

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As I mentioned in my last newsletter, my aunt turned 92 on July 1. In my birthday card to her, I told her that I hoped that she would be like the women from the ELCA church in Glenville, MN, and the woman from a neighboring Lutheran church, who lived to be 100 years old (or more)! I will say the same to all of you, men and women, alike. I would enjoy being able to share stories of a 100th birthday party for multiple members of St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Wilton, in the years to come!

My aunt received a present from my cousin, Mary, and her husband, Jim, that brought back to her many happy memories. It was a photo album of mostly day-trips that they had taken together in recent years. Mary and Jim took the photos and downloaded them to their computer. Then, they turned the images into an album.

The album was not only a joy for my aunt, but for me, too! As I looked at the photos, I was "carried" to different places and times. There were photos of several family members (including a few of me) at parks, museums, and other sites in Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Iowa. There were beautiful bluffs, vistas, flowers, and more. But perhaps what struck me the most, did not occur to me until afterwards. I realized that during that short period of time, as I was looking at the photos, I had "escaped" from thinking about the day, the pandemic, and other things on my mind. I had vicariously been with my extended family in their many adventures.

During this time of the Coronavirus pandemic, when things may be weighing us down, we can pause. We can pull out photos, photo albums, scrapbooks, and other reminders of happy times. We can look at these photos, and for the brief time we look at them, be vicariously transported to times and places that bring us wonderful memories.

As we look ahead to the July 4th holiday, it will no doubt be a different one for many of us. Most of us will not be gathering with family and friends. Yet, we can look at photos and other reminders of times that we have enjoyed, and hope that we will be able to return to celebrating together again in the near future.

May God bless you this holiday weekend as we celebrate in new ways. May God bless you with memories of happy times with family and friends.

Peace,

Pr. Cathy