

The United Church of Strafford

*P.O Box 124
Strafford, VT 05072*



August 15, 2016

Dear Strafford Community,

The United Church of Strafford is going forward! Please come along with us – *now more than ever, this church needs you!*

Some good news!

Over this past year, we have been blessed with an interim half time pastor, Lynn Wickberg from Putney, Vermont. On her very first day with us last year, Lynn came to help the rummage sale crew set up for the week (!) and she has worked tirelessly with the community, in countless ways, ever since then. Lynn has embraced her role as “village chaplain”, and we feel VERY grateful to have her!

We are thrilled to announce that this coming year – beginning in September! – Annemieke McLane will serve as our musical leader. Thanks to a series of grants, and our own Manheim Fund, we will have Annemieke working with us – leading us in most Sunday services, starting up a choir for Strafford young people, directing musical opportunities for grown-ups. If you are a singer, or a devoted listener, you know how lucky we are to have Annemieke!

Over the past few months, we have begun the search for a permanent pastor. A search committee of ten people has written an in-depth profile of the United Church of Strafford. In a nutshell, (though it is admittedly hard to put an in-depth profile into a nutshell!), we are searching for a halftime pastor who values the role of “village chaplain” that our pastor has always served, and who welcomes the opportunity to lead our church forward, and to help folks explore what “church means”, in the challenging times we all live in.

Now what?

As you know so well, our church is a community church. Serving and caring for the community, in a myriad of both spiritual and practical ways - in a way that nothing else can - is why the United Church of Strafford exists.

To be able to “go forward”, the United Church of Strafford, your church, needs the help of *all of us*. It needs people who are willing to plan, to collect for the Haven, to create the Christmas pageant, to plant the flowers, to bake the bread, to make the coleslaw and the pies, to sing in the choir, to lead discussion groups, to visit folks who are sick, to teach the children, to sort the rummage, to tend to the flowers, to organize meal trains, to bring neighbors to doctor appointments, to continue old traditions and to start new ones – and over years and years, folks in the community have stepped in to do all of these things, and more. Thank you, thank you, thank you!

As we do this work, finances also matter, of course. Now, we are asking you to consider an annual pledge to support the continuing work of the United Church of Strafford. Pledges are a promise of sorts, an intent – to help keep the United Church of Strafford open for services, for special events, and especially to be available in times of need. Pledge money pays for fuel, for parsonage upkeep, for fresh paint, for the minister’s salary, for health insurance – as well as mission work like helping support the school-based health clinic and aiding neighbors in need. *Pledges are vital*. They allow the church to continue its truly important work of service to the community, in ways that we know matter to the community itself – to all of us.

Whether you are part of the broader community, or a dedicated church-goer, we hope you will consider filling out the enclosed pledge card and sending it back to us at your earliest convenience. If at all possible, we would ideally like to know your pledge amount by September 15 for budgeting purposes, although the actual funds can be sent anytime between now and July 31, 2017.

Thank you for your continued support, for your faith in what this church means to all of us, for your willingness to look into the future, and for your commitment as we go through the important steps of going forward - and for being a part of this diverse, wonderful community.

With peace and blessings,

The Council of the United Church of Strafford