

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

As most of you know, this past weekend the Ski Jumping Tournament was held in Westby. Although it was modified due to COVID, it nevertheless was held for the 98th year! Prior to reading this, I did not realize that for almost a century this ski jump has been taking place. I recall Bud telling a group of us last year, about the importance of the event to people in our area. How wonderful that it was able to be held again this year!

Last Wednesday, I shared with you some ideas for enjoying animals in nature. This week, as I was looking out the window at my aunt's house, I saw a deer. As I moved closer to the window, I saw another deer, and then another, until I counted 6 deer! They were in the wooded area across the street from her house. Later, I noticed deer hoof prints, and what looked like turkey prints in the snow. Yesterday, while I was driving between Wilton and Sparta on Hwy 71, I saw 4 Bald Eagles!

It was great to see all of these animals, and/or their tracks, from the warmth and comfort of my aunt's house or my car (especially given our current cold temperatures). But it also made me think that rather than going outside right now, perhaps learning about outdoor sports that can allow one to see and enjoy nature, would be appropriate.

One of my cousins and her husband, recently purchased snowshoes. I must admit, when I think of snowshoes, I imagine people in Alaska, dressed in fur coats, trekking from their homes to an outpost to get supplies. (Perhaps, I have watched too many old movies.) The reality is that many people nowadays are buying snowshoes and taking walks in them during the winter months. Snowshoes have grown in popularity, because they offer a unique way to get exercise in cold weather. Although I have not yet tried them, I've heard that they are fun to use!

With this in mind, now might be a good time for you, and/or you and your family, to research and consider purchasing snowshoes and/or other winter outdoor sports equipment. Snowshoes, cross-country skis, downhill skis, and ice skates are some of the possibilities. They provide opportunities to get exercise outside in safe ways (as long as you socially distance, and the weather isn't as cold as it is this week). These opportunities will also take you to new places to see new vistas, and open up new possibilities for you to enjoy the beauty of God's creation.

Peace,

Pastor Cathy