

Service by Ed Fordham

Sunlit Uplands

12<sup>th</sup> July 2020

**Opening Music**

Marie

Here at chapel, joining through the internet or reading at home, we come together in spirit,  
and welcome each other to our time of celebration, reflection and community.

Let us take a few moments of quietness to invite the Spirit of Life and of Love  
to be present among us and to awaken within us.

**Opening Words**

*Gary Kowalski*

In this quiet hour may our spirits be renewed.

In this gathering of friends may we be ready to extend ourselves to those in need,  
and with trust to receive the hand that is offered.

In this community of ideals may we remember the principles that guide us  
and reflect upon those things that give meaning to our lives,  
renewing our dedication to serve the highest that we know.

In this time of worship, may our minds be open to new truth,  
and our hearts be receptive to love,  
as we give thanks for this life we are blessed to share.

**Chalice Lighting**

*Albert Schweitzer*

At times our own light goes out  
and is rekindled by a spark from another person.

Each of us has cause to think with deep gratitude  
of those who have relit the flame within us.

**Opening reading: Summer by Christina Rossetti**

Winter is cold-hearted,  
Spring is yea and nay,  
Autumn is a weathercock  
Blown every way:  
Summer days for me  
When every leaf is on its tree;

And blue-black beetles transact business,  
And gnats fly in a host,  
And furry caterpillars hasten  
That no time be lost,  
And moths grow fat and thrive,  
And ladybirds arrive.

When Robin's not a beggar,  
And Jenny Wren's a bride,  
And larks hang singing, singing, singing,  
Over the wheat-fields wide,  
And anchored lilies ride,  
And the pendulum spider  
Swings from side to side,

Before green apples blush,  
Before green nuts embrown,  
Why, one day in the country  
Is worth a month in town;  
Is worth a day and a year  
Of the dusty, musty, lag-last fashion  
That days drone elsewhere.

**1<sup>st</sup> Hymn**    Green Book                      No. 188                      Let Love Continue Long

Let love continue long,  
and show to us the way,  
and if that love be strong,  
no hurt can have a say;  
and if that love remain but strong,  
no hurt can ever have a say.

If love cannot be found,  
though common faith prevails,  
when love does not abound,  
a common faith will fail.  
When human love does not abound,  
a common faith will always fail.

If we in love unite,  
debate can cause no strife:  
for with this love in sight,  
disputes enrich our life.  
For with this bond of human love,  
disputes can mean a richer life.

May love continue long,  
and lead us on our way:  
for if that love be strong,  
no hurt can have a say.  
For if that love remain but strong,  
no hurt can ever have a say.

### **Prayer**

We pray today to be renewed in the love that never faileth.

To be renewed in confidence that the highest purposes of life may be served  
even in the humblest of acts.

Help us to live our lives with a deeper awareness

of the meaning and significance of what we say and do;

help us to see that even the smallest act done in the spirit of love  
helps to move the world in the direction of Wholeness.

Like footsteps on the sands of time

all that we attempt and all that we do makes its impression.

We do not live wholly to ourselves.

We are each part of a wholeness,

part of a unity moving through time and through space,

a wholeness to which we belong, bound together by the mystery of love.

We feel the power of God, sometimes with profound personal emotion.

At other times we know its reality in the radiant peace of a sunset:

the hint and reminder of the love that moves the sun and stars.

This is the power of the love

in whose fullness we know that even in our deepest loneliness we are never alone  
the love that never faileth.                      Amen.

### **Silence**

**Music**            Broad Sunlit Uplands                      by Mike Oldfield                      <https://youtu.be/yIKXHckeZbl>

### **Candle of Joys and Concerns**

**Reading 2** Up-Hill *Christina Rosetti*

Does the road wind up-hill all the way?

Yes, to the very end.

Will the day's journey take the whole long  
day?

From morn to night, my friend.

But is there for the night a resting-place?

A roof for when the slow dark hours begin.

May not the darkness hide it from my face?

You cannot miss that inn.

Shall I meet other wayfarers at night?

Those who have gone before.

Then must I knock, or call when just in sight?

They will not keep you standing at that  
door.

Shall I find comfort, travel-sore and weak?

Of labour you shall find the sum.

Will there be beds for me and all who seek?

Yea, beds for all who come.

**Reading 3: Summer is ended by Christina Rosetti**

To think that this meaningless thing was  
ever a rose,

Scentless, colourless, this!

Will it ever be thus (who knows?)

Thus with our bliss,

If we wait till the close?

Though we care not to wait for the end,  
there comes the end

Sooner, later, at last,

Which nothing can mar, nothing mend:

An end locked fast,

Bent we cannot re-bend.

**Reflections**

“Sunlit Uplands” comes from a speech by Churchill “and the life of the world may move forward into broad, sunlit uplands”

And so drawing with that sense that the worst of the pandemic is over, let us look ahead.

Often a year can drag – sometimes we look back and say ‘where did it go’ not often do we so seem to wish a year away.

The readings we have today are from the poet and writer Christina Rosetti – one of the most capable and emotional poets of the twentieth century – she often explores loss and unobtainable hope, she dreams and she longs for better things and she captures those emotions through nature, through the seasons. But most of all she speaks of love, of companionship and of together.

Our hymns talk of love and of joy at life and we have music from Mike Oldfield – first “Sunlit Uplands” seeking to reflect the grim determination of handling the situations we are in and the second “Amber Light” a more joyous and optimistic look to the future. Written to mark the end but also recognise the depth of pain from Apartheid this piece is a clarion cry of hope that looks ahead.

What we know more than anything else is we do look ahead and we are not alone – whether that is the shared struggle of war that has gone before, through the words and dreams and insights of past poets and writers, through our own companionship in “Willowwood” a piece that could easily be written by Rivelin Valley here in Sheffield,

or the music of a musician and percussionist who has looked back and dares to shine forwards – there are themes that give us optimism and a chance to be glad.

**Music**      Sailing      by Mike Oldfield      <https://youtu.be/YgpS6dQVHbg>

**2<sup>nd</sup> Hymn**      Green Book      No. 3      We Sing the Joy of Living

We sing the joy of living,      of order, rhythm, meaning,  
we sing the mystery,      of chaos and of strife,  
of knowledge, lore and science,      of richness of sensation,  
of truth that is to be;      of the creating life.

of searching, doubting, testing,      We sing the joy of living,  
of deeper insights gained,      we sing of ecstasy,  
of freedom claimed and honoured,      of warmth, of love, of passion,  
of minds that are unchained.      of flights of fantasy.

We sing the joy of living,      We sing of joy of living,  
we sing of harmony,      the dear, the known, the strange,  
of textures, sounds and colours,      the moving, pulsing, throbbing –  
to touch, to hear, to see;      a universe of change.

**Reading 4: An Echo from willow wood by Christina Rossetti**

*"O ye, all ye that walk in Willowwood." D.G. Rossetti*

Two gazed into a pool, he gazed and she,  
Not hand in hand, yet heart in heart, I think,  
Pale and reluctant on the water's brink,  
As on the brink of parting which must be.  
Each eyed the other's aspect, she and he,  
Each felt one hungering heart leap up and sink,  
Each tasted bitterness which both must drink,  
There on the brink of life's dividing sea.  
Lilies upon the surface, deep below  
Two wistful faces craving each for each,  
Resolute and reluctant without speech:--  
A sudden ripple made the faces flow  
One moment joined, to vanish out of reach:  
So those hearts joined, and ah! were parted so.

**Music**      Amber Light      by Mike Oldfield      <https://youtu.be/grxM66kiuNg>