

# **“Together” - Worship**

## **June 24, 2018**

**Our Savior’s Way**  
**Worshiping Sundays 8:00, 9:30, & 11:00 AM**  
**Pastor Labuhn**

Today, we’re starting our summer series of “Together.” Why “Together”? Simply because even though summer time is a time when we’re more active doing more activities, our culture and society continues to grow more and more isolated. Even our children aren’t as interested in going outside to play, rather they want to be indoors playing video games. And while we’re connected to each other through the internet, cellphones, and social media than ever before, many in our culture today are feeling more alone than they ever have before. We’re connected but we aren’t together.

Acts chapter 2 shares with us that the disciples gathered together for worship. They were all together in one place and they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers. And awe came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were being done through the apostles. And all who believed were together and had all things in common.

God created us for worship. And so, as individuals we connect with God by finding time to read scripture, pray and praise Him for all that He has done and continues to do in our lives. We connect with Him alone, as Jesus Himself did when he went off to pray alone from time to time. But also, as we gather together for corporate worship as the psalmist does in our Old Testament reading for this morning, calling us to worship together in God’s house.

Let’s read Psalm 100 together: “Make a joyful noise to the Lord, all the earth! Serve the Lord with gladness! Come into His presence with singing! Know that the Lord, He is God! It is He who made us, and we are His; we are His people, and the sheep of His pasture. Enter His gates

with thanksgiving, and His courts with praise! Give thanks to Him; bless His name! For the Lord is good; His steadfast love endures forever, and His faithfulness to all generations.”

Jesus and his disciples went to the synagogue and to the Temple together to read scripture, pray, and give praise to God. On one occasion, as Jesus and his disciples were at the temple, when they passed by a man born blind. His disciples asked Jesus if it was the man’s sin or his parents’ sin that made him blind. Jesus said that the man was born blind so that the works of God might be made known. Then Jesus healed the blind man and told him to wash his eyes. And as we see in our Gospel reading for today, the man’s faith grew from confessing Him as someone from God to worshipping Jesus as Lord.

Each of us is born spiritually blind, unable to see our sin and unwilling to do things God’s way. But through Baptism and the Word, God has delivered us from the domain of darkness through His Son, who gave His very life for us on the cross. So that having been raised to new life on the 3rd day, we might be given new life in Him. Having been enlightened by this Good News, we come to know and worship Him as our Lord and Savior.

Yet prompted by the Holy Spirit, we gather together with others for worship, which is an essential element in the life of believers. Without this gathering, we often become distracted and our faith can begin to fade. This reminds me of the story of a member of a church, who had been attending services regularly, but stopped going. After several few weeks, the pastor decided to visit him. It was a cold and rainy evening. And the pastor found the man home alone, sitting before a blazing fire.

Guessing the reason for his pastor's visit, the man welcomed him, led him to a big chair near the fireplace and waited. The pastor made himself comfortable but didn’t say anything. In the silence, the man focused on the play of the flames around the burning logs.

After a while, the pastor took the fire tongs, carefully picked up a brightly burning ember and placed it to one side of the hearth by itself. Then he sat back in his chair, still not saying a word. The man watched in quiet fascination as this one ember's flame diminished, there was a momentary glow and then its fire was no more. Soon it was cold and "dead as a doornail." Not a word had been spoken since the initial greeting.

Just before the pastor was ready to leave, the pastor picked up the cold, dead ember and placed it back in the middle of the fire. Together, with the others the cold, dead ember immediately began to glow once more with the light and warmth of the burning coals around it. As the pastor reached the door to leave, the church member said, "Thank you so much for your visit and especially for the fiery sermon. I'll see you in church for worship this Sunday."

This past Thursday was the Summer Solstice and summer is officially here! Warmer weather, vacations at the beach, cookouts with family and friends, and seemingly more a time to enjoy outdoor activities. It's the time of the year many of us have been looking forward to throughout the year.

But that doesn't mean that it's time to take a vacation from worshipping together. John Keppel, a member of Our Savior's Way, shared his thoughts about worship, here's what John had to say about worship...

This summer, I'd like to encourage you to stay connected by reading God's Word and continuing to pray to Him in all that you do. But I'd also like to encourage you, even if you're elsewhere, to continue attending worship services this summer and pick up a "Together" activity packet in the lobby, so that together we can all learn and grow in faith this summer.

Let's pray.