

Opening Music: (Click on the blue type, it should take you to the piece. It lasts 3 m 26s)

[In Paradisum: Faure Requiem \(Kings College, Cambridge\) - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPca88LPARI)<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IPca88LPARI>

Regular Opening Music: 'Its still not going to rain' by Lizzie Hornby

Welcome: Good morning and Welcome, whether you are here in the church or joining us online. Welcome whoever you are, and however you are feeling, whatever you carry in your heart, and bring with you, cares and concerns or celebrations, sadness or joys, you are welcome, especially if you are joining us for the first time.

However we join in, each one of us is part of our community, contributing by being connected in spirit, and all are equally valued. We begin, as is our custom, by lighting our chalice as a symbol of our free religious faith. If you are at home, and have a candle, you may like to light it now.

Chalice Lighting: Adapted from words of Thandeka

“This common world I love anew, as the life blood of generations who refuse to surrender their humanity in an inhumane world, courses through my veins. May despair be turned to hope as we begin anew the legacy and light of caring.

Opening Words: Today is the 4th Sunday in Lent, which for centuries has been known as Mothering Sunday aka Mothers' Day. For many people, this can be a difficult day, for various reasons. So, today's Service 'Time to Care' celebrates other sorts of caring, beyond the sort traditionally associated with mothers.

As the Dalai Lama says “I believe that to meet the challenge of our times, human beings will have to develop a greater sense of universal responsibility. We must all learn to work not just for our own self, family, or nation but for the benefit of all humankind. Universal responsibility is the key to human survival. It is the best foundation for world peace, the equitable use of natural resources, and through concern for future generations, the proper care of the environment.”

1st Hymn: Purple 141 'She comes with Mother's Kindnesses'

She comes with mother's kindnesses
and bends to touch and heal,
She gives her heart away on love
for those who cannot feel.

She comes with lover's tenderness
to answer love's appeal.
She gives her body with her heart
to make her passion real.

She comes with worker's faithfulness
to sow and reap and spin.
She bends her back in common task
to gather harvest in.

She comes with artist's joyfulness
to make and shape and sing,
She gives her hands and from them grows
a free and lovely thing.

She comes, a child in humbleness,
and trust is in her eyes.
And through them, all of life appears
In wondering surprise.

She comes with sister's carefulness
strong to support and bind.
Her voice will speak for justice's sake
and peace is in her mind.

She comes with power like the night
and glory like the day.
Her reign is in the heart of things –
Oh come to us and stay.

Words ©Kathyn Galloway b. 1952 Permission applied for. Tune: 'St Botolph' by Gordon Slater (1896 – 1979)

Prayers:

1st As we come together, may we find cessation of whatever personal turmoil accompanies us. May we seek forgiveness for harsh words uttered, or healing words left unsaid. May each of us find strength to endure difficulty; may we find acceptance of those we may not understand.

And as this season becomes more glorious with each passing day, may we be aware of each and every miracle around us.

On this day when custom reminds us to remember those who gave us life and nurtured our early years, let us give thanks for each person, female or male, family or friend who loved and guided us to be who we are today.

May we find ways to express that love in words and in the ongoing integrity of our lives. And let us be supporters of each other in this uncertain venture that is our shared life, that our lives may be strengthened and enriched. *A M E N*

2nd A Prayer by Margaret Kirk, UK Unitarian

Spirit of love, of light, of truth, of freedom

Bring courage to those who so desperately need it at this time of crisis in our world. Our faith challenges us to remember all those who have fought for freedom against tyranny, especially in Ukraine. Our hearts go out to those caught up in the suffering that violence brings; especially the most innocent: the children and civilians everywhere living their lives peacefully.

Let kindness bless their lives – small acts of kindness that we pray will give them strength, that will ease their fear and anxiety, that will reassure them of those human values that even in the darkest times, can bring hope and resilience.

Eternal Spirit of love– illumine their lives, protect them, give them strength not to despair, bless them with encircling moments of kindness and compassion that can shine through and bring comfort even in the midst of great suffering. Let it be so. *Amen*

Story: From 'Little Women' by Louisa May Alcott (1832 – March 6, 1888)

Another bang of the street door sent the basket under the sofa, and the girls to the table, eager for breakfast.

"Merry Christmas, Marmee! Many of them! Thank you for our books. We read some, and mean to every day," they all cried in chorus.

"Merry Christmas, little daughters! I'm glad you began at once, and hope you will keep on. But I want to say one word before we sit down. Not far away from here lies a poor woman with a little newborn baby. Six children are huddled into one bed to keep from freezing, for they have no fire. There is nothing to eat over there, and the oldest boy came to tell me they were suffering hunger and cold. My girls, will you give them your breakfast as a Christmas present?"

They were all unusually hungry, having waited nearly an hour, and for a minute no one spoke, *only* a minute, for Jo exclaimed impetuously, "I'm so glad you came before we began!"

"May I help carry the things to the poor little children?" asked Beth eagerly.

"I shall take the cream and muffins," added Amy, heroically giving up what she most liked.

Meg was already covering the buckwheats, and piling the bread into one big plate.

"I thought you'd do it," said Mrs. March, smiling as if satisfied. "You shall all go and help me, and when we come back we will have bread and milk for breakfast, and make it up at dinnertime."

They were soon ready, and the procession set out....

A poor, bare, miserable room it was, with broken windows, no fire, ragged bedclothes, a sick mother, wailing baby, and a group of pale, hungry children cuddled under one old quilt, trying to keep warm. How the big eyes stared and the blue lips smiled as the girls went in. "Ach, mein Gott! It is good angels come to us!" said the poor woman, crying for joy.

"Funny angels in hoods and mittens," said Jo, and set them to laughing. In a few minutes it really did seem as if kind spirits had been at work there. Hannah, who had carried wood, made a fire, and stopped up the broken panes with old hats and her own cloak. Mrs. March gave the mother tea and gruel, and comforted her with promises of help, while she dressed the little baby as tenderly as if it had been her own. The girls meantime spread the table, set the children round the fire, and fed them like so many hungry birds, laughing, talking, and trying to understand the funny broken English.

"Das ist gut!" "Die Engel-kinder!" cried the poor things as they ate and warmed their purple hands at the comfortable blaze. The girls had never been called angel children before, and thought it very agreeable.

That was a very happy breakfast, though they didn't get any of it. And when they went away, leaving comfort behind, I think there were not in all the city four merrier people than the hungry little girls who gave away their breakfasts and contented themselves with bread and milk on Christmas morning.

Readings: (1) Plants and People Anon

Plants grow best when we pay attention to them. That means watering, touching them, putting them in places where they will receive good light. They need people around them to notice if they are drooping at the edges or looking particularly happy in the sunlight. The more attention a plant receives, the better it will grow.

We need to be noticed in the same way. If we notice a family member or friend is drooping, perhaps we can pay some special attention to him or her. All of us need someone to care about how we are and to truly listen to us. We can share and double someone's happiness by noticing and talking about it also. We help the people around us to grow by listening to their droopy edges as well as their bright days. People need this as much as plants need light and water.

(2) The Parable of the Good Samaritan Luke 10:25-37 New International Translation

Now an expert in religious law stood up to test Jesus saying, "Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? How do you understand it? The expert answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and love your neighbour as yourself." Jesus said to him, "You have answered correctly, do this, and you will live."

But the expert wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbour?"

Jesus replied, "A man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell into the hands of robbers, who stripped him, beat him up, and went off, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a priest was going down that road, but when he saw the injured man he passed by on the other side. So too a Levite, when he came up to the place and saw him passed by on the other side. But a Samaritan who was travelling came to where the injured man was, and when he saw him, he felt compassion for him. He went up to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring olive oil and wine on them. Then he put him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The next day he took out two silver coins and

gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Take care of him, and whatever else you spend, I will repay you when I come back this way.'

"Which of these three do you think became a neighbour to the man who fell into the hands of the robbers?"

The expert in religious law said, "The one who showed mercy to him."

So Jesus said to him, "Go and do the same."

2nd Hymn: Purple Book 128 'Our World is one world'

Our world is one world:
what touches one affects us all –
the seas that wash us round about,
the clouds that cover us,
the rains that fall.

Our world is one world:
the thoughts we think affect us all –
the way we build our attitudes,
with love or hate, we make
a bridge or wall.

Our world is one world:
Its ways of wealth affect us all –
The way we spend, the way we share,
Who are the rich or poor,
Who stand or fall?

Our world is one world:
just like a ship that bears us all –
where fear and greed make many holes,
but where our hearts can hear
a different call.

*Words and music by Cecily Taylor b. 1930 ©1988 Stainer & Bell, 23 Gruneisen Road, London N3 1DZ
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Meditation Maryell Cleary's Prayer/ Reflection

Knowing that we do not always live up to our best expectations of ourselves, let us in quietness seek the good within, which some call the Inner Light, and some a 'Spark of the Divine'

P A U S E

Knowing that we live in a society that falls far short of the ideal, let us in quietness resolve to do one thing this week to aid those suffering from want and injustice.

P A U S E

Knowing that the earth is our home, and that humankind is making it a dirty and even poisonous home, let us in quietness consider how we might be part of making it more healthy for all living things

P A U S E

Knowing that each of us has some sorrow or worry hidden within, let us consider in quietness how we may reach out to one another with our smiles, our handclasps, and our encouraging words,

Approx 1 ½ mins of silence, followed by reflective music by Lizzie Hornby

ADDRESS – “TIME TO CARE”

Good morning, its good to be with you all, in person in this building, and via the technological wonders of Zoom or watching later in a recording. Thanks to those of you present now, for remembering to put forward your clocks so that you could be in time for our service here today. It was time for you to care, and you did!

For the mothers among us, I would wish you a happy Mother's day, or more properly, happy Mothering Sunday, though for some, it will be difficult, and maybe a day you would rather not mark. And each one of us has or had, a mother, the woman who gave birth to us physically. From the age of many of us here, including myself, its obvious that our mothers are no longer here in body, though they are living on in memory. Traditionally, the role of mother was that of child- raiser and primary care giver. While this is often still true, due to circumstances and the changing times, that role may include others – family, friends as well as teachers and official agencies.

There is some truth in the old African proverb that says it takes a whole village to raise a child. It comes from the African belief that children are a blessing, so the entire community is delighted whenever a child is born, and everyone likes to share responsibility for their upbringing.

This has many advantages. With family, friends, and neighbours looking after her or him, the child thrives in a secure and loving environment. The community provides a safety net enabling the child to explore and learn without coming to harm, and relieves some of the pressure on busy working parents. If the parents are less stressed and happier, so is the child, who also benefits from multiple role models.

The whole community is brought together, building trust between its members. It teaches us that we need each other, and so we have to learn to get along, forgiving each other if we make mistakes. The child in return, learns to love the community, and care for everyone in it.

This doesn't only apply to Africa of course. When I was a child, in the 1950's and early 60's, everyone in our neighbourhood was watching out for us children – sometimes I wished they wouldn't! You couldn't get away with much! But there was always someone with time to care. Once I lost the penny bus fare to school – disaster! If the conductor turned me off, I would be late! But a kindly young woman gave me a penny, saying with a smile not to worry, she'd done the same when she was a little girl. She took the time to care about someone in a similar plight to hers. The neighbour who fished me, dripping, from a large puddle, took the time to explain to my mother that it really wasn't my fault. The tall agile (adult) neighbour jumped over it but my attempt to copy her failed; stubbly little legs couldn't stretch so far and in I went! Two tiny examples of someone taking the time to care – trivial compared with countless others, all around the world.

In our story, we heard of a busy mother, by no means well off herself, who heard of desperate want and need in a family a few streets away. It was Christmas Day. Many other women would have shut their ears and their doors and enjoyed the special breakfast with their family. Not 'Marmee' Marsh – she was true to her beliefs of caring for those even less well off and had imbued them into her 4 daughters. So after merely the shortest of hesitations, they took practical help to where it was most needed, founding their rewards in seeing how the poor immigrant family benefitted. The Marsh family took the time to care. (They had another, and unexpected reward later that day from a rich neighbour who'd heard of their good deed)

The Parable of the Good Samaritan has several layers of interpretation. At its simplest level, Jesus is telling the story of someone, who quite unexpectedly, cared for the man left for dead by

robbers. Others, who *in theory* should have shown that care, passed by. The Samaritan *took the time to care*.

During the recent pandemic, we've heard of so many times when busy nurses rushed off their feet, took time to speak to worried relatives of patients, and stayed with dying patients when family members were barred from visiting. They took time to care. Captain Tom, at 100 years old, took the time to care enough to raise over £30 million for charity to support the lonely and vulnerable. The community of Keyham came together to raise funds and provide support for the bereaved following the dreadful shootings last summer. Many people taking the time to care for those less fortunate than themselves.

Today, as we, safe in our comfortable homes, watch with horror the unfolding catastrophe in Ukraine, it is humbling to see how the millions of people fleeing the destruction and conflict being welcomed into neighbouring countries like Poland. So many there are opening their hearts and homes, taking the time to care for their neighbours. This has inspired many in UK to do likewise, trying to overcome the Government red tape getting in the way. Many more are doing what they can, driving lorry loads of donated helpful items to where they are most needed. They are taking the time and effort, to care. Many, as in this congregation, are doing what we can by donating money for the aid agencies. Ann cared enough to take the time to knit woollen sunflowers, Ukrainian symbol, to raise some money. The choir which practices in our building every week, cares enough to put on a Concert here soon, with all proceeds from ticket sales going to the funds.

Those are some purely human concerns. Overshadowing all, is the urgent need for action to reduce the effects of Climate Change and habitat destruction, which threatens the future of *all* life on earth. Millions of people around the world are so concerned that they are taking various actions to prevent further damage. From continuing research into what is happening and how to reduce the worst of the damage, to noisy but peaceful marches and demonstrations around city centres, from knocking on doors to raise awareness, to urging banks and financiers to stop investing in fossil fuels, from doing litter picks in local parks to holding global symbolic events like last night's Earth Hour, all are examples of people taking the time to care. We have a long way to go, the road ahead will be bumpy with twists and turns along the way, but I have hope that much can be achieved if people act together and take time to care.

Final Hymn: Purple no 110 Now we sing to praise Love's Blessing

Now we sing to praise love's blessing all through our lives;
Laughter, joy, surprise, confessing all through our lives;
Love that dreamed a new creation, love that dares through incarnation,
Love that offers transformation,
All through our lives.

How our wounds ache for love's healing all through our days;
How our world needs love's revealing in all its ways.
Fearful hearts suspect the stranger,
Hardened nations arm for danger,
Love lives on, the powerful changer, all through our days.

Love's the grace that makes us caring all through our lives,
Urges us to warmth and sharing all through our lives,
Speaks to us, oppression naming,
Strives in us, injustice shaming,
Lives in us, true peace proclaiming all through our lives.

Love's the clown that mocks at winning all through, the world,
Midwife of each new beginning all through the world,

In the struggles that confound us, in the chaos all around us,
Love's wide arms with hope surround us all through the world.

In God's faithful love we flourish all through our lives,
Known and loved, each other nourish all through our lives;
Though the world's demands are pressing,
What life brings is Left to guessing,
Still we sing to praise love's blessing all through our lives.

Words ©Anna Briggs Tune: Olicana by David Dawson

Closing Words:by Lauralyn Bellamy, American UU

If here you have found freedom, take it with you into the world.
If you have found comfort, go and share it with others.
If you have dreamed dreams, help one another that they may come true!
If you have known love, give some back to a bruised and hurting world. Go in peace

Extinguish Chalice

Regular Closing Music: by Lizzie Hornby

Closing Music: Moonlight Night Ukrainian choir & Orchestra

Click on the blue type, it should take you to the piece, singers and orchestra. It lasts for 3 mins 54 s, including about 20s applause.

[A Moonlight Night - The Most Beautiful Ukrainian Song \(Dedicated to All Brave Ukrainian People\) - YouTube](#) Ref

[https:// www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaOChwNPgSo](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aaOChwNPgSo)