

Grace Killian: Good morning.

Congregation: Good morning.

Grace Killian: Welcome to morning prayers. Will you please stand as you're able? We are going to read the responsive reading, Psalm 42 in the black Appleton Psalter.

Grace Killian: As a heart longs for flowing streams, so longs my soul for thee, oh God.

Congregation: My soul thirsts for God, for the living God. When shall I come and behold the face of God?

Grace Killian: My tears have been my food day and night, while men say to me continually, "Where is your God?"

Congregation: These things I remember as I pour out my soul. How I went with the throng.

Grace Killian: And lead them in procession to the house of God with glad shouts and songs of Thanksgiving. A multitude keeping festival.

Congregation: Why are you cast down, oh my soul? And why are you disquieted within me?

Grace Killian: Hope in God, for I shall again praise him. My help and my God.

Congregation: Deep calls to deep at the thunder of thy cataracts. All Thy waves and Thy willows have gone over me.

Grace Killian: As with a deadly wound in my body, my adversaries taunt me while they say to me continually, "Where is your God?"

Congregation: Why are you cast down, oh my soul? And why are you disquieted within me? Hope in God for I shall again praise Him, my help and my God.

Choir: (Singing)

David Diaz: Good morning. Thank you for joining us. I'm going to share a few lyrics from a song that I care about a lot called "Our Love is Different" by Billie Holiday. "Our love is different, dear. To me it's almost heavenly. Let us guard it ever precious, even jealously while we may. A love like ours, dear, the angels send. And as I know dear heart, that it won't ever end. For as the years roll by, you'll learn my love for you is true. And I'm sure I'll learn the same from you. For our love is different dear."

David Diaz: When I was young, I was drawn to singing. For reasons that are still a mystery to me I became obsessed with pop music from the early 20th century. My young parents were listening to hip hop and top 20 pop hits at the time and a name

like Billie Holiday was old even to my baby boomer grandparents. Nevertheless, I spent hours every day learning about the influences of artists, introducing myself to sub-genres that span several decades and geographic locations and memorizing so many lyrics. I began to realize that for some reason, almost all the singers I loved were women. I didn't think much of it at first, but I quickly learned to hide my interest, not wanting others to identify it as abnormal. The shower became a place where I could sing whatever I wanted. The sound dampened by running water.

David Diaz: My morning showers became my most sacred ritual. The privacy allowed me to imagine performing as the women who songs I loved. I tried as best I could to perfectly emulate Ella Fitzgerald's virtuosic scat solos, Helen Farrell's romantic bravado and Billie Holiday's revolutionary phrasing. I bring your attention to "Our Love is Different" here, written and performed by Billie Holiday because it's claimed that a different kind of love can be heavenly, sent by angels, is a sacred message to me as a queer person. Knowing that Billie Holiday openly had romantic relationships with women, makes this message resonate with me even more. Perhaps better than any vocalist I know I've ever heard, Billie Holiday has the ability to evoke the sound of love and all its complexities. The ways that it can hurt, the ways that it can be pleasurable, the ways that it can be transcendent. Love songs that do all of these things bring the intimate feeling of love from the realm of personal experience to the public sphere.

David Diaz: Yesterday, the Supreme Court heard arguments on cases that will determine whether or not someone can be fired for their sexual orientation or gender identity. Coincidentally, this Friday is National Coming Out Day. The lack of nationwide protections against discrimination makes coming out more difficult for lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer people. The Alliance Defending Freedom, which is the group providing legal defense for the man who fired a transgender woman for refusing to wear men's clothes at work, claims to advocate for religious freedom. However, their conception of religious freedom reflects a narrow vision of American conservative Christianity that empowers the economically powerful to impose their ideas of religion onto their workers.

David Diaz: Why don't we think of the woman's desire to express her true identity in the public sphere as an expression of religious freedom? This type of love reflects not only love for oneself, but also for the ways that the divine affirms one's gender identity, even when society does not.

David Diaz: Our spirits do not want to compartmentalize love neatly away in private life. I am fortunate to have discovered a passion for drag performance that took my singing out of the shower and into a communal space. However, I have also experienced homophobia in the workplace that has made me cautious about where I share this passion or wear clothes that look too feminine or talk about my boyfriend whom I love deeply. This is not freedom. Sharing experiences of love of all kinds, romantic love, familial love, the love for the divine, love for

oneself and one's gender identity, is a fundamental human need. We should celebrate all the ways that different people express their love. Thank you.

Grace Killian: Let us pray. Protect us, oh Lord, in all the changes of this mortal life. That we, surely trusting you're never failing love, may accept the issues of life in the glad serve service of your son Jesus Christ. Amen.

Grace Killian: Please join me in the Lord's prayer in the back of your pamphlet.

Congregation: 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, and the power, and the glory forever. Amen.

Grace Killian: Please stand as you're able to join us in singing the hymn, This is Our Father's World on page 189 in the Crimson Hymnal Book.

Congregation/Choir: (Singing)

Grace Killian: Following the service, please join us for MemCafe which today will be held out on the porch in honor for a special October Mem church. Please join us. You'll be directed outside.

Grace Killian: And now let us go in peace to love and serve the Lord.