

Opening Music: 'Le cathedral engloutie' by Claude Debussy

[Debussy - La cathédrale engloutie - YouTube](#) 5 mins 46sec

Good morning and welcome everyone, here in our building and on Zoom or watching online later. You are all welcome, whether a regular attender, or, 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!

This morning's Service is offered by our Poetry Group, of church members and friends, who have been meeting for over 20 years to read and share our love of poetry... Our theme today is 'Water', particularly of the Oceans, from 'Source to Sea' in recognition of World Oceans Day, last Thursday, June 8th. Our poems, readings, prayers and hymns all celebrate this most important substance, for all life on our home, Planet Earth, depends on water. Nearly ¾ of the surface of our planet is covered by water: Rivers, lakes, seas and oceans. From space, our world is blue of the oceans, marbled with water bearing white clouds. Too little water is disastrous: field, farmland and forest, suffer when it is in short supply, as we've seen recently with the Canadian forest wildfires. Too much water is also disastrous, as we've seen only this week, with the Ukrainian city of Kherson and the surrounding area devoured by the waters of Dnipro river released by the destruction of the Khakovka dam.

We start as usual by lighting our chalice flame as a symbol of our free religious faith. Caroline will light our chalice now, and if you are at home and have a candle, you may like to light it with her.

Chalice Lighting: Caroline:

"We light this chalice: may its light and warmth radiate from it, to cheer and strengthen this community and out into the wider world beyond our doors, as ripples radiating from a pebble cast into a calm sea, reach from shore to distant shore."

Prayers: read by Kathy

'Monday Morning' by John Philip Newell

"Blessed are those who weep, for their tears will be wiped away" (Mathew 5.4)

PRAYER OF AWARENESS

Light

golden light

fresh from the source.

Colours

creation's colours

calling our senses.

Life

life in its oneness

life in its manifold oneness

all from You.

You are the Sun from whom the morning shines

You are the River in whom each life-from flows

Each face

Each race

Each cell within our ever-living soul.

This new day we greet You.

Be still and aware

A prayer for all, adapted from one by Cliff Reed, retired Unitarian Minister.

“We hold in our thoughts and prayers, all in our church community, and our families, friends and our neighbours in the wider community who are in need of solace. We hold in our thoughts today especially, the many thousands of people and the damage to the environment and its wildlife, affected by too much water, from the destruction of the Khakovka dam in Ukraine, or too little water, in the Canadian forest wildfires.

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*”

1st set of Poems:

‘Water’ by Philip Larkin,

read by Sheila

If I were called in
To construct a religion
I should make use of water.

Going to church
Would entail a fording
To dry, different clothes;

My litany would employ
Images of sousing,
A furious devout drench,

And I should raise in the east
A glass of water
Where any-angled light
Would congregate endlessly

Prehistoric

Twenty bridges from Tower to Kew-
(Twenty bridges or twenty-two)-
Wanted to know what the River knew,
For they were young, and the Thames was old
And this is the tale that River told:-

"I walk my beat before London Town,
Five hours up and seven down.
Up I go till I end my run
At Tide-end-town, which is Teddington.
Down I come with the mud in my hands
And plaster it over the Maplin Sands.
But I'd have you know that these waters of mine
Were once a branch of the River Rhine,
When hundreds of miles to the East I went
And England was joined to the Continent.

"I remember the bat-winged lizard-birds,
The Age of Ice and the mammoth herds,
And the giant tigers that stalked them down
Through Regent's Park into Camden Town.
And I remember like yesterday
The earliest Cockney who came my way,
When he pushed through the forest that lined the Strand,
With paint on his face and a club in his hand.
He was death to feather and fin and fur.
He trapped my beavers at Westminster.
He netted my salmon, he hunted my deer,
He killed my heron off Lambeth Pier.
He fought his neighbour with axes and swords,
Flint or bronze, at my upper fords,
While down at Greenwich, for slaves and tin,
The tall Phoenician ships stole in,
And North Sea war-boats, painted and gay,
Flashed like dragon-flies, Erith way;
And Norseman and Negro and Gaul and Greek
Drank with the Britons in Barking Creek,
And life was gay, and the world was new,
And I was a mile across at Kew!
But the Roman came with a heavy hand,
And bridged and roaded and ruled the land,
And the Roman left and the Danes blew in-
And that's where your history-books begin!"

2nd set of poems:

'Neither out far nor in Deep' by Robert Frost

read by Christine

The People along the sand
All turn and look one way.
They turn their back on the land.
They look at the sea all day.

As long as it takes to pass
A ship keeps raising its hull;
The wetter ground like glass
Reflects a standing gull.

The land may vary more;
But wherever the truth may be –
The water comes ashore,
And the people look at the sea.

They cannot look out far.
They cannot look in deep.
But when was there ever a bar
To any watch they keep?

'There are Big Waves' by Eleanor Farjon

read by Thelma

'There are big waves and little waves,
Green waves and blue,
Waves you can jump over,
Waves you dive thro',
Waves that dive up
Like a great water wall,
Waves that swell softly
And don't break at all,
Waves that can whisper,
Waves that can roar,
And tiny waves that run at you
Running on the shore.

'Maggie and Milly and Molly and May' by ee cummings

read by Janice

Maggie and Milly
Went down to the beach (to play one day)

And Maggie discovered a shell that sang
so sweetly she couldn't remember her troubles – and

Milly befriended a stranded star whose rays five languid fingers were;

And Molly was chased by a horrible thing
which raced sideways while blowing bubbles:

and May came home with a smooth round stone
as small as a world and as large as alone.

For whatever we lose (like a you and a me)
It's always ourselves we find in the sea.

2nd Hymn: Purple No. 147 'Spirit of Earth, root stone and tree'

3rd set of Poems:

'Sea Fever' by John Masefield

read by Caroline

I must go down to the seas again, to the lonely sea and the sky,
And all I ask is a tall ship and a star to steer her by;
And the wheel's kick and the wind's song and the white sail's shaking,
And a grey mist on the sea's face, and a grey dawn breaking.

I must go down to the seas again, for the call of the running tide
Is a wild call and a clear call that may not be denied;
And all I ask is a windy day with the white clouds flying,
And the flung spray and the blown spume, and the sea-gulls crying.

I must go down to the seas again, to the vagrant gypsy life,
To the gull's way and the whale's way where the wind's like a whetted knife;
And all I ask is a merry yarn from a laughing fellow-rover,
And quiet sleep and a sweet dream when the long trick's over.

'Ithaca' (reason for the journey) by C.P. Cavafy

read by Delphine

As you set out for Ithaka
hope the voyage is a long one,
full of adventure, full of discovery.
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,
angry Poseidon- don't be afraid of them:
you'll never find things like that on your way
as long as you keep your thoughts raised high,
as long as a rare excitement
stirs your spirit and your body.
Laistrygonians and Cyclops,
wild Poseidon- you won't encounter them
unless you bring them along inside your soul,
unless your soul sets them up in front of you.

May there be many a summer morning when,
with what pleasure, what joy,
you come into harbors seen for the first time;
may you stop at Phoenician trading stations
to buy fine things,
mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
the sensual perfume of every kind-
as many sensual perfumes as you can;
and may you visit many Egyptian cities
to gather stores of knowledge from their scholars.
Keep Ithaka always in your mind.

Arriving there is what you are destined for.
But do not hurry the journey at all.
Better if it lasts for years,
so you are old by the time you reach the island,
wealthy with all you have gained on the way,
not expecting Ithaka to make you rich.
Ithaka gave you the marvelous journey.
Without her, you would not have set out.
She has nothing left to give you now.
And if you find her poor, Ithaka won't have fooled you.
Wise as you will have become, so full of experience,
you will have understood by then what these Ithakas mean.

'Just in case' by Charlotte Mitchell read by Janice

I'm going to the sea for the weekend,
in a couple of days I'll be back,
so I'll just take my little brown suit and a blouse
and a beret and carry my mac.

But what if the house is a cold one,
the house where I'm going to stay,
no fires after April, no hot drinks at night
and the windows wide open all day?
I'd better take one – no, two cardies
and my long tartan scarf for my head,
and my chaste new pyjamas in case they decide
to bring me my breakfast in bed,
and what about church on Sunday?
I could wear my beret and suit,
but if it were sunny, it would be a chance
to wear my straw hat with the fruit.

I can't wear my little brown suit, though
not with the straw and the fruit,
so I'll just take a silk dress to go with the straw
and a silk scarf to go with the suit.
I'll just take my jeans and that jumper
in case we go out in the car,
and my Guernsey in case we go out in a boat
and d'you know where my swimming things are?

D'you think I should take that black velvet
in case they've booked seats for a play?
And is it still usual to take your own towel
when you go somewhere to stay?
I had thought of just taking slippers,
but they do look disgustingly old,
I'd better take best shoes and sandals and boots
for the church and the heat and the cold.

I daren't go without my umbrella
in case I'm dressed up and it rains;
I'm bound to need socks and my wellies

for walking down long muddy lanes.

I'd rather not take my old dressing gown,
it is such a business to pack,
but s'pose they have breakfast before they get dressed
I'd have to have mine in my mac.

I'm going away for the weekend,
in a couple of days I'll be back,
so I'll just take my little brown suit and a blouse,
two cardies, my long tartan scarf,
my chaste new pyjamas
my straw hat with the fruit,
my silk dress, my silk scarf,
my jeans, that jumper,
my Guernsey, my swimming things,
my black velvet, my towel,
my slippers (no one need see them)
my sandals, my boots, my umbrella
my socks, my wellies
my dressing gown, no, not my dressing gown,
Ok my dressing gown, and a beret and carry my mac.

Short silence followed by Reflective Music: 'Reflets dans l'eau' by Debussy
[Marc-André Hamelin- Claude Debussy: Images \(Book 1\)- Reflets Dans L'eau - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hyiu7fBUk7o)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hyiu7fBUk7o>

Reading from Psalm 107 verses 23 – 30

read by Delphine

They that go down to the sea in ships, that do business in great waters;
These see the works of the LORD, and his wonders in the deep.
For he commandeth, and raiseth the stormy wind, which lifteth up the waves thereof.
They mount up to the heaven, they go down again to the depths: their soul is melted because
of trouble.
They reel to and fro, and stagger like a drunken man, and are at their wit's end.
Then they cry unto the LORD in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses.
He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still.
Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven

3rd Hymn: Purple Book no 216 'Wide Green World'

4th set of Poems:

'Plymouth' By Ernest Radford

read by Christine

OH! What know they of harbours
Who toss not on the sea?
They tell of fairer havens,
But none so fair there be

As Plymouth town outstretching
Her quiet arms to me,
Her breast's broad welcome spreading
From Mewstone to Penlee.

And with this home- thought, darling,
Come crowding thoughts of thee;
Oh! What know they of harbours
Who toss not on the sea?

'Exiled' by Edna St Vincent Millay

read by Viv

Searching my heart for its true sorrow,
This is the thing I find to be:
That I am weary of words and people,
Sick of the city, wanting the sea.

Wanting the sticky, salty sweetness
Of the strong wind and shattered spray;
Wanting the loud sound and soft sound
Of the big surf that breaks all day.

Always before about my dooryard,
Marking the reach of the winter sea,
Rooted in sand and dragging drift-wood,
Straggled the purple wild sweet-pea;

Always I climbed the wave at morning,
Shook the sand from my shoes at night,
That now am caught beneath great buildings,
Stricken with noise, confused with light.

If I could hear the green piles groaning
Under the windy wooden piers,
See once again the bobbing barrels,
And the black sticks that fence the weirs,

If I could see the weedy mussels
Crusting the wrecked and rotting hulls,
Hear once again the hungry crying
Overhead, of the wheeling gulls,

Feel once again the shanty straining
Under the turning of the tide,
Fear once again the rising freshet,
Dread the bell of the fog outside,

I should be happy, - that was happy
All day long on the coast of Maine!

I have a need to hold and handle
Shells and anchors and ships again!

I should be happy, that am happy
Never at all since I came here.
I am too long away from water,
I have a need for water near.

'Day Dreams' by A.S.J. Tessimond

read by Kathy

One day people will touch and talk perhaps easily,
And loving be natural as breathing and warm as sunlight,
And people will untie themselves, as string is unknotted,
Unfold and yawn and stretch and spread their fingers,
Unfurl, uncurl like seaweed returned to the sea,
And work will be simple and swift
as a seagull flying,
And play will be casual and quiet
as a seagull settling,
And the clocks will stop, and no one will wonder
or care or notice,
And people will smile without reason,
Even in winter, even in the rain.

Closing Prayer: extract from 'In praise of Water' by John O'Donohue read by Sheila

Let us bless the grace of water:
The imagination of the primeval ocean
Where the first forms of life stirred
And emerged to dress the vacant earth
With warm quilts of colour

....Let us bless the humility of water,
Always willing to take the shape
Of whatever otherness holds it,
The buoyancy of water
Stronger the deadening,
Down ward drag of gravity,
The innocence of water,
Flowing forth without thought
Of what awaits it,
The refreshment of water,
Dissolving the crystals of thirst.

Water: voice of grief,
Cry of love,
In the flowing tear.
Water: vehicle and idiom
Of all the inner voyaging
That keeps us alive.

Blessed be water,
Our first mother.

Extinguish Chalice

Closing Video: for World Oceans Day

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q4W5HultwHw> World Oceans Day - YouTube