

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 18 found on page nine. Please stand as you are able. I adore you, Oh Lord, my strength.

Congregation: Oh, Lord, my crag, my fortress, my rescuer, my God.

Wes Conn: My rock in whom I seek refuge, my shield, my mighty champion, my haven.

Congregation: Ropes of death encompass me. Torrents of Belial terrified me.

Wes Conn: Ropes of Sheol encircled me. Snares of Death confronted me.

Congregation: In my distress I called on the Lord, cried out to my God; in His temple He heard my voice; my cry to Him reached His ears.

Wes Conn: You have given me the shield of Your protection. Your right hand has sustained me. Your care has made me great.

Congregation: You have let me stride on freely; my feet have not slipped.

Wes Conn: For this, I sing Your praise among the nations, Lord, and hymn your name.

Congregation: He accords great victories to His king, keeps faith with His anointed, with David and his offspring forever.

Wes Conn: You may take your seats.

Choir: (singing)

Murray Somerville: A reading from the Book of Revelation, chapter 19. I was in the spirit and lo a throne stood in heaven with one seated on the throne. Round the throne were 24 elders clad in white garments with golden crowns upon their heads. Then I heard what seemed to be the voice of a great multitude, like the sound of many waters crying, "Hallelujah for the Lord our God, the Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and exalt and give him the glory." What is this place?

Murray Somerville: It's great for me to be back here in this place in the Harvard Yard, in the Memorial Church, in Appleton Chapel. I thank Ed Jones for inviting me back for this spell. I thank David for all of his help and behind the scenes work. I thank the university choir for their warm welcome, and I particularly of course thank the choral fellows for that wonderful anthem. Bravo. Never heard it before. I have to say it's a little bit disconcerting to be standing here giving the morning

prayers talk since the 13 years I sat here playing the organ and the speaker was down there. But nonetheless, what is this place?

Murray Somerville: It is a space of grace in Harvard Yard as Jonathan Walton used to say, and I very much like that. It's a place of preaching. We've just been thinking about Martin Luther King. I remember Billy Graham and of course many of us think of Peter Gomes. It is a place of teaching, the Nobel lectures, symposia, including one a few years back on the place of choral music in the academic curriculum. It's a place of prayer, daily prayer, the Sunday worship, prayer from many faith traditions or just someone alone in a back pew who's grateful for a place of peace and reflection. It's a place of remembrance as all the names on these walls bear witness. It's a place of celebration, baccalaureate, morning chapel on commencement day, weddings. All of these aspects are under consideration right now as Harvard seeks a new Pusey Minister.

Murray Somerville: But I want to focus today on the Memorial Church as a home for music. In fact, you could perhaps call this a temple for music in Harvard Yard in its layout, its accoutrements, it's acoustic, yes, and its heritage. Not just any music though, music aimed beyond itself to spiritual values, however we define those. Now, those of you who know me know that I'm a bit of a history buff, so I'd like to begin with just a vignette or two from Harvard's sacred music history.

Murray Somerville: The very first book ever printed in New England on the printing press that President Dunster had married on the way over here on the Mayflower was a music book printed right over there on the other side of Massachusetts Avenue. The Bay Psalm Book, texts to be sung to one of six tunes, including the Old 100th that we still sing regularly here. Jump forward two centuries. We find a work by Samuel Holyoke, commissioned by a classmate and sung at the air commencement in 1793. Make a joyful noise to the Lord. The manuscript's in the Pusey library and it was recorded by the university choir on our very first CD in 1992. In 1834 came the first constitution of what seems to have been initially a rather rambunctious student organization called The University Choir. John Knowles Paine arrived as first university organist and choir master in 1862 and imposed professional standards, not without some difficulty.

Murray Somerville: In 1864, he instituted a subset called The Morning Choir. By the time Warren Andrew Locke took over, the Sunday service was actually a service of Evensong. And so Locke brought his choir boys from Saint Paul's Cathedral across the Charles to provide an SATB choir with the young men of the college. But when President Lowell was appointed, he wanted a Sunday morning service. And so the great Archibald T. Davison came from Dorchester over here to the Yard. However, Davison couldn't stand quiet boys, so the whole choir sang tenor or bass music as indeed which indeed we shall hear on Thursday. And before long his personality was so charismatic that he was invited also to conduct the glee club. We'll come back to that in a moment, but I wanted to take a little detour on the subject of acoustics.

Murray Somerville: When Memorial Church was built in 1932, Appleton Chapel was covered wall-to-wall with carpet. Doc Davison walked in here for the first time, immediately said, "My choir is not singing here until that carpet goes," which is why on the night before the first morning prayer service in the new building, Doc Davidson himself and President Lowell were to be seen in here tearing up the carpet for the sake of the acoustics, of course. Also on the subject of acoustics, when Neil Rubenstein was inaugurated as president, he asked the university choir to sing a concert, a rather esoteric concert, of music and reading, which was lovely. There was a lunch afterwards. I found myself sitting across from his college roommate, who by that time was the director of the Desoff Choirs in New York City. This gentleman amazed me by saying, "What perfect acoustics that church has for choral music." After I picked up my fork, which I dropped, I came to realize when sitting out in the body of the church, that actually, there's a lovely halo around the choral sound when the choir sings here and the congregation is listening down there.

Murray Somerville: Anyway, back to Davison and his taking over the glee club. In the end, the university choir and the glee club kind of merged and for many years, the morning choir, the paid morning choir, was an elite subset of the glee club. John Ferris, who succeeded Professor Woodworth, attended one of his last services and he reports that there was no warm-up. The 10 glee club members walked in, took their places, glanced extremely briefly at the music that was laid out on the music stand, and then stood up and sang it from memory because it was part of the glee club's tour repertory.

Murray Somerville: Then when President Pusey threw open the curtains down there in 1958, to admit women to morning prayers, John Ferris immediately instituted a coed morning choir as well as coed university choir. His legendary tenure was marked, of course, by a string of rave reviews, cutting-edge performances, and we very much hope that we will be able to complete the endowment of the choral fellow program in his honor this coming fall. In my day, the commitment of Peter Gomes was crucial for maintaining the institutional health of the music of Memorial Church. Indeed, when he successfully persuaded the Gund family to endow the post of university orchestra choir master in perpetuity, he did it, he said, "to ensure that no future minister could come along and muck it up." I quote. Because at that time, Columbia just completely eliminated its chapel music program.

Murray Somerville: So here we are in this place, a place where Ed Jones is doing the splendid work with the university choir and with the choral fellows, a place where singing is taught at a professional level, which has its own composer in residence, which has two organs, a long tradition of superb assistant organists and organ scholars, a resident Baroque orchestra, and an engaged and educated congregation that cherishes the finest sacred music. What would the Puritans have thought?

Murray Somerville: When the committee to advise President Bacow in selecting the next Pusey Minister was announced last fall, there were some of us who were a little

concerned that there seemed to be very little musical representation in that group. I know I'm not the only one who immediately wrote to the president and in time received a very gracious response. It said, in part, "Many thanks for your thoughtful suggestions. I will keep your thoughts in mind as the search gets underway." It was signed Larry Bacow, and I thought, "Well, that's a good sign." However, I think it behooves all of us at this time to remain involved and aware as the Pusey Minister search process continues.

Murray Somerville: Can I urge everyone who believes in the importance of the musical ministry of this place to communicate your thoughts to the committee members, as I have done, at this crucial time for something that so many of us here hold dear. In the meantime, let me also encourage the musicians of this place to continue making the most inspirational music you can, as a deeply valued resource for the life of the university and essential part of this place. Under Ed Jones' leadership, I know you will be doing that. It's a great pleasure to once again be part of it all with you for this short while.

Murray Somerville: Let us pray. Bless, Oh Lord, all thy servants who minister through music in this temple. Grant them what we sing with our lips you may believe in our hearts, and what we believe in our hearts we may show forth lives. In the name of the Most Holy One we pray. Amen.

Congregation: Amen.

Murray Somerville: 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, for ever 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, for ever and ever. Amen.

Wes Conn: Please note the change in hymn. We will be singing together today the hymn, the book falls open, Lord, we read. Hymn number 357 in your Crimson Harvard Hymnal, verses one and five. Please stand as you are able.

Congregation/Choir: (singing)

Wes Conn: 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.

