

Tuesday, July 14, 2020

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

As I was thinking about an e-update today, I realized that I have cycled back to my first year in ministry, forty-one years ago. I served a church of one hundred members in a town of seven hundred people on the western plains of Montana. In those days I took Mondays and Saturdays off. In that first year I kept office hours Tuesday to Friday but in the winter it was too cold at the church so I was at the parsonage across the street most of the time. The confirmation class was small, the youth group was small, and people didn't need me visiting too often, they were working farms and ranches. So, I would read. Someone once told me in seminary that in a small rural parish I should read as much as I can because as the years go by and churches grow, there will be less time for reading. Now with this Covid-19 quarantine, there is time for reading again.

I've got four books going. I'm reading *The Rational Bible: Genesis: God, Creation, and Destruction*, by Dennis Prager. Last year his *Exodus* volume was my favorite book of 2019. I'm also reading Tom Holland's *Dominion: The Making of the Western Mind*. It is a history of Christianity and how it has shaped the Western World, a world currently under great attack. I'm also reading *Just Listen: Discover the Secret to Getting Through to Absolutely Anyone* by Mark Goulston, M.D. I'm only interested in becoming a better listener. Finally, I'm reading the *Personal Memoirs of U.S. Grant- Complete*. He finished the two volumes three days before his death, a gift for his wife for her retirement. Mark Twain published it and Julia Grant would receive \$450,000. At the time the Grants were basically broke.

What is the news of opening for worship? With the delay of schools here in Arizona opening and new closings in other states, August doesn't seem likely for us. We are still working on some plans to have the building open safely for smaller gatherings. We will keep you posted. Thank you for your support in all of this, both by being online and financially. This too will pass.

Blessings,

Pastor Martin