

Federated Church Buildings Will Remain Closed Through Easter

2020 was a year of challenges, a year of making accommodations, adjustments and we have had to dig deep, to call upon our inner strength and develop new ways to commune and connect. Though we all want to gather and worship together, it is not safe to do so at this time and so our Federated buildings will remain closed to in-person, indoor activities. We are using 'through Easter' as a benchmark for the closure, fully prepared to evaluate and adapt as conditions change.

Though we see hope on the horizon, case numbers and hospitalizations remain on the rise. Building closure is the most assured way to keep our members and guests safe. We maintain that the health of our congregation and community is still the most important consideration, especially for so many in our church who are at high risk.

Our leadership will continue to monitor health and safety guidelines and local COVID-19 conditions from the county boards of health, the state of Ohio, and the CDC. We will continue to consult with medical and public health officials and rely on the scientific understanding of this virus to make decisions going forward.

In the meantime, and most importantly, we will continue to work diligently, creating new opportunities for spiritual growth, learning, reflection, worship, and connection with each other. Be open to new ideas and technologies and above all, please communicate your needs and share ways you would like to connect. Working together and being in service to one another is what makes us a strong and united community.

"Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be frightened, and do not be dismayed, for the LORD your God is with you wherever you go." Joshua 1:9

We thank you for your feedback and thoughts about what we can do to enhance the Federated Community and continue to thrive.

God Bless You,
Beth Rutkowski, Moderator
Hamilton Throckmorton, Senior Pastor
Melissa Owen, Senior Director of People and Operations

A Note from the Senior Director of People & Operations

Happy New Year to you all!

It is 2021 and though we are still navigating some uncharted waters, it is in this time and place that I feel gratitude every day. As part of Federated, I see people helping each other, helping others and being a part of something of true importance.

Our Members are so generous – with their time, with their in-kind donations and with their financial contributions. Our outreach is growing, as is our footprint in the community. We have dedicated members going to St Paul's to feed people – they found a way to ensure safety so basic needs could continue to be met. Our Members, Staff and Clergy work together to collect food, clothing, toys and to give gift cards so families can choose what they want – offering a sort of dignity we might take for granted in our own lives. Federated's Ministries reach people in so many other ways, too. We have programs to broaden perspectives so we can better serve ourselves, families, and community. We have programs to build connections with those who are isolated – with the help of volunteers and staff these programs have grown to meet the greater need caused by the pandemic. We have programs to support people in every stage of life.

Our Lay Leaders I marvel at the time and energy our leaders devote to ensuring member and community needs are met and the Church runs like clockwork. So many caring individuals. So much passion for supporting Federated. Our leaders are deeply invested in ensuring Federated flourishes and our Members are properly represented.

Our Staff. The Federated Staff has done much to adapt to these strange times: increasing our online presence, revamping our website, upping member connections, automating donation and funding mechanisms, working to expand programs and outreach, finding ways for our youth to continue the spiritual journey, all going above and beyond to create new and interactive mechanisms for participation. Our Music team has learned to perform without an audience, perform in smaller numbers, coming up with creative ways for our more musically-inclined members to participate and to feed our artistic souls. Our Pastoral team has embraced technology making possible everything from counseling to prayer services and online programming. Then there is our Properties team, who during these times have been in overdrive, maintaining and ensuring our physical assets are optimal, ensuring our Livestream runs smoothly and updating our building, preparing for what is to come. Staff have risen to the

challenge, showcasing talents and abilities, calling upon strengths previously untapped.

Our Worship Volunteers, Participants and Staff It is with great ingenuity, tenacity and devotion they bring our worship service into our homes each week. Every single week they go above and beyond giving us all the gift of worshipping together.

And of course, all of this is possible because Federated fulfills our spiritual needs – **our Clergy** work tirelessly, adapting to some, well, odd circumstances: sermons from the heart given to an invisible audience, comforting people with only eyes and voice (no hugs and expressions hidden behind a mask), counseling through a camera on a computer, answering endless emails...the list goes on. It is because of this devotion, the examples we see day in and day out, that we all do our part so Federated can flourish in all that Federated is and does.

Thank you for the essential part each and every one of you play in making Federated Church a wonderful, essential part of our lives. It is with the utmost gratitude and excitement that I look forward to all that is to come in 2021.

Cheers,



Melissa Owen
Senior Director of People and Operations

February SPIRE Deadline

Do you have something you'd like to see in the January SPIRE?

Please email your information to communications@fedchurch.org by **Friday, January 15** and include "SPIRE" in the subject line.
Thank you!

HAMILTON'S DESK

Dear Friends,

So FINALLY we have the chance to put 2020 behind us, and to look forward to an entirely new year in 2021. It can't come too soon!

2020 has certainly been a monumental challenge, what with a once-in-a-century contagion that, of this writing, has taken over 300,000 lives; brutal murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and numerous others—murders that have kick-started long-overdue reflections on the systemic racism that eats away at our society; and a brutally divisive election season that has too often cast friend against friend, colleague against colleague, family member against family member. It's enough to discourage even the strongest of people.

And then along comes a new year. A NEW YEAR! A chance to start over. An opportunity to redo what undoes us. A year with an open-ended future. Thank God for possibility! Thank God for hope!

"New" is a marvelous word. It reminds us that what is doesn't have to always be. It assures us that change is possible. With newness, we're not stuck. With newness, we're not confined to an eternal struggle. Some surprise can occur. Some new wonder can arise.

When I'm feeling stuck or discouraged, I often remind myself of the extraordinary goodness that comes from God and that is so prevalent in the world, and especially in our church. Here's some of what I'm grateful for here:

- A staff that is stirringly committed to transmitting the love of God to you and me
- Countless members and friends who live out their faith in their lives, by calling people who are homebound and serving with our Mission Partners and singing and playing and teaching and growing and advocating for a more equitable and just earth
- A lay leadership that wrestles with thorny issues and sets a tone of diligence and cares deeply for both the present and the future
- All you who support the church's remarkable and life-giving ministries with your financial resources

There's a degree of newness in all of this. Oh, people have served at Federated for going on two centuries. But with each new generation, each new era, each new year, the way people serve changes. We are now in the midst of developing a Visionary Action Plan (VAP) that envisions what new angles we will take in following Christ. And we have just rolled out a re-branding that suggests new ways for us to live out our faith in this community and the world. It's fresh. It's new. It's full of hope.

So I invite you to pray and ponder how God might be working a new thing in you and in us together. As 2021 begins, remember those words from the prophet Isaiah: "I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?" (43:19).

Yours in Christ,
Hamilton



UPCOMING WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday, January 3

Rev. Mark Simone preaches
Communion celebrated
10 am Online Worship
11 am Virtual Coffee Fellowship

Sunday, January 10

Rev. Hamilton Throckmorton preaches
10 am Online Worship
11 am Virtual Coffee Fellowship
11:30 am Online Sunday School

Sunday, January 17

Rev. Hamilton Throckmorton preaches
10 am Online Worship
11 am Virtual Coffee Fellowship
11:30 am Online Sunday School

Thursday, January 24

Rev. Hamilton Throckmorton preaches
10 am Online Worship
11 am Virtual Coffee Fellowship
11:30 am Online Sunday School

Sunday, January 31

Rev. Hamilton Throckmorton preaches
10 am Online Worship
11 am Virtual Coffee Fellowship
11:30 am Online Sunday School

Worship: fedchurch.org/live

Coffee Fellowship: tinyurl.com/fedfellowship

Sunday School: Contact Kristin for the link at klefeber@fedchurch.org

Online Worship:

**Every Sunday
10:00 AM**

**on our YouTube Channel:
TheFederatedChurch**

fedchurch.org/live

FEDERATED NEWS & INFO

Your Generosity Revealed

We are pleased to say that **BECAUSE OF YOU**, already 200+ church members and friends have embraced the spirit of gratitude and generosity by submitting an Intention to Give for 2021. We have all been invited to God's feast and there's a seat for everyone at the table! **If you haven't yet stated your Intention to Give, go to fedchurch.org/giving and submit it now.** Thanks be to God and YOU!

In 2020 the Stewardship Committee transitioned toward year-round opportunities that lift the spiritual practices and scriptural basis for living generously. For example, we've:

Included written communication with the quarterly Giving Statements mailed to our congregation donors,

Encouraged more of our members to become a recurring sustainable giver with automated payments, which doesn't preclude additional

ministry-focused gifts for seasonal drives, collections, or celebrations throughout the year,

Worked with Church Council to reconfigure the Stewardship Committee into a year-round Commission that will be presented to the congregation for approval,

And continued letters of appreciation for gifts that support our ministries and our operations, informing recipients of our continued efforts to live into Federated's life-giving ministries.

All of this is done because generosity is a privilege that EVERYONE deserves at any time.

In Gratitude,
Ken Horner
Maren Koepf
Ann Lentz
Martine Scheuermann
Laura Taylor, staff liaison



Christmas Trees and Poinsettias Fund

With a generous offer from the Work Camp leaders (who, in years past, have been the recipients of the fundraiser), last month **our Livestream Music Ministry raised funds through the sale of holiday poinsettias.** In addition, folks also made donations for Federated's Altar Christmas Trees.

Seeing those Christmas poinsettias and trees on the Chancel during our December online worship services was so comforting, reminding us that although 2020's Advent season was different, so many of the Federated traditions remained the same. Federated is a premier messenger of grace and love - and your thoughtfulness makes that possible.

Many thanks to:

Anonymous

Tom & Bobbi Jo Baclawski

In Memory of Wanda M. Albrich

In Memory of Thomas Baclawski

Jane Badal

Janet Berlincourt

Bonnie Borman

Glenn & Jenny Brown

In Memory of John Laskowski

In Memory of Helmut Fochler

In Memory of Charles, Ruth, and Larry King

Doug & Barb Church

Peggy Fullmer

Steve & Cindy Girouard

In Memory of Ronald and Virginia Keim

In Memory of Elizabeth and Michael Girouard

Mary Griffith

In Memory of Noelle

Jack & Mary Hobbs

In Honor of Jody Elizabeth Hayes and her family

In Memory of Jeffery Keith Hobbs

Don & Charlene Krejci

Cal & Kim Lockert

Byron & Elsie Lutman

George & Kim Oliver

In Memory of Michael Rea

Cindy Scott & Miriam Huebscher-Scott

In Memory of Ruth Bader Ginsburg

Marcia Snaveley & Greg Polyak

In Memory of Bob Belding

In Memory of Marian and Geoff Snaveley

Ralph Spresser

Laura, Amanda, and Wilson Taylor

In Memory of Ryburn Taylor

Bill & Linda Zelazny

In Honor of our extended family

Generosity Impact Moments

Each Sunday we share a Generosity Impact Moment during the service. Since last month, we have shared these moments in which Federated makes a difference.

November 29	Christmas Eve Offering	JustHope in Nicaragua
December 6	Christmas Eve Offering	Family Promise of Greater Cleveland
December 13	Christmas Eve Offering	Chagrin Falls Park Community Center
December 20	Christmas Eve Offering	St. Paul's Community Church

Federated Church is a Charity of Choice for both our congregation and the community at large. Each month we highlight another story that showcases Federated as a Charity of Choice:

A community member (not a church member), who regularly supports local Thanksgiving and Christmas relief efforts anonymously donated funds to Federated. These funds were to be used for our Ingathering and Christmas Giving Tree ministries, in which JOY and GROUP kids - along with Mission & Service Commission members - collected nonperishable food for Thanksgiving and children's toys for the St. Paul's Christmas Store. The Federated Youth Group Advisors worked with our youth in November and December to purchase, collect, and deliver the items needed to fulfill the donor's intentions. What a blessing for all!

Worship theme for Epiphany, 2021: Home by Another Way

Epiphany, meaning "appearance," is the church season in which we look for the many and varied ways Christ is made manifest in our lives. The season is inspired by the journey of the Magi who come from the East to see the baby Jesus after he is born.

For Epiphany this year, we pick up on a phrase from that story about those visitors from far away. After they have found Jesus, the story says, the Magi "left for their own country by another road" (Matthew 2:12). They took a different way home, in other words.

Our theme this year for the Sundays of Epiphany (January 10-February 14) is "Home by Another Way." In order for all of us to find our true home, in order for us to return to the spiritual place where we truly belong, we often have to take a different route from the one we have so often traveled. We learn new behaviors. We practice new habits. We find new and deeper avenues for connecting with God. In a word, we go "Home by Another Way."

Join us in this rich and wonderful season as we explore together the depth and vibrancy of some of the new and varied and enriching ways in which Christ leads us home.

Schedule:

January 10: Receive the Holy Spirit; *Mark 1:4-11*

January 17: Come and See Jesus; *John 1:43-51*

January 24: Wait in Silence; *Psalms 62:5-12*

January 31: Heed the Prophet; *Deuteronomy 18:15-20*

February 7: Make Yourself a Slave to All; *I Corinthians 9:16-23*

February 14: Tell No One Until...; *Mark 9:2-9*

Invitation to Join Children's Choir

Anyone with children currently in 1st-8th grade can contact Choir Director Pat Haynish to sing with the Federated Children's Choir in 2021.

New members are always welcome!
Pat's email is: phaynish@sbcglobal.net

THANK YOU CORNER

It was so delightful to receive these notes from people in our Federated faith family!

I hope this is enough to contribute to what is needed/wanted. This church is wonderful for all it gives to people. Thank you!

Thank you so much for your letter about the care and maintenance of the Norling Prayer & Memorial Gardens at the FLC. I'm so pleased that the church is proactively replacing the degraded stones.

MISSION & SERVICE

An Update and Thank You from Phil and Sally Fogarty

Every Tuesday, for the past 91 weeks, the students of Notre Dame-Cathedral Latin have taken supplies, food and smiles to the streets of Cleveland as part of the Labre campus ministry program. I marvel at how immediate the connection is between the kids and their counterparts as we run our route down St. Clair and up Superior and over to Euclid Avenues. There is a gratitude that is so mutual that it is really hard to determine who is serving who. *They* may be grateful for hot chocolate and pizza...we may be grateful to have been there at that moment to provide some relief.

Here is a couple of examples of the lives that we cannot imagine living.....

Johnny (who often sends me a blessing text early in the morning as he starts his day) and Virgil (a veteran who has epilepsy and severe back problems) spend hours every day scrapping or working temp jobs. They go through shoes and socks so often because of the miles they put on their feet every day.

And then there is Ari and Charles who have been in and out of tents, shelters and motels. They were so cold and tired when we came upon their encampment that they asked if we could bring the clothes and food to them. We could only see their faces through the flap but we knew our visit was well timed.

The supplies that you have donated are a conduit for the palpable energy that builds as we travel and stop...travel and stop. What you allow us to deliver is not just a pair of socks (which now that it is cold often double as gloves) or personal hygiene items. What you provide for so many in the inner city is *self-esteem*.

The folks without a home or decent living conditions feel so much better about themselves when they have warm, clean clothing and have had the chance to bathe. They become more rational, take better care of themselves and some even become employable.

So thank you Federated...you always seem to come through for others. It is why I love this church so much. We search, we pray and we serve together.

Merry Christmas and here's to a healthier, Happy New Year in 2011.
Phil and Sally Fogarty

FEDERATED HAPPENINGS

Social and Environmental Justice (SJAM) News

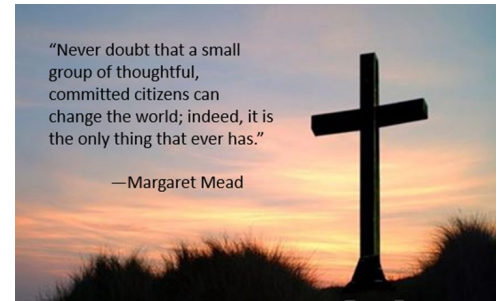
SJAM is a group of Federated and community folks learning about and taking action on a wide variety of societal justice issues such as gun violence, criminal justice, LGBTQ+ rights, environmental issues, racial justice, voter registration, and immigration as well as other areas of concern.

Sound interesting? We welcome you to join us at our next meeting. SJAM is open to all in the community who are looking for ways to work for social justice. To learn more, please contact Kathy Franz (440.821.7795 or wfranz@roadrunner.com).

Next SJAM Meeting — Sunday, January 24, 11:15 am on Zoom

<https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/261964671?pwd=czFEQ1lRzJlUjk2dHE4NGdQaVFTUTog>

Please feel free to log onto the call and check us out! No obligation. Just join the Zoom and see if what we are about speaks to your heart. We welcome you!



“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”

—Margaret Mead

Racial Justice/Criminal justice

White Privilege Classes

New groups forming in January. Seven week sessions. Contact Bill Shaul at theshauls@msn.com or 513.280.2836.

January Movie Night (actually a Speakers Night)

Monday, January 25, 7:00 pm on Zoom

Racial Justice Activism: How to Get Involved Rev. Anne Dunlap Minister, Leader, Showing Up for Racial Justice (SURJ) Faith Coordinator and Avery Martens Organizer, strategist [Showing Up for Racial Justice Ohio \(SURJ Ohio\)](#)

Zoom Link: <https://uso2web.zoom.us/j/83595558354?pwd=U1VxZU5SZoNjcEVkbEcxeXpsbVlWdzog>

Martin Luther King Jr. Day with Mt. Zion

Monday, January 18, 1:00-3:30 pm on Zoom

Mt. Zion Congregational Church has invited us to share in their Martin Luther King, Jr. Day again! We will gather over Zoom around the topic of "Privilege". If interested contact Barry Stees: steesbassoon@gmail.com.

Book Study

Tuesday, January 5, 4:00 pm on Zoom

Caste is an 'Instant American Classic' About Our Abiding Sin. Wilkerson's book is about how brutal misperceptions about race have disfigured the American experiment. This is a topic that major historians and novelists have examined from many angles, with care, anger, deep feeling and sometimes simmering wit. Contact Judy Macjen if interested: jomajcen@gmail.com.

Creation Justice—what can we do to care for God's creation?

Green Tip of the Month

Wear layers. Rather than raise your home's temperature (which requires more energy use), throw on a few layers of clothes during the day and additional blankets at night to keep you warm. This easy practice allows you to turn down your thermostat's temperature a bit, thus saving both energy and money.

De-ice with caution. Typically, you might throw salt on your sidewalks and driveway to eliminate the ice for safety reasons. But did you realize that some deicers, such as rock salt and calcium chloride, can pose a hazard (<https://doe.dc.gov/service/protecting-environment-winter-weather-what-you-can-do>) to children, pets, and the environment? If you must use these materials, read package directions carefully and use only as much as needed. If possible, look for safer, eco-friendly alternatives such as sand and sawdust that apply traction to icy surfaces without using harmful chemicals.

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Shovel snow before it turns into ice. Once snow becomes compacted, or when snow partially melts then freezes again, it turns to ice. Not only does ice pose a safety hazard for pedestrians (and pets) but getting rid of ice causes its own set of problems.

Switch to energy-efficient light bulbs. Now is a good time to turn our attention to the lights in our homes. Consider swapping out those traditional incandescent light bulbs with more eco-friendly versions (<https://www.energy.gov/energysaver/save-electricity-and-fuel/lighting-choices-save-you-money>) such as light-emitting diodes (LEDs), halogen incandescent, and compact fluorescent lamps (CFLs).

Don't leave your car running long. It sure feels good to step into a warm car after "letting it heat up" for a few minutes. However, this practice unnecessarily increases emissions and pollution in the air. Limit idling your car to no more than three minutes at most. Better yet, just start the car and drive (with gloves, hat, and a scarf to keep you warm). Your car will warm up just a few minutes into your trip.

Economic Justice

Chagrin Falls Park Community Center

Chagrin Falls Park residents need dish soap and laundry detergent (unscented). Drop off at the Community Center at 7060 Woodland Ave. Knock on the door and let someone know you have left your donation at the door.

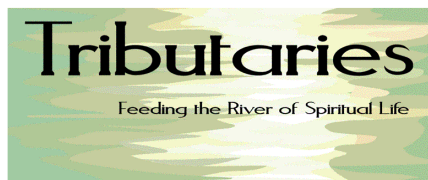
Join Mark in studying the Book of James

This winter, Rev. Mark Simone is offering a Zoom Bible Study on the Book of James, which is one of his favorite books in the Bible. It will be a straightforward, five-week study and will cover a chapter a week. Dates are **Thursdays from 6:30 to 7:30 – January 14, 21, 28 and February 4, 11**. Sign up is required and the class will be limited to 12 homes so that discussion can be possible. This is offered through our Spiritual Formation Commission ongoing ministries. When presenting this idea to the Spiritual Formation Commission, one of the members asked Mark, "Why James?" Excellent question.

He answers: *"To me, the Book of James has an Old Testament feel to it, similar to the book of Proverbs, but adding the New Testament sense of the resurrected Christ. James argues for practical action in our faith life. The book has a feel like what is called the Wisdom Literature in the Old Testament. God's people are encouraged to act like God's people. James offers few latitudes for those who do not measure up. James believed that we Christians show indication of faith by walking the walk and avoiding the bright and shiny distractions. For James, a faith that does not produce change is a faith that is worthless (James 2:17)."*

There is no cost for the class. If you would like, there is an optional Scripture Journal available for \$6.00. You may refer to your favorite Bible translation for insight variety.

To join the study, please contact Mark through his church email at msimone@fedchurch.org.



Gentle Slow Flow Yoga

Open to all levels. Virtual class on Zoom. From the comfort of your own home/space.

Mondays at 10:00 - 11:15 am (January 4, 11, 18, 25)

Thursdays at 7:00 - 8:15 pm (January 7, 14, 21, 28)

This Gentle Slow Flow class links the breath, meditation, movement, and poses together. All levels of Yoga practitioners can find their comfort level, as they slowly and mindfully move through the class. Balance, focus, and peacefulness result from attention to breath as we move through physical "asana" or poses in our yoga practice. Modifications will be suggested as needed. This class is open to everyone with the ability to move through seated, standing, kneeling, and reclined positions unassisted.

You will need a computer or iPad to join the class via a Zoom link from the comfort of your own home/space.

To register, or if you have questions, email Dawn Dole, RYT200 at newdayyoga.dawn@gmail.com.