

'Almost a flower communion' Sunday 30th June 2024 Rev Dr Edgar Mihas

SERVICE THEME – International Day of Parliamentarianism (2024 theme: Parliaments for the Planet)
– my theme: almost a flower communion

MUSIC THEME – Piano Favourites

OPENING MUSIC – George Gershwin, Three Preludes for Piano, No.2
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ehn30z-KsBc>

OPENING PRAYER Opening the Flower Communion by Thomas Rhodes:

We come in a variety of colours, shapes, and sizes.
Some of us grow in bunches.
Some of us grow alone.
Some of us are cupped inwards,
And some of us spread ourselves out wide.
Some of us are old and dried and tougher than we appear.
Some of us are still in bud.
Some of us grow low to the ground,
And some of us stretch towards the sun.
Some of us feel like weeds, sometimes.
Some of us carry seeds, sometimes.
Some of us are prickly, sometimes.
Some of us smell.
And all of us are beautiful.
What a bouquet of people we are!

CHALICE LIGHTING and CHALICE LIGHTING PRAYER

Joy and grief
Health and sickness
Light and darkness
Peace and anger
Life and death
Wholeness and brokenness
We each bring all of these here to this sanctuary of unity in diversity
For this one hour of this one day
And pour them out
Commingling the oil of our lives
To become the flame of this chalice
The symbol of our shared living faith.

1st HYMN no.43 in 'Hymns for Living' 'Universal Spirit' *Words & Music, Rev Dr Norbert Capek 1870 – 1942*
by permission Mrs. B. Capek Haspl Har. David Dawson

1.
Mother Spirit,
Father Spirit,
 Where are you?
 In the skysong,
 In the forest,
 Sounds your cry.
What to give you,
What to call you,
 What am I?

2.
Many drops are
In the ocean,
 Deep and wide.
Sunlight bounces
Off the ripples
 To the sky.
What to give you,
What to call you,
 What am I?

3.

I am empty,
Time flies from me;
 What is time?
Dreams eternal,
Fears infernal
 Haunt my heart.
What to give you,
What to call you,
 What am I?

4.

Mother Spirit,
Father Spirit,
 Take out hearts.
Take our breath and
Let our voices
 Sing our parts.
Take our hands and
Let us work to
 Shape our art.

POETRY 'The Flower' by GEORGE HERBERT

How fresh, oh Lord, how sweet and clean
Are thy returns! even as the flowers in spring;
 To which, besides their own demean,
The late-past frosts tributes of pleasure bring.
 Grief melts away Like snow in May,
 As if there were no such cold thing.

Who would have thought my shrivelled heart
Could have recovered greenness? It was gone
 Quite underground; as flowers depart
To see their mother-root, when they have blown,
 Where they together All the hard weather,
 Dead to the world, keep house unknown.

These are thy wonders, Lord of power,
Killing and quickening, bringing down to hell
 And up to heaven in an hour;
Making a chiming of a passing-bell.
 We say amiss
 This or that is:
Thy word is all, if we could spell.

Oh that I once past changing were,
Fast in thy Paradise, where no flower can wither!
 Many a spring I shoot up fair,
Offering at heaven, growing and groaning thither;
 Nor doth my flower
 Want a spring shower,
My sins and I joining together.

But while I grow in a straight line,
Still upwards bent, as if heaven were mine own,
 Thy anger comes, and I decline:
What frost to that? what pole is not the zone
 Where all things burn, When thou dost turn,
 And the least frown of thine is shown?

And now in age I bud again,
After so many deaths I live and write;
 I once more smell the dew and rain,
And relish versing. Oh, my only light,
 It cannot be
 That I am he
On whom thy tempests fell all night.

These are thy wonders, Lord of love,
To make us see we are but flowers that glide;
Which when we once can find and prove,
Thou hast a garden for us where to bide;
Who would be more,
Swelling through store,
Forfeit their Paradise by their pride.

SHORT STORY – The Beautiful Flower

Once upon a time, in the garden of paradise, there bloomed a beautiful flower. There were numerous pretty roses, lilies, tulips, marigolds, daisies, orchids, and many other flowers in the garden. However, when this young flower bloomed its petals, the whole garden found her to be the most beautiful of them all.

The towering trees bowed down to take a glimpse of her, the butterflies and the honeybees spread the word that she was the most beautiful flower that has ever bloomed in their garden. All the other flowers thought about what her name could be and where she was before. They called her God's favourite flower. The beautiful flower was very happy as everyone admired her in the garden. She had vibrant layered petals. Her petals were brilliant red, sunny yellow, and stunning orange. Every morning the grass would curl up around her stem to greet her and the rest of the garden would spend the day praising her.

One morning, it started to rain heavily and did not stop until the night. When the rain stopped, all the flowers, plants, trees, butterflies, and honeybees had fallen asleep. The next day when the grass curled up at the feet of the beautiful flower, it was appalled to see her colourless. Soon she woke up and saw that the colours had gone off from her petals. It was the rain that washed off its brilliant colours. She could not stop weeping as her petals were white as snow.

After some time, a fairy appeared in the garden. She wore a long, long dress coloured just like the rainbow. Seeing the beautiful flower weep, she said, "What is wrong with you, my child? Why are you weeping?". The flower replied, "The rain has washed away my hues and now my petals are colourless.". The fairy felt bad for her and promised to give her colours once again. The fairy said, "Oh my dear flower, do not be upset. I will paint your petals bright with the colour markers at the end of my dress. However, I have one condition for you. If I paint your petals bright, I shall also give you a fresh fragrance. Promise me to delight every creature in this garden with your charm."

As the beautiful flower agreed to this, the fairy patiently painted her petals with her magic markers. Her petals had hues even more brilliant than before. The fairy also spilled her little bottle of fresh fragrance on her. God's favourite flower was once again the most beautiful of them all. The fragrance of the flower spread all across the garden and all the creatures there were delighted with the fresh scent in the air. The beautiful flower thanked the fairy for the gift. She continued flooding the garden with her sweet scent and delighted everyone in the garden with her charm.

This short story on flowers teaches us that kindness makes the world a more beautiful place. The fairy not only made the flower beautiful again, but it also made the garden a more pleasant place with her kindness. Hence, sharing our virtues and spreading kindness is going to make the world a better place. Imagine if this year's Parliaments for the Planet theme of International Day of Parliamentarianism were to inspire MPs to show as much kindness to the world and as much care for the Planet as the wonderful fairy in The Beautiful Flower story.

READING 1 – This is the garden, by E. E. Cummings (Read by Marianne Beale)

This is the garden: colours come and go,
frail azures fluttering from night's outer wing
strong silent greens silently lingering,
absolute lights like baths of golden snow.
This is the garden: pursed lips do blow
upon cool flutes within wide glooms, and sing

(of harps celestial to the quivering string)
invisible faces hauntingly and slow.

This is the garden. Time shall surely reap
and on Death's blade lie many a flower curled,
in other lands where other songs be sung;
yet stand They here enraptured, as among
the slow deep trees perpetual of sleep
some silver-fingered fountain steals the world.

MEDITATION – Extract from Humility, Anger and Grace: Meditations towards a Life that Matters, by Nancy Crumbine

Time is the heartbeat of existence: this moment here, when grace breaks through the meaninglessness of objects in space. Meaning breaks through our busyness and stops us in our tracks. With a simple turning, we are met with divinity.

...The infinite dwells in the finite: the moments of this world are worthy of love, worthy of our attachment and devotion because it is through those moments, we enter the divine. It is through this abundance, unmerited by even our best moments, that we discover the holiness in time, which is grace.

READING 2 – Climate action begins at home. Parliaments and those who work in them can take concrete steps to reduce their carbon footprint, both as institutions and individuals. By adopting greener policies and embracing a culture of sustainability, parliaments and parliamentarians can help address the climate crisis and pave the way for stronger climate action. The Inter-Parliamentary Union Secretariat has identified 10 key actions parliaments and parliamentarians can consider as they embark on the greening process, or to complement existing greening initiatives. These actions cover three categories: institutionalising the greening of parliament, greening the way parliaments and their members work, and leading and fostering a culture of sustainable change. While a wide range of options to become greener exists and will continue to evolve with time, these 10 actions provide concrete entry points for more sustainable parliaments that lead by example when it comes to climate action.

MUSIC – Moritz Moszkowski, Serenata, Opus 15, No.1 (02:09)
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XPH2l6_2pkw

READING 3 – 'The lilies of the field', Luke 12:16-31

¹⁶ And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. ¹⁷ He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.'

¹⁸ "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. ¹⁹ And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry.'"

²⁰ "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?'

²¹ "This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God."

²² Then Jesus said to his disciples: "Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat; or about your body, what you will wear. ²³ For life is more than food, and the body more than

clothes.²⁴ Consider the ravens: They do not sow or reap, they have no storeroom or barn; yet God feeds them. And how much more valuable you are than birds! ²⁵ Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to your life^{[a]?} ²⁶ Since you cannot do this very little thing, why do you worry about the rest?

²⁷ “Consider how the wildflowers grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you, not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. ²⁸ If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today, and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, how much more will he clothe you—you of little faith! ²⁹ And do not set your heart on what you will eat or drink; do not worry about it. ³⁰ For the pagan world runs after all such things, and your Father knows that you need them.³¹ But seek his kingdom, and these things will be given to you as well.

BLESSING FOR FLOWER COMMUNION, by Michael DeVernon Boblett, PLUS your blessing on hands!

Blessed be the flower that triumphs at last
Over the snows, over the centuries,
over the heavy feet of cattle and of soldiers
treading down the fragile places of the earth.

Blessed be the flower that triumphs at last
Over the tangled branches, over the withered stem,
over the tearing thorns of roses and of barbed wire.

Blessed be the flower that triumphs at last
Even over the hand that gathers it,
cuts it off from life, from roots,
from the memory and taste of iron and tears in the soil.

Blessed be the flower that triumphs at last
Over the closed rooms that are not its home,
over efforts to domesticate its wild truth,
over the vain words of priests and poets.

Blessed be the flower that triumphs at last
Over us, over pasts and futures, over words and silences,
over deaths and lives, placing them all in their proper place,
restoring to all things their joyful smallness.

Blessed be the flower that triumphs at last.

2nd HYMN 216 – ‘Wide green world we know and love you’
from ‘Sing your Faith’ (purple book)

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.

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.

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.

AN UNUSUAL REFLECTIVE ADDRESS – ONE by Mary Oliver

The mosquito is so small
it takes almost nothing to ruin it.
Each leaf, the same.
And the black ant, hurrying.
So many lives, so many fortunes!
Every morning, I walk softly and with forward glances
down to the ponds and through the pinewoods.
Mushrooms, even, have but a brief hour
before the slug creeps to the feast,
before the pine needles hustle down
under the bundles of harsh, beneficent rain.

How many, how many, how many
make up a world!
And then I think of that old idea: the singular
and the eternal.
One cup, in which everything is swirled
back to the colour of the sea and sky.
Imagine it!

A shining cup, surely!
In the moment in which there is no wind
over your shoulder,
you stare down into it,
and there you are,
your own darling face, your own eyes.
And then the wind, not thinking of you, just passes by,
touching the ant, the mosquito, the leaf,
and you know what else!
How blue is the sea, how blue is the sky,
how blue and tiny and redeemable everything is, even you,
even your eyes, even your imagination.

My parliament, my planet, our future! A compilation (04:38):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OiLwJjpJwQ4&t=100s>

“...I feel very strongly there is an intelligence at work in every flower, in every blade of grass, in every cell of my body.” ~ Eckart Tolle

As you walk through a garden or floral shop, which flowers usually catch your eye? The red roses? The white lilies? The soft lavender? With their simple presence, flowers have a mystical way of raising

our spirits as well as the vibrational energy of any room. Subconsciously, we tend to draw towards the flowers that most closely match our desired state of being.

Each flower has a unique colour and essence that vibrationally corresponds with one or more of the seven chakras in our body. Meditating upon a particular flower, therefore, can help us open and align any chakras that may need healing.

According to the philosophy of yoga, there are seven main chakras, or vortexes, that move life force energy (*prana*) through our bodies. They are the meeting points of consciousness and matter. Each chakra is vibrating at a different frequency and responds to similar vibrations of light (colour). In fact, chakras are often visualised as lotuses or flowers.

If you are feeling a block in your emotions, plant or buy some beautiful flowers that match the vibration of the corresponding chakra. Place the flowers in a pot or vase where you can see them often. You can also use a photo or painting of that flower. As you gaze upon the flower, ponder the qualities you'd like to develop. For example, if you're lacking in willpower, you may have solar plexus (yellow) chakra blockages. Bring in beautiful black-eyed Susans and focus on the quality of mental strength.

Root Chakra

Also known as muladhara, the root chakra is located at the base of the spine. It includes the first three vertebrae, the bladder and the colon. Essentially, it is the 'survival' chakra that carries the energies of stability, security, groundedness and your deepest emotions regarding your physical body. It is represented by the colour red, the slowest of all wavelengths in the visible spectrum, but also the most physically stimulating. If your root chakra is feeling blocked -- if you are feeling unstable, insecure or fearful -- you may want to plant or buy some bold red roses, hibiscus or poinsettias.

Sacral Chakra

The sacral chakra, or svadhisthana, is located between the pubic bone and navel and encompasses the genital and urinary systems. It is responsible for creative expression, manifestation, and issues of control and sex. It matches the vibrational frequency of orange and is represented by the tiger lily, hibiscus, marigold and bird of paradise. Writer's block? Having control issues? Meditate on one of these flowers and dwell on the qualities of creativity or 'letting go.'

Solar Plexus Chakra

The solar plexus chakra, or manipura, is located between the navel and the breastbone. It is associated with intellect, self-esteem, self-confidence and willpower. It is linked to the colour yellow and is symbolised by black-eyed Susan, dandelions, daffodils, honeysuckle and chamomile. When you are lacking in willpower or confidence, meditate on one of these flowers and focus on the qualities of assertiveness and confidence.

Heart Chakra

The heart chakra, or anahata, is the fourth and central chakra; it is the bridge between the lower chakras of matter and the upper chakras of spirit -- the meeting point of body and spirit. It includes the entire circulatory and immune systems. As its name suggests, it is the chakra of love, compassion and generosity. This includes love for others, ourselves and God. This chakra is associated with the deep green that is found in grass and stems and leaves of all types. As love is also linked to the colour red, many flowers associated with the heart chakra display red, or pink, as well. Flowers associated with the heart chakra of love include roses, carnations, azaleas, hibiscus and orchids.

Throat Chakra

The throat chakra, or vishuddha, includes the neck, thyroid, jaw, mouth and tongue. It carries the energies of verbal expression and speaking our highest truth. It vibrates at the colour blue and is represented by hyacinths, bluebells and morning glories. If you are feeling a block in communication with a partner or feel that you are not being heard, bring one of these beautiful blue flowers into your home and meditate on the value of expressing your highest truth.

Third Eye Chakra

The sixth chakra is the third eye chakra, or ajna. The centre of intuition, the third eye chakra is located between the eyebrows and is associated with a deep indigo. Do you need to open your intuition? Plant or bring in some hydrangea, lilac, lavender, sweet pea, violets or petunias.

Crown Chakra

The crown chakra, or sahasrara, represents enlightenment and spiritual connection to our higher selves, others and God. It is located at the crown of the head and expresses itself in the colour violet or white. As you work on your higher spiritual connections, surround yourself with white lilies, jasmine, periwinkle or geraniums.

174 Hymns for Living (aka Green Hymn Book) 'A church is a Living Fellowship'

Words Frank Clabburn 1947 – Music David Dawson *Used by permission*

A church is a living fellowship
More than a holy shrine,
Where people can share their hopes and fear
Less of the yours and mine.

Where bonded by trust we search for Truth
Beyond the chains of creeds,
And thought can aspire to shine with fire
From all our deepest needs.

Let's stretch out the open hand of Love,
Conquer the fists of hate,
Divided no more by voices of war,
Greeds of our mindless state.

We'll take all our building bricks of Truth,
Make of them homes of Life,
A future to face the shame and disgrace
In all our past of strife.

A church is a place of human trust
More than of brick and stone;
Of Love we will sing to make it ring
In every joyous tone.

PRAYER

In the name of Providence, which implants in the seed the future of the flower and in our hearts the longing for people to live in harmony.
In the name of the highest, in whom we move and who makes the mother and father, the brother and sister, lover and loner what they are.

In the name of sages and great religious leaders, who sacrificed lives to hasten the coming of the age of mutual respect.

Let us renew our resolution – sincerely to be real brothers and sisters regardless of any kind of bar which estranged us from each other.

In this holy resolve, may we be strengthened knowing that we are God's family; that one spirit, the spirit of love, unites us; and endeavour for a more perfect and more joyful life. Amen.

HYMN 267 – (said, not sung) 'We Sing the Roses Waiting' by Ralph Waldo Emerson.
Words Ralph Waldo Emerson Music 'Ewing' Alexander Ewing 1830 – 1895

We sing of golden mornings,
We sing of sparkling seas,
Of fenlands, valleys, mountains,
And stately forest trees.
We sing of flashing sunshine
And life bestowing rain,
Of birds among the branches,
And spring time come again.

We sing the heart courageous,
The youthful, eager mind;
We sing of hopes undaunted,
Of friendly ways and kind.
We sing the roses waiting
Beneath the deep piled snow;
We sing, when night is darkest,
The day's returning glow.

CLOSING WORDS

Go now in peace.
Deeply regard each other.
Truly listen to each other.
Speak what each of you must speak.
Be ready in any moment to disarm your own heart,
And always live as if a realm of love had just begun.
So be it. Blessed be. Amen.

CLOSING MUSIC – Johann Sebastian Bach, Siciliano, BWV1031 (03:24)
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Iz0UWU88DAI>