

# From the Director

## The Sabbath

*Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation.* (Genesis 2:1-3)

The seventh day, the day of rest\*, the Sabbath, is woven in the creation order. Sabbath is as much a part of creation as the seas, fields, animals, and man. Each day of creation was “good,” and the whole of creation at the end of the sixth day God called “very good.” Day 7 also God blessed and he made it “holy.” Something is going on here that God’s people dare not overlook, take for granted, ignore, or flaunt. (Indeed, much of the Old Testament has to do with God’s people overlooking, ignoring, flaunting, or taking the Sabbath for granted.)

The fourth commandment, requiring Sabbath observance, provides a Creation-mandate rationale:

*Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you, or your son, or your daughter, your male servant, of your female servant, or your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates. For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the seas, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and made it holy.* (Exodus 20:8-11)

Because God rested on the seventh day, blessed and called the day holy, Israel was to cease from all labor. In imitation of God, all who *could* work (note the inclusion of livestock and of the alien) must cease from work. And let’s not lose sight of what this commandment says about the first six days ... just as God worked for six days, the command presumes that we too will labor, then rest. Work is part of our creation living, part of how we are made in the image of God. Like God, we work (and may our work be “good”) and we rest (and may our six days of work be “very good”).

I am currently reading two books that touch on this matter of the Sabbath. Eugene Peterson has written much, helpfully, on this matter as it relates to pastoral ministry. In his new work on spirituality, *Christ Plays in Ten Thousand Places*, he shows how the Sabbath principle

is integral to complete and healthy discipleship. (My quick, uninspired précis on his elegant writing.) From another quite different angle, I happened to pick up the collection of Wendell Berry’s “Sabbath poems,” *A Timbered Choir*. I recommend both as a way of engaging this matter of Sabbath, as Christians in the west in the 21st century.

When Moses again relates the Ten Commandments, he provides another rationale for keeping the Sabbath:

*Observe the Sabbath day, to keep it holy, as the Lord your God commanded you. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is a Sabbath to the LORD your God. On it you shall not do any work, you or your son or your daughter or your male servant or your female servant, or your ox or your donkey or any of your livestock, or the sojourner who is within your gates, that your male servant and your female servant may rest as well as you. You shall remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm. Therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the Sabbath day.* (Deuteronomy 5:12-15)

So, observe the Sabbath: not only in imitation of God’s pattern (work well for six days, do no work on the seventh), but in recognition and celebration of God’s great work on our behalf (you were enslaved and he freed you).

Keeping Sabbath guards us from believing that if we don’t work, things will fall apart. It reminds us that God will provide. There is a matter of justice involved as well—you see it in the Deuteronomy passage: don’t turn from enslaved to slave-drivers; you have been freed, give your servants the day off. Our day of rest is a gift to remind us of God’s good work in creation and his great work in redemption. Before we return to the issue that began this series (how are Sabbath, rest, and the Lord’s Day connected?), we will look next week at how we are called to practice rest. That is, what did, does, and can a Sabbath look like for us?

Because he calls you from striving into his rest

### Sing on!

\*The word for “rest” here is the verb form of the noun “Sabbath.”

*Chuck*

#### Calendar Corner:

Sunday, April 20—morning services: Jubilation Bells, Chancel Choir; Communion service

Sunday, April 27—morning services: String Ensemble, Chancel Choir

Sunday, April 27—evening service: Choral Vespers Service, Chancel Choir (6pm)

Sunday, May 4—evening service: Children’s Choirs present “Elijah” (6pm)

THE PRAYER COLUMN  
LEE HOFFNER, CHOIR CHAPLAIN

Why did you make me, O God? I'm not worth the creation effort!

When we are confessing our sins, the same sins – for the thousandth time – we may be inclined to cry out thus. Isaiah (chapter 43) tells us that we who are called by the Lord's name are created for his glory. Paul told the Ephesians that we are God's work of art, "created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Eph. 2:10)

Pray this week that God would give you his perspective concerning you as part of his creative work: you were created to be redeemed; you are made holy by Jesus' sacrifice and resurrection; you are now a sanctified part of the whole of creation, whose purpose is to call out his glory throughout eternity.

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To include your new prayer requests, contact Chuck King (668-0878 x122; [cdking@college-church.org](mailto:cdking@college-church.org)).

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**Chancel Choir Rehearsal Music:**

**Voice-Building**

Send Your Word	April 27
Return to the Lord Your God	April 20
Rejoice in the Lord Always	April 20

Music for April 27 Choral Vespers (6pm):  
Let Us Go Into the House of the Lord  
Magnificat and Nunc dimittis  
Ubi caritas  
Pilgrims Hymn

**Choir Calendar**

- Sunday evening, April 27—Choral Vespers service, College Church (6pm)
- Choir does not sing in morning services on May 4

**Jubilation Bells Rehearsal**

**Wednesday 6:45 PM in the Choir Room**  
Bells play in services on  
Sunday, April 20

**Brass Ensemble Rehearsal**  
*Ad hoc for the year*

**String Ensemble Rehearsal**  
**Thursdays at 7pm in the sanctuary**  
Ensemble plays morning services, April 27

**Concert Series**  
**College Church Sanctuary**

**June 1, 2008, 3:00 pm**

***The Agape Ringers***  
**Chicago's premier hand bell choir**  
**David Weck, director**