

Readings for July 2, 2023

United Church of Strafford In Person and Zoom Service

Responsive Reading *from Proverbs 8*

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:**

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.”**

Here is a series of passages that reflect different aspects of the Spirit.

Genesis 1:1-2

In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep, and the Spirit swept over the face of the waters like a wind and brooded on them like a mother bird on her nest.

Genesis 2:7

Then the Creator God formed the first human from the humus, the dust of the ground, and breathed into their nostrils the Spirit breath of life; and the human became a living being.

Psalm 139:7-13

O Spirit, where can I go from...your presence?
If I ascend to the skies, you are there; *continued*

if I make my bed in the depths, you are there.
If I take the wings of the morning
and settle at the farthest limits of the sea,
even there your hand shall lead me,
and your right hand shall hold me fast.
If I say, “Surely the darkness shall cover me,
and the light around me become night,”
even the darkness is not dark to you;
the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you.
For it was you who formed my inward parts;
you knit me together in my mother’s womb.

Isaiah 61:1-4

The Spirit of God is upon me and...has sent me to bring good news to the oppressed, to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and release to the prisoners...; to comfort all who mourn...in this nation—to give them a garland instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, the mantle of praise instead of a faint spirit. They will be called oaks of righteousness, the planting of the Spirit.... They shall...raise up the former devastations...of many generations.

Matthew 11:28-30

“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.”

John 7:37-39

On the last day of the festival, the great day, while Jesus was standing there, he cried out, “Let anyone who is thirsty come to me, and let the one who believes in me drink. As the scripture has said, ‘Out of the believer’s heart shall flow rivers of living water.’” He was talking about the Spirit they would find within them...