

**THE**  
**Federated Church**  
**OF SYCAMORE**



**A Congregation of the  
United Church of Christ &  
Unitarian Universalist Association**

# **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 | September 22, 2024, 10:00 am

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

**Prelude** “The Gift of Love” arr. L. Larson

**Introit** “Bes” Sowah Mensah

## **Welcome & Passing the Peace**

*We invite you to like the video and/or say “Hi!” in the comments to let us know you’re here!*

**Gathering Song** “All Are Welcome” vv. 1, 3, 4 (p.3)

## **Prayers of the People**

### **Centering Moment**

*This is your time to center more deeply into the presence of God/Love. We invite you to take a slow, deep breath, read the quotes below, and then: ponder the Meditation Reflection; offer a silent prayer; or simply let the music wash over you.*

“Somewhere along the line, I was taught that in order to be human, I needed to convince white people that I’m human... I had been taught that in order to accomplish justice, I needed to convince white people that I am worthy of justice.” ~ Dr. Christena Cleveland

### **Silent Meditation Reflection**

- ◆ Have you experienced what Dr. Cleveland describes—having to convince others that you’re worthy of being seen as equal and treated with dignity?
- ◆ Are there people—whether individuals or groups—whom you’ve seen as suspect at some point in your life? People who’ve had to convince you that they are loved and worthy of dignity and justice?

*Be attentive to the feelings these questions bring up and move through the breath prayer*

### **Breath Prayer**

Inhale: My flesh is sacred. | Exhale: My dignity cannot be diminished.

Inhale: Your flesh is sacred. | Exhale: You contain the divine.

### **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.**

**Sung Response** “Come and Find the Quiet Center” (p.4)

**Scripture** [Exodus 1:8-20, Romans 12:1-8](#)

**Sermon** "This Is Our Story"

## **Musical Meditation**

### **Our Shared Life & Offering**

#### **Offering Opportunities**

#### **Offertory**

"Inspiration"

*Nii Mensah*

#### **Doxology**

*Praise God from whom all blessings flow.*

*Praise God all creatures here below.*

*Praise God for all that Love has done.*

*Creator, Christ, and Spirit, One. Amen.*

#### **Prayer of Dedication**

**Sending Hymn** "For Everyone Born" vv.1, 3, 5 (p. 5)

## **Benediction**

### **Postlude**

"This Is Amazing Grace"  
*Thank you for joining us for worship!*

*arr. L. Larson*

† † †

## **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

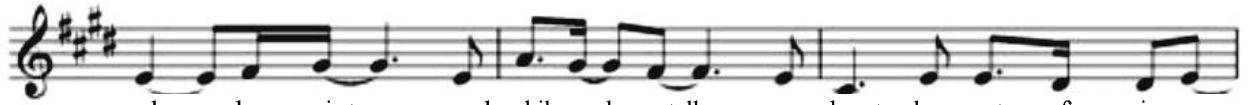
*Ushers for September 29: Alice Whitney, and Bev & Skip Schramer*  
*All music this morning is used with permission: CCLI License #3234671*

The Breath Prayer comes from Cole Arthur Riley, via @BlackLiturgies. For more, follow @Black Liturgies on Instagram or @ColeArthurRiley on Facebook.

**"All Are Welcome"** Marty Haugen & Mark Miller



1. Let us build a house where love can dwell and all can safe - ly\_\_\_ live, a\_\_\_  
2. Let us build a house where proph-ets speak, and words are strong and\_ true, where  
3. Let us build a house where hands will reach be - yond the wood and\_ stone to\_\_\_  
4. Let us build a house where all are named, their songs and vi- sions heard and\_



place where saints and chil - dren\_ tell low\_ hearts learn\_ to for - give.  
all God's chil - dren dare\_ to\_\_\_ seek . o\_\_\_ dream God's\_ reign a - new.  
heal and strength . - en, serve\_ and\_ teach, ; and\_ live the\_\_\_ Word they've known.  
loved and trea - sured, taught and\_ claimed as\_\_\_ words with - in the Word.



Built of hopes and dreams and vi - sions, rock of faith and vault of grace;  
Here the cross shall stand as wit - ness and as sym bol of God's grace:  
Here the out cast and the strang - er bear the im age of God's face;  
Built of tears and cries and laugh - ter, prayers of faith and songs of grace,



— All are wel - come, wel - come in\_ this place, all in - vit - ed\_\_\_ to



come and know\_ God's grace, all are wel - come, the love of Christ to feel, \_\_\_\_\_ 'cause



all of us\_ are wel - come. here,\_\_\_ all are wel - come in this place.

# "Come and Find the Quiet Center" Shirley Erena Murray

1. Come and find the quiet center in the crowd-ed life we lead, find the  
2. Silence is a friend who claims us, cools the heat and slows the pace, God it  
3. In the Spirit let us travel, open to each other's pain, let our

room for hope to enter, find the frame where we are freed: Clear the  
is who speaks and names us, knows our being, touches grace, making  
loves and fears unraveled, celebrate the space we gain: There's a

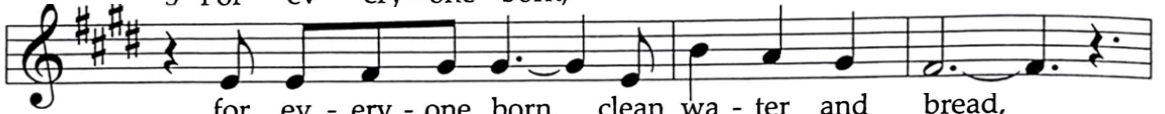
cha - os and the clutter, clear our eyes that we can see all the  
space with - in our think - ing, lift - ing shades to show the sun, rais - ing  
place for deep - est dream - ing, there's a time for heart to care, in the

things that really matter, be at peace, and simply be.  
cour - age when we're shrink - ing, find - ing scope for faith be - gun.  
Spir - it's live - ly schem - ing, there is al - ways room to spare.

**“For Everyone Born”** Shirley Erena Murray and Brian Mann



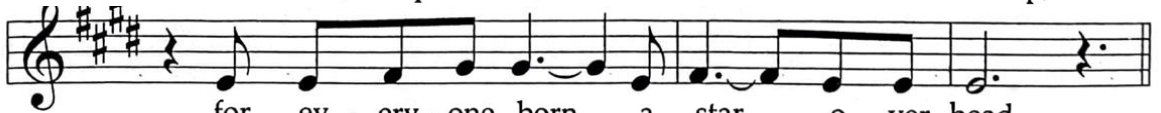
1 For ev - ery - one born, a place at the ta - ble,  
3 For young and for old, a place at the ta - ble,  
5 For ev - ery - one born, a place at the ta - ble,



for ev - ery - one born, clean wa - ter and bread,  
a voice to be heard, a part in the song,  
to live with - out fear, and sim - ply to be,



a shel - ter, a space, a safe place for grow - ing,  
the hands of a child in hands that are wrin - kled,  
to work, to speak out, to wit - ness and wor - ship,



for ev - ery - one born, a star o - ver - head,  
for young and for old, the right to be - long,  
for ev - ery - one born, the right to be free,



and God will de-light when we are cre - a - tors of jus - tice and



joy, com - pas - sion and peace: yes,



God will de-light when we are cre - a - tors of jus - tice,



jus - tice and joy!

## SPECIAL THANKS

We are excited to welcome musical guest *Harambee Percussion Ensemble* back to worship this morning!

**Harambee** [/ha-RAHM-bay/] was founded by Dr. Sherry Jones in the early 2000s in DeKalb, IL as an after-school enrichment program for grades 3-4-5. Co-directed by Sharon McKee, it soon expanded to include its middle school alumni, who became the group's first student leaders. Harambee moved to its current location at The Federated Church of Sycamore in 2015. It is currently a community group: all are welcome to come learn the music and about the cultures that have produced it!

Several current members have studied—and continue to study—with Sowah Mensah, who is an ethnomusicologist, composer and “Master Drummer” from Ghana, West Africa. Sowah has taught music in both Ghana and Nigeria and is currently a music professor at both Macalester College and the University of St. Thomas in St. Paul, MN where he also directs each school's African Music Ensemble.

In 2018, Sowah visited Federated to lead a weekend workshop with Harambee and our church choir. That Sunday, he led them in several gospel pieces during worship.

**About the pieces:** “*Bes*” and “*Inspiration*” are both performed on the pentatonic (five-note scale) African xylophones, using the notes “do-re-me-sol-la.” Both pieces come from the family of our teacher, Sowah Mensah.

- ***Bes***, composed by Sowah, begins with a looping bass line and introduces the melodic parts one at a time. Some players will remain on each part while the rest move on to the next one. The final melody is introduced, then played in a round – similar to *Row, Row, Row Your Boat* – before the piece slowly disappears into the distance.
- ***Inspiration*** was composed by Sowah's son, Nii Mensah. The three melodic parts are layered one on top of the others, followed by a fourth part with lots of running notes, before gently fading away.

**Drum-along:** Come play with us during the inter-generational time after the service! We'll have extra instruments on hand and will teach some very simple parts that are universally accessible. **ALL** are welcome and encouraged to participate, no musical experience necessary!



# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## Fall Fest Schedule

**10-11:10am:** Worship

**11:10-12pm:** Drum-along with Harambee; face-painting; various activities/games

**Noon:** Lunch

**12:30-pm-2pm:** bounce house; face-painting; tai chi; bingo; various activities/games

## Support the Spartan Food Pantry

**Let's kick off the new school year by making a food or non-food donation to the Spartan Food Pantry.** Bring donations to worship each week in Sept. and leave them in the cart at the back of the sanctuary. We will deliver them for you! See a list of most needed items at the QR code:



## Evaluating Pastor-Congregation Ministry Partnership | 9/29, after worship

You're invited to participate in small group discussions on 9/29 following worship to share with each other your sense of how we are doing as a church.

Since Pastor Eric has been here (almost exactly 5 years to the date!), we have been through his integration into our church, been through a pandemic, and seen a change in the nature of our congregation.

We hope these discussions will be useful in discerning next steps for us to move forward as a church. We also want to use this format as the basis for Pastor Eric's evaluation. The discussions will be led by members of the Board of Deacons.

The Board of Deacons

*Pam Kitterman, Paula von Ende, Linda Mason, Dave Juday, Nancy Renfer*

**Faith & Democracy Under Threat: Understanding & Responding to Christian Nationalism**, *location: Federated Church*

*in partnership with First Congregational UCC of DeKalb & Mayfield Congregational UCC*

Mark your calendars & join us for this timely mini-series!

*October 8, 6:30-8pm*

"Christian Nationalism and the Threat to American Democracy"

Fred Clarkson, *Senior Research Analyst at Political Research Associates*

*October 15, 6:30-8pm*

"Faith in Action for the Common Good"

*An evening of facilitated conversations on how we can resist Christian Nationalism and work for the common good.*

**CROP Hunger Walk | 10/13, 2PM Step-off, Sycamore Forest Preserve**

The 2024 DeKalb CROP Hunger Walk will step-off on Sunday, October 13, at 2PM at the Sycamore Forest Preserve. Sign up in Dutton Hall to join the Federated Striders Team. Paula von Ende, Team Captain, will contact you with more information on joining the team, fundraising and more!

**Weekly eNews**

Click this QR code 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](http://www.fedsycamore.org)

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

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

**Children's Church Coordinator:** Janis Schnurr-Trebe

**Federated Church Preschool, Director Bobbi Clough**

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

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