



ST. TIMOTHY'S LUTHERAN CHURCH

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Message from the Pastor

Exodus 3 — April 22, 2020

Remember Moses and his history? He killed an Egyptian that was brutally mistreating a Hebrew Slave. Fearful for his life and freedom, Moses fled from Egypt and settled in Midian which is the northwest corner of Saudi Arabia. There Moses took a wife and settled with the family assuming the role of shepherd for his father-in-law, Jethro, who was the priest of Midian.

One day while out with the flocks in the area of Mount Horeb, Moses encountered the angel of the LORD in the burning bush. When Moses turned to the bush to see this miracle of fire without consuming the bush he heard his name,

“Moses, Moses!” And he said, “Here I am.”⁵ Then he said, “Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.”⁶ He said further, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Holy ground! The places where God is encountered, the divine presence spiritually and often physically felt. Places where God chose to reveal himself in unique and special ways—to Israel in the pillar of cloud by day and fire by night, to the prophets, Saint Paul on the road to Damascus, just to name a few.

I am convinced God continues to show his holiness and power in our lives, not in the storm but in the recovery, not in the cause of human suffering but in healing, not in the lack of understanding but in wisdom. As well, I am convinced God is showing his awesome self in the current struggles, sickness and even death brought about by the Coronavirus. I see God present in the medical industry who risk their very life working in close proximity with those infected. I see God present in the efforts of government to protect their people. I see God present in the efforts of our global community working together for the safety and well-being of one another by social distancing and quarantine.

Perhaps we should remove our shoes as just maybe we, with Moses, find ourselves on Holy Ground. Perhaps God is reaching out to us in new ways. Perhaps God is calling us to use this as a “reset.”

A “reset” taking us back to simpler times when family and friends were more important than dollars and things. Taking us back to a time when we took for



advantage good health and freedom to move safely through our communities. Here are just a few positives that might just have the fingerprint of God upon them,

- The absence of 24 hour production of our factories has greatly reduced the effects of pollution;
- Waterways are cleaning themselves such as in Venice, and even our local rivers;
- More quality time with those close to us;
- Air is cleaner and visibility increased;
- More sea turtles than ever before are returning to our beaches thanks to the absence of people.

These are but a few of what we can glean as positive impact from the Coronavirus. But perhaps the greatest impact of COVID—19 as we social distance is the longing in our hearts to return to worship, to share once again in our churches the joys of worship. How we miss song and prayer; scripture and Gospel proclamation; the sweetness of wine and wafer, the body and blood of our Jesus.

“...Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground.” He said further, “I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.” And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

Something new and wonderful God was doing in the life of Moses and the enslaved Hebrews who struggled at the harsh treatment of the Egyptians.

Something new and wonderful is happening in our own lives. Trust as Moses trusted, not without fear, but in the fullness of faith. Fear, for Moses, was as much a reality for him in his encounter with God as it is for us as we begin to witness God who, even now, is working something new and wonderful.

Prayer—Gracious and Almighty God, Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, reveal yourself to us in healing and recovery of Coronavirus and somehow allow us to be a part of your solution and deliverance. We are fearful Lord, of those things which are uncertain, which threaten to devour us. Give us courage to count upon your good grace and promise to hold our lives in your eternal protection that we would not be paralyzed by our fear but continue to experience you in new and miraculous ways; in the name of our Jesus, your Son, we pray. Amen, and Amen.