

THE
Federated Church
OF SYCAMORE



Stewardship 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? Fill out our brief online [Connection Form here](#), 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 | October 8, 2023, 10:00 am

Please join in reading those parts printed in **bold**.
All music can be found at the back of the bulletin.

Prelude

“You Are Mine”

D. Haas/arr. L. Larson

Welcome

Passing the Peace *(We invite you to say “Hi” in the comments and like the video to let us know you’re here.)*

Gathering Song “Won’t You Let Me Be Your Servant” vv. 1-4, 6 (p.3)

Sharing Prayers of Joy & For Healing

Centering Moment

*This is your time to center more deeply into the presence of God.
We invite you to slowly read the quote below, and then: ponder the Meditation questions;
move through the Breath Prayer; or sit silently as the music plays.*

“We are wounded in relationship, and we are healed in relationship.” ~ Harville Hendrix
“I am often struck by the dangerous narcissism fostered by spiritual rhetoric
that pays so much attention to individual self-improvement and so little
to the practice of love within the context of community.” ~ bell hooks

Meditation Questions

- ◆ How have you found healing from the wounds of one relationship in another?
- ◆ How might you practice that kind of healing love in this community?
- ◆ How has Jesus—or participating here—inspired and challenged you to live the love of God more boldly and courageously?

Breath Prayer

“Breath Prayer” is an ancient Eastern Christian form of prayer done by choosing one or two lines to meditate on, and inhaling/exhaling through them. This helps us unite our prayers with our full being. Take a moment to breathe through these lines as your centering prayer.

Inhale: I am not a burden | **Exhale**: I will let myself be loved

Inhale: Healing is not a solitary journey | **Exhale**: We find freedom together

The Lord’s Prayer

Our Father, who art in 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 "All Belong Here" (p.4)

Stewardship Testimony

Sheldon Turner

Scripture [Micah 6:6-8; John 15:1-17; 1 John 4:7-9, 18-21](#)

Sermon "The Church as a School of Love"

Musical Meditation

Our Shared Life & Offering

Offering Opportunities

Offertory Anthem "This Is the Day the Lord Has Made" *Mark Hayes*

Doxology

Praise God from whom all blessings flow.

Praise God all creatures here below.

Praise God for all that Love has done.

Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.

Prayer of Dedication

Sending Hymn "New Patterns of Loving" (p.5)

Benediction

Postlude "Blessed Assurance" *P. Knapp/arr. M. Hayes*

Thank you for joining us for worship today!

† † †

WORSHIP NOTES

Serving us this morning are:

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

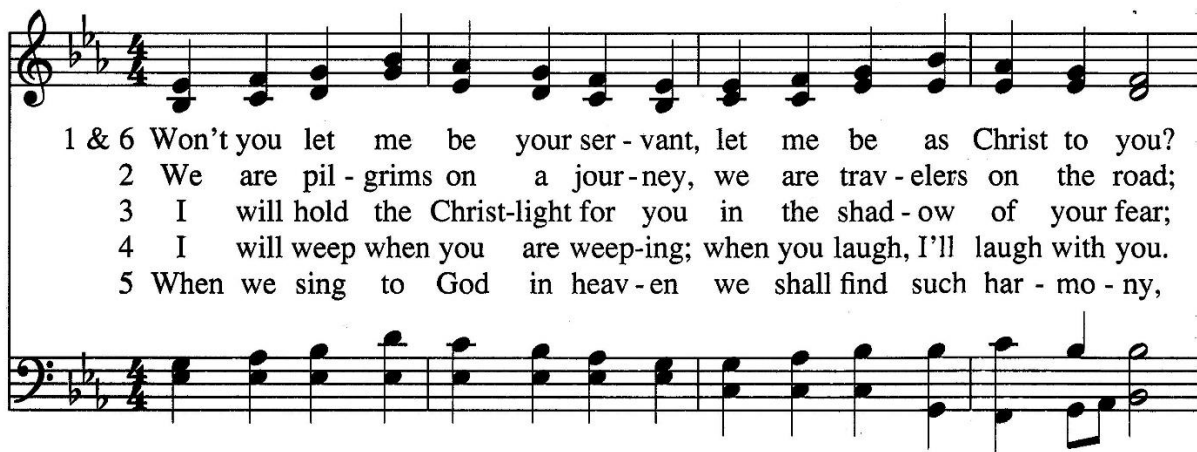
Liturgist: | **Ushers:** Gip Seaver, Ruth Olle, Sally Stevens and Skip Schramer

Ushers for Sunday, Oct. 15: Nate & Pam Kitterman, Linda Mason, and Allison Stahl

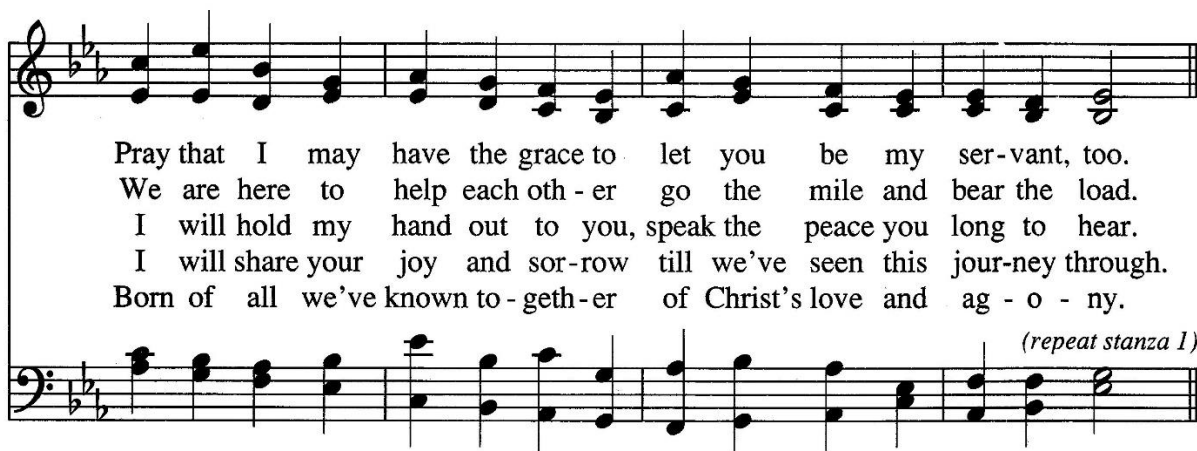
All hymns this morning come from *The New Century Hymnal* unless noted otherwise, and are used with permission: *CCLI License #3234671*

“Won’t You Let Me Be Your Servant?”

Richard Gillard



1 & 6 Won't you let me be your ser - vant, let me be as Christ to you?
2 We are pil - grims on a jour - ney, we are trav - elers on the road;
3 I will hold the Christ - light for you in the shad - ow of your fear;
4 I will weep when you are weep - ing; when you laugh, I'll laugh with you.
5 When we sing to God in heav - en we shall find such har - mo - ny,



Pray that I may have the grace to let you be my ser - vant, too.
We are here to help each oth - er go the mile and bear the load.
I will hold my hand out to you, speak the peace you long to hear.
I will share your joy and sor - row till we've seen this jour - ney through.
Born of all we've known to - geth - er of Christ's love and ag - o - ny.

(repeat stanza 1)

“All Belong Here”

Lenora & Hannah Rand

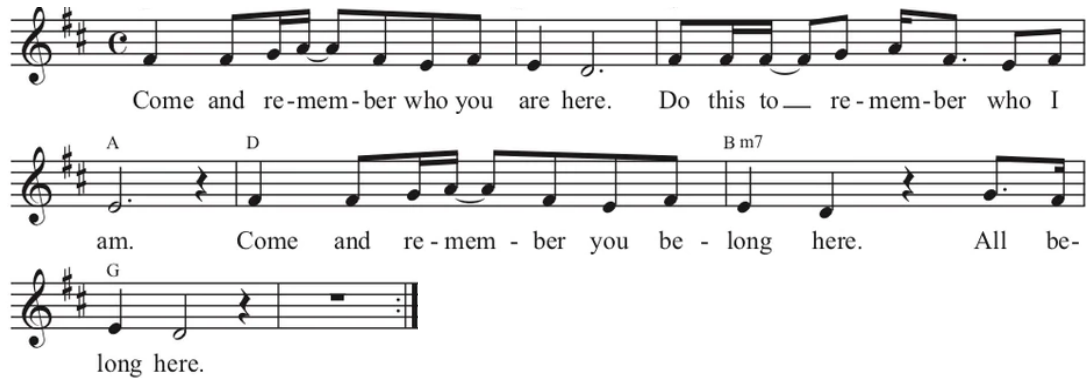
Verse 1



When you're not sure who you real-ly are, When all you feel is the
shape of your scars, And you have more wounds than you can count, O-pen your
eyes, look all a-round, You aren't a - lone, this is your home._

Chords: Bm, A, G, Bm, F#m7, G, Bm, A, Bm, A/C#

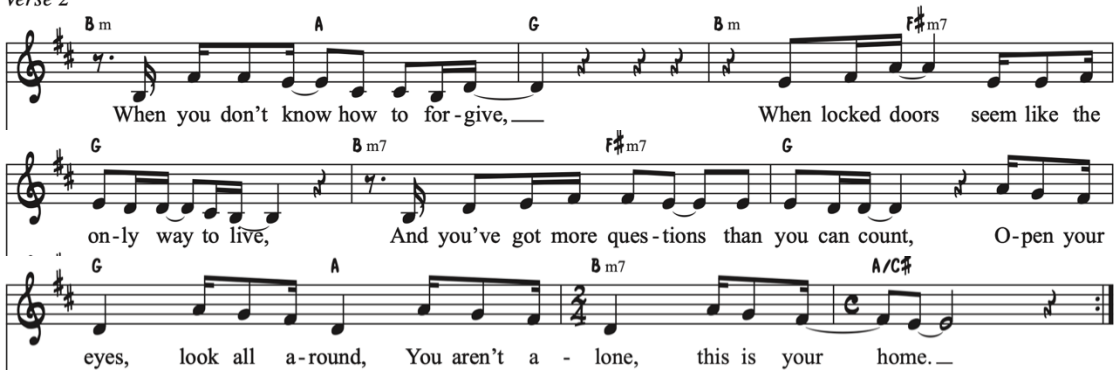
Chorus



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.

Chords: A, D, Bm7, G

Verse 2



When you don't know how to for-give, _ When locked doors seem like the
on-ly way to live, And you've got more ques-tions than you can count, O-pen your
eyes, look all a-round, You aren't a - lone, this is your home._

Chords: Bm, A, G, Bm, F#m7, G, Bm7, F#m7, G, G, A, Bm7, A/C#

“New Patterns of Loving”

Barbara Hamm

1. New pat - terns of lov - ing make room for new ways,
2. Our an - ces - try marks us with vis - i - ble signs;
3. God bless all the mo - thers and fa - thers to - day;

cre - at - ing new fam - ilies to care for and raise.
we bear in our bod - ies ge - net - ic de - signs.
help us to raise chil - dren to walk in God's way,

All those who have loved us and helped us to grow
But love, be - yond lim - its of gen - der or race,
to care for each oth - er as chil - dren of God,

are fam - ilies of choice by the car - ing they show.
can fash - ion new fam - ilies and new ways em - brace.
whose love is in - clu - sive, far - reach - ing, and broad.

We are excited to welcome you into this Stewardship Season at Federated Church. Our theme this year is: “Becoming a School of Love.”

Every Fall over the course of several weeks, Stewardship Season invites us to take a step back and ask ourselves questions like:

- ◆ Why are we here, and why does it matter that Federated Church exists?
- ◆ What difference does our collective presence and ministry make in each of our lives, and in the wider community?
- ◆ How might God be expanding and deepening our sense of what it means to *be* the church in service of the world God so loves?

This year in particular, we are focusing questions like these through the lens of what it might look like to more boldly and courageously become a school of love. That is, to be a community where we reflect on what the love modeled in Jesus inspires us to and challenges us with. A community that practices this love with each other, even as we learn to more boldly offer it in service of the wider world.

Between now and November 5th, we invite you to reflect for yourself: why are *you* here? How has involvement in this community deepened your spirit, given you hope, and expanded your faith? How have you experienced being loved back to life?

As you ponder those questions, we also invite you to consider: How can I “pledge” to offer myself to these life-giving ministries in the year ahead? What can I pledge to contribute—in time and talents, in skills and passion, in finances and service—in order to keep make these life-giving ministries possible for others?

Please plan to join us on November 5th with your filled-out pledge cards (which you will receive in the coming weeks). During worship, we will dedicate these “pledges” and share in a special post-service celebration.

2023 Stewardship Team

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Governance Revitalization Presentation & Conversation

10/8, Dutton Hall, Following Worship

Join the Governance Revitalization Task Force for a presentation and conversation, including updates about the process, changes being considered to our organizational structure, and a chance to ask questions and offer feedback.

Federated 101—10/15, Following Worship, Settle Room

So... you've started worshipping with us, receiving the newsletter, and maybe even had coffee with Pastor Eric. But we're guessing you still have questions. Or maybe you're trying to find ways to connect, serve, or further explore your faith. Or maybe you're wondering how one becomes a member—or what the point of membership is. If this sounds like you, then we invite you to "Federated 101"—a chance to gather around a table for a conversation with Pastor Eric and others in the same boat to learn more about who we are, to finally ask that question you've had, to connect with others. Childcare will be provided while we gather.

Choir Rehearsals Have Begun—Wednesdays at 7:00 PM

Do you enjoy singing? We would love to add your voice to the Federated Church Choir. Rehearsals are Wednesdays at 7:00 PM. Feel free to come when you can. We recognize many of us cannot commit to every Sunday. All are welcome! You can simply show up on a Wednesday, or talk to our Music Director, Gary, for more information.

All-Church Conversation: "Becoming School of Love"

10/22, Following Worship, Dutton Hall

Join us after worship on October 22 for an "all church" conversation on what it might look like for us to be a "School of Love." After getting coffee & snacks, we will split into small groups to reflect together on a series of prompts to begin imagining the kind of community we might seek to be—and become ever more. This is not a formal "visioning" session, but rather a chance for us to hear & learn from—and be inspired by—one another.

Childcare Assistant Volunteers—Sunday mornings

We are looking for volunteers to assist Janis, our Children's Programming Coordinator, with the children during Sunday services. If you're able to help one time, once a month or once in a while, please sign up at <https://bit.ly/3ZLthBS>! See Pam Jackson or Sharon Hollister with questions.

October Love Offering: Neighbors in Need (NIN) NIN is a special mission offering of the UCC that supports ministries of justice & compassion throughout the US. This year's focus is on environmental justice. One-third of the offering supports **Council for American Indian Ministry** and two-thirds is used by **Justice and Witness Ministries** to provide grants to UCC churches & organizations. Online donations may be made at <https://bit.ly/3tqXsSN>, by selecting the "Love Offering" giving fund.

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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