

April 2011



Dear Friends:

What a wonderful celebration we enjoy on Easter Sunday morning! Alleluia! Christ is risen! We will meet for worship in celebration of the Resurrection on Sunday, April 24 at 9:30 a.m. in our sanctuary at First UMC in Franklin Park. Join in this festival of praise and worship! Fellowship time with coffee and goodies follows the worship service. You won't want to miss it!

Easter would be enough of a celebration if it only commemorated Jesus' resurrection, but our celebration goes far beyond that! Jesus' resurrection is more than just a person being raised from the dead a long time ago – even if that person was the Son of God. For Christians, Jesus' resurrection is evidence that resurrection can happen – for us, too! In fact, Jesus calls us from our deadness to newness of life, day by day, as we are filled more and more with God's love. In Paul's letter to the Corinthians, we are reminded, "If anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, all things have become new."

That's what we're about as a church and in our congregation – new life! We exist to offer it. We are challenged to accept it as God's gift. As we seek to offer this gift to those around us, many of whom are struggling at this time, we know we must first take hold it for ourselves. We cannot offer what we ourselves do not know. God's new life begins inside us and hope grows as we open ourselves to it. Then we have something to share – a gift more precious than silver and more valuable than gold. The good news we share is the hope and grace we find in God's gift of new life!

If you are so led this Easter to make a special gift in gratitude to God for this new life, I invite you to do so by mailing or bringing your gift to the church – mark Easter in the memo. The gifts from this special offering will be used to share the joy of God's love with our community! We are deeply grateful for your stewardship and generosity!

With joy at Easter,

Rev. Denise Janssen, Pastor