

Theresa Lungu:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Theresa Lungu:

Welcome to Morning Prayers here at Appleton Chapel. Our speaker today is Kayleigh Noblin, class of 2023 and representing Pforzheimer House. Please rise as you're able, and join me in the responsive reading, number 139 from the black psalter book.

"O Lord, you have searched me and known me."

Congregation:

"You know when I sit down and when I rise up; you understand my thoughts from far away."

Theresa Lungu:

"You search out my path and lying down, and are acquainted with all my ways."

Congregation:

"Even before a word is on my tongue, O Lord, you know it completely."

Theresa Lungu:

"You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me."

Congregation:

"Such knowledge is too wonderful for me; it is so high that I cannot attain it."

Theresa Lungu:

"Where can I go from your spirit? Or where can I flee from your presence?"

Congregation:

"If I ascend to heaven, you are there; if I make my bed in Sheol, you are there."

Theresa Lungu:

"If I take the wings of the morning and settle at the farthest limits of the sea..."

Congregation:

"... even there your hand shall lead me, and your right hand shall hold me fast."

Theresa Lungu:

"If I say, 'Surely the darkness shall cover me, and the light around me become night,'..."

Congregation:

"... even the darkness is not dark to you; the night is as bright as the day, for darkness is as light to you."

Choir:

(Singing).

Kayleigh Noblin:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Kayleigh Noblin:

My name is Kayleigh Noblin. I am honored to be here this morning on behalf of Pforzheimer House, which I've been able to call home for the last several years. I'm going to start with a text from T. S. Eliot's *Little Gidding*, that my faculty dean, Dr. Anne Harrington, pointed me to when we were talking about the message that I wanted to show today. It goes like this. "We shall not cease from exploration and the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time." To me, this quote reminds me of something my grandmother told me right before I left for college. She told me that in leaving, I would be falling back on good seeds; that I'd be fine, because I was falling back on good seeds. As soon as she told me that, I knew there was something to that quote, so I wrote it down in this little notebook that I carry around with me. But I wasn't quite sure yet what that something was.

You see, I'm originally from Oklahoma. I'm part Cherokee, and I grew up in the Cherokee Nation on a farm outside of a small working town. I come from a place that my family has existed in for generations. My town and the land hold memories of us and for us. On the north side of Mission Mountain, in the foothills of the Ozarks, sits the church that was established by one of the largest bands of Cherokees at the end of their removal. This is the same church that my parents got married in. It's the same church that is attached to the cemetery that many of my ancestors are buried in, the same church I drove by every day for school, the same church that my grandparents still attend, and the church I've been to many times for family reunions and birthdays and holidays.

I was the first in my family to really up and leave; to pack my things and get on a flight and find another place outside of the 50-mile radius that all the descendants of my grandparents call home. And I love my home. But when I was growing up there, I didn't realize what I do now. For me, growing up was filled with a lot of things, most of which I didn't always appreciate as anything special. My days didn't feel unique. It was just a Tuesday followed by Wednesday and so on. But through time and distance, I gained a wider view of life, deepening the value I put in life and home and here in relationships and everything. I realized what I thought was just part of the furniture was actually something saturated with life, and that it was really quite amazing.

I feel like, over these last four years, I've been provided the water and nourishment for those seeds that my granny was talking about those years ago. Yes, I knew who I was, but I've been able to grow in all kinds of directions since then, and I'm different than I was four years ago. And despite the distance from home, I don't feel distant. I've come to understand life in a new light, my relationships with new intentionality, and my heritage with deeper roots. I've somehow been able to foster my connection to my heritage by first finding out what that connection meant to me.

I continue to find myself answering many questions I'm asked with something that relates to home. Time after time, I've tied in where I come from to an assignment, to the questions I'm presented with, to

the way I approach the day in front of me. It's something in me that's deep-rooted, something like a seed, and maybe that's where it started, but it's grown. I have good seeds to fall back on, and good nourishment that I've been blessed enough to have now.

And now, Harvard's also a part of my story. Maybe I don't have the deep roots here that I have back home, but I have found people here, and they have found me, and we have laughed and we have cried, and we have shared highs and lows, with most days being somewhere in between. And soon, I will be going back home. But I will be bringing everything I have with me in a lot of suitcases, but also metaphorically, seeing it all with new eyes. I carry it all with me. I carry home with me here, and I'll carry this place with me as I go forward. In Cherokee, there is no word for goodbye. Instead, we say, [Cherokee 00:12:07], which means, "till we meet again". Thank you.

Theresa Lungu:

Please stand as you're able, and let us pray. Thank you, Lord, for your goodness toward us all. We pray that your presence be felt in our lives today. We give you all our cares and burdens, and we trust that you will take care of us. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

Theresa Lungu:

And together, let us recite the Lord's Prayer, 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, 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, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen."

Theresa Lungu:

And please join us in our closing hymn, Morning Has Broken, number 40 in the crimson Harvard hymnal.

Congregation:

(Singing).

Theresa Lungu:

Thank you for joining us this morning. And as we go forth unto this day, may God protect and guide us in all decisions we make. And may we find contentment and joy in everything we already have. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

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