

Pastor Brian's
Midweek Message
March 9, 2022

"TWO YEARS AGO TODAY"

"Be strong and courageous. Do not fear or be in dread of them, for it is the LORD your God who goes with you. He will not leave you or forsake you." (Romans 8:28)

I asked the question at the Church Council meeting yesterday. What happened exactly two years ago today (March 8, 2020)? It didn't take long until someone recalled that on that very day, we had a joint outdoor worship service followed by a catered barbeque. It was a little cool and breezy, but we had a very nice time all together as God's people here at Trinity Lutheran Church of SW Florida. The very next day...which is exactly two years ago today (March 9, 2020) a few of us boarded a bus, then an airliner, followed by another airliner, and winged our way to Israel for a tour of the Holy Land. It was a very nerve-wracking day for all of us.

First, we had some issues with our bus and bus driver. Local law enforcement got involved (that's all the detail that I have space for). We all wondered would we get the Tampa Airport in time for our flight. We did. Then as we deplaned in Miami, news rumors began to circulate that all tour travel to Israel had been halted due to the breakout of the coronavirus. I use the term new rumors as the media wasn't giving the entire story. Yes, Israel was going to shutdown tourism, but not for 72 hours. The tour group that I was leading, 30 of us in all, grew more and more anxious into the evening as we awaited our flight to Tel Aviv...our aircraft waiting on the other side of the wall of the terminal.



In the end, we boarded, we took off, and early the next afternoon (two years ago tomorrow) we arrived in Tel Aviv. We would walk in the footsteps of Jesus! As it turned out, due to the emerging pandemic, there were very few other religious pilgrims traveling the Holy Land. So, we pretty much had the entire country to ourselves, save those who actually live there. At a time that all tourist sites would be jam packed, our progress would have been very slow in the days leading up to Easter and the Passover. We experienced so much more than we would have if Covid-19 hadn't broken out, even though our touring was curtailed by the Israeli government a few days earlier than scheduled. We returned home safely and on time.

Meanwhile, back here at home. No one knew

that the outdoor worship on that Sunday would be our last one together for some time...a length of time that no one could predict. But God had prepared us for this event. Here at TLC, we were already livestreaming our worship services on Facebook for the benefit of our part-time resident and members. So, we we're well positioned to carry on our worship together online. The results were that more people heard the good news of Jesus over the course of the next year or more than had before. People from around the country and even other countries logged on to take part in worship with us. We were blessed to be able to return to the church for worship on Mother's Day, May 10th. These are but a few examples of the truth of Scripture in Romans 8:28. God is always working for our good even in those things that are difficult and thought by us to be not good at all. Praise Jesus for His goodness, mercy, and grace!!!