

Sunday 26th June, Healing/Moving on/Time to Let go

Led by members of our online community: Poppy, Joan, Nick and Edgar with Rev Kate

Intro music: Debussy 1st Arabesque – Harp

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vcbQsQOLaco>

Invite attendees to write down something that is holding them back or that they'd like healing from as they settle in church.

OPENING WORDS – Kate in church

As we enter into worship, let us put away the pressures of the world that ask us to perform, to take up masks, to put on brave fronts.

Let us silence the voices that ask us to be perfect.

This is a community of compassion, healing and welcoming.

We do not have to do anything to earn the love contained within these walls.

We do not have to be braver, smarter, stronger, better than we are in this moment to belong here, with us all.

We only have to bring the gift of our body,
no matter how able;
our seeking mind,
no matter how busy;
our loving heart,
no matter how broken.

Let us bring all that we are, and all that we love, to this time together. Let us worship together.

WELCOME

CHALICE LIGHTING Words by Jeff Foster

THE PRESENT MOMENT - is this where healing dwells?

In this sacred present moment, our chalice flame is lit. Is this where healing dwells, in the birthplace of time, the womb of life where all great insights, ideas, possibilities are seeded and grow. Here we may go to the edge of the darkest night in ourselves, but we will be shown the most brilliant daylight that can warm and heal. Endings will seem like beginnings and beginnings will seem like endings, and we will keep walking even when we lose our path, and the path will be under our feet, always. Or under our lostness. Or so close to us that we doubt it a thousand times over. But we will keep walking. And just when we think it's over, it will all begin again. Here, do not leave, we do not arrive, we are only ever present.

People invited to place their worries in the water.

1st HYMN – 43 (P) Gather the Spirit

READING: from Florence Nightingale, read by Nick online

It is often thought that medicine is the curative process. It is no such thing; medicine is the surgery of functions, as surgery proper is the that of limbs and organs. Neither can do anything but remove obstructions; neither can cure; nature alone cures. Surgery removes the bullet out of the limb, which is an obstruction to cure, but nature heals the wound. So it is with medicine; the function of an organ becomes obstructed; medicine assists nature to remove the obstruction, but does nothing more. And what nursing has to do in either case is to put the patient in the best condition for nature to act upon him.

READING from the Quaker Howard E. Collier read by Nick online

Health is a process, not a single and unique event. Health is a becoming; it is not a state of being. The price of health is an eternal vigilance, a constant adaptation to the creative word of God...During each life period, a new measure of the Word of God must be built, living stone by stone, into the very structure of the growing personality, just as the energy of the sun is built into the plants of the earth. Childhood, adolescence, maturity, middle age and old age, each and every phase of life calls for the discovery of new potentials within the inner self... Thus, by a process of growth, the healthy spirit is prepared for the last crisis, death, when the body returns to the earth, and the spirit of God who gave it. If the spirit be in health, the fate of its tabernacle becomes of slight concern.

PRAYER – read by Nick online

Loving Spirit,

We pray for all those in need of healing, whether to body, mind or spirit. May they know the love that supports us all, the still centre of life. We pray for those known to us. [PAUSE] We pray also for those not known to us, in our city, in our country and in other countries. In particular we pray for those in Ukraine and in other countries ravaged by war or by natural disaster. May we do all we can to support those working to bring healing to those places.

Above all may we remember that it is in healing that we are healed and that in loving that we are loved.

We pray also for all those whose mission is to bring healing to others, whether in body, mind or spirit. We pray for those working in hospitals, hospices, care and nursing homes and for paramedics, GPs and others working in the community, including those in essential support posts as well as those delivering front line services to patients. We offer grateful thanks for their skill, diligence and loving care. We pray that they be provided with what they need to undertake their work effectively, and that they have the support they need at a time when resources are

under greater pressure than ever before. We pray that politicians take heed of the views of clinicians and health managers when setting health policy and budgets, and that all of us treat health workers with proper concern and respect.

Finally, may we see in the practice of healing a reflection of love in action and a step along the road to building a loving community.

May it be so. Amen.

2nd HYMN 198 (G) The Healing of the Nations

STORY Once Upon a Puddle, read by Poppy online

This is a story about some fish who lived in a very small puddle of water. If you ever listened into their conversations, you would often hear them competing for water-bugs:

“Give me that water-bug!”

“No, I saw him first.”

“Get your fins off my supper!”

And so, every day, the little fish spent their time competing for water-bugs. This left little time for laughter and recreation. Their stagnant puddle was cradled between the roots of an ancient oak tree, just beside a flowing river.

But one morning, there was a sudden *splash!*

An amazing, brightly coloured fish had jumped into the riverside puddle...a fish with golden scales. Now – besides their brightness, this visitor was smiling!

One of the puddle-fish asked them, “Where do *you* come from?”

The Sparkling Fish smiled even brighter and replied, “I come from the sea!”

“The sea? What’s the sea?” asked the puddle-fish.

The Sparkling Fish was surprised. “Has no one ever told you about the sea? Why, the sea is what fish were made for! It isn’t like this little puddle, it’s endless! A fish

needn't swim in circles all day...they can dance with the tides! And the sea is beautiful and clear!"

A pale puddle-fish spoke up: "But, how do we get to the sea?"

The Sparkling Fish answered: "Oh, it's a simple matter. You just jump from this little puddle into that river and the current will take you to the sea."

Astonishment clouded the puddle water. At long last, a brave little fish swam forward with a hard look in his eye. He was a Realist Fish and he said:

"It's pleasant to talk about this 'sea business.' But, if you ask me, we have to face reality. And what is reality? Obviously, it's day-to-day life – swimming in circles and hunting for water-bugs. Life is hard. It takes a Realist fish to face facts.

The Sparkling Fish smiled, "But you don't understand...I've *been* there. I've *seen* the sea. And it's far more wonderful than you can...." But, before he could finish, the Realist Fish had swum away.

Next, a fish with a nervous twitch in their tail came forward. They were a Scared Fish. He stammered. "You mean, we're supported to j-j-j-ump into that big, fast river over there?" Pointing with their fin. "Look, I am just an ordinary little fish. That river is deep and strong, and wide! Besides, I'm not sure where it goes! Why, I might be swept away by the current! If I jumped out of the puddle, I might have no control where I end up. No...no...too risky for me."

The Sparkling Fish whispered, "Just *trust*...trust the river will take you someplace good..." But before they could say anything more the Scared Fish had hurried away.

Finally, there swam out a very dignified figure in a black robe – a Theologian Fish. Calmly, the Theologian Fish adjusted their spectacles saying, "My brother and sister fish, our distinguished visitor has expressed views which merit our consideration. However, these puddle-fish have expressed other views. By all means, let us be reasonable. We can work this out. Why don't we form a discussion group? We could meet every Tuesday at 19:00pm to discuss it whilst having some refreshments."

The eyes of the Sparkling Fish grew sad. "No, this will never do. Talking is important, but in the end – it is a simple matter. You *jump*. You jump out of the puddle and into the river and you trust it will take you to the sea. Now, who will come and follow me?"

At first, no one moved. Then a few puddle-fish swam to the Sparkling Fish. All together they jumped from the river and were carried by the current to the sea. The remaining puddle-fish began to swim in circles and hunt for water-bugs, just like they always had.

HEALING CIRCLE RITUAL – facilitated by Edgar in the church

For the purpose of this ceremony, two small rugs or mats will be used and placed a few inches apart. One person at a time stands at the edge of one rug facing the second rug and imagines they are standing at the edge of a cliff with a deep gorge between them and the second rug. They feel the depth of that gorge and how terrifying it would be to fall that far down. But as deep and as frightening as that gorge is, it only takes a small step to cross it. Each person will be invited to take that small step across while thinking “many fears are like this” and feel the comfort of arriving safely on the other side. A given fear may run deep and may have run deep for years and years—but enacting this ceremony can help remind participants that there is no real danger any longer, that they can “step right over it” by using this ceremonial bridge. In the immediate aftermath of this ceremony, the following healing blessing will be read:

HEALING BLESSING – read by Edgar in church

Bless this day with healing, bless it with
radiant sun energy, fill each cell of the body,
bringing a flood of healthy energy to all the body,
banishing illness & disease, as healing grows.

May the abundant powers of health flourish within,
each day, may they expand & grow stronger,
bringing the gifts of vitality, strength & wellbeing,
Blessings flow now with ample energy & happiness.

INTERLUDE

Music to follow prayer/silent reflection – Jules Massenet – Meditation from Thais for Violin and Piano

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7QtGOWemQhY>

We see how our worries have disappeared in the water!

ADDRESS – given by Joan online

How many of you appreciate having your photograph taken? You may feel even worse, when later others say: 'what a good photograph – it really captures who you are'. Can you really agree when it clearly isn't what you would wish to go in the photograph album; and yet, aren't the best photographs, paintings or sculptures the very ones which capture the essence and character of a person, 'warts and all'. It's those pesky old warts which we have to come to terms with somehow, those things which we try to hide.

Healing is the other side of the coin as its opposite SUFFERING or we could say disease. We live in a world of opposites, a world of paradox within which we shape our lives, which are complex and often, or even mostly full of contradictions.

Finding balance and equilibrium in life is an ongoing process and certainly central to my own sense of wellbeing. In acknowledging the warts and all - accepting them - we find what is so often the beginning of a healing process not the end. As we heard in the reading by Howard E Collier, which Nick read earlier: 'Health is a process, not a single and unique event. Health is a becoming; it is not a state of being'.

Mary Jones shared some words by Jeff Foster with our planning team:

Give up the struggle to 'let go' of fear, anger, sorrow, loneliness...

Instead, become exceedingly curious about these, 'unwanted' visitors!

Breathe into them, give them room, let them stay, today, let them live!

Bless them with non-judgmental attention.

When they feel loved enough, and when they feel safely held in your resistant awareness,

and when they are ready, they will 'let go' of you.

This sense of process may not seem to make much sense following the earlier ritual, which Edgar guided us through or the story which Poppy read. However, on further reflection it becomes clear that both are true.

My husband is forever telling me when I have been tussling with a problem; "Just let it go". Sometimes he's absolutely right but sometimes not. It's not always easy or possible or right - the time, place and opportunity hasn't arrived for resolution and healing. However, I hope that today you found the ritual of stepping onto new ground a freeing and empowering experience, timely, an opportunity, when you could at last let something go and move on. You may have felt encouraged to make a small or a big decision. However, known or unknown to yourself, what you left behind in the stepping over was something that was ready to let go of you. The time was right, the place was right within this safe, loving and healing community, and you just needed the opportunity and guidance to acknowledge your difficulty, letting it go and allowing it to let go of you. It can feel good to feel freer and more positive as we move forward without carrying what had been weighing us down, perhaps for some long while.

Several years ago, on my first visit to the Hucklow Summer School, I had the most wonderful experience which illustrates the coming together as a 'Beloved and Healing Community', which I feel we do here, whether meeting in the Church or being blended on Zoom. Walls do not a church make but the people who meet in the spirit of love and healing do.

It had been a big step for me to attend Summer School. Following a long health problem, I took that step with the aid of crutches. During a long and painful illness, when many hours and days saw me unable to leave my bed or lift my head from the pillow - in those darkest moments, an image came into my mind, I seemed to be floating on a multi-coloured blanket made of something like cotton wool. This blanket of cottonwool enfolded me. It eased the pain and always at the very worst time the vision would return. In those moments I would feel utterly loved and whole, whatever was to come. After a relapse I would partially recover and tried to draw in colour that vivid image, which had soothed my body and soul. I couldn't reproduce it in pencil, pen, sewing or knitting, but knew that it held some significance for me.

At the Summer School the workshop I was in made felt in silence. Even my poor attempt at making a small square of felt was healing as one kind soul came to my assistance. One particular morning I was feeling unwell and unable to get to the workshop, arriving late. What I was met with blew my mind. In silence and care for each other, the group were working and moving together around two long tables making a large felt, shawl - draping soft wool and thread of many colours, melding them into one whole, piece - preparing for the next step in creating the complete shawl. In that place and at that time this beloved community had reproduced the powerful, healing image which had returned to me over and over again in those dark days of pain and suffering.

Stepping into that room moved me to tears of joy. I was loved and healed by and into that community and could go forward. I hadn't been able to make this step alone but in a healing community it had been possible. The healing had been both a process and a big step forward. Unintentionally that group was healing in what seemed to me a sacred space of love, peace and joy. They gifted the finished blanket to me and it remains precious and always will be. (Show blanket)

The above process and stepping over a new threshold are things we may have experienced and continue to experience in prayer, meditation, and reflection.

Coming together, here in worship, we find a place of healing, as we sing together, pray together, listen to stories together, express both concern and joy, share in ritual, and show gratitude for this life we are all gifted with.

In whatever small way we can, together with the healing grace of love, step over into wholeness, affirming this one precious birth, life and death. We will experience together both suffering and joy, brokenness and wholeness, mourning and celebration as we go forward. However, with and in grace and through the support of community we can welcome each new day and be grateful for it, be grateful for the simple things, the birds singing, the smile given and returned. Acknowledging the warts and all of ourselves, others and the world, in both suffering and health, loving them both the same we find, healing. In the end we have to say, 'that as long as we live, we must say yes to life'.

On that note let us sing our next hymn, which is 83 in the purple book.

3rd HYMN 83 (P) Just as long as I have breath, I must answer, “Yes.” To life;

CLOSING WORDS read by Kate in church

For Equilibrium by John O’ Donohue

Like the joy of the sea coming home to shore,
May the relief of laughter rinse through your soul.
As the wind loves to call things to dance,
May your gravity be lightened by grace.
Like the dignity of moonlight restoring the earth,
May your thoughts incline with reverence and respect.
As water takes whatever shape it is in,
So free may you be about who you become.
As silence smiles on the other side of what’s said,
May your sense of irony bring perspective.
As time remains free of all that it frames,
May your mind stay clear of all its names.
May your prayer of listening deepen enough
to hear in the depths the laughter of god.

CLOSING MUSIC/VIDEO – Gabriel Faure’s Pavane, Op. 50 (video features paintings by Claude Monet)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mpgyTl8yqbw>