

The Reverend's Ruminations

For some of you, summer's arrival means a little extra unstructured time in the daily schedule. Perhaps you like to work in the yard during the coolness of the early morning and stay indoors when it gets hot. Maybe your duties take you poolside for a few hours in the afternoon while the kids or grandkids splash around, or you're stuck waiting for a baseball practice or a softball game to get over. So what's on your summer reading list? How about picking up an international best-seller?

The Bible can be a daunting read if you attempt it from cover to cover, but perhaps a few small sections could be your summer reading goal. Our Epistle readings will come from Paul's Letter to the Ephesians during the second half of July and all of August, while our Gospel (and sermon) texts will continue from the first six chapters of Mark during July, switch to the sixth chapter of John during August, then return to Mark's chapters 7-13 until Advent begins in December. The entire book of Ephesians is only six chapters, and the gospel selections only cover a couple chapters before the end of the summer, so don't be intimidated. There are no shortage of accessible Bible versions and sizes available, so think about tucking one into your beach bag or keeping it with your folding chair—you can even get it on your smart phone or tablet if carrying one more thing is a challenge!

Like many of you, my family and I will be enjoying a bit of vacation time on both ends of July: first visiting Ellen's family in Oshkosh, then taking a multi-generational trip to the North Shore later in the month with my parents and my sister's family. It's been many years since the four of us vacationed together, and by this time it will include spouses, two teenagers, a toddler, and an infant! We all love to be near Lake Superior, and will surely be ready for its refreshing natural air conditioning by mid-summer.

On a serious note, please hold all of our Minnesota National Guard in your prayers during this season of increased training. Safety is of course a primary concern with so many machines and weapons being employed, but much like our larger society we in military (and the MN NG in particular) also continue to battle the scourge of suicide. I gave a couple suicide awareness and resource briefs during my June drill, since the national news was focused (albeit temporarily) on recent celebrity deaths, and I continue to pray that our Soldiers can find timely and healthy alternatives to such a permanent decision.

On a brighter note, I will be leading a one-day retreat for single Soldiers during our August drill entitled "How Not to Fall for a Jerk," so pray that it is effective in helping our Soldiers find and nurture healthy relationships. In my current Army Chaplain assignment, I have the luxury of splitting up part of my Annual Training days instead of being away for an entire two-week period. This means I'll be observing and rating my two subordinate chaplains during quick two-day stints with their units at Camp Ripley during July and August, but don't have drill with my own unit this July.

Whether it's summer business as usual in Fairmont or you're taking advantage of some time at the cabin or campground, I pray that Christ remains a clear focus in your life. If you're on a vacation and too far away to join us for worship this summer, please seek out a church in that area and see what their services are like. Let me or one of our Worship Board members know what you find—you never know where new and exciting ideas for our congregation may come from!

Whatever this season finds you doing, please be safe. The "dog days" of summer will all too soon be upon us, so just remember those cool and overly-rainy days of late June!

Blessings and Peace be upon you,

Rev. Cory Germain