

Theresa Lungu:

Good morning, and welcome. Welcome to Morning Prayers. We are going to remain masked at the podium, in accordance with Harvard social distancing guidelines. The service will begin with a responsive reading from the black Appleton psalter book, Psalm number 16, found on page eight. Please stand, as you're able, to read responsively by whole verse.

Theresa Lungu:

Preserve me, O God: for in thee do I put my trust.

Congregation:

O my soul, thou hast said unto the Lord, Thou art my Lord: my goodness extendeth not to thee.

Theresa Lungu:

But to the saints that are in the earth, and to the excellent, in whom is all my delight.

Congregation:

Their sorrows shall be multiplied that hasten after another god: their drink offerings of blood will I not offer, nor take up their names into my lips.

Theresa Lungu:

The Lord is the portion of mine inheritance and of my cup: thou maintainest my lot.

Congregation:

The lines are fallen unto me in pleasant places; yea, I have a goodly heritage.

Theresa Lungu:

I will bless the Lord who has given me counsel. My reins also instruct me in the night seasons.

Congregation:

I have set the Lord always before me: because he is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

Theresa Lungu:

Therefore, my heart is glad, and my glory rejoiceth: my flesh also shall rest in hope.

Congregation:

For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell; neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Chior:

(singing)

Sarah Lewis:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Sarah Lewis:

Psalm 91, verses one through 10. "Whoever dwells in the shelter of the most high will rest in the shadow of the almighty. I will say of the Lord, 'He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust.' Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare and from the deadly pestilence. He will cover you with his feathers, and under his wings, you will find refuge; his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart. You will not fear the terror of night, nor the arrow that flies by day, nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness, nor the plague that destroys at midday. A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand, but it will not come near you. You will only observe with your eyes and see the punishment of the wicked. If you say, "The Lord is my refuge," and you make the most high your dwelling, no harm will overtake you, no disaster will come near your tent."

As my godfather, Reverend James A. Forbes says, "May the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, oh Lord, our strength and our redeemer." Amen.

I had heard about the light. Light was the first word I ever said. But I've recently come to understand, in a much more profound way, what is meant by the light of God's love, and God's protection.

I'm here this morning, to testify to the daily miracles that we all experience. Mine was a near death experience, due to a car collision. I was driving on a highway coming back to Cambridge, on a day in July. A driver on the highway was out of control. Because it had just been raining for hours, the car was hydroplaning, and the driver was in some altered state, as it turned out. To swerve out of his way, my car began heading straight for the concrete divider on the highway, rose, and nearly flipped over. In that moment, I was sure that I would die. I also felt, with an indescribable force, not just how much I wanted to live, but how much I wanted to live my life. The life that I understood in that moment, was God's chosen path for me.

I may never have the words to fully describe what happened in that car. Everything slowed down. What was probably 1.5 seconds seemed like years. As I connected with something beyond me, that I sensed, could defy the laws of what was clearly about to happen. A white light, God's light, tied directly to me and the beyond, suspended me in that car as it crashed, it felt. It seemed, as if a cloud was around me. Then, the airbags deployed.

The car was totaled from the impact, nearly unrecognizable. And the EMTs told me when they arrived, that they assumed that there was a fatality. They kept asking me about someone else in the car. I just had a scratch on my arm, from where the airbags cut through the metal to deploy, saving my life.

That light was all I could think about at the time, and still often, say is true in my daily life. As I saw it lying like a membrane over everything, gaseous, cloudy, the way we picture a star nebula. I had heard about lights of this kind. But it was clear, the love of God that is there for all of us is what I felt. I told

myself that I would never talk about the full extent of what I saw, mainly because there are certain parts that I know will only be a frequency, will always go beyond words.

But the core message of what I am a living testament to, from that collision, is what I know to be true about God's love. And that is not something to keep to myself. We have far more guidance and protection in every millisecond of our lives than we could ever imagine. The seemingly ordinary, even catastrophe, is filled with the magic that is God.

Let us remain open to the light that comes in the door of the unknown, even in what seems to be disaster. May we always know the love that comes from God's care. I'm so grateful for that experience, such that I might now more fully know God's love. Amen.

Theresa Lungu:

Please stand, as you're able, and let us pray.

Theresa Lungu:

Lord, we give you thanks for the gift of a new day. Grant, we pray, that we pass the hours of this day in the perfect freedom of your service. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

Theresa Lungu:

Now together, let us recite the Lord's prayer, 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. For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Theresa Lungu:

Please join us in singing the hymn, As Pants The Hart For Cooling Streams, number 303, in the crimson Harvard hymnal.

Congregation:

(singing)

Theresa Lungu:

As we go forth on this day, may we feel our humanity with each other, not in thoughts, but in deeds. And may the love of God go with us, this day and forever. Amen.

Congregation:

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Amen.