

## *The Reverend's Ruminations*

Last month I closed my ruminations by encouraging you to “enjoy all the sunshine, warmth, community festivals, and county fairs that August has to offer, [praying also] that you look for God at work in the world around you.” The last month and its mild temperatures have offered us frequent reminders of God’s continued creation and blessing upon this beautiful area of our world. I hope that you have taken time to pause and just be still, feeling the peace that Christ offers to your life and not running yourself ragged to “enjoy” summer vacation!?!

In July and August, I enjoyed the opportunity of extra physical exertion on behalf of this congregation. In July, Eric Johnson, Staci Thompson, Kevin Benson, and I represented Habitat for Humanity of Martin and Faribault Counties on the Habitat 500 fundraiser bicycle tour in northern Minnesota. While Kevin had the misfortune of experiencing heart issues after the first day and ended up having triple-bypass surgery right in Duluth, he is recovering quickly and we pray that his determination will see him back and better than ever for the 2020 Habitat 500. The rest of us continued the ride with him constantly in our thoughts and prayers. I had the opportunity to meet several other pastors on the ride, which affirmed for me the importance of our congregation’s continued support for such a valuable ministry of physical exertion, on-site construction work, and continued financial investment. We enjoyed getting to see a pair of Habitat homes in progress, while Staci and several of the riders took a day “off” the road to pitch in on some of the construction work.



In August, Eric Johnson (apparently a glutton for punishment much like myself) led another very successful “Adventure Crew” trip, this time to the beautiful North Shore of Lake Superior and the Superior Hiking Trail. We had 13 total participants (the biggest group to date), including four friends from outside our congregation who got to experience what a great Christian family is like in action. We hiked further than many thought they could, slept in tents, ate “camp” foods, jumped into rivers, kayaked, played games, and had devotions in beautiful surroundings and mostly good weather. Jon Neitzel and Eric did an excellent job planning, leading, and cooking for this motley bunch of adventurers, and a great time in God’s creation was had by all!



As September now looms and children prepare to return to school, please pray for their continued success and safety in our area school districts. The calendar change also means that worship services will be moving back to 10:30 after Labor Day (starting September 8), and Sunday School opportunities for “children of all ages” will soon begin at 9:15 on Sunday mornings.

Watch for more information in your mailbox if you have a child in the congregation, but remember that EVERYONE is invited to be a part of some form of Christian education at First Congregational UCC. Being a Christian doesn’t just mean showing up regularly for worship services; it’s a life-long learning and growth process that can be both challenging and fun! If you’d like to see another study opportunity get started, please let me or a member of the C.E. Board know!

Yours in Christ’s service,  
*Rev. Cory Germain*