

As the days grow warm, don't let hearts grow cold...

I often wonder if the title above describes summer accurately. Throughout the school year, families are regulars in church. Almost immediately, we start to focus on Christmas, getting ready for the big celebrations as we remember the birth of our Savior into the world. We revel at the passages that tell us who that Baby is as we see Him begin His ministry and perform miracle after miracle and then comes the repentance packed days of Lent. Recalling our sin, we focus ever more keenly on the cross of Christ where forgiveness is secured for the people of God. Easter explodes with blossoms which burst open like the Easter tomb itself and spring comes rolling in under the shouts of "Alleluia" as the promises of heaven are proclaimed. It's always heartwarming and uplifting to see the church packet and people drinking deeply of the forgiveness Christ has won for them.

Shortly after, however, it begins to happen. Attendance drops off. Not sharply at first and there are still some highlights: Confirmation and 8th grade graduation bring people in again, but the pull of the lovely weather nevertheless sets in. Ascension, wasn't nearly as packet as Easter was just 40 days earlier and ironically, somewhere around Pentecost the fire seems to dim a bit. Vacations, camping trips, baseball games, gardening and home repair the long to-do-lists of summer begin to strangle out the very means through which the Holy Spirit works.

Now don't get me wrong, none of the things I just mentioned are evil, not in and of themselves. Most are even beneficial when properly balanced with time spent with God in His Word. However, Satan knows how to manipulate us and he knows how to move God's people from the one thing needful to the many things wanted. Every church seems to see the same cycle, the summer slump sets in and as attendance drops, so do the gifts they bring to their Savior and the work a church can accomplish through them. Church budgets tighten and sometimes even flounder. It's harder to get the word out about events and opportunities. And this summer there are a lot of things happening: Gym Floor (deliver around June 2nd), VBS (July 27-31), an area night at a water park (July 26th), WELS Night at Miller Park (Aug. 14th), fellowship opportunities and more. But all of these are symptoms of the larger problem: our outward lives betray an inward condition; summer is crowding out the Savior.

So what is the solution as spring ramps into summer and as the school year winds down to its eventual conclusion? Simply this: remain regular in the Word and Sacraments. Our schedule changes this week and throughout the summer to accommodate precious weekend time spent with kids and friends (Thursdays & Saturdays at 6:30pm and Sundays at 9:00am). I want you all to enjoy the warmer weather and get out and breathe the fresh air. I hope you all have tons of fun and make lasting memories as families. I pray that we will not do that at the expense of the Word and the warmth it regularly brings to our hearts. I am confident that as God drenches us in His forgiveness through His means of grace, the rest will take care of itself.

In Christ,
Pastor Michael Kampman