



Federated Church

A Place to Belong

December

2025

KEVIN DIXON
ORGANIST &
CHOIR DIRECTOR

LUANNE BROOKS
CHURCH SECRETARY

Points of Interest

Pastor Letter

Calendar

Choirs

Concerts

Tag Tree

Blood Drive

Diaper Dist.

At this point, I don't think anyone reading this will be surprised to learn that I am kind of a pop culture junkie. Movies, television, books, music. I love pretty much anything that depicts the ideas, attitudes, and images of a particular time...even the dumb ideas and images. Especially, when it comes to Christmas time every year. Outside of what happened at a stable in Bethlehem 2000+ years ago, I think the whole pop culture experience is my favorite part of Christmas.

From the new Santa Claus Coca-Cola cans to those old Claymation TV specials and cheesy Hallmark Channel movies. From driving around with carols playing on the car radio to my collection of seasonally appropriate ties. The weeks between Thanksgiving and December 25th are a pop culture smorgasbord for the senses. And I wouldn't have it any other way. All these pop culture icons take an already special time of the year and kick it up a notch.

And, in all my pop culture Christmas experiences, the one I have that comes the closest to depicting the true spirit of the season is A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens.

Written and published in October of 1843 - the same year that the first Christmas cards were printed and Queen Victoria had the first Christmas tree put up in Buckingham Palace - the short book that Dickens intended to be a Halloween thriller, caught the public's newly emerging interest in the magic of the Christmas season. Whether it was the book's central theme of conversion via supernatural miracles or Dicken's vivid descriptions of London during the holiday season remain open for debate, but there is no doubt that Dickens ghost story has become a pop culture staple of Christmas.

Translated into 74 languages, the book has been adapted 59 times for movies or television – not to mention stage plays, operas, very special Christmas episodes of every sitcom worth its salt, a ballet, and...for those old enough to remember...a classic Christmas Eve radio drama performed every year by Lionel Barrymore. A 1999 study by the literature department at Harvard University concluded that more people knew the plot of A Christmas Carol than the plot of any other literary classic...regardless of whether or not they'd actually read the book.

You know how the story goes. Mean and miserly Ebenezer Scrooge is visited on Christmas Eve by the ghost of his long dead business partner Jacob Marley - who offers Scrooge a chance to change his ways in the form of a visit from three spirits: The Ghost of Christmas, Ghost of Christmas Present, and Ghost of Christmas Yet to Come. In the end, of course, Scrooge takes advantage of the chance presented to him and becomes a changed man.

The Christmas Carol is a story about a promise made, a journey of preparation undertaken, and a promise fulfilled. Not unlike the familiar Story of Christmas - which is also about a promise of a Messiah made, our journey of preparation, and the promise of the Messiah fulfilled...again and again.

But the parallels between the Bible and the Charles Dickens classic don't stop there. Every step that Scrooge takes on the fateful Christmas Eve mirrors a step we take on our Advent journey towards the Christ Child in the manger. Scrooge's stubborn refusal to hear Marley's warnings is reminiscent of the Israelites initial refusal to hear the warnings of the Old Testament prophets. While the three Ghosts look at Scrooge's past, present, and future parallel the places in our lives that need to be revisited during our own time of Advent preparation for the coming Christ...the coming Christ, whose arrival changes our lives in much the same way the coming of Christmas morning changes Scrooge. We all become brand new people through the power of Christmas.

The fact that every image in the Dickens story immediately makes us think fondly of Christmas is just the icing on the already meaningful...and delicious...Christmas Plum Pudding.

God bless us everyone...

Pastor John

Applying Bible Principles

Life is full of choices. Regular gasoline or premium? Whole milk or 2%? Sweetened or unsweetened iced tea? Butter or margarine? Paper or plastic? Credit or debit?

The Christian life is also one that involves choices. Some of those choices may have been made for us by our parents when we were young. Some of those choices we reaffirmed as we grew up. The fact that we are part of the ministry here at The Federated Church is a result of a choice.

Romans 6:13 describes one of the most important choices we will ever make in the Christian life. Writing to first-century converts, the Apostle Paul instructed them, “No longer present your members to sin as instruments of wickedness, but present yourselves to God as those who have been brought from death to life, and present your members to God as instruments of righteousness.”

As God’s children, we have a choice. One way or another, we are going to allow the control of our lives to be determined by a choice. Either we will choose to allow the arch-enemy of our souls to be in control, or we will allow God to be in control. The interesting thing about this choice is that it is not a once-in-a-lifetime decision. It is a decision that we make daily. Some days, it is a decision that we make continuously throughout the day.

In spite of Flip Wilson’s contention that “the devil made me do it,” in reality, we determine whom we will serve. And unlike the decisions regarding sweetened or unsweetened tea or paper or plastic bags, this decision has eternal ramifications. It also has ramifications for The Federated Church.

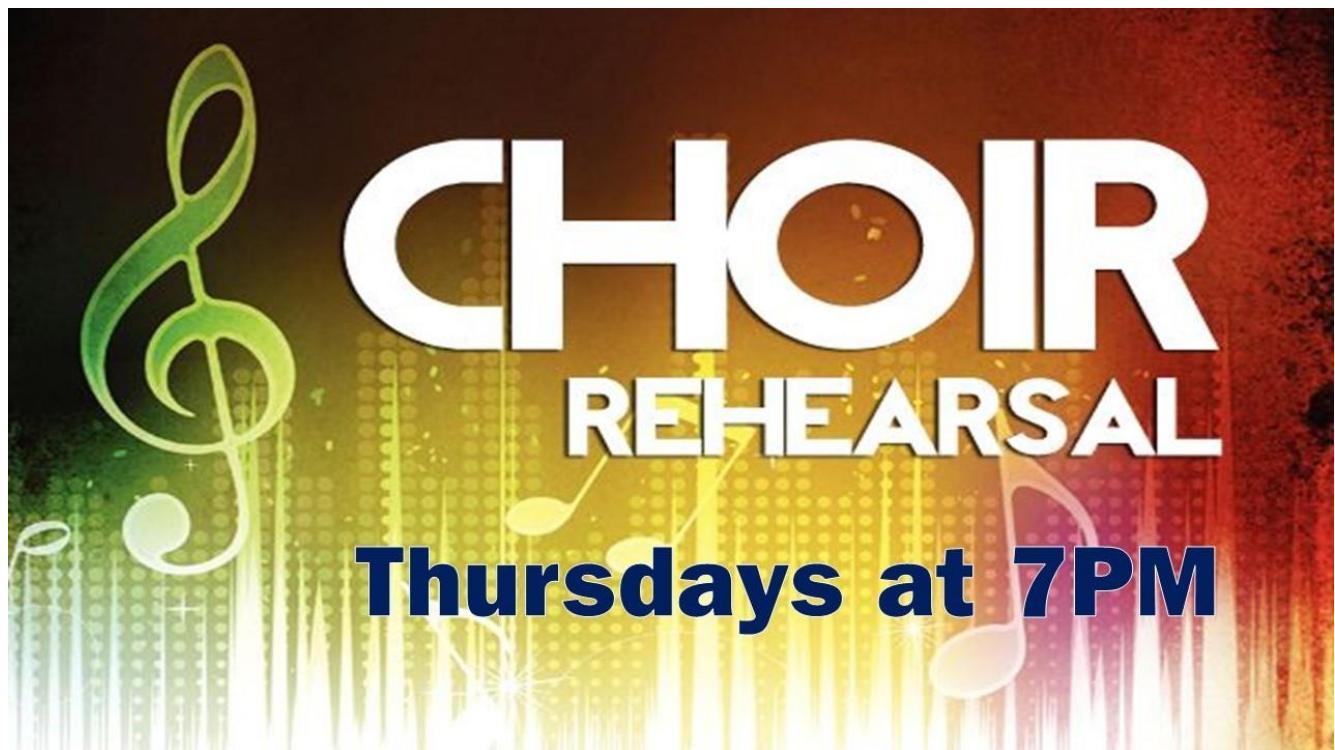
Think about this question: If everyone who is on the roll of our church were totally yielded to God every day, how would it impact the life and outreach of our congregation? If each of us were totally yielded to the controlling power of Almighty God every moment of every day, the impact we could and would have for God’s sake would be staggering.

Choices are inevitable. We cannot escape them. But one choice is of paramount importance, that of deciding who will be in charge of our lives. Do you know how Joshua responded when faced with that choice? Here’s what he said: “As for me and my household, we will serve the Lord.” Will you do the same?

December

2025

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1 7:00 pm Finance Bldgs. & Grds	2 5:00 pm Girl Scouts	3 WIC 9:00am – 2:00pm	4 7:00 pm Choir	5	6
7 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee hour Bell Choir Communion	8	9 5:00 pm Girl Scouts	10	11 7:00 pm Choir	12	13
14 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee hour Bell Choir	15 7:00 pm Church Council	16 5:00 pm Girl Scouts	17	18 7:00 pm Choir	19	20 10:00- Noon Diaper Distribution
21 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee hour Bell Choir	22	23	24 Christmas Eve 8:00 pm	25	26	27
28 9:30 am Worship Service 10:30 am Coffee hour Bell Choir	29	30	31			



Community Singers Present

Annual Christmas Concert
Sunday, December 7th 7pm
Mt. Markham High School
No admission Charge
Refreshments after performance

White Gift

The Worship Board provides Christmas gifts to our sick and shut-ins each year. This year they are gifting the 2026 Daily Guidepost. The envelope marked "White Gift Offering" are for this purpose. Thank you for your generosity.

Tag Tree

The tag tree is in the sanctuary. Each adult has one tag and each child has two. There are suggestions on the tags use your own judgement you are not required to purchase everything. The deadline to return gifts is Sunday, December 14th. Please have them wrapped and the original tag taped on package. This will give us time to get everything arranged and ready for delivery on Saturday, December 20th.



RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE

**The Federated Church
Wednesday, December 10th
1:00 – 6:00 PM**



Poinsettias

We will be adorning the sanctuary with poinsettias for the Christmas Season.

**Please let Luanne know if you would like it in
memory of loved one for the bulletin.**

Keys to the Church

Due to insurance and liability, the church council is preparing a record of who has keys to the church. If you have keys, please let Luanne in the office know. We would really appreciate your help. Thank you.



Mohawk Valley Choral Society

Presents

The Many Moods of Christmas

Sunday, December 7, 2027 at 3:00 pm

At the Faro de Luz Seventh Adventist Church

1605 Genesee Street, Utica

Please see Gail Royce or Cathy Wheat for tickets

\$15.00 for advanced and \$18.00 at the door



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