

You're No Less a Sinner in the Summertime

It's always bothered and puzzled me how many people suddenly "give up" going to church during the summer.

Oh, I know, many people travel on the weekends, so they're out of town. But I get very few requests for help finding a church where those travelers can attend on Sunday mornings. (Though my direct help isn't needed that much for anyone who has access to the Synod's website, lcms.org. In the upper right corner, just click on "Locaters" and then "Find a Church." And yes, there's an app for that!) And while a rare few bring back a bulletin and share their experiences, I don't normally hear about what people saw and heard at the church they visited when they were away. From the experiences they do share, I'm pretty sure that "attending the Divine Service" was not on their list of "things to do."

Then there are all those people who aren't traveling. It seems a lot of them think of church attendance like school attendance, with its three-month summer "vacation." Sunday mornings become time for sleeping in (perhaps from being out very late the night before—sunlight does last late into the evening during the summer months!). For others, it's a time for getting projects done around the house (ah, how often I've heard the sound of hammers doing roof work!). Still others use Sunday morning to get an early start on the day's family outing.

But all this brings me back to the title of this month's article. I'm not sure if you've thought about it, but I know that I'm just as much of a sinner in the summertime as I am the rest of the year. I need the forgiveness of my sins in June, July, and August as much as I need it from September to May. And the place to get that forgiveness is not out in "the beauties of God's creation" or in memories of the past, but gathered alongside the People of God in the present Presence of God in His Word and Sacraments.

As a Pastor, I tend to take most of my vacation in the summer because there are fewer things that need to be cancelled or rescheduled. My wife's workload is usually lighter, too, making days for travel available to both of us. Not that we always go very far. Sometimes, a well-planned "stay-cation" can be as restful and re-creative as a lengthy trip. But even when we do stay at home, we try to find a Sunday (or Saturday) service where we can hear the Gospel, be Absolved, and receive the Lord's Supper. Even though that's my "job," I also recognize that I need it for my weekly re-creation in Christ.

So rather than a "vacation," how about trying for "perfect attendance" at church this summer? If you're traveling, seek out and plan a place where you can attend the Divine Service. If you've got a big project to complete, take a break for an hour or so to come to God's house. (God doesn't mind if you show up in your work clothes and we don't either—well, depending on what kind of work you've been doing). And if you're planning an outing, then start it off with Word and Sacrament so that your "day of rest" sets off on the right foot.

For you're no less a sinner in the summertime than you are the rest of the year. And you and I need Jesus all year long. So come to His house, and make this summer a holy and joy-filled season in every way!

