

Lara Glass: Good morning.

Congregation: Good morning.

Lara Glass: Welcome to morning prayers. Please stand as you are able for a responsive reading in your black Appleton Psalter, Psalm number 105 found on page 53. "We give you thanks, oh God, and call upon Your name. We make known Your deeds among the peoples."

Congregation: "We sing to you. We sing Your praise and speak of all Your marvelous works."

Lara Glass: "We glory in Your holy name. Let the hearts of those who seek you rejoice."

Congregation: "We search for you and Your strength. We continue to seek Your face."

Lara Glass: "You spread out a cloud for a covering and a fire to give light in the night season."

Congregation: "You opened a rock and water flowed. So the river ran in the dry places."

Lara Glass: "For you remembered Your Holy word and Abraham, Your servant."

Congregation: "So you led forth Your people with gladness, Your chosen with shouts of joy."

Lara Glass: "You gave Your people the lands of the nation and they took the fruit of others' toil."

Congregation: "That they might keep Your statutes and observe Your laws. Hallelujah."

Lara Glass: You may be seated.

Choir: (singing)

Sushma Raman: Good morning.

Congregation: Good morning.

Sushma Raman: I'll start with a reading from a Buddhist scripture, the Metta Sutta. Metta Sutta means loving-kindness. "This is what should be done by one who is skilled in goodness and who knows the path of peace. Let them be able and upright, straight forward and gentle in speech, humble and not conceited, contented and easily satisfied, unburdened with duties and frugal in their ways, peaceful and calm, wise and skillful, not proud or demanding in nature. Let them not do the slightest thing that the wise would later reprove. In gladness and in safety, may all beings be at ease."

Sushma Raman: When my daughter was about three years old, she asked me, "Where are you from?" I pulled out the World Atlas, pointed out a familiar shape and said, "India." She looked at me quizzically, paused and then said, "Oh, I thought you're from the office." My office is making the world a better place where both compassion and justice prevail. I've learned so much by working with those most affected by indignity and injustice and who are most focused on problems larger than themselves. When I feel beleaguered, I think about that courage and commitment. I think of Frank Mugisha in Uganda, who has fought perseveringly for the decriminalization of homosexuality, where opportunistic politicians would like to punish gays by life in prison and even death. I think of Angelica Salas, born in Mexico, who came here at the age of five with her parents in search of a better life and who now helps other undocumented people. I think of Joseph Kim, who escaped North Korea, who fled the famine that killed his father and the labor camps that killed his mother and who's trying to help refugees like himself.

Sushma Raman: I think of Chavannes John-Baptiste, who launched a movement for food sovereignty in Haiti to help the poorest country in the Western hemisphere. I also think of countless people I've never met who are change-makers. I think this week of Emmett Till's family, who's dedicating his Memorial for the fourth time. This time, a bulletproof one that cannot be vandalized. I think of those who are not with us anymore, but whose memories remain seared collectively for us, three-year-old Alan Kurdi whose lifeless body washed up face down on a Turkish shore. I think of the many people I've met over the years whose names I no longer remember, bonded laborers in the Indian villages working tirelessly under the hot sun, toiling emerald green fields, tilling the brick-red earth, harvesting pearly white grains of rice but owning nothing but the colorless clothes on their back, sold into bondage for the rest of their lives and their children's lives to repay debts.

Sushma Raman: One of the most powerful memories I have of this work is that we would always start with a song, Hum Honge Kamyab, which translates to, We Shall Overcome. So I've touched a little bit on justice and on the people who are tirelessly saying, "[foreign language 00:07:43], never again." I'd like to think of justice as the quote we see on bumper stickers and on email signatures where there's an arc of a moral universe. It's long, but it's always bending towards justice. But really, I found justice to be a bit of a winding path with lots of detours, false starts and stops. And like the corn mazes we see in New England now, we often end up where we started even though we think we're moving forward.

Sushma Raman: So when I feel hopeless or harrowed, I turn to loving-kindness, or [foreign language 00:08:15]. So to close, I invite you to join me as I lead us in a brief meditation drawing upon [foreign language 00:08:24]. It is a practice that starts with self where you focus on your breath as you inhale and exhale. You may soften your gaze, or you may close your eyes. You may repeat with me aloud or silently if you wish. "May I be happy."

Congregation: "May I be happy."

Sushma Raman: "May I be healthy."

Congregation: "May I be healthy."

Sushma Raman: "May I be free from suffering and harm."

Congregation: "May I be free from suffering and harm."

Sushma Raman: "May I be at ease."

Congregation: "May I be at ease."

Sushma Raman: We then moved to a concentric circle of kinship, someone you love with no complication in the relationship. It could be your child, a pet, a partner. "May you be happy. May you be healthy. May you be free from suffering and harm. Maybe be at ease." We turn our thoughts to someone who's neutral to us, it could be a neighbor, the barista in your coffee shop. Each of us is carrying burdens and baggage invisible to others. "May you be happy. May you be healthy. May you be free from suffering and harm. May you be at ease."

Sushma Raman: We then turn to perhaps the most difficult aspect of this practice, someone we are very angry towards or resentful towards. It could be your boss, he's here, your mother-in-law, or even the person who cut you off and swooped into the last parking spot at Whole Foods. "May you be happy. May you be healthy. May you be free from suffering and harm. May you be at ease." We then turn our practice to all human beings. "May you be happy. May you be healthy. May you be free from suffering and harm. May you be at ease." I wish the same for you as you go forth today in this beautiful fall morning. Thank you.

All: Please join me in offering the Lord's prayer printed on the reverse of your order of worship. "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. 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."

Lara Glass: Please stand as you are able to sing a hymn in your Crimson Memorial Church Hymnal number 347, I Sought God's Love in the Sun and Stars, number 347.

Congregation: (singing)

Lara Glass: We end with words of John O'Donoghue's. "May we live this day compassionate of heart, clear in word, gracious in awareness, courageous in thought, generous in love. Amen."

Congregation: Amen.