

**San Jose First
United Methodist Church**

24 North 5th Street
San Jose, CA 95112
<https://sanjosefirst.org>

408-294-7254
Church Office Hours
Mon, Tues, &
Thurs 9:30am–4:00pm

Rev. Jeffrey D. Hall
Senior Pastor
revjeffumc@mac.com

Pastor Gerardo Vazquez-
Padilla
Associate Pastor
Hispanic/ Latino Ministries
gerardov@sanjosefirst.org



**Pastor's Note, April 1, 2020
Rev. Jeffrey D. Hall**

As many of you have no doubt heard, Santa Clara County Health Department has extended the Shelter-in-Place through Sunday, May 3. This action was taken to minimize the spread of COVID-19, serious illness, and the very real potential for significant loss of life.

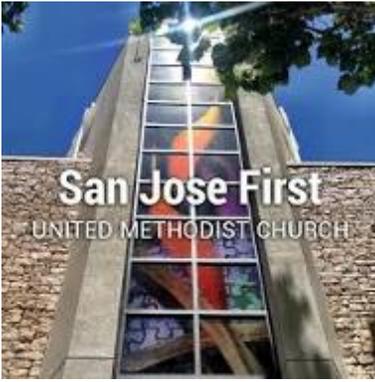
This week my prayers have not only been for each of you, but also for first responders, and grocery store clerks, nurses and doctors, unemployed families, children next-door drawing with chalk on the sidewalk, and the PG&E guy (Mike) who came out to our home late one evening to make an emergency call.

All of us experience Shelter-in-Place differently. For most of us, it means a place we call home. For the unhoused, it may mean a place they hope to eat a meal and rest their head for a night in a large room full of strangers. I pray for them, too.

This morning, I sat in my backyard and watched a family of grey squirrels (or maybe they were friends, or maybe they were strangers who became friends) play in the large tree in the northwest corner by our wooden fence. I could have just as easily watched them through the window, but I wanted to be outside. These days, I look for any excuse to be outside. And those squirrels were as good of an excuse as any. So, I poured myself a cup of coffee, sat under the broad roof sky, and read the following poem by David Whyte:

AT HOME

At home amidst
the bees
wandering
the garden
in the summer
light
the sky
a broad roof
for the house
of contentment
where I wish
to
live forever
in the eternity
of my own fleeting
and momentary
happiness.



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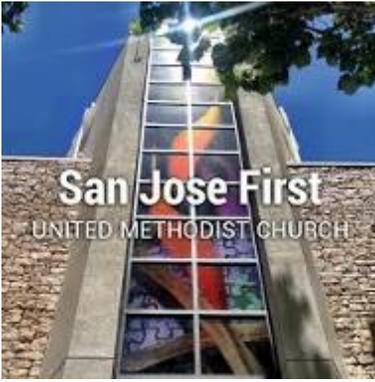
I walk toward
the kitchen
door as if walking
toward the
door of a recognized
heaven

and see the
simplicity
of shelves and
the blue dishes
and the
vaporizing
steam rising
from the kettle
that called me in.

Not just this
aromatic cup
from which to drink
but the flavour
of a life made whole
and lovely
through the
imagination
seeking its way.

Not just this
house around me
but the arms
of a fierce
but healing world.

Not just this line
I write
but the innocence
of an earned
forgiveness
flowing again
through hands
made new with
writing.



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Continued

And a man
with no company
but his house,
his garden,
and his own
well peopled solitude,

entering
the silences
and chambers
of the heart
to start again.

On Ash Wednesday, February 26, few of us knew what pandemic wilderness we would be entering during Lent. I certainly did not. On the first Sunday of the liturgical season, we heard the language of temptation, wilderness, solitude, and angels; but few (if any of us) associated those words with COVID-19, cancelled, lockdown, and Shelter-in-Place. For much of Lent, we have had to learn to be at home with bees wandering our gardens; notice the simplicity of steam rising from our kettles; contemplate a world that offers as much healing as it does heartbreak; welcome no company, only the gift of well peopled solitude; and enter, for the first time in perhaps a very long time, the silences and chambers of our hearts to start again.

I pray these and other small graces are sustaining you while dark clouds gather on the horizon of Holy Week and the Passion of Christ. I pray you remember beyond this pandemic wilderness, beyond Good Friday clouds looming in the distance, there is a frontier with clearer skies, brighter fields, and sweeter waters where our hearts might be baptized anew in the name of faith, hope, and love. The greatest of these. Love.

May the Lord bless you and keep you.
Jeffrey