



July 9, 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

July 9, 2023

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

MH=Methodist Hymnal; PH=Pilgrim Hymnal

“Come to me, all you that are weary and are carrying heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn from me; for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” *Matthew 11:28f*

Gathering Music

Lisa Willems

Silent Prayer of Invocation

Pastor Tom Kinder

Prelude Es is das Heil uns kommen her, Chorale #6

“*Grace and sheer kindness...*” Heinrich Scheidemann (1596-1663)

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 “Spirit of the Living God” Daniel Iverson, 1926

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

Responsive Reading *from Proverbs 8* Debby Richie

Leader: Does not wisdom call,
and does not understanding raise her voice?

People: **On the heights, beside the way,
at the crossroads she takes her stand;
beside the gates in front of the town she cries out:**

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Leader: “To you, O people, I call, and my cry is to all that live.
O simple ones, learn prudence;
acquire intelligence, you who lack it.

**People: Take my instruction instead of silver,
and knowledge rather than choice gold;
for wisdom is better than jewels,
and all that you may desire cannot compare with her.**

Leader: I love those who love me,
and those who seek me diligently find me.
I walk in the way of righteousness,
along the paths of justice,
endowing with wealth those who love me.

**People: And now, my children, listen to me:
happy are those who keep my ways.
Hear instruction and be wise, and do not neglect it.**

**All: Happy is the one who listens to me,
watching daily at my gates, waiting beside my doors.
For whoever finds me finds life
and obtains grace from God.”**

*Hymn MH #474 Precious Lord, Take My Hand

Children’s Time and Lord’s Prayer

Anthem “I Will at All Times Praise the Lord,” *Oratorio St. Paul*
Georg Frederic Handel, (1685-1759) arr. Hal Hopson
paraphrased from Psalm 34: “I sought the Lord...”

Scripture Genesis 1:1-2; 2:7; Psalm 139:7-13; Isaiah 61:1-4
and John 7:37-39

Sermon Seeking Spirit

*Hymn I Will Give You Comfort (Spirit Song) *hymn folder*

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Sharing of Joys, Concerns, Prayer Requests and Reflections
Reflection Questions: Why seek Spirit now, at this moment in our
lives, in the church’s life and in human history? What do you hope
may come of it? What do you think the Spirit hopes may come of
it? Why might the Spirit be seeking us right now?

Time of Prayer

Call to Offering

*Benediction

*Hymn Siyahamba (We Are Marching in the Light of God)
hymn folder

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

Postlude Allegro, Concerto No. 15 in G Major, BWV 986
arr. Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750)
Based upon an unknown concerto

** 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

Welcome back and thank you to Lisa Willems, our organist and
choir director today!

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Congregational Meeting for Information and Discussion about Becoming Open and Affirming, Today 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. Today after refreshments we will look at what other congregations have experienced and discuss a draft of what could become our Open and Affirming Covenant and Implementation Plan.

Sabbatical Time We are pleased to announce a new Sunday morning series. From July 15 to November 15, Pastor Tom Kinder will be on sabbatical, so we are taking the opportunity for “Seeking Spirit.” We will hear inspired voices from our community on topics including (but not limited to!) fostering teens, coming of age in Nazi Germany, body theology, finding spirit in poetry, and much more. Music will be important too—we will be joined by Cesar Alvarez, Becky Bailey, Sarah Cantor, Emerson Gale, Sudie Marcuse, Annemieke McLane, and Rolf Pechukas. And we’ll continue with Story Sundays with Rachel Guaraldi —stories, songs, and puppetry to engage families and kids in the big questions!

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

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.

Heartfulness Contemplative Training Circle offers an informal meditation every evening at 7:30 PM by Zoom. You are invited! See our website Welcome page for details.

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Fulfilling Our Vision The Fulfilling Our Vision committee is working on the question of our becoming officially Open to and Affirming of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities, and also on the creation of our Native American reparations fund. 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.

Mission Committee Update: Supporting Oxfam with an Amazing Bonus! Recently, on behalf of our church, we were honored to support Oxfam which states their mission this way: “Oxfam is a global organization that fights inequality to end poverty and injustice. We offer lifesaving support in times of crisis and advocate for economic justice, gender equality, and climate action. We demand equal rights and equal treatment so that everyone can thrive, not just survive.” Our donation qualified for a Matching Gift Challenge which is funded by a group of anonymous donors and quintupled (5X!) our donation!

We recently also contributed to the Sharon Food Shelf, the Strafford Senior Citizens lunches and Willing Hands. We made donations to both WISE (in Lebanon) and Safeline (in Chelsea) for safety around gender based violence, and we donated to UNICEF to help children who are refugees due to climate impact emergencies.

Please let one of us know if you have suggestions for mission work. With love and gratitude, Danette Harris, Maggie Hookier and Cameron Speth

Pastoral Care: 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.

Haiku by Mel Goertz

A fox lay down next to her mate.
They looked at each other,
touched noses.

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