December 2023



The Spire

The Federated Church Newsletter

United Church of Christ — An Open and Affirming Congregation



From the Desk of Rev. Hamilton Throckmorton

Dear Friends,

When our older son, Alex, was born, the birth took a little longer than we might have hoped because his umbilical cord was wrapped around his shoulder. I remember standing next to Mary as a surgical team assembled in the hall right outside her door, ready to whisk her off to the operating room to perform a cesarean section. Just as they were ready to wheel her out, though, the obstetrician was able to manually move the cord from Alex's shoulder. And Alex was born soon thereafter.

What I remember vividly is my own anxiety as I waited throughout what was for me this particularly tense time. And what I remember equally vividly is that, at one point, I glanced over in the corner of the room. There, sitting peacefully in a chair, with his legs crossed and an air of utter calm, was the doctor who would soon become Alex's pediatrician.

I think of that day so long ago as I approach the birth of Jesus this year. I imagine that first-century Mary, pregnant, having to make the long trek to Bethlehem, without air-conditioned vehicles or comfortable hotel rooms or chef-prepared meals. I imagine Joseph worrying about Mary and about his soon-to-be-born child. I imagine them living in a Roman Empire not particularly concerned for the health and well-being of this apparently inconsequential family. I would guess there was abundant anxiety and tension.

At the same time, though, even as Mary and Joseph must surely have fretted and worried, I wonder if there was also in them a deep sense of peace. When I picture our son Alex's pediatrician sitting quietly and serenely in the corner at the time of Alex's birth, I am reminded of the God who sits with us in every worry, every anxiety, every tense moment, the God who accompanies us on the journeys of our lives, the God who sits serenely with us to remind us that "all shall be well." Remember the words of the angel to the shepherds "abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night": "Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people: to you is born this day in the city of David a Savior, who is the Messiah, the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11).

Into the upheaval of that long-ago moment came the comfort and blessing of God to shine the light of peace. And we have never been quite the same since. May you be filled with God's radiant and life-changing peace during this Advent and Christmas season. For God comes near to make all things new.

Yours in Christ,





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Federated News & Info

Our Advent Worship Themes for December 2023

Dec. 3: Hope.

"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness

did not overcome it."

John 1:1-8

Rev. Betsy Wooster preaches

Dec. 10: Peace. Children's Musical

"God will speak peace to God's People" Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13

Rev. Hamilton Throckmorton preaches

Dec. 17: Joy.

"My spirit rejoices in God my Savior"

Luke 1:46b-55

Rev. Hamilton Throckmorton preaches

Dec. 24: Love.

"You Have Found Favor with God

Luke 1:26-38

Rev. Hamilton Throckmorton preaches

Dec. 31

"When the Light Beckons"

Matthew 2:1-12

Rev. Betsy Wooster preaches

Worship Every Sunday 10:00 AM

In-Person at Federated Church or Online on our YouTube Channel: TheFederatedChurch

January 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, December 15th

Include "Spire" in the subject line.

In Memoriam

Recognition of those who have passed recently.

A farewell to friends; May God welcome them with open arms.

Janis Stefanchik - Nov. 17, 2023

PASTORAL OFFICE HOURS

Need to see a pastor? Our Pastors have Standing Office Hours. We are here for you!



Rev. Hamilton Throckmorton Senior Pastor

Office Hours: Tuesdays 2PM-5PM

P: 440.247.6490 x100

E: hamthrock@fedchurch.org



Rev. Betsy Wooster
Pastor of Spiritual Formation
Office Hours: Mondays 1 PM-4 PM

P: 440.247.6490 x101

E: bwooster@fedchurch.org

'Extravagant E-Welcome'

Please like, share, and subscribe to our



www.facebook.com/ TheFederatedChurch



www.instagram.com/ federatedchurch

Rev. Betsy's Spiritual Formation Corner

I am so very moved to share with you that this December we are holding a special Advent worship service designed to calm and soothe our souls. This service of hope and healing is titled O Come, O Come, Emmanuel to remind us that as we wait for the Christ Child's birth, God's hope and healing is ever present to be born in us. In this season of Advent, how do we wait? We wait for the light together.

Advent Worship Service and Wondrous Wednesday Dinner! "O Come, O Come, Emmanue!" A Special Evening Service of Hope and Healing December 13th, 5:30–6:00pm, in the Federated Chape!

Join your church family on December 13th for a short, soothing, contemplative worship service of hope and healing as we watch for God's light during the beginning of the busy holiday season, a season that can be filled with contrasting emotions. We'll gather as a community in the Chapel to sing, pray, light candles, and remember those we've lost, as we offer prayers for peace in the world, for our own struggles, and healing for all who are—suffering.

Come to pray and worship in the quiet of our candlelit chapel as we lift to God our sorrows and pray for the hope and healing that only God can give. After worship you are invited to share in the December Wondrous Wednesday dinner in fellowship hall. *To Sign Up for Dinner: Please sign up in advance for the Dec. 13th dinner at fedchurch.org/events, or call the church at 440-247-6490, or email Katie at katiesharbage@gmail.com No sign up is necessary to attend the worship service.

A 15th Century Poem to carry with you this Advent Season:

Lo, in the silent night A child to God is born And all is brought again That ere was lost or lorn.

Could but thy soul, O child, Become a silent night! God would be born in thee And set all thing aright.



Yours in Christ, the Light of the world for whom we wait,

Rev. Betsy

Christmas Wreaths and Poinsettias on Sale

Holiday poinsettias and wreaths will once again decorate our church during the Advent season. The poinsettias and wreaths may be purchased in your name, In Honor of, or In Memory Of a loved one or friend. The cost is \$20 per plant or \$30 per wreath. A listing of those names will appear in Christmas Eve bulletins.

All donations are due by Sunday, December 18th. You can drop it into the collection plate on Sunday mornings with the form from the announcement attached. If writing a check, note "Poinsettia/Wreath" in the memo line. If giving online visit fedchurch.org/giving, use the memo line to add your dedication.



Contact communications@fedchurch.org with any questions.

Women's Ministries

Women's Fellowship Circle meets December 18th at 1:00 in Fellowship Hall. We will have our Christmas party. Please bring a sweet or savory treat to share! We will also be collecting items for the giving tree! Scarves, gloves, mittens, and hats will be accepted. For more information contact Lynne Kessell, lynnekessell@gmail.com.



Fellowship Treats

We are **so excited** to continue Fellowship Hour after Sunday worship services. Federated members take turns bringing treats for Fellowship Hour each Sunday, as scheduled by the Congregational Care Commission. Of course, anyone is welcome to bring treats at any time!

Please bring ready-to-serve treats in disposable containers. Healthy food choices are especially welcome. *Please no nuts*. Thank you for helping to make our Fellowship time delicious and enjoyable!

December 3– last names beginning with N, O, P, Q, or R

December 10– last names beginning with S or T

December 17– last names beginning with U, V, W, X, Y, or Z

December 24– No Fellowship Hour

December 31– last names beginning with A or B



Wear Your Faith



As you **#LiveYourFaith**, you can now **#WearYourFaith**.

Federated merchandise is fun to wear and available!

To view the online store, click HERE.



Save these December Dates! Celebrate the season.

Saturday, December 2, 7PM - Celebrating Marcia Snavely

Sunday, December 3, Fellowship Hour - Youth Bake Sale

Monday, December 4, 6.30PM - Advent by Candlelight

Sunday, December 10

- Children's Choir Musical during Worship
- Special Fellowship Hour: Bethlehem Market + Lunch whimsical booths and activities to bring Christmas Joy to Children of all ages

Wednesday, December 13

- Service of Hope and Healing, 5.30PM
- Special Holiday Wondrous Wednesday, 6.00PM

Thursday, December 14, Noon: Primetime Holiday Lunch at The Cabin

Saturday, December 16, 8PM: Apollo's Fire "Wassail! An Irish-Appalachian Christmas"

Sunday, December 17, 4.30PM: Worship with Nature + Potluck

Sunday, December 24: Christmas Eve Worship Services

@ 10AM

- @ 4PM (Pre-Service Music starts at 3:30PM)
- @ 6.30PM (Pre-Service Music starts at 6PM)

Visit <u>fedchurch.org/advent</u> for more details!

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Welcome New Members Class of Fall 2023



Morris Pengilly & Joy Wyatt



The Novinc Family



The Arnold Family





The Elmore Family



Carol King-Shaw



Mari Hageman



The Kohn Family

440.247.6490

Christmas Eve Offering Recipient for 2023

When does a house become a home? <u>Humble Design</u> believes it is when it's a place that fosters joy. A place for experiencing safety, warmth, and comfort. A place of belonging, and new beginnings. The Mission and Service Commission has chosen Humble Design as the 2023 Christmas Eve Offering Recipient.

At Humble Design, their hearts help to do the heavy lifting by offering hope with their hands, providing a makeover for a fresh start, designing a life changing space.

The 2023 Christmas Eve Offering gifts will help to further the mission to assist individuals and families that have been able to work their way out of homelessness and into having their own house yet are financially limited in making it a home. Humble Design transforms houses into homes, affirming families' dignity and self-worth and increases the likelihood that families will remain stably housed.

Our donations will increase the number of families that Humble Design can assist. Since the families do not pay for the efforts of Humble Design, they can focus on what is most important: education, health, home life, employment, and building a better future.

Humble Design Cleveland's programming and service helps individuals escape poverty and become self-sufficient by eliminating a big portion of the high cost of moving into and living in a new home. Cleveland's eviction filling rate is substantially higher than the statewide rate.

Humble Design Cleveland partners with over 30 local housing, social service, and domestic abuse organizations to identify families who would benefit from their services. Services that include getting to know the families and then designing a "home" that fits the life of the family. Homes are designed to fit the specific needs of each family providing a home where each family member can thrive.

Along with our financial support, Humble Design welcomes donations of furniture and other household items.

Humble Design turns moving in – into Moving Forward.



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Holiday Events







Wondrous Wednesdays Celebrates Christmas!

Inspirational and fun holiday music will be provided by a group of our own choir members. **THEN, it's your turn!** Join us in a Sing-along of favorite carols! Marcia Snavely will add her musical touch by accompanying us throughout the evening. Don't forget the array of yummy holiday foods, including the best Christmas cookies you've ever eaten!

Don't forget to let us know you're coming so we create enough food. Sign up using Realm, the sheet at the Angel Desk, or <u>fedchurch.org/events</u>. Come celebrate with us!!!

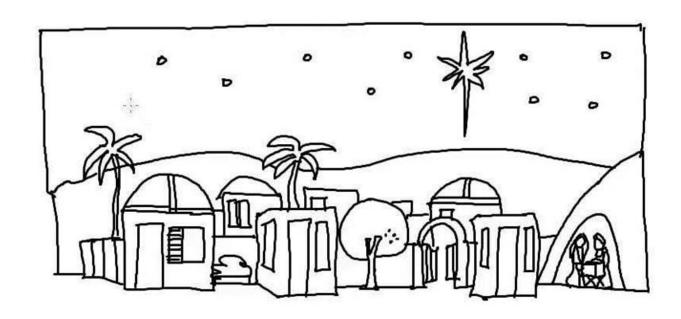




CHRISTMAS MUSICAL & BETHLEHEM MARKET

Sunday, December 10th 10 am – 1pm Federated Church, Chagrin Falls

Join us for a spirited worship service and Children's Choir
Christmas play followed by a whimsical market in Fellowship Hall
with tents of activities for kids of all ages.



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Youth & Family



December

3: Bake Sale and toy shopping trip Meet at the church at 10:00

10: Whirlyball and Christmas Party

Time TBD

17: Activity TBD Time TBD

WE'D LOVE TO SEE YOU! BRING A FRIEND OR TWO!!

QUESTIONS? EMAIL GARY OR PAUL

gdd.fedchurch@gmail.com paulcantlay99mail.com



S.P.I.F.F.Y. NEWS

SERVICE PROJECTS INITIATED FROM FEDERATED YOUTH **NOVEMBER 2023**





NOVEMBER 5

We had a fun evening watching clips of ET and sharing a meal together at Reverend Betsy Wooster's house!

NOVEMBER 12

SPIFFY friendsgiving was lots of fun! We painted pumpkins, played games, and shared a fun meal of some of our favorite foods

NOVEMBER 19

SPIFFY joined with the high school youth group to sort the Thanksgiving ingathering donated goods for St. Paul's Community Church

DECEMBER 3RD

Bake Sale and Toy Shopping bring a baked good, we will bake during the service and leave for Christmas toy shopping at noon 10:00-1:30 pm Meet at the Church

Lantern Making Collect jars and cans to turn into lanters for the next weeks wild church gathering 4:30-6 pm Meet at the church

DECEMBER 17TH

Wild Church

Celebrate the solstice sharing our lanterns with participants Dress for the weather. 4:30 pm - 6:00 pm and the CLC

Questions or service ideas/requests? Please contact emoore@fedchurch.org or bwright@fedchurch.org

DECEMBER 10TH

DECEMBER 24TH & 31ST

No Meeting Merry Christmas Happy New Year

fedchurch.org

EVENTS

PCOMING

Primetime Fun!

Primetime Christmas Lunch Out: The Cabin Restaurant at Mario's Thursday, December 14 at Noon



Join us at The Cabin: 35 East Garfield Road Aurora, Ohio 44202

Lights twinkling reflecting the joy of the season, the sound of friends laughing together...

Enjoy the rustic elegance and expansive menu options: fresh, hearth-baked pizzas, outstanding pasta selections; steaks, chops, seafood grilled to perfection.

Let's celebrate together!

RSVP—hurry our table is filling up fast! Need a ride? Contact Melissa—carpooling is available!





Join us in December:

- ✓ <u>December 2, 7PM: Celebrate Marcia Snavely!</u>
- ✓ <u>December 4, 6.30PM: Advent by Candlelight</u>
- ✓ <u>December 10, Special Fellowship Hour: Bethlehem Market + Lunch</u>
- ✓ <u>December 13, 5.30PM: Service of Hope and Healing</u>
- ✓ <u>December 13, 6PM: Special Holiday Wondrous Wednesday</u>
- ✓ December 14, Noon: Primetime Holiday Lunch at The Cabin
- ✓ December 16, 8PM: Apollo's Fire Wassail! An Irish Appalachian Christmas
- ✓ December 24: Federated Christmas Eve Services 10AM, 4PM, 6.30PM

Save these 2024 Dates:

- ✓ January 18. Noon: Lunch Out at Mario Fazio's
- √ February 16, Noon: Lunch Out at Guido's in Chesterland
- √ February 24, 7PM: Sonya Headlam, Soprano Celebrating Black History Month

RSVP via REALM or to Melissa: mowen@fedchurch.org / 805.636.4256



440.247.6490

Mission & Service

Let us bring the Joy of Christmas to kids on the Near Westside of Cleveland through the St. Paul's Community Church Christmas Store

> Bring New Toys and other gifts for kids of all ages

Place all new and unwrapped items under the tree in the Church Lobby

Now until December 10th

Contact Marty (Mculbert@fedchurch.org) with questions

St. Paul's Trailer **New-More Convenient Time**

The St. Paul's Trailer will be open on the first Sunday of the month from 9:30-11:30 AM to receive your donations. Clean clothing, household items, and small appliances are acceptable. Please, no undergarments or TV's.

We hope this new time will make it more convenient for you to make donations. Come to church early or stay late to drop off treasures you no longer need!

Contact Marty Culbertson if you have any questions. Mculbert@fedchurch.org.







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Social Justice Advocacy Ministry (SJAM)

A ministry for action as we live into our call for Care and Justice for all of God's people and creation



Recycle Your Old Batteries and Light Bulbs



What is the one thing that all batteries and light bulbs have in common? Eventually, they will need to be replaced. But what do you do with batteries and bulbs that are no longer working? The best thing to do is recycle them. You are protecting the environment by recycling old batteries and bulbs. Check out these links to get all the information about an organization that helps you do just that!

https://www.batteriesplus.com/search?categories=&query=Recycle+bulbs https://www.batteriesplus.com/blog/power/battery-and-light-bulb-recycling

Why is this important?

Batteries contain chemicals and heavy metals that can be dangerous if not disposed of properly. When placed in a landfill, these substances can leak out, contaminating soil, groundwater, lakes and streams. Some light bulbs can contain mercury or phosphor, which are toxic to people and animals. When light bulbs are thrown out, they end up in landfills where these substances can leach out into the groundwater and end up contaminating drinking water. Even though a light bulb may contain only a small amount of these chemicals, these substances build up in the environment over time to become more dangerous.

THANK YOU

Dear Federated Church.

Our Community Church of Chesterland is so appreciative of your support for our work against oppression of the LGBTQ+ community and other marginalized groups and individuals – here at home and around the world. As Jesus taught by example, we too are striving to combat hatred with love and social justice work. We were strengthened by receiving your thoughtful and generous donation and support back in March... With you beside us, we continue to move forward as one, stronger and united in love. You are helping us further our Social Justice Mission.

On Behalf of our Pastor Jess Peacock, and our congregation – Love and Peace and Thank you!

Social Justice Advocacy Ministry (SJAM)

A ministry for action as we live into our call for Care and Justice for all of God's people and creation



A Ministry Team of the Spiritual Formation Commission ENVIRONMENTAL AND CREATION JUSTICE federated



"Worship with Nature"

The Light of the World

Sunday, December 17, 2023

Arrive at 4:45 pm, we begin at 4:57 pm

(Communal meal indoors following the outdoor worship at the FLC)

The Solar year has run its course and completed its cycle and a new year begins, bringing light, life and hope to the earth. The winter solstice marks the shortest day of the year as well as the first day of winter. The solstice is also celebrated around the world as Yule, the 12-day festival centered around the solstice that has given birth to many of our most familiar Christmas traditions including the Christmas tree, the Yule log and the Christmas wreath.



Federated Church is pleased to host this "Worship with Nature" gathering. When we listen to the earth, it will teach us. *Everyone is invited - All ages: Elders, Adults, Families, Children -* Add this to your holiday season experience by participating in this meaningful outdoor worship. Create a holiday family memory.

This emergent outdoor worship model is a time to join our hearts and minds with the wind in the trees, the quiet of the snow, the breath of the clouds, the winter animals, the soft flow of the waterfall, and the many other partners in the sacred conversation between Creator and Creation.

We begin in a circle with words of welcome honoring of the sacred space. We include time to wander and wonder, experiencing time in contemplative openness and conversation with the more-than-human world. Music and lighted candles will bring us back to the circle with song, sharing insights, hopes, prayers, blessings, and sending forth.

- Join with us at the Family Life Center Labyrinth at 4:45 pm. (16349 Chillicothe Rd, Bainbridge)
- Bring a chair to sit on, blankets to cover your legs, and your favorite holiday cookies to share.
- We will be outdoors for the worship Snow or Clear. Dress warm, be prepared for the weather.
- Then, we will move inside for a simple communal meal of soup and bread.
- Please register on Realm, or after worship in Fellowship Hall Dec. 3, 10, and 17.
- If you have questions please email: coopdole@gmail.com

Please bring a plate of one of your favorite Christmas cookies to share.

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Community Partners



Community Life Collaborative Welcome Kettle Series Spotlights Needs of Local Immigrants & Refugees

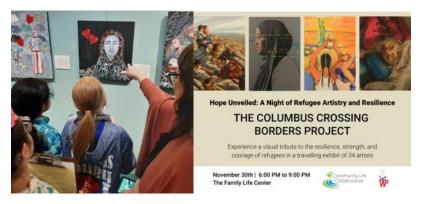
We Continue Our 3rd Year of The Welcome Kettle Series.

November 30, 2023, from 6-9:00 pm at The Family Life Center. – **Hope Unveiled: A Night of Refugee Artistry and Resilience** opening reception. Join us for an inspiring evening featuring the powerful artwork and stories of refugees, and help we will mobilize an urgent call for allyship and practical response channeling funds directly to USCRI, AMIS, and OIA. We'll feature multicultural foods and music. Open to all. <u>More information</u>.

December 7, 6-8:00pm at the Family Life Center – Together We Thrive: Sharing Local Refugee Stories – Graham Ball, from the US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI) will lead a panel of local humanitarian workers to discuss the experiences of refugees and migrants in Northeast Ohio. The panel will include Anne Hill from Americans Making Immigrants Safe (AMIS) and Lynn Tramonte from Ohio Immigrant Alliance (OIA). They will present what they do, who they serve, and how you can get involved.

December 2-16 – Columbus Crossing Borders Project Gallery Exhibit: at Federated's Family Life Center 16349 Chillicothe Road. **Exhibit hours: Tues/Thurs 1-3:00, Wed 5-7:00, Sat 10-2:00.**

This traveling project is an art exhibit and documentary film created to inspire critical thinking, compassion and support for the millions of people who have been forced to flee their homes due to war, climate, violence and persecution. The art exhibit contains 34 refugee-themed paintings that "cross borders" and connect with one another. The documentary provides a visual journey of this art exhibit alongside first-person accounts shared by refugees who have made the United States their home. Watch this video clip to learn more.



The <u>Community Life Collaborative</u> manages all operations and covers repair & improvement costs of the FLC for Federated. To schedule church programs at the FLC, please email ed@communitylifecollaborative.org. The CLC is a separate 501(c)3 nonprofit aligning with Federated Church to engage transformation through collaboration for a just and sustainable world. To get involved or stay informed, subscribe to CLC email blasts, follow us on social media, or reach out anytime!

Community Partners

NEOCH Collection Recap!

Sincere thanks to the generous community of Federated Church for its mountain of donations to NEOCH (Northeast Ohio Coalition for the Homeless)! This year, we eclipsed last year's donations and contributions so that even more men, women and children could have something warm to wear for our bone chilling winter weather. SJAM (Social Justice Advocacy Ministry), which is a ministry of the Mission and Service Commission, collected, sorted and bagged your many items. We also collected financial donations of over \$2300, including a large personal financial donation from one of our Federated couples.

We collected 92 adult jackets (an increase of 10 from last year), 22 kids jackets (an increase of 5), 18 pr. of boots (an increase of 10), 35 fleece tops or sweaters, 87 hats or neck scarves, and over 150 gloves or pairs of socks!

So many of you shopped and washed gently used items. You provided a deeply appreciated assortment of cold weather clothes. Your generosity was clearly felt by NEOCH. The day we dropped off the bags of winter wear, a NEOCH staff member said, "This is huge! These coats will go out tonight!" Thank you for sharing your abundance with our neighbors in need.

With the support and collaboration of Wondrous Wednesday, we presented a speaker event on 11/15, featuring Anthony Anderson. After having lived on Cleveland streets for over 8 years, Anthony was able to find shelter and a job at NEOCH. For the past 30 years, he has continued to serve people like him, who find themselves without a home, and make a difference in their lives.

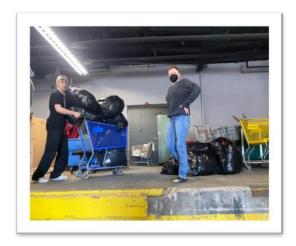
Have a blessed holiday, and know you made a big difference for a friend you haven't met.

With gratitude, Cathy Watterson, Patti Lyden, Patrick Kilian, and Dave Watterson









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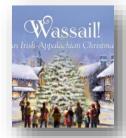
Performing Arts Series '23-'24 Season Save the Dates!

We are thrilled to resume the Performing Arts Series this fall!

Full concert details and are available at fedchurch.org/PAS

Saturday, December 2, 2023, 7pm "Celebrating Marcia Snavely: 30 Years at Federated Church" with Chagrin Falls Studio Orchestra and Federated musicians





Saturday, December 16, 2023, 8pm. Apollo's Fire: "Wassail! An Irish-Appalachian Christmas"

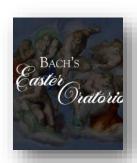
> Saturday, February 24, 2024, 7pm Sonya Headlam, soprano Celebrating Black History Month





Saturday, March 2, 2024, 7pm Cleveland Celtic Ensemble with a community dinner!

Thursday, April 25, 2024, 7:30pm Apollo's Fire: "Bach's Easter Oratorio"





Friday, May 17, 2024, 7pm Factory Seconds Brass in Concert





13, 0110 44022

Contact Us!

www.fedchurch.org fedchurch@fedchurch.org

Phone: 440.247.6490 Fax: 440.247.2516

Facebook: facebook.com/ thefederatedchurch

Instagram: @federatedchurch

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OUDS IN HERE TO HELP YOU

CLERGY

Hamilton Throckmorton, Senior Pastor Betsy Wooster, Pastor of Spiritual Formation

Administration Staff

Melissa Owen, Senior Director of People and Operations Brooke Strong, Congregational Life Administrator Beth Rutkowski, Director of Generosity

* Marty Culbertson, Transitional JOY / Missions Jake Magalski, Properties, Maintenance & Grounds Lead

Music Staff

Joshua Konow, Director of Music Ministries

- * Marcia Snavely, Organist
- * Pat Haynish, Director of Children's Choir

Children's Ministries Staff

- * Kristin LeFeber, Director of Children's Faith Formation
- *Alex Bell, Lianna Davis, Tanya Goff, Childcare
- *Shawn Bottcher, Emma Bottcher, Sunday School Teachers

* denotes part-time staff

