

Opening Music: 'Morning' by Grieg: James Galway on Flute 4 mins 4 sec

[Peer Gynt Suite No. 1, Op. 46: Morning Mood - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2ixULMRV7A)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j2ixULMRV7A>

Usual Opening music and video

### **Welcome**

Good morning & welcome everyone, whether you are here in this building, having managed to find your way through all the road closures for the half-marathon, or survived the excitement of Eurovision last night. Welcome too, if you are joining us on Zoom (wave) or watching online later. You are welcome, whether a regular attender, and especially if you are a newcomer. Whatever you bring in your heart: whether you come in sadness, or joy or out of curiosity, whatever your faith or none, you are welcome! We start as usual by lighting our chalice flame as a symbol of our free religious faith, and if you are at home and have a candle, you may like to light it now

**Chalice Lighting:** *adapted from by Gilbert Murray and Charles Johnson*

“Glory be for the gifts of earth and air, and the round of the seasons, of life, of children, women and men, of the light which calls us all together.

The gift encircles all that we are, the great joy of knowing we are loved, the real knowing – no matter how enlightened we’ve become – visiting us with the touch of a warm hand...

The irrevocable kinship with earth: a tiny ball on the edge of time, a tender openness of being infinite, under the burning glory of an eternal presence...”

### **Opening Words Life path**

Once again we meet as we leave one week and face another; we come here because we identify with one another, and our meaning of the world within us is projected into the world without - because we see the void and recognise it and fill it to recreate value again. The re-creation starts here in this communal fellowship, for we always live in this social world.

Let us throw away the week's skin of falseness and put on a new coat for the next, let us recreate a world of colour and fun, of pleasure and hope, and know that these are possible even when the rough times return and are with us. For it is up to us to be sincere, brave and resolute - if possible.

Not only we ourselves face life, but so do all others. Let us think in silence of those we know - our colleagues, friends and family - and how we may be when we meet them again.

(a few moments of silence)

Time for our first hymn, echoing the sentiments just expressed. All our hymns are from the purple book today. The words will appear on the screen, but you are welcome to use the hymn book if you prefer.

**1<sup>st</sup> Hymn: No. 33 'Enter, rejoice and come in'**

Enter, rejoice and come in.  
Enter rejoice and come in.  
Today will be a joyful day;  
enter rejoice, and come in

Open your ears to the song.  
Open your ears to the song.  
Today will be a joyful day;  
enter rejoice, and come in

Open your hearts everyone.  
Open your hearts everyone.  
Today will be a joyful day;  
enter rejoice, and come in.

Don't be afraid of some change.  
Don't be afraid of some change.  
Today will be a joyful day;

enter rejoice, and come in.

Enter, rejoice and come in.  
Enter rejoice and come in.  
Today will be a joyful day;  
enter rejoice, and come in

Let us turn to a time of prayer and reflection:

**Prayers:** our 1<sup>st</sup> prayer is adapted from one by Cliff Reed, retired Unitarian Minister.

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*

'FOR THE NEEDS OF THIS HOUR' adapted from a prayer by Jacob Trapp

For the beauty that awaits us at the turning of the road  
May there be within us the wonder and the welcome of the living soul

For the trials that await us  
May there be calm strength,  
Courage to trust when mists obscure the way,  
Faith to venture when the issue seems uncertain

For the call to helpfulness  
May there be quick sympathy and a ready response;

May we find gladness on our way  
And the reassuring presence of helpers and friends;

May our desires be tempered to our needs,  
May we value and praise the simple and the lowly  
As well as the difficult and the unusual;

May humour and the gift of laughter be ours,  
May we be understanding, appreciative,  
Reverent in our relations one to another,  
Seeking to elicit another's best,  
And thereby our own ..... *AMEN*

**1<sup>st</sup> Reading:** 'Step by Step' by Elena Mikhalkova

My grandmother once gave me a tip:  
In difficult times, you move forward in small steps.  
Do what you have to do, but little by little.

Don't think about the future, or what may happen tomorrow.  
Wash the dishes.  
Remove the dust.  
Write a letter.  
Make a soup.

You see?  
You are advancing step by step.  
Take a step and stop.  
Rest a little.  
Praise yourself.  
Take another step.  
Then another.  
You won't notice, but your steps will grow more and more.  
And the time will come when you can think about the future without crying.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Reading:** From the Sermon on the Mount, Matthew Chapter 6 vv 19 - 31  
(New King James Version)

"Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moths and vermin destroy, and where thieves break in and steal. But store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where moths and vermin do not destroy, and where thieves do not break in and steal. For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

"The eye is the lamp of the body. If your eyes are healthy,[c] your whole body will be full of light. 23 But if your eyes are unhealthy,[d] your whole body will be full of darkness. If then the light within you is darkness, how great is that darkness!

"No one can serve two masters. Either you will hate the one and love the other, or you will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and money.

"Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more than food, and the body more than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Can any one of you by worrying add a single hour to your life?

"And why do you worry about clothes? See how the flowers of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. ....

So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.

## **2<sup>nd</sup> Hymn: No. 21 'Come and find the quiet centre'**

Come and find the quiet centre  
in the crowded life we lead,  
find the room to hope to enter,  
find the space where we are freed:  
clear the chaos and the clutter,  
clear our eyes that we can see  
all the things that really matter,  
be at peace and simply be.

Silence is a friend who claims us,  
cools the heat and slows the pace;  
God it is who speaks and names us,  
knows our being, touches base,  
making space within our thinking,  
lifting shades to show the sun,  
raising courage when we're shrinking,  
finding scope for faith.

In the Spirit let us travel,  
open to each other's pain;  
let our lives and fears unravel,  
celebrate the space we gain:  
there's a place for deepest dreaming,  
there's a time for heart to care;  
in the Spirit's lively scheming  
there is always room to spare.

**Meditation:** 'In these dispiriting times' - Greta W. Crosby

Let us join in the exercise of silence for reflection, repose, meditation, or prayer.

(Silence)

In reflecting upon the dispiriting times in which we live, I have come to believe that the basic religious response is to refuse to be dispirited for long.

(Silence)

May we seek and find grounding wherever it may be found: perhaps in the buds bursting in air; in the grace of a touch, a smile, a word, a helping hand, a decision or vote or election that goes well, a discovery that enlightens or encourages us.

(Silence)

May we trust in the spirit that will not be quelled forever, that rises up in people from some mysterious source, energy that comes again to affirm that people matter, their needs and aspirations matter, and that the condition of people's flourishing is the cultivation of truth and love.

*Source: 1997 UUMA Worship Materials Collection*

2 minutes of silence followed by Candles of Joy and Concern .....

**Reflective Music::** 'Traumere' by Schuman, James Galway Flute 3 mins 22sec

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wzv63EYI9Wg>

### **ADDRESS - 'A Moving Experience'**

Well, I've finally done it! No, I haven't discovered a supernova, (not yet!) nor won the Lottery. I have done what some people would regard as mundane, and some of my friends regard as a miracle: I have moved back into my original home after renting a house in another part of Plymouth for several years. You could say I've had a 'Moving Experience'!

Anyone who has moved house, will understand how physically and emotionally demanding it is. Several people in this congregation have recently moved, or are planning one soon. You will probably agree that however long one has to plan: weeks, months, even years, some actions can only be arranged close to the actual moving day deadline.

Then, as if in some strange 4- dimensional ballet, a lot happens quickly together. Unneeded items which one resolved to sort out 'tomorrow' have to be given away, discarded, or packed up to be sorted out on another tomorrow at a new destination. The final boxes are loaded on to the lorry, the house door is locked for the last time and we're off to start a new chapter in our lives. If you're lucky, the removal men (they are usually men) are efficient and cheerful, friends come to help and the sun shines.

Any one who has ever moved house will remember being amazed by discovering just how much 'stuff' seems to accumulate all by itself over the years. I was shocked by the amount despite realising I don't live as simply as in my first job, in Surrey. Then I rented one room in someone else's house, and could pack all my possessions into 2 suitcases and a tea-chest when moving to Plymouth 50 springs ago. *This* spring, there is a whole houseful of 'stuff!' and now, at my new destination, the new 'tomorrow' has arrived, along with the Spring, and its

promise of warmer days, breezes to blow away the cobwebs and winter stodginess and bright sunlight pouring into the house, revealing a lifetime's accumulations.

Compared with many people I'm not a great consumer, shopping is not one of my passions – I don't "get and spend" very much - in today's terms. But to the people who listened to Jesus's Sermon on the Mount, my consumption of all manner of things, would seem unbelievably profligate. And that is true of most of Western Society. Something like 5% of all human beings, those in the richest nations, own and consume over 90% of all the earth's bounty.

Planet Earth, our only earthly home, is in a perilous state today, largely as a consequence of our Western lifestyle, which is completely intertwined with using non-renewable fossil fuels, being furiously pumped and mined out of the ground. From the transportation of raw materials used in making all the 'stuff' modern society craves, to the clothes we wear, our food and much else of what we consume is either based on, or refined using fossil fuels. All these activities contribute to climate change, ozone depletion, deforestation, desertification, top soil loss, and radioactive and toxic waste disposal (waste of all kinds for that matter), resulting in mass extinction of species. A crisis stares us right in the face. No-one here today is ignorant of these problems, I'm sure. The question is, how to respond to this over-consumption?

A commonly-discussed solution to over-consumption is called 'responsible consumption' or "voluntary simplicity" Even before the current cost of living crisis, world-wide recession of the past year, lots of people were latching onto this, as though some common consciousness caught hold of us all at once. Many people are keeping their cars longer, shopping in 2nd hand or charity shops, cleaning out the clutter in their lives, learning to reduce, reuse and recycle. Some stores now actively encourage us to recycle our unwanted clothes.

Although the words "Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume" were meant in a different context, they ring true for me this spring. How the burden of all those 'treasures', was weighing me down. Some are clothes which have hung for 20 years in the wardrobe and will never be worn again by me. Some are items which might have 'come in useful' like old plastic containers, or cardboard boxes. There are *many* books, (can one have *too many books*?!), some unread, others well thumbed, some kept because they too might 'come in useful' one day.

Or duplicate items – who really needs 3 toast racks or two extra beds which won't fit in the house! No room to move in the kitchen or the bedroom.

Then there are the written words, probably hundreds of thousands of them by now, on half a ton of paper. .... And finally, little treasures of sentimental value, known only to me. What a wrench to part with any of them - This aspect of the world is certainly too much with me - a spring clean is already underweigh. It involves a lot of recycling, and parting with items which someone else will find useful - off to the charity shop with 2 of those toast racks and the box of books which I will never read, and someone has already collected the beds. It feels good, so much lighter and more room to move around the house.

Returning to the 'Moving House' aspect, it seems to me, it is a metaphor for one's emotional and spiritual life too. To truly progress, to grow and move on as a human being, there has to be a sorting and re-evaluation of that too. Think back to what you believed and how you thought about it 50, 20 or even 5 years ago. Do we hold onto some ideas even though we know in our heads we don't really believe them any more? If so, its worth examining why we hold on? Do we get comfort from the old and familiar, like wearing a pair of worn out shoes?

If we continue wearing them too long, they will harm us eventually, when the shoes let in water, or a hole in the sole leads to damaging our foot from rubbing against the ground. Or maybe a pair we bought for its flashy looks is the wrong fit and ends up literally cramping our

style. A new well fitting pair may feel strange and rub our toes in the beginning, but soon we find we are walking more upright and that mysterious back ache has eased.

So, this spring, seems a good time to have another look at all aspects of our lives, keeping the really useful and beautiful and letting go of the outgrown and out worn to free ourselves of the chaos and the clutter and find our quiet centre.

Be gentle with yourself, though, take it step by step, as in Grandma's tip and you will find that:

"You are advancing step by step.

Take a step and stop. Rest a little. Praise yourself. Take another step. Then another.

You won't notice, but your steps will grow more and more.

And the time will come when you can think about the future without crying"

So lets help one another too, so we will be ready to take one more step along our world and travel from the old to the new, in good company. May your moving experiences, of *all* kinds, be encouraging and freeing and joyful! May it be so!

Time for our final hymn:

**Final Hymn** No. Purple 125 'One more step along the world I go' 2 mins 16 sec

One more step along the world I go,  
one more step along the world I go;  
from the old things to the new,  
keep me travelling along with you;

*and its from the old I travel to the new, keep me travelling along with you.*

Round the corners of the world I turn,  
more and more about the world I learn;  
all the new things that I see  
you'll be looking at along with me  
*and its from the old I travel to the new,  
keep me travelling along with you.*

As I travel through the had and good,  
keep me travelling the way I should;  
where I see no way to go  
you'll be telling me the way I know;  
*and its from the old I travel to the new, keep me travelling along with you.*

Give me courage when the world is rough,  
keep me loving though the world is tough;  
leap and sing in all I do,  
keep me travelling along with you;  
*and its from the old I travel to the new, keep me travelling along with you.*

You are older than the world can be,  
you are younger than the life I me;  
ever old and ever new,  
keep me travelling along with you;  
*and its from the old I travel to the new, keep me travelling along with you.*

**Closing words** Rev Andrew Pakula

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As you prepare to leave this sacred space

Pack away a piece of this church in your heart.

Wrap it carefully like a precious gem.

Carry it with you through the joys and sorrows of your days -

Let its gentle glow strengthen you, warm you, remind you of all that is good and true

Until we gather here again in this place of love.

**Extinguish Chalice**

**Usual Closing music**

**Closing Video:** 'Wonderful World' Louis Armstrong (animated version) 2mins 18s

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBrd\\_3VMC3c](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rBrd_3VMC3c)

**Notices**

**Zoomers chat; Coffee for those in church**