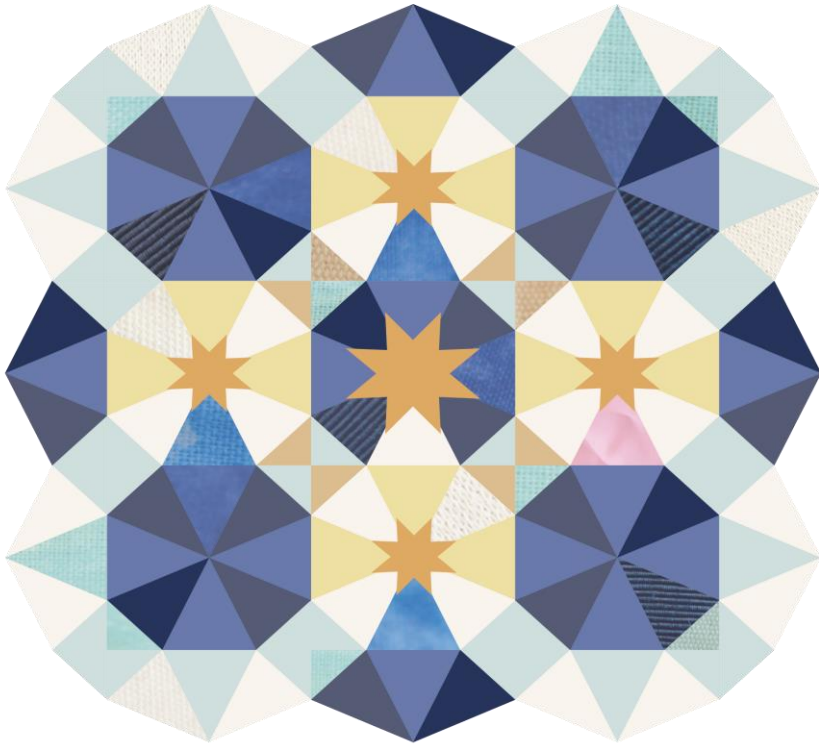


THE
Federated Church
OF SYCAMORE



FOR THE **BEGINNING**

ADVENT REMINDERS FOR NEW SEASONS

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 ridiculed, 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 a reminder 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 08, 2024
All music can be found at the back of the bulletin.

Prelude

“Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence”

arr. Mark Hayes

Welcome & Lighting of the Advent Candles

In a weary and worn world,
how do we begin again?
Where do we even start?

Let us begin together.

Let us begin arm in arm.

**Let us begin by holding each other up,
instead of tearing each other down.**

Let us begin with words of peace.

Yes, let us begin with peace.

Today we light the candles of hope and peace.

the candles of HOPE and PEACE are lit

May these lights remind us of what could be.

May these lights mark a new beginning.

May peace flow like a river, and may it start with us.

Arm in arm, hand in hand, side by side.

By God’s grace, may we begin again. Amen.

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 Hymn “Are You Lost?” (p. 3)

Prayers of the People

Silent Prayer & 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 “If in Your Heart” (p.2)

Scripture

[Ruth 1; Ecclesiastes 4:9-12](#)

Sermon

“You Can’t Go Alone”

Musical Meditation

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

“O Come Little Children” J. A. Schulz/arr M. 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 Church Coordinator: Janis Schnurr-Trebe | **Liturgist:** Pam Kitterman
Ushers: Gip Seaver, Ruth Olle, and Skip Schramer

Ushers for Sunday, Dec. 15: Nate & Pam Kitterman, Linda Mason, and Allison Stahl

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

“If In Your Heart” Ana Hernández



If ___ in your heart you make a man - ger for his birth, then ___



God will once a - gain be - come a child on earth. If ___ earth. ___

“Are You Lost?” *Hannah C. Brown/Gregg DeMey*



1. Are you lost a - mong earth's peo - ples, wan - d'ring
2. Are you bruised by hurt and hard - ship, strained by
3. Are you hop - ing for a fu - ture that is
4. In our wil - der - ness of peo - ple let us



cold and all a - lone? Do you won - der
wrongs or racked by need? Do you tire of
bet - ter than our past? Are you yearn - ing
seek the com - mon good. In our dis - cord



if you're cher - ished? Do you won - der if you're
end - less wait - ing for the world to free and
for com - mun - ion where the first are wel - comed
and di - vi - sions hearts can still be un - der -



known? Love will bind us as a fi - ber,
feed? Love will join us as a bod - y
last? Love de - lights in all our diff - 'rence,
stood. Love is with us when we're work - ing,



washed and card - ed, spun and wound, knit to -
with the strength and means to mend; ev - 'ry
teach - ing jus - tice and re - spect, call - ing
turn - ing stran - gers in - to kin. Love in -



geth - er as a blan - ket, warmed and
mem - ber bears a treas - ure on which
souls and skills and pow - ers to re -
vites us and u - nites us to be



wel - comed, sought and found.
all of us de - pend.
pair and re - con - nect.
bet - ter than we've been.

“I Can Celebrate You” Anna Strickland/Gustav Holst

I can cel - e - brate you, I can hold your joy
I can re - cog nize good fruit that you will bear
We can hold each oth - er in our joy and 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
I can re - cog nize your Christ-light deep with in
We can hold each oth - er, lift each oth - er up

When the wear - i - ness bears hea - vy on your soul
Ev - ery gift that God has sown wait - ing to be gin
Fill - ing one a - noth - er from the Spir - it's cup

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Annual Preschool Cookie Sale, Friday, Dec. 13, 9:00am-3:00pm

The Federated Preschool is holding their Annual Cookie Sale on Friday, December 13, from 9:00 AM to 3:00 PM (or until sold out). Stop by to purchase your holiday treats.

Donations of cookies, candies, and baked goods may be dropped off at the Preschool on Thursday, December 12.

Cookie Delivery, Sunday, Dec. 15, following worship

The Board of Deacons is sponsoring a Cookie Delivery to members and friends who could use some extra cheer (and sweets)!

We are asking those of you who can do so to please bring two dozen cookies to the church's kitchen on Sunday, December 15. Immediately after worship service the "Deacons Elves" will prepare cookies plates...in hopes that some "Driver Elves" will be on the spot to whisk away those cookies to our members and friends.

Blue Christmas, Wednesday, Dec. 18, 7:00pm, Sycamore UMC

Join us at Sycamore United Methodist Church as we join them and Salem Lutheran Church for a special ecumenical service. Amidst the deepening darkness, as we near the longest night of the year, we will gather to *hold space for grief—ours and the worlds—trusting that this honest place is the seedbed for Advent hope.*

Christmas Eve Worship, Tuesday, Dec. 24, 5:30pm

We hope you'll join us for a special Christmas Eve worship of lessons and carols, poetry and candlelight. There will be no childcare during this service, but children are welcome.

Intro to the Bible Small Group, January-February; Date/Time TBD

Pastor Eric is looking to host a 5-6 week "Intro to the Bible" small group in January-February. Day and time TBD by the group. Please sign up by the end of December in Dutton Hall or via the link in the eNews.

December Love Offering, Hope Haven's Night by Night Campaign

Federated's goal is to raise \$1,000 for the *Night by Night* campaign in order to provide one night's shelter for 40 homeless individuals. A \$25 donation provides 3 meals, a warm bed for the night, and services for one homeless person. Donations in any amount may be placed in a Love Offering envelope at the "Table of Offering" prayer station or given online.

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:
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www.fedsycamore.org

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