



May 14, 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.*

United Church of Strafford, Vermont

May 14, 2023

Sixth Sunday of Easter, Story Sunday

MH=Methodist Hymnal; PH=Pilgrim Hymnal

Jesus said, "Jerusalem, Jerusalem.... how often have I desired to gather your children together as a hen gathers her brood under her wings!" *from Luke 13:34*

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** "Peace Like a River" (*see page three*)

First Book Story *Mother God* by Teresa Kim Pecinovsky

Puppet Story *Hagar & Ishmael*

Wondering Questions

***Song** "River Please Carry Me" (*page three*)

Second Book Story *When God was a Little Girl* by David R. Weiss
Read by Danette Harris

Wondering Questions

Introduction to Prayer

Sharing of Joys, Concerns and Prayer Requests

Time of Prayer

***Song** “God’s Got the Whole World in God’s Hands” (*page four*)

Benediction

Closing Song “The Gathering of Spirits” Carrie Newcomer

** Those who are comfortably able may stand.*

Please stay for refreshments and neighborliness in the Parish Hall.

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!*

Thank you to Rachel Guaraldi, Danette Harris and Joey Hawkins for
the gift of Story Sundays!

Covid Precautions at Church The wearing of masks is encouraged
but not required. Thank you for helping the church be a safe place!

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First Song, “Peace Like a River”

I’ve got peace like a river
I’ve got peace like a river
I’ve got peace like a river in my soul
I’ve got peace like a river
I’ve got peace like a river
I’ve got peace like a river in my soul

I’ve got love like an ocean
I’ve got love like an ocean
I’ve got love like an ocean in my soul
I’ve got love like an ocean
I’ve got love like an ocean
I’ve got love like an ocean in my soul

I’ve got joy like a fountain
I’ve got joy like a fountain
I’ve got joy like a fountain in my soul
I’ve got joy like a fountain
I’ve got joy like a fountain
I’ve got joy like a fountain in my soul

Tengo paz como rio
Tengo paz como rio
Tengo paz como rio en mi alma
Tengo paz como rio
Tengo paz como rio
Tengo paz como rio en mi alma

Second Song, “River Please Carry Me”

verse one:

The River is flowing
Flowing and growing
The River is flowing
Down to the Sea

verse two:

Mama please carry me
Your child I will always be
Papa please carry me
Down to the Sea

page three

Third Song, “God’s Got the Whole World in God’s Hands”

She’s got the whole world in her hands.
She’s got the whole wide world in her hands.
She’s got the whole world in her hands.
She’s got the whole world in her hands.

He’s got the wind and the rain in his hands.
He’s got the wind and the rain in his hands.
He’s got the wind and the rain in his hands.
He’s got the whole world in his hands.

They’ve got the itty bitty baby in their hands.
They’ve got the itty bitty baby in their hands.
They’ve got the itty bitty baby in their hands.
They’ve got the whole world in their hands.

God’s got ev’rybody’s hands in God’s hands.
God’s got ev’rybody’s hands in God’s hands.
God’s got ev’rybody’s hands in God’s hands.
God’s got the whole world in God’s hands.

Video and Resources Available: Understanding Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sexual Orientation Christa Wurm led this interactive workshop. The experience was powerful and transformative for many. 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.

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

School You can find the video from this dynamic, informative presentation on the Welcome page of our website. You will come away with a better understanding of the conflicting philosophies of law behind the opposing sides on LGBTQ+ related cases, as well as a good idea of the arguments being made by each before the Supreme Court. This gives useful background to many current stories in the media, and many to come.

Next 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. 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 are May 14th: “Our Mothering God” in honor of Mother’s Day and June 11th: “Gifts of the Spirit.”

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. See our website Welcome page for details.

Church Calendar:

Sun. May 14	Story Sunday 10:00 AM*
Thurs. May 18	Heartfulness Circle Zoom 7:00 PM*
Fri. May 19	Annemieke McLane Piano Concert 7:00 PM*
Sun. May 21	Congregational Meeting after Worship*
Sat. June 3	Bill Williams Memorial Service 2:00 PM
Fri. June 9	Annemieke McLane Piano Concert 7:00 PM*
Sun. June 11	Story Sunday 10:00 AM*
Sun. June 11	Farewell to Denise Cote after Worship

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

Mission Committee Update: A Big Thanks, Helping Immigrant Children and Victims of Tornadoes

First, we want to thank Carmen and Emmett Wurm for inspiring our church with their letter and donation to World Central Kitchen to help the earthquake victims in Turkey. The congregation really got on board and, including the children's donation and a donation from the Mission Committee, we sent off \$727 to World Central Kitchen for meals to be served in Turkey. Thank you, dear Carmen and Emmett for inspiring us and thanks to all who donated!

Also, the Mission Committee recently made a donation to Church World Service for two different purposes. We asked them to use half of the donation to support unaccompanied immigrant children who are fleeing violence, persecution and desperation, providing them with access to education, medical and other services. We asked that the other half be used for CWS kits and blankets for victims of the recent tornadoes in this country.

Please let us know if you have ideas for Mission Work. Thank you. With love and gratitude, Danette Harris, Maggie Hooker and Cameron Speth

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

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

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, envisioning, 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.

If there are any participants who cannot for some reason be at the meeting in person, but would still like to vote, here is the procedure:

- Request a paper ballot from the moderator, Joey Hawkins. Be sure to include your mailing address. You will be sent a paper ballot. Email joeylornell@gmail.com
- Register your vote on the paper ballot, sign the envelope (NOT the ballot itself) and mail it back to Moderator, United Church of Strafford, PO Box 124, Strafford VT 05072.
- Make sure to send your ballot so that it arrives by May 20, 2023.
- Your vote will be counted along with all the other paper ballots at the May 21 meeting.

Haiku by Herbert A. Goertz:

Snowflakes in May? No.
It's a shad in full blossom
outside my window.