



# Federated Church

## A Place to Belong

*“There would be no Easter if there hadn’t been a Christmas,  
but Christmas would mean nothing if there hadn’t been an Easter.”*

- Gordon B. Hinckley

March

2026

John Partise,  
Interim Pastor

KEVIN DIXON  
ORGANIST &  
CHOIR DIRECTOR

LUANNE BROOKS  
CHURCH SECRETARY

Points of Interest

Pastor Letter

Calendar

Choirs

Diaper Dist.

Easter Flowers

Concert

Holy Week

For no particular reason I’ve spent part of this last week comparing Easter to Christmas.

Maybe it’s because they both fell so close together this year? There wasn’t a whole lot of time to completely decompress from Advent and Christmas before all of a sudden Lent and Easter are upon us. Or maybe it’s because I’m starting to prep Easter material while it still looks like Christmas outside my office window?

Either way, in our society we have these two great religious holidays – Christmas and Easter – that are not only important on the church calendar but meaningful to the secular world, as well. Christmas and Easter. Two holidays that I feel are competing with each other for our attention.

For most of our society today, I suspect there will be no competition. Christmas wins hands down. It’s that magical time of year when we gather with family and friends to sing carols, decorate the tree, and exchange gifts. Christmas is the climax of everybody’s whole year. And, you don’t actually have to be a Christian to celebrate it. Just hang some lights on an evergreen tree, throw an inflatable Santa Claus out in the front yard, and you’ve got yourself Christmas.

Easter, on the other hand, is just another day on the calendar...a chance to maybe get away for a week’s vacation if you’re lucky enough to have schools be closed during that same week. There’s no gift exchange. No Easter cookies. The decorations are mostly colored eggs and bunny rabbits. When compared to all the wonder of Christmas, Easter is a distantly second-rate holiday.

But that’s out in the world beyond our churches where we all know secularism and commercialism reign supreme. Let’s compare the way our churches celebrate the two holidays and see what happens inside our walls.

The sanctuary at Christmas has nativity sets, poinsettias, and evergreen trees. The sanctuary at Easter has empty crosses, lilies, and palm branches. At Christmas, we sing those special carols that we hold near and dear to our hearts. At Easter, there's all those wonderful hymns that it just wouldn't be Easter Sunday morning if we didn't sing. One has a special candlelight service on Christmas Eve while the other has a special sunrise service on Easter morning. Both have a forty day period of preparation leading up to them - Christmas with Advent and Easter with Lent.

So, it seems that within our churches, we've made it so there's no real difference between the way we handle Christmas and Easter. And that's too bad because there really should be a huge difference between the two. One of the two is, far and away, more important than the other.

The events of Easter, beginning at noon on Good Friday and continuing through until early Sunday morning, are what marks us as Christians. They provide the necessary sacrificial death on the cross as an atonement for our sins and the triumph of the empty tomb that offers each of us new lives through the presence of a risen Christ.

Christmas offers Christians none of that. If Jesus had not died on the cross for the forgiveness of our sins, his birth would have been just another night in late December. If the tomb had not been empty, the manger would make absolutely no difference.

In the entire New Testament, there is not a single reference to the virgin birth of Jesus outside of the nativity story...and the nativity story itself is only mentioned by Matthew and Luke. Mark and John clearly didn't consider the events of Christmas worth recording.

But the death and resurrection of Jesus is a different story altogether. Those two events come up over and over again throughout the New Testament. All four gospels, Acts of the Apostles, Revelation, and all but three of the twenty-one epistles mention them specifically. When the first Christians preached to each other, it was the empty tomb they were talking about. It was their fundamental faith in the events of that first Easter Sunday that made them stand out from other Jews and eventually establish their own church.

If Jesus did not die and rise again, then we have all spent 2000 years following a misguided Jewish rabbi with delusions of grandeur whose virgin birth in Bethlehem is totally irrelevant.

Sorry Christmas. The win goes to Easter.

Thanks for listening....

*John R. Partise*

Interim Pastor

## Applying Bible Principles

How would you complete this statement:

*The best way to recruit people to serve in the ministry here at The Federated Church is to \_\_\_\_\_?*

Would you say that we should:

- place an ad in the local newspaper?
- seek to “network” with friends and neighbors?
- hire a consultant to be in charge of recruiting?
- identify qualified people in the congregation and pressure them?
- provide some nice “perks” for church workers, such as free coffee and donuts or reserved parking spaces?
- have public recognition ceremonies of present workers as a way to interest others in serving?

Or would your answer be to make this a matter of heartfelt prayer? It might surprise you to learn that in both the gospels of Matthew and Luke, God’s way is described as follows:

*We are to ask God to send forth workers for the harvest field.*

That seems so clear, doesn’t it? Ask God. Ask God to send forth workers. What could be confusing about that? According to Matthew 9:38 and Luke 10:2, God’s primary method for recruiting is prayer. Sadly, that is usually the last thing we do. When there is a need for workers, we’ll try anything and everything but prayer. In fact, most of the time, if we do pray about the need for people to serve the Lord, it is as a last resort when everything else we’ve tried has failed.

In our church, there is always a need for people to become involved in service and ministry. Will you pray and ask God to provide these people? And will you be willing to be part of the God’s answer to your prayer?

# March

2026

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



**Bell Choir  
after  
Worship**



**CHOIR  
REHEARSAL**

**Thursdays at 7PM**



Gently Used. Greatly Needed.

**PASS IT ON**

**Community Closet for Baby**  
West Winfield

VillageDiapers.FedChurch@gmail.com

An Outreach of the Federated Church of West Winfield



**March 21<sup>st</sup>**  
**10am – Noon**

*Running low? We can help!*

*It Takes a Village Diaper Bank*  
*West Winfield*

*VillageDiapers.FedChurch@gmail.com*



Sunday, March 8<sup>th</sup> begins Daylight Saving Time. Don't forget to move your clocks forward ahead on Saturday

**Coffee,  
Clergy,  
&  
Conversation**

**Tuesdays**  
**9:30 – 11:00 AM**  
**Join Us!**



## Easter Flowers

We would love to have plants for the sanctuary on Easter Sunday. Please let the church office know if you are bringing a plant in memory of a loved one. Please let us know by Monday, March 30<sup>th</sup> for it to be in the bulletin. Thank you.



Community Singers  
Annual Springs Concert  
Sunday, March 22<sup>nd</sup>, 7:00 pm  
Mt. Markham High School  
No Admission Charge  
Refreshments



## Federated Church

### Holy Week Schedule

Palm Sunday, March 29<sup>th</sup>, 9:30  
am

Maundy Thursday April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 7:00  
pm

Good Friday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7:00 pm

Easter Sunday April 5<sup>th</sup>, 9:30 am

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