



May 2020

# THE SPIRE

## THE FEDERATED CHURCH NEWSLETTER

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST AN OPEN AND AFFIRMING CONGREGATION

Dear Friends,

I

As we continue to navigate this new world, I want to remind you what a gift it is to know that so many of you are worshiping with us as we livestream on Sunday mornings, and also, when another time is better for you, coming to our YouTube channel and worshiping with our services later. Joshua Konow, our Director of Music Ministries, and I, along with other worship leaders, value the fact that, for so many of you, worship is happening at the same time that we are leading it. We could record it earlier and then make it available on YouTube, and we may have occasion to do that at some point in the future. But for now, when it is possible, it is a joy to know that, so often, you at home and those of us leading and technically facilitating worship are singing and praying and hearing the stories of scripture together, in real time.

When I am leading worship and preaching, I follow some advice of my sportscaster brother, Tim, who said to me just before we first livestreamed, "When you look at the camera, see it as the eyes of the people you're talking to." So while I am gazing at the lens, I am also and especially picturing you. I call to mind your faces, and remember your stories, and hold you always in my heart. It's not just a camera I'm looking at. I'm looking at you, and celebrating that we share together in this wonderful community of faith.

II

Let me also mention two things I want you to know. First, it is our joy to welcome to our staff Melissa Owen as our new Senior Director of People and Operations. Melissa has moved back to Northeast Ohio after a number of years in California, where she was the executive director of an agency providing elder care. Equally adept at both sides of her work, the people side and the operations side, she has dived in and begun her work with commitment and vigor. She is looking forward to getting to know the church. If there is something about which you'd like to contact her, please email her ([mowen@fedchurch.org](mailto:mowen@fedchurch.org)). She would be glad to hear from you.

III

Second, I simply wanted to reiterate what had been announced in an earlier email to the church, which is that I have decided to delay the sabbatical I was to have begun on April 20. Immersed, as we are, in this worldwide coronavirus crisis, I wanted to be here with you and to go through this time together. I trust that there will be time, later on, for that sabbatical. For now, though, it's important to me that I be here with you.

IV

All that said, let me remind us all that, as difficult as this time is, it is also a time of deep and abiding blessing. God is with us—accompanying us, tending to us, beckoning us forward. May we be nourished by the living God, who never lets us go.

Yours in Christ,

*Hamilton*

Hamilton



# News & Info

## Online Worship: Behind the Scenes

With the temporary cessation of in-person worship, Federated had to quickly swing into gear to enable livestreaming of our worship services. The response from numerous people was immediate and overwhelming.



Director of Music Ministries Joshua Konow has led the team that has implemented the streaming, as well as looking ahead to address the needs we still have. Larry Trace and Bruce Gigax have devoted themselves to ensuring that our sound quality would be superb. Tom Meyer and a colleague of his, Dave Arnold, have given us invaluable video advice. And Eric Reed has done a marvelous job of doing the streaming itself.

If anyone else has a desire to be part of the ongoing support of the technical side of this ministry, please reach out to Joshua Konow at [jkonow@fedchurch.org](mailto:jkonow@fedchurch.org) or Rev. Hamilton Throckmorton at [hamthrock@fedchurch.org](mailto:hamthrock@fedchurch.org). We'd love to have you!

## Update on Wondrous Wednesdays

**The Wondrous Wednesday program and dinner for May is canceled** to protect both our church members and speaker, Harriet Smith, who is 82 years old. We're hoping that Mrs. Smith, a member of Mount Zion UCC, will be able to come and speak with us about researching her family roots and slavery at another time. Federated Church has been collaborating with Mount Zion on a variety of programs and is looking forward to gathering with them again soon!

*See you in the Fall!* Our first scheduled program is in **October 14** with **Antonio Dobyne**. He will be sharing his path of a high school drop-out to an inspired college student because of a judge's referral to the Cleveland Sight Center.

## Update on Red Cross Blood Drive

The blood drive scheduled for May 4 is cancelled due to COVID-19 pandemic concerns. In speaking with the Red Cross representative, it is felt that there are some safety risks involved in the drive especially for older people. With that in mind, we will look forward to the next one that is scheduled for **Monday, July 6**. We encourage your participation then.

God's Blessings and Stay Healthy,  
Bill and Carole Mason

## UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES

### Sunday, April 26

Rev. Michael Howard, from the UCC Living Water Association, preaches  
10 am Online Worship\*  
*Music by Kiko Weinroth, soprano, and Joshua Konow, piano*

### Sunday, May 3

Rev. Hamilton Throckmorton preaches on God's Beautiful World  
10 am Online Worship\*  
*Music by Randy Fusco, piano, and Marcia Snavelly, organ*

### Sunday, May 10—Mother's Day

Rev. Hamilton Throckmorton preaches on Letting Go of Sin  
10 am Online Worship\*  
*Music by Marcia Snavelly, organ*

### Sunday, May 17

Rev. Mark Simone preaches on The Unknown God  
10 am Online Worship\*  
*Music by Joshua Konow, piano*

### Sunday, May 24

Rev. Hamilton Throckmorton preaches on Your Fullest, Richest Life Now  
10 am Online Worship\*  
*Music by Marcia Snavelly, organ*

### Sunday, May 31

Rev. Mark Simone preaches on Pentecost Sunday  
10 am Online Worship\*  
*Music by Joshua Konow, piano*

**\* The church building is closed and worship has been moved online through May 31. Further plans are tentative, depending on recommendations from the Ohio Governor and the CDC. You can access the latest updates and worship service streams by following the links at the top of the Federated Home Page: [www.fedchurch.org](http://www.fedchurch.org).**

Please forward prayer requests to Kiersti Critchfield [kcritchfield@fedchurch.org](mailto:kcritchfield@fedchurch.org) or 440.247.6490 x103. Our Pastoral Care Team and our Prayer and Praise Team will pray for your requests.

# News & Info

## Federated Is Staying Active—Even During a Pandemic!

Even in the midst of this crisis, God's Spirit restores us and makes us new. Since we've closed our buildings and curtailed our in-person worship services, with your support Federated has continued the operations of the church - meeting the unique needs of our established and burgeoning ministries. In so many ways, we're performing the work of Christ, while making the necessary adjustments to honor social distancing:

Until the appropriate time, Sunday services are now livestreamed on our YouTube channel at 10 am and can also be viewed back later anytime during the week ([YouTube.com/TheFederatedChurch](https://www.youtube.com/TheFederatedChurch))

Angel Phone Tree Ministry Team and Fellowship of Prayer Note Writers and many other church members are busy making calls and sending notes to fellow church members

The Social Justice Advocacy Ministry raised money from their members to support two organizations that are close to their hearts and who have constituents who are being hard hit with this pandemic: Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless and HOLA.

One of our youth members has formed a new ministry - Angel Errands - and has put together a team to help others by running errands, picking up groceries, etc.

Our Loaves and Fishes leader has created a "safe distance" format that allows us to continue this ministry. He and his crew have been providing 100 much-needed bagged lunches to the St. Paul's community

Members of the Tapestry Circle, the Mary-Martha Circle, the Sit & Stitch ministry, the Helping Hands ministry and many other members are making face masks for various communities, including local hospitals and South Franklin Circle, as well as church and family members. Grateful recipients have even sent contributions to the church. These funds are being collected to buy much-needed cleaning supplies and disinfectant for the Chagrin Falls Park Community Center to distribute.

While our daily lives have been impacted by this crisis, the church continues to thrive and share the love of God. All around us, signs of life and hope abound. We're invited to see and notice them, and to give thanks for them, and to join in that healing and redemptive work of our faith family.

Continuing our financial support of Federated is one of the many ways to join in this healing work. There's such a sense of community, sitting in the pews and collectively contributing to Federated's ministries and operations during the offering. We haven't been able to do that for a while. Giving electronically, via our website ([fedchurch.org/giving/](https://fedchurch.org/giving/)) or a Realm account ([fedchurch.org/Realm/](https://fedchurch.org/Realm/)), is always an option. But for those who are more comfortable sending checks, our staff is still available to pick up and process checks that are mailed to the church.

During this time, we remember that Jesus has been through the worst life has to offer. And we celebrate that God's resurrecting power can and does make new life out of what can sometimes seem to be a totally lost cause.

Many thanks to you for sharing in our new life with your gifts and payments.

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## Zoom Meetings

To keep Federated running with an increased need for virtual conferencing and connecting, we now have a Premium account on Zoom. While a basic account is free for anyone to create, the Premium version removes the 40-minute time limit and unlocks the breakout room feature.

We want to make this available for ministry groups and commissions to use for their meetings. For more information and to schedule a meeting with the church account, please contact Trisha Holland at [communications@fechurch.org](mailto:communications@fechurch.org).



# News & Info

## 2020 Giving in the Wake of COVID-19 Federated Legacy Fund Giving Update

Coordinated by Rob Goble ([Robert.Goble1969@gmail.com](mailto:Robert.Goble1969@gmail.com)) and Pete Franz ([Franze35@gmail.com](mailto:Franze35@gmail.com))

Obviously, the entire landscape of 2020 has been changed from what anyone may have expected coming into the year – financial markets, social interactions, and the economy have all been turned upside down. We wanted to offer some financial insight as our congregation, community, country, and world get up and begin to dust off from a surreal period.

Many financially support the church – annually through stewardship, as a part of the *Rejoice & Renew* capital campaign, and as a part of planned giving strategies (i.e. Federated's Legacy Fund). Your giving is a ministry to the church that allows us to further the mission of Federated Church – and we are forever grateful for your generosity!



**As you structure your 2020 giving, there are a couple of key variables to consider, as a result of the CARES Act – the Federal government's COVID-19 response aid package.**

IRA Required Minimum Distributions (RMDs) for 2020 have been suspended. Some folks use their RMDs to partially or fully-fund direct contributions to Federated (or other charitable organizations). However, just because RMDs are suspended does NOT mean that you can not take them! Concurrently, it would be worth bearing in mind which investments you sell to create those contributions (positions that are up...or down) and the timing around when you make your contribution (e.g. wait until later in the year to give the market more time to potentially recover).

At the same time, there is an additional \$300 charitable deduction allowance from your income on your taxes in 2020. In other words, you will be able to deduct up to \$300 and add that to your standard deduction. This allowance is meant to encourage folks to think about making additional contributions to organizations that are in a tough spot as a result of this pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has taken us all on a mental, emotional, and spiritual adventure we DID NOT anticipate. It kicked up fears and uncertainty within all of us – about health concerns, financial security, and social distancing. All of this has been very unsettling. Yet, if you were like me, you found great solace in knowing that God will provide grace in the challenges - and that Federated Church was, is, and will continue to be a portal to connect with that power and peace.

The markets and the economy will continue to be unsettled for the near future, but normalcy will return with time. And with your support, Federated's light will shine throughout. Please do not hesitate to reach out, if we can be helpful in any way, while you navigate these decisions. Thank you.

Peter R. Franz, CFA, CFP  
440.724.9365 or [Franze35@gmail.com](mailto:Franze35@gmail.com)  
The Federated Church Legacy Fund Committee, Chair



# News & Info

## Capital Campaign Update

While we have all been at home, staying safe, the Capital Campaign Projects Committee has been doing plenty of work behind-the-scenes to keep us on track - verifying capital campaign pledge payments received and bills paid, as well as allocating remaining funds.

- The Master Capital Campaign Projects List was updated with remaining priorities and budgets, and is ready for Church Council review and approval;
- Hamilton jumpstarted a group of members to explore a new altar cross design;
- A key card entry system has been installed at the church entrances, as well as extra security at the Church Office door and the installation of a panic button at the Reception Desk;
- Surveying work for the parking lot paving project has been completed;
- The Telling Our Story Commission appointed a subgroup and project leader to develop a new Federated brand and building signage. They anticipate retiring the current brand, lovingly developed in 2013, by the Annual Meeting;
- New carpeting has been chosen for the 1<sup>st</sup> floor Church Office hallway and Education Wing stairwell that complements our lobby carpet; and
- Various Sanctuary blinds possibilities are being researched.

In addition, while not a capital campaign project, work is proceeding to get 102 Bell ready for leasing. We are so thankful that Keith Mast, Becky Gruss, Janis Stefanchik, and Laura Taylor, as well as the Properties Committee and Church staff, have been willing to keep the show going during these unprecedented times. Thanks be to God!

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# Family, Youth, and Children's Ministry

## What is Happening with GROUP & Confirmation

Hello teens and families! I have deeply missed each GROUP and Confirmation meeting that has been canceled due to our current world health challenges. I am, however, sending out devotions, greetings and confirmation lessons through our new Realm communication program. To make sure that you are getting these communications, please log onto your Realm account and make sure your contact info is up-to-date. Info about getting on can be found at [Fedchurch.org/Realm](http://Fedchurch.org/Realm).

Thanks,

- Mark Simone, Associate Pastor

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# A Note of Thanks

I am in the office today on April 15 working on youth programs and matters. As I sit here, I am filled with a deep thankfulness to this marvelous church family.

20 years ago today I received my life-saving liver transplant and the love and support Federated showed to my family and me was immeasurably incredible. The calls and cards. The prayer promises. The meals for months. The assistance and much more. God's presence was shown to me over and over again through the love of this church family.

Thank you, Federated, for your place in this world and in my life.

- Mark Simone, Associate Pastor

# Mission & Service

## Parish Nurse Corner Update on St. Paul's and CV-19

I spoke to the Director of Outreach, Chuck, who informed me that St. Paul's is effectively shut down during the week, except for help getting ID established. The shutdown includes the food pantry, thrift shop, clinic, and meals. Only three clients are allowed in at a time, and they must maintain social distancing. The lounge area is closed, but morning coffee is available at the back entrance. The Board plans to re-evaluate the situation soon. I will keep you informed.

(Coincidentally, this compliance with state policies happens at the same time I am recuperating from knee-replacement surgery. I am not driving yet, but may try this week. I don't have the benefit of a follow-up visit with my surgeon.)

Kathy Kolcaba, RN  
440.655.2098

## TOS Spotlight

### Men's Ministry and Gerry Powers

We want to wish a happy 90<sup>th</sup> birthday and three cheers to someone who has given so much to Federated! Of all the regularly scheduled Men's Ministry opportunities at Federated, there are quite a few which Gerry Powers has been instrumental in forming and running.

As a result of his behind-the-scenes leadership, he was honored as the obvious(!) recipient of the **Gerry Powers Two Thumbs Up Award** at a men's breakfast last fall. The presentation timing was perfect, as Barry Biggin said during an interview, because some of Gerry's sons and grandsons were also going to attend the September program to hear Mr. Court Durkalski (CEO, Truline Industries) discussing *The Necessity of Foundation*. With that in mind, Barry hand-created the eye-catching award with loving detail using odds and ends from his home workshop.

The award presentation at the men's breakfast was all in fun, but the thought behind it was so sincere. Gerry has been a catalyst for bringing groups of people together at Federated since joining in 2000. The annual men's cook-outs, quarterly men's breakfasts, and monthly Men's Third Tuesday groups are all thankful recipients of Gerry's time and attention. Each of these ministries give men of our faith family the opportunity to gather and support each other, as well as the church.

Federated is blessed to have folks like Gerry Powers and Barry Biggin involved - helping groups form, continue, and make such a long-lasting impact.

If you have any questions about these Men's Ministry programs, feel free to contact Barry Biggin at 440.543.9817 or [barrybiggin@windstream.net](mailto:barrybiggin@windstream.net).



*TOS is the Telling Our Story Commission of Federated Church, who assists with communication, outreach, and extravagant welcome.*

# Federated Happenings

## Social and Environmental Justice (SJAM) News

SJAM is a group of Federated folks learning about and taking action on a wide variety of societal justice issues such as gun violence, criminal justice, LGBTQ+ rights, environmental issues, racial justice, voter registration and immigration as well as other areas of concern. Sound interesting? We welcome you to join us at our next meeting. Bring a friend. SJAM is open to all in the community who are looking for ways to work for social justice. If you would like to learn more, please contact Kathy Franz (440.543.4086 or [kfranz17114@gmail.com](mailto:kfranz17114@gmail.com)).

**Next SJAM Meeting — Sunday, May 17, 1:00 pm on Zoom (Meeting ID: 261-964-671).**

**COVID-19 Response** — Recognizing the devastating impact Covid-19 has on the most vulnerable among us, in April, SJAM members pooled our resources to quickly send monetary support to the Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless (NEOCH) and HOLA. These two organizations were selected because SJAM members have direct knowledge of their work and contributions were able to be directed to food and shelter. The most basic human needs. Going forward, there will be other needs we will hope to help meet. Join our SJAM meeting on Zoom to be part of the conversation!

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### Environmental and Creation Justice

#### **Why do we focus on the Environmental and Creation Justice at Federated Church?**

*"Global warming will hurt the ones we're told to love: the poor and vulnerable.... Climate change will strike hard against the very people we're told to care for and love, amplifying hunger and poverty, and increasing risks of resource scarcity that can exacerbate political instability, and even create or worsen refugee crises. Then there's pollution, biodiversity loss, habitat fragmentation, species extinction: climate change makes all those worse, too."*

— Katharine Hayhoe, Climate Scientist and Christian, New York Times, November 3, 2019

The global theme for Earth Day 2020 is "climate action." The enormous challenge — but also the vast opportunities — of action on climate change have distinguished the issue as the most pressing topic for the 50th anniversary of the Earth Day Celebration, April 22. Climate change represents the biggest challenge to the future of humanity and the life-support systems that make our world habitable.



#### **Movie Night—Monday, May 18—Movie at 7:00 pm and Zoom Online Discussion at 8:00 pm**

##### **Theme: Environmental Racism.**

We invite you to watch these three shorter videos from the comfort of your own home. They are available on the internet using the links below. After viewing these on your own, please plan to join in the group discussion via Zoom using the Meeting ID listed above. Details to follow. Contact Kathy Franz (info above) to be added to the email group.

##### **Environmental Racism—**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OPB5RzReilY>

Environmental Racism is the way in which minority groups are burdened with a disproportionate number of hazards, including toxic waste facilities, garbage dumps, and other sources of environmental pollution. Multiple examples are given including visual examples, the development of e-waste across the world and the health issues pertaining to environmental racism.

##### **The Stream - Colour of pollution: Environmental racism—**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nV4MCL-yBFM>

If you're black, Asian or Latino in the United States, you're more likely to breathe polluted air than if you're white. And if you're white but poor, the likelihood of being exposed to industrial pollution is higher, too. The federal agency monitoring these issues is crafting a new environmental justice plan, but critics say it fails to protect vulnerable communities from toxins trapping them in poverty and poor health.

##### **Environmental Justice: Peggy Shepard at TEDxHarlem—**[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJX\\_MXaXbJA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJX_MXaXbJA)

Peggy Shepard brings to the TEDxHarlem stage a talk around environmental justice and surfacing the meme of "Sacrifice Zones."

*Environmental and Creation Justice continued on next page...*

# Federated Happenings

## Social and Environmental Justice (SEJAM) News, continued

### Creation Celebration Service—Sunday, May 3, 10:00 am

A focus on environmental and creation justice continues with the theme of “Appreciating God’s World.”

We will still be worshipping online, so join us for the livestream at [www.YouTube.com/TheFederatedChurch](http://www.YouTube.com/TheFederatedChurch).



### Electronic Recycling Drive—*Postponed, new date To Be Determined*

*This will be rescheduled for later this Fall.*

Keep collecting your electronics to bring to this recycling drive and tell all your friends and family to join in also. We want to keep harmful electronics out of the landfills. Recycling properly is an important part of caring for our Earth.



## Racial Justice

### Watch at Home

These two short clips were going to be our March movie night, but it was canceled due to COVID-19. If you haven't watched them already, now might be the perfect time. They are thought-provoking.

Bryan Stevenson TED Talk: “We need to talk about Injustice” <https://youtu.be/c2tOp7OxyQ8>  
and Ran Jayadev TED Talk: “Participatory Defense” [https://youtu.be/0lr6\\_0a6P7M](https://youtu.be/0lr6_0a6P7M).

## Immigration Reform

### HOLA

The HOLA fundraiser scheduled for May at the Family Life Center has been moved to August 1, 2020. Save the date!

## Economic Justice

### Chagrin Falls Park Community Center

There is a need for cleaning supplies. If you are able to help, leave your donation by the door of the Community Center, 7060 Woodland Ave. Chagrin Falls. Then call and let the staff know you have left some supplies (440.247.6030) . They'll come out and get them.

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## Angel Telephone Tree Ministry

This ministry contacts families who might not have internet access and offer to play the sermons over the phone each week or snail mail the sermons to them. The ministry then expanded to contact prospective members and our elder members.

So far, there are 23 individuals who have reached out to 133 households.

If you are interested in part of this ministry, please contact Peggie Jo Shinagawa at [pjshinagawa@windstream.net](mailto:pjshinagawa@windstream.net).

