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When I was growing up, after school had dismissed for the summer, we had plenty of opportunities for things to do around our home and neighborhood; adventuring with friends, reading a book, biking the area, creating a melodrama or off the cuff concert, and many more fun things. Now, if your parents were creative like mine were, there was always a list of things we could do if we uttered the infamous words “I’m bored!”. They were not nearly as high ranking on the fun-o-meter; mowing the lawn, cleaning our rooms, washing windows, picking up after the dog, pulling weeds, and again, many more.

I am encouraging you to look for opportunities this summer of ways to engage in the fun of outreach through your congregation, district connections, and things happening in your community. Here are a few ideas to start you off!

- Mercy Meals of the Siouxland - All events are held at Faith Lutheran Church, 3101 Hamilton Blvd, Sioux City. Children ages 8 -11 may package meals accompanied by a supervising adult. Children and youth ages 11 and older may package alone. Children under age 8 should not be brought to packaging events. Sealing of bags will be done by an adult.



Saturdays - June 21, July 26, August 23, 2025 - Events at 8:30 AM & 10:30 AM

If you would like to bring a group to package meals, please contact us by phone or email: (712) 258-0808 (landline), Margee (712) 251-0366 (cell), or mercymealsofsiouxland@gmail.com.

- Contact your outreach/human care/congregational life committees to see how you can help with your VBS this summer. There always seems to be a wealth of opportunities to help out to get prepped, being in person the days of (usually a big need), or for item donations to help things run smoothly and keep the budget in check.

- Does your community host a festival or parade? Gather some of your fellow congregation members (even ask those you may not know well) to put together a display table/booth/tent/float to share what's going on at your church and make connections. Even if your church has been around for 150 years, people may not know how friendly you are. Let your community know they are important to you and that Jesus loves, died and rose for all.
- Lead a small group prayer gathering in the park. There are prayer warriors among us – be bold. Ask for prayer requests from your congregation and those who may wonder what you're up to.
- Host a meal in a local park. It doesn't have to be fancy! Enjoy the bounty of the summer, especially if you plan to do it during sweetcorn season.



All of these ideas are about connecting with our neighbors. Do the relational pieces to lay the foundation. Surprise – you don't even have to evangelize in an overt way. Chat a bit, listen more, and the Holy Spirit will guide you and the conversations. People will want to know why you're doing what you're doing, and you simply let them know that it's out of love because God has abundantly blessed you with grace and mercy. Have a fabulous summer!

Regarding outreach, if you and/or your congregation already have summer plans rolling, I'd love to hear them! Please email me and share the fun – Julie@IowaDistrictWest.org.