

THE
Federated Church
OF SYCAMORE



What do
you fear?
INSISTING ON HOPE

Advent - Epiphany

Responding to God's Invitation: Prayer Stations

Advent is an invitation to journey into our deepest longings; to move toward those places in our world and within ourselves shrouded in darkness. Here, we hear the whispers of angels delivering a surprising message: "do not fear." Rather than denying our fears, these prayer stations invite you to hear this as an invitation to move through—and thus beyond—them; this is what it looks like to insist on hope.

During this time (~10 min), we invite you to freely visit prayer stations in the front, back, middle, and sides of the sanctuary. Take your time. This is a "pilgrimage of the soul." Rather than trying to visit every station, linger where your heart feels called.

Dwelling in the Darkness: Advent is a time of watchful waiting. Such seasons can be agonizing. Yet even in this darkness, God is present. *In your pew, meditate on the poem and prompt inserted in the bulletin (p.7-8).*

Divine Seeing: *Pause to look more deeply at the artwork (p.8) inspired by today's scripture.*

Prayer Candles: *Light a candle and offer a prayer for a loved one or a people / place around the world who are weary, afraid, grieving, or suffering.*

Naming our Fears: *Write a word or phrase of something you fear.*

Welcoming Angels: *Take an angel and write a response to the prompt, which will change with each week.*

Alternative Nativity: Because we've heard the Christmas story so many times, it can lose its power. *Encounter the story anew as it is juxtaposed with contemporary images.*

Table of Offering: *Place your [donation](#) to support our ministries or Mission Offering.*

Guiding Stones: *Pick a black stone. Use an acrylic marker to write a word or short phrase that helps guide you out of fear. Leave it for the season as a guide for others.*

Practices for Moving through Fear: *Use these resources to help you move through fear this season. Some are more personal and intimate; others are opportunities to dispel fear by acting in faith, hope, and love with/for others. Specific resources will change throughout the season.*

Order of Worship | Novemeber 30, 2025

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

Prelude

“Be Not Afraid”

Bob Dufford/arr. M. Kim

Welcome & Lighting of the Advent Candles

In a weary world torn asunder by fear,
Where do you see hope?

We see hope when we look to the next generation.

We feel hopeful when we gather together.

**We know hope, deep in our bones,
When we dream of a better world.**

You are right.

Even in a fear-filled world,

Hope *is* all around us—if we have hearts to see.

So, today we light the candle of hope

As a reminder of this good news.

May this flicker of light help us remember

That we have reason to hope.

the candle of HOPE is lit

Thanks be to God!

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 “Waiting for You” (p.5)

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 “Do Not Fear” (p.3)

Scripture

[Luke 1:5-13; Lamentations 3:55-57](#)

Sermon

“I AM AFRAID!”

Musical Meditation

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

Our Shared Life: Offering Invitations

Sending Hymn

“In the Time of Herod” *(p.4)*

Benediction

Postlude

“Because He Lives”

Wm. Gaither/arr. M. Kim

Thank you for joining us for worship today!

† † †

WORSHIP NOTES

Serving us this morning:

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: Phil Wagener | **Ushers:** Alice Whitney, and Bev & Skip Schramer

Ushers for Sunday, Dec. 7: Pam Wagener, and Chris Borresen

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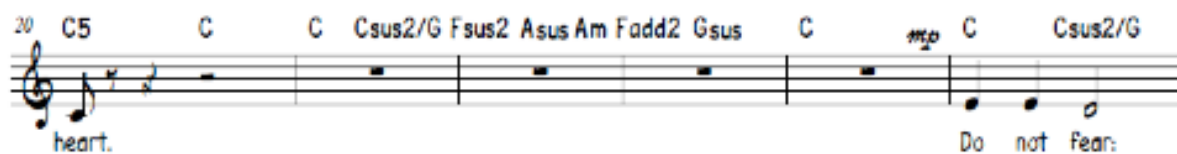
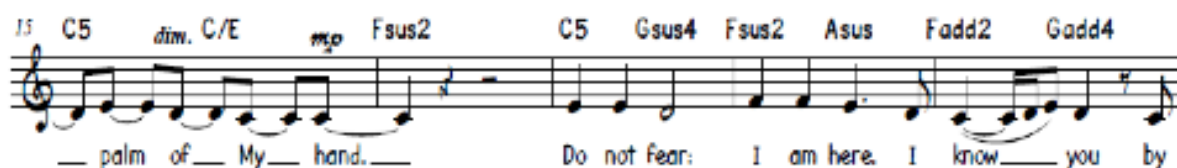
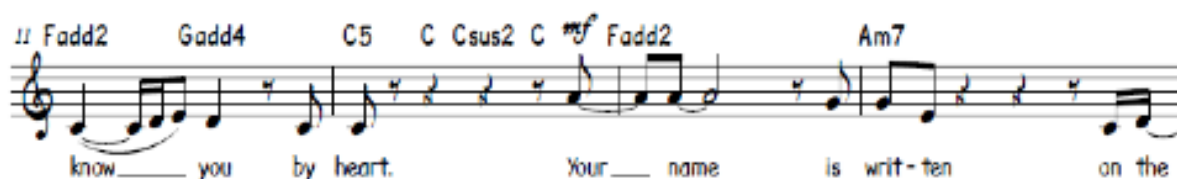
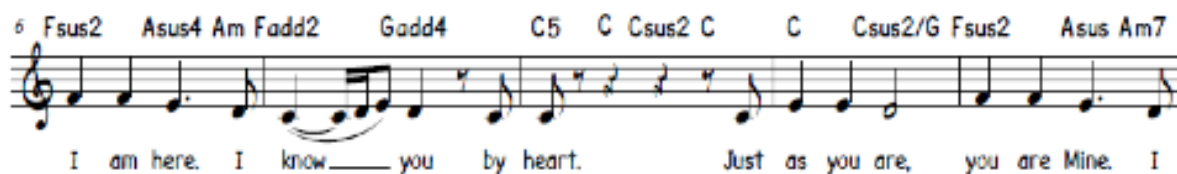
* Visual Meditation is produced by The Work of the People, theworkofthepeople.com

CONGREGATIONAL NOTES

Church Leadership for August 2025 – August 2026:

Moderator: Gip Seaver | **Assoc. Moderator:** Bill O’Hagan | **Past Moderator:** Chris Borresen. | *Should you have any questions concerning the church, how to get involved, or who to contact about something, please reach out to one of them or Pastor Eric, and they will get you the information you need or connect you to someone who can.*

“Do Not Fear” *Hannah Rand*



"In the Time of Herod" by Anna Strickland

In the time of Her - od, fear had ta - ken hold Hope was bur - ied
Thick as fog the fear grew, slow - ly creep - ing in Day by day the
Pierc - ing through the stra - tus comes the an - gels' song "Do not fear!" rings
In the time of He - rod, fear has ta - ken hold Still we share a
deep and hid - den, rare as gold Or - di - na - ry peo - ple dared
peo - ple bent and drew with - in With the clouds so hea - vy, who
hol - low when we've feared so long Still in the re - cess - es of
long - ing for a glimpse of hope Or - di - na - ry peo - ple shout
not speak a - loud Dreams of the Mes - si - ah break - ing through the clouds
could see the stars? Hope - less-ness had trapped them, strong as pris - on bars
our wea - ry souls Some - thing is a - wak - ened— could it be our hope?
the truth we trust: God will stop at no - thing to be here with us

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Stewardship Pledge Drive | Turn in by Monday, December 8

There is still time to get your pledge in to help us sustain our growing ministries in 2026. Additional forms are available at the back of the sanctuary. Completed forms may be placed in the offering plate or mailed to or dropped off at the church office.

Luminary & Candlestick Making Craft | Wed., Dec. 17, 5-7PM

Sign-up by December 14 for this inter-generational activity.

Ladies' White Elephant Gift Exchange/Potluck | Tues., Dec 2, 6:30PM

Wear your Christmas attire/sweaters! Bring a dish to pass, and your White Elephant Gift Exchange gift in Dutton Hall. Let us know you can join us by signing up in Dutton Hall.

Preschool Annual Cookie & Candy Sale | Fri., Dec. 19, 9AM-3PM

The Federated Preschool is holding their 30th Annual Cookie & Candy Sale. Stop by to purchase your holiday treats! Donations of cookies (no chocolate chip cookies), candies, and baked goods may be dropped off at the Preschool on Dec. 17, and Dec. 18.

“Waiting for You” *Hannah and Lenora Rand*

The earth cries out, — noth-ing — feels right. The world — cries
The child cries out, — don't turn out the light. Bro-ken hearts cry

6 

out,___ no jus - tice___ in sight. Fires_____ burn - ing
out,___ no end of hurt in sight. Greed and guns___ rule

11 

ev - 'ry - where, _____ too man-y, _____ too hot, _____ too bright. _____

ev - 'ry - where, _____ too man-y, _____ too strong to _____ fight. _____

16

Example 16 shows a sequence of notes and rests. The notation includes a treble clef, a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#), and a common time signature (C). The sequence begins with a quarter rest, followed by a quarter note G#4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. This is followed by a double bar line, then a quarter note G#4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The sequence continues with a quarter note G#4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The notation ends with a quarter note G#4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. The sequence is labeled with 'A', 'E', and 'A' above the notes.

_____ We are wait - ing for _____ you. _____ We are wait -
3. You are wait -

23 5. You are wait

E A

- ing for ____ you. _____ We are wait - ing for that
ing for us, ____ too. _____

28 

glo - ri - a _____ in ex - cel - sis _____ De - o. _____

32 

Glo - ri - a _____ in ex - cel - sis _____ De - o. _____

Continued on next page

36 E E/G# A

Glo - ri - a in ex - cel - sis De - o.

40 E E/G# A 2nd time to Coda add parts 1 at a time

Glor-i - a in ex - cel - sis De - o. Let us be a

45 A E G#m

sign of hope Let us be your arms of

48 A

love Let us be the ones that say there is

51 B_{sus} B 1. 2. 3. B D.S. al Coda

a - noth - er way. Let us be a We are

54 Coda A E

We are wait - ing for you. You are

59 A E

wait - ing for us, too.



Waiting in the Darkness

“In the Time of Herod”

I didn't live during Herod's time—

that brutal, murderous king, *God save his soul.*

But even hundreds of years later, I know the prayers of his people.

I know the prayers of the mothers and the children under his rule.

I know the prayers of the young men under his angry arm.

I know their prayers, because anyone who has ever lived in this soft world for more than two days knows how to pray for a miracle.

We rub our hands together.

We fold weary shoulders in,
a cage of bone to protect our bleeding hearts.

We sing, *we shall overcome and bind my wandering heart to thee.*

We walk across bridges and in front of powerful buildings.

We cover our cars in stickers that scream, *we will not give up!*

We allow a hungry cry to slip from our lips,
giving our lament a life of its own (with room to dance!).

And when all of that is said and done, we whisper to our creator,
God, break through the yelling and the fear.

Break through the violence and the oppression.

Get past the Herods of this world, and come be here.

Like every bleeding heart before, we pray for a miracle.

by Rev. Sarah Speed

In the time of Herod, we long for God to break in

As you enter the Advent season, what deep longings do you hold? *Reflect silently or journal your response.*

Offer these yearnings and desires to God and trust that God hears and holds each one.



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 *encountering* the Mysterious Force at the heart of the universe. This is a God who 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 across lines of difference—race, class, culture, citizenship status, gender, sexuality, age, and ability—not merely to tolerate each other, but to build authentic relationships and true belonging. We believe the simple but courageous work of showing up in this way is one necessary element in healing our nation and world's deep divisions.

We believe in working for peace through solidarity & justice

At Federated, conversations about racism, sexism, transphobia, poverty, immigration, hunger, and a host of other issues are commonplace—from the pulpit and around the table. With Dr. King, we believe 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.” In this spirit, *in 2025 our Leadership Board initiated a series of conversations with the congregation, and together we discerned a mission priority for the church to act for “immigrant justice,” adopting this covenant to guide us: “As a community of faith, we commit to protecting our migrant neighbors through acts of sanctuary, solidarity, and justice. We will not stand by in the face of unjust enforcement. We will act, love, and speak as our faith commands—with courage and compassion.”*

“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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