



United Church of Strafford, Vermont

March 12, 2023

Third Sunday in Lent, Story Sunday

MH=Methodist Hymnal; PH=Pilgrim Hymnal

March 12, 2023

Morning Worship and Children's Programs at 10:00

United Church of Strafford

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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.

1. "Prayer is taking a chance that against all odds and past history, we are loved and chosen, and do not have to get it together before we show up." 2. "Prayer means that, in some unique way, we believe we're invited into a relationship with someone who hears us when we speak in silence." *from Anne Lamott's book, Help Thanks Wow: Three Essential Prayers*

Welcome and Announcements

Pastor Tom Kinder

Greeting and Call to Worship

Rachel Guaraldi

Opening Song "The 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** "Circle Round for Freedom" *(see bottom of page two)*

Puppet Story *Prayer and Worship*

adapted from the materials of Faith & Play

Wondering Questions

***Song** "We Are Marching (Siyahamba)" *(see page three)*

First Book Story *God's Dream* Danette Harris
by Archbishop Desmond Tutu and Douglas Carlton Abrams

Reflection on Prayer

Second Book Story *The Invisible Web* Joey Hawkins
by Patricia Karst

Wondering Questions

Sharing of Joys, Concerns and Prayer Requests

Time of Prayer

***Song** "Down to the River to Pray" (see page three)

Benediction

Closing Song "The Gathering of Spirits" Carrie Newcomer

Past sermons are available on the back table.

Video recorded services, sermon texts and bulletins
are available on our website unitedchurchofstrafford.com.

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

Sign up for **weekly emails** about upcoming worship and other news
at unitedchurchofstrafford@gmail.com

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

First Song:

Circle round for freedom, circle round for peace
For all of us imprisoned, circle for release
Circle for the planet, circle for each soul
For the children of our children: keep the Circle whole!

Second Song:

Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'
Siyahamba, hamba
Siyahamba, hamba
Siyahamb' ekukhanyen' kwenkhos'

We are marching in the light of God
We are marching in the light of God
We are marching, marching
We are marching, marching
We are marching in the light of God

Third Song:

Refrain: As I went down in the river to pray
Studying about that good old way
And who shall wear the starry crown
Good Lord, show me the way!

O dear friends let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
Come on dear friends let's go down
Down in the river to pray

Refrain

O neighbors let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
Come on neighbors let's go down
Down in the river to pray

Refrain

O kindred let's go down
Let's go down, come on down
Come on kindred let's go down
Down in the river to pray

Refrain

Thank you to Rachel Guaraldi, Danette Harris and Joey Hawkins!

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*

Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and the Law: A talk by Rod Smolla, President of the Vermont Law and Graduate School, on

April 18, 2023 from 7:00 to 8:30 PM. Rod will give an overview of the history and evolution of LGBTQ+ rights in constitutional law and civil rights law. He will also give an overview of the most current points of contention, including tensions between the struggle for equality and human dignity for members of the LGBTQ+ community and claims of religious liberty by those who oppose such rights for religious reasons. Following the initial lecture, Rod will lead the group in a town-meeting style open discussion. The event will be in-person, live-streamed on Zoom and recorded and made available.

LGBTQ+ Circle Conversation, Sunday May 7 after worship for our congregation to explore how our families and other churches and institutions have responded to the presence of LGBTQ+ people. We will discuss our experiences with those situations and what the impacts were, both positive and negative, on all those involved.

Video and Resources Available: Understanding Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sexual Orientation

Christa Wurm led this interactive workshop in our sanctuary on the afternoon of Sunday, February 5th. She enabled us to use our shared knowledge, curiosity and empathy to better understand the meanings of terms relating to gender and sexual orientation. She helped us explore current data and issues facing young people. The experience was powerful and transformative for many who attended in person and on Zoom. We are making the video available to attendees, church members and friends, along with an extensive list of resources that Christa compiled. Please email the church for the link to the video and resource document.

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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!

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.

Pastoral Care: Pastor Tom Kinder serves only one-third time and counseling, visits, funerals and weddings are not included in his ministry. The church council is developing 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.

Haiku by Mel Goertz:

The silver sap is beginning to flow,
drop, drop
into the buckets.

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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 everyone from youngest children to oldest adults explore some of the great spiritual questions. The next Story Sundays after March 12th will be April 9th (see the announcement below for this special Easter version) and May 14th.

Special Children’s Time, Stories and Activities On Easter

Sunday, April 9th, 10:00 AM As an Easter variation on our monthly Story Sunday, Rachel will lead a special Children’s Time early in the service and then the children will go back to the Parish Hall with Rachel, Joey and Danette for more stories, activities, snacks and fun. Parents are welcome to join the children in the back or stay for the rest of the Easter service in the sanctuary.

Next Concerts Admission by donation, 20% goes to the church’s Manheim Fund for the Arts. Featuring pianist Annemieke McLane:

Friday, May 19th, 7:00 PM

Friday, June 9th, 7:00 PM

Church Calendar:

Sun. March 12	Story Sunday 10:00 AM*
Thurs. March 16	Heartfulness Circle Zoom 7:00 PM*
Tues. March 14	<i>Becoming Nicole</i> Book Study 7:00 PM*
Tues. March 21	<i>Becoming Nicole</i> Book Study 7:00 PM*
Tues. March 28	<i>Becoming Nicole</i> Book Study 7:00 PM*
Sun. April 2	Palm/Passion Sunday
Sun. April 9	Easter and Special Children’s Activities*
Tues. April 18	Rod Smolla: LGBTQ+ and Law 7:00 PM*
Sun. May 7	LGBTQ+ Circle Conversation 11:30 AM*
Sun. May 14	Story Sunday on our Mothering God

* *there is an announcement about this in this bulletin*

Becoming Nicole
Book Study
March 14, 21, 28, 7:00 PM

The United Church of Strafford and the Morrill Memorial and Harris Library are pleased to announce an upcoming book study for adults and teens. The book, *Becoming Nicole*, tells the story of the Maines family, who are challenged to come to terms with the fact that one of the children is transgender. Written in 2015 by Amy Ellis Nutt, a Pulitzer prize winning science writer, *Becoming Nicole* is a compelling story of the Maines family’s journey.

The library is gathering copies of *Becoming Nicole* through interlibrary loan, which should be available soon. The book is also available in paperback at the Norwich Bookstore, or through Amazon. We will divide the reading/discussion into three sessions, with a different focus for each session. Everyone is warmly invited to all three sessions (though of course you can come to fewer if needed).

When: March 14 Chapters 1 - 13
March 21 Chapters 14 - 25
March 28 Chapters 26 - 42

Time: 7:00 - 8:30

Place: United Church Parish Hall (also accessible by zoom)

Please contact Joey Hawkins (joeylornell@gmail.com) for more information, and email the church for the Zoom link (unitedchurchofstrafford@gmail.com). Thank you!