

THE  
**Federated Church**  
OF SYCAMORE



Figuring out faith  
with Peter

LENT 2024

# ***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 | February 25, 2024**

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

*We invite you to like the video and/or say “Hi!” in the comments to let us know you’re here! We also encourage you to create a “sacred space” wherever you are this morning as you worship with us: perhaps light a candle or incense, sit in/near the sun streaming through a window, or a favorite plant. Whatever helps ground you.*

**Prelude** “Jesus Messiah” *arr. Larson*

## **Gathering For Worship**

**Welcome**

**Passing the Peace**

**Gathering Song** “Be Now My Vision” (p.2)

## **Centering Our Hearts**

**Prayers of the People**

**Silent Prayer & The Lord’s Prayer**

Our Father who art 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** “Guide My Feet, Lord” *John Carter*

**Scripture** [Matthew 14:22-33; Psalm 69:1-6, 13-18](#)

**Sermon** “Rescue Me!”

**Sung Response** “Precious Lord, Take My Hand” (p.3)

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

*While those in-person spend the next ~7min using prayer stations, we invite you to spend this time with the “Guided Reflection” prompts on p. 5)*

## **Preparing to Live God’s Love**

**Our Shared Life**

**Sending Song** “My Wand’ring Heart” (p.4)

**Benediction**

**Postlude** “The Perfect Wisdom of Our God” *arr. Larson*

*Thank you for worshipping with us this morning!*

# "Be Now My Vision"

Mary E. Byrne

*Unison*

1 Be now my vi - sion, O God of my heart;  
 2 Be now my wis - dom, and be my true word;  
 3 Rich - es I need not, nor life's emp - ty praise,  
 4 Sov - ereign of heav - en, my vic - to - ry won,

noth - ing sur - pass - es the love you im - part—  
 ev - er with - in me, my soul is as - sured;  
 you, my in - her - i - tance, now and al - ways;  
 may I reach heaven's joys, O bright heav - en's Sun!

You my best thought, by day or by night,  
 Moth - er and Fa - ther, you are both to me,  
 You and you on - ly are first in my heart,  
 Heart of my own heart, what - ev - er be - fall,

wak - ing or sleep - ing, your pres - ence my light.  
 now and for - ev - er your child I will be.  
 great God, my trea - sure, may we nev - er part.  
 still be my vi - sion, O Rul - er of all.



# "Precious Lord, Take My Hand"

Thomas A. Dorsey; alt.

1 Pre - cious Lord, take my hand, lead me on, let me stand,  
2 When my way grows drear, pre-cious Lord, lin - ger near,  
3 When the shad - ows ap - pear and the night draws near,

I am tired, I am weak, I am worn;  
when my life is al - most gone,  
and the day is past and gone,

Through the storm, through the night, lead me on to the light:  
Hear me cry, hear my call, hold my hand, lest I fall:  
At the riv - er I stand, guide my feet, hold my hand:

*Refrain*

Take my hand, pre - cious Lord, lead me home.

# "My Wand'ring Heart"

Hannah C. Brown



1. My wan-d'ring heart knows bar - ren land, great  
2. My wan-d'ring heart is wild but true: a -



weight of sin, grave depth of doubt, sharp lure of  
larned by awe, struck down, con-fused. In - spired, I



pow'r and proud com - mand, bleak want of hope, deep  
try to fol - low you and drift off course, re -



thirst of drought. You hear my cry, soul-starved and  
proached, re - fused. Oh, I've been lost, and tem - pest -



dry, and send your an - gels near. My spir - it  
tossed, I've ven - tured far from shore, at last to



stirred, I heed your word, re-newed to serve you  
land, re-turned to sand, re-born to love you



here. No mat-ter how I slip and stray, no mat-ter  
more.



where I roam, on ev - 'ry far and fear - some



way you give my heart a home.



## WORSHIP NOTES

*Serving us this morning are:*

**Pastor:** Rev. Eric J. Ogi | **Ministers:** All of us! | **Music Director:** Gary Mattin  
**Children's Church Coordinator:** Janis Schnurr-Trebe | **Liturgist:** Pam Kitterman  
**Ushers:** Paula von Ende, and Bev & Skip Schramer  
*Ushers for Sunday, March 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

## GUIDED REFLECTION

*Use the following prompts to reflect on this morning's scripture and sermon in the week ahead. We encourage you to either journal about them or discuss them with someone.*

Imagine Peter's motives in this story. Is he trying to prove himself to Jesus by emulating him? Is he earnest and eager, or brash and foolish—or a combination of all these things? Do you see yourself in any of his actions?

In response to the disciples' fear, Jesus says: "Take heart, it is I; do not be afraid" (Matthew 14:27). The verb used for "take heart" is *tharseó*, which also means "to be emboldened," or "to show courage." Jesus offers this imperative in many other situations: [Matthew 9:2](#), [Matthew 9:22](#), [Mark 6:50](#), [Mark 10:49](#), [John 16:33](#). Considering these other instances when Jesus offers this message, what do you think Jesus means by "take heart"? Is it possible that Peter misinterprets his message and believes Jesus is calling him to "show courage" by stepping out of the boat? Is Jesus inviting them to "show courage" in a different way?

In Matthew 14:31, the word used for doubt, *distazo*, literally means "double-stance" or "going two ways, shifting between two positions." What new meaning do you glean from this definition? How do you interpret Jesus' question? Is he questioning Peter's doubt in Jesus, or Peter's self-doubt? Is he questioning Peter's inability to "take heart" in the midst of the raging storm? Is he questioning Peter's attempt to show bravado—by asking Jesus to command him to step out?

Consider two pivotal moments in this story as if they are frozen in time. The first is Peter attempting to walk on water. The second is Peter sinking, holding tightly to Jesus' outstretched hand. Might these two moments represent different postures (or stages) in faith? Perhaps the first could represent a bold, but performative faith, one that attempts to prove faithfulness by trying to be like God. The second could instead represent a wholehearted faith, one that reaches out to God for help when the storms of life engulf us. Which posture do you resonate with the most?

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Volunteer Opportunity

This winter, the Unitarian Universalist Congregation in DeKalb opened an overnight warming shelter for those experiencing houselessness, which they hope to keep going until the temperatures are above 40 degrees at night. As an entirely volunteer-run community program, **they are looking for groups to help make (and serve, if possible) meals.** On a typical night they serve 8-10 people.

*Are you interested in helping with this? Might we form a Federated Team to do this together, once or a few times? Might this be a "spiritual practice" for us for the season of Lent? Might this be a "spiritual formation" opportunity for families to bring kids along—a chance to form them in what love in action looks like?*

*If you are interested, email Pastor Eric asap; he will get folks connected so they can plan together, and also answer questions / get more info as needed.*

## Lenten Devotional Playlist

Looking for a way to ground yourself during the season of Lent? Scan or click the QR code to check out this playlist created by Pastor Eric with music reflecting on themes of brokenness, healing, mortality, and (new) life.



## Lenten Spiritual Formation Small Group | Sundays, Feb 18-Mar 17, 4:45-6pm

**Reading for this Sunday:** "Dignity" (pp.3-13); "Mortality" (pp.191-202); "Lent II: Mortality" (pp. 251-252). *Please see this week's news for a few tips/suggestions for the readings. (You can use the QR code at the bottom of the announcements.)*

**Small Group Childcare:** Janis will provide childcare. If you have kids, please let Pastor Eric know Sunday morning if they'll be there that evening so he can communicate with Janis and she can have a better sense of ages/how many kids to plan for.

## February Love Offering | Food Donations to the Spartan Food Pantry

The Love Offering for February is to increase our food and personal hygiene donations to the Spartan Food Pantry. The Spartan Food Pantry has specifically requested **shampoo & conditioner** donations. **Bring your donations to worship any Sunday in February or March and, during the Prayer Stations, bring them forward to place on the "Table of Offering" at the front.**

During February, monetary donations to the Pantry may also be placed in the "offering" plate, mailed to the church office, or given online at <https://bit.ly/GiveFCS> (select the fund: Love Offering). For checks, note "Spartan Food Pantry."

## Weekly Enews

*Scan (or click) 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.

## **We believe 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.

## **We believe in 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 working for 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  
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