

Grace Killian:
Good Morning.

Congregation:
Morning.

Grace Killian:
And welcome to Morning Prayers. Our responsive reading this morning is Psalm 46, found on page 480 of your pew bible. We will read it responsively by whole verse. Will you please stand? "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble."

Congregation:
"Therefore we will not fear though the earth should change, though the mountains shake in the heart of the sea."

Grace Killian:
"Though its waters roar and foam, though the mountains tremble with its tumult."

Congregation:
There is a river whose streams make glad the city of God, the holy habitation of the Most High."

Grace Killian:
"God is in the midst of the city. It shall not be moved. God will help it when the morning dawns."

Congregation:
"The nations are in an uproar. The kingdoms totter. He utters his voice, the earth melts."

Grace Killian:
"The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge."

Congregation:
"Come, behold the works of the Lord. See what desolations He has brought on the earth."

Grace Killian:
"He makes wars cease to the end of the earth. He breaks the bow and shatters the spear. He burns the shields with fire."

Congregation:
"Be still, and know that I am God. I am exalted among the nations. I am exalted in the earth."

Grace Killian:
"The Lord of hosts is with us. The God of Jacob is our refuge."

Choir:

(singing)

Speaker 3:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Jasmine Brown:

Good Morning.

March being Women's History Month, I wanted to start with a quote from one of my heroes, the great Maya Angelou. "A woman in harmony of their spirit is like a river flowing. She goes where she will without pretense and arrives at her destination prepared to be herself and only herself." When I moved to Cambridge last Fall to become a Nieman fellow at Harvard, I printed this quote out and placed it in frame in my apartment. I want it to serve as a daily reminder to seek and find inner calm. But achieving spiritual harmony is easier said than done.

Jasmine Brown:

We live in a world of constant noise and distraction. The speed of our news cycle, fueled by social media, moving so quickly it gives up whiplash. As a journalist, even I struggle to keep up. Over the last five years working as a TV news producer, I've covered almost every terror attack, mass shooting, and numerous police killings of black men. Long days leading into long weeks, months, and years. By the time I reached Harvard, I was burnt out, ready for a much-needed break from the daily news grind. I turned off my work phone, placed it in a drawer, and made a conscious effort to stop checking my personal phone during dinners.

Jasmine Brown:

Yes, I have two phones. I even removed the Twitter app. And then, a day later, I added it back. I was trying to shut out the noise, trying to find time to breathe but old habits die hard. Over the last six months, there have been uprisings in Lebanon, Chile, Bolivia, Iraq, drought in Zimbabwe, fires in Australia, and pogroms against Muslims in India. I've learned that feeble attempt at taking a break from the news won't stop the Earth from burning. We are living in unprecedented times. Much of the world feels as if it's hanging on by a thread.

Jasmine Brown:

Today, as fear and uncertainty of the Coronavirus grows, panic feels closer than peace. Now, at a time when many need it most, human touch is prohibited and isolation surrounds some in their final days. Where is the harmony now? In these uncertain times, where does one find peace? The bible tells us that when we walk with God, we don't have to look that far. Peace comes as human nature. Colossians 3:12-14 says, "Put on then, as God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, compassionate hearts, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience, bearing with one another and, if one has a complaint against another, forgiving each other. As the Lord has forgiven you, so you also must forgive. And above all these, put on love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony."

Jasmine Brown:

It might not seem like much, but through a daily practice of love and compassion towards others, we can reach harmony. "God's mercy to us is new each day. For the steadfast love of the Lord never ceases. His mercies never come to an end." Lamentations 3:22. "A woman in harmony of their spirit is like a river flowing." I am not yet that great river, more like a small stream trickling along. But I know that if just keep moving, keep, trying, keep loving, eventually, our waters will meet. I pray that as you leave here today, you will seek harmony for your spirit and forgiveness towards others. Through our individual actions, may we heal the world and keep it whole. I pray that you will find peace and community with friends and family, joy in their presence, and that the Lord will watch over us and keep us in good health. Amen.

Grace Killian:

Now let us join in the Lord's prayer together as it is written on the back of your Order of Worship.

Congregation:

"Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done, on Earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses, as forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen."

Grace Killian:

Our hymn this morning is hymn number 268, Break Thou the Bread of Life, in your Crimson Hymnal. Will you please stand? (singing) Now, may the peace of the Lord go with you wherever He may send you. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.