

THE
Federated Church
OF SYCAMORE



How does a weary
world rejoice?

An Advent series in Luke's Gospel

***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? On the table at the back of the sanctuary find a yellow bookmark-sized "Connection Card" (where you picked up your bulletin). Fill it out and place it in the little wooden "holder" next to it, and we'll be in touch 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 | November 26, 2023

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

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.

Prelude

“Be Not Afraid”

Bob Duffard/arr. M. Kim

Welcome & Lighting of the Advent Candles

As we gather in the deepening darkness of this season,

We ask: How does a weary world hope?

By telling stories of hope,

By lighting candles in the night,

And by planting seeds in the winter

That will bloom in the spring.

Beloved, how does a weary world rejoice?

By praying for children as they grow, picking up trash on the sidewalk,

And calling our representatives to end the warfare.

How does a weary world rejoice?

By insisting that small acts can make a difference.

There are a million ways to practice hope.

So today we light the candle of hope as a reminder and as a charge.

the candle of HOPE is lit

With God’s help, may we bring hope into a weary world. Amen.

Gathering Hymn “Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness” vv. 1-3, 5 (p. 3)

Prayers of the People & 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.

Choir Anthem

“Emmanuel, Come Soon”

T. Jordan/D. Angerman

Scripture

[Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19; Luke 1:1-23](#)

Sermon

“The Shape of Hope in a Weary Land”

Sung Response

"If In Your Heart" (p. 2)

Responding to God's Invitation: Prayer Stations *(see insert for instructions)*

Our Shared Life: Offering Invitations

Sending Hymn "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" vv. 1-2, 6-7 (p. 4)

Benediction

"All Is Well"

Michael Smith/arr. M. Kim

Postlude

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

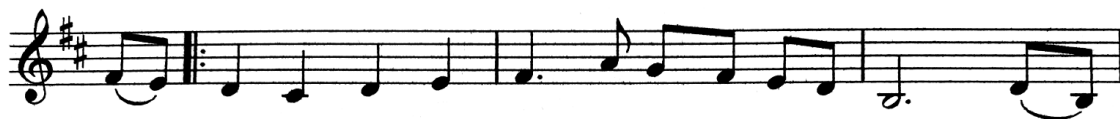
Liturgist: | **Ushers:** Paula von Ende and Bev & Skip Schramer

Ushers for Sunday, Dec. 3: Pam Wagener, Chris Borresen, and Skip Schramer

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

"If In Your Heart"

Ana Hernandez



If__ in your heart you make a man - ger for his birth, then__



God will once a - gain be - come a child on earth. If__ earth.__

“Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness”

Bernadette Farrell



1 Long-ing for light, we wait in dark-ness. Long-ing for
 2 Long-ing for peace, our world is trou-bled. Long-ing for
 3 Long-ing for food, man - y are hun - gry. Long-ing for
 4 Long-ing for shel - ter, man - y are home-less. Long-ing for
 5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the



truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,
 hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone
 wa - ter, man - y still thirst. Make us your bread,
 warmth, man - y are cold. Make us your build - ing,
 hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants



your ho - ly peo - ple, light for the world to see.
 has power to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.
 bro - ken for oth - ers, shared un - til all are fed.
 shel - ter - ing oth - ers, walls made of liv - ing stone.
 to one an - oth - er, mak - ing your king - dom come.

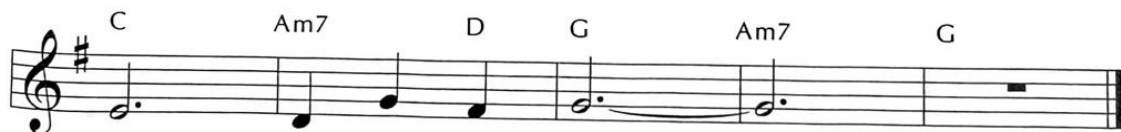
Refrain



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the



dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your



church gath - ered to - day.

"O Come, O Come, Emmanuel"

Transl. John Mason Neal, et. al.

Unison



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and
 2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, and
 3 O come, O come, O A - do - nai, who
 4 O come, O shoot of Jes - se, free your
 5 O come, O Key of Da - vid, come, and



ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el That mourns in lone - ly
 or - der all things far and nigh; To us the path of
 came to all on Si - nai high, And from its peak a
 own from Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny, From depths of hell your
 o - pen wide your heaven - ly home; Make safe the path to



ex - ile here, un - til the Child of God ap - pear.
 knowl - edge show, and help us in that way to go.
 sin - gle law pro - claimed in maj - es - ty and awe.
 peo - ple save, and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.
 end - less day, to hell's de - struc - tion close the way.

Refrain



Re - joice! Re - joice! Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el!

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <p>6 O come, O Day-spring, come and cheer
 our spir-its by your ad-vent here;
 Love stir with-in the womb of night,
 and death's own shad-ows put to flight.
 <i>(Refrain)</i></p> | <p>7 O come, De-sire of Na-tions, bind
 all peo-ples in one heart and mind;
 Make en-vy, strife, and quar-rels cease;
 fill the whole world with heav-en's peace.
 <i>(Refrain)</i></p> |
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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Advent Study, Mondays, December 4, 11, 18, 7-8pm via Zoom

For most of us, the Christmas stories are shrouded in layers of nostalgia and romanticism. We often think of them—and Mary, Joseph and Jesus—as sweet and serene; as politely docile and unquestioningly obedient. In short, we have a very distorted and "Sunday School" understanding of the story.

This small group opportunity will use the Sunday scripture and sermon as a starting point for a deeper exploration of the historical, social, economic, and geo-political context in which the Christmas stories are situated in order to bring them to life in a new way--and to help connect them to the struggles and the hopes of our own world and lives today. *Sign up in Dutton Hall or in next week's eNews to get the zoom link.*

Advent Potluck & Intergenerational Craft Workshop, Sunday, 12/3, after worship

Join us for a potluck meal and inter-generational Advent crafts after worship on December 3! Chicken and beverages (lemonade, coffee, and water) will be provided as well as table service and silverware.

Please **RSVP** in Dutton Hall or via the eNews and **indicate what side/dessert dish you would like to bring**, if you are able. *Contact Sharon Hollister (815-756-9962) or Pam Jackson (815-758-1162) with any questions.*

Post-Service Conversation with Governance Revitalization Task Force

Sunday, December 10, after worship in Dutton Hall

We invite you to an all-church conversation after worship on Sunday, 12/10 to hear a presentation from the Governance Revitalization Task Force on the next steps and considerations in our restructuring process. Bring your questions and offer feedback. Your voice is a valued part of this process! Let's move forward together!

Stewardship

Pledges can still be turned in to the church office through December 12. Financial pledge cards and time and talent pledge sheets can be found at the back of the sanctuary or see the weekly eNews for online links.

Looking to Get Involved?

A variety of sign-up sheets are located on the back wall of Dutton Hall—from helping lead worship, to service opportunities, to book groups and Bible studies, to social gatherings; be sure to check them out and get connected!

Online Giving

Whether it's a recurring pledge, a one-time donation, or a contribution to a specific fund (e.g. the LOVE Offering, Pastoral Emergency fund, etc.), you can now make them simply and securely through our online platform. Scan the QR code with your phone camera to get started or see the weekly Enews for a web-browser link! *Contact the church office with questions.*



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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