

Friday, December 18, 2020

Dear Friends and Members and Guests of Desert Hills,

This weekend I'll be talking with you about the angel Gabriel and his visit with Mary. Be warned, I've got four things about the encounter between a 14-year-old peasant girl and an angel from God, not just three. Please join me online or in person.

This coming Monday there is going to be quite a celestial spectacle with the planets Jupiter and Saturn getting very close in the southwest sky about 45 minutes after sunset. Some call it the Christmas Star. The two planets will look like one large star. The last time it happened was about 800 years ago. You would have to go back to March 4, 1226. The next time it will happen is March 15, 2080 and then in 2400. I heard a lecture in my first year of college at Golden Valley Junior College in Minneapolis about this occurrence. The speaker said it could have been Saturn and Jupiter in conjunction that was the star of Bethlehem. The German astronomer Johannes Kepler thought that the "star of Bethlehem" in the story of the Magi or "three wise men" could have been a rare triple conjunction of Jupiter, Saturn, and Venus. I remembered just two planets in that lecture but there could have been three. I wonder if the speaker had said that it will happen next in 2020. I would have laughed and said, "I wonder if I'll be around." Here I am. I'm pretty sure I should watch this one and not wait for 2080.

I am looking forward to Monday and the event and contemplating the wonder of Advent and the birth of our Lord.

In the time of King Herod, after Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, wise men from the East came to Jerusalem, asking, "Where is the child who has been born king of the Jews? For we observed his star at its rising, and have come to pay him homage." Matthew 2:1-2

We continue our preparations for Christmas. Join us for the lighting of the 4th and last Advent Candle.

Blessings to you all,

Pastor Martin