

Laurie Sedgwick:

Good morning on this glorious day and welcome to morning prayers. Please stand as you are able for our responsive reading from the black Appleton Psalter book. Today, we'll be reading Psalm 47 found on page 24. Clap your hands all peoples. Shout to God with loud songs of joy.

Congregation:

For the Lord most high is terrible; he is a great King over all the earth

Laurie Sedgwick:

He subdued peoples under us and nations under our feet.

Congregation:

He shall choose our inheritance for us, the excellency of Jacob whom he loved. Selah.

Laurie Sedgwick:

God has gone up with a shout. The Lord with the sound of a trumpet.

Congregation:

Sing praises to God, sing praises: sing praises unto our King, sing praises.

Laurie Sedgwick:

For God is the king of all the earth. Sing praises with a song.

Congregation:

God reigneth over the heathen: God sitteth upon the throne of his holiness

Laurie Sedgwick:

The princes of the peoples gather as the people of the God of Abraham for the shields of the earth belong to God. He is highly exalted.

Timothy Patrick McCarthy:

Good morning people. It's nice to be back in this sacred space. A reading today from Lynn Cheney, October 5th, 2001.

"At a time of national crisis, I think it is particularly apparent that we need to encourage the study of the past. Our children and grandchildren, indeed, all of us, need to know the idea and ideals on which our nation has been built. We need to understand how fortunate we are to live in freedom. We need to understand that living in liberty is such a precious thing that generations of men and women have been willing to sacrifice everything for it. And we need to know in a war exactly what is at stake."

There ends the reading. I have never said this before in public. I agree with Lynn Cheney. I agree that we need to study the past. I agree that we need to know where we come from, what our ancestors sacrificed, what it means to be free. I agree that in times of crisis, especially war, we need to know

exactly what is at stake. Tomorrow marks the 20th anniversary of what we have come to call 9/11. Who among us will ever forget American Airlines flight 11 crashing into the north tower of the World Trade Center in New York City at 8:46 AM? Or United Flights, 175 crashing into the south tower at 9:03 AM or American flight number 77 crashing into the west side of the Pentagon in Arlington Virginia at 9:37 AM or United flight, 93, crashing to the ground in Shanksville, Pennsylvania at 10:03 AM?

Who among us will ever forget the images of people jumping to their deaths before the towers fell, people running for their lives as the towers crashed down? People digging through the rubble to find what or who was left in their wake? Who among us will ever forget what happened, where we were, how we felt and who we lost? September 11th, 2001 was a terrible day. Nearly 3000 lives destroyed in the deadliest terrorist attack in human history. For those of us of a certain age, all of this is impossible to forget, but we must also remember that 9/11 marked the beginning of the longest uninterrupted period of war in American history, starting in Afghanistan, October of 2001 and continuing in Iraq in March of 2003. The United States has been constantly at war for two decades. Most college students today were born after 9/11. And even my graduate students were children at the time with faint memories of that fatal morning and its fateful aftermath. Though, they have grown up in the wake of these two failed wars.

They have less to remember or forget, but like all of us much still to learn. Which brings me back to Lynn Cheney and the children and the grandchildren. Weirdly, my own history over these last two decades is inextricably bound up with hers. Not because we share a worldview, Lord knows, but because we stood strong on opposing sides in a world historical moment. For those of you who don't know Dr. Cheney blacklisted me after 9/11. More precisely, I was identified by name in a fall 2001 publication of the American council of trustees and alumni, an organization that the former second lady helped to found and to fund entitled Defending Civilization, How Our Universities are Failing America and What Can be Done About it. This slim report contained a list of 117 campus responses to 9/11 and the war on Afghanistan, mostly by faculty members that they said blame America first or were as they called them short on patriotism.

I was number 32, nestled between Noam Chomsky from MIT and Howard Zinn from BU, but nonetheless, I was the only person from this campus on that list. Although it wasn't technically a blacklist, it sure felt like one. A chilling effort at campus surveillance clearly designed to silence speech and bully critics. With a last name like mine, you can understand why such lists terrify me. I have neither the time nor the inclination this morning to dwell too long on my own bit part in this 21st century tragedy. Suffice it to say those were tough, treacherous, and scary times. My physical safety was threatened, my professional prospects derailed, my mental health was undone. I will always remember the fierce love of those loyal friends, as well as the moral vacancy of the complicit majority and the craven betrayal of backstabbing cowards. I've been thinking a lot about these things and those people recently. History has a special way of sorting it all out. In the aftermath of 9/11, a new ubiquitously mantra emerged, never forget.

On the one hand, I've always wanted to interpret this as an exhortation to honor those who have died and to heal from the collective trauma of that time. But I worry as I have long worried that "never forget" has become another excuse to keep hate alive and to fan the fires of vengeance that fueled those feudal wars in the first place. I also worry that we forget other things. We forget more than nine in 10 Americans supported going to war with Afghanistan after 9/11. We forget that the United States went to war in Afghanistan without congressional authorization. We forget George W. Bush and Rudy Giuliani enjoyed historic approval ratings at that time. We forget the post 9/11 acceleration and escalation of hate crimes against people who were, are, or perceived as Muslim or Arab or, quote, from the middle east. We forget the Patriot act and freedom fries.

We forget enhanced interrogation techniques and extraordinary rendition. We forget drone strikes and black sites. We forget Abu Ghraib and Guantanamo. We forget Republicans and Democrats, bipartisan majorities in both houses of Congress, voted in October of 2002 to authorize war on Iraq. We forget that the Bush administration lied about weapons of mass destruction. We forget that they covered up Picasso's Guernica, the day that general Colin Powell was deployed to the United Nations to sell the war to the world. We forget millions of us throughout the world who marched in protest to stop these wars. We forget these wars have cost more than \$7 trillion to date.

We forget the thousands of US service members who have died in these wars. We forget the hundreds of thousands, tens of thousands who carry the visible and invisible wounds of war, including those who have attempted or committed suicide. We forget the hundreds of thousands of Afghan and Iraqi people who have died in these wars. We forget the millions of people from Afghanistan and Iraq and neighboring countries whose lives have been disrupted, dislocated, and destroyed by these wars. We forget that many more terrorists were created by these wars than caused them. And we forget that the US arms and harbors more terrorists, foreign and domestic, than it, quote unquote, brings to justice. We forget that war is terror. That dissent is patriotic, and that peace is possible.

It feels something like relief to say these things out loud like this all at once on this occasion. And to insist that we never forget this 21st century history, how we got here, what we had to sacrifice and whether or not we will ever be free. It also feels unrelenting. These perennial anniversaries with their predictably, righteous exhortations, and I can't help but wonder if we will ever find a way to forgive, to come to peace with ourselves so we can love each other, at last, if all we do is "never forget". A subject for another day. My prayer this morning is 20 years old, that we never ever to war again.

Laurie Sedgwick:

Please stand as you are able and let us pray. Oh, thou who makes the stars, and turns the shadow of night into morning, we render thee, our Lord and king, the tribute of our praise, for this new day, for the everlasting hopes that rise within the human heart, and for the gospel, which has brought life and immortality to light. Amen.

Laurie Sedgwick:

Now let us together recite the prayer that Jesus taught us saying, our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day, our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Laurie Sedgwick:

Let us sing to hymn. This is my son. Oh God. Of all nations, number 29, found in your Crimson Harvard Hymnal.

Laurie Sedgwick:

Let us now go forth. Oh Lord, our God, to the work of another day, still surrounded by wonderful, loving kindnesses, still pledged to thy loyal service, still standing in thy strength and not our own. Amen.