planted
vineyards that yielded a fruitful
harvest;

Psalm 107:37

Oh that men would praise the LORD for His goodness, and for His wonderful works to the children of men! Let them exalt Him also in the congregation of the people, and praise Him in the assembly of the elders.

He turneth rivers into a wilderness, and the water springs into dry ground; a fruitful land into barrenness, for the wickedness of them that dwell therein.

He turneth the wilderness into a standing water, and dry ground into water springs. And there He maketh the hungry to dwell, that they may prepare a city for habitation; And sow the fields, and plant vineyards, which may yield fruits of increase. - Psalm 107: 31-37 KJV

An early reminder! Set your clocks
back one hour before you go to bed on
Saturday night, November 1, 2025





Avalon Grace Church
of Naples, Florida

**HAPPY
BIRTHDAY
TO YOU!**



SEPTEMBER

8th Patty Hisler
15th John Lombard
20th Rylan Stevens
23rd Joshua McClellan
27th Victor Ramirez

September 2025						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<i>Grandparent's Day</i> 	1 <i>Labor Day</i>	2	3	4	5	6
7 9:45 Breakfast 10:30 Worship 10:45 Child. SS	8	9	10	11 12	13	
14 10:30 Worship 10:45 Child. SS	15	16	17	18	19	20
21 10:30 Worship & the LORD'S SUPPER 10:45 Child. SS	22 <i>Autumn Begins</i>	23	24	25	26	27
28 10:30 Worship 10:45 Child. SS	29	30				



OCTOBER

5th Sharon Riedel
18th Lynn Bean
19th Marcine Cooney



October 2025						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5 9:45 Breakfast 10:30 Worship 10:45 Child. SS	6	7	8	9	10	11
12 10:30 Worship 10:45 Child. SS	13 <i>Columbus Day</i>	14	15	16	17	18
19 10:30 Worship & the LORD's SUPPER 10:45 Child. SS	20	21	22	23	24	25
26 10:30 Worship 10:45 Child. SS	27	28	29	30	31 <i>Halloween</i>	