

**SERVICE LEADER: Rev. Dr. Edgar Mihas**

**SERVICE THEME: Summer Breeze Reflections**

**THEME OF MUSIC:** Summer Breeze and the Wind

**All hymns are from 'Sing your Faith' ('the Purple book')**

**INTRODUCTORY MUSIC:** Πόλεις του καλοκαιριού (Cities of the Summer) by Νένα Βενετσάνου (Nena Venetsánou) – (04:38) – to play a few minutes before the service begins at 11:00 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vD1HqYjryYI>

**GREETING AND WELCOMING**, followed by INTERFAITH AND SECULAR CALENDAR:

18-20.07.2023 – Islamic New Year 1445 AH;

30.07.2023 – International Day of Friendship, World Day against Trafficking in Persons;

01.08.2023 – Lammas (Christian), Lughnassad (Lammas) Wicca/Neo-Pagan, fast in honour of the Holy Mother of Jesus;

01-07.08.2023 – World Breastfeeding Week.

**OPENING WORDS: Prayer of The Seven Directions** (Jose Hobday)

Begin facing EAST- This is where the sun comes up, and so the direction of new beginnings, hope, promise, and potential. Pray that you may be open to receiving these gifts this day. Each turn is a quarter turn to your right.

Turn SOUTH - This is the direction of warmth, growth, fertility (!), also known as creativity and productivity. In addition, this direction represents faith, trust, and faithfulness in relationships. Pray for these things this day.

Turn WEST - This is the direction where the sun goes down. Thus, it is the direction of rest, of our dream lives, and of closure and endings that need to take place in order for there to be new beginnings. Pray for these things this day.

Turn NORTH - This is the direction of the cold, of winds, of strength, courage, fortitude, might, single-mindedness, focus, clarity and purpose. Pray for these things this day.

Turn back to the EAST - and turn UPWARD. For Native Americans this is the direction of Father Sky. Pray that your heart, mind, soul, and spirit will not forget to look upward this day, to the One who is so much greater than we are.

Turn DOWNWARD - and touch our Mother, the earth. Pray that everything you do this day will be in honour and reverence of our Mother Earth.

Turn INWARD- Place your hand on your heart and pray that all that you do this day will be true to the Spirit of God, the Spirit of Christ, the Holy Spirit who dwells within you.

*Amen*

**CHALICE LIGHTING:**

This Chalice forms an integral part of the Unitarian tradition. We light this chalice, symbol of the Divine Light within us and within everyone and everything.

May this gathering of friends for contemplation, meditation, mindfulness, reflection, prayer, and worship warm up hearts and enlighten minds. So be it.

**QUOTE:** "The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit." (John, 3:8)

**OPENING PRAYER: 'Great Spirit Prayer'** translated by Lakota Sioux Chief Yellow Lark in 1887

Oh, Great Spirit,  
Whose voice I hear in the winds  
and whose breath gives life to all the world.  
Hear me! I need your strength and wisdom.  
Let me walk in beauty, and make my eyes  
ever hold the red and purple sunset.  
Make my hands respect the things you have made  
and my ears sharp to hear your voice.  
Make me wise so that I may understand  
the things you have taught my people.  
Let me learn the lessons you have hidden  
in every leaf and rock.

Help me remain calm and strong in the  
face of all that comes towards me.  
Help me find compassion without  
empathy overwhelming me.  
I seek strength, not to be greater than my brother,  
but to fight my greatest enemy: myself.  
Make me always ready to come to you  
with clean hands and straight eyes.  
So when life fades, as the fading sunset,  
my spirit may come to you without shame.

**HYMN 158 in :** the Flame of Truth is Kindled

**PASSAGE for CONTEMPLATION, MEDITATION, REFLECTION:** Meditation on Hope and Love in a Time of Struggle, by Alice Anacheke-Nasemann

In a world so filled with brokenness and sorrow  
It would be easy to lose ourselves in never ending grief,  
To be choked by our outrage,  
To be paralysed by the enormity of suffering,  
To feel our heart squeeze tight with hopelessness.

Instead, this morning, let us simply breathe together as we hold our hearts open.  
Breathing in as our hearts fill with compassion.  
Breathing out as we pray for healing in our world & in our lives.  
Breathing in, opening ourselves to the transforming power of love.  
Breathing out as we pray for peace in our world & in our lives.  
Breathing in as we hold hope in our hearts.  
Breathing out as we pray for justice in our world and in our lives.

May we know our strength.  
May we be filled with courage.  
May our love flow from us into this world.

Breathing in, we are the prayer.  
Breathing out, we are the healing.  
Breathing in, we are the love.  
Breathing out, we are the peace.  
Breathing in, we are the hope.  
Breathing out, we are the justice.

May we know our strength.  
May we be filled with courage.  
May our love flow from us into this world.  
Amen, blessed be, may it ever be so.

### **SHORT STORY:** the Wind and the Sun, by Ruchika

A long time ago, the Sun and the Wind were having a conversation on a pleasant day. Suddenly, the Wind said something strange. "You do know that I am more powerful than you, right?" said the Wind.

The Sun replied calmly, "Why are you suddenly saying this, my friend? Both of us have our share of weaknesses and strengths, so it is not possible to decide who is more powerful."

"Are you trying to say that I am not powerful?" asked the Wind angrily.

"No, my friend. Calm down. I did not say anything like that" replied the Sun. "All I am saying is it's not good to be arrogant".

However, the Wind got offended. "Very well!" the Wind said. "Let's have a competition right now to decide who is stronger". As the Wind said this, its eyes went on a traveller passing by. The traveller had a scarf and a coat on, walking pleasantly. "Look there! Let's see who will be able to make the man take off his scarf and coat faster", said the Wind.

"Okay, my friend. Let's have a competition", the Sun agreed half-heartedly, as it did not want to compete with its friend.

The Wind blew a little. It made the man's scarf and his coat move a little. "See what I can do with this little effort!" said the Wind boastfully. "Now, let me show you some more of my power." The Wind started blowing fiercely, which made the scarf and the coat flap in the air. The more force the Wind would put, the more it made the scarf and the coat flap in the air. At one time, it even made the scarf almost leave the man's neck, but he caught it and tied it around his neck. The fiercer the Wind blew, the more tightly the man would tuck his coat. He started feeling so cold with all the Wind blowing around him that he wrapped his scarf and coat around him and sat by the road. The Wind knew it had failed to take the man's scarf and the coat off.

"Okay, now it's your turn, and I would like to see how you perform", the Wind said, turning towards the Sun.

The Sun did not say anything and smiled a little with warmth at the man. The man immediately felt a little comfortable and stood up. He started walking his way again.

"Is that it? Is that all you can do? Just smile at the man?" questioned the Wind.

The Sun looked at the Wind and smiled gently. He started shining a little brightly. He was not putting in so much effort as the Wind did. The man started feeling warmer and warmer when finally, he could not take it any longer. He started sweating. He felt so hot that he removed his scarf and took off his coat. The Wind was surprised to see this.

The Sun won the competition! "Wow, my friend!" he said. "I think I underestimated the effect of gentleness. I thought only power could make things happen in this world, but I was so wrong." "Now that you have understood that let's come together and make the man feel a little better", said the Sun. "The poor man had to suffer so much because of our competition." After that the Sun shone brightly, and the Wind also started blowing, making the weather pleasant. The man became delighted and carried on with his journey with a smile on his face.

**FIRST READING:** (Genesis 8:1) But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark; and God caused a wind to pass over the earth, and the water subsided.

(Hosea 8:7) For they sow the wind, and they reap the whirlwind. The standing grain has no heads; it yields no grain. Should it yield, strangers would swallow it up.

(Psalm 107:25) For He spoke and raised up a stormy wind, which lifted up the waves of the sea.

**SECOND READING:** Invoking the winds is an ancient practice that dates back to the Ancient Greeks and possibly earlier. In Mycenaean Greece a Priestess of the Winds is named on a tablet found at Knossos. That such a function existed is proof that a Cult of the Winds played an important role in magic and deities associated with the Winds were prevalent and worshipped. Wind magic utilises the forces of the four winds to create changes and the power of the wind can give a tremendous intensity to spell work. Each of the winds is associated with certain aspects and depending on which wind is blowing, the vibrations on the earth will differ. When invoking the winds for spell work, it is best to be outside. Here's an extract from The Wiccan Rede by Doreen Valiente

"Heed the North wind's mighty gale:  
lock the door and trim the sail.  
When the wind comes from the South,  
love will kiss you the on the mouth.  
When the Moor wind blows from the West,  
departed spirits have no rest.  
When the wind blows from the East,  
expect the new and set the feast. "

**THIRD READING:** Vayu Gayatri Mantra (Vayu – God of the Wind in Hinduism)

Om Pavana Purushaya Vidmahe Sahastramurtiye Cha Dhimahi Tanno Vayuh Prachodayat	OR	Om Sarva Pranaya Vidmahe Yashti Hastaya Dhimahi Tanno Vayuh Prachodayat
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Regular repetition of this mantra helps to cure respiratory diseases like asthma, pneumonia, bronchitis, sinusitis and other related problems. It helps to purify the air and prevent air pollution.

**HYMN 148:** Spirit of Life, Come onto Me

## REFLECTIVE ADDRESS:

The Greek song we heard before today's service, carries with it diachronic messages steeped in classical and ancient history. Its title refers to the "Summer Cities" of the Sunshine and the South; terms like Summer, Sunshine and South are imbued with symbolic civilisational and cultural, if not spiritual, qualities. Perhaps, it was the summer-like climatic conditions which allowed these places to develop truly awesome civilisations whose heritage remains indispensable even to this day for the entire European Continent and beyond. These civilisational centres developed belief systems in tune with nature and its cycles, the seasons and the elements, including the light, fire, the water, the rain, and of course the wind. The Cities of Summer, as the song calls them, found a way to survive to this day and often to thrive. There must be something in the summer, something in the wind, something in the summer breeze that makes us reflect on what exactly we are made of, what we truly are, what we carry or choose to carry with us in a metaphorical sense.

Unbeknown to us Europeans, until nearly five centuries ago, the Native civilisations of the Americas also had advanced and elaborate forms of spirituality directly linked to nature and its wonders. The Great Spirit Prayer, which was read at the beginning of this service, makes references, among other things, to the wind. The Great Spirit's voice can be heard in the winds, and it is the Great Spirit whose breath gives life to all the world, according to that prayer.

In today's European society, we tend to look forward to the summer as a period during which we tend to let our hair down, to relax as much as we can and, arguably, to be closer to our true self ... and ... if it gets too hot, we long for a cool summer breeze to help us refresh our body and mind. In so many religious traditions and belief systems, the wind acquires its own symbolism in terms of spirituality, e.g. the Holy Spirit in Christianity or the Great Spirit in Native American traditions, often associated with the wind; the same is true for Pagan and Earth-based spiritual belief systems with prayers and rituals often intended for or even addressed to the wind either in the form of praise and thanksgiving or of appeasement and placation. In Hinduism, as we saw in the third reading, Vayu is the actual God of the Wind and different mantras are addressed to Vayu in the hope, if not belief, that the regular repetition of such mantras helps to cure a range of diseases and health conditions associated with the respiratory system, but also in supplication for the purification of the air and the prevention of air pollution. Should we try this in London, perhaps?

The wonderful poem Summer Wind by William Cullen Bryant, which will be read towards the end of this service, Summer Wind is written from the first-person personal point of view as a narrative about the wind in the summer. Cullen writes using the pronoun 'I' and refers to the wind in his narrative as 'he'. Summer Wind is written in one long monologue in blank verse, allowing Cullen to express his thoughts naturally. Cullen uses the metaphor 'motionless pillars of the brazen heaven,' to describe the 'bright clouds,' as almost majestic features of the sky. Cullen employs alliteration in the opening lines of The Yellow Violet in 'when beechen buds begin to swell / And woods the blue-bird's warble know.' The setting of this poem is on 'a sultry day,' in nature, where the protagonist is under 'the canopies' of their 'dwelling' in the shade, possibly in a cave. After all, it is summertime, but is there a summer breeze?

Well, this is the million-dollar question because it is up to us to breathe in new life to all the rich traditions, religions, faith and belief systems, spiritualities both alternative and mainstream with which we choose to associate, and which may or may not be part and parcel of our life both as an individual as well as in our various groups and communities. Unitarianism places a lot of emphasis on the individual and their conscience, and this requires reflection, contemplation, introspection, possibly even meditation and prayer. Can the wind, can the summer breeze help us develop new ways to get rid of the clutter accumulated in our life, a new way for reinvigorating our emotional and spiritual health? Can the wind, can the summer breeze bring us together as a community, helping us discover anything and everything that unites us?

Without a doubt, summer can be and often is a slower-pace season during which we can afford deeper reflection and a more profound consideration of who we truly are, metaphorically stripping ourselves down to the bare essentials, leaving behind anything and everything which we no longer need. May the wind, in whatever form, divine or simply natural, be our inspiration and our guide. If not now, then when? If not we, then who? Whenever the wind blows, it is time to reflect on the importance of life. Spiritually, the wind is the reason for our existence. Without the wind, we would cease to exist. Another spiritual significance of wind is activity. The fact that the wind blows means that the universe is still active. The moment the wind stops blowing, everything becomes redundant and static. Therefore, the wind allows us to remain active and alive; perhaps, even more so, the summer breeze. It gives us a feeling of vitality and strength, helping us make decisions by feelings, yes feelings, because in our European civilisation, reason appears to have left little room for our feelings and emotions, let alone for our inner voice or even inner thought. May the wind, may the summer breeze here and now help us accomplish that, too! May the wind, may the summer breeze, help us reflect on what to do next, but also on what to stop doing.

**MUSIC FOR CONTEMPLATION, MEDITATION, PRIVATE PRAYER and/or REFLECTION:**

Walking with the Wind (04:00) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cnh1zC5hjTE>

**OFFERTORY PRAYER:**

As, at the end of this service, you will be making your generous contributions for the church which may have meant so much to you, for the church which meant so much to those who came before you, and for the church which will probably mean so much to people you will never know, let us give thanks in advance for the generosity, loving-kindness and support. We pray that all gifts of money, together with all other gifts, will go towards supporting Plymouth Unitarians and the many services they offer to the wider community. So be it.

**HYMN 217: Winds Be Still**

**POETRY: 'Summer Wind', by William Cullen Bryant**

It is a sultry day; the sun has drank  
The dew that lay upon the morning grass;  
There is no rustling in the lofty elm  
That canopies my dwelling, and its shade  
Scarce cools me. All is silent, save the faint  
And interrupted murmur of the bee,  
Settling on the sick flowers, and then again  
Instantly on the wing. The plants around  
Feel the too potent fervours: the tall maize  
Rolls up its long green leaves; the clover droops  
Its tender foliage, and declines its blooms.  
But far in the fierce sunshine tower the hills,  
With all their growth of woods, silent and stern,  
As if the scorching heat and dazzling light  
Were but an element they loved. Bright clouds,  
Motionless pillars of the brazen heaven,—  
Their bases on the mountains—their white tops  
Shining in the far ether—fire the air  
With a reflected radiance, and make turn  
The gazer's eye away.

For me, I lie  
Languidly in the shade, where the thick turf,  
Yet virgin from the kisses of the sun,  
Retains some freshness, and I woo the wind  
That still delays its coming. Why so slow,  
Gentle and voluble spirit of the air?  
Oh, come and breathe upon the fainting earth  
Coolness and life. Is it that in his caves  
He hears me? See, on yonder woody ridge,  
The pine is bending his proud top, and now  
Among the nearer groves, chestnut and oak  
Are tossing their green boughs about. He comes!  
Lo, where the grassy meadow runs in waves!  
The deep distressful silence of the scene  
Breaks up with mingling of unnumbered sounds  
And universal motion. He is come,  
Shaking a shower of blossoms from the shrubs,  
And bearing on their fragrance; and he brings  
Music of birds, and rustling of young boughs,  
And sound of swaying branches, and the voice  
Of distant waterfalls. All the green herbs  
Are stirring in his breath; a thousand flowers,  
By the road-side and the borders of the brook,  
Nod gaily to each other; glossy leaves  
Are twinkling in the sun, as if the dew  
Were on them yet, and silver waters break  
Into small waves and sparkle as he comes.

**PRAYER:** Henrik Beyer, windsurfer and author of "Health & Fitness for Windsurfing" wrote a prayer to please god Aeolus.

Almighty Aeolus, ruler of the winds.

I thank you for blessing me with your presence.

I honour all your work. Storms or breeze.

I am thankful for the stoke you have given me.

Your existence is a condition for my happiness.

I ask of only two things: your touch on my sail, and on the ocean.

My offering to you is my soul and passion for experiencing your manifestation.

I pray for you being in my life, today.

**CLOSING WORDS:** 'Now', by Andrew Usher

Now, through the rain and the sun,

Go your ways with gladness:

With Love in your hearts,

Peace in your minds

And Beauty touching your soul.

**RECESSIONAL VIDEO-CLIP:** [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xyoco3hG\\_5k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xyoco3hG_5k) Pocahontas - The Colours Of The Wind - Panflute - Quena - Instrumental - Raimy Salazar (04:22)