

Lara Glass: Good morning. Welcome to morning prayers. Please stand as you are able for a responsive reading from your Black Appleton Psalter song number 93 found on page 47. The Lord is King. He is robed in grandeur. The Lord is robed. He is girded with strength.

Congregation: The world stands firm, he cannot be shaken.

Lara Glass: Your throne stands firm from of old, from eternity you have existed.

Congregation: The oceans sounds O Lord, the ocean sounds its thunder. The ocean sounds its pounding.

Lara Glass: Above the thunder of the mighty waters, more majestic than the breakers that the sea is the Lord. Majestic on high.

Congregation: Your victories decrees are enduring. Holiness befits your house, oh Lord, for all times.

Lara Glass: You may be seated.

Congregation: (singing)

Alexander Rehding: Good morning. I want to begin with an inspired text that is perhaps a little unusual. It is a greeting that was recorded in 1977 and that was sent into outer space by NASA on board of the Voyager spacecraft. And the greeting goes like this, "As the secretary general of the United nations and organization of the 147 members States who represent almost all of the human inhabitants of the planet earth. I send greetings on behalf of the people of our planet. We step out of our solar system into the universe seeking only peace and friendship to teach if we are called upon, to be taught if we are fortunate, we know full well that our planet and all its inhabitants are but a small part of the immense universe that surrounds us and it is with humility and hope that we take this step."

Alexander Rehding: This is probably the first time that a politician, no less than the head of the UN had the chance to address extraterrestrials, even if it was not known who they were or if they even existed. Truly an awesome responsibility and the tone of humility that he strikes here. The message of peace, hope and learning seems exactly appropriate to the occasion, but what is even more remarkable is what follows. NASA had put together a whole mixed tape of music from different parts of the world from Azerbaijani Mugham, to Zairean initiation songs. From Mozart to Mexican mariachi. From Tchakrulo to Chuck Berry.

Alexander Rehding: This playlist was the greeting from United humanity to an extraterrestrial unknown, a greeting that largely avoided words and instead relied on the binding power of music. What better way to say we come in peace? It seemed appropriate given the weightiness of this communication that this musical playlist would be printed on a record covered in gold. It was at once a mixed

tape, a very personal message, truly the labor of love from one person to another or in this case from the inhabitants of one planet to those of another.

Alexander Rehding: It gave from humanity and it was also a message in a bottle sent out into the unknown in hopes that someone somewhere might pick it up at the other end. Let's hope they like Chuck Berry. Of course, no one knows what to expect. Do aliens even have ears. The two spacecraft that departed from earth in 1977 has now left the solar system and are on route to their respective destinations to near star systems that they will reach up are about 40,000 years.

Alexander Rehding: One thing is for sure. If anyone out there will one day return their own greeting to earth, none of us are going to be around to hear it. There's even a good chance that earth itself is not going to be around then, hit by an asteroid or scorched by the sun, in which case the golden record would be the only record of humanity to survive this global catastrophe.

Alexander Rehding: As my friend and former student Evan Price has pointed out, the golden record is a future monument, a catalog of human culture speeding away from us at 35,000 miles an hour. A permanent reminder that our earthbound human civilization is but a blink of an eye in astronomical time.

Alexander Rehding: There's a good case to be made that the golden record is not really meant for any aliens, but that it holds up the mirror to ourselves. That it invites us to zoom out and look at ourselves from an unfamiliar perspective. The lesson that I take away from the golden record is this. When Carl Sagan his NASA team created what his NASA team created was a collection of world music. A carefully curated representative sample of music that is trying its best to be fair to the variety of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds, social registers, and historical periods from all the different parts and divisions of our world. But.

Alexander Rehding: as the space ships speed away from planet earth and as the cultural context that might help explain what each of them mean individually becomes smaller and disappear in the distance, the finely calibrated differences fall away. The merge into a unified whole until all that is left, all that intelligent, extra terrestrial will here, one distant day in the future perhaps is one music from planet earth.

Lara Glass: 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. 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.

Lara Glass: Please stand as you are able to sing him. Number 25 in your Crimson Memorial Church Hymnal. When In Our Music God Is Glorified. Number 25.

Congregation: (Singing)

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Lara Glass: May we live this day, compassionate of heart, clear in word gracious and awareness, courageous in thought and generous in love. Amen.