



**GRACE
LUTHERAN
CHURCH**

**Online worship until further notice
See page 5 for how to access**

**Sunday Worship: 9:00 a.m.
Weekday morning Prayers 9:30 a.m.**

The building is closed – reach us at 515-276-6873

5201 Urbandale Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa 50310
515-276-6873
www.gracedm.org

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Inside This Issue...

- 2... Celebrations, Sympathies
- 3... Health and Safety Committee,
When can we return?
- 4... Finance Report , Little Free Pantry
- 5... Covid Recovery Iowa, Online Worship
- 6... Youth and Family Ministry for all
Fresh Produce giveaway
- 7... Guinea Grinders, Monster Cookies
- 8... LSI Update, DMARC requests
- 9... Synod Assembly livestream
- 10... Member summer adventures
- Insert: Coloring Page

How Did We Get Here?

It is difficult to know about what one can or cannot speak. There seems to be a growing list of taboo topics. Growing up, I was told that one does not talk about money, religion, or politics. Well, spoiler alert: I am going to talk about all three.

First...money. I want to start with a huge "Thank You!" We are four months into the pandemic realities, and we are holding steady financially. Giving has remained strong. In addition to regular giving, we were able to tackle the mini Capital Campaign and raise the money needed for the new Air Conditioning unit that will be installed soon. We would not be in the position we are in if it were not for the continued dedication and giving of the community of faith. I continue to be amazed at the strength of Grace Lutheran Church and consider it an absolute blessing to serve as your pastor.

Second...politics (concerning citizens/people). We live in a time when people are on edge. There is a pandemic on the loose. There is an election coming up. There is a greater divide in this country than of any other time that I can remember. Where "politics" used to mean one did not talk about candidates or how one would vote, it now means a variety of things. Common and mundane things have become political topics. Even the topic of Covid-19 becomes political, with research at varying points in the spectrum. The topic of masks has become political, as if to wear or not to wear shows how one may vote in November. Care for the health and well being of others should not be a taboo topic. We need to do better and talking with one another and finding a solution.

Simply put, the word "Politics" comes the Latin for "citizen or people." The more we use the word political to cancel the voice of others, the less it is about people and the more it is about promoting your world view. The more one lives on an isolated island, only hearing what affirms one's ideology, the easier it is to become ignore others and view anyone who disagrees as an enemy, someone to be feared. With news bias at all points in the spectrum, that is our current context. We have people on isolated islands. Or, to use another analogy, it is as though you have multiple people engaged in trying to win a tennis match, only instead of playing against each other with the volley going back and forth, they are on different courts, by themselves. We need to learn to talk with one another.

Continued on page 4

Happy August Birthday

- 1 - Cathleen Swanson
Laura Schwartz
Amy Neal
- 2 - Kevin Drury
Deborah Helt
- 3 - Michael Hansen
- 4 - Matthew Trickel
- 5 - Rev. Ro Zimany
Donald Swanson
Elizabeth Rudisill
Joshua Appenzeller
Jolee Feeney
Kayleigh Medhurst
- 6 - Carla Peterman
Riannon Brown
- 7 - Dale DeBolt
Layne Weber
- 8 - Teri Koch
- 9 - Ross Lewis
Katherine Lenhart
- 10 - Delores Larsen
- 11 - Martha Martens
Linda Ulrick
- 13 - Maria Jacobo
Josefina Ruiz
- 14 - Angela Hansen
Rachel Welty
- 15 - Connie Heuton
Alex Pilon
Adam Dostalík
- 16 - Cheryl Weatherington
- 18 - Beverly Russell
Michael Best
- 20 - Patrick Thompson
Brent Ridnour
Cooper Mortenson
- 21 - Tom McCleary
- 22 - Annika Christensen
Devin Christensen
- 23 - Marvin Johns
Janice Nordeen
Mark Mattes
- 24 - Grace Schroeder
Janet Trentmann
John Gronert
Linda Gronert
Brady Bogue
Cris Hidalgo
- 25 - Scott Honsey

Happy August Anniversary

- 1 - Stuart and Martha Mitchell
- 4 - Paul and Melissa Kallenbach
Howard and Alice Kulzer
- 7 - Ryan and Rachael Bigg
- 11 - Donald and Bonnie Jo Swanson
- 12 - John and Sharon Schwemler
- 13 - Gary and Marion Nehmer
- 14 - Lathrop and Sally Preston
Ralf and Inga Hoifeldt
- 15 - Sean and Melinda Stickrod
Chris and Melissa Lawson
- 16 - John and Carol Rudisill
Dale and Pat Bordt
- 19 - Kenneth and Eleanor Carlson
- 21 - Ernest and Cheryl Weatherington
- 25 - Bruce Mumm and Christie Rosheim
Scott and Julie Honsey
- 26 - Jerry and Diane Westercamp
- 29 - Norman and Lenora Iverson
- 30 - Joshua and Kristene Shortell
- 31 - Martin and Kari Dostalík
Kurt and Kathy Bowermaster

*Anniversary
Celebration*



Our sympathies are with:

The family of Frank Nehmer (father of Gary Nehmer)

The family of Serena Helton

Birthdays Continued

- 27 - Tim Nelson
- 28 - Richard Randolph
Philip Snyder
Brandon Niemuth
- 29 - Susan Halblom
Todd Prescott
- 30 - Janet Gross
Leonard Ringgenberg
Janet Habick
- 31 - Eleanor Carlson
Gary Nehmer



Health and Safety Task Force Update

The Health and Safety Task Force consists of Dr. Virginia Wangerin, Dr. Scott Honsey, Mary Weaverling, Rich Snyder, Emma Stammer, and Pastor Mike. This task force has been meeting every other week since the end of May to make recommendations on how to proceed safely as Grace Lutheran Church during this global pandemic. These recommendations are then taken to the Congregational Council for a decision. The Congregational Council approved the following recommendations at the July meeting.



Grace Lutheran Church will take a phased approach to the return of in person worship and activities. The following phases will remain fluid, as it may be necessary to move back to a prior phase based on new case counts or active cases within Grace Lutheran Church. Masks will be required in all public spaces of the Grace Lutheran Church building until we reach a point where there is a widespread vaccine and it is deemed safe to discontinue the mask requirement.

Phase 1 – The building is completely closed with the possible exception of livestreaming worship services.

Phase 2 (current phase) – The Grace Lutheran Church building remains closed apart from Grace Kids Care, livestream of worship, private baptisms and funerals, and staff use.

Phase 3 – The Grace Lutheran Church building would open for small groups and meetings of less than a dozen people. There would be additional safety provisions, and people using the building would sign a contract stating they would follow these rules. *This phase could be considered after there is a two-week sustained downward trend in new cases in Polk and Dallas Counties.*

Phase 4 – We would begin to have in person worship with a maximum of 50 people per service. There would be the possibility of multiple services between the sanctuary and Grace Hall. *This phase could be considered after an 8 week sustained downward trend in new cases in Polk and Dallas Counties.*

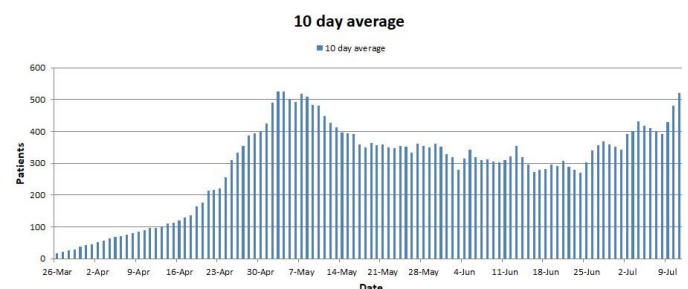
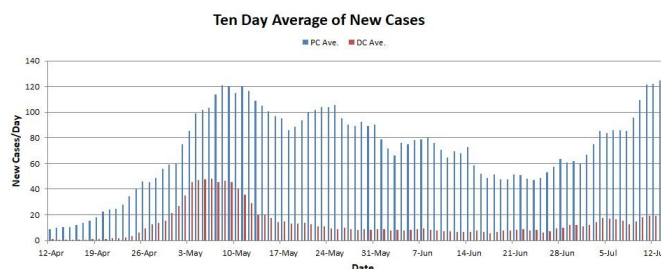
Phase 5 – We would go back to one service in the sanctuary with some updated safety protocols. *This phase could be considered once there is a widespread vaccine and it is safe to gather.*

When can we get back to normal?

Health and Safety Committee member, Rich Snyder

In answer to the question, "When can we get back to normal?" the Center for Disease Control (CDC) has advised that a consistent downward trend in the number of covid cases over a two week period would be grounds for a limited relaxing of current restrictions. With this in mind, here are descriptions of the trends in the number of hospitalized patients and the average number of new patients per day in Iowa.

The number of hospitalized cases state wide rose from late March to a peak on May 6 when the count held fairly steady between 350 to 400 until May 27. A decrease then followed until June 27 when the number of hospitalized patients dipped to 119 but then increased to the current count of 186. The number of new cases varies widely from day to day, and for that reason, the following numbers represent the average number of new cases for the previous ten days. Average new cases reached a peak on May 4 of 526, and then new cases fell to 300-350 per day until June 25. At that time, the average number of new cases rose and continues to rise. On July 12, the average daily number of new cases was 504. Similar data for Polk county has been reported. The peak in Polk county occurred on May 10 at 120 new cases per day after which the number decreased until June 24 at 47. New cases increased after that point reaching 125 cases per day average currently. These data indicate that Iowa as a whole and Polk county specifically are experiencing a rise in both the number of new cases and the number of hospitalized patients. In short, the number of cases is not decreasing, and in fact it has been increasing over the past roughly three weeks.



How Did We Get Here, *continued from page 1*

Third...religion. We have done these same things in the Church for a very long time. Fear has been used as a marketing tool in the Church for hundreds of years. It has been far easier to scare people toward Christ through fear of damnation, than it is to teach people about the love and grace of God. The Gospel is quite clear, "Do Not Be Afraid." These words are spoken to Mary, to the shepherds in the field, and the disciples locked away out of fear. God is love. Fear should not be used as a tool to chase one toward love. Let the love of God attract others.

The Church has also created a lot of isolated islands, theologically, over the years. Anne Lamott says it best when she writes "You know you have created God in your own image when God hates all the same people you do." It is a dangerous and slippery slope to cut off conversation with others who disagree with you. That, honestly, has been my biggest fear in the ELCA since 1999 with the adoption of Called to Common Mission. Congregations who disagreed simply left. As congregations left, there were fewer voices around the table. Those that left became an isolated island with their beliefs, and those that stayed became part of a smaller island. We need one another. We need the conversation.

How did we get here? Well, it has been a long road. However, I believe in you and I believe in God. I believe in the power of conversation. I believe in the power of grace and love. There has perhaps never been a time, in my lifetime at least, when the world has needed honest conversation centered in love and grace more than it does now. I truly believe the Church can be that which guides this conversation and works to bring truth and reconciliation to a hurt and broken world.

I believe in you. I believe in us. And most of all, I believe in God.

In Christ,
Pastor Mike

Finance Report – June Results

Financial results for June YTD are as follows:

- Pledged Offerings – Actual \$201,485, Budget \$209,950
- Other Income – Actual \$11,687, Budget \$14,750
- Expenses – Actual \$211,481, Budget \$226,325
- Net activity – Actual \$1,691, Budget (\$1,625)



Actual net activity was favorable to budget primarily due expenses below budget. Pledged offering continues to approximate budget, unpledged offering is below budget. Continued giving during these uncertain times is appreciated. Maintenance and utility activity was under budget due to lack of occupancy. Contributions to the Capital Campaign (\$47,165) are not included in the above results.

Little Free Pantry Produce Exchange and School Supplies

THANK you for answering Ellen's Facebook call when the pantry was bare – especially Connie and her grandsons! Your thoughtfulness and care is much appreciated!

Fresh Produce: We have placed a basket under the food pantry for produce. If you have extra in your garden, place it in the basket, and we're hoping others will be encouraged to do the same!

School Supplies: Students this semester will be spending less time in a classroom, which means less access to a pool of shared supplies, such as notebooks, pencils, and pens. Art supplies and craft items such as colored pencils, watercolors, crayons, glue, and sketchbooks can help keep kids creative, especially if Mom or Dad is trying to work from home between classes.

From the Iowa Department of Human Services:

COVID Recovery Iowa is here to help

- ▶ Counseling will take place via virtual sessions, chat or phone call.
- ▶ People of all ages may join groups online to find support and learn new strategies to cope with the effects of the pandemic in a variety of creative ways

Every Iowan is eligible for FREE, confidential counseling, group activities, support groups and resources.

Visit www.COVIDrecoveryiowa.org and complete a contact form and a counselor will get back to you.

Facebook, Instagram and Twitter: COVID Recovery Iowa

Call the Iowa Warm Line, 844-775-9276;

to connect with a peer counselor or request to get in touch with a COVID Recovery Iowa counselor.

Comm. 552 (06/20)

Accessing Online Worship

We will continue to adapt worship to best be a place where we become centered in our faith. We are making changes to the readings and the Prayers of the People to, hopefully, better be present you in this time of growing need.

Written materials and Announcements can be found in the Resources section of the website. Click on the word Resources at the top right of any page of the website and go from there! Or, follow this link <https://gracedm.org/resources/> For those who are not using social media, computers, or smart phones, please call the office and we will happily mail you a copy of the worship materials to use at home.

Worship will broadcast live at 9:00 a.m. through Facebook and our website.

Worship will broadcast live on Sunday at 9:00 a.m. on Facebook Live and there will also be links for Facebook Live and a test of another streaming platform on the website. These links will be posted in the "Recent News" section on the www.gracedm.org homepage.

Or if it is easier, the links are: <https://iframe.dacast.com/b/174906/c/559028>
https://www.facebook.com/permalink.php?story_fbid=3121772711203792&id=626637384050683

Weekday Morning Prayer on Facebook Pastor Mike will go live weekday mornings at 9:30 a.m. If not on Facebook, you can still access the videos at this link:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/category/Religious-Organization/626637384050683/>

Sunday Morning Zoom Virtual Coffee Hour begins at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings. Links can be found in the Thursday afternoon enews and in the file section of the Abiding Grace Facebook group. (Who plans to show up with fried food on a stick instead of a donut?)

Youth and FAMILY Ministry – Active Grace

Contact ellen@gracedm.org

Confirmation update-

This Spring Confirmation students and mentors met virtually each week to check-in and discuss questions of faith. After a summer hiatus we will resume our regular check-ins on July 26. We don't know what the Fall will hold for us, but we enjoy the opportunity to see each other.

Third year Confirmation students are working on their faith statement journals, considering their answers to various faith questions including; "Who is God to you?" and "Why should I go to church?".

We are considering ways to continue this important ministry safely in the fall. Look for updates to come.

Fall All Church VBS On Earth As In Heaven-ELCA World Hunger VBS

This Fall our education opportunities beginning on September 13 through October 18 will be Vacation Bible School for all! Not just for kids and young families, this will be five weeks of learning and activities about different parts of The Lord's Prayer as they relate to parts of the world and the needs people experience there. Everyone can participate at their own pace and level, whether you have access to Facebook or the internet or not. Each participant will get a journal to write in each week. Sundays will be a live Zoom introduction to the theme for that week and then three activity videos will be posted through the week for you to follow along at home. Tired of being virtually connected? That is fine too! We will provide materials for you to do everything at home with whoever else is there with you. We want this to be an opportunity for growth in understanding of The Lord's Prayer and what Christian Community looks like right now.

How can you help? We are looking for people who would be willing to record and share a video of themselves leading an activity. Examples include; cooking, reading a story, saying The Lord's Prayer. Contact Ellen (ellen@gracedm.org) if you would be willing to help in this way.

We are looking forward to doing this together as a church this Fall!

Fresh Produce Giveaway

The Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC) Food Pantry Network has been distributing boxes of fresh fruits and vegetables from Capital City Fruit through the USDA Farmers to Families Food Box Program.

The produce boxes are distributed through DMARC's network of 14 partner food pantries and include a public giveaway held at the Southridge Mall parking lot. The giveaways have been extended to include two August dates: Friday, August 14, and Friday, August 28, at 10:00 a.m.

The produce boxes include approximately 20 lbs. of a variety of fresh fruits and vegetables and are being distributed along with additional food items through DMARC's network of partner food pantries. Food pantries have implemented a variety of alternative pantry methods such as call-ahead ordering, curbside pick-up, and food deliveries to help keep the community safe during the pandemic.

"Providing healthy food to people in need remains our top priority," said DMARC CEO Matt Unger. "We are so grateful to partner with Capital City Fruit during this time to provide additional fresh fruits and vegetables to the people we assist."

More recipes needed for the New Grace Lutheran Cookbook!

If you haven't yet sent in a recipe or are still deciding, or just haven't had time yet, that's ok! We will continue to share them as we receive them, till we have enough for a cookbook! Keep emailing them to Emma at emma@gracedm.org, OR mail to the church at 5201 Urbandale Ave, Des Moines 50310.

Guinea Grinders from the kitchen of Margaret Beeler

Cherie Rissman

I have found comfort during these uncertain times with recipes of my mother's. Holding any of her recipe cards, written in her perfect manuscript and stained with the very ingredients listed on the card, reminds me of being a care-free child, feeling safe with the presence of my parents and brother in my childhood home.

I picture my mother in our small kitchen cooking and the aroma that drifted to wherever I was at play. Sitting at the kitchen table enjoying those meals, as a family of four, over talk and laughter. We were nourished in body and soul. We were blessed.

Below is a family favorite I still make, especially when needing the presence of my mother and memories of the care-free days of my childhood. Making the recipe is as satisfying as the food itself.

1 pound of hamburger
1 pound of Italian sausage (nothing, but Graziano's, my mother would remind me)
Season to taste with onion salt, garlic salt, oregano, fennel seed, basil, and crushed red pepper
16 oz. can pizza sauce
Package of sliced mozzarella cheese
Hoagie Rolls (6 to 8, depending how much meat you like or the size of the hoagie roll)

Brown meats and seasonings. Drain excess fat. Add pizza sauce and simmer 15 min.

Place meat on hoagie rolls; add slice of cheese and wrap in foil.

Bake 400 for 10 minutes. (During the summer, my mother didn't like to heat the kitchen any more with the oven on, so my father would light the grill outside and place the foiled wrapped hoagies on the grill).

Monster Cookies

Marion Nehmer

I've made many batches during the Covid home stay. This recipe makes almost 60 and freezes well. Some for now, some for later! And since they have egg and peanut butter one for breakfast is enticing. (I admit to more than enticing)

1 Cup sugar
1 1/4 Cup brown sugar
1/2 Cup softened butter (not chilled, let it sit out of the refrigerator til soft works best)
3 eggs
1/2 teaspoon vanilla
4 1/2 Cups peanut butter
2 teaspoons baking soda
1/2 teaspoon salt
4 1/2 Cups old fashioned rolled oats
3/4 Cups M&M
(1/2 Cup chocolate chips are also an option to add)

Mix Sugars and butter together well. Add 3 eggs and vanilla. Add oats, salt and soda. Stir in M&Ms. I use parchment paper, dropping tablespoon size dough on cookie sheets. I squish the dough into mounds. Bake at 350 for 8-10 minutes. Let cookies cool on the pan for at least 5 minutes to help them stay moist. Makes 4-5 dozen. Store when completely cooled.



Back to School Month

School is right around the corner! This year's back-to-school time feels a little different than usual for all of us, but imagine what it would be like to be a child or teen with an emotional or behavioral disorder. For the last several months, their routine has been turned upside-down and they've

learned to adjust to a new way of life. Moving back into a school year structure can be particularly stressful and it can be difficult to concentrate and cope.

Lutheran Services in Iowa (LSI) provides mental health services to children and families across the state. It's our job to relate to children who might feel alone or misunderstood. Our therapists provide virtual telehealth therapy sessions with children while our Behavioral Health Intervention Services team collaborates with families virtually or in a community setting to help them develop skills like anger management and healthy decision-making. LSI also provides 24-hour mental health care at the Bremwood and Beloit Residential Treatment Centers in Waverly and Ames to empower Iowa's most vulnerable children and teens.

We thank you for your support of LSI's mission as we respond together to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service! We know there are more Iowa children in need of this critical care. If you would like to learn more about how you can give a gift to support these crucial services, please contact Deb Whitford, LSI director of philanthropy and church relations, at 563-676-2065 or Deborah.Whitford@LSIowa.org.

Our Mission: Lutheran Services in Iowa responds to the love of Jesus Christ through compassionate service. LSI is an affiliated social ministry partner of the Iowa congregations of the ELCA (Evangelical Lutheran Church in America) and a member of LSA (Lutheran Services in America). We proudly serve people of all ages, abilities, religions, sexes, gender identities, national origins, ethnicities, races, and sexual orientations. Learn more at www.LSIowa.org and www.facebook.com/LSI.iowa.

We are Still Here: LSI's Therapy Services

When LSI's workforce began working remote as a COVID-19 precaution, therapist Andrea knew she would need to adjust to a new way of providing therapy to the clients she serves.

In particular, one individual she met with struggled with anxiety on a daily basis. With the pandemic, however, her anxiety deepened and she spiraled to levels she hadn't encountered in years. And she was afraid she would no longer be able to see Andrea and receive the weekly therapy she'd relied on.

But that wasn't stopping Andrea. She set up a home office where she could provide telehealth virtual therapy sessions to all her clients in need of the same consistent care they were used to. Andrea used this time to work with her client on self-care strategies, coping skills, and mindfulness to help her client stay grounded when she felt anxious.

Andrea's client now has the tools she needs to handle the difficult days through this crisis, and Andrea is able to continue providing life-changing serves to Iowa children, adults, and families in her community.

DMARC Requested Donations: Cash

DMARC is able to purchase more per dollar in bulk than we can in person, and is both easier and safer for many at this time. Checks may be mailed to the address below, and food donations may be dropped off at the DMARC Food Pantry Network Warehouse, located at 1435 Mulberry Street in downtown Des Moines.

The 2020 Synod Assembly

August 5 & 7, online

The Southeastern Iowa Synod Council approved a plan to move the 2020 Synod Assembly to a format that is entirely online. Several members of Grace will be in attendance, including Pastor Mike, Ellen Rothweiler, and a member of the Grace community who has volunteered to attend. The primary business of this meeting will include the adoption of the 2021 budget, and the elections of a new synod bishop, a new synod vice president, several synod council and committee members.



Visitors will be able to watch the assembly via livestream through the synod website <https://seiasynod.org> and Facebook (search for Southeastern Iowa Synod, ELCA) or follow this link <https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=southeastern%20iowa%20synod%2C%20elca> . There is no visitor registration for this assembly.

Schedule

Wednesday, August 5

3:00 pm Check-In Process Begins

4:00 pm Plenary Session 1

First Ballot for the Election of a Bishop

6:00 pm Recess until Friday, August 7th at 9:30 am

Thursday, August 6

The assembly is not in session*

8:00 am Results of this First Ballot for the Election of a Bishop posted at www.seiasynod.org and the voter portal.

11:00 am Deadline for nominees on the First Ballot for the Election of a Bishop who choose to remove their name from the election process.

12:00 pm Names of nominees who will be on the Second Ballot for the Election of a Bishop will be posted at www.seiasynod.org and the voter portal.

3:00 pm Deadline for nominees for the Election of a Bishop to submit a biographical form if not already completed.

Friday, August 7

8:15 am Check-In Process Begins

9:30 am Plenary Session 2

Second Ballot for the Election of a Bishop

10:35 am Worship

11:00 am Plenary Session 3

Seven nominees for the Election of a Bishop address the Assembly

Third Ballot for the Election of a Bishop

12:35 pm Recess for Lunch

1:15 pm Plenary Session 4

Three nominees for the Election of a Bishop respond to questions

Fourth Ballot for the Election of a Bishop

Two nominees for the Election of a Bishop respond to questions

Fifth Ballot for the Election of a Bishop

4:10 pm Closing of Assembly

Summer Adventures!

We asked you to share some photos of things you've been up to this summer, if you missed that request as you were enjoying a staycation, or because you were super tired of all things Social Media, email, and online, send them in! We'd love to make this a regular feature!

Share what you've been up to: gardening, baking/cooking, visits with friends, making State Fair food at home, reading, and yes, even trips you've taken. Heck out what these families have been doing!



Dick Johansen with the Summer Cypress Tree sent to him from the Arbor Day Foundation. He has been enjoying it (and caring for it) until it could be planted outside.

Pastor Gregory Davis has been doing some reading:

In Praise of Walking is a book by neuroscientist Shane O'Mara. It walks the reader through the evolutionary steps that led humans to walk about on two legs. He details the benefits these have conferred upon our species toward socialization and cooperative endeavors promoting our survival. O'Mara gets specific about areas of the brain that are enhanced while walking. He encourages distance walking, promoting health and creativity. Read the book and follow the doctor's prescriptions as much as you can and want.

The Revd Gregory Nelson Davis, D.Min.

The Medhurst Family enjoyed some time at Gull Lake, Minnesota with family. Here's what Kristin shared about their trip (it looks like a wonderfully relaxing time!)

- The fish was caught by Kyler—was a wee one (not a very productive fishing expedition this year—the fish were social distancing I guess).
- The picture of the guys with Nick at the picnic table are my side of the family (we had to separate boys and girls as the place was VERY busy and so the girls ate at another table).
- The last picture is of Kayleigh reading on the dock.

