

**Rev. Nathan Detering**

**“And Yet”**

**April 1, 2018**

**UU Area Church At First Parish in Sherborn**

*Here is our world; beautiful and sad things happen.*

*Be not afraid.*

*Keep our hearts tender.*

*Keep our eyes soft.*

*Because this is what we are about:*

*We know there is no answer but to love one another.*

*We bear witness against unnecessary destruction.*

*We gather in community to practice being the person*

*The world is calling us to be.*

*We cannot do everything,*

*But we can do something, and that something is not nothing.*

*So forget your perfect offering.*

*There is a crack in everything*

*That is how the light gets in.”*

Happy Easter morning, friends, and happy April Fools.

I was watching Jimmy Kimmel the other night and with the help of NASA Engineer Mark Rober, Kimmel demonstrated a few good ways for parents To prank their kids on Easter morning. You ready?

Filling chocolate bunnies with broccoli.

Coating brussels sprouts with chocolate to make them look like cake pops.

And worst of all – ready? – replacing the filling in a Cadbury Crème Egg

With...mayonnaise.

I don't mean to offer any ideas, BTW. I'm just mentioning it as a public Service announcement so our kids here will be...careful; ok?

So I ask this every year at Easter, wondering what you're wondering here In your pews on Easter morning:

*1) How many of us have questions about what Easter means?*

*2) Have doubts, or wonderings or questions about resurrection?*

*3) Wonder what this story has to do with Jesus and bunnies and springtime?*

(tell them connection to pagan practices)

*4) But given all that, how many of us need to hear stories of new beginning*

*In our lives and in our world?*

*5) How many of us are waiting and wondering how to resurrect hope After what has been a hard year for many?*

*6) And how*

Which is why the story that Rev. Heather and Jessica bears repeating, This ancient story that actually isn't about believing a bunch of things about Jesus

But instead about wondering what it can mean for us and what it might feel Like to follow his example.

And now I'm wondering: did you hear how Heather and Jessica told The story?

Did you hear how some of the themes – protest, marches, resistance, Punishment by people in power, women leading the way (remember, They the ones who saw Jesus first after the stone was rolled away),

Followers despondent, looking for signs of hope, looking for the resurrection of hope – still connect with some of the themes happening in our country today?

Is it just me?

With Easter and Passover still a week away,

And me looking for ways to not just be a preacher who gives practiced sermons

But a preacher instead who practices what he preaches (you get the distinction?),

Last Saturday our congregation rented a big yellow school bus

And filled it to the brim with children and adults in that order,

The bus leaning and rocking around corners all the way into Roxbury,

The kids non-plussed but the adults getting sea-sick,

The kids leading us there, and the adults tagging along,

Which is an important detail,

All of us going there a week before Easter to practice an Easter sermon,

An Easter sermon that saw kids waving signs like “*why is harder to get tickets*

*To Hamilton that it is to get a gun?*”

And “*I hate crowds but I hate school gun violence more*”

And “*students today but voters tomorrow*”

And “Isaiah 11:6” that says: “*And a little child shall lead them!*”

All these 70,000 people marching this march on this March for Our Lives

Saying to the gun violence that struck Parkland, HS 6 weeks ago

In our culture’s own Good Friday moment...

All these kids and adults saying back to the hurt, the loss, the lack of laws,  
The politicians, the brokers, the lobbyists two big, foolish, April Foolish,  
Two big Easter Words – ‘And yet’

- You tell us we’re just kids – maybe, *‘and yet...we know how use social media better than u!’*
- You tell us we just have to get used to this big, huge, intractable problem...*‘and yet, we organized this big march is 6 weeks and look at the movement!’*
- You offer us thoughts and prayers...*‘and yet, what we want is action!’*
- You tell us you’re in charge, you’re adults...*‘and yet, we’re just kids, and so know we’re the ones needing to say ‘enough!’*
- You tell us this is just how the world is...and yet, it’s Easter morning...we don’t have to live this way,  
The world can be different, we don’t have to sit and accept.  
We can march.

Friends, I grew up wondering and worried that I didn’t believe in Easter enough,

The nuns in my Catholic school giving me the stink eye when I kept saying ‘and yet...’ to the stories, wondering if the story had to be literally true

In order for it to carry a message of meaning.

But all those mental gymnastics and Easter Sunday arm wrestlings

Really don’t matter much to me anymore...

Because our world is beautiful but its broken, too,

And it needs our capacity to say, walk, march our ‘and yet’

To its many Good Friday moments.

And so...do this with me:

Friends, I invite you to close your hands like fists in your lap –  
These fists the symbol of the stones in your life that can't seem to move,  
The hard rocks of disappointment, anger, resentment, grudges...  
The stones of terrible, sad news in the world that sit in the pit of our  
stomach,  
The rocks of worry for what may come...

And now slowly open your hands, our fingers the symbol the stone rolling  
away, open palms signing for us what is yet to come,  
hope for what is yet to be born, that which promises to be renewed.

And as we hold open our hands,  
I invite you to join me in a litany of a blessing for Easter and renewal Please  
respond after each line with "and yet".

**Litany: (Otto will adapt)**

Every day that confronts with us with signs and symbols that cause us to  
hang  
Our head and feel like giving up, we say...  
*And yet*

When our voices feel small, the busses two few, and the march ends, we  
say...  
*And yet*

When the promises we've made ourselves fall short, and we find it hard  
To practice being the person we want to be, we say...

*And yet*

When the stranger isn't welcomed, and the immigrant is threatened  
With deportation, we say with UU Bedford's physical sanctuary...'

*And yet*

When we struggle to practice what we preach, and the courage to  
Put our bodies where our beliefs are feel hard to come by, we say...

*And yet*

When you've been hurt, and you can't find a way out of the hurt, we say...

*And yet*

When another black life is lost to police violence in CA, and we forget  
That race and racism touches each one of us, we say...

*And yet*

When we look to love the world in spite of itself, we say..

*And yet*

When the people we love drive us crazy, we say...

*And yet*

When the powers the powers that be would rather have us be divided,  
We say...

*And yet*

Beloved, as you go forth into the world,  
May you find renewal in this season, and may you practice your foolish,  
April Fool's 'And Yet" again and again. Amen.