

Elizabeth Propst:

Good morning. Oo.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Elizabeth Propst:

Crack of thunder. Welcome to Morning Prayers here in the Appleton Chapel. Our speaker this morning is Sharon Christner, a third-year master of divinity candidate at Harvard Divinity School. Who has blessed us with her words before, and who we are excited to have back with us.

Please rise in body or in spirit for our responsive psalm, which is number 62 in your black psalter.

For God alone, my soul waits in silence; from him comes my salvation.

Congregation:

He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress, I shall not be greatly moved.

Elizabeth Propst:

For God alone my soul waits in silence, for my hope is from him.

Congregation:

He only is my rock and my salvation, my fortress, I shall not be shaken.

Elizabeth Propst:

On God rests my deliverance and my honor, my mighty rock, my refuge is God.

Congregation:

Trust in him at all times, O people; pour out your heart before him; God is a refuge for us.

Elizabeth Propst:

Men of low estate are but a breath; men of high estate are a delusion; in the balances they go up; they're together lighter than a breath.

Congregation:

Put no confidence in extortion; set no vain hopes on robbery; if riches increase, set not your heart on them.

Elizabeth Propst:

Once God has spoken; twice have I heard this: the power belongs to God.

Congregation:

And that to thee, O Lord, belongs steadfast love. For thou must requite a man according to his work.
(singing)

Sharon Christner:

A reading from 2 Chronicles 7. "If my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and I will forgive their sin, and will heal their land." Good morning.

Congregation:

Good morning.

Sharon Christner:

And good morning, or afternoon, or night, to anyone listening later in another place or time.

I usually look forward to speaking in church. I love having a good reason to write something carefully, and to give it as a gift. But today, I think we should do something else. I think we should just pray for whatever it is you most need to pray. Maybe something screams to the top of your consciousness. This is this thing that I desperately need, and it's too hard to pray for. Pray for that today. You'll have time.

Maybe you have something to pray that's almost too hard to ask for. Pray for that. For me, that means that I need to pray for civilians, and families, and children in Gaza. And against our part in their deaths. And against our part in their starvation. I need to pray that something else happens. That God's own hand will stop the grinding descent of war. That God's own hand will reach down here and turn our hearts around. I need to pray for mercy, and for a miracle.

For you, in the silence, let in that need or hope that is almost too desperate, or too unlikely, or too difficult to pray. For the next few minutes, I invite you to pray that prayer. Don't be afraid of the quiet. Pray aloud, or in a whisper, or silently. I'll step back from the mic and join you. And Elizabeth will collect your prayers.

Elizabeth Propst:

Each of the prayers offered aloud and held in silence of our hearts, oh God, we lift up to you. Even before a word is on our tongue, you know it completely. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.

Elizabeth Propst:

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

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 today our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not to temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever and ever. Amen.

Elizabeth Propst:

Please join in our closing hymn, number 45 in your Crimson hymnal.

(singing)

Just a brief reminder that our noble lecture for the spring is going to be here this evening. I think it's 6:00 PM? I'm seeing nods. The award-winning novelist and Buddhist priest, Ruth Ozeki. It's going to be a great conversation, so if you are able to join us, we would love to have you. And now, remember as you go out into the day that Christ has no hands in this world but yours. No voice but yours. Our hands and our voices do the work of justice and of love, today and always. Amen.

Congregation:

Amen.