

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 10, 2023

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

Prelude

“Lo, How a Rose E’er Blooming”

arr. Mark Hayesm

Welcome & Lighting of the Advent Candles

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

By dancing and cooking and sharing stories.

By holding sleepy babies,

And opening ourselves to childlike wonder.

Friends: how does a weary world practice joy?

By telling the story of Jesus.

By letting our own stories be known to others.

By singing loudly—even if off-key.

Church: how does a weary world practice joy?

By committing ourselves to small, everyday acts.

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

There are a million ways to practice joy.

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

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

With God’s help, may we bring joy into our weary world. Amen.

Gathering Hymn

“All Earth is Waiting” (p. 3)

After singing, children will gather with Miss Janis in the back for “Children’s Church”

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.

Sacrament of Baptism

Invitation

Covenant Promises of the Parents

Covenant Promises of the Godparents

Covenant Promises of the Congregation

Will you who witness and celebrate this sacrament promise your love, support, and care to this child who is about to be baptized?

We will, with the help of God. With this sacrament we welcome Bennett James Kurt Tasic into the family of Christ's church, and invite him to share with us the joyful lifelong pursuit of discipleship. We promise to receive him as a beloved child of God, to nurture him in faith and hope, and to grow with him in the knowledge and love of Jesus, our Christ. Amen.

**Pouring of Water & Prayer of Blessing
Sacrament of Baptism**

See what love God has for us, that we should be called children of God.
Holy One, we thank you for Bennett James Kurt; bless him and keep him, now and forever.

Introduction to the Family of Faith

Sung Response "I Was There to Hear Your Borne Cry" (p. 4)

Scripture [Psalm 126; Luke 1:57-66](#)

Sermon "Can You Allow Yourself to be Amazed?"

Musical Meditation

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

Our Shared Life: Offering Invitations

Sending Hymn "Isn't it Amazing" (p. 5)

Benediction

Postlude "Come Thou Long Expected Jesus" R.H. Prichard/arr. 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: | **Children's Coordinator:** Janis Schnurr-Trebe

Ushers: Judy Winter, Gip Seaver, Ruth Olle, & Skip Schramer

Ushers for Sunday, Dec. 17: Nate & Pam Kitterman, Linda Mason, Allison Stahl

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

“All Earth Is Waiting”

Alberto Taulé / Transl. Gertrude C. Suppe



1 To - da la tie - rra es - pe - ra al Sal - va - dor y el sur - co a - bier - to, la
 2 Di - ce el pro - fe - ta al pue - blo de Is - ra - el: “De ma - dre vir - gen ya
 1 All earth is wait - ing to see the Prom - ised One, and o - pen fur - rows, the
 2 Thus says the proph - et to those of Is - ra - el, “A vir - gin moth - er will



o - bra del Crea - dor; es el mun - do que lu - cha por la li - ber - tad,
 vie - ne Em - ma - nuel,” se - rá “Dios con no - so - tros,” se - mi - lla se - rá,
 sow - ing of our God. All the world, bound and strug - gling, seeks true lib - er - ty;
 bear Em - man - u - el”; One whose name is “God with us,” our Sav - ior shall be,



re - cla - ma jus - ti - cia y bus - ca la ver - dad, (4 dar - nos li - ber - tad.)
 con él la es - pe - ran - za al mun - do vol - ve - rá.
 it cries out for jus - tice and search - es for the truth, (4 brings us lib - er - ty.)
 through whom hope will blos - som once more with - in our hearts.

3 Mon - tes y va - lles
 ha - brá que pre - pa - rar;
 nue - vos ca - mí - nos
 te - ne - mos que tra - zar.
 Dios es - tá ya muy cer - ca,
 ve - nid - lo a en - con - trar,
 y to - das las puer - tas
 a - brid de par en par.

3 Moun - tains and val - leys will
 have to be made plain;
 o - pen new high - ways,
 new high - ways for our God,
 Who is now com - ing closer,
 so come all and see,
 and o - pen the door - ways
 as wide as wide can be.

4 En un pe - se - bre
 Je - sús a - pa - re - ció,
 pe - ro en el mun - do
 es - tá pre - sen - te hoy.
 Vi - ve en - tre la gen - te,
 con e - llas es - tá;
 y vuel - ve de nue - vo
 a dar - nos li - ber - tad.

4 In low - ly sta - ble
 the Prom - ised One ap - peared,
 yet feel that pres - ence
 through - out the earth to - day,
 For Christ lives in all Chris - tians
 and is with us now;
 a - gain, on ar - riv - ing
 Christ brings us lib - er - ty.

“I Was There to Hear Your Borning Cry”

John Ylvisaker

Unison

1 I was there to hear your born - ing cry, I'll be
 2 When you found the won - der of the Word, I was
 3 In the mid - dle a - ges of your life, not too
 4 I was there to hear your born - ing cry, I'll be

there when you are old. I re - joiced the day you
 there to cheer you on; You were raised to praise the
 old, no long - er young, I'll be there to guide you
 there when you are old. I re - joiced the day you

were bap - tized, to see your life un - fold.
 liv - ing God, to whom you now be - long.
 through the night, com - plete what I've be - gun.
 were bap - tized, to see your life un - fold.

St. 4, end

I was there when you were but a child, with a
 Should you find some-one to share your time and you
 When the eve - ning gent - ly clos - es in and you

faith to suit you well; I'll be there in case you
 join your hearts as one, I'll be there to make your
 shut your wea - ry eyes, I'll be there as I have

wan - der off and find where de - mons dwell.
 vers - es rhyme from dusk till ris - ing sun.
 al - ways been with just one more sur - prise.

"Isn't It Amazing"

Anna Strickland



Seeds with-in the so - il grow Deep un - der the
Deep - er, deep - er grow the roots Reach - ing up - ward
Cell by cell a plant is built Toward the sun the
Ev - en when the earth seems bare Plant the seeds of



ground be - low Plant - ed when the earth was bare
grow the shoots Through the earth they weave and snake
leaves will tilt Nour - ished by the sun and rain
hope with care If you wat - er in the drought



No life show-ing an - y - where Glo -
Un - til so - il starts to break Glo -
To bring forth its seed and grain Glo -
You will reap with joy - ous shout Glo -



ri - a Is - n't it a - ma - zing?



Glo -

ri - a



Is - n't it a - ma - zing?

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

This small group opportunity will use the Sunday scripture and sermon as a starting point for a deeper exploration of both the world in which the Christmas stories took place, as well as the perennial questions they raise about suffering, hope, and justice, and joy. See the weekly eNews for the link to join each Monday!

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 today to hear a presentation 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!

Christmas in Bethlehem, *Sun, 12/17, after worship in Dutton Hall*

As we journey toward Christmas, we invite you to join us for a conversation with Usama Nicola, a Palestinian Christian living in Bethlehem, Palestine. Usama is a civil society activist, Citizens Diplomacy Project Coordinator at Wi'am: the Palestinian Conflict Transformation Center, and a local tour guide. Usama will join us via Zoom to reflect on what it means to be a Christian living today amidst occupation and war in the place where Jesus was born. Pastor Eric has known Usama since 2013.

Cookie Plates Delivery, *Sunday, 12/17, after worship*

The Board of Deacons asks those who can to bring two dozen cookies to the church's kitchen on Sun., 12/17, for our Annual Cookie Plates Delivery. The "Deacon Elves" will prepare cookie plates immediately following worship in hopes that some "Driver Elves" will whisk away the cookies to members & friends who could use some extra cheer.

Ecumenical Blue Christmas Service, *Thursday, 12/21, 7-8pm, at Federated Church*

There is often very little room during the holiday season for those of us who are experiencing difficult realities: from loss and grief to anxiety and depression; from financial stress and difficult diagnoses to aging parents and sick children. This service, held jointly with Salem Lutheran Church and Sycamore United Methodist Church, will carve out a uniquely sacred space for silence, music, candlelight, prayer stations, and tears. We hope you'll join us.

Christmas Eve Service, *Sun, 12/24, 5:30pm (note: no morning service this day)*

Join us for our annual Christmas Eve service featuring the Christmas story accompanied by poetry, carols, and candlelight. *Please note the new time: 5:30pm.* We hope you'll join us: alone, as a family, or with those family and friends joining you for the holidays.

December Love Offering: The Christmas Fund

With contributions from United Church of Christ congregations across the country, The Christmas Fund offering provides retired pastors and church leaders in need with direct assistance to supplement pensions, help with medical insurance costs, and grants to meet emergency needs. Donate in the collection plate, online, or by mail to the office.

Weekly Enews—*Scan this QR code with your phone camera to see the most recent Enews with all these announcements and more! Subscribe tab is at the top.*



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
Facebook & Instagram:
@FederatedChurchSycamore



www.fedsycamore.org

Church Office Phone: (815) 895-2706 || **Email:** Office@fedsycamore.org

Pastor Eric Cell: (815) 797-2250 || **Email** RevEric@fedsycamore.org

Federated Church Preschool, Director Bobbi Clough

Phone: (815) 764-9473 || **Email:** Preschool@fedsycamore.org

Address: 612 W. State Street, Sycamore, IL 60178