

# 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 12, 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.  
Please join in reading those parts printed in **bold***

## **Prelude**

## **Gathering For Worship**

**Welcome**

**Passing the Peace**

**Gathering Song** “Come, O Fount of Every Blessing” (p. 3)

## **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.**

**Choir Anthem**

“There Is a Time”

*Craig Courtney*

## **Scripture**

[John 4:5-42](#)

## **Sermon**

“Will You Give Me a Drink?”

**Sung Response** “We All Come Thirsty” (p. 4)

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

*Lent is an invitation to journey through our questions, doubts, fears, 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.” During this time (~5min) connect with what it is that you are seeking in this season.*

*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. (station descriptions continued on next page)*

**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 on our Wall of the Seeking. Pause to notice what others are seeking; offer a prayer for them, 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) home with you. 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** "O Christ, Surround Me" vv. 1-2, 4-5 (p. 5)

### **Benediction**

## **Postlude**

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

† † †

# **WORSHIP NOTES**

Those serving us this morning are:

**Pastor:** Rev. Eric J. Ogi | **Ministers:** All of us! | **Director of Music:** Gary Mattin

**Ushers:** Roger Jacobson, Judy Winter, Gip Seaver, Ruth Olle

*Ushers for Sunday, Mar. 19: Nate & Pam Kitterman, Linda Mason, Allison Stahl*

All hymns are used with permission: CCLI License #3234671

# "Come, O Fount of Every Blessing"

Robert Robinson



1 Come, O Fount of ev-ery bless-ing, tune my heart to sing your grace;  
2 Here I pause in my so - journ-ing, giv-ing thanks for hav-ing come,  
3 O to grace how great a debt - or dai - ly I am drawn a - new!



streams of mer - cy, nev-er ceas-ing, call for songs of end-less praise.  
come to trust, at ev-ery turn - ing, God will guide me safe-ly home.  
Let that grace now, like a fet - ter, bind my wan-dering heart to you.



Teach me some me - lo-dious son - net, sung by flam-ing tongues a - bove.  
Je - sus sought me when a strang-er, wan-dering from the fold of God,  
Prone to wan - der, I can feel it, wan-der from the love I've known:



Praise the mount; I'm fixed up - on it, mount of God's un - fail-ing love.  
Came to res - cue me from dan - ger, bless-ed bod - y, pre-cious blood.  
Here's my heart, O take and seal it, seal it for your ver - y own.

**"We All Come Thirsty"**  
*Anna Strickland*

We Through We all dif care - come fren for thir ces God's sty our com - to hands mun - the can i - well reach ty to to Our

seek care mu - the and tual li - hold aid ving each shared wa oth free - ter er ly With There To wounds are all and no we

pasts stran give - we'd gers as ra for we ther they re - hide are ceive But Our With let sib - grace ting lings, and our sis - lov - hearts ters, ing

sof bro deep - - ten thers ly

## “O Christ Surround Me”

Richard Bruxvoort Colligan



1 God, be the love to search and keep me; God, be the prayer to  
2 Bind to my-self the Name of Ho - ly, great cloud of wit - ness -  
3 Bright-ness of sun and glow of moon-light, flash - ing of light-ning,  
4 Walk - ing be-hind to hem my jour - ney, go - ing a - head to  
5 Christ in the eyes of all who see me, Christ in the ears that




move my voice; God, be the strength to now up - hold me:  
es en - fold; proph - ets, a - pos - tles, an - gels wit - ness:  
strength of wind, depth of the sea to soil of plan - et:  
light my way, and from be - neath, a - bove, and all ways:  
hear my voice, Christ in the hearts of all who know me:



O Christ, sur-round me; O Christ, sur-round me.

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

**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. Place donations in the Sunday collection plate in an envelope marked Love Offering. Donations may also be mailed to the church office. Indicate OGHS on the check memo line.

**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 QR code to see!](#)  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!

# 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 (before it leaks more than it already does causing damage no longer covered by insurance).

**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.**

In an exciting shift, **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.**

**Read the full letter inviting/challenging us from the donor on the other side.**

As stewards entrusted with this gift that was handed down to us by our faithful forebears, ***we invite you to prayerfully consider whether and how you can contribute so that we too can bless another generation; any amount will get us closer to the goal.***

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.



After reading through the annual report in the 2022 yearbook, I was drawn to the need to raise an additional \$27,000 to pay for the completion of the church roofing project. I was impressed by the way the congregation raised the amount anticipated to complete this project in 2020. I also understand the increased cost over the initial estimates due to supply issues raised by COVID shutdowns.

Overall, I am impressed by the way the congregation has been able to step up and provide the funding necessary to maintain its programming and outreach without having to draw on investment funds. I am also impressed with the direction the congregation has been moving in revitalizing the life of the congregation and its role in the life of the Sycamore community. The two areas together has made me decide to offer a challenge to the congregation.

If the congregation raises \$15,000 through donations to be used for the roof replacement project by May first 2023, I will match that amount dollar for dollar resulting in \$30,000 to cover the extra amount to cover any unexpected charges for completion of the project or any other unknown repairs needed around the building.

I am making this challenge anonymously at this time so I will look to see when it is announced to the congregation in some manner to confirm that the Church has accepted my offer. Looking to completion of a successful fund raising effort.

# 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