

Wes Conn:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Wes Conn:

Welcome to morning prayers. We'll begin today's service with a responsive reading from the Black Appleton Chapel Psalter Book, Psalm selection number 121, found on page 61. Please stand as you are able.

Wes Conn:

"I will lift up mine eyes unto the hills from whence cometh my help."

Congregation:

"My help cometh from the Lord, which made Heaven and Earth."

Wes Conn:

"He will not suffer thy foot to be moved. He that keepeth thee will not slumber."

Congregation:

"Behold, He that keepeth Israel shall not slumber nor sleep."

Wes Conn:

"The Lord is thy keeper. The Lord is thy shade upon thy right hand."

Congregation:

"The sun shall not smite thee by day, nor the moon by night."

Wes Conn:

"The Lord shall preserve thee from all evil. He shall preserve thy soul."

Congregation:

"The Lord shall preserve thy going out and thy coming in from this time forth and even forevermore."

Wes Conn:

You may take your seats.

Choir:

(singing)

Douglas Elmendorf:

A reading from the Letter to the Colossians, chapter three: "Put on then, as God's Chosen Ones, holy and beloved, heart-felt compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience, bearing with one another and forgiving one another if one has a grievance against another. As the Lord has forgiven you, so must you also do."

Douglas Elmendorf:

Good morning everyone.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Douglas Elmendorf:

I had the opportunity recently to observe forgiveness in a way I never had before, and I want to tell you that story. My wife, Karen, and I and some of our colleagues at the Kennedy School spent a week in Vietnam, where we had never been before. More than 25 years ago, as Vietnam was moving toward a more market-oriented economy, Vietnamese leaders ask the Kennedy School to teach their senior public officials about economic policy. My colleagues have now taught many dozens of officials, and our original program has evolved into a school of public policy and management, which has become the hub of a new university coaching the city.

Douglas Elmendorf:

Our group went to Vietnam to celebrate the past success and plan for the future. We met with government officials, educators, students, Harvard alumni, and others. The trip was an extraordinary experience for which I'm very grateful. And I came away with a lesson in people's astonishing capacity for forgiveness.

Douglas Elmendorf:

Between 1965 and 1975, more than 58,000 Americans were killed in Vietnam and probably between one and two million Vietnamese were killed. Roughly 1,500 Americans and hundreds of thousands of Vietnamese remained Missing In Action. Unexploded ordinance kills and maims people to this day. So one might think that relations between our countries could never be healed. And certainly many people have wounds, physical and mental, that will never heal, and my heart goes out to them.

Douglas Elmendorf:

And yet, the first American ambassador to Vietnam after we normalized relations, had been himself a prisoner of war in Hanoi for 6 years. When he became ambassador, he spoke not of anger or bitterness, but of hope. He said, "I want to heal the wounds between the United States and Vietnam. It's a tragic history that we've shared as two peoples. No one can change that, but there is a great deal we can all do about the future."

Douglas Elmendorf:

When we met with the president of this new university, she showed us a poll in which Vietnamese people reported an 80% favorable view of the United States, and we joked that if we ran that survey in the United States, we wouldn't get an 80% favorable view of the United States. Everywhere we went, we had such a warm welcome and such effusive thanks for our work. Indeed, after a formal ceremony

with the Prime Minister of Vietnam, he came over and hugged Tommy Vallely my colleague, who has led our work there over the past few decades.

Douglas Elmendorf:

And so, when I encounter situations in the future, where history seems too raw to move beyond and divides seem too wide to be bridged, I will think about this trip and that hug and about the astonishing forgiveness that we saw.

Douglas Elmendorf:

I want to add as a postscript and I was also reminded on the trip of the amazing power of the Harvard name. When we checked out of our hotel in Da Nang to head home, I handed the desk clerk my Harvard credit card. He looked at the card and said, "Oh, you are a professor at Harvard. That's a very great university." So, in his eyes, I was not just an average traveler, but a distinctive person because of this name that I carry, that we all carry in our way.

Douglas Elmendorf:

The power of that name gives us great responsibility to use the name to do good for people in the world. Sometimes that good is abstract and unfolds slowly. Harvard attracts the most talented and curious and amazing people and turns them loose to see what they can discover and create. Other times, the good we do is concrete and immediate. Harvard people have helped the Vietnamese to transform their economy and their state, and we've seen in the public scene the positive changes in people's lives.

Douglas Elmendorf:

And so, in my week in Vietnam, and I learned about particular people in a particular place at a particular time, but I also learned lessons of broader value, of the possibility of forgiveness, and of our power as sharers in the Harvard inheritance to do good in the world.

Douglas Elmendorf:

Thank you, have a good day.

Wes Conn:

Please join me in offering the Lord's Prayer, found on the reverse of your Order of Worship.

Wes Conn:

Our Father ...

Congregation:

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 stand as you are able to sing together the hymn, Let the Whole Creation Cry, number three in your Crimson Harvard Hymnal. Number three.

Congregation:

(singing)

Wes Conn:

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

Congregation:

Amen.