

Opening Music: 'Sinama Drew' by Habib Koite from 'African Odyssey'

<https://youtu.be/oV-TH3QdFko?si=4Plqc2BONBuXj19B>

Welcome words: Good morning & welcome everyone, whether you are here in this building or joining us on Zoom (wave) or watching online later. You are welcome, whether a regular attender, a few times visitor, and especially so if you are a newcomer. Whatever you bring in your heart: whether you come in sadness, joy or out of curiosity, whatever your faith or none, you are welcome!

Before going any further, I would like to say that we here in Notte Street, join with our national Unitarian community which released a statement expressing shock and sadness at hearing of the recent attack at the Heaton Park Synagogue in Manchester. This will be felt deeply by all UK Jewish communities, including the one here in Plymouth, particularly as happening on the holy day of Yom Kippur.

We stand for peace and oppose violence in all its forms.

An attack on any place of worship is an attack on all who value freedom of faith and conscience. Places of worship should be sanctuaries; safe spaces for reflection, community and spiritual life. As Unitarians, we are committed to interfaith solidarity and to building communities where people of all faiths and none can live without fear. That commitment matters most in moments like this.

We have sent this message of support to our local Synagogue, just across the road.

So, now to our Service. This morning we are celebrating Fairtrade Fortnight which runs from 22nd September until today, 5th October, so we are at the very end of this year's FT Fortnight. This year's theme is "Do It Fair – Brew it Fair", and we'll hear some personal experiences of FT growers from various countries. Our opening music was African, because much FT tea, coffee and cocoa, as well as other Fair Trade foodstuffs, is grown in various African countries. Our reflective music and final video are also African music, although FT tea is also grown in India, and lots of FT coffee is grown in South American countries. We'll also include two short videos widely available on the FT website.

All FT growers around the world are our neighbours, albeit at a distance. So, before we start, please turn to your near neighbour, and introduce yourself. If you are on Zoom, maybe you'd like to greet one another via the Chat box.

Chalice Lighting: We begin as is our custom, by lighting our Chalice as a symbol of our free religious faith. Those who are with us on Zoom may like to light a candle with us now:

Words for Chalice Lighting:

We light this candle to remind ourselves of the light of conscience that exists in every person, leaving us without excuse for ignoring the plight of those who are less fortunate than ourselves.

May our worship this morning enlighten us about humanity's needs, and may we become inspired to give light to the dark corners of our world.

Opening words: from Leviticus 19:13 and 25:14,17 (New International Version – UK)

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“Do not defraud or rob your neighbour....“Do not hold back the wages of a hired worker overnight.....“If you sell land to any of your own people or buy land from them, do not take advantage of each other. ... but fear your God.”

1st Hymn: Purple 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.

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

Words Cecily Taylor b. 1930

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Prayers:

1...We hold in our thoughts and prayers, all those of our church community, all those of our families and friends and our neighbours in the wider community who are in need of solace.

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*

Prayers; 2...Adapted from a prayer by A.Powell Davies

When we give thanks for what is given to us and not to others, let us remember to pray softly, for there will be many who overhear.

Let conscience search our gratitude!

This bounty did not come to us because, more than others, we are deserving.

Spirit of Truth, rebuke us until the needy multitudes press upon our thoughts and prayers, These are our brothers and sisters! We are all part of one global family. In our gratitude, help us to remember the many who will overhear...AMEN

It has become a custom to have a story at this point in our Service. Initially this was for any children who might join us, but even if there aren't any, the grown ups enjoy a story too! So we continue this tradition, and today we are having two stories! Firstly a short video cartoon briefly explaining about Fair Trade, followed by the true story of one African person living and working in a FT Co-operative.

Story: Short video: FT Coffee explained

[\(Look on youtube for 'Fair Trade coffee explainer'\) 1 min 56 secs](#)

And now Kim has kindly agreed to read Amanai's story. This is Kim's first time reading for us, and we are really looking forward to hearing from you.

1st Reading: Amani's story - Changing women's roles in cocoa farming and decision-making Read by Kim

Amani Adèle Yao is a Cocoa Farmer and Deputy Secretary of the Women's Association at a Co-operative of coca growers on Africa's Ivory Coast.

She leads a growing group of women who are reshaping their roles in cocoa farming and decision-making in the household. Women are taking on new responsibilities and contributing more directly to their households.

She says, 'Through Fairtrade, our husbands gave us plots of land. Now we have become more independent Once we ... believed that in the absence of men, nothing was possible.'

The women now earn more by growing cassava, yams, peanuts, and beans, and their work is valued both in the fields and at home. This is about more than income, but about women having a stronger voice and being more active in shaping the future for their families and the community.

The Fairtrade Premium – an extra sum of money paid on top of the selling price, has transformed her life. Amani says, "The Fairtrade Premium is a big help. Before that our resources were running out. These bonuses allow us to cover unexpected expenses, such as medical care or children's school fees." She has also had leadership and financial training through the Fairtrade network based in Africa.

She says this has changed her outlook: "The training courses have ...changed our vision of thingsnow I am more savvy with my money. I learned to save part of my income." She uses this to support her children's education and help cover household costs.

Amani's story is also one of adapting and improving farming practices.

She says, "The training courses also influenced our agricultural practices, particularly in favour of organic farming. By ditching chemicals, we have seen a significant improvement in our crops. Organic guarantees better safety and increases the quality of our harvests, particularly for cocoa and coffee ... the cocoa is better quality and the pods no longer stick, which makes harvesting easier The pods are more beautiful and so are the cocoa beans."

Amani's passion for organic farming has also inspired others in her community to adopt more sustainable practices. The new generation of farmers – increasingly women – is both innovative and more environmentally conscious.

2nd Hymn: Green 42 'A Dream of widening Love'

We rest awhile in quietness,
The world not to forget,
But rather shape the silence
And words and thoughts we've met
To nobler ways of living,
To hope-filled truth, above
Our narrow selves, to seek one
Great dream of widening love.

We share a world where sorrow
And poverty and greed
Live side by side with privilege
Of wealth beyond true need;
Yet though we cannot alter
All ways of humankind,
We ask a strength within us
To right the wrongs we find.

We know that strength is weakened
By narrow truths and fears,
That still we claim true knowledge,
Deny the changing years:
Yet here, within the silence,
We question what we know,
That through more honest persons
All humankind may grow.

To find eternal Meaning
Deep in each passing hour,
To seek beyond the confines
Of our small powers, one Power,
Strength deep within our being,
Arise as hope and will:
Come, silent living Spirit,
With peace our spirits fill.

Music: 'Crüger' William Henry Monk 1823- 1889

Words: Frank S. Clabburn b.1947. Used by permission

We will now see a video cartoon about Climate change and how FT Premium enables people living and working on a tea plantation in southern India to combat the challenges of Climate Change, and making life safer for them at night. This will be followed by the story of another FT worker, from South India this time, as a real life example of what is shown in the film. how the FT premium is helping that community to work towards dealing with Climate Change.

Video on Climate Change and FT <https://youtu.be/0xQP6tVlcxg> 3 mins 3 secs

2nd Reading: Mr Murugaraj's story:

Mr Murugaraj is a Supervisor and a member of the Fairtrade Premium Committee at Stanes Amalgamated Estates, South India

As the third generation in his family to work at Stanes, where his wife also works, tea means a lot for Mr Murugaraj and his family's livelihood. He is dedicated to the continuation of tea growing by improving sustainability on the estate, and he's using the Fairtrade Premium to do it.

Mr Murugaraj explains how climate change affects the livelihood of tea workers: "...our crop yields go down. If the crop yield goes down, our tea production reduces. And if that goes down, our income also comes down... when this happens, we face hardship." Using the Fairtrade Premium, Mr Murugaraj has developed a reforestation project to protect the environment.

He says "We've bought and planted trees. Through this, we are creating more forests. That helps bring in more wildlife... we protect these areas and safeguard the water sources."

As a Fairtrade Premium Committee member, Murugaraj has driven further change in his community by improving the safety of workers and their families.

Paid for by their money from the FT Premium, Solar-powered street lighting has been installed to keep families safe at night, especially from wildlife attacks. He explains, "Our children have evening classes... if there's lighting in those areas, animal movement will reduce. It will give us a sense of safety."

The community could only afford these improvements thanks to the FairTrade Premium.

Spoken Meditation: adapted from words of George Chryssides, one time member of this congregation

We live in a divided world:

75% of the world's population live in the Third World. Yet that 75% receive

>30% of the world's cereals;

>15% of the world's fuel and energy;

>11% of the world's education budget;

>6% of the world's health budget ...

We acknowledge that this is unjust, and that we need to play our part in raising people's consciousness, taking active steps to remedy these injustices, and being prepared to forgo some of our luxuries in order to achieve this. We remember relief/

We remember relief organisations which seek to help directly where the need is greatest;

Let us be thankful there are ventures like Fair Trade which seek to ensure workers World are paid fair wages for their efforts;

We think of Politicians, who have it in their power to find solutions to problems of inequality;

We remember those who do business in foreign countries and determine the conditions in which trade is carried out;

We think of those who are tempted to put profits before people, or who exploit them, and those who suffer from that exploitation and live in poverty as a result;

We think of those who feel self-satisfied, believing there are easy solutions, or that they are morally superior to the rest of us;

So, may we recognise the complexity of the problems, be willing to learn, and willing to change, so that we may play our part in creating a just and equal world:

May our hearts be filled with the Spirit of Love and Peace, now and for evermore,
AMEN.

A short silence

Reflective Music: 'Beautiful African Song'

ADDRESS – 'Do it Fair'

"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?"

These words from our first hymn this morning, seem so appropriate for a service celebrating Fair Trade.

As mentioned earlier, today is the last day of this year's Fairtrade Fortnight. Why are we talking about Fairtrade in church? I hope this is a little clearer after hearing some of those real life stories about how FT has improved the lives of people living and working in FT communities in various countries. We heard about some of Fairtrade growers, and the challenges they face.

In the Old Testament, we read that Moses was given a set of rules by God. They cover many different things, including laws to protect poor people and foreigners

In our opening words, from Leviticus 19:13 and 25:14,17 "Do not defraud or rob your neighbour...." "Do not hold back the wages of a hired worker overnight...." "If you sell land to any of your own people or buy land from them, do not take advantage of each other. ... but fear your God." And similarly, from Deuteronomy Chapter 24:14-15 (New International Version) "Do not take advantage of a hired worker who is poor and needy, whether that worker is a fellow Israelite or a foreigner residing in one of your towns. Pay them their wages each day before sunset, because they are poor and are counting on it"

Well intentioned as it was, this law would have been hard for many of the people living when this was written, over 3,000 years ago, to follow. The farmers who had to pay the wages to the labourers were often very poor themselves. Although it would have been hard, the rules that Moses wrote down said that treating everyone fairly, whatever your differences, was an important part of serving God.

We've all become much more aware recently of just how much trade matters to our daily lives. We've become very aware of how many jobs, government policies, the goods we buy and services we enjoy are linked to trade – both here in the UK, and in countries right around the world. In the last few months, many of us have probably reached saturation point hearing about trade deals - or no deals! And new Tariffs imposed on our goods by some countries overseas, on TV, the media and in the papers! Please, don't 'turn off' just yet...

We humans have been trading throughout our history, long before formal money was invented. The first trading was most likely simple swapping or bartering. If someone had something another person needed or wanted, they might be persuaded to hand it over in exchange for something they wanted from the other person. Maybe a small piece of meat was exchanged for some sweet berries, or a place nearer the campfire. However simple trading started, everyone's life was a little better. Trading involved cooperation, and a partnership that helped both parties. Its true today. Without trade, we could not eat bananas, or drink coffee, for example. Without trade, many jobs would simply not exist.

But trade has always been a tough business, and modern trading is complicated, involving hard fought negotiations. No one wants to come out with a bad deal. (We've all heard more than enough about that recently!) To be successful in trade negotiations, you need to be strong, economically and politically.

So, when trading with poorer communities around the world, we need to consider two questions. • First, who has the power? • Second, how do we see those we trade with? as opponents and competitors – or friends and partners?

This year the Fairtrade Foundation asks us to 'Do it Fair' when out shopping and to 'Brew it Fair' when making our favourite drink, be it tea, coffee or cocoa or serving wine for a special occasion

In the first little video of Ingala in Ethiopia, we saw how the unscrupulous coffee buyer had the power to pay whatever he chose, usually as little as possible, leaving each individual grower struggling to meet their several living expenses. By forming a co-operative with other growers in the area, and selling to FT, Ingala and his neighbours took back that power for themselves. They work in partnership with FT to receive better prices for their crops, a price which remains stable whatever the vagaries of the market. So Ingala can budget, secure in the knowledge that he can pay for all life's necessities. The FT premium, an extra sum is for each community to use as best fitting their community's needs.

Whichever organization buys the coffee, cocoa or other crops, ultimately it is the consumer of the finished product, of the coffee, packet of tea or bar of chocolate, who has the power over farmers of Ethiopia, Sierra Leone or South India, through that trading relationship with them. They grow the food that we eat, the bar of chocolate we enjoy on the bus or the bedtime cup of cocoa in our living rooms in Plymouth. Is this trading relationship a fair one,

a relationship of neighbourly concern, neighbourly love even, for that geographically distant farmer neighbor? It can be if the producers enjoy FT status.

In the longer video, and in Aman's and Mr Murugaraj's stories, we learnt and saw how Fair Trade enables them to undertake training to live better lives, whether its living more independently or dealing with the challenges of Climate Change.

An important aspect of the work Fair Trade groups and Co-operatives do, is in the field of gender equality for pay and conditions, as Amanai explained. The training has enabled and supported her and other women to take control of their own lives, to manage their resources and develop the ability to make decisions and given them confidence to act on them. Now they are able to take up leadership roles in their community and farming organisations.

One very important issue not mentioned directly in these stories is that of child labour. There are very strict conditions attached when conferring FT status on any community – children of school age are not allowed to work or be taken advantage of in any way. They must attend school and have time afterwards to do homework and also enjoy being children! Children are encouraged to stay on for further education too, for their own future benefit and that of their communities. This applies to all FT communities around the world.

So, what is our role in all this? We have the power of our wallets or purses. We have the power to refuse to accept trade which exploits others. We can choose to buy in ways which are fairer to the growers, and so help to rebalance the scales of trade.... What's in it for us?

Emotional and spiritual benefits, a nice warm glow from thinking we've done our bit today? Well, there are other "rewards" too! Remember Sidie and Mr Murugaraj living in different continents but equally concerned about the effects of Climate Change, and the uncertainties growers like them are facing. If farmers don't have the money to invest in adapting to climate change, then their crops become harder to grow and more expensive. The money and the training from Fair Trade enables the growers to make those adaptations. Paying fair prices to farmers now keeps **our** shopping bill down in the future! In our interconnected world, we cannot isolate ourselves from the damage we do to others. Our World is one world, what touches one affects us all.

So lets '**Do it Fair**' Choose to buy Fairtrade so that Amani., Mr Murugaraj, Sidie, Sadique and many more like them, get a fair price for their crops, be they cocoa, tea, coffee, bananas, fruit, or cotton to name but a few.

Raise awareness about Fair Trade: tell people about our as in our Wednesday Coffee mornings/

Educate and Advocate: Learn more about fair trade and its impact on producers. Share this knowledge with others, and advocate for fair trade practices in your local businesses and institutions.

Donate to or volunteer with organizations that promote fair trade and support producers in developing countries.

Engage on Social Media: Use social media platforms to share information about Fairtrade Fortnight, your fair trade choices, and the impact of fair trade on communities.

Buy Fairtrade Gifts: for special occasions. There is a chance to do so this very day! Mary is here with a selection of FT goodies in the hall. Do go and look – and spend! Over FT Coffee. These gifts not only delight the recipient but also support fair trade producers.

>We can speak out about unfair trade, to say that we want business that is fair.

> And we can pray that a spirit of fairness, compassion and kindness will “come on in” and help us make a fairer world. So lets Do it Fair not only this week, but all the weeks of every year!

I'll leave the closing words to Traorè Awa Batiba: a cocoa grower on Côte D'Ivoire She is now the director of her co-operative, overseeing over 2,300 farmers, 90% of whom are men. She said, "I love Fair Trade so much. It is the future for cocoa farmers around the world like me, and I hope that customers will buy more Fair Trade certified products to keep helping us. I thank you all for that and I hope that Fair Trade will save our planet too"

3rd Hymn Purple 84 'Justice for persons'

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.

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Music: 'Georgina' © David Dawson 2009. Used by permission.

Closing Words:

Our worship time today has finished, but our Service is not over: it has only just begun!
We cannot solve all of the world's problems, but may we be more aware
of suffering, poverty and injustice and each do what we can, to 'Do it Fair' in whatever
small ways we can, to bring a better life to those who work so hard
to produce those goods which bring a better life to us. **AMEN**

Extinguish Chalice

Closing Music/Video : 'Go Sou' from African Odessy <https://youtu.be/tH5mXA84Oqo>