

Harriet Lindman:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Harriet Lindman:

Welcome to morning prayers here at Appleton Chapel. Our speaker this morning will be John Clayton Gehman, Master of Theological Studies candidate of Harvard Divinity School. Welcome. Please rise in body and in spirit for a responsive reading of Psalm 145 found in your black Psalter.

"I will exalt you, oh holy God, and bless your name forever and ever."

Congregation:

"Every day, I will bless you and praise your name forever and ever."

Harriet Lindman:

"Great are you, oh God, and greatly to be praised. There is no end to your greatness."

Congregation:

"And one generation shall praise your works to another and shall declare your power."

Harriet Lindman:

"I will ponder the glorious splendor of your majesty and all your marvelous works."

Congregation:

"You uphold all those who fall, you lift up those who are bowed down."

Harriet Lindman:

"The eyes of all wait upon you, oh God, and you give them their food in due season."

Congregation:

"You open wide your hand and satisfy the needs of every living creature."

Harriet Lindman:

"You are righteous in all your works, and loving in all your ways."

Congregation:

"You are near to those who call upon you, to all who call upon you faithfully."

Choir:

(singing)

John Clayton Gehman:

Blessed morning, everyone. I'll be reading a poem from Angelus Silesius.

"The rose is without why. She blooms because she blooms. She pays herself no regard, asks not if she's seen. The rose, she buds from a seed, though her tender unknown. She knows know why nor cares if she's seen. Unbeknownst to her, her seed carries the secret of time, the eternal beauty of an ephemeral life. She blooms as she blooms, still little does she know the rarity for her seed to grow. She roots in good soil, and only good soil, and her roots become many. Then, one day, the storm. The rose hears thunder and trembles at her might. The tremble heard in the core, even if there is no light. In the sweet storm's lament, the rose, she notices the truth longing to be heard. With the kiss of the thunder, she awakens to the heart where they must gather."

"She awakens to the sky of the crystalline heart, a place eternal and expansive, teeming with glorious light. Rooted in luscious soil, she can never give way. She grows in the garden, hidden in a single facet of the heart's infinite domain. She will not tire for she has trust in her true form. Instead, she basks in the light and the refraction of its ten thousand infinities. Their love shines so bright, ceaseless in color. She never questioned her own. And seasons said, faintly in the distance, the reflection of her radianta. The light shines and the crystal is brightened. She is laid in the breath with its gentle caress. For she is the subtle wind carried in the thunder's silent roar. For she understands that this palace so pure is so simply her near and fleeting breath. With perfect heart and mind, she breathes back to the thunder whipped and lashed, her petals fall before her and still she pays herself no regard, never tempted in fear. So again, the rose breathes, each one rising and falling, and sends forth her thousandfold kisses."

"Hurled back by her wings, she [inaudible 00:09:47] and remembers the storm. She retains her true light even if still hidden in form. She blooms because she blooms, eventually to die. She soon grows weak, and as she droops, she remembers her little brown roots and the seedling that started this loop. In her final moments, under the crystallized sky, she still pays herself no attention, and with no distraction, never chokes the voice of the thunder. And at last, she imagines and remembers the beauty, the birthplace in her eternity. Shedding her last tear, she has seen the beauty forever and ever, all witnessed in plain sight. The rose is now dead, but death she knew was merely a choice. And she chose life, the breath always after the voice. In life, she offered all that she could give, for even in her very weakness she peered into our shimmering eyes. She paid herself no attention and gestured the best way she could toward her breathing love, the one that will never die."

"For she knew that this was all she ever had, and thus, cherishing so deeply her mother, she who is called the land. She now kisses her children in the breath of the breeze as the quiet thunder spring them to calmness and peace. She was the love, and she chose you, the sacred and the ordinary. The rose blooms simply for you. She lasted a mere few seconds and now returns as the breath in forever, and she still pays no regard. Cares not if she's seen."

"As her wilted petals fall through the gravity, they now tremble on different land for the land is now scorched. The water's dry on the heavy earth that once cried. Her memories are lost. This, my beloveds, is the apocalypse's cost. The cries went forward, but we ignored the thunder, and now the winds and their breath no longer moved, strayed without their creator. And natural movements have stopped, and earth, well, she can't go much further. Our time is, as ever, unclear. With no seasons to move, the rose, she never really bloomed. She never took root. Her soil was innocent. In our ego, she never had her chance. We paid her no regard. Now, there is no longer her beauty, the ephemeral light. Might we have one last chance to kiss the silent thunder. Until then, she is the rose who comes to mind."

And now, I want to invite us to a short period of quiet and prayer to glimpse the rose who comes to mind.

Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

Harriet Lindman:

Please rise in body and spirit for prayer. And now, we pray as Jesus taught us, saying: Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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 trespassed against us. And lead us not to temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Congregation:

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed by 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 trespassed against us. And lead us not to temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory forever and ever. Amen.

Harriet Lindman:

Please join in singing the hymn, Awake, Awake to Love and Work, number 46.

Congregation/Choir:

(singing)

Harriet Lindman:

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

Congregation:

Amen.