

This month in First Word we highlight our purpose of exalting God's heart, mind, and soul - that is worship. We talked with two people, Rick

**Psalm 148:13** "Let them praise the name of the Lord, for his name alone is exalted; his splendor is above the earth and the heavens."

FW: How do you experience God during a worship service?

**Rick:** During the morning worship, I often sense God speaking directly to me through a song, a scripture or the message. If I come to the service expecting to experience God, I'm never disappointed.

FW: What is the value of worshipping God corporately versus having only a personal experience?

**Rick:** Worshipping with others helps me realize that I am not alone. There are other worshippers who are seeking and praising God with me. I'm encouraged by the joyful expressions of others as we meet together.

FW: If worship is more than just a Sunday experience, how can you tell you've worshipped during the week?

**Rick:** I know I have worshipped when I joyfully and willingly obey God, rather than follow the worldly desires that tempt me.



FW: What is one way you'd like to encourage the worshippers at First Free?

**Rick:** Romans 15:13, "May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

FW: What role does who you are in Christ play in your worshipping on Sunday?

**Rick:** Who I am in Christ compels me to worship Him and praise Him, knowing how undeserving I am and how merciful and gracious He is.

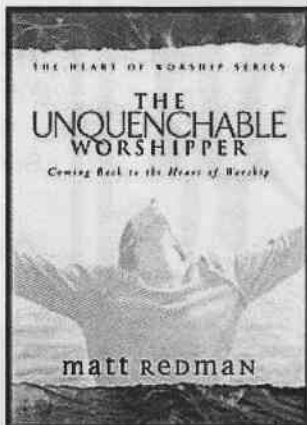
## DID YOU KNOW...?

1. Rick Olson and his wife, Edie, have attended First Free since 2003 and also participate in a small group Bible study
2. Rick, during his free time, loves to play with his two grandchildren pictured above.
3. Sailing and woodworking are some of Rick's hobbies.
4. Rick works in the business office of a large Ear, Nose and Throat Clinic.

ame. The first and greatest commandment is to love God with all our  
Olson (choir director) and Debbie Smith (pianist). Here's what they shared....

"The Heart of God loves a persevering worshipper who, though overwhelmed by many troubles, is overwhelmed even more by the beauty of God."

- Mat Redman



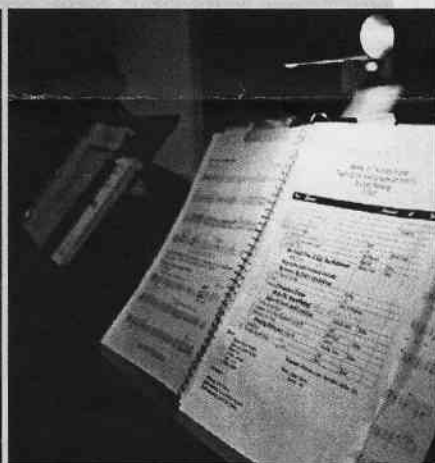
"...the truths can be so great and powerful that I am awestruck and humbled in His presence."

FW: What character quality of God do you most connect with?

Debbie: God is omnipotent. He is all-powerful. Since He has all the power, He is in control. Since He is in control, He knows about my life, and nothing happens without His knowledge. Since He knows, I must trust Him and not be anxious. God's omnipotence is a blessing and encouragement to me.

FW: If worship is more than just a Sunday experience, how can you tell you've worshipped during the week?

Debbie: God has a chance to work in my life as often as I seek Him. When I meet with Him alone, by reading the Bible and praying, I am drawn into worship. As I worship, He can change my heart to be more like His. To be more like Him is worship.



FW: How do you experience God during a worship service?

Debbie: When I have prepared my heart to meet with God and I consciously think about the words I am singing, the truths can be so great and powerful that I am awestruck and humbled in His presence. At that point, I am able to offer up a purer worship to Him.

FW: What is the value of worshipping God corporately versus having only a personal experience?

Debbie: Corporate worship brings people together that may have very little in common with each other outside of Jesus Christ. Praying and singing in a group becomes an encouraging experience. Being unable to hear myself in a group can be a glimpse of our oneness in Christ and the future glories of heaven.

### DID YOU KNOW...?

1. Debbie Smith has served First Free Church as the pianist for 9 years. She has also been involved in singing with the worship team, teaching the Sr. High youth on Sundays, and leading a Bible study in her home.
2. Debbie loves to travel. A couple of the places she has traveled to are China and Greece.
3. Recently Debbie adopted a little puppy named Lulu!