

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 | April 9, 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 at Jesus’ Tomb [John 20:1-3, 11a](#)

Introit “I Weep Because They Have Taken My Lord Away”

Easter proclamation [John 20:11b-13](#) & [Mark 16:6-7](#)

Alleluia! Christ is risen!

Christ is risen indeed! (3x)

Hymn of Resurrection “Christ the Lord is Risen Today!” vv. 1, 2 & 4 (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

“Hallelujah Chorus”

Handel / Ward

We invite anyone interested in singing to join us for our pick-up choir anthem! Each section is anchored by people who know the part, so jump in even if you’re a little shaky!

Scripture

[John 11:1-44](#) (selections) & [John 20:1-18](#)

Sermon

“Who Are You Looking For? —

The Resurrection of Jesus, Mary, and All the World”

Musical Meditation

Responding to God’s Invitation: Prayer Stations

The Journey to Easter is a journey through our questions, doubts, fears, longings, griefs, and wounds. That is, experiencing New Life requires us to journey through the wildernesses of life. During this time (~5min), we invite you to connect with the things you are carrying, and what it is that you are seeking.

As music plays, freely visit different prayer stations. Take your time. Linger where your heart feels called and receive what you need as you journey toward healing & New Life.

(Station descriptions and locations are on the next page)

Mary wept.
Standing in the garden, soft dirt under her feet,
sun still tucked away, sleeping under the horizon.
The other disciples left, but Mary stayed. Mary wept.
Shoulders shaking, tears running down her face.
She said, "They have taken my Lord away, and I don't know where they put him."
But here's what Easter taught me:
If you think you've lost God, if it feels like heaven has slipped through the cracks,
If you feel like the night will never end, then know
There is no hide-and-seek with the divine that doesn't end in you being found.
Stay still. Keep breathing. God is closer than you think.
"Lost and Found" by Sarah (Are) Speed

Waiting at the Empty Tomb: When all the other disciples left the tomb, Mary remained. She wept. She honored her grief and her love for Jesus. *Allow yourself to remain in your pew and sit in silence as you wait on God.*

Wall of the Seeking (*front*): 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 (*front*): 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.

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

Table of Offering (*middle*): What do you have to offer for the healing of the world God so loves? Place a donation to the church, Raise the Roof fund, or Love Offering supporting a community partner in the basket, or sign up in Dutton Hall to serve.

Baptismal Blessing (*back*): 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, and your desire for this love to heal and make you new.

Wonder Wall (*back*): 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 "Who Are You Looking For?" (*p.4*)
Benediction

Postlude

Thank you for joining us for worship today!

"Christ the Lord Is Risen Today"

Charles Wesley



1 Christ the Lord is risen to - day, Al - le - lu - ia!
2 Let the Vic - tor's peo - ple sing, Al - le - lu - ia!
3 Love's re - deem - ing work is done, Al - le - lu - ia!
4 Soar we now where Christ has led, Al - le - lu - ia!



Mor - tal tongues and an - gels say: Al - le - lu - ia!
Where, O death, is now your sting? Al - le - lu - ia!
Fought the fight, the bat - tle won, Al - le - lu - ia!
Fol - lowing our ex - alt - ed Head, Al - le - lu - ia!



Raise your joys and tri - umphs high, Al - le - lu - ia!
Dy - ing once, Christ lives to save, Al - le - lu - ia!
Death in vain for - bids Christ rise, Al - le - lu - ia!
Made like Christ, like Christ we rise, Al - le - lu - ia!



Sing, glad heavens, and earth re - ply: Al - le - lu - ia!
Where your vic - to - ry, O grave? Al - le - lu - ia!
God has o - pened par - a - dise, Al - le - lu - ia!
Ours the cross, the grave, the skies, Al - le - lu - ia!

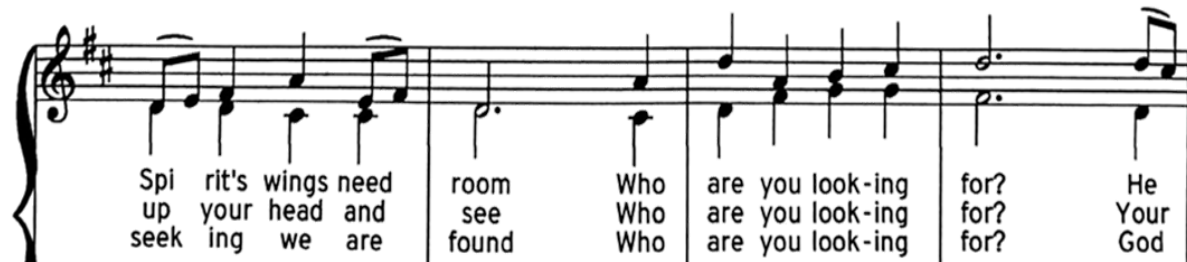
“Who Are You Looking For?”



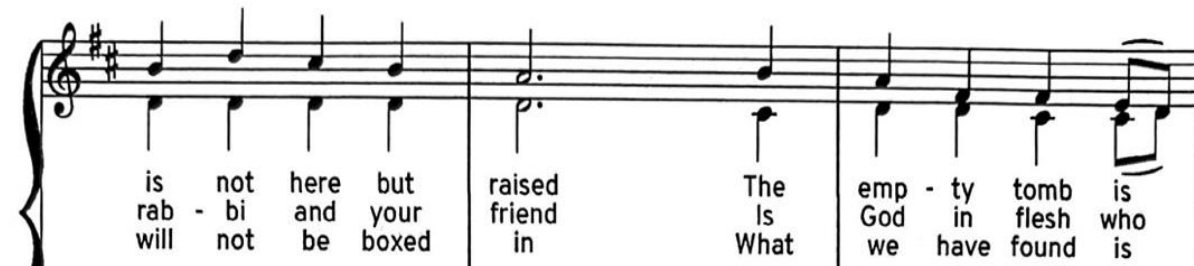
Who are you look - ing for? A bo - dy in the
Who are you look - ing for? The man of Gal - i -
Who are you look - ing for? An an - swer to pin



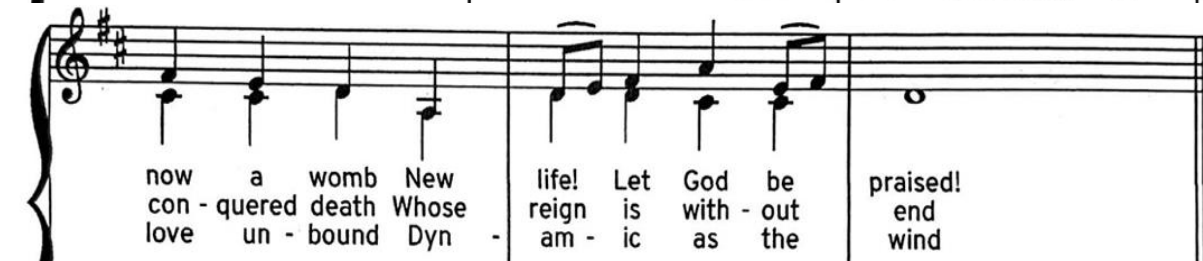
tomb? The grave is death but God has breath The Lift
- lee? He is not here but al - ways near But
down? We can - not know where God will go But



Spi rit's wings need room Who are you look - ing for? He
up your head and see found Who are you look - ing for? Your
seek ing we are found Who are you look - ing for? God



is not here but raised friend in The emp - ty tomb is
rab - bi and your friend in What God in flesh who
will not be boxed in What we have found is



now a womb New life! Let God be praised!
con - quered death Whose reign is with - out end
love un - bound Dyn - am - ic as the wind

† † †

WORSHIP NOTES

Those serving us this morning are:

Pastor: Rev. Eric J. Ogi | **Ministers:** All of us! | **Music Director:** Gary Mattin
Liturgist: Sharon McKee | **Ushers:** *Judy Winter, Gip Seaver, Ruth Olle, & Skip Schramer*
Ushers for Sunday, Apr. 16: Nate & Pam Kitterman, Linda Mason, and Allison Stahl

The poem, "Lost and Found" is by Sarah Are | A Sanctified Art LLC | sanctifiedart.org and is used with permission. All hymns used with permission: CCLI License #3234671

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Pastor Eric on Vacation, *Monday, April 10-Sunday, April 23*

While Pastor Eric is away on vacation, we look forward to welcoming Brian Eide, a Member-in-Discernment on the path to ordination to lead us in worship on April 16, and Rev. Joe Gastiger to lead us on April 23.

In case of Pastoral Emergency, please reach out to *Rev. Alan McNamara, the Interim Pastor at First Congregational UCC in DeKalb, at (952) 594-9706.*

April's Love Offering is for *The Federated Church Preschool*. Bobbi Clough, Center Director, shares this message: We will be adding a fourth classroom in fall 2023 so that we can offer full-time childcare here in Sycamore. There is a huge shortage of full-time, full-day childcare. We want to support our local families so that they can work knowing their children are safe in our care. We already have 15 kids (out of 32 openings) signed up. The additional spots will fill up quickly. We need furniture for this fourth classroom: tables, chairs, shelves, dramatic play items, an art easel, and a sand and water table. These items are required by DCFS, our state licensing body. We cannot thank Federated Church enough for all of your assistance as we venture into going to full-time care!

Donations in any amount are welcome and can be placed in the collection plate on Sundays or mailed to the church office. Be sure to write "preschool" in the memo section of checks.

Raise the Roof Campaign We continue to accept contributions for the Raise the Roof Campaign. An anonymous donor has agreed to provide **half** of the remaining \$30,000 balance needed for our roof repairs **if the congregation can raise the other half -- \$15,000 – by our May 1 deadline. We are almost there—help us cross the finish line!** 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. Be sure to write "Raise the Roof" in the memo section of checks.

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*



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