

Rev. Dr. Gary Comstock
The First Congregational Church of Old Lyme
Pastoral Prayer
September 6, 2026

Hello, God, is it okay today if we call you by your Hebrew name, Yahweh? It seems right to do so, because we want to talk about number four of the Ten Commandments — this is the commandment about resting on the seventh day of the week — and the Bible quotes you, Yahweh, as announcing the commandments.

The story behind the fourth commandment is that you did a lot of heavy work creating the world for six days and needed a rest on the seventh day — and it should be a model for us to put rest into our busy and often chaotic and demanding lives.

In the fourth commandment you tell the head of the family to take a day off each week, but you also say others in the family should too. The kids, the servants, the animals, and visitors like migrant workers, who help with harvests, and others who come to work on the farm and end up staying.

So, you put a social justice emphasis into this commandment. You probably know that our Biblical scholars say this is the first documented law ever written to protect the rights of workers, animals, and immigrants — so you really started something when you said they deserve a day off.

There's a lot packed into the fourth commandment; and we thank you, Yahweh, for an inspiring what became Labor Day and labor unions in our time and also to what has become an increased attention to animal welfare.

Speaking of that, an issue worthy of our attention right now is the plight of wild horses in the western part of our country. Despite a federal law banning the slaughter of wild horses, a legal loophole has been relaxed under the current administration that allows sales to Canadian slaughterhouses.

Also in keeping with the fourth commandment, we praise what Haitian immigrants have done in Springfield, Ohio, to fill critical labor shortages and to revitalize that city's economy and optimism, and we praise also what the mayor there has done to protect and care for the safety and well-being of immigrants and all residents of the city.

We do want to bring up something that bothers us about the fourth commandment, though. Among the list of those family members and others who get the day off, the wife isn't mentioned.

Now, we know that patriarchies generally depend on the collaboration and management by wives.

Wives train the kids, manage the servants, often supervise the whole operation, and are on call for anything at any time.

So, maybe, because when everyone got the day off, someone was needed to stay on board and hold things together, and she was the most capable candidate to keep working.

But that would also be your situation in regards to the world; how can and do we get along for a day without you at the helm, while you are resting?

Well, we know you must know the answer to that, and maybe you could do some editing of the fourth commandment and get The Mrs included in the ranks of those who get a day off. That's fair, isn't it?

Thank you, Yahweh. Good talk. Enjoy your day of rest as we enjoy ours. Take care now. We love you, Buddy. Amen