

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

Welcome to morning prayers. All who are able, please rise for our responsive reading found in the psalter on page 50.

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

We will be reading Psalm 100. "May all lands be joyful before you, O God, serve you with gladness and come before your presence with a song. For we know you are God. You, yourself, have made us, and we are yours. We are your people and the sheep of your pasture."

Congregation:

"For we know you are God. You, yourself, have made us, and we are yours. We are your people and the sheep of your pasture."

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

"We shall enter your gates with thanksgiving, go into your courts with praise, give thanks to you and call upon your name. For you are good. Your mercy is everlasting, and your faithfulness endures from age to age."

Congregation:

"For you are good. Your mercy is everlasting, and your faithfulness endures from age to age."

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

You may be seated.

Choir:

(singing)

Audrey Dilgarde:

Good morning, everyone.

Congregation:

Morning.

Audrey Dilgarde:

We will begin with James 1. "James, a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ to the 12 tribes scattered among the nations. Greetings. Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters whenever you face trials of many kinds because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance. Let

perseverance finish its work so that you may be mature and complete, not lacking anything. If any of you lacks wisdom, you should ask God, who gives generously to all without finding fault, and it will be given to you. But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, low and tossed by the wind."

During my undergraduate years, there's been many waves. There were moments when the waters were still, things were calm, and life was good. And then, the water would rise, and its level ever-increasing until I was engulfed in disillusionment and the persistent feeling that more could have been done, and the lingering belief that things just weren't going my way.

But as the water subsided and the waves retracted, I was left dazed but not so confused, for I had come to the realization, as one often does after hard times, that I had not been fearful that negative outcomes would occur, but that I had been faithful that negative outcomes were inevitable as fear is merely faith in evil rather than faith in good.

You see, when you are going through consistent ups and downs, when you are working through long nights and early mornings, it is easy to orient your faith in disillusionment and disbelief. But when I realized that my problems were the results of perspective rather than circumstance, the water stilled and the waves were no more.

This shift in perspective became the bedrock of my patience, for I now understood that God denies to give. It's this knowing, this confidence in a divine conspiracy of circumstance, that has allowed me to walk by faith, not by sight.

Audrey Dilgarde:

So, as those waves ebb and flow, whatever the cycle may be, let us remain patient and utilize this patience as the well spring for our faith in good, not in evil, for nothing is inevitable unless we deem it so. Thank you.

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

Eternal God, as we navigate ups and downs, you remind us that you are a present help in the time of trouble. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

Those who are able, please rise as we recite together the Lord's prayer.

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thou 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, the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Congregation:

Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thou 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, the glory forever and ever. Amen.

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

Let us sing together hymn number 166, We Know That Christ Is Raised.

Congregation:

(singing)

The Rev. Calvin Jones:

As you leave this place but never away from God's presence, as you navigate the storms of life, may you be mindful in that your soul is anchored in Christ, for Christ, indeed, is raised.