

## January

JANUARY 3 9:30a.m. online only

"The Party of Life"  
Pastor Doug Dent

John 1:1-18  
*Celebrating the Lord's Supper*

JANUARY 10 9:30a.m. online only

"Words Create Worlds"  
Pastor Doug Dent

Genesis 1:1-5

JANUARY 17 9:30a.m. Worship

"Try and Buy"  
Pastor Doug Dent

John 1:43-51

JANUARY 24 9:30a.m. Worship

"A Good Disciple Is the One Who Leaves"  
Pastor Doug Dent

Mark 1:14-20

JANUARY 31 9:30a.m. Worship

"Real People, Not Actor's"  
Pastor Doug Dent

ANNUAL MEETING

Psalms 111

## Dates to Remember

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 1**  
CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED  
NEW YEAR'S DAY

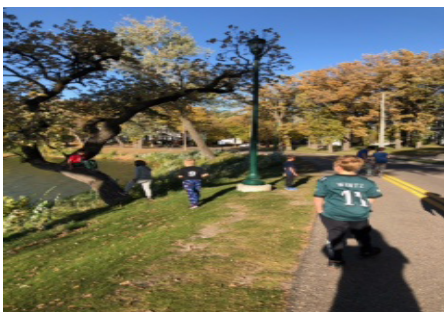
**TUESDAY, JANUARY 12**  
MINISTRY NIGHT

**FRIDAY, JANUARY 15**  
NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

**MONDAY, JANUARY 18**  
MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

**THURSDAY, JANUARY 21**  
D&E MEET

**SUNDAY, JANUARY 31**  
ANNUAL MEETING



Kidz club on a God the Creator walk this fall around Lake Alice.



Senior High Youth had a really good time getting together for a canoe trip. We gathered this fall on the Ottetail River.



Some of the Senior High youth were able to get together and go out Christmas caroling. They all had a wonderful time!



During the Advent-Christmas season just past, I pondered the light that shines in the darkness. The prophet Isaiah announces that the people who lived in deep darkness, on them light has shined. And the gospel writer John reaffirms that the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

Isaiah and John give us a message of hope. The light is coming into the world, into our darkness, into our despair, into our sadness, into our injustice. And when it comes, none of that darkness can overpower the light.

But couldn't the light expel the darkness forever? I want the darkness crushed. Like the smallpox vaccine, I want the light to eradicate our diseases and our dis-eases so that they will never return. I want it to be like those ballgames that you leave after the seventh inning because the losing team has no chance of winning. Instead, the promise is that the darkness will not overcome the light.

The darkest place I ever visited was the Siloam Tunnel in Jerusalem. King Hezekiah (d. 687 BC) built this tunnel to bring water into the pool of Siloam. A guide handed us candles as we set out, sometimes waist deep in water, to transverse the 583 yards of the tunnel. About midway, our guide told us to extinguish our lights. The darkness was overwhelming. It felt almost physical, pressing down on us. Not a glimpse of light anywhere!

Can you imagine the darkness of that cavern? In the night darkness of my home, light creeps in from a neighbor's porch light. The glow of an electronic device provides some ability to see the contours and contents of each room. If not, I know where the light switches are by memory.

But the darkness of that cave was deep. Isaiah-deep. We remained in our temporary darkness for just a moment. Long enough for the gloom to penetrate our psyche and implant a small amount of danger and foreboding. A long, quiet, disturbing moment. Then the guide relit his light, and relief swept through our group. The long night of darkness (only a minute!) was over. The darkness could not overcome the light.

We've had a long, dark year. The reasons are well known. Health crisis, racial crisis, climate crisis, economic crisis. Some are new; others have long been circulating among us. In the end, they may have no final, all-encompassing cure. But the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness cannot overcome it.

In the 16th century, the Franciscan monk Giovanni Giocondo wrote a letter to a friend who was suffering: "Take peace! The gloom of the world is but a shadow. Behind it, yet within reach, is joy. There is radiance and glory in the darkness, could we but see. And to see, we have only to look. I beseech you to look! And so at this Christmastime, I greet you with the prayer that for you now and forever, the day breaks, and the shadows flee away."

We begin this new year in the confident knowledge that God's light – Jesus – came into the world, and his light still shines brightly. May his light help to beat back the shadows of doubt and fear.

Blessings for a healthy and happy New Year!  
Pastor Doug

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THANK YOU to Bill and Mary Ann Nead for providing technical support for our virtual services. THANK YOU to the musicians who provided special music for the Christmas season: Karen Anderson, Ruth Aulds, Hollis Davenport, Cindy Holte, Craig Jorgensen, Sondra Lee, Michelle Loomer, Tessa Nord, Gloria Ronning, Paul Shol, and Vivian Whipple.

WE appreciate all your efforts to keep our worshipping community connected!



After meeting in-person consistently this fall for Sunday School, Kidz Club, Senior High youth group, and 9th grade confirmation, we shifted into virtual mode for the month of December. Kidz Club and Sunday School learning pages continue to remain available through the Federated Church website. 9th grade confirmation and youth group began meeting by Zoom. 7th and 8th grade confirmation continued meeting by Zoom, as we have been throughout the fall due to scheduling issues. Although Zoom is a blessing in these times, we hope to be able to begin meeting in-person again as soon as we are able, as there really is no substitute for being with one another and building strong relationships.

Back in December our senior high youth were able to plan a Christmas carol outing, which was possible due to the fact that many of them drive their own vehicles now or carpool with one another. Both the middle school and high school groups are praying for snow so that we are able to plan more outdoor winter activities to do, such as sledding and cross-country skiing. Our elementary school, middle school, and high school youth are all wonderful people with great ideas and a desire to be with one another, and so we hope that come January 2021 we will be back together. As you can guess, it is difficult to lay out concrete plans for the coming month as things are changing at such a rapid pace. We will provide information about the start-up of activities as soon as we are able! I truly miss being with all of you. I can't wait to see you all again soon!

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## **ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION – Sunday, January 31, 2021 (10:30 AM)**

The Deacons & Elders cordially invite you to attend the Annual Meeting of the Federated Church Congregation on Sunday, January 31, 2021 at 10:30 AM, for the purpose of electing officers, reviewing the 2021 budget, approving the pastor's compensation, and conducting other routine business of the congregation.

**Meeting Format:** This will be a hybrid meeting and members may participate in-person at Federated Church or online via Zoom. A link to the online meeting will be provided by email one week prior to the meeting.

**Meeting Spaces:** Members attending the meeting in-person and masked will gather in the sanctuary, sitting spatially distanced. If more than 75 people attend, extra seating will be in the Fellowship Hall with the meeting projected on the tv screen. Members wishing to attend the meeting online will be sent a link to join via Zoom from their computer, laptop, tablet, or smartphone.

**Annual Reports:** The annual meeting reports and the proposed 2021 budget will be available on the church website ([federatedff.org](http://federatedff.org)) one week prior to the meeting. No paper copies will be provided. Reports will be shared on the screen during the meeting.

**Recording:** For transparency and voting accuracy, the meeting will be recorded both by video (in-house) and by Zoom. The annual meeting will not be broadcast on Boxcast.com or YouTube.

**Voting Procedures:** In-Person voting will be by hand for attendees in the sanctuary and fellowship hall. Votes will be recorded by the Clerk and D&E designates. Online voting will be by Zoom's voting feature at the bottom of the screen. Please note Zoom can only record one (1) vote per household. For multiple voters, use the chat feature.

**Recording Votes:** The minutes will reflect in-person votes, online votes, and the total number of votes cast.

**Safety Procedures:** For everyone's protection, members attending in-person are asked to wear a face mask, sanitize hands, refrain from physical contact, stay spatially distant (6-ft apart), and to sit in the designated pews or places around tables.

**New to Zoom?:** We will host a tutorial for new Zoom users on a date in mid-January (TBD). Please contact the church office to register for this special session (Phone: 218-739-3227 or Email: [church@federatedff.org](mailto:church@federatedff.org)).

**Offer Grace:** This is a new meeting arrangement for all of us. We ask for your patience during the meeting. We also ask for a measure of grace in the likely event that things do not go exactly as planned.





**Federated**  
CHURCH

224 North Union Avenue  
Fergus Falls, MN 56537

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*Happy  
New Year* ★★

## January Birthdays

- |       |                    |       |                  |
|-------|--------------------|-------|------------------|
| 01/01 | Wayne Link         | 01/23 | Molly McDougall  |
| 01/01 | Cheryl Anderton    | 01/25 | Vivian Whipple   |
| 01/03 | Megan Grover       | 01/25 | Pam Phillips     |
| 01/04 | Arlene Worner      | 01/25 | Dale Anderson    |
| 01/05 | Sean Buchfink      | 01/26 | Shelby Tabbut    |
| 01/06 | Walter Gondrez     | 01/27 | Robert Dent      |
| 01/08 | Bill Borowski      | 01/28 | Kerian Stenstrom |
| 01/08 | Janie Lee          | 01/30 | Linda Wolfe      |
| 01/09 | Jude Weinrich      | 01/31 | John Collins     |
| 01/09 | Ella Sundheim      | 01/31 | Beth Schlepp     |
| 01/10 | Roxane Nereson     | 01/31 | William Haas     |
| 01/10 | Cheryl Harrington  |       |                  |
| 01/10 | Tori Bult          |       |                  |
| 01/14 | Chloe Beske        |       |                  |
| 01/15 | Dana Schlepp       |       |                  |
| 01/16 | Mark Rodning       |       |                  |
| 01/16 | Bob Wolfe          |       |                  |
| 01/20 | Karoline Gustafson |       |                  |
| 01/21 | Judy Friedrich     |       |                  |
| 01/22 | Mindy Christianson |       |                  |

## The church staff wants to know...

We rely on you to contact us with your email, phone or address changes. If you are not receiving our emails, but would like to, please contact to church office. Also contact us for pastoral care needs. Please call 218-739-3227 or email church@federatedff.org

The Federated Church is a joint ministry of The Presbyterian Church (USA) and The United Church of Christ.

224 N. Union Avenue, Fergus Falls, MN 56537  
Phone: 218-739-3227 | email: church@federatedff.org

## Endnotes

