

Laurie Sedgwick:

Good morning and welcome to Morning Prayers. Please stand as you are able for our responsive reading from the black Appleton Psalter book. This morning we'll be reading Psalm 91 found on page 46. He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.

Laurie Sedgwick:

Surely he shall deliver thee from the snare of the Fowler and from the noisome pestilence.

Laurie Sedgwick:

Thou shalt not be afraid for the terror by night; Nor for the arrow that flieth by day;

Congregation:

Nor for the pestilence that walketh in darkness; Now shall not be afraid for the terror by night, nor for the era that fly if by day.

Laurie Sedgwick:

For He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways.

Congregation:

They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone.

Laurie Sedgwick:

Thou shall tread upon the lion and the adder, the young lion and the dragon shall thou trample under feet.

Congregation:

Because he has set his will upon me, therefore I will deliver him; I will set him on high because he has known my name.

Choir:

(SINGING)

Liz Hanson:

The point is this the one who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly and the one who sews bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each of you must give, as you have made up your mind, not reluctantly or under compulsion for God loves a cheerful giver and God is able to provide you with every blessing in abundance. So that by always having enough of everything you may share abundantly in every good work. It has been almost three years to the day that I became a member of this beloved community. It happened unexpectedly. I was not actively seeking religious affiliation for, I had not yet identified this was a hole in my life that needed filling. I arrived here on that November morning instead to hear from my former boss and forever mentor, Governor Deval Patrick delivered the Founder's day address. It was the Sunday after the 2018 midterm election, and I was hungry for any guidance he might provide on how to navigate the terrain ahead.

The lesson that morning was 2 Corinthians 9:6 and the Governor delivered a stirring sermon on reaping what we sow, calling us to understand that America can only be great by being good. That morning he clearly placed the work he had done and by extension that I had done during his administration within the moral contexts that I find too often lacking in our political discourse. He framed the why that drove for what, the being that drove for doing, but it was not just Governor Patrick's words that stirred me that morning. I liked the rest of the two. I arrived here weary and could feel long before professor Paulsell had put these words to it that Memorial church was pouring good into me and I needed it. After a decade working on climate policy, I was battling pessimism, overwhelm, and disengagement. So I came back again and again, I let myself sit quietly and feel deeply.

Two opportunities rarely afforded to me in my day to day work or busy life at that time I reflected on what our culture was reaping and on what I wanted to sow. As I turned my attention to these important questions, I could not shake the feeling that some of the most pressing generational challenges of my day, burnout, loneliness, inequality, polarization, climate change. They are all different manifestations of the same fundamental issue, assistance thinker by nature and by training, I tried to dig down to the root of these seemingly disparate ailments and arrived at this truth. We are suffering from a profound loss of connection to ourselves, to one another, to the natural world and to the transcendent. This seems to me the inevitable bounty of systemic structures that prioritize an extractive form of consumption, strip attention away from that, which cannot be readily monetized and demand a pace of living out of sync with human and planetary nature.

Forming connections takes time, intention, attention to draw on the metaphor from the lesson with which we began. Between the sowing and the reaping, there is much tending to be done. To someone with a to-do list as long as the day is short, this might seem quite a imposition, but I would submit that it is within this tending of our relationships, that the magic of life dwells. This is the place from which joy, creativity, hope, community, love hence spring forth. Blessings that we need in spades to meet the challenges ahead. And so the questions I sit with now are these, how do we design a life, a community, a society to reap the blessings of connection, what personal rituals, community organizations, or systemic structures are necessary to ensure we can all share abundantly in this good work.

Questions, generational in scope that could easily overwhelm and so I pray, Dear Lord, give us the courage to pay attention, the wisdom to see you in ourselves and one another and the faith that your blessings are available in abundance. As we head into this season of Thanksgiving and Advent help us consume consciously, give cheerfully and connect deeply. Turn our attention to that which is worth attending to and guide us to sow worthy seeds in the year ahead. Amen.

And now please stand as you are able and let us recite together the prayer that Jesus taught us saying,

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. Amen. Hail, Mary! "Our father who art in heaven hall be my name by kingdom. Come by, 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 to temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, The power, and the glory. Forever and ever. Amen.

Laurie Sedgwick:

And let us sing to him. Let whole creation cry #3 found in your Crimson Hymn note.

Congregation:

(SINGING)

Laurie Sedgwick:

May today there be peace within. May you trust God then 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 this presence settle into your bones and allow your soul, the freedom to sing, dance, praise, and love. It is there for each of us, everyone of us in Jesus' name we pray. Amen.