



April 21, 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.*

**United Church of Strafford, Vermont**

April 21, 2024

Fourth Sunday of Easter, Good Shepherd Sunday

Earth Day Sunday

*MH=Methodist Hymnal; PH=Pilgrim Hymnal*

“Many of our deepest thinkers and many of those most familiar with the scale of the challenges we face have concluded that the transitions required can be achieved only in the context of what I will call the rise of a new consciousness. For some it is a spiritual awakening—a transformation of the human heart. For others it is a more intellectual process of coming to see the world anew and deeply embracing the emerging ethic of the environment and the old ethic of what it means to love thy neighbor as thyself. But for all it involves major cultural change and a reorientation of what society values and prizes most highly.” Gus Speth from *The Bridge at the Edge of the World: Capitalism, the Environment, and Crossing from Crisis to Sustainability*

**Gathering Music**

Becky Bailey

**Silent Prayer of Invocation**

Pastor Tom Kinder

**Introit**

**Blessing and Lighting the Peace Candle**

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

**Unison Reading** PH p. 540, #110 *Psalm 23* Rod Smolla, Reader

**\*Hymn** PH #343 In Heavenly Love Abiding

### **Prayer of Confession (in unison)** *Ojibway Prayer*

Grandfather, Great Spirit, look at our brokenness. We know that in all creation only the human family has strayed from the Sacred Way. We know that we are the ones who are divided, and we are the ones who must come back together to walk in the Sacred Way. Great Spirit, Sacred One, teach us love, compassion and honor that we may heal the earth and heal one another.

## Silent Confession and Assurance of Pardon

### **Anthem**

**Scripture** Matthew 22:15-22; John 10:1-3, 9-11, 14-16

**Sermon** Resolving a Deadly Duality

**\*Hymn** MH #148 Many and Great, O God, Are Your Things

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

*Reflection Questions:* Read again the famous quote from Gus Speth at the top of page one. Do you believe that Gus is right, that humanity can solve the challenges it faces only by evolving to a new consciousness, or a spiritual awakening? If so, do you feel that our church is called to help bring that about? If so, do you have any ideas about how we could help?

## Time of Prayer

## Call to Offering

**\*Hymn** You Are God's Temple *hymn folder*

## \*Benediction

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

## Postlude

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

***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](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)

**You Are Invited to Stay after Refreshments** today to talk with Tom about the changes in his position and his retirement at the end of January 2025 and what will be happening between now and then. Tom will also be available to talk after refreshments on May 5<sup>th</sup>. (He will be away next Sunday, the 28<sup>th</sup>, on vacation.)

**New Children's Story Program** We are excited for another Story Sunday on May 19<sup>th</sup>. Early in the service we will read a story, then we will go to the Parish Hall for discussion, fun activities, and a snack. We enthusiastically welcome all to join us and look forward to seeing you. With love, Danette Harris, Joey Hawkins, Beth Randall and Christina Robinson

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**Pastoral Care: Pastor Tom Kinder is available and eager** to talk with you. Please speak with him after worship to set up a time, or email rev.thomas.cary.kinder@gmail.com or call him at home at 333-9967. Tom is a one-third time pastor whose list of duties has recently changed. He is returning to providing pastoral care and officiating at memorial services after a two-and-a-half year hiatus. To make time for that work he is stepping away from some other duties. See the announcement below about the opportunities that have opened up!

**Volunteer or Paid Opportunities** Please consider helping out with the streaming and recording of worship services, and with administrative work like copying bulletins. These positions could be volunteer or paid. We could have one person as our tech supervisor, or we could have a team to support and back up the teens who are doing such a great job with the streaming and recording. If we have several people who are familiar with the process who take on small parts of it, we think it could be something anyone could do. We also could have one person as church administrator and clerk, or we could have a team of people taking on individual tasks. If you are interested in exploring any of this, please be in touch with Tom.

**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. 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.

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### **Church Calendar:**

Sun. April 21	Good Shepherd and Earth Day Sunday
Thurs. April 25	Heartfulness Circle Zoom 7:00 PM*
Sun. May 5	Talk with Tom after Refreshments*
Fri. May 10	Annemieke and Jeremiah McLane 7:00 PM*
Sun. May 19	Story Sunday and Seeking Spirit
Sun. May 26	Celebration of Pentecost

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

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

*Friday evening at 7:00 PM:*

May 10th with Jeremiah McLane

June 21 "Summertime"

**Mission Committee Update: Sending Love to the Make a Wish Foundation in Vermont** Recently, a congregation member asked that we consider a donation to the Make a Wish Foundation which grants life-changing wishes for critically ill children. We had no idea that Vermont has its own chapter that supports children in our own region but we now know and have voted to send them a contribution. It is both heartbreaking and inspiring to read the stories on their website. Granting wishes offers children (and their families and communities) the strength "to fight against and even overcome a critical illness" and it also "renews hope, uplifts spirits and encourages belief in the impossible." We are humbly proud to be a small part of their loving work. Please let us know if you have ideas for mission work for us. With love and gratitude, Danette Harris, Maggie Hooker and Cameron Speth

### **Haiku by Mel Goertz**

Coltsfoot blooming  
in the valley, by the road.  
Spring is finally here.

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