

Courtney Godwin:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good Morning.

Courtney Godwin:

Welcome to Morning prayers. Our speaker this morning is the Reverend Aisha Ansano. For all who are able, please stand for our responsive reading, Psalm number 25, found in your black psalter.

Courtney Godwin:

To you, oh God, I lift up my soul. My God, I put my trust in you, let me not be humiliated nor let my enemies triumph over me.

Congregation:

Let none who look to you be put to shame. Let the treacherous be disappointed in their schemes.

Courtney Godwin:

Show me your ways, oh God, and teach me your paths.

Congregation:

Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation. In you have I trusted all the day long.

Courtney Godwin:

Remember, oh God, your compassion and love, for they are everlasting.

Congregation:

Remember not the sins of my youth and my transgressions. Remember me according to your love and for the sake of your goodness, oh Lord.

Courtney Godwin:

Gracious and upright are you. Therefore, you teach sinners in your way.

Congregation:

You guide the humble in doing right and teach your way to the lowly.

Courtney Godwin:

All your paths are love and faithfulness to those who keep your covenant and your testimonies.

Congregation:

Let integrity and uprightness preserve me, for my hope has been in you.

Courtney Godwin:

You may be seated.

Choir:

(singing)

Aisha Ansan:

Our reading today is from the poet Nikki Giovanni. "Sometimes the window is open, and a breeze comes through singing a sweet song. It is nap time. Grandmother sits on the front porch. Grandpapa cuts the grass. It is a song. You nap. I nap. The angels hug us. A book settles besides us. Rest is resistance. It is a war we will win."

One of the absolute hardest things that I do in my life is rest. Even when I'm doing a leisure activity, like watching TV, I always feel like I should also be doing something productive, checking my email, folding my laundry, painting my nails, something so that I'm not just sitting there. There are always things to be done. We live in a society that deeply prizes productivity and that disparages laziness, and a society that has conflated any form of rest with laziness. I shouldn't feel guilty for taking the time to sit on the couch under a cozy blanket, drinking a mug of tea and reading a book. It's okay for me to nap in the middle of the day or go to bed early, even if my to-do list is full. I'm allowed to just be. I'm allowed to care for my body and my spirit with rest, even when there are things to be done. Rest is healing. Rest is resistance.

Now, there are times when it is easier for me to make time to rest, when my to-do list has gotten short, and I feel that it's okay to slow down and take a break. And there are those times when I think that I absolutely do not have the time or space to stop working, to take time to rest. And I know in those moments it is when I need due to rest the most. In those moments, I have to remind myself that there is no way I can finish all the work, even if I run myself ragged. Even if I fill every single possible moment with work, everything will still not get done. I can allow that to be overwhelming and lead me into despair, or as I try to do, I can allow it to release me from the necessity of filling each moment with work. I am trying so hard to fill more moments with time for lingering, for joy, for contemplation and for rest.

Tricia Hersey started a program called The Nap Ministry. She calls herself the Nap Bishop. And she's also the author of the forthcoming book, Rest is Resistance. That reading from Nikki Giovanni earlier was praise of that book. Tricia says, "Rest is not some cute little luxury item you grant to yourself as an extra treat after you've worked like a machine and are now burned out. Rest is our path to liberation, a portal for healing, a human right. Rest is a human right and our path to liberation."

What a powerful concept. And so over and over I try to remind myself I deserve rest. Rest is the way that I will get free and help others get free. I know I am my best self when I make time to rest. I deserve rest. I deserve rest. The need to power through, to rush, to keep living my life with an end goal of maximum productivity, I don't always need to give into that. I can listen to my body and sink into practices of slowing down, of conserving energy, of healing, of rest, And so many things can be rest, anything that helps me recuperate and rejuvenate, anything that helps me recover from the work I have

done, anything that helps prepare me for the work I will do, anything that refreshes my body or my spirit or my mind.

Rest can be just doing a whole lot of nothing and letting myself heal. It's hard to remember that I deserve rest when there is so much on the to-do list. But I'm working on continuing to convince myself and to find time every day to rest in some way. May it help lead us all to healing and liberation.

And now, if you will join me in a spirit of prayer. Spirit of Life, Holy One, help us to remember that our entire beings are in need of rest. May we find the ways to bring it into our lives and remind ourselves and each other that no matter what it feels like, we deserve it. May it be so. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

Courtney Godwin:

All who are able, please rise for the Lord's Prayer. Together let us recite the prayer that Jesus taught us saying:

All:

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.

Courtney Godwin:

Now, let us sing the hymn number 188, I Sing the Mighty Power of God, found in the Harvard hymnal.

Congregation/Choir:

(singing)

Courtney Godwin:

May the words this morning go with us today as we leave this place, you remember that rest is resistance and you deserve rest. So please, go take a nap.