



United Church of Strafford, Vermont

April 9, 2023

EASTER

MH=Methodist Hymnal; PH=Pilgrim Hymnal

Something has happened on the first day of the week, powerful enough to heal every wound, to recover every waste, to break down every barrier, to unlock every prison, to forgive every transgression, to unite everything at odds. There is love enough to flood every heart, to raise everyone dead and lost...but this is too much for me to grasp.... I cannot grasp the resurrection. But it can grasp me and give rise in me to a loving heart. *Martin Smith*

April 9, 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.*

Gathering Music

Annemieke McLane

Blessing and Lighting the Peace Candle

Pastor Tom Kinder

Leader: He is risen!

People: He is risen indeed!

Leader: In him 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: Hallelujah!

People: Hallelujah!

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

Prelude "les Papillons" F. Couperin

Welcome and Announcements

Introit Alleluias!

Children's Time The Legend of the Easter Eggs Rachel Guaraldi
(adapted from Godly Play)

Anthem "Glorious, Risen Christ!" David Burke/Lloyd Larson

Call to Worship *adapted from Psalm 118* Rev. Deadra Ashton

Leader: We give thanks to you, O God, for you are good;
Your steadfast love endures forever. Let Israel say,

People: "God's steadfast love endures forever!"
You are our strength and our salvation.

Leader: There are glad songs of victory
in the tents of mercy and love:
"The right hand of God does valiantly;
the right hand of God is exalted."

People: "The right hand of God does valiantly."
**We shall not die, but we shall live,
and recount your deeds, O God.**

Leader: Your way leads through suffering,
but you do not give us over forever to death.

People: **You open to us the gates of your realm
and its ways of mercy and love
that we may enter and give thanks!**

Leader: We thank you that you have answered us
and become our salvation.

People: **The stone that the builders rejected
has become the chief cornerstone.
This is your doing; it is marvelous in our eyes.**

All: **This is the day that our God has made;
let us rejoice and be glad in it!**

***Hymn** PH #185 Come, Ye Faithful, Raise the Strain

Scripture Jeremiah 31:31-34; John 20:1-18

Sermon Can You Believe It?

***Hymn** MH #308 Thine Be the Glory

Sharing of Joys, Concerns, Prayer Requests and Reflections
Reflection Questions: What hope does Easter inspire you to have
this year? Where do you see signs of resurrection and new life
happening now?

Time of Prayer

Call to Offering

***Benediction**

***Hymn** MH #302 Christ the Lord Is Risen Today vv. 1-5 *only*

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

Postlude Sonata in F, K.82/L.30 D. Scarlatti

** 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 Rev. Deadra Ashton, Rachel Guaraldi, Annemieke
McLane, Rod and Anja Smolla, the choir and the Deacons for
contributing their gifts to the beauty and joy of this celebration!*

Flowers today are dedicated to children, Grace Davidovna, Vera Eduardovna and Kohen Jacob, by Anja and Rod Smolla.

Upcoming Story Sundays All ages are welcome to join us on “Story Sundays” 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. Attend in-person or by Zoom. Please pass the word about this to anyone who might be interested of any faith or age. Story Sundays are held the second Sunday of the month. The next Story Sundays are Mary 14th on “Our Mothering God” in honor of Mother's Day and June 11th on the “Gifts of the Spirit.”

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.

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.

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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 in those situations and what the impacts were, both positive and negative, on all those involved. It is a time to listen with open heart and mind; talking is up to you. If you can attend only by Zoom please email us. Hearty refreshments will be provided!

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.

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.

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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.

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!

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. April 9	Easter and Special Children’s Activities*
Thurs. April 13	Heartfulness Circle Zoom 7:00 PM*
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*
Fri. May 19	Annemieke McLane Concert Here 7:00 PM
Sun. May 21	Congregational Meeting after worship*

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

Mission Committee News: Help from Strafford Children to Help Others Recently, the Mission Committee received a heart-warming letter with cash tucked inside from Carmen and Emmett Wurm. The children asked us to “Please take this money that we’ve been collecting for a while and give it to the people in Turkey that need it..... We want to send you this money because it has love in it and greatness in it and kindness.”

Thank you, Carmen and Emmett! We are so proud of you and grateful! The Mission Committee will add a donation to the children’s and will send the money to World Central Kitchen to help feed earthquake victims in Turkey.

Anyone wishing to also add a donation may give Danette cash or a check made out to World Central Kitchen by April 30 or you are welcome to send a check on your own to:

World Central Kitchen
200 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, 7th floor
Washington, DC 20001

With grateful hearts and love,
Danette Harris, Maggie Hooker and Cameron Speth

Haiku by Mel Goertz:

The earth opens from day
to day preparing the way
for Spring flowers.