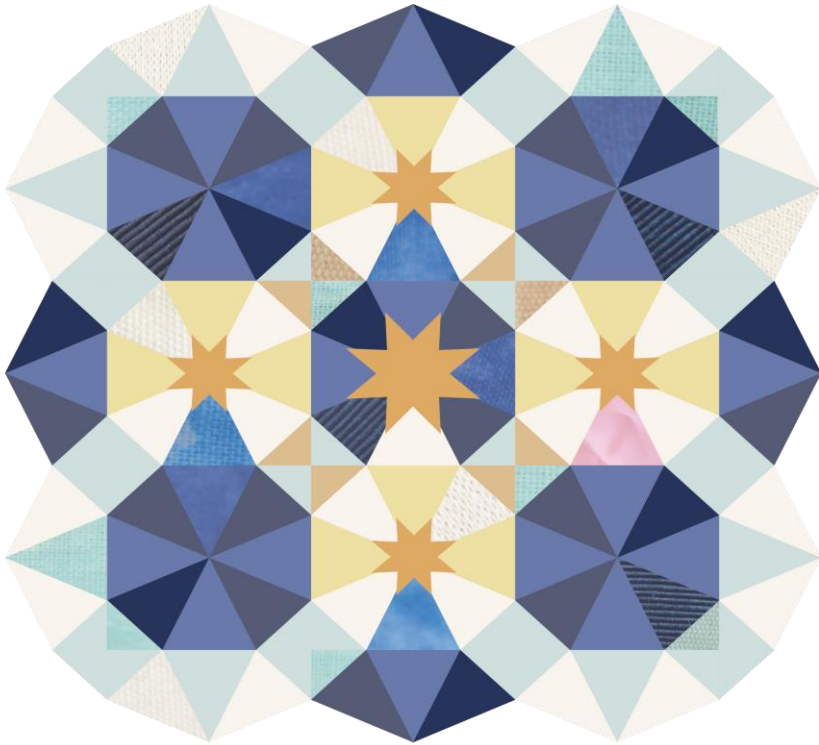


THE  
**Federated Church**  
OF SYCAMORE



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 22, 2024

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

**Prelude** “Breath of Heaven (Mary’s Song)” C. Eaton/Amy Grant arr. Larson

## **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 with tenderness**

**Let us begin with our hearts on our sleeve.**

**Let us begin from a place of vulnerability and hope**

**Let us begin with love.**

Yes, let us begin with love.

Today we light the candles of hope, peace, joy, and love.

*the candles of HOPE, PEACE, JOY, and LOVE are lit*

May the warmth of these lights be our cornerstone.

**May these lights inspire action.**

**May the truth in these lights helps us begin again.**

By God’s grace, may it be so!

**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** “O Come, O Come Emmanuel” vv. 1-2, 6-7 (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.5)

**Scripture** [Matthew 1:18-25; Luke 1:46-55](#)

**Sermon**

“Hope Is Worth the Risk”

**Special Music**

“Is It Worth It?”

Shaina Taub

*Duet by Emilie Walton & Ryan Washabaugh*

**Responding to God’s Invitation: Prayer Stations****Our Shared Life: Offering Invitations**

**Sending Hymn** “Let Us Hope When Hope Seems Hopeless” (p.4)

**Benediction****Postlude**

“Ding Dong! Merrily on High”

16<sup>th</sup> Cent. French/arr L. Larson

*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:**

**Ushers:** Sally Stevens, and Bev & Skip Schramer

*Ushers for Sunday, Dec. 29: Alice Whitney, and Bev & Skip Schramer*

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

*We thank Emilie Walton and Ryan Washabaugh for offering special music for us this morning. The song they are singing is from the Broadway Musical, Suffs, about the American women’s suffrage movement.*

*This song, “Is it Worth it?” is about the constant struggles, roadblocks, and gaslighting that suffragists faced. The lead character asks the question repeatedly throughout the show. Alice Paul sings the song as part of a scene where she wants everyone from her mother to her great-granddaughter to know she was there. Ida B. Wells also sings the song.*

# "O Come, O Come Emmanuel" *David Beebe*

*Unison*



1 O come, O come, Em - man - u - el, and  
 2 O come, O Wis - dom from on high, and  
 3 O come, O come, O A - do - nai, who  
 4 O come, O shoot of Jes - se, free your  
 5 O come, O Key of Da - vid, come, and



ran - som cap - tive Is - ra - el That mourns in lone - ly  
 or - der all things far and nigh; To us the path of  
 came to all on Si - nai high, And from its peak a  
 own from Sa - tan's tyr - an - ny, From depths of hell your  
 o - pen wide your heaven - ly home; Make safe the path to



ex - ile here, un - til the Child of God ap - pear.  
 knowl - edge show, and help us in that way to go.  
 sin - gle law pro - claimed in maj - es - ty and awe.  
 peo - ple save, and give them vic - tory o'er the grave.  
 end - less day, to hell's de - struc - tion close the way.

*Refrain*



Re-joyce! Re-joyce! Em - man - u - el shall come to you, O Is - ra - el!

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>6 O come, O Day-spring, come and cheer<br/>             our spir-its by your ad-vent here;<br/>             Love stir with-in the womb of night,<br/>             and death's own shad-ows put to flight.<br/> <i>(Refrain)</i></p> | <p>7 O come, De-sire of Na-tions, bind<br/>             all peo-ples in one heart and mind;<br/>             Make en-vy, strife, and quar-rels cease;<br/>             fill the whole world with heav-en's peace.<br/> <i>(Refrain)</i></p> |
|--|---|

“Let Us Hope When Hope Seems Hopeless” *David Beebe*



1 Let us hope when hope seems hope less, when the dreams we  
 2 Faith and hope in love's com - pas sion will sur vive though  
 3 Like a child out - grow - ing child hood, set - ting child - hood



dreamed have died. When the morn ing breaks in bright - ness, hun - ger  
 knowl - edge cease, though the tongues of joy fall si - lent, dull the  
 things a - way, we will learn to live in free - dom, in the



shall be sat - is - fied. One who sows the fields with  
 words of proph - e - cies. Faith shall see and trust its  
 life of God's new day. Now we see as in a

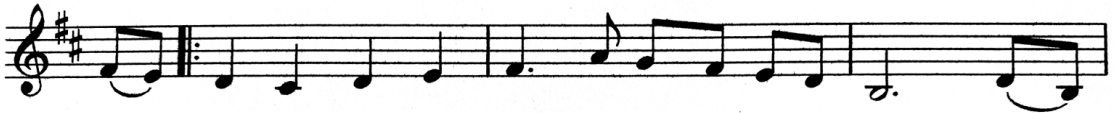


weep - ing shall re - trace the sor - row - ing way and re -  
 ob - ject; hope shall set its an - chor sure; love shall  
 mir - ror. Then we shall see face to face, un - der -



joice in har - vest boun - ty at the break - ing of the day.  
 bloom in Love e - ter - nal. Faith and hope and love en dure.  
 stand how love's com - pas - sion blos - soms through a maz ing Grace.

## "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. \_\_\_

## ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

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.

### **Church Office Closed, Wed., Dec. 25, & Thurs. Dec. 26**

The church office will be closed for the Christmas holiday on Wednesday, December 25, and Thursday, December 26.

### **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. To participate, sign up by next Sunday, Dec. 29, in Dutton Hall or via the link in the eNews to participate.

### **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.

### **Recycle/Reuse Bulletin Covers & Prayer Station Inserts**

We will recycle and reuse the bulletin covers and prayer station inserts. Please place the items in the basket at the back of the sanctuary on your way out. You are welcome to take the order of worship with music & announcements. Thanks!

### **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.

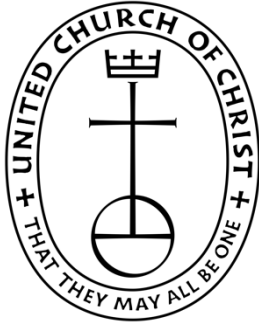
## **We believe in peace through justice**

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

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@FederatedChurchSycamore



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