



May 5, 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

May 5, 2024

Sixth Sunday of Easter

MH=Methodist Hymnal; PH=Pilgrim Hymnal

“If we are to create a Golden Civilization, we must envision it clearly and then we must choose to enact it.” *George Kinder, from A Golden Civilization and the Map of Mindfulness*

“Never doubt that a small group of committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.” *Margaret Mead*

“The problem is that most people don't really care, and so it's our job to be the small minority and bring about a change. To meet here in church with people who share our convictions lifts our spirit and makes us believe it's not a hopeless task. We have to keep at it and get reinforced by meeting with other people who feel the same way.” *Herbert Goertz, here on April 21, 2024*

Gathering Music

Erik Reimanis

Silent Prayer of Invocation

Pastor Tom Kinder

Prelude

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.

Introit

Welcome and Announcements

page one

Call to Worship

Responsive Reading *adapted from Joel 2 & Acts 2* John Echeverria

Leader: In the last days it will be, God declares,
that I will pour out my Spirit upon all flesh,

People: **And your sons and your daughters shall prophesy,**

Leader: And your young men shall see visions,
and your old men shall dream dreams.

People: **Even on those you would least expect,
in those days, I will pour out my spirit,
and they shall prophesy.**

Leader: And I will show portents in the heaven above
and signs on the earth below,
blood, and fire, and smoky mist.

People: **The sun shall be turned to darkness
and the moon to blood,
before the coming of that day.
Those who turn to the Spirit
shall find the way through those days.**

***Hymn** MH #730 O Day of God, Draw Nigh

Reading of the Open and Affirming Covenant *on page seven*

Silent Confession and Assurance of Pardon

Anthem

Scripture John 7:37-39a; 14:12a, 15-20, 25-27; 16:13

Sermon Considering Seemingly Insurmountable World Problems

***Hymn** Now Is the Time Approaching *hymn folder*

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Sharing of Joys, Concerns, Prayer Requests and Reflections

Reflection Questions: “In those days, I will pour out my spirit, and they shall prophesy.” Who do you hear the Spirit speaking through today, who are the prophets or visionaries or guides who inspire you or give you comfort or hope? Where do you look to find the Spirit’s presence shining through people, and what do you see?

Time of Prayer

Call to Offering

Invitation to Holy Communion

***Hymn** When We Can See As God Can See *hymn folder*

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

**Those who are comfortably able may stand.*

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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

May 12th Celebration of the “Mother’s Day Proclamation” of Julia

Ward Howe As you may know, Howe wrote the words of the “Battle Hymn of the Republic” early in the Civil War, which she supported as an abolitionist fighting against slavery, but by the end she had become horrified by the reality of war and called for its abolition, as so many have since, including Presidents Franklin Roosevelt and John F. Kennedy who, like her, had seen war first hand. Howe wrote what we now know as the Mother’s Day Proclamation calling on women to rise up and demand universal disarmament and a global commitment to peace. We will read the Proclamation in worship on May 12th and reflect on its message in the context of what is happening in our world today.

Combined Seeking Spirit and Story Sunday May 19th We are excited for another Seeking Spirit and Story Sunday! The **Seeking Spirit** portion: Dr. Ray Chin is a therapist who has worked with children in many local schools and private practice. He specializes in neurodevelopmental disorders, cognitive behavioral therapy, trauma, and mindfulness. He will speak to us on the relationship between Martin Luther King Jr. and Thich Nhat Hanh. The **Story Sunday** portion: Early in the service Beth Randall will share a book with the children, *Somewhere Today, a Book of Peace*, by Shelley Moore Thomas then two of us will go with them 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

You Are Invited to Stay after Refreshments to talk with Tom about the recent changes in his position and his retirement at the end of January 2025 and what will be happening between now and then.

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 tasks 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 possibly helping with 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.

Mission Committee Update: Helping Stock the New Resource Closet for Foster Families in Orange and Windsor Counties

We have been very excited to work with Nicci Maynard who is helping to establish a new Resource Closet to help outfit children in foster care in Orange and Windsor counties. The new closet is located in East Thetford and is taking donations of gently used and new children's clothing (ages 0-18) and items such as diapers. On behalf of the church, we have provided many items from Nicci's "most needed" list. You are welcome to reach out to Nicci to donate or to offer help at the closet at nicci.maynard@gmail.com. You can hear Nate Hine and Nellie Pennington talk about their experience offering foster care in a video from their service here last July at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4cuuwBuxZI> Please let us know if you have any ideas for mission work. With gratitude and love, Danette Harris, Maggie Hooker and Cameron Speth

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.

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"

Church Calendar:

Sun. May 5	Talk with Tom after Refreshments*
Thurs. May 9	Heartfulness Circle 7:00 PM Meditation*
Fri. May 10	Annemieke and Jeremiah McLane 7:00 PM*
Sun. May 12	Mother's Day Proclamation in worship*
Sun. May 19	Seeking Spirit and Story Sunday*
Sun. May 26	Celebration of Pentecost

**see the announcement about this*

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Open and Affirming Covenant

*Adopted unanimously at Annual Meeting
on September 17, 2023
after a well-informed, careful process
open to our entire church family.*

We, the members of the United Church of Strafford, Vermont, regard all people as beloved children of God. We give thanks for the many and diverse gifts of God among us.

We declare ourselves to be an Open and Affirming congregation. We welcome and accept into full participation, membership and leadership, people of every sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, race, ethnicity, faith background, political affiliation, age, marital status and family structure, physical or mental abilities, education and economic status. We acknowledge with humility that this list is not exhaustive and that the terms are in some cases harmful and evolving social constructs. We honor the worth and dignity of all people. We affirm all relationships founded on the principles of love, justice, the Golden Rule and treating others as they wish to be treated.

We commit ourselves to integrate the spirit of this covenant into all aspects of our church life. We pledge to work to end oppression, discrimination and hateful behaviors whenever we encounter them, and, guided and empowered by the Holy Spirit, to help create the beloved community of God's realm on earth.

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

Haiku by Mel Goertz
Daffodils everywhere
transforming March light
into yellow blossoms.

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