

Pastor Brian's
Mid Week Message
September 23, 2020

"THE RETURN"

Rend your hearts and not your garments." Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love; and he relents over disaster. Joel 2:13

This Saturday we here at Trinity Lutheran Church of Southwest Florida we will be taking part (in our own small way) of a nationwide movement of Christians. It's called "The Return" and it's a day of repentance and prayer on behalf of our nation and the world. The main event will be in Washington DC, on the Mall before the Washington Monument as 1000s gather and remain over the course of the day for Divine inspiration and to pray for our country and all the world in the midst of all the problems that we are facing. Our problems are at least in part due to our turning our backs on God, His ways and His wisdom, to follow our own desires. The United States was not formed as a "theocracy", with our government controlled by the Church, but we were most definitely founded on Christian principles and with a reverence and awe of our Creator God, and His Son Jesus Christ as our Redeemer. In our lifetime that has been largely lost in our culture as secularization has worked to remove God from every equation of our lives. If the Church doesn't stand up to call all people, especially in our land, to return to our gracious and merciful God in repentance for restoration and renewal, then who will? Our part in all of this will be mainly focusing on prayer, not just for our country, but starting with us as individual members of the Church, the body of Christ here on earth. Repentance and renewal begin with us. If we as God's children are not committed to turning from worldly ways that draw us away from the Almighty and embracing His wisdom, precepts and commands then the rest of it won't matter, things around us will continue to spiral downhill into more and more sin and suffering. At the dedication of the original temple in Jerusalem, under the kingship of Solomon, God knew that His people would turn from Him and follow the wicked ways of the nations around them. He not only knew it, but He provided a way for them to be healed and renewed. *The LORD appeared to him (Solomon) at night and said: "I have heard your prayer and have chosen this place for myself as a temple for sacrifices. "When I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or command locusts to devour the land or send a plague among my people, if my people, who are called by my name, will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin and will heal their land. (2 Chronicles 7:12-14)* God would bring drought, locusts, and plague as the consequence of the coming rebellion of the people, always with the desire for them to return to Him and be healed and restored. He is the same merciful and gracious God today as He was back then, nearly 3000 years ago. In an ever-darkening world we, God's people in Christ Jesus, are called to shine His light. I invite, encourage, and pray that many of us will take part here on a local level out front of TLC on Saturday morning. We will begin at 10:00am and be finished by 11:00. We'll hear from God's Word, sing songs and hymns, and spend time being led in prayer by some our members in the congregation. If it is raining, we'll move inside. Many of us complain about what we see happening around, and here is an opportunity to do something about it. Please join me this Saturday to cry out to God on our behalf and that of the nation and world for repentance, restoration, renewal, and healing.