

With the end of the school year come changes in our schedules. It is not so much that things slow down, it is just new activities now fill our calendars. Unfortunately, those many activities crowd out other activities. Often and with many people, the one activity that gets crowded out the most is worship. Now before you let that last sentence turn you off and lead you to move on with this newsletter, please hang with me. I am not here to make you feel guilty (I can't make you feel anything actually). Guilt trips are never a long-term solution to anything. It just makes people resentful in the long haul. The reason for me writing what I did is for one reason and one reason alone: **I miss you.** You see, as a fellow member of the body of Christ I long to be with other brothers and sisters in Christ. I love worshiping with you. I love singing with you. I love praying with you. I love confessing the Apostles' Creed with you. I love receiving Holy Communion with you. I love hearing the Gospel with you. I love proclaiming the Gospel to you. I love visiting with you after worship. And the list could continue but you get the point. In the end, it is all about the unity of the body of Christ. Yes, we can pray and read the Bible at home or at the lake cabin, but nothing can replace the community of believers. Nothing can replace corporate worship. As the saying goes, there is safety in numbers and that safety is related to the opposition we have from the Adversary – Satan. Sheep on their own are vulnerable, but together with the Shepherd there is safety. But worship is more than safety. Worship is about the One who has saved you through Jesus Christ. It is ascribing to Him what is due to Him – glory.

So, in the meantime, wherever you are and whatever you are doing, know that the love of God through Jesus Christ never leaves you. Know that His grace is always there for you when you turn to Him and confess your sins. Know the peace of Christ that sustains you in this life. Know the hope of the resurrection that was given to you through the resurrection of Jesus from the dead. Know that you are never absent from God.

Know, also, that my door is always open, my phone is on, and my email is monitored. And so, what that, allow me to share a couple quick updates of things coming up:

~ Miles John Thilges, son of Derek and Shelby, will be baptized during worship on July 17.

~ There will be an outdoor community worship service during Bison Days on July 31 at the Post Office park at 9:30 AM

~ Bethlehem Sunday registration event will be Sunday, August 7.

~ Rally Sunday will be September 11.

God bless your summer and I look forward to seeing you all soon.

Your brother in Christ,

Pastor Eric