

Elizabeth Propst:

Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Elizabeth Propst:

Welcome to Morning Prayers here in the Appleton Chapel. We are blessed to have Shir Lovett-Graff joining us this morning, an MTS candidate at Harvard Divinity School. Welcome, Shir. Please rise, in body or spirit, and join in our responsive psalm, which is number 71 in your black Psalter. "In thee, O Lord, do I put my trust: let me never be put to confusion."

Congregation:

"Deliver me in thy righteousness, and cause me to escape: incline thine ear unto me, and save me."

Elizabeth Propst:

"Be thou my strong habitation, whereunto I may continually resort. Thou has given commandments to save me, for thou art my rock and my fortress."

Congregation:

"Deliver me, O my God, out of the hand of the wicked, out of the hand of the unrighteous and cruel man."

Elizabeth Propst:

"For thou art my hope, O Lord God, thou art my trust from my youth."

Congregation:

"I am as a wonder unto many; but thou art my strong refuge."

Elizabeth Propst:

"Let my mouth be filled with thy praise and with thy honor all the day."

Congregation:

"Cast me not off in the time of old age; forsake me not when my strength faileth."

Elizabeth Propst:

"My lips shall greatly rejoice when I sing unto thee, and in my soul, which thou hast redeemed."

Congregation:

"My tongue also shall talk of thy righteousness all the day long: for they are confounded, for they are brought unto shame, that seek my hurt."

Choir:

(Singing).

Shir Lovett-Graff:

"Dearest Mother, what becomes of the girl no longer a girl? The stretch marks from my once breasts have migrated to their new tectonic flats. But you can always find hints of what used to be. Trust me, it is more beautiful this way, to look closely at my body and name it things like Pangaea and history and so, so warm. Look at me now and you'll see how blood faithfully takes the shape of its body, never asking too many questions." These are words by trans writer Kayleb Rae Candrilli from their poem, *One Geography of Belonging*.

As a Jewish community organizer and activist, I often speak to my community members about how we show up differently in public and private spaces. In private, we share stories about our individual journeys to solidarity work. We give each other advice on navigating difficult family conversations. We tease out the complexities of diasporic Jewish identity with patience and care. But in public, we show up as a united front. We shout, sing, and march in solidarity with movements for justice and freedom. We are accountable to one another; to not burden those most affected by state violence with our internal unlearning. We enter spaces with banners and T-shirts that match, so the world will know that we represent a new and unified wave of activism.

Sometimes it is hard that the wider world cannot witness the intercommunal work being done to move the Jewish world into a liberatory future. And at the same time, the boundary between public and private feels clear and strategic. However, as a trans and queer person, navigating my own boundaries between private and public identity can feel challenging. Within queer communities, I feel more flexible about my clothing, my pronouns, and even my name, because I trust that people will see me the way I'm asking to be seen. My queer loved ones do not need the guideposts of binders and they/them pronouns to see the map of my existence. In the privacy of my room, the rules that guide public trans expression disappear completely, and I'm queen of my domain.

But in public, queer and trans people are constantly forced to choose markers of identity that stake our claim in the cis realm of existence. We must use language grounded in history to prove that we've always been here. We are categorized into studies and theories by people who are afraid of identity so fluid it transcends citations. We choose words that don't always fit who we are so we can maintain relationships with people fixated on finding the perfect language.

If there's one thing I've learned on my intersecting journeys into transness and community organizing, it's that perfect language does not exist. We can try to find the right messaging or perfect chant to encompass the grief and anger overlaid in our hearts, but we won't. We can try to find the words to describe our dynamic identities, shifting across age, gender, aspirations, and dreams, but we won't. All we can do is choose which boundaries between public and private feel right to us, right now, in this moment, knowing that it will change. Blessed are those who set boundaries, and blessed are those whose boundaries change. May all who navigate public and private spaces find comfort in this universal experience. Thank you.

Elizabeth Propst:

Please rise, in body or spirit, for the Lord's Prayer. "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."

Elizabeth Propst:

Please join in our closing hymn, number 303 in your crimson hymnal.

Congregation:

(Singing).

Elizabeth Propst:

God's hands work through your hands, God's voice speaks through your voice. May our hands and our voices do the work of justice and of love, today and always. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.