

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 26, 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 “My Life Flows on in Endless Song” (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.

Sung Response “God, We Take These Steps” (p.2)

Scripture [Ezekiel 37:1-14; John 11:1-3, 17-21, 33-41, 43-44](#)

Sermon “Can These Dry Bones Live?”

Sung Response “God, We Take These Steps” (p.2)

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 "Beautiful Things" (p. 4)

Benediction

Postlude

Thank you for joining us for worship today!

† † †

"God, We Take These Steps"

Burns Stanfield



God, we take these steps in our bro-ken-ness. Help us know this hour just how claimed we are

“My Life Flows on in Endless Song”

Robert Lowry/Doris Plenn



1 My life flows on in end - less song; a - bove earth's lam - en -
2 What though my joys and com - forts die? My Sav - ior still is
3 When ty - rants trem - ble, sick with fear, and hear their death knells
4 I lift my eyes; the cloud grows thin; I see the blue a -



ta - tion, I hear the sweet, though far - off hymn that
liv - ing. What though the shad - ows gath - er 'round? A
ring - ing; When friends re - joice both far and near, how
bove it; And day by day this path - way smooths, since



hails a new cre - a - tion. Through all the tu - mult
new song Christ is giv - ing. No storm can shake my
can I keep from sing - ing? In pris - on cell and
first I learned to love it. The peace of Christ makes



and the strife, I hear the mu - sic ring - ing; It
in - most calm, while to that Rock I'm cling - ing; Since
dun - geon vile our thoughts to them are wing - ing; When
fresh my heart, a foun - tain ev - er spring - ing; All



finds an ech - o in my soul— how can I keep from sing - ing?
Love com - mands both heaven and earth, how can I keep from sing - ing?
friends by shame are un - de - filed, how can I keep from sing - ing?
things are mine since I am Christ's— how can I keep from sing - ing?

"Beautiful Things"
Michael and Lisa Gungor

1. All this pain. —
All this earth. —

— I won-der if I'll ev - er find my way; — I won-der if my
— Could all that is lost ev - er be found; — could a gar-den

life could real - ly change _ at _ all. _____
come up from this ground _ at _ all? _____

chorus

You make beau - ti - ful things, —

— You make beau-ti - ful things out of the dust. —

You make beau-ti - ful things, — You make beau-ti - ful things out of us. —

2. All a round — hope is spring - ing

up from this old ground. — Out of cha - os, life is be - ing found —

— in — You. _____

WORSHIP NOTES

Those serving us this morning are:

Pastor: Rev. Eric J. Ogi | **Ministers:** All of us! | **Guest Pianist:** Terri Goodman
Liturgist: Sheldon Turner | **Ushers:** Pam Wegener, Chris Borresen, & Skip Schramer
Ushers for Sunday, Apr. 2: Paula von Ende, and Beverly & Skip Schramer

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

March's Love Offering is for *One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)*. This special mission offering of the UCC involves you in disaster relief, refugee/immigration responses, and development ministries throughout the world. Join with us in the spirit of generosity, and together we will build a just world for all. Place donations in the basket on the "Table of Offering" in an envelope marked *Love Offering*, or you can mail them to the church office. Indicate OGHS on the check memo line.

HOLY WEEK SERVICES

Maundy Thursday—*Thursday, April 6, 5:30pm, Dutton Hall/Sanctuary*

We are excited to be offering a different, engaging experience for Holy Week this year with our **Maundy Thursday** service. We will begin with a FREE vegetarian Mediterranean dinner (falafel, pita, hummus, salad, etc.), during/after which we will remember the story of Jesus' final hours—from the Last Supper through his crucifixion—through readings, music, candle lighting, and several interactive components. *Sign up in Dutton Hall or in the weekly eNews so we know how much food to order!*

Good Friday—*Friday, April 7, 3pm, Sycamore United Methodist Church*

Join us and our friends from Salem Lutheran Church, St. Peter's Episcopal Church, and Sycamore United Methodist Church for a Good Friday service reflecting on "the seven last words of Jesus" from the cross, and the invitation, promise, and challenge they offer us and our world today.

Easter Sunday—*Sunday, April 9, 10am*

Join us for a special Easter worship service that will feature a pick-up choir singing the "Hallelujah Chorus." No choir practice attendance needed. More info to come!

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

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