

Anna Burnham:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Anna Burnham:

And welcome to Morning Prayers, Memorial Church. Today's service will begin with a responsive reading from the black Appleton psalter book, Psalm 19 found on page 10. Please stand as you are able and read responsibly by the whole verse. The heavens are telling the glory of God and the firmament proclaims his handiwork.

Congregation:

Day to day pours forth speech, and night to night declares knowledge.

Anna Burnham:

There is no speech, nor are their words. Their voice is not heard.

Congregation:

Yet their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In the heavens, he has set a tent for the sun.

Anna Burnham:

Which comes out like a bride groom from his wedding canopy and like a strong man runs its course with joy.

Congregation:

It's rising is from the end of the heavens and the circuit to the end of them, and nothing escapes from its heat.

Anna Burnham:

The law of the Lord is perfect. Reviving the soul. The decrees of the Lord are sure, making wise the simple.

Congregation:

The precepts of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart. The commandment of the Lord is fear, enlightening the eyes.

Anna Burnham:

The fear of the Lord is pure, enduring forever. The ordinances of the Lord are true and righteous all together.

Congregation:

More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold, sweeter also than honey, and drippings of the honeycomb.

Choir:
(Singing).

Evelynn Hammonds:
Good morning.

Congregation:
Good morning.

Evelynn Hammonds:
The reading that I chose for this morning is Micah 6:8. He has showed you what is good. And what does the Lord require of you, but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God. As I also learned as a child in Bethlehem Baptist Church in Covington, Georgia, made the words of my mouth and the meditation of our hearts be acceptable in thy sight, oh Lord, our strength and our redeemer. Amen.

Congregation:
Amen.

Evelynn Hammonds:
For me, community has always been more than a word that names a relation. I've always understood community to be a daily act of being in fellowship with others. In right relationship with others, which is what Micah means by justice. I believe that I am in community with the people around me and those connected to me near and far. What community means to me is best understood in the South African philosophy of Ubuntu.

Quote. It encompasses all our aspirations about how we live life well together. We feel it when we connect with other people and share a sense of humanity. When we listen deeply and experience an emotional bond. When we treat ourselves and other people with the dignity they deserve. Unquote. Archbishop Desmond Tutu explained the essence of Ubuntu as, quote, my humanity is caught up, is inextricably bound up in yours. As his granddaughter noted, the bedrock of the philosophy is respect for yourself and for others, and Ubuntu teaches us to look outside of ourselves to find answers. Ubuntu tells us that individuals are nothing without other individuals, without other human beings. It encompasses everyone regardless of race, creed, or color. It embraces our differences and celebrates them.

This academic year has made visible many thought lines in our Harvard community. All of us have been stressed by our daily struggles with the virus that seems insatiable in the demands it has placed on us to protect ourselves and one another. Our community has also been saddened by many losses, including the untimely deaths of our colleagues, Harvard Law Professor Lani Guinier and Harvard Medical School Professor Paul Farmer.

When I think about the fact that these two towering teachers and advocates for justice are no longer with us, my heart weeps. We have also been roiled by discussions about sexual harassment and the devastating impact it has had on those who are survivors of it in our community. These discussions have pushed me to think hard about the uneven distribution of power in our community and the impact of that inequality on those who are most vulnerable among us, students, faculty, and staff who are deprived of rights, voice, and resources.

They have pushed me to ponder my own responsibility. The great responsibility that those of us who have power in this University must wield and do so ethically from the heart and with care. In the midst of all this turmoil and sadness, I have returned to morning prayers, this sacred place for reflection in Appleton Chapel each morning, as a way to remind myself that it is now spring, the season for renewal. And I am here with you this morning to rededicate myself to you all, to building a better community. One here at Harvard that can hold all of us, scholars, and teachers, and students, and workers, in an embrace that centers on Ubuntu.

May we celebrate our differences in our common labors to make our Harvard the best that it can be for us and the world.

Speaker 1:

Please pray with me. God of justice, God of kindness, God of dignity. We thank you for the gift of spring, of renewal, and of each other. May we always seek to be in right relationship in our communities and may we learn to walk humbly with you. Amen.

Church Congregation:

Amen.

Anna Burnham:

And together, let us recite the prayer that Jesus taught us. Please stand as you are able. Saying, our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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.

Congregation:

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Anna Burnham:

And together, let us sing the hymn, Amazing Grace. Number 299, found in your crimson Harvard hymnal.

Congregation:

(Singing).

Anna Burnham:

That one always gets me. Go forth into this day in peace. Hold fast to that, which is good. May we better seek to serve God and each other today, and every day, and let the congregation say, amen.

This transcript was exported on Apr 13, 2022 - view latest version [here](#).

Congregation:

Amen.