

**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](mailto:revjeffumc@mac.com)

Pastor Gerardo Vazquez-  
Padilla  
Associate Pastor  
Hispanic/ Latino Ministries  
[gerardov@sanjosefirst.org](mailto:gerardov@sanjosefirst.org)



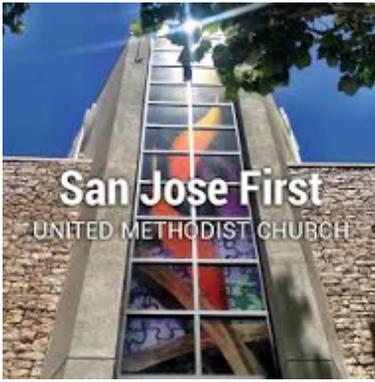
**Pastor's Note, April 22, 2020  
Rev. Jeffrey D. Hall**

I decide it's time for a break from the blurred screen and computer camera that is hell-bent on capturing me in the worst possible light on yet another video conference call, so I head for the backyard with a book of poetry. It is Earth Day. The air smells clean. The sky is azure blue. Benefits, I am told, from a significant reduction in emissions due to the "shelter-in-place" mandate, the negative economic ramifications of which have been well documented, to include no less than 4 million Americans who are unemployed. I offer a heartfelt prayer for them, absent of inner chatter, and welcome a steady breeze, green leaves waving, that would make most anyone smile.

I watch a grey squirrel search for the perfect spot to bury his spoils next to a small patch of earth where my wife has planted some seeds. Some are starting to sprout, and I am reminded of Martin Luther who is quoted as saying: ***Even if I knew that tomorrow the world would go to pieces, I would still plant my apple tree.*** During these anxious and fearful times, let each and every one of us plant our apple tree. Let us not resign ourselves to some bleak future that is not yet, or continue in outrage over a past we cannot change. Let us welcome both rain and sun and continue to plant seeds of kindness, care, compassion, love, and hope.

A poem for us on this Earth Day titled, *The Sun*, by Mary Oliver.

Have you ever seen  
anything  
in your life  
more wonderful  
  
than the way the sun,  
every evening,  
relaxed and easy,  
floats toward the horizon  
  
and into the clouds or the hills,  
or the ruffled sea,  
and is gone—  
and how it slides again  
  
out of the blackness,  
every morning,  
on the other side of the world,  
like a red flower



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streaming upward on its heavenly oils,  
say, on a morning in early summer,  
at its perfect imperial distance—  
and have you ever felt for anything

such wild love—  
do you think there is anywhere, in any language,  
a word billowing enough  
for the pleasure

that fills you,  
as the sun  
reaches out,  
as it warms you

as you stand there,  
empty-handed—  
or have you too  
turned from this world—

or have you too  
gone crazy  
for power,  
for things?

May the Lord bless you and keep you.  
Jeffrey