

Cheyenne Boon:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Cheyenne Boon:

And welcome to Morning Prayers. Today's service will begin with a responsive reading from the Black Appleton Psalter book. Please rise, in body or spirit, to read Psalm number 104, found on page 52.

Bless the Lord, O my soul. O Lord my God, you are very great. You are clothed with honor and majesty.

Congregation:

Wrapped in light as with a garment. You stretch out the heavens like a tent,

Cheyenne Boon:

You set the beams of your chambers on the waters, you make the clouds your chariots, you ride on the wings of the wind.

Congregation:

You make the winds your messengers, fire and flame your ministers.

Cheyenne Boon:

You set the earth on its foundations so that it shall never be shaken.

Congregation:

You cover it with the deep as with a garment, the waters stood above the mountains.

Cheyenne Boon:

At your rebuke they flee, at the sound of your thunder they take to flight.

Congregation:

They rose up to the mountains, ran down to the valleys to the place that you appointed for them.

Cheyenne Boon:

May the glory of the Lord endure forever. May the Lord rejoice in his works.

Congregation:

Who looks on the earth and it trembles, who touches the mountains and they smoke.

Choir:

(singing)

Eba Hathout:

In your name God, the most gracious and merciful, the Quran reads, "Say we believe in God and the revelation given to Abraham, Ishmael, Isaac, Jacob, and the tribes, and that which was given Moses, and that which was given through Jesus. And to the prophets from our Lord, we make no distinction between one and the other and to God, we surrender."

At the prelude of this Thanksgiving week, the biggest interfaith festival of our year, my heart expands with gratitude for the kind invitation to deliver this Morning Prayer service at Harvard's Memorial Church.

Embedded in the many traditions we share, my Muslim family and I rejoice in recounting the role models of gratitude exemplified in the rich succession of Abrahamic prophethoods, and our mutual missions, such as the one stated by God in the Quran, we have sent you for none else but mercy to the worlds.

In his last book, Audible Silence, my late father, Hassan Hathout, wrote of a French parliamentarian he met at a conference in Switzerland. She had been a member of the French Resistance in World War II, and thus harbored immense repulsion to Germans. One day, she was seen rushing out of a conference in anger because of the arrival of a German delegate. When an American of faith stopped her and asked, "Do you think you can rebuild Europe without the Germans?" She struggled with this thought in solitude for days, then came out and confronted the German emissaries with an angry narration of personal Gestapo horror stories that fewered her hatred, she said, to all Germans.

When she finished speaking, a moment of silence followed, before a lady from the German group quietly replied. "My husband was involved in the plot against Hitler. He was arrested and executed. I was left alone to raise our two children. I apologize if our response was not early or strong enough." The French parliamentarian changed in an instant. And as she held hands with the German delegate, and as they prayed together that day, they ushered reconciliation between France and Germany, which was to change the face of Europe and the world forever.

Y'ven Yough called her biography, Pour L'amour de Demain, for the Love of Tomorrow. Words I later use as a standing title for many interfaith events over the years. Although I am new to this chapel, having just relocated from Los Angeles. The studies that my children have pursued here at Harvard, and the beautiful songs of this choir, which I heard in Harvard commencement ceremonies, make me feel somewhat at home.

The other reason I feel at home is the divine presence I cannot dismiss in Memorial Church, given how the Muslim scripture describes Jesus as the spirit of God and His word, which He bestowed on Mary the virgin.

I feel at home here as I think of our country, and the deep wounds and fractures that sustained in recent years. And a voice within me whispers that are morning prayers of today are indeed for the love of tomorrow.

Let us pray, that God may grant us the clarity to better understand our shared humanity, to serve the essence of our Judeo-Christian-Islamic creed, and the many other spiritual traditions that can help us along the way. May God enable us to taste the sweetness of forgiveness and love, which our faith has at its core. May God's light fill our heart with gratitude, and help many, in our nation and throughout the world, move from a place of hatred or fear to a home of peace and love.

I end with words from one of my father's poems, Friends in Faith Rise, while you still have a choice. On the wings of love soar above and sing with your hearts, not only your voice. God is love. God is love. God is love.

Cheyenne Boon:

Now, if you would please rise in body or spirits, and join in saying the prayer that Jesus taught us, 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.

Cheyenne Boon:

Now, please join in singing hymn number 78, For the Fruit of All Creation.

Congregation/Choir:

(singing)

Cheyenne Boon:

And now 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.