

Cheyenne Boon:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Cheyenne Boon:

Welcome to morning prayers. Today's service will begin with a responsive reading from the black Appleton Psalter book. Psalm number 24 found on page 12, please rise in body or spirit to read responsively by whole verse.

Cheyenne Boon:

The earth is the Lord's and all that is in it, the world and those who live in it.

Congregation:

For he has founded it on the seas and established it on the rivers.

Cheyenne Boon:

Who shall ascend the hill of the Lord and who shall stand in his holy place?

Congregation:

Those who have clean hands and pure hearts who do not lift up their souls to what is false and do not swear deceitfully.

Cheyenne Boon:

They will receive blessing from the Lord and vindication from the God of their salvation.

Congregation:

Such is the company of those who seek him, who seek the face of the God of Jacob.

Cheyenne Boon:

Lift up your heads, oh, gates, and be lifted up, oh ancient doors that the king of glory may come in.

Congregation:

Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong, and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle.

Cheyenne Boon:

Lift up your heads, oh gates and be lifted up, oh ancient doors that the King of glory may come in.

Congregation:

Who is this King of glory? The Lord of hosts, he is the King of glory.

Choir:

(Singing).

The Rev. Dr. Robert Allan Hill:

Romans chapter 12 verses 9 and following, "Let love be genuine. Hate what is evil? Hold fast to what is good, love one another with mutual affection. Outdo one another in showing honor, never lag in zeal. Be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord rejoice in your hope. Be patient and tribulation. Be constant in prayer, contribute to the needs of the saints. Practice hospitality. Hold fast to what is good in a troubled time, hold fast." Howard Thurman the Dean of Marsh Chapel from 1953 to 1965, held fast through poetry and through painting and through psalms. He had a theological poetics, this predecessor who was 100 years ahead of his time 50 years ago. So he is still 50 years ahead of me at least. And he wrote in verses he remembered being on his beloved Daytona Beach at midnight, starry heavens above the moral law within, feet in the sand and walking.

And he wrote later, "The ocean and the night surrounded my little life with a reassurance that could not be affronted by any human behavior. The ocean at night gave me a sense of timelessness, of existing beyond the ebb and flow of circumstance. Death would be a small thing, I felt, in the sweep of that natural embrace." Presence, sense of presence, practice of presence. April 5th, 2022, may you discover, or may you be discovered by a verse of poetry this Lord's day.

Thurman was a painter. He liked to paint with brush and canvas. He loved painting penguins and so on, but he was really a verbal, a rhetorical painter with a flourish, with an image, with a portrait he kept us and held fast himself presence, sense of presence, practice of presence. His most famous, most memorable was a crown said, he wrote, "We have been given a crown high, heavy, beautiful to grow into all our days." Holding fast through an image, a portrait, a rhetorical painting. April 5th, 2022, may you discover or be discovered by this Lord's day, such an image, such a portrait.

Thurman was most especially a lover of the Psalms. Your beautiful service here includes each day a Psalm. And he had his own favorites, perhaps you do as well. For him, those that connected with intimacy to presence, sense of presence, practice of presence were his beloved, including some verses, which we'll remember from 139. "Oh Lord, thou has searched me and known me. Thou knowest when I sit down and when I rise up. Thou discernest my thoughts from afar. Thou searchest out my path and my lying down and are acquainted with all my ways. Even before a word is on my tongue, oh Lord, thou knowest it all together. Thou dost beset me, behind and before and layest hand upon me, such knowledge is too wonderful for me. It is high. I cannot attain it. Wither shall I go from my spirit? Wither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend to heaven, thou art there. If I make my bed in Sheol, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning and travel to the uttermost parts of the sea, even there, thy hand shall lead me, thy right hand shall hold me. If I say, let only the darkness cover me and the light about me be as night. Even the darkness is not dark to thee. The night is as bright as the day or darkness is as light with thee."

April 5th, 2022, may you discover or be discovered by a favorite Psalm or three. Beloved, of the faithfulness of Memorial Church, friends older, newer, your gathering, your voice, your presence here, helps those siblings of yours across the river, my congregation at Marsh Chapel, your presence here is part of what allows us to hold fast to what good this and every day. May we pray. Grant us thy peace, grant us thy peace, grant us thy peace.

Cheyenne Boon:

If you would please rise in body or spirit to pray 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. And now we'll sing hymn number 41, Christ, Whose Glory Fills The Skies found in your crimson Harvard Hymnal.

Congregation/Choir

(Singing).

Cheyenne Boon:

As we go into this day, let us bless and keep one another. Let us make peace. Let us be at peace. May it be so, and may the church say amen.

Congregation:

Amen.