

Steph Grossano:

Good morning and welcome to morning prayers. Our speaker this morning is Roeshana Moore-Evans. She's the executive director of the Harvard and Legacy of Slavery project. Welcome. Our service today will begin with a responsive reading of Psalm 145. Please rise in body or spirit as we read the Psalm responsibly by whole verse. "I will exalt you, oh holy God, and bless your name forever and ever."

Congregation:

"Every day will I bless you and praise your name forever and ever."

Steph Grossano:

"Great are you oh God, and greatly to be praised. There is no end to your greatness."

Congregation:

"One generation shall praise your works to another and shall declare your power."

Steph Grossano:

"I will ponder the glorious splendor of your majesty and all your marvelous works."

Congregation:

"You uphold all those who fall. You lift up those who are bowed down."

Steph Grossano:

"The eyes have all wait upon you, oh God, and you give them their food in due season."

Congregation:

"You open wide your hand and satisfy the needs of every living creature."

Steph Grossano:

"You are righteous in all your ways and loving in all your works."

Congregation:

"You are near to those who call on you, to all who call upon you faithfully."

Choir:

(Singing)

Roeshana Moore-Evans:

Good morning. Today I acknowledge the last day of February, the 29th, which make this a leap year. I also acknowledge this last day as being the last day and the end of Black History Month. I'm grateful to be here with you all today and I look forward to sharing what I hope will be an encouraging message. My message today will be coming from John 14:1-4, and the reading of God's word is as follows, "Let not your heart be troubled. You believe in God, believe also in me. In my father's house there are many mansions. If it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and prepare

a place for you, I will come again and receive you unto myself, that where I am there ye may be also, and whither I go ye know and the way you know."

May the Lord add a blessing to the reading of his wonderful word this morning. In the previous chapter, John 13, Jesus had told his disciples that one of them was a traitor, another would deny him, and He would leave them that night. All of this was devastating news for his disciples and gave them great sorrow. But in these verses, in John 14, Jesus, being the merciful savior that He is, wanted to bring them at ease. These verses encapsulate the themes of faith, comfort, assurance and the promise of eternal life Through Jesus Christ. They offer solace to believers encouraging us to trust in Jesus and his divine plan, even in times of uncertainty. Jesus never told his disciples or us that we wouldn't have hard times, but He wanted us to believe in Him and the promises he's made to us, we have faced, well I have faced tremendous amount of uncertainty this year, certainly at this university and for some of us in our own personal lives.

But who are we in the face of uncertainty? What do we do? I am reminded of a quote by Martin Luther King Jr. Which reads, "The ultimate measure of a man or a woman is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands in times of challenge and controversy." Do we give up or do we persevere? Do we have faith or do we doubt? As believers, we are called to stand firm in our faith. My nana is a shining example of this, of what it looks like to stand firm in your faith during times of uncertainty. She has been a pillar of strength and a beacon of light in my life for as long as I can remember. She just had her fifth stroke this week, yet she is alert, mobile and still standing strong in her faith. As I sat with her last night, I began to quote scriptures.

I shared this scripture with her and watched as she mouthed the words along with me. She had taught me this scripture at a very young age, and we'd often recited together. How heartening and encouraging it was for me to see her mouth these words with me. It's clear that they still live in her heart. The faith that she continues to display during this time of uncertainty in her life is encouraging and not only strengthens me, but I'm sure it strengthens her. It provides for me the example that she has set for me my entire life of what it means to be strong in your faith, to know God's word, to the point that it lives in your heart during the darkest time, to trust in God's comforting touch, that my faith must be strong and in action during uncertainty. May we all find comfort in the sacrifice Jesus made for us and his eternal promises, just as my nana has.

I would like to close out today with the Psalm of David. Many of you probably know this one, Psalm 23, and this is a scripture that my grandmother would recite after all of her prayers. "The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not want. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures. He leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul. He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil for thou art with me. Thy rod and thy staff comfort me. Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of my enemies. Thou anointest my head with oil. My cup runneth over. Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever."

Thank you all for your time and your fellowship this morning.

Steph Grossano:

Will you pray with me? Loving God, we live in uncertain times. We live in times of upheaval and change, of unfolding war and cataclysm. But Lord, we know that you are with us always. Help us to remember that during this uncertainty. Help us to be filled with the faith of your loving presence and with the hope to persevere. Truly, as you tell us, you have prepared a place for us. You are with us always. Amen. And together let us pray as Jesus taught his disciples. "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 the stay 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 ever on. Amen."

Please rise in body or spirit as we sing together, hymn 286.

Choir:

(Singing)

Steph Grossano:

As we go into this day, may we remember that in the goodness of God, we were born into the world, by the grace of God, we have been kept all the day long, even unto this very hour, and by the love of God, we are being made whole. Go in peace. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.