



# The Spire

The Federated Church Newsletter

United Church of Christ An Open and Affirming Congregation A Creation Justice Church

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*"And now faith, hope, and love abide, these three;  
and the greatest of these is **love**"*

*~ 1 Corinthians 13:13*



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# In the Interim...

*"Life can be cruel and so unfair sometimes.*

*Living each day to the fullest is the only thing in our grasp." – Sylvia Corridan*

Dear Friends,

We are living in difficult times, days when the news tells stories of cruelty and oppression we couldn't have imagined might happen in our country. And so, as we enter Lent in the midst of these troubling events, rather than focus on this as a season for restraint and confession, I invite you to a radically different Lent, into an expansive life full to the brim. Come to be authentically yourself, to counter scarcity and injustice at every turn, and instead celebrate the abundant grace God offers. When we live fully, pursuing justice and hope, we allow ourselves to be filled to the brim with God's lavish love, a love that reaches beyond ourselves and spills over, touching everything in its path.

We begin our Lenten journey on Ash Wednesday, February 18, hearing the words of the prophet Joel proclaim, "Return to God with all your heart, with fasting, with weeping, and with mourning." Our brokenness, joy, gifts and doubts all belong to God; we have to break open our faith to go deeper and Lent offers a chance to do so. Our evening will begin with a Wondrous Wednesday dinner of delicious soups followed by a short service of contemplation and reflection.

At the Ash Wednesday service, and continuing in the weeks following, you will be asked to create a blessing bowl or choose a blessing jar that we will provide. During the season, we invite you to expand your sense of gratitude and generosity by becoming more mindful of the many blessings in our lives and, as we explore a life full to the brim during Lent, reflect each day or each week on the ways that God blesses your life. Write down those blessings on a slip of paper and fill your bowl with them. On Palm Sunday, you will be asked to bring your bowl to worship and pour your blessings into a collective bowl that we will fill to the brim with gratitude.

Part of living an expansive life is seeking to live in right relationship with God, ourselves and one another . . . and prayer is a great way to deepen and expand those relationships. As part of our Lenten season, you'll be asked to pray daily for a different member of the congregation, creating a paper Lenten prayer chain much like the ones we made at Christmas when we were children. Look for more information in the Eblast in coming weeks.

As we focus on our expansive lives this Lent, I pray we will all be filled with a greater sense of awe, gratitude and generosity as we reflect on the abiding love and endless grace that God pours out for us daily.

Shalom!

*Vicki*



Wondrous Wednesday Presents...

# Ash Wednesday

## COMMUNITY DINNER

February 18, 2026 | 6 PM

Join us for a Wondrous Wednesday Community Dinner on February 18 as we gather together before the Ash Wednesday service.

We'll meet at 6:00 PM in Fellowship Hall for a delicious meal featuring homemade soups, side dishes, and desserts. Vegan and gluten-free options will be available.

The Ash Wednesday service will follow at 7:00 PM in the Sanctuary.  
Make it easy on yourself—no need to cook dinner first!

Please sign up on [HERE](#) or at the Angel Desk.  
We hope you'll join us for this meaningful evening of fellowship and worship.

## Ash Wednesday Service



**Wednesday, February 18th at 7:00 pm in the Sanctuary.**

**Begin your Lenten journey with worship including prayer, confession, reflection, and the imposition of ashes.**

**All are invited to participate in this short, simple service as we seek forgiveness and recommitment to our Christian calling.**

# Federated Church Annual Meeting

**Sunday, February 22nd  
Immediately Following Worship  
Sanctuary or via [Zoom](#)**

Join us **Sunday, February 22nd**, immediately following worship, for our **Annual Meeting** in the Sanctuary or via [Zoom](#). This is an important time to reflect on the past year, discuss future plans, and participate in the life of our church community.

**Watch for the Annual Report and Financial Report**, which will be sent via email the week before the meeting. We encourage you to review them in advance and join us for this meaningful gathering.



## Federated Church Building Closure Policy

The building at 76 Bell Street will be closed for weather-related issues on a case-by-case basis. We will not automatically align with local school closures since our schedules and needs are very different. Individual groups may also decide for themselves whether they hold in-person meetings in the building as well.

If there is a power or water outage, the building will be closed for safety and security reasons.

A building closure will be communicated through a church-wide email, notification on the website, a voicemail message, and door signage.



# Women's Ministry

**Circle** will meet **Monday, February 16 at 11:30 AM** for lunch. Location to be announced.

**Helping Hands** Meets **Monday, February 23 at 1:00 PM** in the **Lower Level Meeting Room**. We'll be stuffing and sewing **cancer pillows** for Western Reserve Hospice. Last year, over 200 pillows were donated! Donations of **100% cotton fabric (3/4 yard or more)** are always appreciated.

**Sit and Stitch** Meets **every Thursday at 10:00 AM** in **Room 340**. Join us for fellowship while knitting or crocheting prayer shawls, prayer squares, baptismal blankets, and other items of care. Yarn and needles are available—everyone is welcome.

**Loaves & Fishes** Loaves & Fishes will serve lunch at **St. Paul's on Sunday, February 22**. Donations of cookies (packed two per bag) or snacks may be left in the **church kitchen by 9:00 AM** that day. If you would like to help serve, please contact **Jim Scheuermann**.

If you would like to join any of these activities, all are welcome... just drop in!

For more information contact Lynne Kessell, 440-487-9104 or [lynnekessell@gmail.com](mailto:lynnekessell@gmail.com).



## Service Project Luncheon

**Wednesday, February 11th, 11:45 AM**

**Fellowship Hall**



Join us for a time of service and fellowship! We'll begin with a punch bowl mixer at 11:45 AM, followed by baked potatoes with all the trimmings at noon.

During our time together, we will:

- Assemble **toiletry kits** for Phil Fogarty to distribute to individuals experiencing homelessness
- Create **Valentine's cards** with Kathy Rayer for the **Geauga County Department of Aging**

Please bring small, travel-size items if you are able: shampoo, soap, lotion, toothbrushes, toothpaste, tissues, lip balm, razors, combs, white tube socks, and washcloths. If you cannot attend, donations may be left **behind the Angel Desk**. These items are collected year-round.

**Please RSVP by Monday, February 9** by contacting **Lynne Kessell** at **440-487-9104**.

For more information contact Lynne Kessell, 440-487-9104 or [lynnekessell@gmail.com](mailto:lynnekessell@gmail.com).

# Soup"er Bowl

# GAME DAY

## Collection



**Fill up the Food Pantries**

**FEBRUARY 8TH**  
**BRING DONATIONS**  
**TO THE CHURCH LOBBY**

**with cans of soup**



28 Days Is BACK...



# Self-Love Edition

*“Love your neighbor as YOURSELF.” – Luke 10:27*

You cannot pour from an empty cup.

Before loving others well, we must first learn to love ourselves—with grace, intention, and honesty.

Join us for an evening of reflection, connection, and comfort as we explore what self-love looks like in real life and faith.



**Wednesday, February 25th  
6:30 PM | Federated Church  
76 Bell Street | Chagrin Falls**

*Sign Up by Scanning*



[fedchurch.org/events](http://fedchurch.org/events)

**THIS WILL BE  
A POTLUCK!**

Bring a dish that makes you feel loved, safe, and comforted—a favorite meal, a family recipe, or something that nourishes your soul.





# LENTEN BOOK STUDY

**With Revs. Dan Kershner & Houston Bowers**

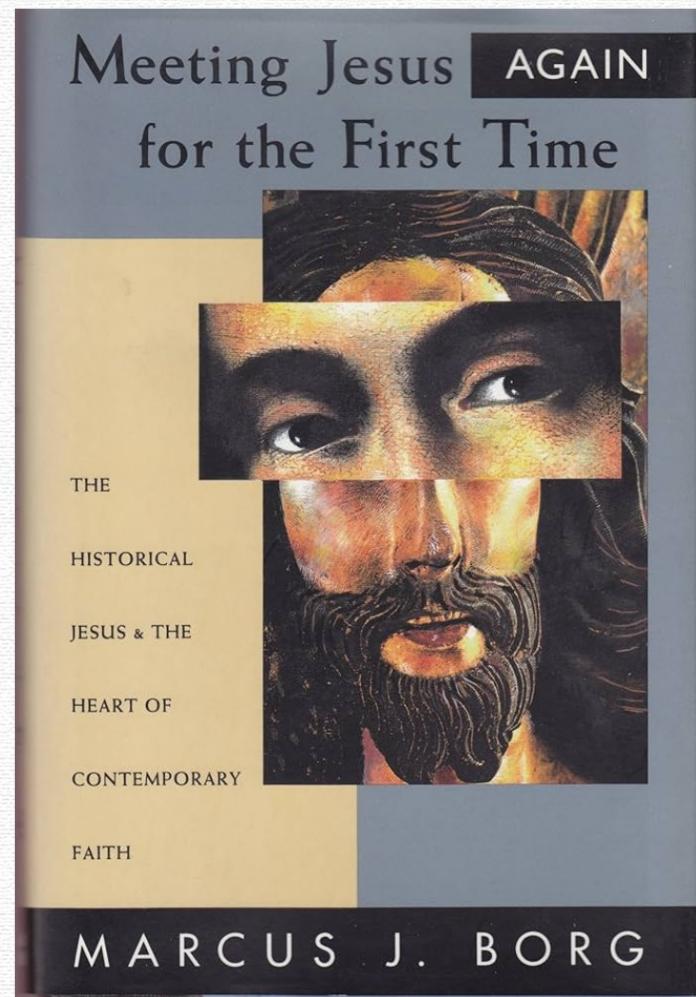


**WEDNESDAYS  
MARCH 4 - APRIL 1  
10:30 AM - 12 PM  
ROOM G30**

Lent invites us to reflect, question, and deepen our faith. Join us for a five-week book study of Marcus Borg's Meeting Jesus Again for the First Time, a thoughtful exploration of who Jesus was, who he is, and what it means to follow him today.

Through guided discussion and shared reflection, we'll engage themes of history, faith, and spiritual renewal—creating space for both curiosity and growth during the Lenten season.

**All are welcome.** Come with questions, an open heart, and a desire to journey through Lent together.



**BOOKS AVAILABLE THROUGH AMAZON  
OR OTHER BOOK RETAILERS**

**PLEASE REGISTER THROUGH REALM OR IN THE LOBBY.**

## Membership & Nominating Commission

Great news! Our Commissions and Committees are almost filled for the 2026 Church Calendar year. Thanks so much to everyone who is serving Federated in this important way.

We still have openings on the following Commissions and Committees. I urge you to prayerfully consider these opportunities!

- **Congregational Care Commission** – Fostering fellowship opportunities (Coffee Hour and Advent by Candlelight are a few examples), and visitation to members
- **Spiritual Formation Commission** – Spiritual growth/Christian development, retreat planning, book discussion planning, and adult education
- **Human Resources Committee** – Reviews staffing levels, compensation and benefits, job descriptions, etc. (*HR background required*)
- **Legacy Committee** – Manages and promotes the Legacy fund; meets four times per year
- **Generosity Commission** – Creates strategy and celebrates financial commitments, gifts of time, and gifts of talent; works with other committees and commissions on practices of generosity

Joining a Commission or Committee is a fantastic way to serve Federated, to deepen your faith, to get to know fellow parishioners, to be a part of a team, and to offer your God-given talents.

To learn more, please reach out to Dawn Herdman at 440-487-5645, or [dtrmherd@gmail.com](mailto:dtrmherd@gmail.com).

federated   
grow

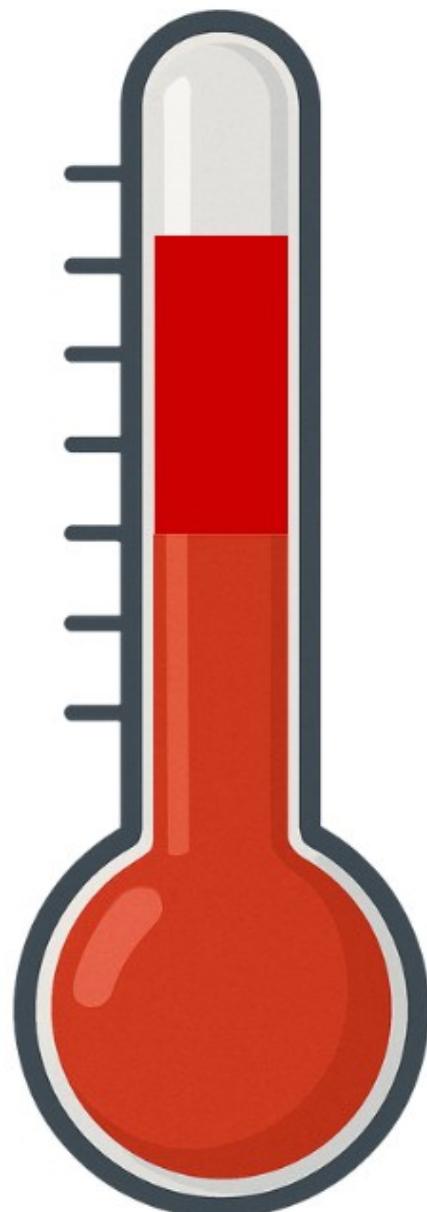
### Federated Generosity Pledge Campaign 2026

Thank you to everyone who submitted their pledge. We received 253 pledges – towards our goal of 300+ pledges. Thank you for your overwhelming generosity. You are always free to give [HERE](#) on REALM or contact the office if you need help.

**The Generosity Commission set a goal of 300 for the 2026 Generosity Campaign.**

**We finished the campaign at 253 pledging households.**

**Thank you for your support!**



**federated**   
*support*



# FEDERATED CHURCH

## PRIMETIME NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026



We would love to have you join us for one or all of the upcoming Primetime events! You do not need to be a member of the church to join us. Church members can sign up on REALM. Feel free to sign up by contacting Thea Mozingo at [tmozingo@fedchurch.org](mailto:tmozingo@fedchurch.org) or by calling 440-247-6490

### Upcoming Events

#### **February 12th - Primetime Lunch Out - Lola's Bistro 11:30am - 1:30pm**

Join us at Lola's Bistro and enjoy this new local spot!

#### **February 17th - Widows' Dinner 5:30pm**

Join us for a dinner out at Mavis Public House in Solon.  
Please register online or by contacting the office.

#### **Primetime Bridge** February 3<sup>rd</sup> & 17<sup>th</sup> 1:00pm to 3:00pm Fellowship Hall - Contact Harriett Rogers to schedule

#### **Primetime Mahjong** Every Friday from 1:00-4:00pm Fellowship Hall - All experience levels welcome

Federated Church  
76 Bell St  
Chagrin Falls OH  
440-247-6490  
[www.fedchurch.org](http://www.fedchurch.org)





# FEDERATED CHURCH PRIMETIME NEWSLETTER

FEBRUARY 2026

**f** federated  
*live your faith*

## Lunch & Craft



**THANKS,  
KATHY!**



Federated Church  
76 Bell St  
Chagrin Falls OH  
440-247-6490  
[www.fedchurch.org](http://www.fedchurch.org)

**federated** *grow*



FEDERATED CHURCH

welcomes you to  
**“GOD’S BIG BACKYARD”**  
**VBS 2026**



**13-17  
JULY  
9 AM- 12 PM**



**FAMILY LIFE CENTER**

**K - 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE**

**JOIN US IN EXPLORATION!**

Calling all kids Kindergarten–5th Grade!

Join us for a week of fun, faith, and discovery as we explore God’s Big Backyard—learning how to care for God’s creation through earth stewardship and environmental themes.

**MORE INFORMATION**  
**FEDCHURCH.ORG/VBS**





# JOIN US!



**Book your spot now!!**

**On Friday, February 6<sup>th</sup>, the youth group is going to a Cleveland Charge game. The Cleveland Charge is Cleveland's G League Basketball team and feeder into the Cavaliers. We have a VIP night organized where we will have the following plan:**

- We have 15 participants for the Benchwarmers experience (Book your spot by emailing Oliver omason@fedchurch.org)**
- We will be arriving in the lobby no later than 6:00 PM. We will be going down to the court right afterwards to begin the Fan Experience where your group will get to watch warmups from the Charge bench.**
- It is a cashless facility, please bring the appropriate payment methods if you will want something from concessions.**

**RSVP to Oliver at [omason@fedchurch.org](mailto:omason@fedchurch.org)**

COLORADO  
KIDS...

# H.A.C.K. IS BACK!



We've  
Got You  
Covered!



Are you in need of help this winter? Are your sidewalks getting too icy? Are there decorations in need of putting away? Look no further than the HACK program here at Federated Church! "Hire a Colorado Kid" is a program we are relaunching in order to help fund the Youth Group's trip to Colorado. We ask that you donate \$100 per 4 hours of work to the Colorado fund. This donation can be made in cash or by logging into Realm. If your snow looks like a sheet, then take a seat, because it is quite the feat, what our kids can complete!

Contact Oliver, [omason@fedchurch.org](mailto:omason@fedchurch.org), for more information.





# ← → PARENTS NIGHT OUT ← →

## Saturday, February 21, 2026

Give yourself a night off—we've got the kids covered!

Federated Church is hosting a **Parents' Night Out** for children **Pre-K through 5th grade**. While parents enjoy an evening out (or a quiet night in!), kids will have a fun-filled night at church with:



🎉 And more fun than we can fit on a flyer!

**Drop-off: 6:00 PM**

**Pick-up: 8:15 PM**

**Location:** Federated Church

Questions or interested in participating?

✉ Email **Oliver Mason** at [omason@fedchurch.org](mailto:omason@fedchurch.org)

A great night for kids—and a well-deserved break for parents!



Federated Youth Invites You To...

# MARDI GRAS LUNCHEON

**FEBRUARY 15, 2026**

*Immediately Following Worship*

Celebrate Mardi Gras with your Federated church family!  
Join us after worship for a festive luncheon featuring traditional Mardi Gras  
food, decorations, and fellowship.

This event will be supported by our Colorado Kids, who will help set up,  
decorate, cook, and serve as part of their fundraiser for this summer's faith  
journey.

♥ At-will donations will be accepted during Fellowship Hour  
฿ Cash Appreciated

Come hungry and ready to celebrate!

# 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

## Social and Environmental Justice (SJAM) News

The mission of the Social Justice Advocacy Ministry is to be a voice and witness to God's love for all people and creation and to advocate for justice for those who are marginalized, discriminated against and denied their inherent rights as children of God and citizens of our nation and world.

We strive to become well informed, provide opportunities to educate ourselves, balanced with opportunities to take action. Live Our Faith!

To learn more or receive our emails, please contact [sjamfedchurch@gmail.com](mailto:sjamfedchurch@gmail.com)

**Next Meeting: Sunday, February 8, 2026**

**LOWER LEVEL MEETING ROOM**

**Come and join us! ALL ARE WELCOME!**



**To see events that may be of interest to you – go to:**

[https://docs.google.com/document/d/15o1wV1KY9yPpMqiLsQwwOuMA-0SmuLT\\_og24PCblya4/edit?usp=sharing](https://docs.google.com/document/d/15o1wV1KY9yPpMqiLsQwwOuMA-0SmuLT_og24PCblya4/edit?usp=sharing)

**SPEAKER NIGHT – Monday, February 23<sup>rd</sup> – 7 PM at 76 Bell St., Fellowship Hall**

In honor of Black History month, the Racial Justice Committee of SJAM is sponsoring a presentation on the **Community of Hope**. COH is a non-profit organization in Cleveland that supports youth aging out of foster care. When folks reach the age of 18, they are legally no longer able to be supported by the foster care system. Many youth are still challenged and not fully ready to engage with the world around them. COH creates a network of volunteers to come together for a period of at least one year to support, mentor, and simply be in relationship with a young person.

We invite everyone to come and hear the program director, Denise Eaddy and 1 or 2 youth talk about the impact COH is having on so many young men and women in Cleveland.

Snacks provided

Free Will offering to support COH

**MOVIE "1946 – THE MISTRANSLATION THAT SHIFTED CULTURE"**

**Sunday, March 1 – 1-4 PM at the Family Life Center**

SJAM in conjunction with GEAUGA SOGI is presenting this thought-provoking documentary about roots of the word "homosexual" in the Bible. See flyer for details.

# 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

## 1946 Workshop

March 1, 2026 1-4pm

The Family Life Center

Join us as we watch  
and unpack this incredible  
film documenting how  
a mistranslation in the  
Bible reshaped our culture.

Discussions facilitated by:

Jessica Peacock M.Div.

Dana Oleskiewicz M.S.

Alexander Miller M.A.

FREE EVENT!

Register here:



[events@geaugasogi.org](mailto:events@geaugasogi.org)

## WHAT IF THE WORD **HOMOSEXUAL** WAS NEVER MEANT TO BE IN THE BIBLE?

# 1946

THE MISTRANSlation THAT SHIFTED CULTURE



**SOCIAL  
JUSTICE  
ADVOCACY  
MINISTRY**  
federated *act*



March 14, 2026      6-10 pm

Take a sweet escape to this nontraditional, sensory friendly prom! LGBTQIA+ high schoolers and allies can dress up or dress down for this silent disco. Enjoy dinner and dessert along with dancing and games. A quiet space will also be provided.

FREE EVENT!  
Register here!



For questions contact:

[events@geaugasogi.org](mailto:events@geaugasogi.org)



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*live your faith*

## Creation Care

### February Tip of the Month

#### Winter Energy and Heating Efficiency

Layer Up: Wear sweaters and blankets to stay warm, allowing you to lower the thermostat, which can save 1%-3% on heating bills for every degree reduced.

Seal Drafts: Use weather stripping or draft excluders on windows and doors to keep warm air in.

Utilize Sun: Keep curtains and blinds open during the day to let in sunlight, but close them at night to trap warmth.

Smart Thermostat: Install a programmable or smart thermostat to automatically manage temperatures.

Efficient Lighting: Switch to LED lights, which use up to 93% less energy than traditional ones.

Maintain Equipment: Replace furnace filters regularly and have heating systems serviced annually.

Snow Removal: Avoid chemical de-icers and gasoline-powered snow removal products.

Be sure to use a reusable mug when warming up with a hot beverage.

# FEDERATED CHURCH PRESENTS...

# 2025-2026

## PERFORMING ARTS SERIES



**ROMAN RABINOVICH, PIANIST**

**THU, OCT 9, 2025 - 7 PM**

**TICKETS: \$25-\$45 | STUDENTS \$10**

Renowned pianist and ChamberFest Cleveland co-director performs Haydn, Debussy, Beethoven & Schumann.



**BURNING RIVER BRASS**

**"OUR KIND OF CHRISTMAS"**

**SAT, DEC 20, 2025 - 7 PM**

**TICKETS: \$30-\$50 | STUDENTS \$10**

Celebrate the season with a festive mix of carols, swing, and a jazzy Big Band Nutcracker! A holiday concert sure to have you singing along.



**APOLLO'S FIRE- "WINTER SPARKS"**

**SAT, JAN 31, 2026 - 7:30 PM**

**TICKETS: ASSIGNED SEATS**

Virtuoso chamber works by Bach, Telemann, Vivaldi, and Marais, featuring dazzling soloists on flute, oboe, violin, and viola da gamba.



**CLE CONCIERTO- "CELEBRATING WOMEN'S HISTORY MONTH"**

**SAT, MAR 21, 2026 - 7 PM**

**TICKETS: \$25-\$45 | STUDENTS \$10**

Celebrate women composers of the 17th century featuring the music of Strozzi, Bembo, and Leonarda.



**AUSTIN WALKIN' CANE- "BBQ & BLUES"**

**SUN, JUNE 7, 2026 | 4 PM**

**FAMILY LIFE CENTER**

**TICKETS: \$30 | KIDS (12U) \$10**

A crowd-pleasing blues performance paired with our annual dinner. Featuring a community BBQ cookoff!



FOR MORE INFO: JOSHUA KONOW (JKONOW@FEDCHURCH.ORG)  
OR 216.247.6490X120 OR VISIT FEDCHURCH.ORG/PAS



# Fellowship Treats

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!

**February 1– last names beginning with L and M**

**February 8– last names beginning with N, O, P, Q, and R**

**February 15– last names beginning with S and T**

**February 22– No Fellowship Hour for Annual Meeting**



## Contact Us!

[www.fedchurch.org](http://www.fedchurch.org)

[fedchurch@fedchurch.org](mailto:fedchurch@fedchurch.org)

Phone: 440.247.6490

Fax: 440.247.2516

Facebook: [facebook.com/thefederatedchurch](https://www.facebook.com/thefederatedchurch)

Instagram: [@federatedchurch](https://www.instagram.com/federatedchurch)

## OUR STAFF

### IS HERE TO HELP YOU

#### CLERGY

**Vicki McGaw**, Interim Pastor

**Judy Bagley-Bonner**, Minister of Pastoral Care

#### Administration Staff

**Beth Rutkowski**, Senior Director of People and Operations

**Brooke Strong**, Director of Communications

**Thea Mozingo**, Director of Generosity

**Oliver Mason**, Director of Youth and Families

\* **Susi Kawolics**, Bookkeeper

\* **Marty Culbertson**, Director of Missions

\* **Allison Hutchins**, Administrative Specialist

**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

\* **Jannine Mason**, Children's Activities Leader

\* denotes part-time staff



# federated

**Hope to see you  
this Sunday!**

**10:00 AM  
In person and Online**