

Sally Hammel: Good morning.

Congregation: Good morning.

Sally Hammel: Welcome to morning prayers. Will you please stand as you're able to join me in the responsive reading in your black Appleton psalter, Psalm 23. The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want.

Congregation: He maketh me to lie down in green pastures, he leadeth me beside the still waters.

Sally Hammel: He restoreth my soul, he leadeth me in straight paths for his name's sake.

Congregation: Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff, they comfort me.

Sally Hammel: Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies. Thou hast anointed my head with oil; my cup runneth over.

Congregation: Surely your goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

Choir: (singing)

Sarah Dryden-Peterson: Good morning.

Congregation: Good morning.

Sarah Dryden-Peterson: I read this morning from a novel, *Go, Went, Gone* by Jenny Erpenbeck . The novel is set in contemporary Germany, and built on a story of relationships among African refugee newcomers and a widowed and newly retired long-time resident professor. Erpenbeck writes, "Could these long years of peacetime be to blame for the fact that a new generation of politicians apparently believes we've now arrived at the end of history, making it possible to use violence to suppress all further movement and change, or have the people living here under untroubled circumstances and at so great a distance from the wars of others been afflicted with a poverty of experience, a sort of emotional anemia? Must living in peace, so fervently wished for throughout human history and yet enjoyed and only a few parts of the world, inevitably result in refusing to share it with those seeking refuge, defending it instead so aggressively that it almost looks like war?"

Sarah Dryden-Peterson: Collectively, we are all impacted by the inability of those fleeing conflict and war to locate spaces where sanctuary is possible yet through distance, through national laws, through walls, many of the worlds would-be host countries, including the one we stand in today, seek to enforce the absence of refugees by preventing them from crossing the border. Eighty-five percent of refugees

globally live in a country that neighbors their conflict-affected country of origin. So unlike in Lebanon, where one out of every four people is now Syrian, less than one-tenth of 1 percent of Americans are refugees.

Sarah Dryden-Peterson: I work in the field of education. As my work takes me geographically far, schools are where I feel most at home. In Beirut, Syrian students attend Lebanese schools. They follow the Lebanese curriculum with Lebanese teachers. They sit for Lebanese national exams and finish school with Lebanese certificates. At the same time, Syrian students and Lebanese students attend school at different times of the day, Lebanese students in the morning and Syrian students in the afternoon. One teacher, Leila, explained how the splitting into two shifts was necessary to curb the violent fighting, that she didn't feel within her power to stop, that happened between Lebanese and Syrian children when they were together. Grade nine student, Syrian student, Munir, described how he made sense of the resulting separation. He said, "It's like they're giving us the school so we can learn, but not to be established."

Sarah Dryden-Peterson: The notion of welcome and the notion of exclusion can seem like polar opposites, and yet often they're not. They're often held together at the same time, in the same community, even within the same person. Imagining welcoming new people and doing the hard work of figuring out how to live together are entirely different endeavors. Being together in the same schools and in the same classrooms is a new experience for both newcomer Syrians and for long-time resident Lebanese children. For both those who stay in one place and those who flee war, their worlds have changed, and their experiences of being together represent the intertwined opportunities, and at the same time, the threats of that change.

Sarah Dryden-Peterson: Common rhetoric that we hear around refugees, flood tides, waves, flows, streams, reflects a general bias that we have towards geographic stability as we think about identity and about who belongs, so often invoked as this idea of roots. Yet in every year since 1990, one half to three quarters of the world's population has experienced armed conflict, and many of those, the displacement that results from it. With this evermore frequent movement come the hard questions on which the possibilities of true sanctuary depends; Who am I and what is my future? How does your being here and being new threaten my opportunities to be here and to be me? I challenge us to answer these questions because how we answer these questions, how we link ourselves to others, how we embrace the search for belonging and open spaces to make home is the crux of our collective challenge to share sanctuary and make possible a future of peace.

Sally Hammel: Will you pray with me? Please read The Lord's Prayer, which is on the back 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.

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 and ever. Amen.

Sally Hammel: Please stand as you're able and join us in singing the hymn from the Crimson Memorial hymnal. It is God of the Earth, the Sky, and the Sea, number 194.

Congregation: (singing)

Sally Hammel: It's Wednesday, so please join us downstairs for MemCafé from 8:45 to 9:45 to enjoy coffee, conversation, and community. Meanwhile, may the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make His face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. Amen.

Congregation: Amen.