

Courtney Godwin:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Courtney Godwin:

Welcome to Morning Prayers in Appleton Chapel. Our speaker this morning is Anna Dean, a sophomore in Mather House. Welcome. Will you please rise, as you are able, and join me in our responsive Psalm, number 146, found in your black psalter? Praise ye the Lord. Praise the Lord, O my soul.

Congregation:

While I live will I praise the Lord. I will sing praises unto my God while I have any being.

Courtney Godwin:

Put not your trust in princes, nor in the son of man, in whom there is no help.

Congregation:

His breath goeth forth, he returneth to his earth; in that very day his thoughts perish.

Courtney Godwin:

Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the Lord his God.

Congregation:

Which made heaven, and earth, the sea, and all that therein is. Which keepeth truth for ever.

Courtney Godwin:

Which executeth judgment for the oppressed, which giveth food to the hungry. The Lord looseth the prisoners.

Congregation:

The Lord openeth the eyes of the blind; the Lord raiseth them that are bowed down; the Lord loveth the righteous.

Courtney Godwin:

The Lord preserveth the strangers; He relieveth the fatherless and the widow. But the way of the wicked He turneth upside down.

Congregation:

The Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Zion, unto all generations. Praise ye the Lord.

Courtney Godwin:

You may be seated.

Choir:

(Singing).

Anna Grace Dean:

The apostle Paul writes in Romans 8, starting in the 20th verse, "For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself was set free from its bondage to corruption and obtain the freedom of the glory of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation has been groaning together in the pains of childbirth until now. And not only the creation, but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for the adoptions as sons and the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen, not hope. For who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we wait for it with patience."

"Likewise, the Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words. And He who searches hearts knows what is the mind of the spirit, because the Spirit intercedes for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that for those who love God, all things work together for good, for those who are called according to His purpose."

So, the first thing that I think of when thinking of the climate crisis is my home. I was born in Jackson, Mississippi, and if you don't know much about Mississippi, Mississippi is the poorest state in the country. Mississippi also bears the brunt of climate change. Mississippi experiences more than 60 days out of the year above 95 degrees Fahrenheit. Mississippi floods extremely. Just one week ago, there was a tornado in Rolling Fork, Mississippi, that destroyed an entire city, primarily a city of low-income Black folks. In my hometown of Jackson, the drinking water is contaminated with lead and copper. This crisis is due to environmental racism, historic floodings, and freezing temperatures. Jackson is also known as the cancer belt. Due to environmental injustice, people in my hometown are more likely to get cancer than in any other region of the United States.

In the past, I've really struggled with my spirituality because of climate change. Growing up, I was surrounded by members of the church who denied climate change was real or human-caused. The lack of care and even talk about climate change in the church has been extremely hard for me. I feel that my spirituality is extremely connected to nature, and thus climate change. I found myself grappling with climate anxieties and frustration with the church, alone. Grieving the climate is something that we must do in community. I believe that the church and people of faith have an instrumental role in the crisis. Not only is it imperative that we speak about the crisis in worship settings like this, but we must actively work to address these issues. Prayer isn't enough. We need to talk about the issue, and actively work to combat it. I believe that fighting the climate crisis can be making greener decisions in our individual lives, but the fight is also a community-based shift in how people of faith view our role in environmental collapse.

So, I just read Paul's excerpt from Romans earlier. Here, Paul is articulating how the Holy Spirit can help us with present sufferings, like climate change, and give us hope for the future. The power of the Holy Spirit doesn't mean that we shouldn't actively be fighting against climate change. It doesn't mean that we shouldn't actively be helping our most vulnerable brothers and sisters in Jackson, Mississippi. The Holy Spirit gives us the power to fight, despite it all. Because of the Spirit, we are free from the weight of climate anxieties. Yet, we must actively, on a daily basis, aid our most vulnerable communities during this crisis.

Time is scary, and the race of time and rising oceans is extremely terrifying. When we were in Iceland, a dear friend of mine told me a quote that she had heard in a class at Harvard. Zoe said, "We do what we can with the time that we have." We must do what we can in the time that we have. We don't know how much time we have left, but we do know that we have to work in order to help the most marginalized by the climate crisis. The Holy Spirit can liberate us from our anxieties; however, we must fight in the time that we have left. Thank you.

Courtney Godwin:

All who are able, please rise for prayer. Let us pray. Eternal God, in whom we move and breathe and have our being. Accept, O Lord, our thanks and praise for all that you have done for us. We thank you for the splendor of the whole creation, for the beauty of this world, for the wonder of life, and for the mystery of love. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

Courtney Godwin:

Together, let us recite the prayer that 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 from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

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, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

Courtney Godwin:

Please join in singing our closing hymn... The place mat is incorrect, today we will be singing 219, Fairest Lord Jesus. Hymn number 219, in your personal Harvard hymnal.

Congregation:

(Singing).

Choir:

(Singing).

Courtney Godwin:

God, you call us to justice, to care for our neighbors, especially the poorest among us. With the Holy Spirit, empower us to fight for that justice, and to fight for our earth, your creation. Amen.

Congregation:

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Amen.