

Opening Music: 'En Bateau' by Debussy, played on the harp
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jils19KXeww>

Welcome: Good morning and Welcome, whoever you are, and however you are feeling, whatever you carry in your heart, and bring with you: cares, concerns or celebrations, sadness or joys, you are all welcome,

Our service today celebrates the seas and oceans of our world. Yesterday June 8th, was World Oceans Day. Our readings, prayers, hymns and music all celebrate various aspects of this most important substance, for all life on our home, Planet Earth, depends on water. Nearly $\frac{3}{4}$ of the surface of our planet is covered by water: Rivers, lakes, seas and oceans. Images taken from space, show our world as a predominantly blue globe, the blue of the oceans, marbled with water bearing white clouds.

We start as usual by lighting our chalice flame as a symbol of our free religious faith.

Chalice Lighting:

"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."

Opening Words: 'Sailors on the Sea of Faith' by Rev Cliff Reed

Who sails the sea of faith? Who will we meet, who will we be, when we put out from port?

Those adrift- tossed about by the waves and whirled around by every fresh gust of teaching - without compass or chart ...

those who know their destination all too well, and never stray from well- marked sea lanes into feared and unknown waters ...

those who cruise for mere amusement, visiting exotic shores but learning nothing of them: returning with souvenirs to impress their friends...

those who leave a home port that no longer holds their loyalty, sailing as emigrants with no thought of return ...

those who sail as pirates under false colours, doing violence and plunder on the sea of faith as invaders, imposing their will on foreign shores...

those who sail as pilgrim-explorers, anxious to learn, respectful of those they meet, as honest traders, whose commerce exchanges the treasures of the spirit...

There are many sailors on the sea of faith, and we are amongst them. May we voyage with loving purpose, ride out its storms, avoid its rocks and come safe to port on a tide of rising hope.

1st Hymn: Purple No. 128 'Our world is one world'

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

Our world is one world:
its 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.

Prayers: 1..‘For the Waters of the Earth’

inspired by words from Genesis 1: 2; Psalm 104: 25; Psalm 107: 23-24

Spirit of Life, who moved upon the face of the primeval deep;
whose works and wonders are seen by those who go down to the sea in ships;
whose ocean bounty is gathered with skill and hope and courage, as it was by the first disciples;
we come before you in thanksgiving for the living waters of the Earth.

Grant us wisdom to care for her seas and oceans, her lakes and rivers,
keeping them clean and conserving the life with which you filled them.

Turn us from the greed and folly that leaves them dead and empty.

Stir within us compassion for all who make their honest living from the waters, risking the wrath
of storm and tempest.

Teach us reverence for the myriad creatures that swim and creep and play there in glorious variety.

So may the waters' harvest be sustained as long as Earth shall last, and may we share it fairly,
humbly, and always with thanksgiving.

This we ask in the spirit of Jesus, for whom the waters were a pathway..... *AMEN*

2..Let us be thankful for those who go down to the sea in ships and on whom we depend: the
seafarers who leave their families, friends and homes to bring us the food for our table, the
cargoes for industry and commerce, and fuels for our country.

May we in our turn care for them and their families, wishing them well, that all may sail in safety,
and return home to their loved ones.

Let us think and be thankful for all who work in shipping, in management, in unions, in support
industries and services. May their work be valued and rewarded with success and a greater
understanding by those who benefit from their gifts and skills.

We are thankful for all who work to serve seafarers and their families around the world: the chaplains, their assistants, and all who support them in any way...

We hold in our thoughts all who are in darkness or despair, at home or at sea, in hospital or in prison. May they find light in their darkness and hope in their despair ... *AMEN*.

Story: from the The Ancient Norse tradition. Ancient Norse people had multiple sea deities. The supreme sea god was Njord, a member of the Vanir tribe.

Our story is about two other Norse Sea gods **Aegir and Ran** two giants married to one another, one representing the calm and benevolent sea, and the other the terrible stormy sea. Together they rule the seas much like the Greek god Poseidon. They are the personifications of the different aspects of the sea. Seafarers of the Viking Age prayed to them for safe voyages.

Ægir, the husband, was kindly and good-humoured, representing the peaceful rather than the stormy sea. He was supposed to cause and quiet the great tempests which swept over the deep. Ægir was also very rich, and was celebrated for his great prudence and wisdom. His chief residence was in the island of Hlesey or Leesöe, in the Kattegat.

By contrast, Ægir's wife and the queen of the ocean, Ran (whose name means "robber"), was of a cruel and avaricious disposition, and it was she who caused all shipwrecks. Her favourite pastime was lurking near dangerous rocks, where she would entice mariners.

There she spread her net, her most prized possession, and, having entangled them in its meshes and broken their vessels on the jagged cliffs, she calmly drew them down into her cheerless realm. All who were drowned were believed to go to Ran, a belief which the Swedish peasants still hold. Ran was, therefore, also considered the goddess of death for all who perished at sea.

The Norse nations believed that she entertained the drowned in her coral caves, where her couches were spread to receive them, and where the famed mead of poetry flowed freely as in Valhalla.

The goddess was further supposed to have a great affection for gold, which was called the "flame of the sea," and was used to illuminate her halls.

You can still see these even today, as the shining trails that sometimes illuminate the sea. We call them 'phosphorescence'.

So the old Norse sailors believed that to win Ran's good graces they had to have some gold on them whenever they crossed the sea, especially during long voyages.

Reading: The miraculous draft of fishes, when Jesus calls his first disciples
Luke chapter 5 verses 1 – 11 New International version

One day as Jesus was standing by the Lake of Gennesaret the people were crowding round him and listening to the word of God.

He saw at the water's edge two boats, left there by the fishermen, who were washing their nets.

He got into one of the boats, the one belonging to Simon, and asked him to put out a little from the shore. Then he sat down and taught the people from the boat.

When he had finished speaking, he said to Simon, 'Put out into deep water, and let down the nets for a catch.'

Simon answered, 'Master, we've worked hard all night and haven't caught anything. But because you say so, I will let down the nets.'

When they had done so, they caught such a large number of fish that their nets began to break. So they signalled to their partners in the other boat to come and help them, and they came and filled both boats so full that they began to sink.

When Simon Peter saw this, he fell at Jesus' knees and said, 'Go away from me, Lord; I am a sinful man!'

For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners.

Then Jesus said to Simon, 'Don't be afraid; from now on you will fish for people.' So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.

Poem: Excerpt from 'The Dry Salvages' No. 3 of TS Eliot's four Quartets **read by Delphine**

.... the sea is all about us;
 The sea is the land's edge also, the granite
 Into which it reaches, the beaches where it tosses
 Its hints of earlier and other creation:
 The starfish, the horseshoe crab, the whale's backbone;
 The pools where it offers to our curiosity
 The more delicate algae and the sea anemone.
 It tosses up our losses, the torn seine,
 The shattered lobsterpot, the broken oar
 And the gear of foreign dead men. The sea has many voices,
 Many gods and many voices.
 The salt is on the briar rose,
 The fog is in the fir trees.

The sea howl
 And the sea yelp, are different voices
 Often together heard: the whine in the rigging,
 The menace and caress of wave that breaks on water,
 The distant rattle in the granite teeth,
 And the wailing warning from the approaching headland
 Are all sea voices, and the heaving groaner
 Rounded homewards, and the seagull:
 And under the oppression of the silent fog
 The tolling bell
 Measures time not our time, rung by the unhurried
 Ground swell, a time
 Older than the time of chronometers, older/ Than time counted by anxious worried women

Than time counted by anxious worried women
 Lying awake, calculating the future,
 Trying to unweave, unwind, unravel
 And piece together the past and the future,
 Between midnight and dawn, when the past is all deception,
 The future futureless, before the morning watch
 When time stops and time is never ending;
 And the ground swell, that is and was from the beginning ...

2nd Hymn: Purple No. 147 'Spirit of Earth

2nd Hymn: Purple book No. 147 'Spirit of Earth

Spirit of earth, root, stone and tree,
 water of life, flowing in me,
 keeping me stable, nourishing me,
 O fill me with living energy!

*Spirit of nature, healing and free,
 spirit of love, expanding in me,
 spirit of life, breathe deeply in me,
 inspire me with living energy!*

Spirit of love, softly draw near,
 Open my heart, lessen my fear,
 Sing of compassion, help me to hear,
 O fill me with loving energy!

*Spirit of nature, healing and free,
 spirit of love, expanding in me,
 spirit of life, breathe deeply in me,
 inspire me with living energy!*

Spirit of life, you are my song,
 sing in my soul, all my life long,
 gladden and guide me, keep me from wrong,
 O fill me with sacred energy!

*Spirit of nature, healing and free,
 spirit of love, expanding in me,
 spirit of life, breathe deeply in me,
 inspire me with living energy!*

Spoken Meditation: extract from 'In praise of Water' by John O'Donohue

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 ,

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.

Approx 1 ½ mins of silence.

Reflective Music: The sounds of waves 3 mins <https://youtu.be/iB27qWbXaW4>

ADDRESS – “Celebrating our Seas”

Those beautiful images of our home, planet Earth, rising over the surface of the Moon were, and still are, truly awe inspiring. There it was, this predominantly blue globe, the blue of the oceans, marbled with white water-bearing clouds, set in the profound darkness of space. We must be eternally grateful to quick thinking astronaut Bill Anderson, on board Apollo 8 space craft, for re-loading his camera with colour film on Christmas Eve 1968, to give all humanity a wonderful Christmas gift. Sadly, Bill Anders died last week, aged 90, while piloting a small air plane. As Nasa administrator and former senator Bill Nelson said in tribute to him, "Mr Anders embodied the lessons and the purpose of exploration. He travelled to the threshold of the Moon and helped all of us see something else: *ourselves*."

That blue globe appears deceptively tranquil when seen from a distance, for those blue seas and oceans are in endless movement, their tides driven by that same Moon which Apollo 8 circled over half a century ago. The world's seas are interconnected, forming a magnificent and vibrant web that is the life-support system of our planet. The sea, however, has two faces: as we heard in the Nordic tale of Aegir and Ran: the calm, beautiful and bountiful, teeming with a wealth of life, resources and opportunity, but also rough, raging, violent, threatening and destroying life.

The ocean is a place of great power and mystery. It has been said to symbolize strength, life, peace, and stability. The ocean is a place of great beauty and wonder. It is also a place of great danger. The ocean is a place of great opportunity and great challenge. It plays a large role in modifying the climate, in absorbing CO2 etc, It is thought to be the place where life on Earth originated. It is home to innumerable species of plants and animals. For humans, a source of food in itself, of minerals and other valuable resources, transport of all kinds, commercial, leisure and military. We have just commemorated the 80th Anniversary of D Day, the largest ever sea borne invasion in history.

In his book 'Sea Change' Richard Girling, the environmentalist 's writes,

"You can't live in Britain and have no feeling for the sea. It is the amniotic fluid in which our civilization grew and was shaped. In sub-Freudian ways it lubricates our dreams and fires our imagination. In its presence we are mute spectators at a demonstration of unanswerable power - Cnut could have chosen no more potent metaphor for the impotence of kings. The Atlantic and its inlets, the Channel and the Irish and North Seas, are the most powerful drivers of our economy, culture and politics. Our rim of salt has determined what we eat, how we use the land, how we relate to our neighbours, how and where we travel even the thickness of our coats. Insulated by the Gulf stream, our winters are 10 degrees warmer than Newfoundland's. The sea is what gives us our cherished landscape of oak and beechwoods, Its why we are so good at rain. It brought us the people - Romans, Vikings, Saxons, Normans - who filled our veins and shaped our culture and kept out undesirables like Napoleon, Hitler and rabies.

Our national heroes - Nelson, Drake - have a nautical bias. The benchmark for commercial competence is the ability to run a whelk stall, and no town in the land escapes the odour of frying fish. We are, above all else, children of the ocean, never more than 72 miles from a coast. The family photographs are private extensions of the national psyche - hearts are of oak, horizons are blue, and Britannia rules the waves. If we had no other god we would probably worship it, for like a god it demands obedience, gratitude and fear."

He goes on to remember a time as a small boy in 1953, when he nearly drowned during a seaside holiday, and reflects upon the damage and loss of life caused by overflowing seas and flooding on the east coast in the same year... and he continues, " It will do the same again, and worse, for this most edgy and unpredictable of neighbours is growing more irascible. We have fouled it, plundered it, poisoned it, stripped it of fish and interfered with the climate. God like it has given and now, god-like it will take away."

In the Bible, The ocean is seen as vast and seemingly endless expanse, which can be both intimidating and peaceful. It is a place where one can easily get lost, both physically and metaphorically. The ocean can represent the boundless span of life, and the way one can get lost on the journey through life. The ocean can be a place of great beauty and mystery, offering solace and a sense of peace. It is also a place of great danger, where one can be easily swallowed up by the waves. The ocean is a metaphor for life itself, and the way it can be both beautiful and cruel.

In the extract from Luke's gospel, which Gill read earlier, we heard of the sea giving up its immense bounty of fish, so much so that Simon's boat almost sank under the weight. On another occasion, that same sea was so violent that Jesus's disciples in their little storm tossed boat, feared for their lives, calling to him for help, as depicted right here in our famous mural.

Today, to those 'natural' threats of storm and tempest, human excess and greed has added threats undreamt of 2,000 years ago. Our seas and oceans face an onslaught of industrial fishing, tides of plastic pollution, ocean temperatures soaring to record highs, and climate change threatening species, ecosystems, and communities across the globe. There's only one path forward: we must all work together to protect our seas, and planet. There is hope, and this is where World Oceans Day comes in.

A little about the history of World Oceans day: The vision of the blue globe floating in space helped to inspire the environmental movement over 50 years ago. Twenty years on, in 1992, in Rio de Janeiro the United Nations held a Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED) which provided an opportunity for non-government organizations (NGOs) and civil society to express their views on environmental issues. On 8 June, an event, "Global Forum on Oceans – The Blue Planet" was organized by the Oceans Institute of Canada, supported by the Canadian Government. It featured international experts, opinion leaders and those in a position to speak for the oceans' contributions to sustaining the Blue Planet. This led to the declaration of a day to celebrate and help the oceans – 'Oceans Day'.

Over the following decade and a half, observation of Oceans Day broadened and deepened to include Maritime space, international shipping, maritime security, marine science and technology, marine biological diversity, the marine environment and sustainable development, climate change and regional and international cooperation. The need and scope for this was reflected in the broad range of concerns expressed in 2008 by the UN Secretary-General. It led to the UN Convention on the international Law of the Sea. So in late 2008, The General Assembly resolved that 8 June would be designated by the United Nations as "World Oceans Day". (General Assembly resolution 63/111) and so **World Oceans Day** was born!

The First United Nations World Oceans Day was observed in 2009, 15 years ago this weekend. Its theme was 'Our Oceans, Our Responsibility'. " It highlighted the many ways in which Oceans contribute to society. –It also recognized the considerable challenges we face to maintain their capacity to regulate the global climate, supply essential ecosystem services.

The next few years themes included "One Ocean, One Climate, One Future", to help make the connection between climate change and ocean health. "Youth: the Next Wave for Change" helped

to involve more young folk worldwide as these are the most promising people to create lasting change.

And : "Together we have the power to protect the ocean" showing how small actions can add up to make a big difference – using the power of the oceans to obtain and promote renewable energy; More recently, a 5-year campaign to raise awareness of the damage caused by plastics in the seas, and now "Protecting at least 30% of our lands, waters, and ocean by 2030" (or simply 30x30) calling on world leaders to support this and make it happen.

What can we all do to protect our seas and oceans? An organization called 'Only One' has been involved in many of these actions. Just over a year ago, together with Greenpeace and other partners, delivered more than 5 million signatures on the first day of negotiations calling for a strong High Seas Treaty. This is a landmark agreement to protect more than 60% of the ocean beyond the jurisdiction of any country. This treaty was written, adopted, signed by 90 nations, and is now on track for ratification at the 2025 UN Ocean Conference. Every signature and every voice that has contributed to this milestone is an incredible example of how by all acting together, we can make important changes for the better.

So in that spirit, for World Ocean Day, a quick action you can take right now: for those online, Sign and share our appeal to ban bottom trawling, a destructive and wasteful fishing practice scarring Europe's seabed, releasing millions of tons of carbon, and killing wildlife indiscriminately within marine protected areas.

Join the movement to urge France to protect 30% of its maritime spaces by 2030 with a network of effectively protected marine areas. As the host of the 2025 UN Ocean Conference, France has the power to set an example and include strict protections in 10% of its MPAs. If you are interested, I can send you the information by email.

Together, we can persuade national legislators and corporate leaders to follow through on their promises and all the big talk about doing the right things, so that there will be a healthier and more abundant future for all on our 'Blue Boat Home'. *A M E N*

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

1. Wide green world, we know and love you:
clear blue skies that arch above you,
moon-tugged oceans rising, falling,
summer rain and cuckoo calling.
some wild ancient ferment bore us,
us and all that went before us:
life in desert, forest, mountain,
life in stream and springing fountain.

2. We know how to mould and tame you,
we have power to mar and maim you.
Show us by your silent growing
that which we should all be knowing:
we are of you, not your master,
we who plan supreme disaster.
If with careless greed we use you
inch by extinct inch we lose you.

3. May our births and deaths remind us
others still will come behind us.
That they also may enjoy you
we with wisdom will employ you.
That our care may always bless you
teach us we do not possess you.
We are part and parcel of you.
Wide green world, we share and love you.

Closing Words: A Maori Blessing:

May the calm be widespread,
May the sea glisten like the greenstone,
And may the shimmer of sunlight
Ever cross your pathway in life,
Now and always A M E N:

Extinguish Chalice

Closing Music: 'Blue Boat Song' Peter Mayer & Roland Hugh Pritchard

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0XziR3M2wYk>