



December 24, 2024, 5:30 PM
Sunday 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

December 24, 2024, 5:30 PM
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
All carols will be from the red or blue Pilgrim Hymnal (PH)
All Bible readings are from the King James Version.

In him was life; and the life was the light of all.

And the light shineth in darkness;
and the darkness comprehended it not.

John 1:4-5, KJV adapted

Gathering Music Claire Potter, violin; Annemieke McLane, piano

Prelude "What Child is This?" arr. by Phillip Keveren

Silent Prayer of Invocation Pastor Tom Kinder

Introit "Peace, Peace" Rick Powell and Sylvia Powell
arr. Fred Bock

Welcome and Announcements

Children's Time

Carol PH #129 *It Came Upon the Midnight Clear* *verses 1, 3 & 4 (seated)*

Lord's Prayer

Please see your pew card for the Lord's Prayer. We will read first the Traditional Version and then the New Version.

Responsive Reading *from Isaiah 9* Cary Perry, Reader

Leader: The people that walked in darkness
have seen a great light.

People: **They that dwell in the land of the shadow of death,
upon them hath the light shined.**

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Leader: For unto us a child is born, unto us a son is given:
and the government shall be upon his shoulder.

People: **And his name shall be called Wonderful, Counselor,
The mighty God, The everlasting Father,
The Prince of Peace.**

Leader: Of the increase of his government and peace
there shall be no end, upon the throne of David
and upon his kingdom,

People: **To order it and establish it with judgment
and with justice from henceforth even for ever.**

All: **The zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this.
Alleluia!**

***Carol** PH #132 O Come, All Ye Faithful *verses 1, 2 & 3 only*

First Lesson Luke 1:26-35, 38 Beth Randall, Reader

Anthem “Wexford Carol” Irish 12th Century, arr. Philip Stopford
Soloists: Deadra Ashton, Soprano; Amber Wylie, Tenor

Second Lesson Luke 2:1, 3-7 Rod Smolla, Reader

***Carol** PH # 120 Hark! the Herald Angels Sing *verses 1 & 3 only*

Third Lesson Luke 2:8-16 Christina Robinson, Reader

***Carol** PH #130 Joy to the World! The Lord Is Come

Fourth Lesson Reflection on John 3:16 Tom Kinder, Reader

Call to Offering

***Carol** PH #128 In the Bleak Mid-Winter *verses 1, 3 & 4 only*

Fifth Lesson John 1:1-5, 10-14 Rev. Deadra Ashton, Reader

Lighting of the Christ Candle

The Prescott Family

Reflection

Rev. Tom Kinder

LIGHTING OF THE CONGREGATION’S CANDLES

The ushers will bring the flame from the Christ candle to the person sitting at the end of each pew who will pass it to the next person, and so on. Remember to tip only unlit candles!

Once all candles are lit, we will sing Silent Night. (The words are printed below.) During the second verse, please raise your candle high to shine the light to the world. Please keep your candle lit until the Postlude, if possible.

Carol Silent Night, Holy Night (*the words are printed at the end of the bulletin on page five; during verse two, raise your candle!*)

Benediction

Postlude

* *Those who are comfortably able may stand.*

Past sermons are available on the back table and on our website.

Look for updates on our **website**: unitedchurchofstrafford.com
Sign up for **weekly emails** about upcoming worship and other news
[at *unitedchurchofstrafford@gmail.com*](mailto:unitedchurchofstrafford@gmail.com)

Please let us know if you need to be added to our **mailing list**.

Thank you to Annemieke McLane, Claire Potter and the choir!

Nursery for this service Please feel free to take your child out the door by the pulpit to our nursery in the Parish Hall. The service will be broadcast over a speaker there. Listen for the last verse of the Carol “In the Bleak Mid-Winter,” and come back into the sanctuary then if you can. The candle lighting will begin shortly thereafter.

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Ushers and Greeters This Evening: Eliza and Emily Masteller, Erik and Kate Reimanis, Debby Richie and Cameron Speth.

Thank you to Vin Wylie, Zoom Master and Recording Engineer!

The offering this evening is going entirely to the Deacon's Fund of this church that provides assistance to people in need in the community, including helping people keep their homes heated or their cars on the road or their prescriptions filled and many other basic necessities. Please keep us in mind if you know of someone in need or if you could use assistance. Our contact information is on the cover of this bulletin. Thank you for your contributions!

Upcoming Special Services

Sun. Dec. 29 Informal Potluck Sunday-after-Christmas Service

A carol-sing by request, a time for sharing brief favorite Christmas stories, either personal or a classic tale, or poems or quotes or songs—a kind of inspirational potluck, followed by a potluck of your favorite seasonal treats for refreshments.

Sun. Jan. 5 Epiphany Sunday The Magi follow the star...

Sun. Jan. 12 Seeking Spirit Sunday

Sun. Jan. 19 Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday

Sun. Jan. 26 Pastor Tom Kinder's final Sunday

Next Concerts "Winter Wonders" held on Sundays 4:00-5:15 PM. Admission by donation, 20% goes to the church's Manheim Fund for the Arts.

January 12th Bruch and Beethoven Miriam Herron, Cello & Annemieke McLane

February 9th Crossing Bridges by Cassotto Duo (Jeremiah McLane, Accordion & Annemieke McLane)

March 9th Waterways Rebecca Bailey, voice; Jim Schley, poet; Annemieke McLane, piano

April 6th Edvard Grieg, wonders of imagination. Annemieke McLane, piano solo

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Silent Night, Holy Night

Silent Night, holy night,
All is calm, all is bright
Round yon virgin mother and child,
Holy infant, so tender and mild.
Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.

Silent Night, holy night,
Shepherds quake at the sight,
Glories stream from heaven afar,
Heavenly hosts sing alleluia;
Christ the Savior is born!
Christ the Savior is born!

Silent Night, holy night,
Son of God, love's pure light
Radiant beams from thy holy face,
With the dawn of redeeming grace,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth,
Jesus, Lord, at thy birth.

Haiku by Mel Goertz:

When snowflakes are falling
we take our ease—
the birth of Jesus fills us with peace.

*We are an Open and Affirming congregation.
Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey,
you are welcome here!*

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