



United Church of Strafford, Vermont

March 3, 2024

Third Sunday in Lent

MH=Methodist Hymnal; PH=Pilgrim Hymnal

March 3, 2024

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.*

The days are surely coming, says our God, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and the house of Judah. It will not be like the covenant that I made with their ancestors... I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. No longer shall they teach one another...for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. *Jeremiah 31:31-34*

Gathering Music

Erik Reimanis

Silent Prayer of Invocation

Pastor Tom Kinder

Prelude "Telephone Line" Jeff Lynne/Electric Light Orchestra

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 "And We Bid You Goodnight" Traditional/Grateful Dead

Welcome and Announcements

Call to Worship

Responsive Reading *from Psalm 51*

Joey Hawkins

Leader: Have mercy on me, O God,
according to your steadfast love;

People: According to your abundant mercy
blot out my transgressions,
for I know my wrongs,
and they are ever before me.

Leader: You desire truth in the inward being;
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.

People: Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Leader: Let me hear joy and gladness;
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.

People: Create in me a clean heart, O God,
and put in me a new and right spirit.

Leader: Do not cast me away from your presence,
and do not take your holy spirit from me.

People: Restore to me the joy of your salvation,
and sustain in me a willing spirit.

Leader: Then my liife will show others your ways,
and those who have strayed will return to you.

People: Open my heart and instruct it how to serve you,
for you have no delight in superficial sacrifice;

Leader: If I were to give a burnt offering,
you would not be pleased.

People: The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;
A broken and contrite heart, O God,
you will not despise.

***Hymn** Pues si vivimos (In All Our Living) *hymn folder*

Children's Time and Lord's Prayer

Anthem "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" African-American Spiritual

Scripture John 12:17-33

Sermon A Troubled Spirit

***Hymn** My Soul Is Troubled *hymn folder*

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Sharing of Joys, Concerns, Prayer Requests and Reflections

"I am part of the rain forest protecting itself. I am that part of the rain forest recently emerged into human thinking." If we are part of the earth recently emerged into human thinking, what do you think the earth wants us to think and do? What is the Spirit of the earth hoping to do through us as individuals or as a congregation?

Time of Prayer

Call to Offering

***Hymn** The Wilderness Is Dark Tonight *hymn folder*

Invitation to Holy Communion

Words of Institution and Prayer of Consecration

Sharing of the Elements *remaining seated*

(All are welcome to this feast of love. We all eat the bread and drink the cup together. We serve gluten-free crackers as well as gluten bread, and we serve juice, not wine, so that all may partake.)

Prayer of Thanksgiving *unison*

We thank you, God, for inviting us to this table where we have known the presence of Christ and have received all Christ's gifts. Please strengthen our faith, increase our love for one another, and let us show forth your praise in our lives by following the way of Christ with joy. May it be no longer we who live, but Christ who lives in us, our truest and best self. Amen

Benediction

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

Postlude "Hushabye Mountain" R. M. Sherman/R. B. Sherman

**Those who are comfortably able may stand.*

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***We are an Open and Affirming Congregation.
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

New Members Group If you are interested in becoming an official member of this congregation, please speak with Pastor Tom Kinder. The process involves reflecting on your spiritual journey and learning about the history, structure and mission of this church.

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.

Fulfilling Our Vision Committee Meeting You can find the Future Directions Vision and the Open and Affirming Covenant we are working to fulfill on our website. Our Native American Reparations Fund has been established, with a generous start-up donation from a member of our congregation. FOV usually meets the first Tuesday evening of every month. Please contact Kate Reimanis with any questions or ideas.

Daily Meditation Sessions Our **Heartfulness Circle** offers an informal meditation gathering on Zoom every evening from 7:30 to 8:10 PM. On Thursdays we have an extended session starting at 7:00 PM. See our website Welcome page for the Zoom link and details.

Childcare We welcome children of all ages to the United Church of Strafford! Childcare is available during the church service for children second grade and younger.

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Next Concerts here by pianist Annemieke McLane. Admission by donation, 20% goes to the church's Manheim Fund for the Arts.

Sunday afternoon at 4:00 PM:

March 17 "French Connections"

Friday evening at 7:00 PM:

April 5th, with poet, Jim Schley

May 10th, with Jeremiah McLane

June 21 "Summertime"

Mission Committee Update: Supporting World Central Kitchen and Dismas House

Recently, the Mission Committee made two donations on behalf of the church, helping our neighbors close by and across the globe. We supported the Hartford, Vermont Dismas House whose mission "is to reconcile former prisoners with society and society with former prisoners." Dismas provides a "supportive community for former prisoners transitioning from incarceration." We also sent a donation to World Central Kitchen to continue feeding our neighbors in war-torn areas such as Gaza and Ukraine. Please let us know if you have other ideas for mission work. With love and gratitude, Danette Harris, Maggie Hooker and Cameron Speth

Church Calendar:

Sun. March 3

Third Sunday in Lent

Tues. March 5

Fulfilling Our Vision meeting 7:00 PM*

Thurs. March. 7

Heartfulness Circle Zoom 7:00 PM*

Sun. March 17

Annemieke, "French Connections" 4:00 PM*

Sun. March 24

Palm/Passion Sunday

Fri. March 29

Good Friday

Sun. March 31

Easter

** there is an announcement about this on this insert*

Haiku by Mel Goertz:

A flock of doves
roosting in an apple tree.
Beauty all around us.

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