



United Church of Strafford, Vermont

March 5, 2023

Second Sunday in Lent

MH=Methodist Hymnal; PH=Pilgrim Hymnal

March 5, 2023

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

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.*

“Ask, and it will be given you; search, and you will find; knock, and the door will be opened for you. For everyone who asks receives, and everyone who searches finds, and for everyone who knocks, the door will be opened.” (*Matthew 7:7f*)

“When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me... I will restore your fortunes and...bring you back.” (*Jeremiah 29:13f*)

“In returning and rest you shall be saved; in quietness and trust shall be your strength.” (*Isaiah 30:15*)

Gathering Music

The Cantornote Church Musicians

Silent Prayer of Invocation

Pastor Tom Kinder

Prelude “Erbarme dich mein Gott,” *St. Matthew Passion* J.S. Bach

Blessing and Lighting the Candles

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.

Introit “Unto the Hills We Lift Our Longing Eyes”
text: J. Campbell; tune: C. H. Purday

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

Unison Reading *Psalm 121, King James Version* Joey Hawkins

I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills,
from whence cometh my help.
My help cometh from the Lord,
which made heaven and earth.
He will not suffer thy foot to be moved:
he that keepeth thee will not slumber.
Behold, he that keepeth Israel
shall neither slumber nor sleep.
The Lord is thy keeper:
the Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand.
The sun shall not smite thee by day,
nor the moon by night.
The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil:
he shall preserve thy soul.
The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in
from this time forth, and even for evermore.

***Hymn** PH #93 Guide Me, O Thou Great Jehovah

Children's Time and Lord's Prayer

Anthem "Deep River" African-American Spiritual

Scripture Genesis 12:1-4a; John 3:1-12, 19-21

Sermon Go to the Land That I Will Show You

***Hymn** I Come to You through Dark of Night *hymn folder*

Sharing of Joys, Concerns, Prayer Requests and Reflections

Reflection Questions: In Gaviotas, Columbia, a richly diverse primordial rain forest sprang up under millions of pines the community planted. The rainforest seeds were hiding in the shallow soil, waiting hundreds or possibly thousands of years for the right conditions to sprout again. Do you see any seeds sprouting of the

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Garden of Eden or realm of God on earth, a harmonious, sustainable world ruled by compassion, justice and love? How can we create the conditions for that world to emerge? What pines can we plant today?

Time of Prayer

Call to Offering

***Benediction**

***Hymn** Be Thou My Vision *hymn folder*

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

Postlude "Out from the Deep" Thomas Tallis

** Those who are comfortably able may stand.
Please stay for refreshments and neighborliness in the Parish Hall.*

Video recorded services, bulletins and newsletters 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!*

Thank you to The Cantornote Church Musicians, including Sarah Cantor, Edward Cipullo, Susan Hodges, Lori Ishimatsu, Rachel Kurland, Guy Pugh and Brian Warnock!

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*

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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.

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 compare how legal and religious traditions each approach an issue like this. He will give an overview of the history and evolution of LGBTQ+ rights in constitutional law and civil rights law. He will also address 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.

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.

Church Calendar:

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| Sun. March 5 | Annemieke McLane concert 4:00 PM* |
| Thurs. March 9 | Heartfulness Circle Zoom 7:00 PM* |
| Sun. March 12 | Story Sunday 10:00 AM* |
| 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 |
| Tues. April 18 | Rod Smolla: LGBTQ+ and Law 7:00 PM* |
| Sun. May 7 | LGBTQ+ Circle Conversation 11:30 AM* |

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

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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.

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!

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

Sunday March 5th 4:00 PM "Masterworks"

Friday, May 19th, 7:00 PM

Friday, June 9th, 7:00 PM

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Recommended Daily Readings for Lent It is not too late to make Lent an intentional season of spiritual deepening. Martin Smith's book, *A Season for the Spirit: Readings for the Days of Lent* is a spiritual classic, a rich, insightful and useful book. Here is some of what the Norwich Bookstore blurb says about it: "Originally commissioned by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1991, *A Season for the Spirit* provides forty daily meditations for Lent, leading us on a journey of discovery in which we find that Christ, through the Spirit, embraces every aspect of our humanity. Each meditation concludes with a prayer and passage of scripture or quotation for further reflection and study." Pastor Tom Kinder says, "I have never found a better companion to take on the Lenten journey. I have read *A Season for the Spirit* year after year and always gained from its wisdom."

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.

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. **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 Herbert A. Goertz:

Unseen—yet we know
Skunk and coon were here last night
Tracks in the snow

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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, including the Zoom link if needed.

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