



February 12, 2023

*Morning Worship and Children's Programs at 10:00*

***United Church of Strafford***

230 Justin Morrill Highway

PO Box 124, Strafford, Vermont 05072

802-765-4585

Email: [unitedchurchofstrafford@gmail.com](mailto:unitedchurchofstrafford@gmail.com)

[rev.thomas.cary.kinder@gmail.com](mailto:rev.thomas.cary.kinder@gmail.com)

Website: [unitedchurchofstrafford.com](http://unitedchurchofstrafford.com)

***Our Church Covenant***

*We gather together with freedom of conscience  
in a community of love and inquiry.*

*All are welcome, without exception.*

*We practice Christianity with faith and compassion.*

*We covenant with one another to embody the love of Christ,  
to nurture contemplation and action,  
and to offer our gifts, talents and energies as we are able.*

***United Church of Strafford, Vermont***

February 12, 2023

Sixth Sunday after Epiphany, Story Sunday

*MH=Methodist Hymnal; PH=Pilgrim Hymnal*

Seek, seek and you shall find  
A rainbow hiding in this heart of mine.  
Seek, seek, seek and you shall find.  
When the day's sunshine seems to fade in time,  
Take a look inside, where the real glow hides.  
Seek, seek, seek and you shall find.

**Gathering Music** Carol Rousseau

**Welcome and Announcements** Pastor Tom Kinder

**Greeting and Call to Worship** Rachel Guaraldi

**Opening Song** "Gathering of Spirits" Carrie Newcomer

**Reflection on the Peace Candle**

**Blessing and Lighting the Peace Candle**

**Leader:** In Christ was life, and the life was the light of the world.

**People:** **The light shines in the darkness,  
and the darkness does not overcome it.**

**Leader:** Let us pray for peace and the things that make for peace  
as we light the peace candle.

**\*Peace Song** "May All Children" (*see page three*)

**Reflection on the Stories' Theme**

**Puppet Story** *Faith and Play: Listening for God*

**Wondering Questions**

**\*Active Body Prayer**

**\*Song** “Seek and Find” *(see page three)*

**First Book Story** *Where Does God Live* Danette Harris  
by Holly Bea

**Wondering Questions** Think/Pair/Share

**Reflection on Prayer**

**Second Book Story** *What Is Given from the Heart* Joey Hawkins  
by Pat McKissack

**Sharing of Joys, Concerns and Prayer Requests**

**Time of Prayer**

**\*Song** “Seek Ye First” *(see page three)*

**Benediction**

**Closing Song** “Gathering of Spirits” Carrie Newcomer

**Silent Prayer** *We invite you to end the service in a spirit of prayer.*

**Postlude**

*\* Those who are comfortably able may stand.*

**Past sermons** are available on the back table.

**Video recorded services, sermon texts and bulletins**  
are available on our website [unitedchurchofstrafford.com](http://unitedchurchofstrafford.com).

See us on **Facebook** at United Church of Strafford

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**First Song:**

May, may all, may all children,  
may all people everywhere  
hear this prayer.

May, may all, may all children,  
may all people everywhere  
live in peace.

Sweet peace.

Peaceful minds, peaceful hearts,  
peace on earth.

Sweet peace on earth.

**Second Song Refrain:**

Seek, seek and you shall find

A rainbow hiding in this heart of mine.

Seek, seek, seek and you shall find.

When the day’s sunshine seems to fade in time,

Take a look inside, where the real glow hides.

Seek, seek, seek and you shall find.

**Third Song:**

Seek ye first the kingdom of God

And God’s righteousness;

And all these things shall be added unto you.

Hallelu, Hallelujah!

Ask, and it shall be given unto you;

Seek, and you shall find.

Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Hallelu, Hallelujah!

We shall not live by bread alone,

But by every word

That proceeds out from the mouth of God.

Hallelu, Hallelujah!

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*Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey,  
you are welcome here!*

**Thank you** to Rachel Guaraldi who along with Danette Harris, Joey Hawkins and Tom Kinder developed the Story Sunday program!

**NEW Covid Precautions at Church** The wearing of masks is encouraged but not required. Thank you for helping the church be a safe and healthy place for all! *from The Steering Committee*

**Childcare** We welcome children of all ages to the United Church of Stratford! Childcare is available during the church service for children second grade and younger. Children are encouraged to remain in the sanctuary for the entire service on Story Sundays. There are quiet toys and activities in the back of the sanctuary.

**Mission Committee Update: Earthquake Relief** In Turkey and Syria, thousands were left without shelter in freezing temperatures after the devastating earthquake. On behalf of the church, we decided to send donations to two organizations that are working to provide relief. The International Rescue Committee is on the ground in both countries providing emergency supplies. World Central Kitchen is already providing meals in Turkey and told us that they are working to do the same in Syria as soon as possible. You are welcome to join us in supporting these two loving, hard-working organizations to help our brothers and sisters in Turkey and Syria. Thank you. With love and gratitude, Danette Harris, Maggie Hooker and Cameron Speth

**Heartfulness Contemplative Training Circle** gathers on Thursday evenings at 7:00 PM by Zoom and offers an informal meditation all other evenings at 7:30 PM by Zoom. You are invited to be part of the circle anytime. See our website Welcome page for details.

**Next Concert** Admission by donation, 20% goes to the church's Manheim Fund for the Arts. Featuring pianist Annemieke McLane:  
**Sunday March 5<sup>th</sup> 4:00 PM** "Masterworks"

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**Fulfilling Our Vision** The Fulfilling Our Vision committee is continuing our focus on exploring the question of whether our congregation will become officially Open to and Affirming of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. The vision we are fulfilling is our Future Directions Statement that you can find on the pew card or on the Welcome page of our website. For more information please speak with Kate Reimanis or email her at kreimanis@gmail.com.

**Fulfilling Our Vision Survey** Please fill out and return the survey from the Fulfilling Our Vision Committee to help guide our education and discussion series about differences in sexual orientation and gender identity and expression, and how the church and society respond to them. If you are not on the church's mail or email list, you can find a copy of the survey on the table at the back of the sanctuary. Thank you!

**Pastoral Care:** Pastor Tom Kinder serves only one-third time. The church council continues to look for ways to provide a full range of pastoral care. Those in need can reach out to Deacons through Becky Bailey (rbailey@sover.net), Debby Richie (dc.richie@hotmail.com), and Cameron Speth (cece@speth.com) or call the church number printed on the cover of this bulletin.

**Story Sundays!** All ages are welcome to join us on "Story Sunday" led by Rachel Guaraldi. Rachel uses stories, as well as song, movement, and shared conversation to help all ages of people explore some of the great spiritual questions. **This week, February 12**, the stories will focus on "How do we find God?" **On March 12**, the stories will revolve around "What does it mean to pray? How do we pray?" Attend in-person or by Zoom.

**Haiku by Mel Goertz:**

Cards come in the mail.  
Brooks, butterflies, flowers.  
Words to lift the Spirit.

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