

Grace Killian: Good morning.

Congregation: Good morning.

Grace Killian: Our responsive reading this morning is Psalm 103, in your black Appleton Psalter. Please stand.

Grace Killian: Bless the Lord, O my soul, all my being, His Holy name.

Congregation: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and do not forget all His kind deeds.

Grace Killian: He forgives all your sins, heals all your diseases.

Congregation: He redeems your life from the pit, surrounds you with steadfast love and mercy.

Grace Killian: The Lord executes righteous acts and judgments for all who are wronged.

Congregation: He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the children of Israel.

Grace Killian: The Lord is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love.

Congregation: He will not keep anger forever, or nurse His anger for all time.

Grace Killian: He has not dealt with us according to our sins, nor has He requited us according to our inequities.

Congregation: For as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is His steadfast love for those who fear Him.

Grace Killian: As east is far from west, so far has He removed our sins from us.

Choir: (singing).

David King: Oh my goodness. That was remarkable. Could just do that all morning. Thank you so much. My name is David. I'm so happy to see you all here. I'd like to offer up for a reading a poem by Kahlil Gibran. It's titled God, and in it Gibran takes us along four journeys seeking God.

David King: "In the ancient days when the first quiver of speech came to my lips, I ascended the Holy mountain and spoke unto God, saying, 'Master I am thy slave. Thy hidden will is my law and I shall obey thee forevermore.' But God made no answer. And a mighty Tempest, he passed away. And after a thousand years I ascended the Holy mountain and again spoke unto God saying, 'Creator, I am thy creation out of clay has thou fashioned me and to the I owe mine all.' And God made no answer. But like a thousand swift wings passed away. And after a

thousand years I climbed the Holy mountain and spoke unto God again saying, 'Father I am thy son in pity and love thou has given me birth, and through love and worship I shall inherit thy kingdom.' And God made no answer, and like the mist that veils the distant hills, God passed away."

David King: If this seems really pessimistic and out of place for us this morning there is a fourth journey up the mountain. "And after a thousand years I climbed the sacred mountain and again, spoke unto God saying, 'My God, my aim and my fulfillment, I am thy yesterday and thou are my tomorrow. I'm thy root in the earth and thou are my flower in the sky. And together we grow before the face of the sun.' Then God leaned over me and in my ears whispered the words of sweetness, and even as the sea that enfoldeth a Brook that runneth down to her, God enfolded me. And when I descended to the valleys and the plains, God was there also."

David King: Now, when Kahlil Gibran takes us through this journey he encounters a dying creator, after promising, "I shall obey thee forever more. And to the I own, I owe mine all. And through worshipping God, I shall inherit thy kingdom." And every time God does not answer. God though is very much alive. Not as a master to a slave, nor a potter to clay, but in loving partnership and in active collaboration. Can you feel yourself through the poet talking here with God? "My God, my aim and my fulfillment, I am thy yesterday and thou are my tomorrow. I am thy roots in the earth and thou are my flower in the sky, and together we grow for the face of the sun." We don't simply serve God, we serve with God. God is with us and among us and we are in God. I've had some mountainous journeys.

David King: I was born in the Andes to Methodist missionaries. While my parents were attending their various flock, my sisters and I were nurtured and loved by two Aymara Indians, two Inca descendants who were profoundly loving and in full partnership with their mountainous God, who is my God, who is our God and who sits in here with us today. My parents were living the story of Kahlil Gibran's third trip up the mountain, promising resurrection only through the hands of the son of God. And as a child I imagined heaven as this place out there. Here's Matthew 4:17. "From that time Jesus began to preach saying, 'Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand.'" My religious tradition emphasize the word repent. Though now, I'm mainly here, heaven is at hand and I choose to believe literally at hand, right here to be built in partnership with this loving community, nurturing and supporting each other. And among us and through us is God.

David King: This sounds, I know, very preachy and while I'm not preacher's son, I have a different kind of church. Mine's a classroom, a collaborative space that steeps in sacred democratic tests, not necessarily religious ones, but the goals are the same. Dignity, shared purpose, a loving community. And recalling Kahlil Gibran, "Then God leaned over me and in my ears whispered words of sweetness and

even as the sea that enfoldeth the brook that runneth down to her, God enfolding me." God, enfolds all of us. All. Amen.

David King: Let us pray. God, in the stillness of this sanctuary, we hear you whispering in our ears and we whisper together, thank you. And when the [tee 00:10:05] is jostling and losing, we feel your rumbling attention and together we purr, thank you. And when you seem out of view behind that desk or around those children, just when we are growing tired of the hunt for you, our breath appears and blankets our souls with life giving confidence and we shutter, thank you. In the stillness of this sanctuary, we hear God whispering in our ears and God hears us whispering, thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Amen. And now let's join together in the Lord's Prayer. 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 for ever and ever. Amen.

Grace Killian: Please stand, and our hymn this morning number 36, My Soul, Awake and Render. In your red hymnal.

Congregation: (singing).

Grace Killian: And now may the peace of the Lord go with you, forever remain receptive. Amen.

Congregation: Amen.