

February Worship

Sunday, February 7 *Worship will be in-person and streamed online*

9:30a.m

"The Cure for News Fatigue"

Pastor Doug Dent

Isaiah 40:21-31

A Celebration of The Lord's Supper

Sunday, February 14 *Worship will be in-person and streamed online*

9:30a.m.

"No Guts, No Glory"

Pastor Doug Dent

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Ash Wednesday, February 17 *Worship will be in-person and streamed online*

5:30p.m.

"Faith Badges: Crosses and Conversations"

Pastor Doug Dent

Romans 10:5-15

Sunday, February 21 *Worship will be in-person and streamed online*

9:30a.m

"Inner Navigation & the Lord's Way"

Pastor Doug Dent

Psalms 25:1-10

Sunday, February 28 *Worship will be in-person and streamed online*

9:30a.m

"Abraham and the Adalatherium"

Pastor Doug Dent

Romans 4:13-25

Dates to Remember

TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 9

6:30pm MINISTRY NITE

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14

VALENTINE'S DAY

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15

NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

PRESIDENT'S DAY

CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17

ASH WEDNESDAY

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18

6:30PM D&E MEETING

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20

7:00AM FEDERATED ICE FISHING OUTING





“What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun.” Ecclesiastes 1:9

Dante Alighieri, author of *The Divine Comedy*, died 700 years ago this year. The Florentine author witnessed firsthand his era's political chaos, civil unrest, divided family loyalties, internal warfare, immigration issues, and the construction of walls. He experienced poor urban air quality and climate change, disease and pandemics, great wealth and abject squalor. Speaking truth to power about these issues so upset the rulers of Dante's day, that they banished him for life. He lost his home, his wife, and most of his possessions.

If all of this sounds familiar, it is because, as Ecclesiastes states: “What has been will be again, what has been done will be done again; there is nothing new under the sun” (1:9).

Drawing on his personal experiences, Dante used his literary talents to promote his belief in a better world. He dedicated the last two decades of his life to composing something that would transcend the problems of his day and be of benefit all humankind. Dante's *Comedy* is divided into three parts: *Inferno*, *Purgatory*, and *Paradise*.

In the first part, *Inferno*, a traveler named Dante descends to the bottom of Hell to recognize the true nature of sin and its consequences. Here Dante sees “the damned” who have no hope of redemption. In the second part, on the mount of *Purgatory*, Dante becomes more introspective and rids himself of bad habits and sinful tendencies (represented by the seven deadly sins of pride, envy, anger, sloth, avarice, gluttony, and lust). He acknowledges that to progress he must confess and change his ways. Finally, in *Paradise*, the humbled Dante, freed from sin, speeds through the heavens to experience a vision of God which qualifies him to become a Christian poet and to share a message of warning and hope with a deeply troubled world. As Dante looks down at earth, he perceives the pettiness of most disagreements and recognizes the blessing for those who put aside their own follies and focus on lessening the burden of others.

Writing about Dante's *Comedy* in an article entitled, “We Are Living in Dante's *Inferno*. Here's Our Way Out,” Madison Sowell, professor emeritus of Italian and comparative literature at Brigham Young University, poses several questions of Dante and of us: “What is my role in this chaos, conflict or war of words? Is my own pridefulness or enviousness partially at fault or even completely to blame? Am I too quick to anger, too lazy to take an active role in solving problems or too greedy to share of my own abundance to aid others?”

Sowell, echoing Jesus, says that the person who most benefits from the pilgrim's experiences must embrace the virtues that oppose the Seven Deadly Sins: humility, altruism, forgiveness, active engagement in problem-solving, generosity, and brotherly-sisterly love.

As our world's problems continue into 2021, Dante's epic, if read all the way through, teaches that there is a better and more hopeful way. Channeling Dante, Sowell encourages us all to read widely and open our minds to more than one news source or point of view; to recognize how breaking the law – God's or human – leads to corruption; to personal responsibility for our part, acknowledge when we are wrong, and seek to make amends; to adopt long-term views and prioritize what matters most.

Dante calls his work a comedy because it starts on an unhappy note, with the traveler lost in the dark wood of error; but it ends happily with a vision of the good, the beautiful, and the true. Our choices affect the trajectory of our lives. We can choose to make things better, instead of worse. We can act in ways that promote personal and communal well-being, instead of seeking selfish gain. We can speak words of affirmation, instead of hate. We can do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly with our God (Micah 6:8), recognizing our interconnectedness in this world, instead of going it alone.

As Sowell sums it up: “We may feel at times that we are living in a Hell parallel to Dante's, but we need not take up permanent residence.”

Let each of us, as we are able, take up Dante's challenge to improve our small corner of the world.

Blessings as you go!

Pastor Doug

P.S. – Madison Sowell's article may be found at:

<https://www.deseret.com/opinion/2021/1/18/22225422/dante-the-divine-comedy-inferno-purgatorio-paradiso-political-conflict-unrest-hope-peace>



After a hiatus in November and December, our children's and youth activities resumed in-person with great success in mid-January! Everyone is VERY HAPPY to be back together again, learning and growing together! During the interim time, middle school and high school youth met periodically for outdoor activities such as skating and sledding, which we hope to continue doing as weather permits through February. We usually decide to organize with short notice, and text one another a time and place. Sunday school kicked off with all our teachers returning and kids in each class. Kidz Club began with a strong start as well, with most of our fall/winter participants back in routine. 9th grade confirmation was happy to be back meeting face-to-face for class, and senior high youth picked up where we left off in November with an active and committed group.

Sunday School: Our Sunday school classes, for K-6 and 7-12 continue to meet each week following worship. Our elementary students and teachers carry on the theme "Who is God", and the older youth have a different unique lesson each week.

Kidz Club: Beginning in February we will start a series entitled "God Speaks!" Exploring ways in which God communicates with his people. We wanted to continue our year on the theme of God, and believe this will be an important focus. Each week we will study a story from the Bible that shows God connecting with individuals. Hopefully this will encourage our participants to develop the practice of listening for God!

Middle School: Our middle school group continues to meet each week by Zoom during mid-afternoon on Wednesdays. With the different school schedule this year we are unable to get our kids to the church as they are not in school on Wednesdays. As the winter and spring progresses we hope to continue meeting periodically in person for special activities and figure out ways to have in person youth group!

Senior High: Our senior high meets each week in person on Wednesdays at our regular time (7:30pm-9) for learning, fellowship, service projects, and games. We will also continue to organize periodic special activities outside of the regular meeting time.

Women's Bible Study: The women's Bible study is beginning a study of the Gospel of John and continues to meet on Tuesdays at 11:30 am via Zoom, which we have done since March of 2020. If you are interested in joining us please contact Karen at kmad@prtcl.com or the church office in order to be added to the invite link.

It is a blessing to be able to be back together for our Christian Education ministry here at Federated!

Welcome New Committee Members! If you are newly appointed to one of our committees, thank you for agreeing to serve our congregation and community. We are excited to add your voice to the discussion about how we can best preach, teach, and reach more people this year.

Ministry Nite: Ministry Nite is always the second Tuesday each month. Your first committee meeting will be Tuesday, February 9, 2021. Meetings are typically at 6:30 PM. Watch for information from your chairperson about in-person or Zoom meetings.

Did you know that we have prayer time every Sunday after worship? For confidentiality reasons we cannot use names or mention specific circumstances during online worship services; but those worshipping in-person stay after the service is concluded and the cameras are turned off to lift our faith family and community in prayer. If you have a prayer request you would like included during that time, please send it to Pastor Doug (dougdent@prtcl.com) or to the church office (739-3227 or church@federatedff.org).

Stewardship Report: Our stewardship campaign ended well! Thank you for the generous, open-hearted support for Federated Church's mission and ministries. We received 131 pledges totaling \$366,093. We did not reach our goal is \$375,000 but we came close. If you would still like to make a pledge for 2021, we will be happy to accept it.

Federated Church 10th Annual Ice Fishing Outing: Join us Saturday, February 20 at 7am on Ottertail Lake. Ottertail Lake guide Ross Hagermeister will locate the spots and provide the houses for a fantastic day of fishing. Ottertail lake is only 1/2 hour away, so you can stay for the morning, afternoon, early evening, or the entire day. The cost is \$25 per fisherman, so sign up in the church office or with Dennis Bowman at dbowman@fergusotters.org to reserve your fishing hole.

Adult Bible Study – Pastor Doug Dent - "Galatians: The Gospel and Nothing Else" - Beginning Sunday, February 7, 2021 at 10:15 AM Together we will work through Paul's letter to the Galatian Christians, making comparisons to our own day, and discovering how essential it is to cling to the Gospel of Jesus Christ – and nothing else! Join us in person (masks and other safety procedures apply) or by Zoom. Contact the church office to receive the Zoom link.



224 North Union Avenue
Fergus Falls, MN 56537

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Time sensitive information
Please deliver by February 1st



If you would like to receive text updates from Federated Church, please **text the message @federated to the number 81010.**

Stewardship Report

General Fund Report

Revenue	\$34,577.64
Expenditures	\$32,072.52

Year to Date Pledge Offering

Budgeted	\$394,064.50
Actual Received	\$373,657.00

Grocery Receipts

THE GROCERY RECEIPTS

Service Food

January	\$55,169.98
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February Birthdays

02/01	Ella Childs	02/14	Jon Frasen
02/02	Robin Andrews	02/14	Kristi Rufer
02/03	Donna Hendel	02/16	Brennan Olson
02/03	Karen Orcutt	02/18	Carol Bopp
02/03	Jona Brown	02/18	Finn Christianson
02/03	Robert Stout	02/19	Love Ell Hultin
02/04	Norma Loomer	02/19	Marjan Schuetze
02/04	Anna Sundheim	02/19	Ashlynn Eckhoff
02/05	Olivia Jensen	02/20	Shana Johnson
02/06	Tanya Westra	02/21	Barb Flom
02/08	Patty Lindholm	02/21	Sean Rufer
02/08	Ida Gustafson	02/22	Bruce Bopp
02/09	Lee Syverson	02/22	Maura Fransen
02/10	Luke Collins	02/22	Norma Wolden
02/10	Kurt Johnson	02/22	William Johnson
02/10	Andrew Link	02/24	Madilyn Michael
02/11	Kitt Schara	02/27	Benjamin Schierer
02/12	Greg Truax	02/27	William Nuss
02/12	Alicia Paulzine	02/28	Gary Nelson
02/14	Doug Dent	02/28	Mark Thompson
		02/29	Ruby Schmidt

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.

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