

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

Wednesday, April 1, 2020

Forty-one years ago, I preached my first sermon at Valier Lutheran Church in Valier, Montana on April 1, 1979. My family and friends thought the day appropriate. Today is another April Fool's day, but not much joking will happen. The world is being shaken by a pandemic.

Yesterday we started stay-at-home here in Arizona. The church is not exempt. So, we have named four people essential to, at times, be in the church building. All other staff will work at home. Staff was promised 75% in time and pay for April. That promise will be honored. It means some will get paid who are not working. We understand that. It is sometimes called "grace." We will monitor giving and either continue the 75% or adjust it moving forward.

This weekend we enter Holy Week. It will be the oddest one I have ever participated in but worship we will. During Holy Week we will have both an online Maundy Thursday and a Good Friday service along with Saturday and Sunday Easter.

We will have some work done on the roof to anticipate the monsoon season. I tell you this, because it is important to keep an eye on the horizon. Today is all we have, but we will have faith that we will need a dry building this summer.

I want to thank you for your giving. The whole staff thanks you. Part of fighting the fear is remaining grateful for what we have and what we can still share.

Finally, the word "troubled" shows up twice in John 14:1 and again in 14:27. Keep focusing on them. Jesus is speaking to his disciples who are fearful of what is coming. 14:1 "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Believe in God, believe also in me." 14:27 "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid." This is no April Fool's joke.

One more thing: our last Lenten service is tonight online with Pastor Dennis Nelson. I hope you will join in and worship with us.

Blessings,
Pastor Martin