

(organ music) (choral singing) (organ music)

- I greet you this morning in the name and spirit of Christ Jesus our Lord. Surely this is none other than the house of the Lord where we gather to worship God, to have fellowship with one another, and to hear anew of the goodness of the Lord through the words sung and proclaimed on this holy day. Let us now, having sung praise to God, confess our sin in the company of one another and before the presence of our gracious God. Let us pray. Almighty and most merciful Father, we have erred and strayed from thy ways like lost sheep. We have followed too much the devices and the desires of our own hearts. We have offended against thy holy laws. We have left undone those things which we ought to have done. And we have done those things which we ought not to have done. But thou oh Lord have mercy upon us. Spare thou those oh God who confess their faults. Restore thou those who are penitent according to thy promises declared unto mankind in Christ Jesus our Lord. And grant oh most merciful Father, for his sake, that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and sober life to the glory of thy holy name. Amen. (soft organ music) No other foundation can anyone lay than that which is laid, which is Christ Jesus our Lord. The Christ who says come unto me all ye who labor and are heavy laden. And then gives us this promise. I will give you rest. In the name of Jesus Christ, as we have confessed our sins, I declare your sins forgiven. May you this day find rest for your souls. Let us give thanks for God is good, and God's love is everlasting. (congregation recites prayer) Amen May I welcome you to Duke Chapel on this cold, wintry February morning. A day and a time when indeed it is good to come into the house of the Lord. And May God's spirit touch your spirit and meet some very special personal need which is yours on this day. We welcome you in the name and spirit of Christ to this place and to this glorious service of worship. Immediately following this service, at approximately 12:05, we will observe our first Sunday of the month communion service in the memorial chapel to your left. If you care to share in the blessed sacrament of our Lord's supper with us, we invite you to remain for that brief, liturgical service at that time. On the back of the bulletin today, you will find a listing of many agencies and causes to which the offerings of Duke Chapel are given. I don't know how you feel, but it is reassuring to me to think about the extensive and extended ministry which takes place through the gifts of those of us who are privileged to worship in this chapel. You may want to take a moment either now or after the service and look over the list of those places, those causes, to which our offerings go. There are many persons of need and with special concerns who benefit from the gifts which we give to God in this place. I invite you to look over that list, and I invite you also to remember it when the time of giving our offering comes. One of the real delights that those of us who are in the Duke community have had thus far this year has been that of having Bishop and Mrs. Kenneth Goodson back at Duke with us. Bishop Goodson retired from active service in the episcopacy in July of last year and became officially bishop in residence on the faculty and staff of the divinity school here at Duke. I have heard nothing but words of praise and commendation about his presence and his ministry among the students, the faculty, and the staff in the divinity school since he has been here. Indeed about his ministry in the entire university community. Bishop Goodson is one who is known as a man who loves the church, who loves the ministry, whose life has been totally and completely committed to Christ and to ministry in the name and spirit of Christ. As a matter of fact, he's a man who is

known by his loves. His love for North Carolina and the people with whom he grew up and the people whom he has not forgotten but still loves very much, his family, and those near and dear to him here. His love for the church. His love for the ministry and for all young men and women who commit their lives to ministry. His love of Duke University. He has served on the Board of Trustees here for a number of years, and is now a member of the Board of Trustees through the Duke Endowment. He is known as a gifted and effective preacher, having preached before congregations and churches throughout this country. And at one point, having served an extended period of time as a preacher on the Protestant Hour. Ken, we're delighted to have you and Martha back at Duke. And this morning, we look forward to the word of God, which you, by the grace of God, will bring to us. Welcome, and blessings on you.

- Let us pray. Heavenly father, we thank you this morning for the privilege and the joy of coming before you in prayer. Father, we ask that for us each one of us personally this morning, that would fulfill your promise that you gave in Isaiah 55, that so shall it be that when your word goes forth, it shall not return to you void or empty. But it shall accomplish the purpose for which you sent it and succeed in the manner in the matter for which you sent it. Father, we ask this morning that the word would impact our hearts, it would not return empty, but would accomplish the purpose in our lives for which you sent it. We would ask, heavenly father, that we would, through the service and through your word, come to know you and not just merely know things about you. And we ask this in Jesus' name, Amen.

- The epistle lesson is from I Corinthians chapter 13, a very beautiful passage called the love passage. If I speak in tongues of men and of angels but have not love, I'm a noisy gong or a clanging symbol. And if I have prophetic powers, and understand all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains, but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all that I have, and if I deliver my body to be burned, but have not love, I gain nothing. Love is patient and kind. Love is not jealous or boastful. It is not arrogant or rude. Love does not insist on its own way. It is not irritable or resentful. It does not rejoice at wrong things, but rejoices in the right. Love bears all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things. Love never ends. As for prophecies, they will pass away. As for tongues, they will cease. As for knowledge, it will pass away. For our knowledge is imperfect, and prophecy is imperfect. But when the perfect comes, the imperfect will pass away. When I was a child, I spoke as a child. I thought like a child. I reasoned like a child. When I became a man, I gave up childish ways. For now we see as in a mirror dimly, but then face to face, now I know in part, then I shall understand fully, even as I have been fully understood. So faith, hope, and love abide. These three, but the greatest of these is love. Here ends the reading from the epistle lesson. Amen. (organ music) (choral singing)

- Will the congregation please stand for the reading of the gospel lesson. Gospel lesson this morning is from Luke chapter 2. And when they had performed everything according to the law of the Lord, they returned into Galilee, to their own city Nazareth, and the child grew and became strong, filled with wisdom, and the favor of God was upon him. Now his parents went to Jerusalem every year at the feast of the passover, and when he was 12 years old, they went up according to custom. And when the feast was ended, as they were returning, the boy Jesus stayed behind in Jerusalem. His parents did not know it, but supposing him to be in the company, they went a day's journey. And they sought him among their kinsfolk and acquaintances. And when they did not find him, they returned to Jerusalem seeking him. After three days, they found him in the

temple, sitting among the teachers, listening to them, and asking them questions. And all who heard him were amazed at his understanding and his answers. And when they saw him, they were astonished. And his mother said to him, "Son, why have you treated us so? Your father and I have been looking for you anxiously." And he said to them, "How was it that you sought me? Did you not know that I must be in my father's house?" And they did not understand the saying which he spoke to them. And he went down with them and came to Nazareth and was obedient to them, and his mother kept all these things in her heart. And Jesus increased in wisdom and in stature and in favor with God and man. (organ music) (choral singing)

- As I have said once before when I stood in this place at commencement time, and if you have ever been a student at Duke University for an hour, the chapel stands alone as a building unlike any other building, in all of America. If there's an unquestioned honor and a frightening experience to be asked to stand and preach from a pulpit in front of which you so long sat and listened to others speak. And I do it with an unusual joy but with a kind of a frightening joy, for I know where I am and what at this moment I am supposed to be doing. My comfort, I guess, if there is any at this moment is to see in the congregation members of the student body of the divinity school who have informed me that they all know how to do it better than I do, but they have come to help me get through this hour. Their presence is greatly appreciated. In addition to that, there are new friends now who belong to the faculty who scattered in among you to bring me rescue whenever I needed. It is, it is more than I deserve to have them here, but it is not more than I need. I am grateful to these kind and warm words of Bob Young's. We have been friends over the whole course of his ministry and over much of mine, but all of his. And I count it a great honor to be given one of the Sundays out of a schedule that actually belongs to him. There is an unusual relationship in my life to Duke University. When we were living in the city of Charlotte, and I was serving in its first church. The sexton of our church happened to be a very close and a very dear friend. And one day when he was doing over my office, a stranger came in to see me, and Monroe McGriff told him that I was not there. He said he needed to come back and see me, and he wondered what kind of a man I was. And the sexton proceeded to tell him. And he said, well could you condense it? What does he believe in? And Monroe told him, he believes in three things. The Duke Blue Devils, the New York Yankees, and the Methodist church. (audience laughter) And the embarrassing part about it all was that he put it in that order. (audience laughter) But within or without that order, I come to you with great joy. Would you bow your heads for a moment? It is a quiet time. And though a human voice will be speaking, let a voice far beyond the human be heard. Let the words of our mouths and the meditations of our hearts may be acceptable, dear God, in your sight. Amen. On a sabbath day on the year 1847, a man with a name of Henry Francis Lyte preached the final sermon in the wee church of Scotland, and said goodbye to his parishioners. He had been their minister for more than 50 years, and the doctor had told him that his health was collapsing and that he needed to go away to the French Riviera, and there in the sunshine and the salt air, he may be able to regain his health. The congregation stood there and looked at him after the service and the communion was over and watched him as he made his way down across the garden and down to the edge of the lake that was to take him out to the open sea. They stood there and watched him as he went away in a little boat, and as long as they could see the white handkerchief of Henry Lyte waving from the boat, and as long as they could wave their own, they were saying mutual goodbyes to each other. When it was done, they turned and walked away again, never knowing whether or not they would ever see their minister again. The first night on the way to the French

Riviera, the ship stopped on the northern coast of France, and the tourists decided they would like to put up for a couple days, and do a bit of looking around on the northern coast of France, which they proceeded to do. When they came down for breakfast on the morning of the second day, everybody answered to the roll call and formally made except Henry Francis Lyte. They didn't really know where he was or what he was doing, they only knew he was late and he didn't come for breakfast. And they waited for a little while, and Dr. Lyte didn't come. And finally they sent someone up to his room, who knocked lustily at the door, and there came no response. The innkeeper was immediately summoned, and they went upstairs again and knocked at the door and no response. The innkeeper took his key, of course, that he had, unlocked the door, and walked in, and there lying across the bed dead was the body of Henry Francis Lyte. In his hand was the last bit of verse that he ever wrote for a hymn, and it's in our hymn book today. We don't use it anymore for we rather delegated it to be used only at funeral times. And it really wasn't for that reason that he wrote it at all. He wrote it as an unusual affirmation of his own soul and of his own life, but when they took it out of his hand, there it was. It's a beautiful thing that every church knows of course, Abide With Me. Fast falls the even time. The darkness deepens, Lord with me abide. If you'll remember that lovely old hymn, Abide With Me, you will remember that in the second or the third stanza of it there is a line that says, "Change and decay, "and all around I see." Every now and again I have a feeling that these words might be written over every generation in human history. Change and decay and all around I see. There are a good many people in the world today who would say you can write that underneath the lines of the 20th century and that would serve to categorize all of us. I don't know how it has been with you lately, but the last months have been unusually difficult for me. I really don't know how to handle the world in which I find myself living. I've celebrated in this building this week and in other buildings across Durham. And while our fellow citizens have been doing it across the world, with the release of the hostages and my own prayer for welcome of them home. But I do not understand the kind of a world in which that could happen. I do not understand the collapse of international law. I do not understand the breakdown of every accepted form of international behavior to which all civilized nations have agreed. I do not understand. I read with an unusual interest in the paper in the financial section where most ministers are total strangers, and I being one of them, that the prime rate is going down, and I'm unusually glad that it's going down. But they tell me it's good for the life of the country, but I do not understand why it is so high. I live in a world of which I am having an unusually large bit of difficulty overcoming. I do not understand high prime interest rates. I do not understand inflation. We not only have our house in Durham, but we also own a house in Richmond, and once every month I am reminded of the unusual cost and I do not understand what's happening. I do not understand what's going on. I feel a bit every now and again like the young boy in AA Milne's poem. Do you remember it? "I think I am a muffin man, "but I haven't got a bell. "I haven't got the muffin things, "that muffin people sell. "Perhaps I am a postman or I think I am a train. "I'm feeling rather funny and I don't know what I am, "but round about and round about, "and round about I go." I don't know how it is with you. I only know it with me, it's been an unusually difficult time. And when Henry Lyte says change and decay in all around I see, I cannot really accept it, but I am tempted living in a world of change, that if there isn't any longer any room to dispute that. Not long ago in a class where I was a poet, one of the young people in the class asked me what I thought was the largest single happening of my boyhood. I know what it was. Seems so long ago, seems so far away. But I remember in 1927 the largest single announcement that I ever heard in my life. And the afternoon paper in the little town in North Carolina where I was born and raised carried a headline that said "The Flying Fool Lands in Paris". But in northern Virginia, I have friends who commute to Berlin every

week for their work. The old order has changed, it's yielded a place to the new. Nothing unusual about that. You can do the same kind of thing. We were changed in transportation. We've changed in our way of doing things. We've changed in almost in every single way that I know. And you can go on and on and on with an endless list of the changes that we've made in our own life. All I'm saying to you is that we live in a world of unusual change. And with change there always comes complexity, and with change there always comes doubt, and with change there always comes a bit of insecurity. And we're beginning to wonder about is there anything on earth that isn't going to change? Or must we adapt ourselves to a constantly changing lifestyle. We are not the only people who've ever asked that question of ourselves. The Corinthians ask it over and over again. Paul had been down to Corinth to speak, and he had converted many, led many of the people in Corinth to Christ, and they had become members of the church. They simply didn't understand all of it. They didn't really understand the relationship that ought to exist between what a man believes and how a man lives. They didn't really understand the relationship between my commitment and my ethics. They really weren't sure in their own minds how much difference one's commitment to Christ ought to make, and so they began to write to Paul, and Paul began to write to them back. We have only two letters to the Corinthians in the New Testament, but it'll always have that kind of a sneaking feeling that somewhere hiding around there ought to be another dozen letters, David, from the Corinthian church. I don't think you can satisfy the Corinthians with two letters. And finally out of their desperation and out of their unusual ability to come to terms with life, they are bound to have written Paul a letter and said are there any permanent things? Are there any everlasting things? Are there any unchanging things? Or do I have to accommodate myself to a world of change in which nothing any longer will be permanent? Nothing any longer will be stable? Nothing any longer, will have character? One of our ministerial students who serves a church up in the southern part of Virginia sent me the other day a copy of his bulletin. He quoted an old friend of mine and a new friend of his. A man by the name of Collin Morris, British preacher who I've known for many, many years and with whom I share a very warm friendship. There came a time of unusual doubt in the mind of Collin Morris that nothing was going to be permanent, that nothing was going to remain stable, and nothing would remain as it ought to be. And in his depression, and almost a state of surrender, Collin Morris came down the steps one morning in the apartment building where he was living in London and stopped to say a word to a kindly old man who shared a first floor apartment. "Is there anything established?" said Collin Morris to the old man. "Anything that isn't going to change?" The old man helped himself up out of the chair and walked over to his bed, and on a table by his bed took a tuning fork and hit it across the poster of the bed and said to Morris, "Listen to that. Did you hear it?" "I heard it," said Collin Morris. "It is middle C," he said. "It was middle C yesterday, it is middle C today, it will be middle C tomorrow. That's good news." And now abide three things Paul said to the Corinthians, maybe there are more. Only historically we brought these three into our own minds. Now abide three things. Now abide faith. Seber Teasdale once said that somewhere, one by one, like leaves falling off of a tree, the things in which she had believed and given herself were beginning to fall away so that she no longer believed anything, and she no longer had any place to stand. What a horrible experience it is in the mind of a human life when no longer there is faith. It's never a question of faith or no faith, but of faith in what? Of faith in whom? In whom should you put your trust? Vital religion and much of it is there is ultimately based upon an adventuresome faith. The faith at the heart of things, there is a God who understands and who cares. The faith that life has meaning and purpose. The faith at the cross of Jesus Christ is no mere incident or accident, but the revelation of what is ultimate in the affairs of the world. A schoolboy was asked to give a

definition of faith. "Faith," he replied, "is believing in what you know ain't so." It isn't faith. It has never been faith. Faith is betting your life on what you know is so, so that by reason, and experience and tradition and scriptures, you can discover more of what's so. Edison St. Vincent Millay did it so beautifully in a poem, not truth but faith it is that keeps the world alive, if all at once faith were to slacken then unconscious faith which I know must be the cornerstone of all believing. Birds now flying fearlessly across the sky would drop in horror to the ground and fishes would drown in the depths of the sea. I live by faith. They might've been able to have shaken Job had he not been able to say, "I know that my redeemer liveth." Not only does faith abide, not only are you going to have to come to terms with it, in addition to faith abiding, love abides. Every now and again I get a little weary about using the word love. Not very long before we came to Durham, Miss Goodson and I came in one night from a late trip, 1:00 or 2:00 o'clock in the morning, and we'd been riding across Virginia doing the life of the church. And having grown up in a small town, I said to Nora before we went to bed, "Let's go check the main drag." Did you never go check the main drag? You know, you just want to go take a look at the town, see that everything is there. In Richmond, when you check the main drag, you go in Monument Avenue, and you turn at Miller Roads and Tallheimers and you go back down Broad Street, and if all is well, you go to bed. You checked the main drag. (audience laughter) Just next to Miller Roads, which is the paladium in the center of our city, there is Lowes Theater now being converted into a community opera house. The marquis was burning wildly, late at night after 1:00. And on the marquis there were these words, "Mighty Love Drama Rated X." It's not love. The Greeks had a word for it, but it never got into the scriptures. It's dirt and filth that would appeal to a part of me that they have no right to do. It won't abide. Now abides love, the kind of love that exists between a husband and his wife, between a father and his daughters, between a mother and her sons. The kind of love without which a home has no stability, no life, no permanence, no future. They will still be talking about it. Now abideth love, but there is a deeper love. A love that is known as agape love. How important is the love that you have for God. How important is the love that you have for your home. How important is the love that you have for your child. How important is the love that you have for your neighbor. But the great love of which Paul wrote to them was not the love that I have for God, but the unusual, unchanging, unswerving love that God has for me. "I love you this much," said God. We have seen a nation this week come nearer to understanding the meaning of joy and the joy of love, that we have known in a long time. Who rejoices in liberation? The gospel, God. It will never change. It will not wash out, but will be everlasting. Now abides faith, love, and now abides hope. Dennison wrote to his friend, Arthur Halem, once and said, "I write to remind you of the mighty hopes that keep us alive." Tucked away in my files of the year, in my files of my ministry in my life are letters written by young men in my church down in the country who happen to have been the squadron leader that did the reconnaissance flight over Hiroshima. That night in a tent in Okinawa, he wrote his minister, "I hope, "I hope, "I hope that it never happens again." You see, if we live by faith, if we understand the meaning of love, if we live by hope. It was middle C yesterday, it is middle C today, it will be middle C tomorrow. We were speaking about this lovely part of the world last night. We used to do our vacations years ago in New Hampshire. And we went so long ago that the highway system of New Hampshire was more primitive and more beautiful than now. We were there during the days of the second World War on a vacation with all our children. The only newspaper that came in was a paper published in the little community of Portsmouth, New Hampshire, which is the largest submarine base that the Navy has. During the latter days of the second World War, the Navy was experimenting with a new submarine that they chose to call the S-4. And when they did whatever you need to do to make a submarine and had it all done, they took it out about 10 or 11

miles into the Atlantic, off of the nine-mile coast of New Hampshire for an experimental run. And they did whatever you got to do to make a submarine sink. And it went to the bottom of the sea. And I know, I know I know that they did whatever you've got to do to make a submarine rise, and it was at this point that it failed. And for 28 years, the 84 men who were in the S-4 stayed in their watery graves. Before giving up, the Navy did everything it knew to affect a rescue to be sure. And finally the last thing they did was to go out on Cape Code to Provincetown and find an old diver and send him to the floor of the sea to do a reconnaissance trip. He got there. By instrumentation, he found the S-4, and he walked about it and about it. And while he was walking, he heard a rhythmic knocking from inside the ship. It obviously was the telegrapher, the radio man, and the old diver put his helmeted head up against the ship, and on the inside somebody was beating it out. An I, and an S, and a T, and an H, and an E, and an R, and an E, and an A, and an N, and a Y, and an H, and an O, and a P, and an E. "That," said Alford Lockock once, "is the biggest single question of the 20th century. Is there any hope?" And the old diver didn't know. He knew nothing about political science and could've given him no classroom lecture on what tomorrow may have, but he asked for all the power the mother ship had, and he threw back his air hammer, and beat out against the hull of the S-4, the only message he knew, "Is there any hope?" and the Portsmouth paper said that he responded with a J, and an E, and an S, and a U, and an S, and a C, and an H, and an R, and an I, and an S, and a T. It was the only hope he knew. Charles A. Ellwood once said in this institution that we have finally come to that spot that we realized he is the only solvent personality in the world's bankruptcy. Paul wrote it to the Corinthians, and he also wrote it to Duke. Now abideth faith. No way to make it without it. Now abides that unusual quality of love without which life has no meaning. Now abides hope. The hope that is born out of a deep commitment to Jesus Christ. In the name of the father and the son and the holy spirit, Amen. (organ music) (choral singing)

- Having heard the word proclaimed, let us now with one voice affirm what we believe. We believe in God who has created and is creating, who has come in the truly human Jesus to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by the spirit. We trust God. Who calls us to be the church to celebrate life and its fullness to love and serve others to seek justice and resist evil to proclaim Jesus crucified and risen. Our judge and our hope. In life, in death, in life beyond death God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God. The Lord be with you.

- And also with you.

- Let us pray. Gracious Lord, our God, we pause this moment to give thee thanks. Thanks for all those things which come from thee which abide forever. Faith, love, and hope. Thanks be unto thee oh Lord, our God, for these most priceless, precious, unchanging gifts which will sustain us in this day and forever. Thanks be unto thee oh Lord, our God, especially for the gift of thy son our blessed savior, even Jesus, the Christ who has come, is come, and is to come to give to us the fullness of life, which thou has promised to all thy children. Hear us now oh Lord, our God, as we give thee thanks for life, for health, for beauty, the beauty of this place, the beauty of friends, the beauty of family, and the beauty of thy word so richly shared. And now hear us oh God as we offer prayers of intercession for the needs of others. Be thou near and dear to all who suffer. All here this morning, all here in our hospital on this campus, and all around the world. All here and everywhere whose hearts are heavy, who know the pain and loneliness of death and loss. All here and everywhere whose lives bear the marks of stress and strain and tension. All here and everywhere who seek

relief from pressure, release from pain, strength in weariness, direction in waywardness. Be very close oh Lord, our God to comfort those who need love to support them, those who have had love misused upon them, those who know not where to turn to find new life and love. Indeed oh Lord, our God, be thou our way, our truth and our life. Come near oh blessed, living spirit. Grant us to receive all thy gifts with gratitude, and shed abroad in our hearts now thy most perfect gift of love that we may be filled with faith and hope. And may we always be mindful of the needs of others freely, ready, and willing to give oh Lord, our God, even as we have received. Hear us as we pray. As our Lord has taught us, saying, 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. Amen. (organ music) (flute music) (operatic singing) (choral singing) Grant we beseech thee, almighty God. That all of our gifts being dedicated fully to thy service may be used for the good of thy holy church and for the blessing of all thy people through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. (organ music) The grace of our Lord and savior, Jesus Christ. The love of God. The communion and fellowship of the holy spirit be with you and with those whom you love this day and forever. (choral singing) (organ music)