

Sunday, May 31, 2020

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

Julie and I are away this weekend on short trip to Tucson. This is a big deal for us as it is not a long vacation but just a nice weekend off. Since I normally work every weekend, this may have happened only a handful of times in our thirty-plus years of marriage. We have eaten at some restaurants; servers are required to wear masks however no diners are wearing them. We spent all day yesterday at the pool area. I'm guessing there were about 300 people between the five pools; most of the servers wore masks but we saw only one guest with a mask. People seem happy to be here and to be out with their friends and families. Contrast this with what we are hearing about church gatherings. In some states church gatherings have been limited to fifty people, even in sanctuaries like ours that hold many more. Remarkably, this past week the Supreme Court voted to give state governments permission to stop worship services as they see fit. I have had much distress over this news.

There also have been riots over the death of George Floyd which was a heinous and evil event. It appears that Mr. Floyd was murdered; the police officer responsible is now in custody and we pray for justice for all. Then we heard and saw the looting, rioting, burning of buildings, and attacks on police, first in Minneapolis and then in other cities. My niece who lives in Minneapolis used the term 'terrorists' on social media to describe the people committing these horrible acts. She has taken a lot of criticism for using that term, but I completely agree with her. The U.S. Attorney General Bill Barr said, "In many places, it appears the violence is planned, organized, and driven by anarchistic and far-left extremists, using Antifa-like tactics, many of whom travel from out of state to promote the violence." Time will tell how true this is.

Finally, I finished the book *Gettysburg* by Sears. It was interesting reading about a Civil War that began over the refusal to let slavery continue or let states destroy the Union. It seems like civil war might be in the wind again. So, what do we do? We continue to look to our God to guide us through some more dark times, and we remember that nothing can separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus. And so, on this Sunday when we still only can worship online, I will pray for us and for our country.

Blessings,            Pastor Martin