

A Service for Fair Trade Fortnight

Opening Music: "Eternal Love" Andean Flutes by Wuaunquikuna 5 mins 50sec.
[Eternal Love | Relaxing | Beautiful Music With Andean flutes by FS Wuaunquikuna - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWVXH2dMZpg)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dWVXH2dMZpg>

Opening Words: Good morning & welcome everyone, whether you are here in this building or joining us on Zoom (wave) or watching online later. You are welcome, whether a regular attender, and especially so if you are a newcomer. Whatever you bring in your heart: whether you come in sadness, joy or out of curiosity, whatever your faith or none, you are welcome! Our Service this morning service celebrates Fairtrade Fortnight which ran from 27th February until today, 12th March. This year's campaign highlights the message that whatever your budget and wherever you shop, when you choose Fairtrade, you are helping to support their growers and farmers to take care of the environment through Fairtrade's Price, Premium and Programmes.

Some personal experiences of FT growers will be included in our Service today. Our opening music was a recording of Andean flutes, as a lot of FT coffee is grown in South American countries. Our reflective music and final video are of African music, as many FT goods like tea, coffee and cocoa are grown in African countries.

All the FT growers around the world are our neighbours, albeit at a distance. Before we start, please turn to your close by neighbour, and introduce yourself. If you are on Zoom, maybe you'd like to greet one another via the Chat box

Words from Leviticus 19:13 and 25:14,17 (New International Version – UK)
"Do not defraud or rob your neighbour...." "Do not hold back the wages of a hired worker overnight....." "If you sell land to any of your own people or buy land from them, do not take advantage of each other. ... but fear your God."

Chalice Lighting: We begin as is our custom, by lighting our Chalice as a symbol of our free religious faith. Those who are with us on Zoom may like to light a candle now:

Words for Chalice Lighting:

We light this candle to remind ourselves of the light of conscience that exists in every person, leaving us without excuse for ignoring the plight of those who are less fortunate than ourselves.

May our worship this morning enlighten us about humanity's needs, and may we become inspired to give light to the dark corners of our world.

1st Hymn: Purple Book No. 128 "Our World is one world" 2 mins 16s



1st Hymn: Purple Book No. 128 "Our World is one world"

2 mins 16s

Our World is one world:
what touches on 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 hold our attitudes,
with love or hate, we make
a bridge or wall.

Our World is one world:
as 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.

Cecily Taylor, b. 1930

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Prayers: Let us turn to a time of Prayer and reflection. Our first prayer is one, slightly adapted, by retired Unitarian Minister, Cliff Reed:

1st Prayer: We hold in our thoughts and prayers, all those of our church community, all those of our families and friends and our neighbours in the wider community who are in need of solace.

For the sick, may there be healing and strength.
For the distressed may there be peace and tranquility of spirit.
For the embittered may there be reconciliation and a new beginning.
For the despairing, may there be faith and rekindled joy
For the fearful, may there be courage and unquenchable hope
For the poor and oppressed, may there be better times ahead

With trembling hands we reach out to all our neighbours, those near by or afar, who are suffering in any way.
May love and life flow out through us to restore, to relieve and to re-create ... *AMEN*

2nd Prayer, adapted from one by Anna Jane Evans, from an Ecumenical Service from Fair Trade Website

Creator Spirit,

We pray for farmers and producers across the world who are living with the ravages and fear of climate change threatening their livelihoods and income.

We pray for families and children who see their crops fail because of storms, floods and drought and who live from day to day not knowing from where their next meal will come.

We pray for world leaders and scientists. We pray that they will respond to the climate emergency with the speed and commitment to enable countries to deal with Climate Change sustainably, cleanly and fairly.

We pray for organisations working in poor communities to find and promote new ways of farming to protect the environment and to enable the sustainable development of community life.

We pray for ourselves – that our commitment to justice may bear fruit in our lives, in the choices we make and in the priorities we set ourselves.

We pray for the Fairtrade movement – for all who campaign and spread the message. May our love to each other and to your creation deepen our commitment and determination so that our voices will be heard more loudly and that the impact of our campaigning will increase.... *AMEN*

1st 'Reading' In place of a Reading, we are going to show a video about Fair Trade farming in Ivory Coast and how it is being affected by Climate Change. The farmers speak in their own language, so there are English sub titles. It lasts for 4 minutes

1st Reading: Video about Fair Trade in place of: 4 mins 5 secs

[Farming for the Future: Hear from 3 West African Cocoa Farmers - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFo3OzCZC6w&t=184s)

Watch it on <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HFo3OzCZC6w&t=184s>

2nd Reading: Liliane and Mauro's story – Brazil

Liliane and Mauro da Silva are Fairtrade coffee farmers, a coffee-growing, daughter-raising, future-focused team. As husband and wife they belong to Ascarive co-operative, in Brazil's Sul de Minas region.

They say, "Our goal is for our children to leave and study, but to return to the land where they were born and carry it forward."

Liliane says, "Climate change is making some of our favourite foods – like coffee, bananas and chocolate – harder and harder to grow."

Combined with deeply unfair trade, communities growing these crops are being pushed to the brink. But through Fairtrade, farmers are finding ways to stand together. It was what Liliane's father did, and she wants her own teenage girls to be able to carry on the proud family tradition of producing top-quality coffee.

However, farming is an ever-more unstable profession. Farming costs are going up, coffee prices are increasingly volatile and the effects of the climate crisis are deepening. Fellow coffee farmers in other parts of Brazil recently suffered from unusually heavy frosts, and Liliane and Mauro have noticed that the weather is getting increasingly unpredictable. “We live and own property in an area very favourable for coffee, but, even so, we suffer a lot with the climate's setbacks,” says Liliane.

They and colleagues in the Fairtrade co-operative are trying out different methods for protecting their harvests. As well as financial support from Fairtrade, they also receive expertise and information about what’s been successful for coffee farmers elsewhere. As Liliane says: ‘We are not in charge of the climate, but we can collaborate a lot with it.’

They also have a long-term trading relationship with UK coffee buyer, which they value greatly.

Liliane's neighbour and fellow Fairtrade farmer Maria Paul agrees. ‘When the producers take better care of their crops and of nature itself, it will be more resistant to overcome these... environmental disasters.’

For Luiz, another co-operative member, it’s changed how he thinks about farming: ‘Today I think about taking care of my piece of land... Not just the coffee tree, but the soil. This opened my mind a lot.’

Mauro believes the future of farming is about facing challenges as a team. ‘Coffee production, for me, is what I know how to do, I enjoy doing. There have always been setbacks. But together we will learn to overcome these difficulties.’ *They are all facing the challenges together, with the help of Fair Trade*

We in the UK also have our own challenges to face, including that of Climate Change. Much of our usual daily routine includes actions which are contributing to this, as well as damaging in other ways the beautiful world we all inhabit, as expressed in our 2nd Hymn:

2nd Hymn: Purple Book No. 199 ‘Weaver God, Creator’

2 mins 12s

Weaver God, Creator, sets life on the loom,
draws out threads of colour from primordial gloom.
Wise in the designing, in the weaving deft;
love and justice joined - the fabric’s warp and weft.

Called to be co-weavers, yet we break the thread
and may smash the shuttle and the loom instead.
Careless and greedy, we deny by theft
love and justice joined – the fabric’s warp and weft.

Weaver God, great Spirit, may we see your face
tapestryed in trees, in waves and winds of space;
tenderness teach us, lest we be bereft
of love and justice joined – the fabric’s warp and weft.

Weavers we are called, yet woven too we're born,
For the web is seamless: if we tear we're torn.
Gently may we live – that fragile earth be left;
love and justice joined – the fabric's warp and weft.

Words © by Kate Compton. Used by permission. French Carol tune arr. David Dawson

Meditative reading: Adapted from words of George Chryssides, one time member of this congregation

We live in a divided world:

75% of the world's population live in the Third World. Yet that 75% receive 1/3rd of the world's cereals;
15% of the world's fuel and energy;
1/10th of the world's education budget;
Only 6% of the world's health budget ...

We acknowledge that this is unjust, and that we need to play our part in raising people's consciousness, taking active steps to remedy these injustices, and being prepared to forgo some of our luxuries in order to achieve this. We remember relief organisations which seek to help directly where the need is greatest. That includes those working in Syria and Turkey to help in the aftermath of the earthquake. This will take not months but years.

Let us be thankful there are ventures like Fair Trade, which seek to ensure that workers around the World are paid fair wages for their efforts;

We think of Politicians, who have it in their power to find solutions to problems of inequality; may they be given wisdom and compassion;

We remember those who do business in foreign countries and determine the conditions in which trade is carried out;

We think of those who are tempted to put profits before people, or who exploit them, and those who suffer from that exploitation and live in poverty as a result;

We think of those who feel self-satisfied, believing there are easy solutions, or that they are morally superior to the rest of us; sometimes that may be ourselves....
So, may we recognise the complexity of the problems, be willing to learn, and willing to change, so that we may play our part in creating a just and equal world:

May our hearts be filled with the Spirit of Love and Peace, now and for evermore, *AMEN.*

Music for personal Reflection, 'Beautiful Relaxing African Song:

Find this on youtube https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hq_PG9XW7c8

ADDRESS FOR FAIR TRADE FORTNIGHT 2023

Right at the start of our worship this morning, we each said 'hello' to our neighbour, the person sitting right next to us, here, in this church, or close to us via the wonders of technology on Zoom.

The words of our first hymn reminded us that "our world is one world, what touches one affects us all" and in our prayers, we expressed concerns for our families, and friends, those in the wider community, and around the world.

The words from Leviticus remind us that it is important to be fair to our neighbours who work hard to make *our own* lives better. Whoever and wherever they are, whatever their work, they should be treated fairly, with a fair day's wages for a fair day's work, to be paid on time, so that *their* lives may be a little less hard.

In the book of Deuteronomy, are rules, covering many aspects of life, including the protection of poor people and foreigners. For example, in Chapter 24, it says:

"Do not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether that worker is a fellow Israelite or a foreigner residing in one of your towns. Pay them their wages each day before sunset, because they are poor and are counting on it." (Deuteronomy Chapter 24:14-15 – New International Version)"

This would have been hard because the farmers paying the labourers' wages were often very poor themselves. Even so, they believed that following these rules, about treating everyone fairly, whatever your differences, was an important part of serving God.

These messages about treating everyone fairly are as relevant today as when they were written over two and a half thousand years ago!

Unfortunately, even in 2023, a lot of growers, farmers and workers around the world are still unfairly treated. Because of deeply unfair trade systems, many farmers in Africa, Asia, Latin America, and the Caribbean are not paid a fair price for their crops. Coupled with rising costs of living – yes, it's a global phenomenon! this means they don't have enough to meet their household needs, and ultimately, this has an impact on the whole local community. From an ethical point of view, this simply isn't right - it isn't justice. It isn't right from an environmental point of view either, because the farmers cannot afford to fight the harmful effects of climate change and soil loss. We know that these farmers and their families have contributed least to the climate emergency but are forced to face some of its worst effects, like nasty crop diseases, prolonged dry spells, and more intense storms.

Thankfully, despite the challenging situation many farmers and agricultural workers find themselves in, there is a solution – Fair Trade! Fair Trade is a simple but effective way to make a difference to the lives of the people who grow and create the things which we, the consumers, love. Some items are well known; food and drink items like tea, coffee, sugar, bananas, cocoa and wines. There are less well known ones : spices like vanilla, which already costs more than silver pound for pound, and cinnamon, chilli, ginger, cardamom, saffron and pepper. I have a pot of pepper which I bought from our friend, 'Fair Trade Mary'.

There are also flowers such as roses; and there is cotton and gold. How much poorer our lives would be without all these! Surely the growers and producers deserve fair recompense for all their efforts.

As its name suggests, the Fairtrade Foundation is all about fair treatment for its farmers and producers around the world. Through Fairtrade, they are given the security of a guaranteed 'Minimum Price', for their crops, so they can cope with the climate and cost-of-living crises, giving them confidence to plan ahead. On top of that, they receive a 'Fairtrade Premium' – an additional sum to invest in community, business, and environmental projects of their choice. This simple act makes a huge difference to the lives of farmers and workers in the developing world, who produce FT goods. This means they can protect their crops and their communities, while being kinder to our planet, too. Environmental protection and justice is ingrained in Fairtrade.

Fair Trade growers and producers usually belong to local FT Co-operatives. As well as the guaranteed minimum price and Fair Trade Premium, many are given training in how to improve their growing practices. All Fairtrade smallholder farmers and larger hired labour set-ups are required to comply with a set of Standards.

Key ones include not employing child labour, providing equal rights and opportunities for women and men, and encouraging sustainable practices and environmental protection. Farmers have to improve soil and water quality, manage pests, avoid using harmful chemicals, manage waste, reduce their greenhouse gas emissions and protect biodiversity.

In the video earlier, we saw what the cocoa growers on Ivory Coast are doing. They no longer burn the ground, nor use pesticides, and let the weeds to improve the soil quality, as Lucy said, to go back to some of the "old" ways (Similar in a way to what some farmers in this country are now doing!)

Many Fairtrade co-operatives invest their Fairtrade Premium in reforestation projects. Planting trees on cleared, degraded land prevents soil erosion and reduces climate change by binding and storing carbon dioxide. The trees also improve biodiversity, protect soils, and provide a habitat for indigenous wildlife. Sireet Project in East Africa planted 150 thousand trees in one year. Others like Sadick in the video, plant trees to shade their crops with similar additional benefits.

The banana growers in Coobana Co-operative in Panama use some of their Fairtrade Premium to protect endangered turtles hatching on nearby beaches. They patrol the beaches at night during hatching season and clean up the shoreline. They also protect and feed the local population of manatees which suffer from pollution in the rivers.

In places like Ethiopia, improving the environment also improves the health of local people. Due to extreme poverty, most people cooked over smokey open-wood fired stoves. This was harmful to the environment because so many trees were felled and harmful to the people using them, mostly women. Smoke kills more people than TB, HIV/AIDS and malaria combined. It is estimated that solid fuel open fires and leaky stoves causes over 4 million premature deaths each year. A truly shocking number!

A project run by FT Oromia Co-operative in Ethiopia equipped 10,000 coffee farmers with efficient new cookstoves. These reduce the use of firewood by half, significantly reduce release of harmful soot particles and carbon emissions up to 70 percent. These biogas stoves are powered by cow dung, creating by-products which can be used as organic fertiliser on the farms – a “win-win” solution. An example of good stewardship of our Earth.

A Fairtrade ambassador, Deborah Osei-Mensah from Ghana, is the daughter of cocoa farmers who were not part of Fair Trade and remembers how they struggled. Deborah says. “I was born into farming, Mum and Dad were farmers and still are. I saw Dad harvest a lot of cocoa but he was still struggling to get money, to pay for household costs. Before and after school I helped out. But one thing I realised: my Dad harvested a lot of cocoa but he was still struggling to get money. Paying school fees was difficult, despite how hard he was working. So in my mind, farming wasn’t an option for me.”

Deborah finished school, went on to university and took part in national service.

Her turning point came by chance. She was working in the district of Asunafo and attended a meeting for a local Fairtrade co-operative. She says “The way the farmers talked about farm management, practices, harvesting, I realised then there is hope. I can do something. These farmers were different from the farmers that I knew previously. I learnt about Fairtrade, the Fairtrade Premium and what they used it for., I realised then there is hope... Once they are getting fair prices, farmers will protect their farm... [and]use the Fairtrade Premium to contribute to their communities. If they feel they are being supported they can invest in the future of food security. I can do something. Fairtrade is what motivates me to work in farming. I see a future for farming where farmers are more powerful and they can call on the government to do or make policies that will help them, support their farm and fight for their livelihoods. So there is still hope.”

The wonderful thing is that she spoke to the Fairtrade Foundation before the COP27 climate summit began in Egypt just a few months ago. She explained what world leaders need to do. “There is no time to waste. Climate change is happening now. If there is action to be done, it has to be done now. “Political leaders should put their pens down and start acting. If you have to save the world, to save food, it has to be done **now.**”

So what can *we*, sitting here on this Sunday morning, on the last day of Fair Trade Fortnight 2023, *do*?

Deborah says that shoppers across the world can help. “For consumers, ***I want each and every one to be more conscious of the products we buy.*** “Together, let’s make the future fair. Let’s buy more Fairtrade. Let’s advocate for producers across the globe to make sure we have a fair future for each and every one.”

We can speak out about unfair trade, to say that we want business that is fair. And we can pray that a spirit of fairness, compassion and kindness will “come on in” and help us make a fairer world.

I'll leave the closing words to Traorè Awa Batiba, a coca grower from Ivory Coast. She is a young woman in her 30's who attended a Women's Leadership School funded by Compass Group UK & Ireland and the Co-operative Group.

"I love Fair Trade so much. It is the future for cocoa farmers around the world like me, and I hope that customers will buy more Fair Trade certified products to keep helping us. I thank you all for that and I hope that Fair Trade will save our planet too"

Final Hymn Purple Book no. 84 'Justice for persons and for different nations' 2 min 35s

Justice for persons and for different nations,
respect the diverse species in our care,
community of life on earth sustaining,
love for this planet which we all must share.

Compassion is the strength of love and sympathy
letting us share another being's pain;
creature or human, loving friend or stranger,
love for each other is the whole world's gain.

Wisdom is insight clear, precise and thoughtful,
searching for truth and human law refined;
guidance from past, made ready for the future
by the best reasoning of the human mind.

Integrity, with honour and uprightness:
these are the qualities which form and make
women and men, the people for tomorrow,
those who serve others for another's sake.

Justice, compassion, wisdom and integrity,
these are the virtues which our poor world needs.
They'll flower tomorrow, fruit in glorious splendour,
if we today go out and plant the seeds.

Words © Andrew McKean Hill b. 1942. Used by permission. Tune 'Georgina' by David Dawson 1939 - 2020

Closing words Our worship time today has finished, but our **Service** is not over: it has only just begun! We cannot solve all of the world's problems, but may we be more aware of suffering, poverty and injustice and each do what we can, by taking a step up, however small, to bring a better life to those who work so hard to produce those goods which bring a better life to us. *AMEN*

..... Extinguish Chalice

Closing Video: "Zauoli Dance" from Ivory Coast. The dance is believed to increase the productivity of the village that it is performed in and is seen as a tool of unity for the Guro community, and by extension the whole country.

"Zauoli Dance" traditional Ivory Coast dance
Watch on: [youtube:zauoli+dance&docid=608056147272018168&mid](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=608056147272018168&mid)