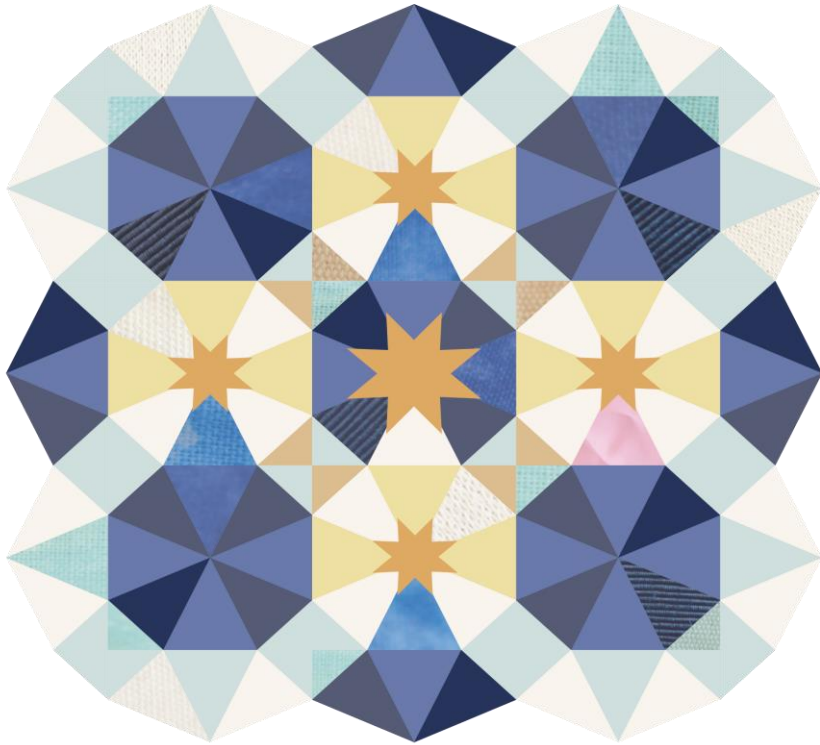


THE  
**Federated Church**  
OF SYCAMORE



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 01, 2024  
*All music can be found at the back of the bulletin.*

**Prelude**                                    “O Come, O Come Emmanuel”                                    *arr. Marianne Kim*

**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 the good news!**

**Let us begin by trusting that we are a blessing, loved by a gracious God.**

**Let us begin with music and singing!**

**Let us begin with warmth and welcome.**

**Let us begin with hope.**

Yes, let us begin with hope.  
Today we light the candle of hope  
to shine a light in a worn and weary world.

**May this be our foundation.**

**May this be our fresh start.**

**May this be our new beginning.**

*the candle of HOPE is lit*

By God’s grace, may hope flow forth from here.  
**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** “Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness” vv. 1-2, 4-5 (p. 3)

**Prayers of the People & 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.**

**Song of Illumination** “If in Your Heart” (p.2)

**Scripture**                                    [Luke 1:26-38; Isaiah 43:1-7](#)

**Sermon**

“You are a Blessing”

**Musical Meditation**

**Responding to God’s Invitation: Prayer Stations** *(see insert for instructions)*

**Our Shared Life: Offering Invitations**

**Sending Hymn** “In Case No One Ever Told You” (p.4)

**Benediction**

**Postlude** “Come, Thou Long Expected Jesus”  
*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:** Pam Wagener, Chris Borresen, and Skip Schramer

*Ushers for Sunday, Dec. 8: Gip Seaver, Ruth Olle, and Skip Schramer*

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. \_\_\_

# "Longing for Light, We Wait in Darkness" *Bernadette Farrell*



1 Long-ing for light, we wait in dark-ness. Long-ing for  
 2 Long-ing for peace, our world is trou-bled. Long-ing for  
 3 Long-ing for food, man - y are hun - gry. Long-ing for  
 4 Long-ing for shel - ter, man - y are home-less. Long-ing for  
 5 Man - y the gifts, man - y the peo - ple, man - y the



truth, we turn to you. Make us your own,  
 hope, man - y de - spair. Your word a - lone  
 wa - ter, man - y still thirst. Make us your bread,  
 warmth, man - y are cold. Make us your build - ing,  
 hearts that yearn to be - long. Let us be ser - vants



your ho - ly peo - ple, light for the world to see.  
 has power to save us. Make us your liv - ing voice.  
 bro - ken for oth - ers, shared un - til all are fed.  
 shel - ter - ing oth - ers, walls made of liv - ing stone.  
 to one an - oth - er, mak - ing your king - dom come.

## Refrain



Christ, be our light! Shine in our hearts. Shine through the

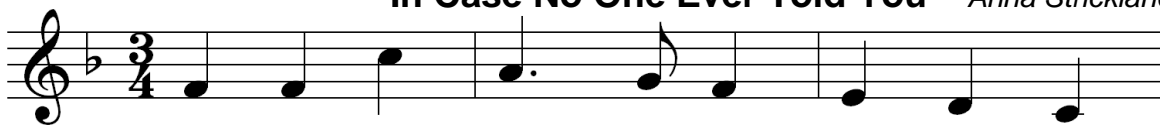


dark - ness. Christ, be our light! Shine in your



church gath - ered to - day.

# "In Case No One Ever Told You" *Anna Strickland*



In case no one e - ver told you or  
You are the mas - ter-piece born of God's  
You are u - nique - ly cre - a - ted for

4



you have for - got - ten You are a bless - ing and  
i - ma - gin - a - tion E - ven the parts that are  
love and be - long - ing For - cing your - self to be

9



have been since you were be - got - ten  
cry - ing out for res - tor - a - tion  
some - one you're not is ex - haus - ting

13



Fash-ioned from love Sent to the earth from a - bove  
All that you are Born out of star - dust and scars  
You are a gift There is no box you must fit

18



You're no - thing short of a god - send  
Re - flects God's per - fect cre - a - tion  
Let your be - lov - ed - ness blos - som

# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## **Advent Potluck & Intergenerational Craft Workshop**, *Today, after worship*

Join us for a potluck meal and a variety of inter-generational Advent crafts after worship! There are several craft activities this year for *all* ages, including some that will be incorporated into our worship space in the sanctuary.

## **Stewardship**

Financial Pledges and Time-Talent Pledge forms can still be turned in through December 9. Additional forms are available at the back of the sanctuary and in the weekly eNews.

## **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.

## **Federated 101**, *Tentatively Sunday December 8, 11:20-12:20pm, Settle Room*

New(ish) to Federated? Trying to find ways to get involved, serve, or further explore your faith? Looking to meet other new(ish) folks? Or maybe you're wondering how one becomes a member—or what the point of membership is?

If this sounds like you, then we invite you to “Federated 101”—a chance to gather around a table for a conversation with Pastor Eric and others in the same boat to meet each other, learn more about who we are, and to finally ask that question you've had.

*\*These conversations only happen a couple times a year. Participation in a Federated 101 is needed to become a member. Childcare provided. Sign-up in Dutton Hall or via the eNews.\**

## **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.

## **Online Giving**

Whether it's a recurring pledge, a one-time donation, or a contribution to a specific fund (e.g. the LOVE Offering, Pastor's Community Emergency fund, etc.), you can now make them simply and securely through our online platform. Scan the QR code with your phone camera to get started or see the weekly Enews for a web-browser link! *Contact the church office with questions.*



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

We will recycle and reuse the bulletin covers and prayer station inserts. Please place the cover in the basket at the back of the sanctuary on your way out. 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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