

Laurie Sedgwick:

Good morning and welcome to morning prayers. Please stand as you are able for our responsive reading from the Black Appleton book. Today, we'll be reading Psalm 141 found on page 171. Lord, I cry unto thee: make haste unto me; give ear unto my voice, when I cry unto thee.

Congregation:

Let my prayer be set forth before thee as incense; and the lifting up of my hands as the evening sacrifice.

Laurie Sedgwick:

Set a watch, O Lord, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips.

Congregation:

Incline not my heart to any evil thing, to practice wicked words with men that work iniquity; and let me not eat of their dainties.

Laurie Sedgwick:

Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head for yet my prayer also shall be in their calamities.

Congregation:

When their judges are overthrown in stony places, they shall hear my words for they are sweet.

Laurie Sedgwick:

Our bones are scattered at the grave's mouth, as when one cutteth and cleaveth wood upon the earth.

Congregation:

But mine eyes are unto thee, O God the Lord; in thee is my trust; leave not my soul destitute.

Laurie Sedgwick:

Keep me from the snares which they have laid for me, and the gins of the workers of iniquity.

Congregation:

Let the wicked fall into their own nets, whilst that I withal escape.

Laurie Sedgwick:

My Shepherd will supply my need. Jehovah is His name. In pastures fresh He makes me feed beside the living stream. He brings my wand'ring spirit back when I forsake His ways. And leads me for His mercy's sake in paths of truth and grace.

Congregation:

When I walk through the shades of death, thy presence is my stay. A word of Thy supporting breath drives all my fears away. Thy hand in sight of all my foes doth still my table spread. My cup with blessings overflows, Thine oil anoints my head.

Laurie Sedgwick:

The sure provisions of my God attend me all my days. O may Thy house be mine abode and all my work be praised. There would I find a settled rest while others go and come. No more a stranger or a guest, but like a child at home.

Choir:

(singing)

Phoebe Carrai:

Good morning. My name is Phoebe Carrai and I'm very grateful this morning, and that's what I'd like to share with you all. I'd like to begin with a quote that really took me. This is from David Steindl-Rast, originally Austrian and now American. His name now is David Steindl-Rast, but he was born Franz Kuno Steindl-Rast in 1926. He's still very much alive at 95 years old today and of him, I'm very grateful for. He wrote, "The root of joy is gratefulness. It is not joy that makes us grateful. It is gratitude that makes us joyful." I think that's just a very simple thing to carry through the day when they asked me to speak today. I thought, my goodness, what do I speak? I'm so much more used to playing my cello for all of you. Then, it hit me that I just feel so grateful for coming through the pandemic the way I got to.

Phoebe Carrai:

We all have to grieve what happened in the pandemic. Something I'm very grateful about is that as much as I miss my mom and dad, they didn't have to go through the pandemic because it might have been very frightening. We've all come through in our own way. As the pandemic happened in March of 2020, we were about to perform a beautiful program with Harvard Brook Chamber Orchestra, which from one day to the next, we just had to stop. And that was truly difficult. Then, we went on Zoom and I'm so grateful that we got to do that and that the orchestra, really through the entire summer, we had this community that was so very special. Every week we did different things than we'd ever had time to do. We spend so much time rushing around from point A to B and here in the fall, it's rush around and get that fall concert ready for everybody.

Phoebe Carrai:

Here, we got to sit back and just take a breath and talk about very important things and work in a way that we'd never gotten to work. Of that I'm very grateful. Also, then, being able to walk into these walls again, after so much time and hear such beautiful music like we just heard now. It's just, it's overwhelming, really. That's what came to me. I'm grateful that my sister wrote this quote on a thank you letter for all her sponsors. She raises money for MS every year. She's wonderful at it. She was the one who led me in this direction.

Phoebe Carrai:

I urge you all, go take a look at David Steindl-Rast. He was born in Vienna in 1926 and was inscripted into the war but his mom managed to keep him from the front line somehow. He then immigrated with his family to the United States. He was a Benedictine monk by the time he moved to the United States.

Then, he got very interested in Buddhism and the interfaith dialogue. And he's still doing that. He became part of a community out in Big Sur, California. He's written four or five books that I can't wait to read them now.

Phoebe Carrai:

That's basically who I wanted to talk about, and the fact that there's so much to be grateful for. I'm grateful that I get to be in this community at this church with the wonderful orchestra, with the amazing Ed Jones who's conductor of the choir and David von Behren, and that we get to make music in here. I am so happy that my path led me to the cello, which is just a beautiful instrument and my way of talking usually.

Phoebe Carrai:

The other thing that I'm entirely, when I'm showing gratitude, it's either playing my cello or cooking food, which is equally as important. This church has this fantastic kitchen downstairs and we've already had some great, great times before the pandemic. I think it's open again. We will have further wonderful times just cooking together. Of that, I'm also extremely grateful. If any of you ever need a recipe, just get in touch. I've got lots of them. I hope we can go forward and just take time to see how grateful we are just to breathe and just breathe long enough to say, "Yes, I'm grateful."

Phoebe Carrai:

I'd like to close with another comment from Steindl-Rast where he says, "Gratefulness can change our world in immensely and important ways, because if you're grateful, you're not fearful. And if you're not fearful, you're not violent. If you're grateful, you act out of a sense of enough and not out of a sense of scarcity. And you are willing to share. If you are grateful, you are enjoying the differences between people and you are respectful to everybody, and that changes this power pyramid under which we live." I think it's quite sage words, and I hope that inspires you to look him up and come hear us play this year. We'd love to have you. Thank you.

Laurie Sedgwick:

And now, please stand as you are able and let us pray. Glory to you, O God, source of all being. This great liturgy finds expression at this moment in our us gathered here in a posture of prayerful openness with listening hearts, loving spirits, and a holy wonder. May the sacred web that unites us with each other, our God and all creation, ignite communities of light and hope throughout the earth. May we be open to the source of all being our God within and among us. Amen.

Laurie Sedgwick:

Now, let us recite together the prayer that Jesus taught us saying: 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 into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever and ever. Amen. Let us sing the hymn Once More the Daylight Shines Abroad, number 38 found in your Crimson Harvard Hymnal.

Congregation:

(Singing)

Laurie Sedgwick:

May today there be peace within. May you trust God that you are exactly where you are meant to be. May you not forget the infinite possibilities that are born of faith. May you use those gifts that you have received and pass on the love that has been given to you. May you be confident knowing you are a child of God. Let his presence settle into your bones and allow your soul the freedom to sing, dance, praise, and love. It is there for each and every one of us. This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.