

Pastor's Corner

Dear Friends,

“God is our refuge and strength; a very present help in trouble.” Psalm 46:1

Three weeks ago, our family took our annual vacation up on Lake Superior in northern Minnesota, about 40 miles south of the Canadian Border. The place *in which* my soul finds rest.

When mom died four years ago, she wanted her ashes divided between the Iowa State University Cemetery (where my dad is interred), her family farm in Minnesota, and the North Shore of Lake Superior. We tried to fulfill her wish the year she died, but Covid showed up uninvited at our home and our plans didn't pan out.

When my sister died unexpectedly last September, we felt she'd want her ashes up on the lake, too. So, after her funeral, my brother and I took both containers of ashes north to the lake and set their earthly bodies free. It was November by then: the lake was freezing, the wind was unkind, we had our winter coats and hats on, and we didn't linger there.

I wasn't sure, last month, if it would be difficult being there—looking out on that magnificent body of water, knowing mom and Heather were “out there.” I braced myself, emotionally, for the scab to be ripped off once more. But what I found up there was peace, a profound feeling of comfort, and the sense that all was well. If possible, this little piece of God's Creation, that has been my refuge my entire life, became even more so—maybe because, in some spiritual way I'll never understand, my family is there with me, once again. I'm not sure why I'm writing about this, but it's on my heart. And, maybe, you are uncertain about going someplace (either literal or metaphorical) because there might be something there—sorrow, memories, mistakes, regrets—that you are afraid will haunt you. So, you stay away. What I found was that my fears were not real, but the peace I found was; and I would have missed out on the comfort if I hadn't gone. God is good at nudging us in directions we'd rather not go, because he knows it's the path that will help us find healing. Our invitation is to trust him. So, go. Take the trip, make the call, write the email, get another job, choose to retire, leave something bad, take the leap of faith. Trust that the One who redeems will use whatever difficult situation you're in to bring you his Peace. “God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.” Thanks be to God.

Pastor Kara

