

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

In my last letter, I wrote to you about a variety of fall activities that you can participate in by yourself or with family members. Today, I am writing to encourage you to actually do some of these activities this weekend!

This Saturday (September 26) is National Family Day. While we don't need a special "named" day to go outside and participate in fall activities, doing so on National Family Day, could be a lot of fun!

Most of us know that spending time with family can help drive away feelings of loneliness, isolation, and even depression. According to *National Today (online)*, "Research shows that the quality of familial relationships has significant effects on well-being. Strong family ties support us under stress, help us process trauma, and boost our self esteem."

There are many different activities you and your family can choose from. Of course, choosing ones that you have enjoyed together in the past can be a good starting point. But what if your favorite activities are indoor activities that you are avoiding due to the Coronavirus pandemic? Even if you can't participate in some activities, you may be able to create a shared experience that is close to it. For example, maybe your family likes to bowl, but you are concerned about being in an indoor venue. Why not try lawn bowling, instead! With some creativity, many activities that are typically done indoors can be modified to outdoor settings. Here's another thought... how about bringing out your beanbag cornhole game, croquet set, horseshoes, badminton net and racquets, and/or other games that have been gathering dust in the barn, garage or basement. Perhaps now is a good time to use them again.

For some of us, our immediate family members live quite a distance away. But, that does not mean that we cannot spend time with them this weekend. Call, email or virtually meet with other family members. Decide on an activity or activities that you will participate in this Saturday. On Saturday, get going! When you are done, contact your family members to tell them what you saw and heard. In this way, you can create a shared family experience, apart, but together.

Biological families are important for our well-being, and our church family is important for our well-being, too. At St. Paul's Lutheran Church, we often talk about being a family. When we gather together for our Drive-In Worship Services, even though we are in our own cars, we are joined together with our family in Christ. We are God's children. We are part of God's family, even when our biological families live far away from us. We are part of a shared experience every Sunday as we worship with family members from St. Paul's Lutheran Church whether we are in-person or homebound. For when we gather for worship, we not only gather together with our brothers and sisters in Christ here, but with Christians throughout the world. Thanks be to God!

Peace,

Pastor Cathy