



Celebrate Easter!

March 2020

Dear First Church Milford,

This is not the Easter we expected. We imagined that we'd gather in the Sanctuary, pews crammed with people of all ages. We expected to listen to brass arrangements and sing triumphant Easter hymns, then pass the peace with hearty handshakes and hugs. And whether we could make it to worship, we hoped we would spend quality time with loved ones. Instead we will be maintaining our social distance, sheltering in place, in effect hiding in our homes, trying to keep COVID-19 at bay. This is not the Easter we expected.

But the original Easter was all about defying expectations. At the original Easter God defied expectations of life and death. The original Easter was about people (who were hiding in fear, too!) finding hope and joy from the Resurrection and the divine love it expresses. Despite our fears, through Easter God still reveals God's undying love for you and me.

The church is doing extraordinary ministry right now. We are holding online worship, watched more times than we usually have people in-person. We're offering online faith formation and music activities as people yearn for connection more now than ever. The leaders of Milford Food 2 Kids have partnered with Milford Public School to help feed the over 600 students whose families have asked for food assistance while school is out. Our food closet and Emma Davis Medical Equipment Ministry remain open (with strict rules for distancing).

First Church Milford declares God's love and new life exactly when we might otherwise retreat in fear.

That's why if you are still able, **I ask you to remain committed to fulfilling your 2020 pledge** so that our operating budget can stay on target and First Church can fulfill its mission uninterrupted. If you haven't made a pledge commitment but would like to, I invite you to support our faith community and the hope that it offers every day. Usually the Easter offering goes toward maintaining First Church Milford's historic buildings. There are many of us, however, who have lost jobs or whose jobs are up in the air and whose priority is keeping a roof over our own heads. That is why **this year's Easter offering will instead go toward the church's Matthew 25 fund to help people in need**, especially those dealing with the pandemic's massive financial impact. The Matthew 25 fund is overseen by the pastors, who will use their discretion to pass along help in the church community and wider community as it arises. We invite you to go to firstchurchofmilford.org/eastergiving where you can catch up on your pledge or donate to Matthew 25's COVID-19 fund (or even donate to the building improvement fund if you desire!).

At the first Easter, God through Christ turns fear into hopeful joy. **This Easter, God opens us up to the joy of supporting one another and our church community in faith, hope, and love!** We will gather again soon, when it is safe, and on that day we will know that God has renewed us in Spirit and in ministry. In the meanwhile, keep up your vital ministry of faith!

With Easter joy,
Rev. Adam