

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 | January 11, 2026, 10:00 am

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

Prelude “Nearer My God to Thee” *Lowell Mason/arr. M. Hayes*

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 “Like a Mother Who Has Borne Us” (p.3)

Prayers of the People

Centering Moment

This is your time to center more deeply into the presence of God/Love. Take a slow, deep breath. Open your heart and mind to receive this meditation. Notice the images or phrases that stay with you. Remain present & curious to the feelings they bring up in you.

Visual Meditation

“Within, Everywhere & Always”*

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.

Sung Response “O Love That Will Not Let Me Go” v.1 & 2 (p.4)

Scripture [Luke 3:15-17, 21-23, 4:1-2; 1 John 4:7-21](#) (excerpts)

Sermon “How (Not) to Be Afraid”

Musical Meditation

Renewal of Baptism

Our Shared Life & Offering

Offering Opportunities

Offertory

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 Song “My Life Flows on in Endless Song” vv. 1, 2, 4 (p.5)

Benediction

Postlude “They'll Know We Are Christians by Our Love” P. Scholtes/arr. M. Hayes
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: Sharon McKee | **Ushers:** Gip Seaver and Ruth Olle

Ushers for Sunday, Jan. 18: Nate & Pam Kitterman, Linda Mason, and Allison Stahl

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** The Visual Meditation this morning is written by Kelly Ann Hall and produced by The Work of the People, and is used with permission.*

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.*

"Like a Mother Who Has Borne Us" by Daniel Bechtel

1 Like a moth - er who has borne us, held us
2 Like a fa - ther who has taught us, grasped our
3 Though as chil - dren we have wan - dered, placed our
4 When we of - fer food and com - fort, grasp our

close in her de - light, Fed us free - ly from her
hand and been our guide, Lift - ed us and healed our
trust in power and might, Left be - hind our broth - ers,
neigh - bor's hand in love, Tread the path of peace and

bod - y, God has called us in - to life.
sor - rows, God has walked with us in life.
sis - ters, God still calls us in - to life.
jus - tice, God still walks with us in life.

“O Love That Will Not Let Me Go” by George Matheson

1 O Love that will not let me go,
2 O Light that follows all my way,
3 O Joy that seeks me through my pain,
4 O Cross that raises up my head,

I rest my weary soul in you;
to you I yield my flickering flame;
to you I can not close my heart;
from you I dare not seek to flee;

I give you back the life I owe, that
Re-new my spirit's feeble ray, that
I trace the rainbow through the rain, and
Life's glo-ries with-er and are dead, but

in your o - cean depths its flow may swell with ar - dor true.
from your bril - liant sun - lit day it may new bright - ness claim.
know the prom - ise is not vain that you will ne'er de - part.
from the ground there blos-soms red, life that shall end - less be.

“My Life Flows on in Endless Song” by Robert Lowry/Doris Plenn

1 My life flows on in end - less song; a - bove earth's lam - en -
2 What though my joys and com - forts die? My Sav - ior still is
3 When ty - rants trem - ble, sick with fear, and hear their death knells
4 I lift my eyes; the cloud grows thin; I see the blue a -

ta - tion, I hear the sweet, though far - off hymn that
liv - ing. What though the shad - ows gath - er 'round? A
ring - ing; When friends re - joice both far and near, how
bove it; And day by day this path - way smooths, since

hails a new cre - a - tion. Through all the tu - - mult
new song Christ is giv - ing. No storm can shake my
can I keep from sing - ing? In pris - on cell and
first I learned to love it. The peace of Christ makes

and the strife, I hear the mu - sic ring - ing; It
in - most calm, while to that Rock I'm cling - ing; Since
dun - geon vile our thoughts to them are wing - ing;
fresh my heart, a foun - tain ev - er spring-ing; When
All

finds an ech - o in my soul— how can I keep from sing-ing?
Love com-mands both heaven and earth, how can I keep from sing-ing?
friends by shame are un - de - filed, how can I keep from sing-ing?
things are mine since I am Christ's— how can I keep from sing-ing?

SAVE THE DATE: COMING UP

Un-deck the Halls | Today, following worship

All who are available are invited to stay after worship to help take the Christmas decorations down.

Pastor Eric Out of the Office | Monday-Wednesday, January 12-14

Church Office Closed | Tuesday-Thursday, January 13-15

Birthday Kit Assembly & Board/Dice/Card Games | Sat., 01/17, 1-4pm

Help assemble Birthday Kits for area food pantries & after play some games. Provide items (see eNews) or sponsor a kit for just \$16 (write "Birthday Kits" on your offering).

State of the Congregation: Moderator Update | Sun., 01/18, after worship

Ahead of our Annual Meeting (Jan. 25), Church Moderator, Gip Seaver, and Pastor Eric invite you to participate in conversation around vision for our ministries and building.

Annual Congregational Meeting | Sun., 01/25, after worship, in the Sanctuary

Present, discuss, and approve the Federated Church's budget for 2026 and review the annual report. Everyone is welcome to listen and ask questions; if you are a member, you are asked to stick around to vote.

Annual Calendaring Session | Sun., 02/01, after worship

All are welcome to join the Leadership Board in planning the events for 2026. This is an informal gathering to pick dates for important events.

Get Connected & Serve!

A variety of ways are available to plug into what we do here, to serve other, and to get connected. Look for sign-up sheets in Dutton Hall or scan the Weekly News QR code below.

Online Giving

Recurring, one-time, and designated contributions can be made simply and securely through our online platform. Scan the QR code to get started.



Weekly eNews



Scan the code at the left
to see the most recent
eNews & join our email list.

Church Calendar

Scan the code at the right
to see the church's
Master Calendar of events.



JANUARY MISSION OFFERING

To Cover Asylum Legal Fees



On Sunday, we were blessed to be joined after worship for a conversation with Ahmed Elqattawi about the realities of growing up living through the horrors of Israeli bombings, escaping through education / scholarship, studying in the US while his family and homeland survives a genocide, and now seeking asylum in the US amidst our current terrorizing political climate.

This Fall, after months of conversation and discernment with the congregation, the Leadership Board adopted the following covenant to guide us in establishing a mission priority of “Immigrant Justice, Solidarity, and Welcome”:

“As a community of faith, we commit to protecting our migrant neighbors through acts of sanctuary, solidarity, and justice. We will not stand idly by in the face of unjust enforcement. We will act, love, and speak as our faith commands—with courage and compassion.”

Bearing witness to the stories—of struggle and joy, of pain and fear and resilience—of our neighbors, such as Ahmed, is one way we live into this covenant.

Another, is combining that witness with material support. This is, in part, what “acts of solidarity” looks like. So here's our invitation as a church:

Ahmed personally has upward of \$10,000 in legal fees related to his asylum case. As the political landscape becomes less and less hospitable to immigrants and refugees, these fees continue to accrue as refugees and their lawyers seek out all options to ensure safety. Our January Mission Offering will go to create a “legal fund” to help cover these asylum-related fees. Our goal is to meet or exceed \$5,000.

Interested in supporting this by offering a “matching grant,” or other challenge to the congregation? Please reach out to Pastor Eric!

To donate

1. Write a check to The Federated Church of Sycamore with “asylum” in the “memo” line. Place it in the Offering Plate or mail it to the church.
2. Give cash in an envelope (write: “asylum fund” on envelope)
3. Give online (*via ACH or debit / credit card*) using this QR Code.
Under “Fund,” select “Mission Offering”



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*



Follow us on
Facebook & Instagram:
@FederatedChurchSycamore



www.fedsycamore.org

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

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

Director of Children's Church: Bill O'Hagan

Childcare Support: Janis Schnurr-Trebe

Federated Church Preschool, Director Bobbi Clough

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

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