



United Church of Strafford, Vermont

April 2, 2023

Palm Sunday, Passion Sunday & Sixth Sunday in Lent

MH=Methodist Hymnal; PH=Pilgrim Hymnal

April 2, 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.*

Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus, who, though he was in the form of God, did not regard equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. *Philippians 2:5-8*

Gathering Music

The Cantornote Church Musicians

Silent Prayer of Invocation

Pastor Tom Kinder

Prelude Duet # 4 in G minor, Allegro Georg Phillip Telemann

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 “Benedictus Qui Venit” Antoine Brumel

Welcome and Announcements, Joys and Concerns

First Reading Luke 19:29-42 Christina Robinson, Reader

Children's Time and Lord's Prayer

Hymn PH #155 All Glory, Laud, and Honor *verses 1 & 3 only*

Second Reading Luke 21:37-22:23, 39-46 Amber Wylie, Reader
page one

Prayer of Confession

Jesus, we confess that our spirit is willing, but our flesh is weak. We want to stay awake, we want to stay by your side, but instead, we sleep. We sleep through times when you need our love and help. You deserve far better from us. Please forgive us. Please send your Holy Spirit to wake us up and strengthen us. Help us to face our times of trial, help us to sacrifice ourselves, in the faith that God will make all things right, even our dark Gethsemanes, even our crucifixions, if we surrender to God's will, and love as you love all.

Assurance of Pardon and Grace

***Hymn** MH #292 What Wondrous Love Is This *verse 1 only*

Third Reading Luke 22:47-54a; 22:66-23:12 Joey Hawkins, Reader

Anthem Ochi Delenti Mie Francesco Landini

Responsive Reading *from Matthew 27:15-26*

Leader: Now at the festival the governor was accustomed to release a prisoner for the crowd, anyone whom they wanted. At that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. So after they had gathered, Pilate said to them, "Whom do you want me to release for you, Barabbas or Jesus who is called the Messiah?"

People: Barabbas! Barabbas!

Leader: Then what should I do with Jesus?

People: Crucify him! Crucify him!

Leader: Why? What evil has he done?

People: Crucify him! Crucify him!

Leader: Pilate took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves." He released Barabbas for them; and after flogging Jesus, he handed him over to be crucified.

Fourth Reading Luke 23:26-56 Glenn Wylie, Reader

***Hymn** PH #170 O Sacred Head, Now Wounded *vv. 1 & 3 only*

Reflection Let the Same Mind Be in You

***Hymn** PH #177 When I Survey the Wondrous Cross *vv. 1, 2 & 3*

Time of Prayer

Call to Offering

***Benediction and Sung Response** Tune: PH#177

Were the whole realm of nature mine,
That were a present far too small;
Love so amazing, so divine,
Demands my soul, my life, my all.

Silent Prayer

Please be seated to end the service in a spirit of prayer

Postlude Duet # 4 in G minor, Largo Georg Phillip Telemann

** 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 and Rebecca Bailey!

page three

Good Friday Viewing of J.S. Bach's St. Matthew Passion on Video, April 7th, 6:30 PM Here We will prayerfully immerse in the powerful experience of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* as our Good Friday service this year. It is considered by many to be among the greatest works of art of all time. It takes us on a long, emotional journey to the cross, almost three hours, conducted by one of the leading contemporary Bach scholars, Ton Koopman, and performed by the Amsterdam Baroque Choir and Orchestra. See **page seven for a brief introduction to Bach's St. Matthew Passion.**

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. 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. *page four*

Congregational Meeting May 21st after worship We will have a Congregational Meeting on May 21st to decide whether to move forward to the next, final steps in our Open and Affirming process. The first step, our educational series, will conclude on May 7th. Here is the plan we approved at Annual Meeting: "Step 2) At the end of the educational series, the congregation votes whether to examine what our church could look like as an Open and Affirming Congregation. This could include holding one or more congregational meetings for reflection, visioning, and discussion. Step 3) At the end of that process, the congregation votes whether to become an Open and Affirming Congregation." May 21st will be the first of these two votes. If we vote then to move forward to the next phase, part of our exploration would include drafting a proposed Open and Affirming Covenant and Implementation Plan to fit our congregation. Our last vote would be whether to adopt them.

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.

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.

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*

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

page five

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. The next Story Sunday will be May 14th with a variation on April 9th (see the announcement below for this special Easter version).

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.

Church Calendar:

Sun. April 2	Palm/Passion Sunday, Cantornote Music
Thurs. April 6	Heartfulness Circle Zoom 7:00 PM*
Fri. April 7	Good Friday viewing of J.S. Bach’s <i>St. Matthew Passion</i> on video*
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*
Sun. May 21	Congregational Meeting after worship*

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

page six

Johann Sebastian Bach wrote his St. Matthew Passion...to present the Passion story in music at Good Friday vesper services. (See page three to read about our viewing of it on **April 7th**.)

Bach’s Passion continues to move audiences nearly three centuries after it was first heard in St. Thomas’s Church in Leipzig, Germany. Standing as one of the pillars of Western sacred music, it is at once monumental and intimate, deeply sorrowful and powerful.

With gripping drama, Bach’s Passion retells the compelling story of the events leading up to the crucifixion of Jesus. Bach divided the music into two parts. Highlights of the first part include the last supper and the betrayal and arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane.

In the second part, the music turns softer and more somber — signaling the inevitability of the story — as it depicts the trial, crucifixion and burial of Jesus. The Passion ends with the darkly textured chorus “In tears of grief...”

Bach built his Passion from choruses both small and large, and arias for specific characters such as Jesus, Judas, Peter and Pontius Pilate. The Evangelist, a role for tenor voice, is the principal storyteller, moving the drama along through a kind of half sung, half spoken recitative. Supporting Bach’s massive structure are three grand choruses — at the beginning, middle and end...

The Passion begins with an immense wave of sound — an opening chorus constructed of an interlocking double choir with a children’s chorus soaring over the top — building with intensity and sweeping the listener into the drama.

“I think the St. Matthew Passion is one of the greatest pieces of music in the Western repertory,” tenor Ian Bostridge says.

From National Public Radio, “A Visitor’s Guide to Bach’s St. Matthew Passion” by Tom Huizenga, April 17, 2014

<https://www.npr.org/sections/deceptivecadence/2014/04/17/298773771/a-visitors-guide-to-bachs-st-matthew-passion>

Haiku by Mel Goertz:

The chickadees have made it
through winter. Snow, ice
and sunflower seed.

page seven