

Harriet Lindeman:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Harriet Lindeman:

And welcome to Morning Prayers here at Appleton Chapel. Please rise, in body or in spirit, as we read Psalm 85, found in your black psalter.

"You have been gracious to your land, O God. You have restored the good fortune of Jacob."

Congregation:

"You have forgiven the iniquity of your people and blotted out all their sins."

Harriet Lindeman:

"I will listen to what you are saying, for you are speaking peace to your faithful people and to those who turn their hearts to you."

Congregation:

"Truly, your salvation is very near to those who fear you, that your glory may dwell in our land."

Harriet Lindeman:

"Mercy and truth have met together, righteousness and peace have kissed each other."

Congregation:

"Truth shall spring up from the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven."

Harriet Lindeman:

"You, O God, will indeed grant prosperity, and our land will yield its increase."

Congregation:

"Righteousness shall go before you, and peace shall be a pathway for your feet."

Choir:

(Singing).

Franz Lepionka:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Franz Lepionka:

Hope everyone's a little less soggy than me. The text I'll read today is from Jeremiah 12:5. "If you have raced with foot-runners and they have wearied you, how will you compete with horses? And if in a safe land you fall down, how will you fare in the thickets of the Jordan?"

When I set out to write down my thoughts for today, I started on a path that led me far away from my intended words. I listened to prior speakers, and the poignant messages they conveyed. I observed the prior speakers showed personal, frank openness. I determined that my planned discourse on the ethical, moral morass of attorneys acting human instead of professional was far better for a law review article than this moment of closeness. And that is when my daughter stepped in and shared a parable with me. In her own words, and I'm not kidding, she looked at my transcription of her story, and told me to hand her the computer. These are her words.

Helen and her classmate had a debate about climate change. Her classmate took the position that we should leave it for the generations coming. Helen asked him, "Do you have a sibling?" He said yes. Helen asked him, "Do you have a dishwasher?" He said, "We do, but it broke a few days ago." Helen said, "Imagine it's your sibling's week to wash dishes, and they do not do them. Now it's your week, and now you have to wash the dishes from last week, and the dishes piling up around you. Won't you wish then that your sibling had done their part? That's what it would be like if we did not do anything to help slow down climate change now. We would then be leaving it worse than we found it for the coming generations."

Those are Helen's words, conceived and spoken on the spot in that moment. And these are not Helen's only words or actions on the topics of climate change. Last school year, in fourth grade, Helen and a few of her friends organized a climate school strike. The courageous kids went to school on a Friday, lined up on the firmament surrounding the schoolyard world they know, marking the border between their safe world and the unknown, and said, "No." When school administrators said, "Nice protest. Now come to school," they then went on to march through town, and down Mass Ave to Harvard Square and into this yard. They raised placards; they raised their voices. They sent a letter to alumni Governor Healey. And the school administration tracked down Helen's mother and said, "No more, this is disruptive." And Helen's mother said, "Thank you for getting the point."

Helen fretted the coming return to school on Monday. What would wait for her? What waited for her was her chance to run with the horses. Run she did, right into the unsafe thickets of the river Jordan. She was safe when she was away from the schoolyard and away from authority. Yet she knew the hard part was still to come; the return to school, to impactful judgment upon her actions. She did not shy away from the challenge of retribution. She continues to meet the challenges of her cause, our necessary common cause. Though her task, at the moment, appears a thankless jeremiad no one wants to hear, a task that angers many. Nonetheless, the climate reckoning is occurring, and the warnings are sounding now.

On the eroding beaches, we must fight for our planet. In the petroleum-fueled farm fields and car-choked streets, we must fight for our planet. In the mountains where the glaciers melt, we must fight for our planet. And beyond our borders, where Canada and the old world burn and flood, we must fight for our planet. I bring you this message on behalf of Helen. Helen, who inspired this talk with her parable. Helen, who is willing to run with the horses, head on, into the swollen Jordan. If once a thousand ships were willing to launch for her, then today, launch a billion voices for Helen and each of us by using your status to fight for our planet. Let us all run with the horses and do the hard work before there are no horses to run. Thank you. Amen.

Harriet Lindeman:

Please rise, in body or in spirit, for prayer. God of love and grace, we give thanks for the unexpected leaders in our midst, sometimes the young ones, who have the boldness and the bravery to do what must be done. Let us find our own power to do our part. And now let us pray as Jesus taught, saying, "Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is 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 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 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 into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory. For ever and ever. Amen."

Harriet Lindeman:

And let us sing the hymn Morning Has Broken, number 40.

Congregation:

(Singing).

Harriet Lindeman:

And now as we go into this morning, the peace of God be in your hearts, the love of God be in your hands, the joy of God be in your soul. Go in peace. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.