

# Federated Church

## OF SYCAMORE

*United Church of Christ + Unitarian Universalist Association*



# seeking:

what are you seeking?

**honest questions for a deeper  
faith and a more authentic life**

LENT 2023

# **YOU ARE WELCOME HERE!**

## **A warm WELCOME to those visiting or checking out Federated Church!**

We're glad you're here! Are you looking for more information about who we are, what we do, or how to get involved? Would you like to meet with Pastor Eric or get connected to others? In the book rack on the back of the pew toward the center aisle, you will find a green or red "pew pad" with a yellow bookmark-sized "Connection Card" inside. Fill it out and place it in the offering plate as they are passed around during the "Offertory," and we will be in touch with you soon!

## **Federated Church is an Open & Affirming Community**

In a time of deep division and vitriolic rhetoric around issues of race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality, and where the dignity of people living with disabilities or mental health issues are often ignored, demonized, or turned into a joke, we promise to:

*Welcome all people of every age, gender, race, national origin, faith expression, marital status & family structure, sexual orientation, gender identity or gender expression, physical ability, mental or emotional condition, economic and social status, and educational background to share in the life, leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, blessings, and joys of our church family.*

**The Rainbow Flag:** We proudly display a rainbow flag at the front of our sanctuary as a visual declaration of God's extravagant and inclusive love, as well as of our own "promise of welcome" to all people. Our prayer is that all can be their truest selves here. This flag serves as a particular signal that our church is a safe and affirming space for LGBTQ persons to be, to belong, to lead, to question, and to grow in faith.

## **Order of Worship | March 05, 2023**

*All music can be found at the back of the bulletin.*

*We invite you to say “Hi” in the comments and like the video to let us know you’re here. Today we will be taking communion. We invite you to participate however you’re best able.*

*Feel free to use whatever you have for the “bread and cup”—whether that’s bread and grape juice or a cookie and coffee. God takes our ordinary offerings, whatever they are, and blesses them as we share them together!*

*Please join in reading those parts printed in **bold***

### **Prelude**

### **Gathering For Worship**

**Welcome**

**Passing the Peace**

**Gathering Song** “For Everyone Born” (p. 4)

### **Centering Our Hearts**

**Sharing Prayers of Joy & for Healing**

**Silent Prayer & The Lord’s Prayer**

**Our Father who art heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.**

**Sung Response** “We Yearn, O Christ, for Wholeness” vv. 1 & 2 (p. 5)

### **Welcoming New Members**

*Donna O’Hagan; Sheldon Turner, Nicole LaDue, and Theia; Keith & Nikki Meyers*

*One: Do you promise to continue in your pilgrimage of faith, growing as a disciple of Jesus so that you may: resist oppression and evil; embody love; challenge injustice; pursue mercy; and bear witness to the way of Jesus the Christ as best you are able? And, when you stray from this path—as we all inevitably do—do you promise to rest in God’s all-encompassing grace and forgiveness, return to the way of Jesus, and begin again?*

***New Members: We promise, with the help of God.***

*One: Do you promise to journey with us in faithfulness and love, participating in the life of this church by worshiping God with us, and by offering your time,*

talents, and treasures for the building up of the ministries of this church, the larger Church of which we are a part, and the world God so loves?

**New Members: We promise, with the help of God.**

*One:* Do you, the people of Federated Church, promise to extend Christ's love and extravagant welcome to *Donna, Sheldon, Nicole, Theia, Keith, and Nikki*, journeying alongside them in their pilgrimages of faith as you continue in yours?

**Congregation: We promise, with the help of God.**

*One:* Do you promise to embrace the ways their presence and gifts, their backgrounds and perspectives will add to, inspire, challenge, and re-shape us as a church, as we discern the future to which God is calling us?

**Congregation: We promise, with the help of God.**

**Scripture**

[Genesis 12:1-4a](#); [John 3:1-17](#)

**Sermon**

“How Do We Begin Again?”

**Choir Anthem**

“We Yearn”

**Holy Communion**

*We practice an “open table,” which means everyone is welcome to partake. There is no creed you must first confess or dogma you must first believe. God meets us where we are—amidst our questions and doubts, our fears and failures—and offers us bread and cup: nourishment and a blessing amidst life’s journey.*

**Invitation & Words of Institution**

**Prayer of Thanksgiving**

**Sharing Bread & Cup** “All Belong Here” refrain (p. 6)

*Please come forward by forming one line in the center aisle. As you come forward, join in our sung response. After receiving communion, we invite you to continue moving around the sanctuary for the prayer stations.*

**Responding to God’s Invitation: Prayer Stations**

*Lent is an invitation to journey through our questions and doubts, fears and longings, griefs and wounds—to journey through the wildernesses of life instead of trying to avoid them. This year, we’re imagining the wilderness as “The Land of the Seeking.” This is a time for connecting with what it is that you are seeking as you journey through the wilderness.*

*During this time (~5-7min), as the music plays, we invite you to freely visit different prayer stations. Take your time. This works best if you don't try to visit all the prayer stations each week; linger where your heart feels called and receive what you need as you journey toward new life. (see next page for stations)*

**Waiting in the Wilderness:** The wilderness can be a season of silence; of waiting; a time when our most pressing questions have no simple or straightforward answers. Allow yourself to remain in your pew and sit in silence as you wait on God.

**Wall of the Seeking:** What is it your heart seeks? What questions do you carry? Write them down on our Wall of the Seeking. Pause to notice what others are seeking; offer a prayer for your fellow sojourners and receive theirs for you.

**Water of Release:** What is weighing you down? What do you need to release in order to journey toward new life? Take a slow, deep breath as you drop a stone—or stones—into the bowl of water as you release this burden.

**Table of Offering:** What is it you have to offer for the healing of the world God so loves? Place your donation to the church, Raise the Roof fund, or Love Offering supporting a community partner in the basket. Sign up on a clipboard. Or, email Pastor Eric or our Moderator, Sharon McKee (mccubs@gmail.com), with a new idea!

**Baptismal Blessing:** Dip your fingers in the baptismal font and mark your forehead in the sign of the cross or circle as a reminder of God's infinite and irrevocable love for you as you are, and your desire for this love to heal and keep making you new.

**Prayer Candles:** Light a candle and offer a prayer for a loved one or for a place / people around the world who are suffering.

**Wonder Wall:** Each card has a different question; take one (or a few). Real connection begins with wonder. In the week ahead, plan a time over coffee, at dinner, or at bedtime with a family member or friend to wonder together on this question, and see what happens in your relationship.

## **Preparing to Live God's Love**

### **Our Shared Life**

**Sending Song** "Will You Come and Follow Me?" (p.7)

### **Benediction**

## **Postlude**

*As the postlude plays, please join us in Dutton Hall for coffee and fellowship!*

† † †

# "For Everyone Born"

Shirley Erena Murray



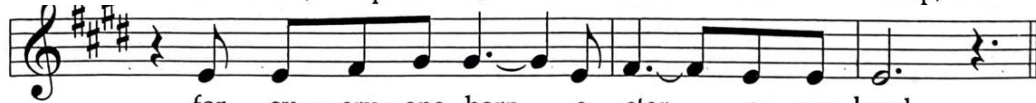
1 For ev - ery - one born, a place at the ta - ble,  
2 For wom - an and man, a place at the ta - ble,  
4 For just and un - just, a place at the ta - ble,  
5 For ev - ery - one born, a place at the ta - ble,



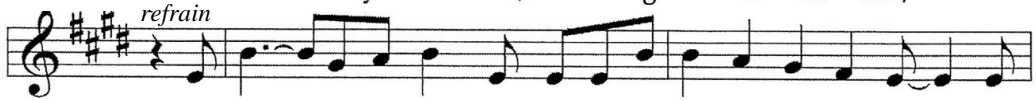
for ev - ery - one born, clean wa - ter and bread,  
re - vis - ing the roles, de - cid - ing the share,  
to li - sten and mourn, for - give and be changed,  
to live with - out fear, and sim - ply to be,



a shel - ter, a space, a safe place for grow - ing,  
with wis - dom and grace, di - vid - ing the pow - er,  
in an - ger, in hurt, a mind - set of mer - cy,  
to work, to speak out, to wit - ness and wor - ship,



for ev - ery - one born, a star o - ver - head,  
for wom - an and man, a sys - tem that's fair,  
for just and un - just, a new way to live,  
for ev - ery - one born, the right to be free,



and God will de - light when we are cre - a - tors of jus - tice and



joy, com - pas - sion and peace: yes,



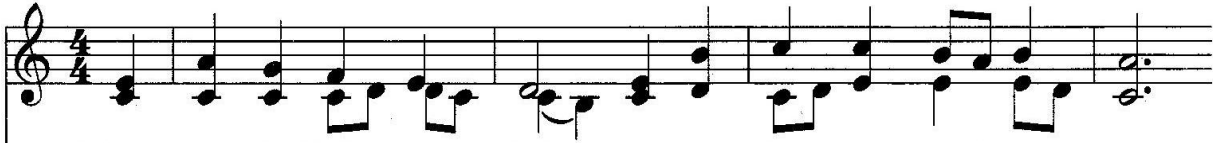
God will de - light when we are cre - a - tors of jus - tice,



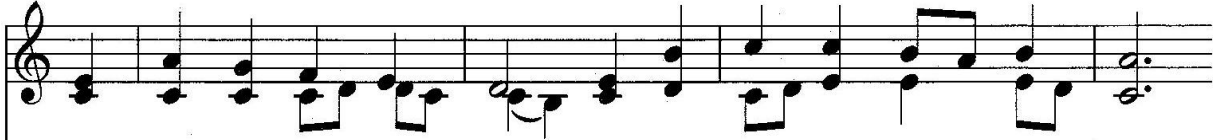
jus - tice and joy!

# "We Yearn, O Christ, for Wholeness"

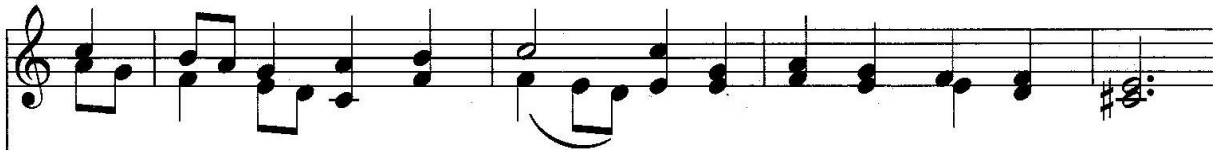
*Dosia Carlson*



1 We yearn, O Christ, for whole - ness and for your heal - ing touch;  
2 We long to have com - pan - ions who trav - el by our side,  
3 We need your liv - ing pres - ence, O Christ of Gal - i - lee,



too long have we felt help - less; our bur - dens seemed too much.  
strong friends to call and an - swer with whom we are al - lied;  
a pres - ence that re - vives us and sets our spir - its free.



For - get - ting all pre - tens - es we make our plead - ings heard,  
As we lift up each oth - er when strug - gles lay us low,  
No long - er are we fear - ful, your love per - vades each place.



in hope and ex - pec - ta - tion a - wait your gra - cious Word.  
com - mu - ni - ty de - vel - ops; our faith and car - ing grow.  
Em - pow - er us with cour - age to claim your heal - ing grace.

# "All Belong Here"

by Lenora Rand & Hannah Rand



Come and re-mem-ber who you are here. Do this to— re-mem-ber who I



am. Come and re-mem - ber you be - long here. All be-



long here. At— this ta - ble— come as you are,



bro - ken and bleed-ing's o - k. — At— this ta - ble—



eat and be filled, come— and drink in this grace. —



# “Will You Come and Follow Me?”

by John L. Bell and Graham Maule



1. Will you come and fol - low me if I but call your name?
2. Will you leave your - self be - hind if I but call your name?
3. Will you love the "you" you hide if I but call your name?
4. God, your sum - mons ech - oes true when you but call my name.



Will you go where you don't know and nev - er be the same?  
Will you care for cruel and kind and nev - er be the same?  
Will you quell the fear in - side and nev - er be the same?  
Let me turn and fol - low you and nev - er be the same.



Will you let my love be shown, \_\_\_ will you let my name be known, -  
Will you risk the hos - tile stare \_\_\_ should your life at - tract or scare? \_  
Will you use the faith you've found \_\_\_ to re - shape the world a - round, \_  
In your com - pa - ny I'll go \_\_\_ where your love and foot - steps show. \_



\_\_\_ will you let my life be grown in you and you in me?  
\_\_\_ Will you let me an - swer prayer in you and you in me?  
\_\_\_ through my sight and touch and sound in you and you in me?  
\_\_\_ Thus I'll move and live and grow in you, and you in me.

# WORSHIP NOTES

Those serving us this morning are:

**Pastor:** Rev. Eric J. Ogi | **Ministers:** All of us! | **Director of Music:** Gary Mattin  
**Liturgist:** Sharon McKee | **Ushers:** *Dave Wood, Pam Wagener, and Chris Borresen*

*Ushers for Sunday, Mar. 12: Roger Jacobson, Judy Winter, Gip Seaver, Ruth Olle*

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Raise the Roof Campaign— \*\*\* UPDATE \*\*\***

After years of patchwork, a couple years ago we had to replace two major sections of our flat roof—the first time since the roof's construction when the church was built in the 1960s. The time has come for us to finish this work and complete the third and final section. **The cost of this final phase is just under \$100,000.** But, we still have \$67,000 left over from fundraising during the first two phases! **This means that all we have left to raise is \$30,000.**

**Our goal is to raise this \$30,000 by May 1.**

**A fund-raising challenge has been made! An anonymous donor has agreed to provide HALF of the remaining balance on our roof repairs if the congregation can raise the other half -- \$15,000 -- by our May 1 deadline.**

**Please prayerfully consider whether you might be able to help; any amount will get us closer to the goal. By working together, we can soon gather, minister, and worship under a soundly-repaired roof.**

As stewards entrusted with this gift that was handed down to us by our faithful forebears, please consider what you can offer to help us keep a roof over our heads, and so that we too can bless another generation.

*Donations can be mailed in (612 W. State St.) or placed in the basket on the "Table of Offering" during Lent. For checks, please specify "Roof Fund" on the memo. We hope to have an online giving option available on our website soon!*

Reach out to Church Treasurer, [Karen Hamingson](#), or Assistant Treasurer, [Dave Wood](#), by May 1 with any questions.

**March's Love Offering** is for *One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)*. This special mission offering of the UCC involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and the long-term recovery.

Donation envelopes for OGHS and bulletin inserts are included in the bulletin and the OGHS Love Offering can be made throughout March. Donations may also be mailed to the church office. Indicate OGHS on the check memo line.

**Listen to Sermons Online**—Video of sermons are posted each week on our website: [www.fedsycamore.org/sermons\\_](http://www.fedsycamore.org/sermons_). They're also available via podcast (*scan the QR code!*)



**Progressive Christian Children's Books**—we're curating a library of children's books that reflect our progressive Christian values of love, diversity, compassion, dignity, and justice for ALL. *Scan the QR code to see!*



From pictures to storylines, these books reflect an attention to diversity of authorship and representation in ethnicity, culture, race, gender, sexuality, and family units. They are LGBTQIA+ affirming, communicate healthy responses to feelings, and include an emphasis on our connection to and care for creation / the environment. These books are primarily written from a Christian perspective, although there are also many fantastic books that align with our values that are not explicitly "Christian." *Many of these titles are also available to be checked out for free from our church library! Have a question about how to do so? Email the church office!*

**Meals on Wheels** As we eagerly await the coming of Spring, it is time to start thinking about signing up to deliver Meal on Wheels in April. Sign-up sheets are in Dutton Hall for both Sycamore East and West routes. Please include your name and phone number as you sign up. If there are any questions, contact Sharon Hollister at 815-761-7759.

**Mayfield UCC Women's Retreat** is Saturday, March 11, from 9 am to 3 pm. Contact Paula von Ende if you are interested in attending and/or carpooling.

# OUR FEDERATED VALUES

## **We believe in God**

At the center of our faith is the surprising, unsettling, and deeply personal God found in the Bible, most profoundly revealed in the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus. At Federated, our primary interest is not merely talking *about* God, but in *encountering* the Mysterious Force at the heart of the universe. This is a God who comforts us where we need to be comforted and challenges us where we've become complacent. This is a God who will not be confined to dogmatic teachings, nor even to the Bible. We believe that we are invited to encounter this God everywhere: in nature, science, one another, and in other religious traditions as well.

## **Each person is on a unique spiritual journey**

We value faith as a journey rather than a destination. We recognize that each person is at a different place on their journey, so we focus on “testimonies” of faith rather than “tests” of faith; stories of how we are being transformed, rather than dogmas we must affirm. Here, you are welcome to belong, question, explore, and lead whether you grew up in church and loved it, or you've had a painful relationship with Christianity; you are welcome whether you feel your faith is unshakeable or you're not sure if you believe in God at all. You are welcome to join a community of people “on the way”: encouraging and caring for one another, learning and growing together, and serving alongside each other as we build, in some small way, the world we believe God dreams of.

## **Building authentic community across our differences**

We are an “Open and Affirming” congregation, which is our way of saying that we value diversity. In a time of deep division, we believe it is paramount to gather people from a variety of backgrounds, experiences, and identities in order to build authentic relationships and community. We believe that the simple but courageous work of showing up and being together in this way is one necessary element in healing our nation and world's deep divisions.

## **We believe in peace through justice**

In this congregation, conversations regarding racism, sexism, poverty, war, immigration, homophobia, hunger, abuse, and a host of other issues are commonplace, both from the pulpit and around the table. We know that the Realm of God is not being experienced on earth so long as people are being hurt. With Martin Luther King Jr., we believe that we are all “caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny,” and that “none of us can be free until all are free.” Which means that, as a community, we have a God-given responsibility and mission to work for justice and healing in our neighborhood and beyond. Jesus says: “I have come that they may have life and have it abundantly” (John 10:10). This work is defined not merely by what we are against, but the vision we are for—flourishing for *all!*

# ***“Welcoming Any, Loving All”***

*The Federated Church is affiliated with two national denominations:  
the United Church of Christ & the Unitarian Universalist Association*



Follow us on

Facebook & Instagram:

@FederatedChurchSycamore



[www.fedsycamore.org](http://www.fedsycamore.org)

**Church Office Phone:** (815) 895-2706 || **Email:** [Office@fedsycamore.org](mailto:Office@fedsycamore.org)

**Pastor Eric Cell:** (815) 797-2250 || **Email** [RevEric@fedsycamore.org](mailto:RevEric@fedsycamore.org)

**Federated Church Preschool, Director Bobbi Clough**

**Phone:** (815) 764-9473 || **Email:** [Preschool@fedsycamore.org](mailto:Preschool@fedsycamore.org)

**Address:** 612 W. State Street, Sycamore, IL 60178