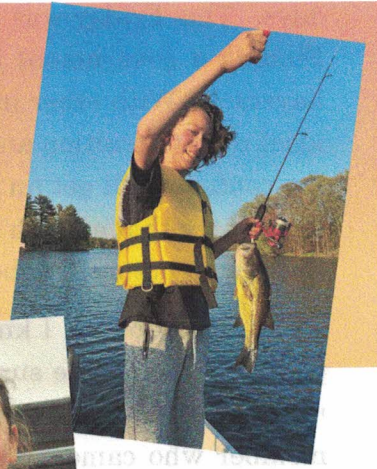


Summer 2025

Verlooy Family



Ministry

Dear Brethren,

Over last two years, we have been making plans to build a place for worship. I've been creating the plan, budgeting and sourcing materials/labor. We went back and forth on whether to build or remodel our current pole building. We decided on a smaller building with the intention of increasing as we grow. We wanted to start this spring. However, due to changes in cost and available time, we've decided to renovate the house on our church property enough that we can worship. At the moment, it's not efficient to heat in the winter, there's still mice, and it's a bit smaller. However, I think I'm able to get it ready for winter and we think this will be sufficient for us until we grow. Currently, we are still worshipping at my house and the church property is winterized. We enjoy the after-worship fellowship at our home. The pole building on the church property still has issues with mice, snakes, flies and wasps. However, the members like worshipping in our home.

This coming week we have Beaver Creek Bible camp. I'll be a counselor, a teacher, and giving a devo. I'm usually involved in a lot of the games and events as well. It's a great opportunity for the children, and every age, in our area to get together. This is one of the only times friends from different congregations get to see each other. A couple of us preachers were discussing the idea of establishing another opportunity for families to camp together. This would help us keep in touch.

The beginning of this year started with its own challenges. Our members have either a major health issue or subject to job loss. Two of us are federal employees and were required to return to office early in the year. I work with some wonderful people but it's been rough with a lot of uncertainty and criticism. The other member of our congregation was able to retire. The leadership at my agency said we would likely dissolve and recommended we seek other employment and apply for other agency positions. Managers encouraged me to stay since my type of position is hard to fill with qualified staff. So, I've decided to stay, praying about it, focusing on my work, and not trying to think too far into the future. I have two interviews, one with the state of WI and another with the state MN. These are mostly remote. If I get laid off, these are options. The major downside right now is that my office location is two hours from Rice Lake in Duluth, MN. So, I've been staying with my mom all week in Superior, WI. It's so far away that I'm only home on the weekends. My mom lives about 20 minutes from my office. My supervisor recently let me change it to 4-10hour days with Wednesday off and is flexible with my schedule. A split week is not ideal and I'm tired but I do it so that I can spend the nights with my family. With the drive, back and forth, it's 12-hour

days. This Friday was a 14-hour day since I had to drive to work and back home in the same day. Finding a government job that allowed me to work in Rice Lake was like finding a needle in a haystack. With other interviews, they wanted me to move hours away. I waited two years for the ideal remote position and I believe this is still the right one. While I'm having to go into office now, I'm confident I'll get an accommodation to work less in the office or even fully remote. Recently, it was hinted that enough employees likely resigned so we keep our positions but will be moved within the new structure. It's been a difficult year for everyone and were trying to maintain some positivity.

I'm hopeful. I know, although times are hard, we are refined by fire. I'm able to look at the positive aspects like surviving the first set of layoffs and finding a better option for worship. Our member is enjoying retirement and is more available to help with the church. We also have a new member who came from a congregation that's sadly been going by the wayside. She's been an encouragement. She has a husband with a debilitating disease but has maintained her excitement and joy of worshipping with us. Also, the people I work with in the federal government are fully supportive of my Christianity. We quote scripture regularly. The other day I was giving a co-worker some advice on how to read the bible and generate outlines. I've never had this environment in a workplace. I'm also blessed with a supportive wife and kids. It's not easy being apart but they are doing well and we communicate throughout the day. I do my best to be available and aware of the time I spend with each of them. Even though I'm gone most of the week, my family continues with daily bible study and I added Psalms before bed. Every Sunday, we read a section from the gospel accounts.

Times are difficult and I think it's the case for many Christians. It's as it always has been and will be. However, with perseverance comes patience. I believe my family has seen a lot of the devil's arrows come our way. We're a small group, we have limited resource and time, yet we see that it has strengthened our faith. Not just for us but also for our members. God has been good to us. We've survived some sad, hurtful, and difficult situations. We know that burdens are lifted and God is and will always be the source of comfort. We thank you for being with us, praying for us, and supporting the work. Please continue to pray for us and also that we might have the opportunity to visit you as well.

Family (Steph)

We have arrived at my favorite time of year— summer! This summer has been a great so far. I am looking forward to soaking it all up with our family instead of having to balance our time between the business and our family time. It has been almost a year since we closed on the sale and has been so nice to focus on our home and children. Mason, Nora, and Elon all finished up school at the end of April. They all did so well this year. Mason completed 7th grade, Nora 5th grade, and Elon 2nd grade. They still love to keep busy with their reading and Nora has been reviewing some math facts through their summer break so far.

The weather has been back and forth with several days in the 90s then a week of 50s-60s and then back up to the 70s and 80s for a while. I'm hoping the temps will level out soon and it will stay warm. I have been working on our garden and some outdoor projects. Life and I made some planter boxes for around our front porch and an additional raised bed in the garden for potatoes. We've also been working on finishing up some projects inside and hopefully will be done with those by the end of summer too.

Mason and Elon love to read books, play/build with legos and play video games together. They love to be outside too and play with the neighbor kids. We are frequent visitors of the library, I am certain our kids will end up reading every book in there before they're 18! Nora loves anything crafts. She had started a small venture making lotion bars this past winter. It has been a good learning experience for her. She is now looking at what she can add to her lineup of things to sell. She seems to be leaving toys in the past and looking more toward crafts and hobbies. She also has been working on learning how to play the guitar and piano.

This year we've been working through reading the whole Bible together as a family. We've done something similar in past years with Nora and Mason but now that Elon is a little older, he's able to follow along a bit better. It has been fun to see them make connections and grow in their knowledge. We are already planning for how we will study through the Bible together next year.

In a couple of weeks Life, Mason, and Nora will be heading off to Bible camp. Mason and Nora are very excited to be going and seeing some of their friends from last year. Life will be teaching and a cabin counselor. I ended up staying home this year. Elon wasn't ready to go as a camper and with our pets, it's easier to be home and able to care for them. Thankfully camp is only about an hour away from us so we can go visit throughout the week. We are always so thankful for your support, prayers, and encouragement.

Thank you so much for everything!

In Christian Love,

Life Verlooy

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