

**REV. JIM'S  
THOUGHTS AND PRAYERS  
April 2019**



Dear Friends,

Greetings in the name of our Loving God! Are you ready to celebrate the joy and hope of Easter?

Easter is my favorite time of the year. I'm filled such a sense of awe and appreciation for God's love and grace each time I sing the words of *Up from The Grave He Arose!*

**The powerful message of Easter is that God sent His son Jesus into the world, and Jesus gave His life so we can live forever in Heaven.** That message assures us that since Jesus rose from death, if we accept Jesus into our heart, we receive the promise of hope and the wonderful gift of Eternal Life with God and Jesus.

That amazing promise of hope means death no longer frightens us. The love of Jesus in our hearts gives us a roadmap for how to live and find meaning in the midst of the "little deaths" in life. Those little deaths of our mistakes, sadness, pain, disappointments, and the shattered dreams that feel so suffocating - all become more bearable because we know God loves us, cares for us and guides and directs us! The promise of God's forgiveness that comes with Jesus in our life, gives us a sense of the purpose God has for us. God's love for us, frees us to love God, ourselves and others. **God's love and the promise of Eternal Life, gives us the hope we need to enjoy our friends and family and live a meaningful life, even in the midst of all of the changing circumstances of life! Friends, Jesus calls that abundant life!**

When I think about a meaningful life, I think about all the blessings God has given me. I think about the blessings of my family and friends who love me. They are the members of my "cheering section" who encourage me to keep trying even when I've failed miserably and want to give up! They are my "cheering section" who remind me when I've done something well and then remind me to praise God for my blessings! I'm so blessed to have a "cheering section" filled with angels looking down on me from heaven, and folks who I can sit across a table from and share coffee. I think about how blessed I am to have a home, food, and my health. I think about how blessed I am to live in this great nation where I have the freedom to worship God. **When I think about a meaningful life, I think about how blessed I am to have God's love.**

How about you? As Easter approaches, have you accepted the gift of hope and Eternal Life that comes from a relationship with Jesus Christ? Is your life filled with joy as you stop and give thanks for the many blessings God shares with you?

This Easter season, I pray you experience God's richest blessings as you allow the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus to fill your heart with hope and assurance.

I'm looking forward to seeing you in Church!

Love and prayers,

+ Pastor Jim