

THE
Federated Church
OF SYCAMORE



everything
[in] between

Meeting God in the midst of extremes

Lent 2025

Responding to God's Invitation

Prayer Stations at home for online worshippers

Lent is an invitation to journey through the things we tend to avoid—our doubts, fears, griefs, wounds, and even death. This Lent, though, we are inviting you to hold the “both/and” of life—for even amidst our doubts, we do believe in something; in the face of fear, we experience courage; our wounds can make way for connection; and even death can be the seedbed for new life. Let's meet God here, in the midst of life's polarities.

During this time (~10 min), people in the sanctuary will be visiting various prayer stations. While we can't re-create that experience for you at home, here are some ways you can use this time to create sacred space and connection for yourself wherever you are!

Waiting in the Wilderness: Some seasons of life feel like wilderness wandering. Even here, God is present. We, too, are invited to be present—even here.

Meditate on the poem (p. 5 in the bulletin). This will be a new poem each week. As you read, notice what word jumps out at you; what feeling(s) arise(s) in you.

When you finish, take a few slow deep breaths and read the poem again. This time, listen for how these words are calling you to action. Reflect on the prompt beneath the poem.

Divine Seeing: *Pause to look more deeply at the artwork (on p. 7) inspired by today's scripture. As you do, ponder the questions and Artist's Statement (p. 8) beneath it.*

Prayer Candles: Lighting candles as one prays for a loved one or a people / place around the world who are weary, war-torn, grieving, or suffering is an ancient spiritual practice. *Find a candle, bring it into your space with you and, as you light it, offer any prayers for yourself, loved ones, or people around the world.*

Table of Offering: We are grateful to continue expanding our accessibility online, growing our intergenerational community in person, and offering a bold witness of love and justice in the wider world. As a small church/nonprofit, none of this is possible without many donations, large and small. Your donations to the “general fund” will especially help us enhance our growing children's ministries and accessibility for young families. *If our worship or ministries have blessed you, we invite you to consider making a donation to support them or our Love Offering partner (p. 9) through [this link](#).*

Practices for Living in the Messy Middle: In Lent, we intentionally focus on practices that help us live more fully amidst the mess, brokenness, and uncertainty, trusting that as we do, healing, hope, and new life *will* emerge—even here. [Click here](#) for an e-reader version of our Lenten devotional filled with poetry, art, question prompts, and short essay reflections. Commit to using this devotional as a spiritual practice during Lent. Use the question prompts to deepen conversation with a partner, friend, or (grand)child!

Order of Worship | March 30, 2025 | 10:00 am

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

Prelude

“Taste and See”

J.E. Moore / arr. M. Kim

Gathering For Worship

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

“Come As You Are” (p.2)

Centering Our Hearts

Prayers of the People

Silent Prayer & The Lord’s Prayer

**Our Father/Mother/Parent who is in heaven, hallowed be your name.
Your kin(g)dom come, your 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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from
evil. For yours is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.**

Song of Illumination “My Wand’ring Heart” (p.3)

Scripture

[Luke 15:1-7](#)

Sermon

“Lost *AND* Found”

Sung Response “God, We Take These Steps” (p.2)

Responding to God’s Invitation: Prayer Stations *(see inside bulletin cover)*

Preparing to Live God’s Love

Our Shared Life

***Sending Song** “Are You Lost?” vv. 1, 2, 4 (p.4)

***Benediction**

Postlude

“Song of Hope”

Argentine Folk Melody / arr. M. Kim

Thank you for joining us for worship today!

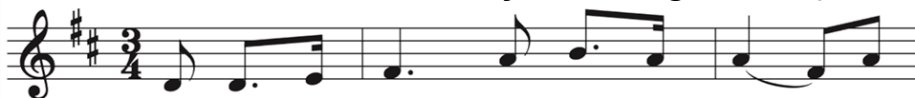
“Come As You Are” by Gary Rand / Lenora Rand

1.Come, you who've been wound-ed, all you who've lost hope.
Come, you who are long-ing for what you do not know. 2.Come, you hun-gry for jus-tice.
ach-ing for heav-en on earth. Come, you who've been tossed a-side, don't re-
mem-ber what you're worth. *refrain* Come as you are. Come you wear-y, come and
lay your bur-dens down. Come as you are. Bring your hopes, bring your
doubts and your scars. Come as you are.
3.Come, you who've been cast out, all you who've been shamed. Come, you who are look-ing for that
my-st'ry you can't name. 4.Come, you cry-ing for mer-cy, hop-ing for peace on earth.
to refrain
Come you car-ry-ing ques-tions, all you who've been so hurt.

“God, We Take These Steps” by Burns Stanfield

God, we take these steps in our bro-ken-ness. Help us know this hour just how claimed we are

“My Wand’ring Heart” by 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.

“Are You Lost” by *Hanna C. Brown / Gregg DeMeyl*



1. Are you lost a - mong earth's peo - ples, wan - d'ring
2. Are you bruised by hurt and hard - ship, strained by
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
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
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
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
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
vites us and u - nites us to be



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



everything [in] between

Meeting God in the midst of extremes

Waiting in the Wilderness

“The Good Shepherd”

Jesus said, *“Who among you wouldn’t leave the 99?
Who among you wouldn’t look for the one?”*

Someone in the crowd probably rolled their eyes.
Someone squirmed and looked at their palms.
Someone sighed and thought to themselves,
*“This man doesn’t understand the business.
What fool would leave 99 to look for one?”*

But maybe God was not talking about us.
Maybe God was talking about
her own reckless love.
Maybe God was talking about
her own willingness
to turn the world upside down
for me.

by Rev. Sarah Speed

Where am I on the spectrum?

As you ponder this week's polarities—*lost & found*—consider where you would place yourself. Do you feel more strongly aligned to one end or the other, or more in the middle?

Consider how your location on the spectrum reflects where you are in your faith journey. Is your current location different from previous seasons of life? Is God calling you to move in a particular direction now?

Take this insert home with you and offer a prayer asking God to grant you what you need as you journey ahead.

lost-----found

WORSHIP NOTES

Serving us this morning are:

Pastor: Rev. Eric J. Ogi | **Ministers:** All of us! | **Music Director:** Gary Mattin
Children's Church Director: Bill O'Hagan | **Childcare Support:** Janis Schnurr-Trebe
Liturgist: | **Ushers:** Alice Whitney, and Bev & Skip Schramer
Ushers for Sunday, April 6: Pam Wagener, Chris Borresen, and Skip Schramer

All hymns this morning are used with permission: CCLI License #3234671

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Intergenerational All-Church Lenten Retreat | Sat. 04/05, 10AM-2PM
Mark your calendars (Note the date change!) and join us for this inter-generational Lenten retreat filled with meaningful small group conversation, time for silent reflection or spiritual practices, and making art. Some parts will include children and adults working together in the same space, and some will be facilitated separately. **Lunch will be provided.** Suggested donation is \$5/person for adults; kids are free. RSVP in Dutton Hall or in the eNews. Please note any food allergies.

Maundy Thursday Dinner & Service | *Thursday, April 17, 5:30-7:30 PM*

Join us for our intergenerational Maundy Thursday service, beginning with dinner at 5:30pm in Dutton Hall. When the adults move into the sanctuary, children will go to the Chapel with Mr. Bill to engage the rest of the story in a developmentally appropriate way.

Many hands make this evening possible! Please consider volunteering as part of the MT Dinner Planning Ministry Team (help with decorating, food pick-up/prep, serving and clean-up). Contact Paula von Ende with questions. Indicate that you can help when you RSVP online or in Dutton Hall.

Weekly eNews

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Lost & Found

by Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Inspired by Luke 15:1-7

Newspaper & gold leaf collage with digital drawing

I began my artwork for this series by collaging torn strips of newspaper articles together, overlapping global headlines with photos of current events. Along the torn edges, I added gold leaf. Then I photographed the result, editing the photos in black and white. These photos would become the backdrop for my pieces, as I wanted my digital drawings to emerge within the noise of the world's deepest pains, divisions, and everything in between. The collage is also a reference to theologian Karl Barth's famous quote about reading the bible and the newspaper together.⁷ I wanted the gold leaf to represent God's presence in the spaces in between the events and forces that tear us apart.

On September 27th, 2024, I began drawing the Good Shepherd with the lost sheep tenderly wrapped around his shoulders. As I worked, rain pummeled our roof, saturating the ground with an endless deluge as the wide bands of tropical storm Helene⁸ reached our high-elevation town of Black Mountain, NC. The next day, winds roared and threw trees to the ground like dominos. We lost power, then water, then cell service. We didn't know it yet, but every creek and river had swelled with enormous force, sweeping away everything in their path. Landslides, sinkholes, and extreme flooding ravaged the entire region of Western North Carolina, taking homes, towns, and human lives.

We were incredibly and graciously spared, having no flooding in our house or trees on our roof, so as soon as the storm relented, we headed out to find our friends and family by foot. As we walked through our small town, we found ourselves in a maze-like wasteland, changing our route every other turn due to downed trees or power lines, or washed-out roads. Progressively, we found family and friends, greeting them with great relief and urgent questions: "Do you have enough water to drink? Do you have water for flushing? Do you need any food?" It would be nearly 6 days before any emergency relief could arrive with food, water, and supplies. Meanwhile, neighbors survived by the help of their neighbors. Churches opened their doors. Firefighters and first responders persisted, despite perilous rescue missions. Helicopters air-lifted stranded people to safety.

When I began this artwork, I naively hoped to gain insight into Jesus' parable of the lost sheep. In that process, I did not wish to *become* the lost sheep and live through the greatest natural disaster to hit my hometown in over a thousand years. But as I read this parable again, now over 6 weeks after the storm, what strikes me is the pursuit of the shepherd, so singularly focused on the one who is lost, vulnerable, and at-risk. The Good Shepherd steadies the sheep on his shoulders and steps out of the frame toward us. His gaze finds mine, and I almost hear him whisper, "I will never stop searching for the lost. I will never stop rejoicing when one is found." —Rev. Lisle Gwynn Garrity

Mission Moment

The Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL)

The Council of Churches in Sierra Leone (CCSL) has made significant strides in empowering women and supporting communities through transformative programs. Serving approximately one million church members and nearly three million beneficiaries annually, CCSL is committed to breaking barriers and promoting women's leadership across various sectors.

A key initiative is the Women's Desk, which focuses on training, mentorship, and enabling women's active participation in church capacity building, community development, leadership, and economic sustainability. Through this platform, CCSL equips women with the essential skills needed to take leadership roles in society.

One notable program is the Council's microcredit initiative, established in 2020, which supports participants in the Village Savings and Loan Groups (VSLGs). This program includes 20 groups and empowers women to establish small businesses, provides finance education, improves access to clean water, and promotes community development. The microcredit program has proven to enhance women's leadership, business skills, and literacy.



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*



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