

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? 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 | December 3, 2023

All music can be found at the back of the bulletin.

Today we will be taking communion. We invite you to participate however you're best able. Feel free to use whatever you have for the "bread and cup"—whether that's bread and grape juice or a cookie and coffee. God takes our ordinary offerings, whatever they are, and blesses them as we share them together!

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

We invite you to say "Hi" in the comments and like the video to let us know you're here.

Prelude

"Here I Am, Lord"

Daniel Schutte/arr. Kim

Welcome & Lighting of the Advent Candles

As we gather in the deepening darkness of this season,
We ask: How does a weary world practice peace?

By listening before we speak;

By saying sorry when we need to.

By advocating for justice, and caring for our neighbor.

By practicing Sabbath and forgiving "seventy times seven" times.

Friends: how does a weary world practice peace?

By choosing mercy over revenge. By opening the door for each other.

Church: how does a weary world practice peace?

By committing ourselves to small, everyday acts.

This is how a life is made; this is where peace begins.

There are a million ways to practice peace.

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

We hold a moment of silence as the candles of HOPE & PEACE are lit

With God's help, may we bring peace into our weary world. Amen.

Gathering Hymn

"Light Dawns on a Weary World" (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

"Christmas Communion Song"

S. N. Callaway

Scripture

[Isaiah 40:1-11; Luke 1:24-45](#)

Sermon “Wisdom’s Circle: Connection & Joy in a Weary World”

Musical Meditation

Holy Communion

We practice an “open table”—everyone is welcome to receive God’s gifts. There is no dogma you must first believe. God meets us where we are—amidst our questions, doubts, fears, and failures—and offers us nourishment and a blessing on life’s journey.

Invitation & Words of Institution

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Sharing Bread & Cup

*In Advent, we will offer Communion by coming to you row by row.
If you would like to participate but do not wish to receive bread & cup,
we invite you to come forward, hold your hands open, and Pastor Eric will offer you a
spoken blessing. Afterward, we invite you to continue on with the Prayer Stations.*

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

Our Shared Life: Offering Invitations

Sending Hymn “I Can Celebrate You” (p. 4)

Benediction

Postlude “Soon and Very Soon” *Andrae Crouch/arr. Kim*
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: Sharon McKee | **Ushers:** Pam Wagener, Chris Borresen, & Skip Schramer
Ushers for Sunday, Dec. 10: Judy Winter, Gip Seaver and Ruth Olle

Communion Poem: “Before Jesus,” by Alla Renée Bozarth

All hymns this morning come from *The New Century Hymnal* unless noted otherwise,
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“Light Dawns on a Weary World”

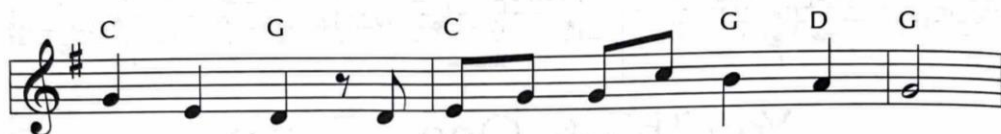
Mary Louise Bringle/William P. Rowan



1 Light dawns on a wea - ry world when eyes be - gin to
 2 Love grows in a wea - ry world when hun - gry hearts find
 3 Hope blooms in a wea - ry world when crea - tures, once for -



see all peo - ple's dig - ni - ty. Light dawns on a
 bread and chil - dren's dreams are fed. Love grows in a
 lorn, find wil - der - ness re - born. Hope blooms in a



wea - ry world: the prom - ised day of jus - tice comes.
 wea - ry world: the prom - ised feast of plen - ty comes.
 wea - ry world: the prom - ised green of E - den comes.



The trees shall clap their hands; the dry lands, gush with springs;



the hills and moun - tains shall break forth with sing - ing!



We shall go out in joy, and be led forth in peace,



as all the world in won - der ech - oes sha - lom.

"I Can Celebrate You"

Anna Strickland/Gustav Holst

I can cel - e - brate you, I can hold your joy, We can re - cog nize oth - er good er fruit in that you will bear fear,
When the load is crush - ing and you've lost your voice,
When your own self doubt hides gifts you have to share,
Know - ing that the Spir - it moves when we are near,
I can cel - e - brate the pro - mise your life holds,
We can re - cog nize your Christ-light deep with in up,
lift each oth - er,
When the wear - i - ness bears hea - vy on your soul,
Ev - ery gift that God has sown wait - ing to be gin cup,
Fill - ing one a - noth - er from the Spir - it's cup

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Advent Sermon/Scripture Study, Mon, Dec. 4, 11, 18, 7-8pm via Microsoft Teams

Post-Service Conversation with Governance Revitalization Task Force

Sunday, December 10, after worship in Dutton Hall

Preschool Cookie & Candy Sale, Friday, 12/15, 9am-3pm (or until sold out)

Xmas Eve Service, Sun, 12/24, 5:30pm (note there will be no morning service this day)

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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