



# First Baptist Church in Needham

*One in the Spirit, One with Our Neighbors*

American Baptist Churches USA

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Christ is Risen!

On Sunday, April 4th, we gathered on the lawn to celebrate Christ's resurrection and the persistence of God's love and life in the face of any terror or fear we might experience. We have certainly witnessed fear, terror and death this year - in our country, in our communities, and around the globe - from viral and human agents alike.

This Easter, we gathered around the cross in the spirit of resurrection and possibility. Like the women on the first Easter morning - we bore witness to the love of God revealed to us even in the midst of fear, trauma, confusion, and doubt - the love that holds us and continues to raise us to a newness of life in this world and beyond it; not even death can stifle God's love and possibility for us.

*"Do not be alarmed; you are looking for Jesus of Nazareth, who was crucified. He has been raised; he is not here. Look, there is the place they laid him. But go, tell his disciples and Peter that he is going ahead of you to Galilee; there you will see him, just as he told you" (Mark 16:6-7).*

Just as the resurrected Christ went on ahead of the women at the tomb and the disciples to follow, Christ continues to lead us in ways of life-affirming relationship and community, of forgiveness, compassion, healing, and inclusive love.

In the flowering of the cross, we acknowledge that we each have the capacity to be agents of justice, beauty and hope - miraculous agents of resurrection, new life, and the persistent love of God. May our beautiful cross serve as a hopeful reminder to our community of the love and hope that Christ's love brings to the malignancies and malevolence we encounter in our world.

In the spirit of resurrection and possibility,  
Rev. Daryn Stylianopoulos & Rev. Dr. Holly Benzenhafer

