

Michael's Message

After the massive snowstorm of this last weekend, almost everyone is dreaming about summer with its warmer temperatures and lack of snow. We all hope that the winter will end soon, but we can begin to think about summer activities in the meantime.

We can begin with the camps at Okoboji. The Lakeshore Center at Okoboji is a marvelous facility. Cathy and I have stayed in a room there and can certainly recommend the accommodations. I am sure that the children and youth camp are most rustic than our lodgings, but they do have air conditioning, power, and a private bath. If money is a concern, scholarships are available.

These camps have a variety of programs and one of these camps is certain to please everyone. These camps are for children, youth, and adults alike. They even have a camp for night owls.

Lakeshore is also sponsoring a mission trip to Denver, Colorado. They will be working at "food shelves, children's programs, elder care facilities, soup kitchens, and clothing distribution centers to learn about the struggles of poverty in an urban environment." The camp will recruit additional adult drivers to supplement the camp staff. So, if you are interested in volunteering as a driver or know someone who might be, you can contact the camp. Regardless, you can be assured that all the youth will be well-supervised as the camp staff is intensively trained including first aid and CPR.

Synod School is a wonderful opportunity to get to know more of your fellow Presbyterians, learn ways to practice your faith, and to become engaged in inspiring worship and music. This year's theme is "Cultivating Civil Community." I can't think of a more relevant topic in our current climate of insults, division, and bitterness.

If we could learn to listen to each other, speak gently to each other, and solve problems with each other, we could overcome our divisions and begin to see a new vision of the beloved community. As the Church of Jesus Christ, we are called to be his ambassadors of reconciliation. I believe that this Synod School could give us the tools to be more effective as those ambassadors so that we might bridge the distance between opposing groups in our society.

Synod School is not just about serious societal and religious issues. There is tie-dying and basket weaving, pickup basketball and golf, and outdoor cooking and breadmaking. In short there is a workshop that would appeal to almost everyone.

After the storm, I want to turn my thoughts from the fierce cold and deep snows of the last two weeks to a future of warmer temperatures, new learning, and fun. I hope that you will look over the catalog of offerings at Synod School and Lakeshore Center. I am sure that there is something that will appeal to you.

Michael

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