



June 18, 2023

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

***United Church of Strafford***

230 Justin Morrill Highway  
PO Box 124, Strafford, Vermont 05072  
802-765-4585

Email: [unitedchurchofstrafford@gmail.com](mailto:unitedchurchofstrafford@gmail.com)  
[rev.thomas.cary.kinder@gmail.com](mailto:rev.thomas.cary.kinder@gmail.com)  
Website: [unitedchurchofstrafford.com](http://unitedchurchofstrafford.com)

***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***

June 18, 2023

Third Sunday after Pentecost

*MH=Methodist Hymnal; PH=Pilgrim Hymnal*

If I have even just a little sense  
I will go along the Great Way [the Tao]  
And my only fear will be of turning from it.  
The Way is not hard,  
but people tend to stray, and stay sidetracked.  
Be aware when things are out of balance.  
Stay centered within the Tao.

*Tao Te Ching Chapter 53, from various translations*

**Gathering Music**

The Cantornote Church Musicians

**Silent Prayer of Invocation**

Pastor Tom Kinder

**Prelude** Alla' Se me ponga el sol by Juan Ponce (1480-1521)  
Hoy comemos Juan del Encina (1468-1529)

**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.

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Call to Worship**

**Responsive Reading** *adapted from Micah 6:6-8* Danette Harris

**Leader:** With what shall we come before you, O God,  
when we bow ourselves before you on high?

**People:** **Shall we come before you with burnt offerings,  
with calves a year old?**

*page one*

**Leader:** Will you be pleased with thousands of rams,  
with ten thousand rivers of oil?

**People:** **You have told us, O God, what is good;  
and what do you require of us  
but to do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with our God?**

\*Hymn PH #401 Teach Me, My God and King

### **Children's Time and Lord's Prayer**

**Anthem** Ecco la Primavera, Francesco Landini (1325-1397)

**Scripture** Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

**Sermon** Walking with the Spirit

\*Hymn PH #232 Spirit of God, Descend Upon My Heart

### **Sharing of Joys, Concerns, Prayer Requests and Reflections**

*Reflection Questions:* Where or when in your life do you feel you are really in the Tao, the sacred Way, the flow of the Spirit? What do you do to get back into it when you have strayed or life has knocked you off course? What benefits do you feel when you are in that good way of being?

### **Time of Prayer**

### **Call to Offering**

### **\*Benediction**

\*Hymn PH #37 Still, Still With Thee

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

**Postlude** "And I Ask You" Ukrainian Folk Song Arr. Lance Eccles

*\* Those who are comfortably able may stand.*

*Please stay for refreshments and neighborliness in the Parish Hall.  
If you would like to provide refreshments sometime,  
please speak with Christina Robinson.*

**Past sermons** are available on the back table.

**Video recorded services, sermon texts and bulletins**  
are available on our website [unitedchurchofstrafford.com](http://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](mailto: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, Susan Hodges, Rachel Kurland and Sarah Ward recorders, Henry Ward, cello and Jack Ward, violin.

**Dot Burden Graveside Service and Reception** The family of Dot Burden, who died last November, would be honored to have you join them at a graveside service for Dot on June 24 at 10:00am at the Strafford Cemetery, which is to the left of the Strafford Town House. The Reverend Deadra Ashton will be officiating at the graveside. A reception will immediately follow the service in our Parish Hall.

**Next Story Sunday** 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 (except July). The next is August 13<sup>th</sup>.

**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.

**Video and Resources Available: Understanding Gender Identity, Gender Expression and Sexual Orientation** Christa Wurm led this interactive workshop. Please email the church for the link to the video and resource document.

**Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and the Law: A talk by Rod Smolla, President of Vermont Law and Graduate School** You can find the video from this presentation on the Welcome page of our website. This gives useful background to current stories in the media.

**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.

**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 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, July 28<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 PM Piano Classics I**

**Friday, August 25<sup>th</sup>, 7:00 PM Piano Classics II**

**Friday September 22<sup>nd</sup>, 7pm**

**October 20<sup>th</sup>, 7pm "Connecting with Cage" w/Sylvia Smith**

**November 3<sup>rd</sup>, 7pm**

*page four*

**Congregational Meeting for Information and Discussion about Becoming Open and Affirming, July 9<sup>th</sup> after Refreshments** Our congregation voted unanimously on May 21<sup>st</sup> to continue to the next stage of our Open and Affirming process. Our task now is to explore what happens when a congregation becomes officially open to and affirming of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities and expressions. We will talk about this at a congregational meeting on Sunday, July 9<sup>th</sup> after refreshments, looking at what other congregations have experienced and discussing a draft of what could become our Open and Affirming Covenant and Implementation Plan.

**Sabbatical Time from July 15<sup>th</sup> to November 15<sup>th</sup>** Pastor Tom Kinder will be away on sabbatical from July 15 to November 15, 2023. The church council is eager to use this sabbatical experience as a joyful opportunity—a time of renewal for the church, as well as for Tom. We propose to use the time to explore "Seeking Spirit," a framework for spiritual experience in community that incorporates both beloved traditional and new elements. For more information, please see the letter in the back of the sanctuary or on our website.

**"My Father" by Mel Goertz**

On my sixteenth birthday  
my Father gave me a typewriter.

Little did he know  
what poems I would write  
or what meadows

I would wander.

I remember the tap tap tap  
of his fingers  
as page after page  
flowed into day.

A chip off the old block  
he always said.

A twinkle in your Mother's eye.  
Although at times he was fit  
to be tied,

my Father loved me.

*page five*