

THE FEDERATED FORECAST

The Federated Church

612 W. State Street, Sycamore, IL 60178

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A Covenanted Congregation of
The United Church of Christ & The Unitarian Universalist Association

"An Open and Affirming Church"

Welcoming Any, Loving All

December 2019



*Into this silent night, as we make our weary way we know not where,
Just when the night becomes its darkest and we cannot see our path,
Just then is when the angels rush in, their hands full of stars.*

"Into This Silent Night," by Ann Weems

I was recently on my computer when I started to see "Black Friday" deals popping up on my screen. Apparently we don't even have to wait until the infamous day after Thanksgiving to claim our deals anymore! It seems as though our culture starts the holiday season earlier and earlier with each year—at least the commercialization of it.

One of these years, we might actually have Christmas in July!

Our world isn't very good at waiting. Instead, we are the culture of "now" and instant gratification. It's almost as though "waiting" is becoming a lost art.

When I think of "waiting," I think of when I was a child. I think of the anticipation of a birthday or trick-or-treating, or going from watching my brothers play sports to being old enough to play them myself. Those days, weeks, and years of waiting were not filled with thumb-twiddling, though. They were filled with imagination, practice, and preparation that ultimately shaped what one day would be.

But, if I'm being honest, I know that's also not the whole story of waiting.

Because when I think of "waiting," I also think about sitting with the couple awaiting a diagnosis or a major surgery. I think of the homeless men who lived in the shelter where I worked during seminary—some of whom worked full-time—waiting until they had enough saved up to afford an apartment. I think of times in my own life when I've struggled with depression, wondering when the weight would lift. In these seasons, waiting feels more like "making our weary way, not knowing where," as poet Ann Weems writes.

For better and for worse, waiting is an inescapable part of life. While our world doesn't seem to know what to do with these seasons (preferring, instead, to pretend all is well, to distract ourselves, or to jump to the next celebration), our faith tradition has carved out a sacred rhythm to hold us in it.

We call this rhythm "Advent."

Advent invites us to slow the rush to Christmas. To recognize that the journey to "Joy to the World" takes us through "Silent Night" and the darkest day of the year. When we journey through Advent to Christmas, we discover that our anxious, weary souls and world are not signs of God's absence, but the very place where God chooses to meet us—angels and all, with hands full of stars.

This Advent, we have a number of opportunities to embrace the fullness of this season. There will be space for making crafts and sharing food and laughter. There will be opportunities to put our prayers for healing into action through our partnership with Hope Haven. And on Wednesday December 11th from 6:30-8pm there will be a special "Contemplative Christmas" service in our chapel to hold space for longing and grief, followed by a Bible study and conversation about where God might choose to be born in our lives and world today. I look forward to sharing in the journey with you.

Gratefully,
Pastor Eric

God Speaks Through Our Worship



December

Advent Liturgist: Sally Stevens

Sunday, December 1

Advent I: HOPE (Communion)

Sunday, December 8

Advent II: JOY

Advent Workshop

Wednesday, December 11

Contemplative Christmas, 6:30-8:00pm

Worship in the chapel followed by Bible Study

Sunday, December 15

Advent III: PEACE

Handbell Choir

Sunday, December 22

Advent IV: LOVE

Christmas Cantata

Tuesday, December 24

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 7:00 pm

Sunday, December 29

IN THIS ISSUE

Worship Service

Worship	10:00 am
Kids Club	10:15 am
Coffee Fellowship	11:00 am

Inside This Issue

Pastor's Page	1
Worship Schedule	2
Flowers & Fellowship	2
Annual Meeting	3
Cookie Sales/Shut In	4
BRE/Upcoming Events	5
Bd. of Mission & Society	6
Ladies Night Out	7
Prayer List	8
Birthdays & Anniversaries	8
Stewardship Report	8
Church Information	9
Monthly Calendar	10

Flowers & Fellowship Hosts

Please share your commemoration of personal dates with your church family by providing Altar Flowers for the morning worship.

The cost is \$25.00 and envelopes are provided for your convenience.

You are welcome to take the flowers home with you following the service.

Please commit to these important roles by signing the sheets in Dutton Fellowship Hall.

Altar Flowers

December 1	OPEN
December 8	Judy Winter in memory of Bob Woggon
December 15	Christmas Poinsettias
December 22	Christmas Poinsettias
December 29	OPEN

Fellowship Hosts

Board of Religious Education

December 1	OPEN
December 8	Advent Sunday—BRE
December 15	OPEN
December 22	Skip & Bev Schramer
December 29	OPEN





Our 2019 Annual Congregational Meeting will be held on Sunday, January 19 following worship.

A FRIENDLY REMINDER TO ALL BOARD CHAIRS:

December is the time for each of us to begin preparing our Board reports for the Annual Meeting on January 19th. Reports are due to Liz by January 2nd. It takes Liz HOURS to review and prepare the reports, data, and other pertinent information that is put into the Annual Meeting booklet so please be get your report in ASAP.

Thanks,
Jerry Lane, Moderator



Sunday, December 22



Ellwood Steak and Fish House
6:00 pm
Monday, December 16th

Sign-up Sheet in Dutton Hall



Federated Church Preschool is happy to announce its 25th Annual Cookie and Candy Sale. Friday, December 13th, 2019 in Dutton Hall from 10:30 to 3:00 p.m. or until sold out, whichever comes first! Select your own assortment of dazzling homemade cookies and candy for only \$6 a pound. All proceeds directly purchase toys and activities for the preschool children.

Thank you to the Fall Thrift Sale Committee members for the \$100 donation to the preschool scholarship fund. Every dollar helps are families who are struggling and need a little help with their child's preschool bills. We really appreciate this generous donation.

Preschool will be closed from December 21 through January 5, 2020 for Christmas break.


Merry Christmas, Happy Hanukkah and Happy Holidays to all of you. May you enjoy whatever holiday you observe with those you hold close and dear to your heart.



Mark Your Calendars

Get ready to bake! On December 22nd the Board of Deacons is asking for donations of 2 dozen Christmas cookies to be brought to the church that Sunday. The Deacons (along with anyone who could volunteer a bit of time after the worship service!) will prepare cookie plates to be distributed to our home bound members and friends. We usually make up about 20 cookie plates. We also could use volunteers to help distribute the cookie plates. If we have several volunteers to help us, no one person will have to deliver more than 2 or 3 plates!





Religious Education

Advent Sunday Sunday, December 8, 2019

Advent is the season before Christmas during which Christians celebrate the birth of Jesus. Christians use the four Sundays and weeks of Advent to prepare and remember the real meaning of Christmas, a time to slow down and swing into Christmas with joy. At Federated, on Advent Sunday we gather for worship, share a meal together in Dutton Hall, and enjoy fellowship and laughs over intergenerational holiday crafts. We're excited to offer activities designed to teach a skill and deck the halls inside and out. Everyone is welcome! We'll be serving Federated's famous BBQ, chips, and brownies. A signup sheet is in Dutton Hall for anyone wishing to help bring food. Let's all join in, slow down, and enjoy this Advent season together!

See you there.

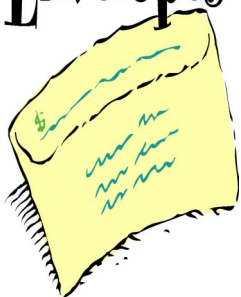
*Board of Religious Education Members
Ruth, Nancy R., Polly, Pam J., Sharon H., and Malorie*



Saturday, December 7 at 10:00 am

Offering Envelopes

Anyone wanting offering envelopes for the 2020 year, please let Liz know in the office.



Saturday, Dec 7	Hanging of the Greens 10:00 am
Sunday, Dec 8	Advent Workshop
Wed, Dec 11	Contemplative Christmas, 6:30-8:00pm
Friday, Dec 13	Preschool Cookie & Candy Sale
Monday, Dec 16	Ladies Night Out-6:00pm
Monday, Dec 16	Guy's Night Out-6:00 pm
Sunday, Dec 22	Cookies for Shut-ins
Sunday, Dec 22	Christmas Cantata
Tuesday, Dec 24	Candlelight Service-7:00pm



Mission and Society News

Paula von Ende, Chair

Christmas Offering for Hope Haven

Between now and December 8th, we are putting together 50 **Personal Care Bags for residents of Hope Haven**. Grab a list of items needed for each bag at the back of the sanctuary. Please purchase and return the bags by December 8th. For more information, email Paula von Ende at pvonend@yahoo.com.

Food Pantry Reminder

Food donations are needed all year at the Sycamore Food Pantry in the First United Methodist Church. The Federated Church has been supporting this mission for many years. All types of canned and packaged foods are needed as well as diapers, sanitary products, toilet paper, and paper towels. Put your donation in the cart in Dutton Hall and a volunteer will take it to the church.



The Love Offering for December 2019 is the UCC Christmas Fund. The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund is a Special Mission Offering that congregations have been supporting for over 100 years. The offering is administered through the United Church Board for Ministerial Assistance, the charitable arm of the Pension Boards. Funds provide direct financial support to those who serve the church and are facing financial difficulties. Active and retired clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses may be eligible for the Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and/or Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks.

FYI: Our 2018 Love Offering for the Christmas Fund was \$800.

Love Offering Report for October

Our donation to Neighbors and Need is \$200.

Meals for Mattin's

Thank you to everyone who provided a meal for Gary and Margot Mattin in November. November helped them so much that we are going to provide meals for December too! The December list is on the divider ready for volunteer sign ups. To refresh everyone's memory, the congregation is donating two meals a week to them on Wednesday and Sunday to make their lives a little easier while Margot undergoes dialysis three times a week.

Merry Christmas from the Board of Mission and Society—Fe, Judy, Paula, Peg Tomi.

With your help we have made a difference in our community and world.



Ladies Night Out

Christmas Potluck and White Elephant Gift Exchange Date Set!

Bring your appetizer, salad, dessert and your special white elephant gift to the home of Peg Vitkus, 1382 Prosser in Sycamore on **Monday, December 16, 2019 at 6 pm.** All ladies of the church are invited to this annual holiday gala!

So, clean your closets and basements to find that perfect gift or maybe you saved yours from last year. This is a good re-gifting opportunity! Your gift might be a gem to someone else and you will have a chance to swap!

Looking forward to seeing you all there. Please use the sign-up sheet in Dutton Hall so our hostess can plan.

Merry Christmas





December Birthdays

12/01	Jennifer Covert
12/04	Margot Mattin
12/05	Malorie Nelson (70)
12/06	Jerry Lane
12/12	Kiyah Jones
12/13	David Salvatore
12/14	Marilyn Hrymak
12/15	Rachel Happ
12/17	Tom Foster (80)
12/22	Brad Nelson
12/26	Sally Stevens
12/28	Kay Jacobson



December Anniversaries

12/19	Michael & Tonilynn Carlson
12/19	Linc & Ann Smelser
12/27	Isaac & Jennifer Covert
12/27	Mark & Tracy Ekstrom



Stewardship Report for the month of December

Average Monthly Attendance	51
Offering Y-T-D: \$	149,398.38
Covenant with God: \$	158,169.00

Prayer Requests

Note: If you or someone you know is in need of prayer, please let Liz know.

Prayers for Healing from Illness or Injury

Judy Hoke-Jackson; Marilyn Hoover's daughter; Roger Jacobson; Pam Kitterman's brother, Larry; Karen Hamingson's grand-niece, Rebekah; Margot Mattin; Peggy Safford's mother, Virginia; Phil Wagener's great nephew, Warren Wagener

Prayers for Peace at Time of Passing

Rachel and family, niece of Bev Whildin; Family of Judy Hoke-Jackson's great niece; Family of Phyllis Moore, Malorie Nelson's mother; Family of Mildred Berry, Linda Mason's mother

Your Federated Church Staff

Pastor: Rev. Eric J. Ogi
Pastor's Emergency: 815-797-2250
Pastor's email: RevEricFederated@gmail.com
Pastor Emeritus: Rev. Dale Beaman
Administrative Assistant: Liz Finney
Admin Assistant email: thefederatedchurch@frontier.com
Director of Music: Gary Mattin
Music email: mattincurtain50@aol.com
Keyboardist: Yule Dain Yoon
Handbell Director: Marilyn Montzka
Custodian: David Whitney
Office phone: 815-895-2706
Office fax: 815-899-2076
Office email: thefederatedchurch@frontier.com
Web Link: <http://thefederatedchurchsycamore.com>

Federated Preschool

Preschool Director: Jan Scheffers
Preschool Phone: 815-764-9473
Federated Preschool email: Federatedchurchpreschool@gmail.com



Church Leadership

Moderator:
Jerry Lane 815-762-8339
Email—fedmod48@yahoo.com

Assistant Moderator:
TBD

Clerk:
Suzanne Juday 815-895-2082

Treasurer:
Karen Hamingson 815-895-4631

Assistant Treasurers:
David Wood 815-756-1680
Linda Babcock 815-758-0763

Council Members-at Large:
Pam Kitterman 815-899-7032
Dave Wood 815-756-1680

Board of Deacons:
Linda Babcock 815-758-0763
Judy Winter 815-761-9515

Board of Membership & Fellowship:
Pam Wagener 815-895-9852
Alice Whitney 815-895-5023

Board of Mission & Society:
Paula von Ende 815-758-7375

Board of Religious Education:
Malorie Nelson 815-784-6060
Ruth Olle 815-757-1794

Board of Trustees:
Skip Schramer 815-751-4817
Dave Finney 815-739-1734

Pastor-Parish Relations Committee
Jerry Lane
Roger Jacobson
Karen Hamingson
Nancy Renfer



New Collector

Sue McCue is collecting bottle tops.
Contact Sue if you have any questions.

The Federated Church

December 2019

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Communion First Sunday of Advent 10:00am Worship 11:15am Fellowship 11:30am Bd. of Religious Ed. 6:00pm Troop #16 8:00pm AA	2 8:30am Federated Preschool 12:30pm Federated Preschool 7:00pm Prayer Shawl Ministry	3 8:30am Federated Preschool	4 8:30am Federated Preschool 9:30am Sewing Bee 12:30pm Federated Preschool 7:30pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	5 8:30am Federated Preschool 5:30pm Quilters' Christmas Party 8:00pm AA	6 Pastor's Day Off 8:30am Federated Preschool 12:30pm Federated Preschool	7 Pastor's Day Off 10:00am Hanging of the Greens
8 Second Sunday of Advent 8:45am Bd. Membership & Fellowship 10:00am Worship 11:15am Fellowship & Advent Workshop 6:00pm Troop #16 8:00pm AA	9 8:30am Federated Preschool 12:30pm Federated Preschool	10 8:30am Federated Preschool	11 8:30am Federated Preschool 9:30am Sewing Bee 12:30pm Federated Preschool 6:30pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal 6:30pm Comtemplative Christmas Worship 7:30pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	12 8:30am Federated Preschool 6:30pm Church Council 8:00pm AA	13 Pastor's Day Off 8:30am Federated Preschool 10:00am Preschool Christmas Cookie/Candy Sale 12:30pm Federated Preschool	14 Pastor's Day Off
15 Handbell Choir Third Sunday of Advent 10:00am Worship 11:15am Fellowship 11:30am Bd. of Mission & Society 11:30am Bd of Deacons 6:00pm Troop #16 8:00pm AA	16 8:30am Federated Preschool 12:30pm Federated Preschool 6:00pm Guys' Night Out 7:00pm Prayer Shawl Ministry	17 8:30am Federated Preschool	18 8:30am Federated Preschool 9:30am Sewing Bee 12:30pm Federated Preschool 6:30pm Handbell Choir Rehearsal 7:30pm Chancel Choir Rehearsal	19 8:30am Federated Preschool 5:30pm Bd. of Trustees 8:00pm AA	20 Pastor's Day Off	21 Pastor's Day Off
22 Christmas Cantata Fourth Sunday of Advent 10:00am Worship 11:15am Fellowship 6:00pm Troop #16 8:00pm AA	23 6:00pm Ladies' Night Out	24 Christmas Eve 7:00pm Candlelight Service	25 Christmas Day	26 8:00pm AA	27 Pastor's Day Off	28 Pastor's Day Off
29 10:00am Worship 11:15am Fellowship 6:00pm Troop #16 8:00pm AA	30	31 New Year's Eve				