

Friday, September 11, 2020

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

On this 9/11, it is not hard for many of us to remember that moment in time. The United States was attacked by 19 Islamic terrorists of Al-Qaeda on four commercial jets. Two jets were sent into the North and South Towers of the World Trade Center killing 343 firemen, 60 police officers and thousands of workers, a third plane hit the Pentagon killing 125 and the fourth plane, Flight 93, was taken down by brave passengers who now knew of the attacks by phone and fought the terrorists and crashed the jet in a field. This plane was to either hit the White House or the Capitol.

Personal events during that day and the weeks after remain so clear. That Tuesday morning, I drove my second grade son Alex and fourth grade son Sam to school. I continued on to Sioux Falls to visit a high school member who had been injured at the Friday night football game. Within just a day or two, our youngest boy Grant, age four, began to come in almost every night to sleep with us because he was afraid. About nine months later he quietly asked Julie, "Is it over?" She said yes and the late-night sleepovers ended.

Julie reminded me that the next evening we attended a packed prayer vigil at Augustana Lutheran. September 12 was also Sam's 10th birthday. That next Saturday, we went to Minneapolis to the Mall of America to celebrate Sam's birthday. Sunday we were back in St. James and our services were packed with hurting and angry and bewildered church members.

Why should we remember? Because nearly 3000 Americans lost their lives in a terrorist attack. You can be sure that the family members and friends of the victims still remember. I'm not sure that our schools even teach about the day 9/11/01 anymore. Is it safe to fly without screening every bag and person? Is it safe to move around every city in America now? Is it safe even to worship?

Yesterday my Psalm was Psalm 16. Verses 1 and 2 are a good way to end this remembrance: "Protect me, O God, for in you I take refuge. I say to the Lord, "You are my Lord; I have no good apart from you."

Is it safe? Life is not safe. Only in God's presence will we find the comfort we seek.

Blessings,

Pastor Martin