

Wes Conn:
Good morning.

Congregation:
Morning.

Wes Conn:
Welcome to morning prayers. We'll begin today's service with a responsive reading from the black Appleton Chapel Altar book, Psalm selection number 62 found on page 31. Please stand as you are able.

Wes Conn:
For God alone my soul waits in silence. From Him comes my salvation.

Congregation:
He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be greatly moved.

Wes Conn:
For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him.

Congregation:
He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress; I shall not be shaken.

Wes Conn:
On God rests my deliverance and my honor. My mighty rock, my refuge is God.

Congregation:
Trust in him at all times, O people. Pour out your heart before him. God is a refuge for us.

Wes Conn:
Men of low estate are but a breath. Men of high estate are a delusion. In the balances they go up. They are together lighter than a breath.

Congregation:
Put no trust in extortion. Set no vain hopes on robbery. If riches increase, set not your heart on them.

Wes Conn:
Once God has spoken, twice have I heard this, that power belongs to God.

Congregation:
And that to thee, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For thou hast requited a man according to his work.

Wes Conn:
You may take your seats.

Choir: (singing)

Maggie Beazer:

Good morning.

Speaker 2:

Morning.

Maggie Beazer:

I'd like to begin today and it's two readings. The first is a poem by Mary Carr called the "Voice of God."

Maggie Beazer:

Ninety-percent of what's wrong with you can be cured with a hot bath. He says, God from the bowels of the subway, but we want magic to win the lottery we never bought a ticket for. Tenderly the monks chant, embrace the suffering. The voice of God does not pander, offers no five year plan, no long-term solution. Marry an edict. It is small and fond and local. Don't look for your initials and the geese honking overhead or to see through the glass even darkly. It says the most obvious crap. Put down that gun. You need a sandwich. The second the sign outside of university Lutheran church, Cambridge, Massachusetts. God is in the midst of the city.

Maggie Beazer:

When I was growing up, it felt like answers to prayer were inevitable. When I was a kid my favorite church magazine brimmed with stories where prayer was the key that unlocked all sorts of wonders. Misplaced stuffed animals, miraculously recovered a victory in an important soccer game. Parents coming around the corner at an amusement park just when it felt like you had given up hope on seeing them ever again. I could even see these moments sometimes in my own life.

Maggie Beazer:

In first grade, I was really profoundly affected by the video about stranger danger that we watched in my class. So every night before bed with my mom kneeling on the carpet below me, my stressed out six year old self would repeat what became an obsessive kind of litany, "Please bless that I won't get kidnapped. Please bless that I won't get kidnapped. Please bless that I won't get kidnapped," and I never did. So chalk that one up to an answered prayer.

Maggie Beazer:

That sort of easy assurance with spirituality evaporated a couple of years later when I was a teenager. Once I came here, I was surprised to realize that I was ready to explore religious faith again. But I found that things had changed. I no longer had the reliable call and response burning in my bosom that I'd felt when I was a kid. I would try to say a prayer earnestly and would get the emotional equivalent of a dial tone. I liked receiving communion and crossing myself and I liked singing church songs, but it remained hard for me to access what I was deep down hoping for, which was I think something unforgettable and something electrifying. That moment didn't come when I got baptized on May 5th, which was a really nice experience, but also colored by the discomfort of being stared at by a room full of people.

Maggie Beazer:

It did come four weeks later though when I was back in Utah, driving alone on the freeway at night during a lashing thunderstorm, and the windshield of my family's beater minivan fogged up and cars were flying past on both sides of me and I couldn't see the lines on the road in front of me anymore. It was very Jesus take the wheel. So even after the danger was passed, my body was still flooded with adrenaline and I cried the entire 15 minutes left on my drive home exhausted and relieved, and so, so grateful to not be dead. Definitely unforgettable. Definitely electrifying.

Maggie Beazer:

Moments of spiritual connection, I've learned, rarely come when expected or desired and I've become okay with that, trying to keep the spiritual antenna tuned with also being very comfortable with silence. Harvard college, it should be said, was not necessarily the place where I expected this progression to happen.

Maggie Beazer:

Sometimes I feel uneasy with my relationship to this school. So many of its students are obstructed in various ways from really being able to thrive, but I'll never be able to think about college without understanding it as the first place where I started to wake up happy. The Memorial church is obviously a big part of that. I love Memchurch so much because it strikes me as an unambiguous good on a campus where that is rarely the case. It's my last semester of college, but even without the nostalgia tinted senior spring goggles on it clear to me that I only began to see and feel all the ways that God suffuses this place once I started attending morning prayers. The beauty of a short service five days a week is that even if four out of those five days I'm yawning or lethargic or stressed or busy placing my Dunkin mobile order, then one day a week I will really be able to feel it.

Maggie Beazer:

Most days the sunlight will come through this window just behind me and slants hard directly into my favorite Pew. It means that I can see all the little dust particles rising off the century old wood and swirling around in the 8:30 AM quiet. It also means that I can't usually look directly at the speaker without kind of hurting my eyes, and it means that I've started my mornings for the past three years just listening, often with my eyes closed, serene in my reliance upon this beautiful routine bathed in sunlight.

Maggie Beazer:

God is in the midst of the city, and God is in the midst of Harvard yard. Let us pray.

Maggie Beazer:

Dear heavenly Father, we thank thee for this morning and we thank thee for the day ahead of us and all the opportunities that thou has given us. And we thank thee for the Memorial church, and thank thee for thy presence in our lives. And please bless us throughout the rest of the day, and I say these things in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen.

Wes Conn:

Please join me in offering the Lord's prayer found on the reverse of your order of worship.

Wes Conn:

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.

Wes Conn:

Please join me in singing the hymn Oh God, the Rock of Ages. Hymn number 207 in your Crimson Harvard hymnal. Please stand as you are able.

Congregation: (singing)

Wes Conn:

Perceive now these good words. May the Lord keep you from evil. May the Lord keep you in your going out and in your coming in from this time on and forevermore. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.