

Wednesday, June 10, 2020

Dear Members, Friends, and Guests of Desert Hills Lutheran Church,

Does anyone have a recipe for roasted quail? I'm not serious (and my wife does not think this is funny!). The Overson quail are fine but I'm not going to write anymore about them.

Yesterday I attended a most interesting webinar put on by Mutual Brotherhood. It was four pastors of different sized congregations having a round table discussion about reopening their churches. About 400 pastors and leaders representing 400 churches were listening. This was not specifically a Lutheran gathering but there may have been other Lutheran pastors among the 400. There was one survey question for the 400 who attended.

Question: Please indicate where you are in opening.

Already open \_\_\_ Opening in June \_\_\_ July \_\_\_ August or later \_\_\_

The outcome: Already open 23% Opening in June 20% Opening in July 29% Opening in August or September 28%

One of the four churches (similar size to ours) opened five weeks ago. One of the churches was much smaller and one much larger (3000-4000 average attendance). What was so interesting is that we have all been talking and watching and waiting and reading about what to do. No one has solid answers. Everyone is trying to do the best they can for the Body of Christ that we are a part of. We all have agonized over masks and singing and cleaning and distancing, etc. 43% of the 400 churches are open or will open before Desert Hills. 72% of the 400 churches will open before August 1. As one of the pastors whose church is opening in July said, "We are doing the best we can. We won't be able to please everyone, and things can change daily."

My favorite takeaway was hearing the pastor of the church that opened five weeks ago say how during the second song of their first service back, hearing his congregation singing, he wept in joy. Our plan is to still open July 4/5. The services will be shortened to allow cleaning between services and masks will be optional. We will have common sense distancing for seating, and we will have a section set aside for those who do not wish to sing. If this plan does not meet your needs at this time, I hope you will continue to worship with us online.

I can't wait until we are back again. I'm looking forward to giving a sermon in a sanctuary full of people instead of by myself. I'm looking forward to when the people of Desert Hills Lutheran Church are back together. That will be months from now, but at least we are making a start.

Blessings,

Pastor Martin