



November 27, 2022

Morning Worship and Children's Programs at 10:00 AM

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

November 27, 2022

First Sunday of Advent, Sunday of Hope

Bringing in the Greens

MH=Methodist Hymnal; PH=Pilgrim Hymnal

“For the vast majority of us...what is called ‘the holiday season’ turns out to be the most stressful time of the year.... Our hope is mingled with dread, our anticipation with despair. We sense the deeper meanings of the season but grasp at them in vain; and in the end, all the bustle leaves us frustrated and drained.... If the essence of Advent is expectancy, it is also readiness for action; watchfulness for every opening, and willingness to risk everything for freedom and a new beginning.... We might ask, ‘What grounds are there for such hope?’ Or we might seek to become like little children, and believe. Mary did. So did the shepherds and the wise men of the east.... So can each of us, wherever we are.” *from the introduction to Watch for the Light: Readings for Advent and Christmas*

“The word *hope* has two different meanings. The first involves hopefulness, where our preferred outcome seems reasonably likely.... The second meaning is about desire..., knowing what we hope for and what we’d like, or love, to take place. It is what we do with this hope that really makes the difference... Active Hope is about becoming active participants in bringing about what we hope for.” *Joanna Macy & Chris Johnstone, from Active Hope*

Gathering Music

The Cantornote Church Musicians

Silent Prayer of Invocation

Pastor Tom Kinder

Prelude “Veni Emmanuel”

Welcome

Bringing in the Greens

Hymn PH #110 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel *verses 1 & 2*

Bringing in the Holly and Poinsettias

Hymn PH #110 O Come, O Come, Emmanuel *verses 3 & 4*

Bringing in and Blessing the Light

Leader: In him 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.

Lighting of the First Advent Candle

Deacons Becky Bailey, Debby Richie and Cameron Speth

Please see your pew card for the Lord's Prayer. We are reading the New Version this week.

Anthem "Of the Father's Love Begotten"

Announcements

Confession and Assurance of Pardon

Scripture Readings **Scripture Readings** Romans 13:11-12;
Matthew 24:36-39, 42-44, 46 Debby Richie

Sermon The Advent Path of Active Hope

***Hymn** PH #108 Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying
verses 1 & 2 only, plus verse 3 found on bulletin page 4

Sharing of Joys, Concerns, Prayer Requests and Reflections

What are the candles of hope that you see being lit now, near or far?
What candles of hope do you want to hold up for others?

Time of Prayer

Congregational Benediction

Go Forth to Wait and Watch and Pray *(on page 4)*

Silent Prayer

Please be seated to end the service in a spirit of prayer

Postlude Wachet Auf (Amber Wylie soloist)

** Those who are comfortably able may stand.*

Past sermons are available on the back table
and **video recorded services** are on our website.

See us on **Facebook** at United Church of Strafford

Look for updates on our **website**: unitedchurchofstrafford.com

Sign up for **weekly emails** about upcoming worship and other news
at unitedchurchofstrafford@gmail.com

Thank you to the The Cantornote Church Musicians, including
Sarah Cantor, Rachel Kurland, Susan Hodges, Amber Wylie and
Peter Thompson!

Lord's Acre 2022 The 2022 Lord's Acre auction is nearly over—but
not quite! You have two more days, til noon on the 28th, to put in
your bid. All items are LOCAL, and there is wonderful stuff
available! Many thanks to ALL who have participated - sponsors,
donors, and bidders. We appreciate you all so much!
<https://www.biddingowl.com/UnitedChurchofStrafford>

Covid Precautions at Church We continue to require masks while
in the church building. Thank you for helping the church be a safe
and healthy place for all! *from The Steering Committee*

Pastoral Care: Rev. Deadra Ashton, who has been providing
valuable pastoral care for the past year, finds that she needs to step
away from this position. Currently, the church council is looking for
someone to fill that important position.

Wake, Awake for Night Is Flying (PH#108)

Verse 3:

Though deep darkness may surround you
And sleep, or worldly dreams, confound you,
This hope can lead you through the night.
See its single candle burning
Within the window of your yearning
And choose your heart's path by that sight.
Leave other hopes behind
As this light fills your mind:
Christ born in you.
Sing out your choice with longing voice:
O come, O come! Rejoice! Rejoice!

ADVENT

Go Forth to Wait and Watch and Pray

Thomas Cary Kinder, 2009, 2015



Go forth to wait and watch and pray. Hope is it - self the
De - part, and in the dark pre - pare. Let go what feels too
light - ed way, A door that o - pens in the night,
much to bear, And, blessed by Ad - vent's nar - rowed scope
A can - dle fill - ing all our sight.
Find light to share: a star of hope.

Haiku by Mel Goertz:

Advent, the time when birds
come back to your feeder
bringing light with them.

page four

Upcoming Special Services & Events Calendar

Sun. Nov. 27 First Sunday of Advent

Advent begins with the beautiful rituals of bringing in the greens and lighting the Advent candle of Hope, plus beloved Advent hymns and other music provided by The Cantornote Church Musicians.

Fri. Dec. 2 "Noël" Concert 7:00 PM with Julie Ness, Timothy Cummings, Jeremiah McLane and Annemieke McLane

Sun. Dec. 4 Second Sunday of Advent The candle of Peace.

Fri. Dec. 9 7:00 PM Thetford Chamber Singers concert here

Sun. Dec. 11 Third Sunday of Advent and Pageant Sunday

During the 10:00 AM service Rachel Guaraldi will present a puppet pageant with an opportunity for children to participate and for the congregation to sing carols. Afterward, Tom will lead a brief Advent service and we will light the candle of Joy.

Sun. Dec. 18 Fourth Sunday of Advent, Mary Sunday

Lighting the candle of Love and celebrating Mary, the mother of Jesus, and the model she serves for our spiritual lives.

Tues. Dec. 24 Christmas Eve Service 5:30 PM

Picture excited and awe-filled children, a sanctuary lit entirely by candles, beloved lessons and carols and gorgeous instrumental music provided by The Cantornote Church Musicians, in a service timed to allow you to have all your other Christmas Eve traditions as well.

Sun. Dec. 25 Christmas Day, 10:00 AM Zoom-only gathering

On Christmas morning we will gather by Zoom to read aloud a beloved Christmas story for all ages and to say Merry Christmas to one another.

Sun. Jan. 1 Epiphany Sunday Zoom-only Worship Service The Magi follow the star...

Sun. Jan. 8 Second Sunday Story Sunday (see page seven)

Sun. Jan. 15 Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday

Next Concert Friday, December 2, 7:00 PM "Noel" 5th year!

Music for Advent Soprano Julie Ness, Bagpiper Timothy Cummings, Accordionist Jeremiah McLane, Pianist Annemieke McLane

page five

Mission Committee Update: Bountiful Food for Our Neighbors from Our Church....Thank you!

Last week, the Mission Committee delivered 24 pounds of food from the basket in the back of our church. Thank you all so much for this kind generosity. Some of the food promptly went right home with food shelf guests. We ask that you continue to open your hearts and keep that basket in mind as we head into winter. Hearty soups are particularly in high demand right now. Thank you, thank you! With love and gratitude, Danette Harris, Maggie Hooker and Cameron Speth

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

Heartfulness Contemplative Training Circle gathers on Thursday evenings at 7:00 PM in person and by Zoom and offers an informal meditation all other evenings at 7:30 PM. You are invited to be part of the circle anytime. See our website Welcome page for details.

Fulfilling Our Vision The Fulfilling Our Vision committee depends on people joining in when they are interested in specific projects. We are continuing our focus on anti-racism and becoming officially Open to and Affirming of people of all sexual orientations and gender identities. We also voted at Annual Meeting to create a Reparations Fund for Native Americans, and we will be exploring how that can be most beneficial. 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. **Next Meeting:** *Tuesday, December 6 at 7:00 PM* will be a planning meeting on Zoom and in person in the church library. Please join us! For more information and zoom links, please speak with Kate Reimanis or email her at kreimanis@gmail.com.

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

page six

New: Story Sundays! Question: who doesn't love a good story?
Answer: We ALL love good stories!

From the time we are tiny and through all the rest of our lives, stories keep us going. A good story can make us laugh, it can make us cry, it can make us think, and it can connect us with our fellow human beings.

In this spirit, the United Church of Strafford is excited to offer monthly Story Sundays! Using stories, song, and poetry (and maybe cookies!) we will spend the second Sunday morning service of each month exploring some of the great questions that our fellow humanfolk have wondered about through the ages - and still wonder about.

Story Sundays are for everyone. The children will be invited to remain in the sanctuary for the entire service, and it will be structured to work for them as well as the adults. We will begin our Story Sundays in January on January 8th where we will explore and share together about God.

However, **for an introduction to this form of story and sharing, we invite you to our Pageant Sunday, December 12th.** Elements of Story Sundays will be integrated into it as we hear the story of the Nativity told with a beautiful Waldorf style puppet show and sing beloved carols. The children will be invited to explore the story of the Nativity further through art, reading and wondering in the Parish Hall, if they choose, during the final portion of the service.

Please join us in December for this special service and then again in the new year! **The next Story Sundays will be January 8, February 12 and March 12, 2023.**

page seven