

(organ music) (organ music) (hymnal singing) (organ music)

- Grace be unto you. And peace from God who creates us, redeems us and sustains us. God has given us life, but we do not always live. We have been given freedom, but we have found this burden heavy, this anxiety painful. And pride and insecurity, we have turned from God to live self deceit. And to serve other gods. In this moment now, let us join together, as we admit both our willfulness and our weakness, let us confess our sins. Oh, God, in whose mystery we abide, and by whose mercy we are redeemed, we confess our sin against one another and against you. All our transgressions, hidden and open, the evil done and the goodness left undone. We have deceived ourselves about ourselves and worn masks and not trusted in love. We confess that we have been careful with things, careless with persons, adept in taking, awkward in giving, in love with our fears, and in fear of our loves. Forgive us for the times of our anger and the occasions of our stupidity, for the times of our cowardice and the places of our hesitation, for every time we did not love the goodness of persons nor praise your glory, forgive us, lift us up and heal us this day, through Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen. Let us continue in prayer with our personal words of confession. I offer now a simple word of forgiveness, of healing, of restoration. Thus says the Lord, "I have loved you with an everlasting love. "Therefore, I have continued my faithfulness to you. "Take this assurance with you, my friends, "into the life that lies before you. "In all that you do, may you be as one who is free, "free to find yourself, free to be yourself, "free to give yourself. "Amen." (organ music) (hymnal singing)

- The reading is from the 10th chapter of Luke. "Now, as they went on their way, "he entered a village and a woman named Martha "received him into her home. "And she had a sister called Mary "who sat at the Lord's feet and listened to his teaching. "But Martha was distracted with much serving "and she went to him and said, Lord, "do you not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? "Tell her then to help me. "But the Lord answered her, "Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled "about many things, one thing is needful. "Mary has chosen the good portion, "which shall not be taken away from her." (organ music) (hymnal singing)

- Let us affirm what we believe. We believe in God who has created and is creating, who has come into truly human Jesus to reconcile and make new. 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. Let us pray. Carl Sandburg once wrote, "I have kept high moments. "They go round and round in me." Oh, Lord our God, we thank you for high moments. For the high moments of these past four years, a new insight, a deep friendship, a kept trust, a realized hope and overcome frustration. Dark become light, sadness shared, hurt healed, comfort given and received, love felt. This is the place, oh, God, where indeed, lives have been molded, values clarified, minds enlarged, visions expanded, touch made more sensitive. Where life has taken on newer and deeper and richer meaning. As together, we have struggled and sweated and studied and cursed and griped and laughed and cried. And now we celebrate.

Oh, God, in spite of our complaints and our frustrations, we give you thanks for this university and all its people who love and care and serve one another. Here, now we pray. Our prayers of intercession for those who graduate this day. Keep them strong in their struggles, weak in their pride. Give them health to do and to be and grace to become. Make them wise in their decisions and happy over the consequences. Give them power, but not for self, but for others. Give them not all things that they might enjoy life, but give them life that they might enjoy all things. Perfect, oh, Lord, in so far as is humanly possible, the talents which you have given each of them, chasing the self-centered strivings of their spirits, forge their wills to follow you no matter what the cost. Direct their feet the way you would have them go. Give them always the knowledge that you and your love are with them. May deep joy be their constant companion along the way. May they keep this high moment. May it go round and round in them. Hear us now, as we pray together the prayer which our Lord has taught us, as we pray, 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, forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. And his kingdom, the power, the glory forever and ever. May I say a word of welcome to all of you this morning? The only thing different in some ways about those who are seated down at the front, they're in their customary seats, which they occupy every Sunday, as you know. (audience laughing) The only difference, they're just dressed a little bit differently today. We're delighted to have each of you here. Those of you who have come for this very, very special occasion, I'm not sure that you look forward to it anymore than we do but we're delighted to have the opportunity to share it with you and for you to share it with all of us. It is our privilege to have as our preacher today, Bishop James Armstrong, resident and presiding Bishop of the Dakotas Area of the United Methodist Church. One whom many of us in that particular church and in Christendom have admired and respected and appreciated for many, many years. He is a writer, preacher and administrator by necessity, I suppose. A pastor... A man of strong convictions equaled only by his courage and his compassion. Bishop Armstrong, we welcome you to Duke and to this very special service.

- Many years ago, and for several years, I found myself crisscrossing the state of Indiana. Speaking at an assortment of high school baccalaureate and commencement ceremonies. There was a certain sameness about those events. Usually they were held in gymnasiums, sweaty, smelly gymnasiums. The graduating seniors, more often than not, were giggling and self-conscious. The football heroes always had more applause than the class valedictorian. And my rah rah enthusiasms were frequently concluded with a poem of sorts. A poem that went like this. "You men of Earth have here, the stuff of paradise. "You need no other things to build a stairway "to the unfulfilled, no other marble for the floors, "no other ivory for the doors, no other cedar for the beams, "or dome to man's immortal dreams. "Here on the common human way, here on the path of every day "is all the stuff that God would take to mold "and make new Edens. "Ours is the task sublime to build eternity in time." I thought that was a clincher. But you know, in retrospect, there are a couple of things that need to be said about it. One, it does reflect a starry-eyed idealism. But, two, it is permeated through and through with unabashed male chauvinism. "We, men of Earth have here. "We men of Earth. "We men." In spite of the fact that we opened this service of worship with a hymn that said, God of our Fathers, the fact remains that reality consists of infinitely more than maleness. I have hanging in my study at home over my desk, an 18" by 24" reproduction or parody of Michelangelo's Creation. God is there, but he is not a he God, not a Moses like figure with flowing beard. He is a she. A black woman with an Afro hairdo. And Adam is there, but Adam is not Adam. Adam is Eve. Feminine, if not

voluptuous figure. Their fingers touch as in Michelangelo's classic, God's and woman's fingers touch and creation results. That is where we are today. We are living through a time of revolution. Woman is the revolutionary. As Kate Millette has said, "The revolutionary in this instance is not a murderer. "She is a changer, "a teacher, one who keeps in there, "keeps at it and loves people "until she can change their heads." Almost 2,000 years ago, a story was told. A story about two women sisters, Mary and Martha, who invited the Nazarene Jesus to their home. Mary sat at his feet, looked up adoringly, was stimulated by the worldly knowledge, the profound insight that came from the mind and the lips of the man. But all the while, Martha was in the kitchen or scurrying about here and there, caring for the guests who came. At one point, impatient, Martha said, "Mary, will you help me?" Jesus gently chided her and suggested that in our kind of world, there is room for both a Mary and a Martha. The line was drawn, it has come into sharper focus now. And as then, Martha is that low person on the totem pole. Martha, the homemaker continues to be put down. Is known by many as a drudge, one without color, without glamor. It is I think significant that on this Mother's Day, we find ourselves here. And in a position to affirm the homemaker, the mother, the very crux of human development. There are some 60 million women over 18 years of age in this country, who even now are tending their homes, rearing their children, responding to those chores that will in some strange and mystic way, provide both the values and the disposition of the world of tomorrow. One of that number, a mother speaking to a large assemblage of people not long ago said, "Here's to Martha. "She faces challenges and responsibilities "no one else can claim. "If she cultivates qualities of patience, "openness, reflection, sensitivity, "compassion, the capacity to listen, "respond and learn, she can prevail." But if she fails, what then? If Martha does not cultivate herself, respect herself, affirm herself, she will be denigrated by all the Marys and the males around. "Believe me," the mother went on to say, "to be an adequate Martha "requires as much as any other calling in this world." To be an adequate Martha, contributes as much as any other service vocation in this world. The family, however structured, and it is undergoing radical change. The family, however, structured is not a relic of the past. It will be an integral part of whatever future we choose to claim. If in our pseudo sophistication, we tend to look down upon the marries, the homemakers, the families of our time, we are reflecting, not upon Martha, not upon the homemaker, but upon ourselves. Homemaking is an art and a science. It consists of so much more than housekeeping, just as journalism consists of so much more than typing copy. The work is there, the drudgery. The doing of dishes and washing of floors and dusting of furniture and all the rest but beyond that, there is this person who stands in the center of the flux, guiding the delicate, fragile interpersonal relationships, providing the nurturing atmosphere in which a future world is being molded. Now, having said all that, don't sell Mary, the working woman, the career woman short. Feminism, if it has done anything, has enabled us to see that we stand on equal footing. Woman, apart from tradition and bias and stereotype, woman has certain inalienable rights to determine her own destiny. A Barbara Jordan, a Golda Meir, a Barbara Walters, a Rosemary Ruether, an Indira Gandhi, a Chris Evert, have reminded each of us what woman can become. These in a sense, are the headliners, the stars, those who have shown us that baby has come a long, long way. And yet the very rules they play tend to obscure the fact that there are nearly 40 million American women who are now a part of the labor market. They are not only nurses and teachers and domestic workers, they're coal miners and truck drivers, scientists, and police officers, attorneys, and executives and politicians. 48% of the women in this nation are employed. Some of them are reluctant Marys. Doing what they do because of inflation or other harsh realities that force them into a world out there. Ends must be met. But others of them quite consciously, and with intentionality, have chosen careers in which they seek to fulfill their own dreams, in

which they seek to serve the larger human good, in which they seek to fulfill that which is inherent within them. And this of course is their perfect right. I thank God for them. A pioneer physician, Nettie B. Powell brought me into this world in Indiana. And at the ripe old age of six, when I was about to check out, she pulled me back from the threshold of death and gave me life again. I'm grateful for that Mary. And glad that she chose to be one. Yet, the dilemmas involved, during difficult periods of change. I talked with a woman not long ago, a 50 year old woman. Articulate, charming, brilliant, ultra competent, who had been given an opportunity to become the national director of a movement to which she is committed. The base of operations of that movement would be 1,000 miles from her home that would require just a trace of commuting. She talked to her family about it. Her youngsters, two university students respected her, were proud of her, were enthused about the prospect, encouraged her to take the job. Her husband would not discuss it with her. After weeks of stubborn silence on his part, she said no. But confesses now that there are things yet to be worked through. She is no longer willing to move back into a realm of timid domesticity. No longer willing to be the sex object in his world. The charming hostess at his cocktail party presiding over his table, the alter ego to his ambitions. She is a person. And she has dreams she will respond to. There are confrontations yet to come. His name is Joe. Joe... The stereotypical male is the eye at the center of the contemporary storm. He's threatened by feminism. The ground on which he stands is no longer sure and certain ground. He's not certain who he is, what is expected of him. Rules are strangely being fused. Where once he was the sturdy oak and she was the clinging vine. Well, where once he thought that was true, it will be true no longer. You know how we are regarded. Man is strong. Woman is weak. Man is dominant. Woman is submissive. Man is active. Woman is passive. Man is aggressive. Man is the aggressor. And woman waits and waits and waits only when she receives the invitation to respond. No longer. No, in fact, it's never been true where persons have been willing to accept themselves as they are. When I was the age of some of you, I was married and a father. I had the night shift. So when Jimmy woke up, it was my task to go to him and change him and dunk his diapers in the toilet bowl. Those of you who live in the world of Pampers don't know what you've missed. (audience laughing) And Phyllis and I shared responsibilities in the kitchen, cleaning, cooking. One of the role models for that sort of bizarre behavior in that ancient past was my own father. A lightweight boxer, broken nose three times, football, baseball, boxing. He had all the macho characteristics but... He also knew who he was. And therefore knew a quality of gentleness and tenderness, almost unbelievable. I remember him without a bit of self-consciousness, strutting about the kitchen with an apron tied around his girth. I remember being cuddled in his lap as a small boy. Nor would I give anything for those memories. He could be affectionate as any good Hungarian or Italian father can be affectionate. He knew who he was. He had nothing to prove. Hans Kuhn, the Swiss theologian, talking about feminism as a new reformation, has said among many other things on the subject, "One cannot deduce from the essence of Christian marriage, "a specific division of labor. "For instance, that a woman is to raise the children "while the man is to be the breadwinner. "Raising children and doing housework "as well as financially supporting the family "can be performed by a husband and wife together." A journalist seeking to cope with this same confusion of rules, seeking clarification, has written, "For every woman who is tired "of acting weak when she knows she is strong, "there is a man who is tired of appearing strong "when he feels vulnerable. "For every woman who is tired of acting dumb, "there's a man who is burdened with the constant "expectation of knowing everything. "For every woman who is tired of being called "an emotional female, "there is a man who is denied the right to weep "and to be gentle. "For every woman who is called unfeminine when she competes, "there is a man for whom competition "is the only way to prove his masculinity. "For every

woman who is tired of being a sex object, "there is a man who must worry about his potency. "For every woman who feels tied down by her children, "there is a man who is denied the full pleasures "of shared parenthood. "For every woman who is denied meaningful employment "and equal pay, there is a man who must bear "the full financial responsibility for another human being. "For every woman who was not taught the intricacies "of an automobile, there is a man who was not taught "the satisfactions of cooking. "For every woman who takes a step toward her own liberation, "there is a man who finds the way to freedom, "has been made a little easier." You see, we are not talking about women's liberation, but about human liberation. About mine, as well as yours. The apostle said, "In Christ, "there is neither male nor female." He was not opting for some sort of neutral unisex category. Anyone reading the New Testament knows that. Rather he was insisting that the old superior, inferior categories can no longer apply. We are in this thing together. We stand on equal footing. We must continue to address ourselves to the urgent issues of the day. Poverty and hunger, full employment and economic justice, issues of political tyranny and distributed justice, war and peace and all the rest. And I pray we will address with fervent conscience, these issues, but in the final analysis, we are dealing with human liberation. With the emancipation of men and women, not as stereotypical objects, but as persons, struggling, growing, dreaming, weeping, questing persons, and as they and we find our shared liberation, this world will be a better greener place on which to live. And so with a paraphrase here or there, we will close with the same romantic poem. We earthbound ones have here, the stuff of paradise. We need no other things to build a stairway to the unfulfilled, no other marble for the floors, no other ivory for the doors, no other cedar for the beams or dome to man's immortal dreams. Here on the common human way, here on the path of every day is all the stuff that God would take to mold and make new Edens. Ours is the task sublime to build eternity in time. Amen. (organ music) (hymnal singing) (hymnal singing) Will you join with me now in this responsive prayer of thanksgiving and commitment, let us pray. Oh God, we rejoice that we have learned together and have worshiped together. Now we bring before you the symbols and reality of our lives. (indistinct) We give thanks for the universe. For the Earth. (indistinct) For communities and neighborhoods. (indistinct) For the revolutions which shape our world. (indistinct) For the power of our learning. (indistinct) For the perplexities which confront us. (indistinct) For our heritage. For the visions of this university's students, staff, and faculty. (indistinct) We are given the eyes of the spirit. (indistinct) The promise is to each of us, we may see, we may receive, we may love. (indistinct) Amen and amen. (organ music) (hymnal singing) Now without bowing heads or closing eyes, will you receive this benediction, this blessing, which I offer you? My friends, go now, remembering always what you have done in this place. And may you never be the same again. May you be responsive and responsible wherever you are. May you seek always to love God and to love one another. The love of God, the grace of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, the communion and fellowship of the holy spirit be with you. ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ (organ music)