

‘Humanitarian Day Reflections’ by Rev Dr Edgar Mihas

Opening Music Grieg: Peer Gynt Suite No. 1, Op. 46: I. Morning Mood

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J-1Bob1dU18&list=RDJ-1Bob1dU18&start_radio=1

Opening Prayer

As we gather here in this harbour of safety

We thank the spirit for fellowship and family.

We ask that we be strengthened, restored and inspired with love.

We ask that we may be filled with peace

So that as we journey onwards

We would pour out love and grace to others.

We ask that our souls would catch the wind of the spirit

so that we would take a message of hope and unity to all the earth.

So be it.

Chalice Lighting Prayer

For the gift of this day and for our community of spiritual nurture and compassion, we give thanks.

We light this chalice as a symbol of our free Unitarian faith.

May our many sparks meet and merge in communion of heart and soul.

1st HYMN: 178: ‘Together Now We Join As One’ in Sing your Faith’ (The ‘Purple book’)

Together now we join as one
our common faith to sing;
to render to this pilgrim world
our heart felt offering.

We strive to be a fellowship
with mind and conscience free,
to search for truth and saving light
in cosmic mystery.

We worship God – love’s source and power;
we celebrate the life
that all earth’s children freely share
beyond their sinful strife.

We would in love, serve humankind
with caring, justice, peace;
and with the earth seek harmony
that pride and pillage cease

We hold in reverence the man
who walked in Galilee,
who healed the sick and loved the poor –
revealed divinity.

We welcome truth, we welcome light,
all prophecy and song,
whoever they be channelled through
to all they shall belong.

Music 'St. Fulbert' Henry John Gauntlett, 1805 1878
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Prayer "May We Become"

May we become at all times, both now and forever,
A protector for those without protection
A guide for those who have lost their way
A ship for those with oceans to cross
A bridge for those with rivers to cross
A sanctuary for those in danger
A lamp for those without light
A place of refuge for those who lack shelter
And a servant to all in need.
So be it.

Meditation:

At this quiet time and in this place of worship we would seek to know more deeply what it means to love one another.

We know so well our own needs. We know that we, ourselves need understanding, affection and recognition. Why is it then that so often we hesitate to extend these precious gifts to others? The cost of a kind word is small. The moment that it takes to listen could hardly be better used. A gesture of forgiveness can mark a new beginning. An embrace or a note of appreciation can convey crucial encouragement and comfort.

And yet, so often we fail even within our own families to live by the sacred command that we should love one another.

O Spirit of life and of love, strengthen our faith, increase our resolve to give more generously of ourselves. We pray for the courage to take the risks of love. We pray for the insight to see ourselves and others in perspective. We pray for humility and understanding that we may always stand ready to forgive and begin anew. Amen.

Short Story: Short Moral Story of Four Friends on Unity is Strength

(On 12th September 2013, by Ramesh Kumar)

Once, a deer, a crow, a mouse and a turtle were great friends.

One day the deer went out to graze. He was caught in a hunter net. In the evening, the deer did not return to his friends.

The mouse said to the crow, 'Will you fly over the trees and find the deer? Then fly back to us and tell us where he is.'

The crow flew away. He came back after half an hour. He said, 'Our friend, the deer is in the hunter's net.'

'What shall we do?' said the mouse and the turtle.

'I will take mouse on my back,' said the crow. 'He will bite through the net and set the deer free.'

'Yes,' said the mouse. I will do that.'

'And I will walk to the deer,' said the turtle. The crow took the mouse on his back and flew with him to the deer.

The mouse bit through the net. The deer was free. The turtle got friends. They were all very happy together.

First Reading: World Humanitarian Day, 2025 Theme – The metaphoric theme of the Day

This year, the UN has decided to metaphorically associate this day with the upbringing of a child. "It takes a Village" from English Idiom "It takes a village to Raise a child", has been used for the theme of 2022. As a little child needs utmost effort and care to be brought up and the process engages the entire home, the service of humanity also requires the whole world to share its role. This slogan also points towards the world as a "Global Village" and we humans as its inhabitants. Thus, the entire Global village has

to care about their new child, “humanity & humanitarian workers”. It urges all to take part in the service of humanity and raises voices for the appreciation of humanitarian workers. The world comprises of two types of people: those who need help and the others who help them. Every society is based upon this balance where a helping hand also needs help in times of need.

Let us join hands to turn this Global village into a Humanitarian village. Only a collaborative activity can raise this humanitarian child. We can avoid and mitigate the probability of crises by providing a level field to the volunteers who are aiding us during the crises. Let’s do it together as it will take a global village to raise human beings together.

This theme again recalls and declares the Human Rights workers as heroes. These heroes are not the ones who are portrayed in fictions, stories and films, nor are they the ones who believe in achieving their own goals. These real-life heroes are the people who despite all odds serve humanity.

Second Reading: ‘For a new beginning’ from ‘Benedictus: a book of Blessings’ by John O’Donahue

In out -of –the- way places of the heart,
Where are your thoughts never think to wander ,
This beginning has been quietly forming,
Waiting until you were ready to emerge.

For a long time it has watched your desire,
Feeling the emptiness growing inside you,
Noticing how you willed yourself on,
Still unable to leave what you had outgrown.

It watched you play with the seduction of safety
And the grey promises that sameness whispered,
Heard the waves of turmoil rise and relent,
Wondered would you always live like this.

Then the delight, when your courage kindled,
And out you stepped onto new ground,
Your eyes young again, with energy and dream,
A path of plenitude opening before you.

Though your destination is not yet clear
You can trust the promise of this opening;
Unfurl yourself into the grace of beginning

That is at one with your life's desire.

Awaken your spirit to adventure;
Hold nothing back, learn to find ease in risk;
Soon you will be home to a new rhythm
For your soul senses the world that awaits you.

Third Reading: 2 extracts from the Bhagavad Gita

1. He who knows me as his own divine Self breaks through the belief that he is the body and is not reborn as a separate creature. Such a one is united with me.
Delivered from selfish attachment, fear, and anger, filled with me, surrendering themselves to me, purified in the fire of my being, many have reached the state of unity in me.
2. He who experiences the unity of life sees his own self in all beings, and all beings in his own self, and looks on everything with an impartial eye.

2nd HYMN: 84 – ‘Justice For Persons’ in ‘Sing your Faith (The ‘Purple Book’)

Words © Andrew M. Hill. Used by permission.

Music: ‘Georgina’ © David Dawson 2009. Used by permission.

Justice for person and for different nations,
respect the diverse species in our care,
community of life in earth sustaining,
love for this planet which we all must share.

Compassion is the strength of love and sympathy
letting us share another being's pain;
creature or human, loving friend or stranger,
love for each other is the whole world's gain.

Wisdom is insight clear, precise and thoughtful,
searching for truth and human love refined;
guidance from past, made ready for the future
by the best reasoning of the human mind.

Integrity, with honour and uprightness:
these are the qualities which form and make
women and men, the people for tomorrow,
those who serve others for another's sake.

Justice, compassion, wisdom and integrity,
these are the virtues which our poor world needs.
They'll flower tomorrow, fruit in glorious splendour,
If we today go out and plant the seeds.

REFLECTIVE ADDRESS: "The Call of Compassion: Humanitarianism and Justice in the Unitarian Heart".

We gather today in the spirit of reflection and responsibility. In our shared sanctuary of thought and openness, we pause to consider the profound themes of humanitarianism and justice — not as abstract ideals, but as living principles that shape how we move through the world, how we respond to suffering, and how we stand, together for what is right.

As Unitarians — and I include both Unitarian and Unitarian Universalist perspectives in that term — we are not bound by creeds or dogmas. We are not told what to believe, but we are certainly called, called by conscience, by compassion, and by a deep moral intuition that our lives are interwoven with all lives, that our liberation is bound up with the liberation of others.

This is the heart of humanitarianism: the belief in the inherent worth and dignity of every person, and the commitment to act when that worth is diminished by suffering, oppression, or neglect. And this is the foundation of justice: not just fairness in theory, but fairness embodied in systems, in policies, in opportunities, and in lived realities.

Let us begin by naming what we already know — humanitarianism and justice are not neutral concepts. They are not clean, detached ideas we analyse from a distance. They are lived. They are often messy. They ask something of us.

Humanitarianism, at its core, is the instinct to respond to human need. It is the voice inside us that says, “This suffering is not acceptable.” It is the voice that moves us towards relief, towards healing, towards solidarity. And yet, if we stop at humanitarianism alone, we may be content to bind wounds while ignoring the blades that cause them. We may grow skilled at responding to crises, but fail to challenge the conditions that make those crises inevitable. That is where justice deepens the call. Justice asks, “Why is there suffering in the first place?” “Who benefits?” “Who is left out?” “What systems must change and how?”

Justice is not only about generosity, it is about transformation. As Unitarians, we are heirs to a spiritual tradition that has always asked these questions. From the earliest Unitarian ministers who challenged the theology of damnation and insisted on a loving God, to those who fought for the abolition of slavery, for women’s suffrage, for civil

rights, and for LGBTQ+ dignity — Unitarian history is rich with those who dared to connect faith with action, belief with behaviour.

Our first principle affirms the inherent worth and dignity of every person. This is not a vague nicety. It is a radical moral position, one that says no human being is disposable. No life is worth less than another. No community should suffer silently while others thrive. But affirmation alone is not enough. As Unitarian theologian James Luther Adams reminded us, “Good intentions are not good enough.” He said that a faith worth anything must be a faith that acts.

So, where does that leave us? In a world where humanitarian crises abound from war and displacement to poverty and climate collapse, and in a society where injustice runs through the veins of institutions — racism, economic inequality, xenophobia, and environmental degradation — what does it mean to be people of conscience? What does it mean to be Unitarian in such a world?

It means we do not turn away. It means we listen deeply to those whose voices are marginalised. It means we examine our own lives, our own comforts, our own complicity. And it means we commit not just to momentary acts of aid, but to sustained work for structural change. Justice is not charity. Justice is not feeling good about helping. Justice is redress; in some cases, it is also redistributing power. It is centring those who have been pushed to the margins. It is building a world where humanitarian aid is no longer needed because the systems themselves are humane.

Consider the story of the Good Samaritan. Yes, he bandaged the wounds of a stranger, and that was beautiful. But imagine if, instead of only caring for those who had been attacked on that dangerous road, we asked: Why is this road so dangerous? Why are people constantly being left for dead? What would it take to build a world where no one is harmed like this in the first place? This is the difference between compassionate response and systemic change and both are sacred.

As Unitarians, we must walk both paths. We must be the ones who bring the water to those in the desert and also the ones who ask why so many are left thirsty. We must advocate for refugees, and also challenge the violence and policies that drive displacement. We must support those experiencing homelessness, and also demand a

world where housing is a human right. This is the work of faith. Not the faith that rests in dogma, but the faith that moves with love. The faith that, in the words of Rev. Dr. Rebecca Parker, “calls us to deeds, not creeds.” And yet, let us be honest: this work is not easy. It is easy to become overwhelmed. It is easy to feel small. It is tempting to retreat into comfort.

However, we are not alone. We are held in a community that reminds us that love is never wasted, that even small acts ripple outwards; that justice is not a solitary endeavour, but a shared journey. We are guided by a moral compass that says again and again: You are not powerless. You have a role to play. You have gifts to offer. You may be an organiser. You may be a listener. You may be a teacher, a healer, a protester, a writer, a weaver of connections. All are needed. All are worthy.

Let us remember justice is not just what we fight against, it is also what we build. We are not only tearing down what is broken, we are imagining what is possible: a world where kindness is policy, where love is not sentimental, but strategic; where no one is left behind.

This is our calling. This is our faith in action. Therefore, let us go forward with open hearts and steady hands. Let us respond to suffering with real compassion. Let us challenge injustice with courage. Let us be, together, a people of humanitarian concern and of radical justice; and in doing so, may we bring a little more light to this hurting world. Amen, and blessed be.

Music for reflection: ‘Meditation’ from ‘Thaïs’ by Jules Massenet. Orlando Pimentel, clarinet and Elena Abend, piano. Video 5min 27sec

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dm03Zx47O_s&list=RDdm03Zx47O_s&start_radio=1

Words Before the Offertory:

The purpose of the church is to encourage all who gather there to grow more generous in spirit and in action. This is the great end of all the world's faith traditions: to bring the human being closer to the divine by acts of creation and compassion. We now take an offering that allows us to exercise that all-important generosity of spirit, an offering that will support this self-supporting church. The gifts of the congregation will be received most gratefully immediately after the end of this service.

Poetry: “A Sister is Forever” by Bruce B. Wilmer

A sister's a sister forever,
A bond that diminishes never,,
A friend who is kindly and caring,,
A sibling God chooses for sharing.,
Few ties as deep and profound,
And with so much affection abound,
Though some thoughts are seldom expressed,
Love endures and survives every test.,
Of the constants that rest in the heart,,
A sister's a primary part.,
She'll always be there when you need her,
You listen, you value, you heed her.,
As growth, independence you ponder,,
Your feelings grow deeper and fonder;,
And life tells you one thing that is true:.,
A sister's a large part of you.

Prayer For Unity:

In times of challenge, change and growth we seek to renew ourselves. Help us to explore how to renew our faith and spiritual nature through practice and how it is embodied in our daily lives. For many people this comes through the practice or connection with prayer, mantras, meditation, kriyas, asanas, singing and various expressions. The process of cleansing and renewing our spirit is an integral part of our co-creative relationship with life. It aids us to continue our path toward peace, love and understanding with greater courage and purpose. Help us to learn to share how to restore balance and harmony into the geometry of our being in light of our spiritual path. So be it.

3rd HYMN: 128 – Our World Is One World (purple book)

Tune: ‘Chernobyl’ Cecily Taylor b.1930 Arr. Richard Graves, 1926 – 2002

Words Cecily Taylor b. 1930

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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.

ACCEPTING LISA INTO THE UNITARIAN FAITH (to be presented with flowers and a gift)

Final Blessing (adapted from the Hindu tradition):

May the lord of all beings protect thee,
May the one who creates, preserves and dissolves life protect thee,
May Govinda guard thy head; Kesava, thy neck; Vishnu, thy belly;
The eternal Narayana, thy face, thine arms, thy mind, and faculties of sense;
May all negativity and fears, spirits malignant and unfriendly, flee thee;
May Rishikesa keep you safe in the sky; and Mahidhara, upon earth.

CLOSING MUSIC Video: 'Für Elise', by Beethoven, Performed by Lang Lang

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s71I_EWJk7I&list=RDs71I_EWJk7I&start_radio=1