

Grace Killian: Morning.

Congregation: Morning.

Killian: Our responsive reading is Psalm 113, found in your black Appleton Psalter. Please stand. Hallelujah, O servants of the Lord, give praise; praise the name of the Lord.

Congregation: Let the name of the Lord be blessed now and forever.

Killian: From east to west the name of the Lord is praised.

Congregation: The Lord is exalted above all nations. His glory is above the heavens.

Killian: Who is like the Lord our God, who, enthroned on high...

Congregation: Sees what is below, in heaven and on earth?

Killian: He raises the poor from the dust, lifts up the needy from the refuse heap...

Congregation: To set them with the great, with the great men of His people.

Killian: He sets the childless woman among her household as a happy mother of children. Hallelujah.

Congregation: Hallelujah.

Choir: (singing)

Katherine Schofield: Good morning.

Congregation: Good morning.

Schofield: It is so wonderful to be back with you all here at morning prayers, and to see friends old and new. I'm going to save my sacred text for the end, which is also a poem and a prayer. A few years ago, I had the blessed opportunity to hear a talk by my theological idol. John Cobb, Jr., is considered by many to be the father of Christian process theology, a system of belief that challenges many of our held understandings about the nature of reality, the pursuit of truth, and the relationship between God and the world. I won't get into all of that, but I find it incredibly brave and fascinating.

Schofield: Rev. Dr. Cobb was speaking at a conference with Bill McKibben, another outstanding Christian thinker, about the current climate crisis and the impending climate crisis, and now it relates to faith. So that everyone was on the same page, Cobb started his breakout session with an explanation of the

term metaphysics, classically understood as "beyond the physics," or that which is beyond our understanding of the natural world. Since the Enlightenment, society has privileged the physics over the metaphysics: chemistry, biology, mathematics, economics, over philosophy. Even so-called soft sciences, psychiatry, sociology, focus on measurable evidence. This leaves little room for questioning things like reality and meaning.

Schofield: The pursuit of truth, of the answer, is seen as the greatest ideal, and this, Cobb argues, is why we're in such trouble, because we think that we can dissect the whole world into understandable parts, that we have control over all existence because we can put everything into an equation and under a microscope. For us, science is a comforting idea, but faith, by definition, is terrifying, because this Enlightenment idea that there is some equation that explains every part of life is simply a falsehood. We can't even look at a quark under a microscope without changing it.

Schofield: When it comes down to it, maybe matter isn't the building block of life, energy is. Cobb argues, and I agree, that life is in a constant state of motion. Essentially, life equals change. Maybe it would be easier if life stood still so we could analyze and name it. But if we take energy as the basis of life, then we should be less interested in stable matter and more interested in energy producing events and interactions. Now, I'm not saying that science isn't wonderful. It is, and I cheer on all of you physicists and organic chemists. But for me, I need something more than two plus two is four.

Schofield: And if you think about what makes you who you are, is it more about blood and guts, or is it more about the people you've known and the experiences you've had? Certainly, no person is a statue, the same today as yesterday. We change with each passing day and experience. So, in the face of this scary idea that we may never fully understand the natural world, I take comfort in the truth that the world is always changing, because things are by no means perfect right now. Our environmental practices coupled with booming population are a sure recipe for disaster. People still live in slavery, die needlessly from diseases, and engage in constant warfare. But I can easily dispute anyone who says, "Well, that's the way it's always been and always will be." No. Life equals change.

Schofield: And this is one of the reasons I'm a Christian, because I strive to be a disciple of Jesus Christ: God turned human, carpenter turned leader, religious scholar turned activist. Jesus flipped the money-changers' tables and revolutionized how we understand our obligation to the law and to each other. Jesus saw that life is change, and sought to move that change in a positive direction. And if life is change, then stasis, or the status quo, is death. In this way, Jesus does lead from death to eternal life.

Schofield: The poem I'd like to share is by E.E. Cummings, called I Thank You God For Most This Amazing. I'd ask you to enter a posture of prayer. "I thank You God for most this amazing day: for the leaping greenly spirits of trees and a blue true dream

of sky; and for everything which is natural which is infinite which is yes. I who have died am alive again today, and this is the sun's birthday; this is the birth day of life of love and wings and of the gay great happening illimitably You. How should tasting touching hearing seeing breathing any, lifted from the no of all nothing, human merely being doubt unimaginable You? Now the ears of my ears awake and now the eyes of my eyes are opened." Amen.

Congregation: Amen.

Killian: Let us join in the Lord's Prayer as found on the reverse of your order of worship. Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Congregation: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Killian: Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Congregation: Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Killian: Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Congregation: Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us.

Killian: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Congregation: And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Killian: Our hymn this morning is hymn number 36, My Soul, Awake and Render, in your crimson hymnal.

Congregation/Choir: (singing)

Killian: May the peace of Christ and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

Congregation: Amen.