

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

Good morning.

Congregation:

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The Rev. Matthew Potts:

Welcome to our daily service of Morning Prayers here in the Appleton Chapel of our Memorial Church. Our speaker this morning is the Reverend Dr. Mae Elise Cannon as executive director of the Churches for Middle East Peace. I invite you please to rise and join in saying our responsorial Psalm number 86, which is printed in your black psalter.

Bow down thine ear, O Lord, hear me: for I am poor and needy.

Congregation:

Preserve my soul; for I am holy: O thou my God, save thy servant that trusteth in thee.

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

Be merciful unto me, O Lord: for I cry unto thee daily.

Congregation:

Rejoice the soul of thy servant: for unto thee, O Lord, do I lift up my soul.

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

For thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee.

Congregation:

Give ear, O Lord, unto my prayer; and attend to the voice of my supplications.

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

In the day of my trouble I will call upon thee: for thou wilt answer me.

Congregation:

Among the gods there is none like unto thee, O Lord; neither are there any works like unto thy works.

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

All nations whom thou hast made shall come and worship before thee, O Lord; and shall glorify thy name.

Congregation:

For thou art great, and doest wondrous things: thou art God alone.

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

Teach me thy way, O Lord; I will walk in thy truth: unite my heart to fear thy name.

Congregation:

I will praise thee, O Lord my God, with all my heart: and I will glorify thy name for evermore.

(singing)

The Rev. Dr. Mae Elise Cannon:

Thank you for the gift of worshiping with you this morning. The passage that I'd like to share with you is one of my favorites. It's one of my life verses. It's from Deuteronomy chapter 30, starting with verse 11.

"Now what I am commanding you today is not too difficult for you, nor is it beyond your reach. It is not up in heaven, so that you have to ask, "Who will ascend into heaven to get it and proclaim it to us so we may obey it?" Nor is it beyond the sea, so that we have to ask, "Who," and proclaim it to us so that we have to ask, "Who may obey it?" No, the word is very near to you; it is in your mouth, it is on your heart so that we might obey it. I have set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. And I command you today to love the Lord your God, walk in obedience to Him, keep His commandments, decrees and laws; and then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land that you are entering."

The passage continues and says:

"This day I have called heavens and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you, life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life so that you and your children may live and that you may love the Lord your God. Listen to His voice and hold fast to Him. For the Lord is your life and He will give you many years and the land that He swore to your ancestors."

May these words be an encouragement to you. These were my life verses. When I was applying to college, I couldn't decide where to go. Don't hold it against me, I went to the University of Chicago and not Harvard. But I think that these words about choosing life remind us that even when we live in the midst of a broken world, that God invites us to engage in it. And that we have the opportunity to choose life in small choices and big. That we have the opportunity in small moments when we encounter people who might disagree with us, to respond either with a word of kindness or hope or goodness or to respond with hatred or anger.

And so as you go about your day, might we make choices in small ways to choose life instead of death and destruction. And as you heard, I work on Middle East Peace. My hope and prayer is that we might choose life in the world. And so we pray for our leaders. I pray that we would choose life for all people rather than war and death and destruction. And so I'd ask if you would please join me in prayer.

Lord God, in heaven, thank you that you do not leave the world only to death and destruction, but that you give us a choice to choose life. And so I pray for each person here in this room that you would help us to know what that means in our own lives. I pray that for this community, for this city, for our country, and I pray that for the world. As war rages in so many places, from Ukraine to the Middle East, to Nagorno-Karabakh in Armenia, Lord, I pray that we might choose peace over death, that we might choose the lack of violence over war, that we might choose humanization over seeing people as less than human. So remind us of the good news that we may choose life rather than death, and that you bring hope rather than destruction. Go before us this day, we pray, amen.

The Rev. Matthew Potts:

I invite you now please to rise. Join me in saying the prayer Jesus taught us.

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, forever and forever. Amen.

Please join in singing our concluding hymn number 29.

(singing)

Again, reminders and invitations to join us downstairs for fellowship in the undercroft for MemCafé after this service. And join us here in the chapel at 5:15 for a service of Holy Communion. And now, may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be among you all and remain with you always. Amen. Let us bless the Lord.

Congregation:

Bless you, God.