

Harriet Lindman:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Harriet Lindman:

And welcome to morning prayers here at Appleton Chapel. Our speaker this morning will be Dr. Eba Hathout. Welcome. Please rise in body or in spirit for responsive reading of Psalm 107 found in your black Psalter.

Oh, give thanks to the Lord for He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever.

Congregation:

Let the redeemed of the Lord say so. Whom he hath redeemed from hell.

Harriet Lindman:

And gathered in from the lands, from the east and from the west, from the north and from the south.

Congregation:

Let us thank the Lord for His steadfast love. For His wonderful works to the sons of men.

Harriet Lindman:

For He satisfies him who is thirsty and the hungry He fills with good things.

Congregation:

Some sat in darkness and gloom. Prisoners in affliction and [inaudible 00:04:15].

Harriet Lindman:

For they have rebelled against the words of God and spurned the council of the most high.

Congregation:

Their hearts were bowed down with hard labor. They fell down with none to help.

Harriet Lindman:

Then they cried to the Lord in their trouble and He delivered them from their distress.

Congregation:

He brought them out of the darkness and gloom, and broke their bonds in sunder.

Choir:

(singing)

Dr. Eba Hathout MD:

In your name, God, the most gracious, the most merciful. The Quran reads, "True piety does not consist in turning your faces towards the east or the west. Truly pious are they who believe in God, and the last day, and the angels and revelation and profits and those who spend their substance, however cherished upon the needy and then wait there, and for the freeing of human beings from bondage. They who are constant in prayer, truly pious are they who keep their promises and are patient in misfortune and hardship and times of peril. It is they that have proved themselves true and it is they who are conscious of God."

To reinforce this spirit, Muslims in America and throughout the world begin the fasting month of Ramadan tonight. Our fellow co-religionists of the Abrahamic faiths, Christians and Jews, have other versions of fasting. Despite difference in ritual, we share with each other and with our fellow humans of all creeds, the common definition of righteousness spelled out in the Quranic verse I shared. For the next 29 days, many Muslims shall refrain from food and drink and water and physical intimacy from dawn to sunset. During such a fast, fires of hatred are extinguished, toxins invading gut or ear or spirit are put to rest, body and soul align to make restful brains and happy hearts. Ramadan is a month of healing at its best. There is a depth and a breadth that are attained when one fasts that are enormously uplifting. Predicaments deflate, everything shrinks to its proper dimension.

And spirits rise unencumbered. Whenever they reach one mountain top, they begin to climb another. A magical power prevails, that I would suggest is the power of distilled purified love, love of God, love in God, and love for God. In his last book, Audible Silence, my late Father Hassan Hatu described his daily practice of quiet time as a time when ideas and insights condense on the slate of the mind, like dew drops. Solutions to problems and queries just float in with appraisal of things done or planned, and the nearness to God that inspires us to know what God wants us to do. My father frequently said, "Religion is a verb."

Today and here, we are together on a quest hoping that our spirits become aligned with God's plan for us and for our world, so that after we do our part, our egos may one day accept all else as is. Ladies and gentlemen, when I read how the Quran describes Jesus as the Spirit of God and His word, which He bestowed on Mary the Virgin, I feel privileged as a Muslim to start the holy month of Ramadan at this memorial Church of Harvard University, the alma mater of my daughter and son, and my new professional home. I hope that our fasting will add to the collective prayers of like-minded people to help the victims of injustice, inequity, and intolerance within our country and beyond.

Let us pray that divine healing may touch bodies and soul in our nation and our world. Let us pray that God make us instruments of mercy as we rebuild our common Judeo-Christian, Islamic, and all human path, guided by divine wisdom and shining with God's light. Almighty lasting God who safely brought us to the beginning of this day, defend us. See that all our doings may be ordered by thy government to do always what is righteous in thy sight. Guide us to better ways of serving you. Breathe your healing spirit through our rooms. Shine your light through our brokenness and make us hope. Allow your loving guidance to steer our path. Carry us in your loving hand and look upon us with your overpowering, loving mercy. Make us instruments of your peace. Bless our loved ones. Fill our hearts with your love. And through your mercy, bring peace to our souls and to our world. God of love, hear our prayer.

Congregation:

Amen. Amen.

Harriet Lindman:

Amen. Please rise in body and spirit, as we pray as 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 evil. For thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever and ever. Amen. Please join in singing the hymn, O Day of God, Draw Nigh, number 329.

Congregation/Choir:
(singing)

Harriet Lindman:

And now may the Lord bless you and keep you. The Lord make his face to shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace. Go in peace. Amen.

Congregation:
Amen.