

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 1:21 found on page 61.

Laurie Sedgwick:

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.

Laurie Sedgwick:

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

Congregation:

Behold, he that keepeth Israel shall neither slumber nor sleep.

Laurie Sedgwick:

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.

Laurie Sedgwick:

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 for evermore.

Choir:

(singing)

The Rev. Ahmaad J. Edmund:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

The Rev. Ahmaad J. Edmund:

A reading from the fourth chapter of Philippians, starting with verse six.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, that transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds through Christ Jesus.

As I was making my way back to Boston after a long and restful break, I found myself on a two hour flight from Charlotte, North Carolina. During the flight, I noticed a young couple with their baby boy. The baby was probably 15 months old, had the bluest eyes, and an unbothered smile.

As young children tend to do, the baby became restless on the journey. The father, without delay, picked the baby boy up and began good old fashioned homemade entertainment. The father picks up the baby boy, holds him high and lowers him. He does it a couple of times, and finally puts the baby boy back down on the seat. The baby who couldn't talk, offered the suggestive body language that the entertainment must continue. Again, the father picks the baby boy up, turns him sideways, almost as if he were to let him go. However, he did not. I became worried, I was a little startled, but before I could even give any attention to my concern, to my dismay, I heard the voice of God. I was amazed by the behavior of the baby boy, the father, and the circumstance. While the father tilted the child back and upright, the baby boy never cried. He didn't seem to be dismayed. He giggled and he smiled. And even at the tilt, a little too risky, the baby boy held a bit tighter to his father.

The father amazed me because he never let go of the child. No matter how it inconvenienced his restful posture. But what are you saying, Ahmaad? I'm here to share with you that life has a way of tilting us. Life has a way of presenting us with unexpected challenges, twists and turns, ups and downs. We are like that baby boy, often called in the middle of it. However, isn't it good news to know that we have a heavenly father who never lets us go, despite the circumstances? The apostle Paul wrote do not be anxious. So, I'm not going to be redundant and say that you shouldn't worry, but I will ask you why worry? But in everything, by prayer and supplication, with the heart of Thanksgiving, let your request be known to God.

Notice that the baby did not look at me, he did not look at the ceiling of the airplane, nor did he reach for a neighbor sitting across the aisle. However, the baby looked in the face of his father. And in the face of his father, no matter the circumstance, no matter how far he was tilted, his faith never wavered.

Let your request be known unto God. The giggle, the smile, that's where verse seven comes in, "And the peace of God, that transcends all understanding, will guard both your heart and your mind through Christ Jesus."

Let us pray. Dear God, we thank you for this day, we thank you for this time, the fellowship. Dear God, allow us to lean on the words recorded by the apostle Paul, not to be anxious about anything, but to pray about everything. Amen.

Laurie Sedgwick:

And now let us together recite 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 not 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, Holy God, we praise thy name. Number 21 found in your Crimson, Harvard hymnal.

Congregation:

(singing)

Laurie Sedgwick:

Let us go forth into the world in peace and dedicated to your service, O Lord. Let us hold fast that which is good, render to no man evil for evil, strengthen the faint-hearted, support the weak, help the needy and the afflicted, honor all beings. Let us love and serve the Lord, rejoicing in the power of his spirit. And may God's blessing be upon us and remain with us always. Amen.