

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 17, 2023

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

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

Prelude

“The Huron Carol”

arr. Mark Hayes

Welcome & Lighting of the Advent Candles

As we gather in the deepening darkness of this season,

We ask: How does a weary world practice love?

By sending cards and picking up the phone.

By practicing empathy, and learning people’s stories.

Friends: how does a weary world practice love?

By advocating for justice.

By singing freedom songs, and interrupting dehumanizing comments.

Church: how does a weary world practice love?

By committing ourselves to small, everyday acts.

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

There are a million ways to practice love.

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

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

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

Gathering Hymn “Come, O Long Expected Jesus” (p.2)

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.

Choir Anthem

“Unless You Consider the Child”

Mary Kay Beall

Scripture

[Isaiah 6:1-4, 8; Luke 1:46-55, 67-80](#)

Sermon

“Liberation’s Song: Full-Throated Joy in a Weary World”

Sung Response

“Weary World Rejoice” vv. 1, 2, 4 (p.3)

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

Our Shared Life: Offering Invitations

Sending Hymn “My Heart Sings Out with Joyful Praise” (p. 4)

Benediction

Postlude

“Gloria in Excelsis Deo”

Mark 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

Children’s Coordinator: Janis Schnurr-Trebe | **Liturgist:** Sheldon Turner

Ushers: Nate & Pam Kitterman, Linda Mason, Allison Stahl

Ushers for Sunday, Dec. 24 (5:30 PM): Bev & Skip Schramer

All hymns this morning come from *The New Century Hymnal* unless noted otherwise,
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“Come, O Long Expected Jesus”

Charles Wesley



1. Come, O long-ex-pect-ed Je-sus, born to set your peo-ple free.

2. Born your peo-ple to de-liv-er, born a child, you ca-me to reign



From our fears and sins re-lease us; grant us your true li-ber-ty
born to reign in us for-ev-er, come be known to u-s a-gain



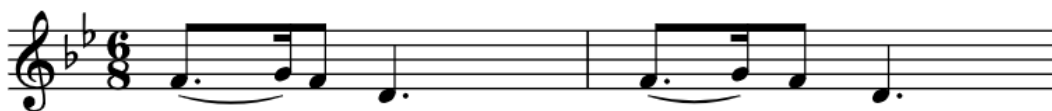
You, our strength and con-so-la-tion, come sal-va-tion to im-part;
By your own e-ter-nal Spir-it come to claim us as your own



dear de-sire of e-vry na-tion, en-ter e-vry long-ing heart.
by your all-suf-fi-cient mer-it let us share your cross and crown.

“Weary World Rejoice”

Anna Strickland



Wea - ry world,
Wea - ry world,
Wea - ry world,
Wea - ry world,

God's own vine
bro - ken and bruised
out of hope
wait - ing still



Tears our on - ly
Name of God
Dis - be - lief is
Hold - ing our

bread and wine
so mis-used
how we cope
breath un - til



Cry - ing out
Can we see
We've left faith
Christ re - turns

to be re-stored
the light of Christ
to rot and rust
in truth and grace



Des - perate for
Glow - ing in
Dreams are cov - ered in
Will we re -

a break from war
each per - son we spite?
lay - ers of dust
cog - nize his face?



Wea - ry world re - joice



Come and raise your voice

"My Heart Sings Out with Joyful Praise"

Ruth Duck

1. My \times heart sings out with joy - ful praise To God who rais - es
2. The arm of God is strong and just To scat - ter all the
3. The prom - ise made in a - ges past At last has come to

me, Who came to me when I was low And
proud. The ty - rants tum - ble from their thrones And
be, For God has come in pow'r to save, To

changed my des - ti - ny. The Ho - ly One, the
van - ish like a cloud. The hun - gry all are
set all peo - ple free. Re - mem - b'ring those who

Liv - ing God, Is al - ways full of grace To those who
sat - is - fied; The rich are sent a - way. The poor of
wait to see Sal - va - tion's dawning day, Our Sav - ior

seek their Mak - er's will In ev - 'ry time and place.
earth who suf - fer long Will wel - come God's new day.
comes to all who weep To wipe their tears a - way.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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

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

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

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

December Love Offering: The Christmas Fund

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*



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www.fedsycamore.org

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