

Worship in Marquand Chapel is a balancing act. In a sense, the worship of all faith communities is a balancing act, balancing received traditions with the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, as well as balancing pastoral, ecclesial and theological demands and expectations. We in Marquand are, therefore, not so different from the communities and congregations from which we have come and which we hope to serve by being here. However, worship at YDS is a balancing act in different ways than in the churches, because YDS is a divinity school and, moreover, it is a divinity school within a research university.

In addition to the balancing act that churches are performing, worship in Marquand Chapel is also balancing pedagogical as well as spiritual concerns. A Divinity School is a primarily a place of learning, whereas most other worshipping communities are primarily a site of simply being church. A Divinity School such as ours—ecumenical, and open to all who would study here—is not a church in the conventional sense, even as we hold the church constantly in minds and hearts as the reason for our work. Moreover, a Divinity School such as ours, which is part of a research university, has a mandate to be not only a place of learning, but also a place of research-and-development. All this finds a focus in chapel.

During BTFO and in the first week or two of the semester, the balance has tipped towards meeting the pastoral needs of the people in the school, creating a spiritually-nourishing point on campus that can sustain us through the rather steep curve of adjusting to starting (or returning to) academic life and re-forming as a community. Consequently, those who have leadership positions in our school have tended to have leadership positions in worship (in part because they are the ones who have been around and capable of taking a lead—but also because their ministries on campus naturally evolve into these initiatory roles in chapel). As a result, the services during BTFO and the first week or two have had more of a “blended” character than usual, fusing different languages and worship styles.

But quite quickly from now onwards, services will take on more of the language, somatic identity and sonic landscape of the particular tradition or worship style of the person or group that is hosting them. By this, the hope is to maintain the spiritually-nourishing aspects of Marquand, while also beginning the liturgically-educational aspects of the program. Over the coming weeks, the educational component of worship in Marquand will be balanced with the spiritual and pastoral, and it is a vital and integral part of how worship at YDS is conceived, because it offers a great opportunity for members of our community to learn with one another.

Many graduates report that the teaching and learning that happened in chapel was among the most important educational aspects of their time at YDS. For some it was the place where the whole of the rest of the curriculum (which could seem quite disjointed while in the thick of each separate course) could come together and find an integrating point. For others it taught them about ecumenism, with all its

tensions, compromises and irritations as well as its delights and insights. And for yet others, chapel was the place where they learned about the rich and diverse histories of Christian worship traditions. Finally, for many, it was simply a place where they learned great ideas for how to plan and lead worship, ideas that they are now using in their churches today.

And so, by the end of September we will have had services planned with intentionally Reformed, Black-Church, Episcopalian, Lutheran, Evangelical-Emergent and Roman Catholic themes and liturgical styles but offered with ecumenical techniques and invitations, so that the community as a whole can participate. And by December, we hope, there will also have been services based on Orthodox, Baptist, Methodist, Korean-Protestant and Anglican traditions—as well as many others.

The key to making this work is that those leading worship must draw deeply on their own traditions and invite others to join with them in them. They should not merely present what they normally do, as they might in a demonstration for a museum performance. Nor should they dumb-down what they do, imagining it will never be understood or shared. Rather, they should think carefully about what of their tradition they are able to offer at this time, in this place, and to this community, and then invite the congregation to participate in this worship with them. Through their leadership, they call the rest of the community into their own beloved worship styles and practices, and, as a result, the community not only grows in ecumenical understanding, not only learns about Christian worship traditions, but also encounters the living God anew.

This week, a Preview:

MONDAY's worship will be a Litany of Labor. Litanies are an ancient form of Christian worship. Most often thought of in relation to litanies of the saints in the western Church (in which the cantor would intone the names of a saint, and the people would intone "pray for us" after each one), litanies are in fact a simple prayer form that predates the existence of "saints" and can be adapted to many different situations. The word comes from the Greek *λιτή*, meaning prayer or supplication and was probably first applied to the *kyrie* ("lord have mercy"). When conducted with multiple petitions, and multiple responses, litanies can become chant-like or, occasionally, trance-like because of their rhythmic, contemplative quality. Monday's service will be composed of short scripture readings interspersed with prayers for every form of labor and laborer, punctuated with brief, simple sung responses. In the past (on those Labor Days we have had worship in Marquand) people have reported that it was an incredibly meditative and world-expanding experience.

TUESDAY will be a service of the Word, with a sermon from Christa Swenson, Marquand's Liturgical Coordinator, who is a candidate for ordination to this ministry in the Presbyterian Church (USA).

WEDNESDAY, as always, will be sung morning prayer, continuing the beautiful form in global song created by Patrick Evans that we began last week. Sung Morning Prayer is the only service that repeats from week to week (for 3 or 4 week cycles), although the poems, readings and prayers spoken during open prayer are always contingent upon the day itself.

THURSDAY will be a Service of Commissioning, emphasizing the mission of the entire community that is YDS, and also offering a charge to those serving in supervised ministries internships in the coming year. Weather permitting, it will end outside, out in the world where this mission finds its focus.

FRIDAY, as always, will be Eucharist, and this week we are delighted to welcome as our worship leader the Rev. Winnie Varghese, who is the Priest in Charge at St. Mark's in the Bowery in New York City. She serves on the Executive Council of the Episcopal Church and the Board of Directors of the Episcopal Service Corps, and has been active in peace and justice work as a board member of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship and as a writer for *The Witness* magazine. We will worship ecumenically, invited into the Episcopalian-style of celebrating Holy Communion, while using inclusive language resources and celebrating the life and work of Henry (Harry) Thacker Burleigh.

Rev. Varghese sent the following prayer in preparation for the service: "God our strong deliverer, we bless your Name for the gifts of grace given to Harry Thacker Burleigh to gather and preserve the good heritage of African-American music and to lift up in song the struggles of his people. Let that Spirit of love which spurred him draw us also to join hands throughout the earth in Christ's one great fellowship of love; through the same Jesus Christ, who with you and the Holy Spirit lives and reigns, one God, now and for ever. Amen."

All are welcome in worship in Marquand, Monday through Friday at 10.30am.

Blessings on your week,

Siobhán Garrigan,
Dean of Chapel.