

Friday, January 8, 2021

Dear Members and Friends of Desert Hills Lutheran,

Quite a week in America. I was ashamed of the Washington riot, just as I have been angry and ashamed of all the riots this past year. I pray that the transition of power continues. We have a new President. We have riots on both coasts now and even in the middle states. I hope the new administration will find ways to heal the nation. It will not happen without God, and that is something a huge number of Americans don't understand.

This weekend I will be talking about the baptism of Jesus and how that affects us. It is an interesting concept for so many of us who were baptized as infants, so we have no recollection or memory of the event. I was told that I was quite a screamer that Sunday in August 1953 at First Lutheran in Albert Lea, Minnesota. I came to believe that I became an adopted child in the kingdom and that I received the Holy Spirit and that I was sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever. However, it wasn't magic. As Martin Luther reminds us taking a verse from Mark 16, "He who believes and is baptized will be saved, but he who does not believe will be condemned." I was instructed in the faith by family and our churches. Too many of our children in the U.S. do not have that privilege or experience. That is why I believe we must always continue to invite people to come and see the good news of Jesus.

We continue to re-open our church building very slowly. Our protocol is that for the building, we enter through the West entrance and wear a mask. If you are not comfortable coming, we understand. Many believe that we will be more open by May. I pray that is the case, in the meantime we will be just as careful as we are on planes and in grocery stores.

As we move into this weekend, we must remember as we have been doing, to put our country, currently in distress, into God's hands and then we move into each day as baptized people, celebrating God's grace, growing in faith, and making a difference. See you this weekend one way or another.

Blessings,

Pastor Martin