



January 1, 2023

*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***

January 1, 2023

Epiphany Sunday Online Service

*MH=Methodist Hymnal; PH=Pilgrim Hymnal*

“Knowing God’s presence is simply a matter of awareness, of enjoying the now, of deepening one’s own presence. There are moments when it happens. Then life makes sense. Once I can see the Mystery here, and trust the Mystery even in this piece of clay that I am, then I can also see it in you. We are eventually able to see the divine image within ourselves, in each other, and in all things.... Jesus pushes seeing to the social edge. Can we see the image of Christ in the least of our brothers and sisters...? The Christian vision is that the whole world is a temple. If that is true, then our enemies are sacred, too.... The ability to respect the outsider is probably the litmus test of true seeing. And it doesn’t stop with human beings.... It moves to frogs and waters and weeds.... One God, one world, one truth, one suffering, and one love... All we can do is participate.”

*Richard Rohr*

“We ask ourselves, Who am I to be brilliant, gorgeous, talented, fabulous? Actually, who are you not to be? You are a child of God.... We are all meant to shine, as children do. We were born to make manifest the glory of God that is within us. It’s not just in some of us; it’s in everyone.” *Marianne Williamson, from Return to Love*

**Silent Prayer of Invocation**

Pastor Tom Kinder

**Prelude** Invitatory from J. S. Bach’s *Christmas Oratorio*  
performed by the 1958 Choir of King’s College, Cambridge  
including “Break Forth, O Beauteous Heavenly Light”  
David Willcocks, Director

**Welcome and Announcements**

**Call to Worship**

**Scripture Readings** Joey Hawkins, Reader  
from Isaiah 60 and Gospel of Thomas, 24, 70, 77 and 113

**Hymn** O Morning Star, How Fair and Bright

**Children's Time** *The story of the Magi: Matthew 2:1-12*

**Lord's Prayer**

**Reflection** Living into the Epiphany Story

**Hymn** What Child Is This, Who, Laid to Rest

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

**Time of Prayer**

**Call to Offering**

**Benediction**

**Silent Prayer**

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

**Postlude** "And the Glory of the Lord," from Handel's *Messiah*  
Atlanta Symphony and Chorus, Robert Shaw, Director

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

**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)

**Story Sundays! Next on January 8th**

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 had a preview of what these services will be like with Pageant Sunday this year.

Themes of upcoming Story Sundays could include questions like, Who is God? How do we find God? How do we pray?

**The next Story Sundays will be January 8, February 12 and March 12, 2023.**

**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.

**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:** Pastor Tom Kinder serves only one-third time, and weddings, funerals and pastoral counseling for individual and couples are no longer part of what he does. The church council continues to look for ways to provide a full range of pastoral care. Those in need can reach out to Deacons through Becky Bailey (rbailey@sover.net), Debby Richie (dc.richie@hotmail.com), and Cameron Speth (cece@speth.com) or call the church number printed on the cover of this bulletin.

**Fulfilling Our Vision** The Fulfilling Our Vision committee is 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. For more information please speak with Kate Reimanis or email her at kreimanis@gmail.com.

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### **Upcoming Services**

**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** Vermont UCC Open & Affirming consultant Jeffrey Tuper-Giles leads worship

**Next Concerts** Held on Fridays (except where noted), 7:00-8:15 PM. Admission by donation, 20% goes to the church's Manheim Fund for the Arts. Featuring pianist Annemieke McLane:

**Sunday January 22<sup>nd</sup> 4:00 PM** "New Hopes"

**Sunday February 12<sup>th</sup> 4:00 PM** "With Love"

**Sunday March 5<sup>th</sup> 4:00 PM** "Masterworks"

**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. *For our current children's programming, see the Story Sundays announcement on page three.*

### **Two Haiku by Mel Goertz:**

This chickadee who comes  
to my hand to pluck up a seed—  
Are we kin?

The rising sun,  
sky as pink as petunias  
yesterday was gray.

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