



United Church of Strafford, Vermont

June 25, 2023

Fourth Sunday after Pentecost

MH=Methodist Hymnal; PH=Pilgrim Hymnal

June 25, 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
rev.thomas.cary.kinder@gmail.com
Website: 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.*

In the Indigenous view, humans are... lesser beings in the democracy of species. We... must learn from our elders. Plants were here first and have had a long time to figure things out.... Plants are providers for the rest of the community and exemplify the virtue of generosity.... Many Indigenous peoples share the understanding that we are each endowed with a particular gift, a unique ability... It is understood that these gifts have a dual nature, though: a gift is also a responsibility.... What is our gift? And how shall we use it...? People... lacked gratitude and the sense of reciprocity that flowed from it... Gratitude comes first, but gratitude alone is not enough.
Robin Wall Kimmerer, Braiding Sweetgrass pp 346f

Gathering Music

The Cantornote Church Musicians

Silent Prayer of Invocation

Pastor Tom Kinder

Prelude "La Dolce Vista" Guillaume Dufay

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

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

Responsive Reading *from Psalm 84* John Echeverria

Leader: How lovely is your dwelling place,
O God, my hope and strength!

People: **My soul longs, indeed it faints for your courts;
my heart and my flesh
sing for joy to your living Spirit.**

Leader: Even the sparrow finds a home,
and the swallow a nest for herself
where she may lay her young at your altars.

People: **Happy are those who live in your house,
ever singing your praise.**

Leader: Happy are those whose strength is in you,
in whose heart are the highways to Zion.

People: **As they go through the desolate, dry valley
they make it a place of springs;
they bring the rain that ends the drought.**

Leader: Your Spirit's power flowing through them
leads from blessing to blessing.

People: **A day in your courts is better
than a thousand elsewhere.**

Leader: I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of God
than live in the tents of wickedness.

People: **O God of hope and strength,
happy is everyone who trusts in you
and dwells in your love.**

***Hymn** How Lovely Is Your Dwelling *hymn folder*

Children's Time and Lord's Prayer

Anthem

Scripture Deuteronomy 5:33, 6:5-9; Matthew 6:25-31, 33

Sermon Are You Not of More Value Than They?

***Hymn** God's Love Is in Each Song *hymn folder*

Sharing of Joys, Concerns, Prayer Requests and Reflections

Reflection Questions: Deuteronomy calls us to love God with all our being and then says, "Keep these words that I am commanding you today in your heart. Recite them to your children and talk about them when you are at home and when you are away, when you lie down and when you rise." It says that if we do this we may live long in the land we have been given. Robin Wall Kimmerer says that our words are a gift we can offer Creation in grateful reciprocity for all we have received. Are we talking about what we love and the Spirit's sacred way of love enough? If not, why not, if it means saving all life so that it may exist long on earth?

Time of Prayer

Call to Offering

***Benediction**

***Hymn** MH #150 God Who Stretched the Spangled Heavens

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

Postlude "Russian Earth Hymn"

Sarah Cantor, Rolf Pechukas and Amber Wylie

** Those who are comfortably able may stand.*

Please stay for refreshments and neighborliness in the Parish Hall.

***Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here!***

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

Thank you to The Cantornote Church Musicians, including Sarah Cantor, Susan Hodges and Rachel Kurland.

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 13th.

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. 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 28th, 7:00 PM Piano Classics I

Friday, August 25th, 7:00 PM Piano Classics II

Friday September 22nd, 7pm

October 20th, 7pm “Connecting with Cage” w/Sylvia Smith

November 3rd, 7pm

Congregational Meeting for Information and Discussion about Becoming Open and Affirming, July 9th after Refreshments Our congregation voted unanimously on May 21st 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 9th 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 15th to November 15th 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.

Job Opening for a teen or adult, paid or volunteer, sharing the position of Zoom Master and Recording Engineer. Please speak with Tom if you or anyone you know might be interested!

Haiku by Mel Goertz

Outside my window
fluttering Swallowtail wings.
Phlox is in blossom.