

- Easter Sunday, service of worship, April 10th, 1977, 11:00. (silence) (bright organ music) (people chattering) (dramatic organ music) (solemn music) (dramatic music) (singers singing in foreign language)

- Hallelujah. The Lord is risen.

- The Lord is risen indeed, (indistinct).

- And a voice from the throne said. "Behold, I make all things new."

- (indistinct), the Lord (indistinct). (dramatic music) ♪ The Lord is in (indistinct), hallelujah ♪ ♪ Peace on Earth and angels sing, hallelujah ♪ ♪ Raise your voice and join our side, hallelujah ♪ ♪ See him come (indistinct), hallelujah ♪ ♪ (indistinct), hallelujah ♪ ♪ (indistinct), hallelujah ♪ ♪ Blessing come, our souls who sing, hallelujah ♪ ♪ (indistinct), hallelujah ♪ ♪ (indistinct) Earth and sky, hallelujah ♪ ♪ Thou shalt (indistinct), hallelujah ♪ ♪ (indistinct) who lives in Christ, hallelujah ♪ ♪ (indistinct) in paradise, hallelujah ♪ ♪ (indistinct), hallelujah ♪ ♪ (indistinct), hallelujah ♪ ♪ (indistinct), hallelujah ♪ ♪ As (indistinct) angel's side, hallelujah ♪ (dramatic music) ♪ God is above ♪ ♪ Angels come beside ♪ ♪ Thou shalt seize the waiting ♪ (indistinct) ♪ Angels sing (indistinct) ♪ (music drowning out singers) ♪ Let us live forever ♪ ♪ Help us (indistinct) ♪ ♪ Oh, Jesus, praise you ♪ ♪ We have (indistinct) ♪ ♪ Love is in (indistinct) ♪ ♪ Blessings be upon us ♪ ♪ Save us from our sins ♪ ♪ (indistinct), let thy glory in ♪ (music drowning out singers) ♪ Praise the comforting side ♪ ♪ Let us seize the glory (indistinct) ♪ (dramatic music) ♪ Oh, Gloria, let us bring the word ♪ ♪ Let us all rejoice, take us to your side ♪ (music drowning out singers) ♪ Let thy glory in ♪ (dramatic music drowning out singers)

- The Lord is risen.

- The Lord is risen indeed, hallelujah.

- Beloved in Christ. If it's possible, would you move toward the center so some of the people standing could have seats. We would invite those of you who are in the back If you want to come and stand in the center isle, do, but we would ask you to lead the procession out. It may be of comfort for you to know that in the early cathedrals, there were no seats and all people stood during the services of worship. (congregation chuckling) Remember the words of our Lord. Ask and it will be given you. Seek, and you will find. Knock, and it will be open to you. It is this same promise which enables us to confess our sins with the assurance that we will be heard, and that God's forgiveness is ever awaiting our acceptance. Let us pray. Oh, holy God. On this joyous Easter Sunday, it is difficult for us to confess our sin. We give thanks. We rejoice. We are exultant. But we pray, oh God, that our rejoicing will not blind us to the needs of the world, that our affirmation of the resurrection will not dam the continuing reality of the crucifixion. Break our apathy and our arrogance with the judgment of your love and the assurance of the resurrection faith. Then in mercy, heal us, oh holy spirit,

causing us as a community to be born anew in Jesus Christ, our lord. Amen. Rejoice, dear people of God, for we know that nothing can separate us from God's love. Neither death nor life, nor things past nor things present, not principalities or powers. No, not even our sin, nothing in all of creation will be able to separate us from the love of God and Jesus Christ, our Lord, and for this assurance we give thanks. (solemn organ music) ♪ Live on, (indistinct) ♪ Come into (indistinct) place ♪ All this receive unto God ♪ Receive unto God ♪ We honor that we know ♪ (singers singing over one another) ♪ Receive, we pray ♪ Oh, I am woven (indistinct) history ♪ We shall (indistinct) when he comes ♪ We shall not all sleep, we shall not all sleep ♪ When he comes ♪ We shall all be changed, all be changed ♪ We shall all be changed ♪ And we shall all be changed ♪ Shall all be changed ♪ He will come at a moment ♪ In the twinkling of an eye ♪ At a song, a song, at a song ♪ A song, a song, a song, a song ♪ (dramatic music) (music drowning out singers) ♪ When, when, at a moment (indistinct) ♪ (dramatic music) (music drowning out singers) ♪ This is the time, when, when, this is the time ♪ (music drowning out singers) (indistinct) (music drowning out singers) ♪ There is eternal ♪ (indistinct) ♪ Where, where ♪ Where ♪ Where is (indistinct) ♪

- Our first lesson this morning is taken from the Book of Acts. And Peter opened his mouth and said, "Truly, I perceive that God shows no partiality, "but in every nation, "anyone who fears him and does what is right "is acceptable to him. "You know the word which he sent to Israel, "preaching good news of peace by Jesus Christ. "He is Lord of all." The word, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee, after the baptism, which John preached, how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the holy spirit and with power. How he went about doing good and healing all that were oppressed by the devil for God was with him. And we are witnesses to all that he did both the country of the Jews and in Jerusalem. They put him to death by hanging him on a tree, but God raised him on the third day and made him manifest, not to all the people, but to us who were chosen by God as witnesses, who ate and drank with him after he rose from the dead. And he commanded us to preach to the people and to testify that he is the one ordained by God to be judge of the living and the dead. To him, all the prophets bear witness that everyone who believes in him receives forgiveness of sins through his name. Will you now rise to hear the further word of God as found in the gospel of John? Mary stood weeping outside the tomb. And as she wept, she stooped to look into the tomb. And she saw two angels in white sitting where the body of Jesus had lain, one at the head and one at the feet. They said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" She said to them, "Because they have taken away "my Lord and I do not know where they have laid him." Saying this, she turned around and saw Jesus standing, but she did not know that it was Jesus. Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping? "Whom do you seek?" Supposing him to be the gardener, she said to him, "Sir, if you have carried him away, "tell me where you have laid him, "and I will take him away." Jesus said to her, "Mary." She turned and said to him in Hebrew, (speaking foreign language), which means teacher. Jesus said to her, "Do not hold me, "for I have not yet ascended to the father, "but go to my brethren and say to them, "I am ascending to my father and your father, "to my God and your God." Mary Magdalene went and said to the disciples, "I have seen the Lord." And she told him that he had said these things to her. May God bless the reading of his holy word. (triumphant organ music) ♪ We pray all the sound of glory ♪ Sing the breath of (indistinct) song ♪ Let them show of God's story ♪ Through the moment (indistinct) ♪ God above, blessed bringing ♪ (indistinct) shall see ♪ Israel (indistinct) ♪ Bells (indistinct) in Christ we keep ♪

- Let us 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 and death and life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God. The Lord be with you.

- And with your spirit.

- Let us pray. Oh, loving God, our hearts are overflowing. We are thankful for the hope which this resurrection day brings. We are overwhelmed by the majesty of the music and by the beauty of your world. We are grateful for the joys and love we receive from our family and friends. We thank you that Jesus lived as one of us and shared our lot, that his life has shown us the way from isolation to community, his death the way from selfishness to love, and that his resurrection brought the word of hope for a new and fuller life. Help us in our joy, oh God. Not to turn away from those who live this day with no hope, no joy, no love, no resurrection, faith. We pray for those who mourn, that they may be comforted, for those who are sick, that they may be healed, for those who face death, that they may rest in the faith of our risen Lord. For those who are hungry, that they may be fed. Those who search for work or for meaning in their work, that their search may be fulfilled. And oh God, we pray for our world, torn by greed and oppression, and the ravages of floods and droughts and disasters. That we may find peace, trust, and community, and the alleviation of natural and human disasters. Use us to help those who are in need. Hear us now, oh God, as we pray for ourselves. You know the temptations we face to deny you, betray you, to seek temporary selfish pleasures and justify them as our needs or our rights. So we pray that we may accept the health giving, life giving limits which are placed on us by our commitment to you, to our families and to our vocation in life. Oh loving God, open our lives and our hearts that we may continue to meet the risen Christ. Send us your spirit of truth to open our ear, eyes, and ears to see you where we are afraid to look, to hear you in voices which offend our sensitive ears. Oh God, we seek you in the spectacular and the extraordinary. And you come to us, poor, lonely, hungry thirsty, diseased, in prison, and the least of our brothers and sisters. Teach us to see you, hear you, touch you, know you where you really are and not where we would like for you to be, and help us that we may truly pray the prayer which our Lord taught us. 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 and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, the power, the glory forever. Amen.

- Welcome on this Easter day. Those of us who have the privilege of leading the service of worship, rejoice with you and worship with you and give thanks that we have the privilege of worshiping in the service again. Our spirit soul with the glory of this time of worship, the power of the word and the majesty of the music. There are also two special Easter concerts today. You will find one noted in your bulletin, the Duke Chapel Choir and the North Carolina Symphony will play here and sing tonight at 7:00 PM in the Duke Chapel and at 2:30 this afternoon, in the Duke Gardens, the Duke Wind Symphony will play their Easter concert.

- The word of God reads. "Now on the first day of the week, "how dare the fading stars shine? "How dare the sun rise? "How dare a new day dawn? "How dare the soft breeze blow? "How dare the birds sing? "It is over.

"Jesus was condemned. "He was dead. "He was crucified. "He's finished. "He's through. "He was left to die all alone. "How dare the flowers bloom? "How dare people be up and about? "How can they? "How dare the world go on as if nothing has happened? "The Messiah is dead. "We had thought he was the one, Jesus of Nazareth, "king of the Jews. "Doesn't anybody know, doesn't everybody know? "Doesn't anybody care? "How can the world go on? "How dare people eat and drink and laugh and live on? "Jesus is dead. "He really is. "I saw him. "I know that is why my heart is sorrowful "even unto death. "Jesus, the one who accepted me and cared for me, dead. "How dare life around me continue as if he had not die?" Mary Magdalene. Langston Hughes wrote some words, "Some time when I'm lonely, "don't know why I keep thinking "I won't be lonely by and by." Surely this must have been how Mary felt as she made her way to the tomb where Jesus said lane. You and I can only get some partial, some very, very partial sense of how she must've felt as we try to relive some of the past week, some of the real heaviness of the past few days. And it really is a heavy week Palm Sunday, shouts of acclamation, knowing that they will fade and die. Monday, Thursday, celebration over food and drink, but an ambivalent celebration, knowing that it is to be the last meal we will have with Jesus. Friday, suffering, agony, horror, pain, death. Low Saturday, and surely it is low, the lowest day spiritually for all of us in the whole of the Christian year, Mary Magdalene at the tomb. How dare life to go on? Have you ever had that frame of mind in you? You hurt so much, you ache so badly, you had been wrong so deeply. You had suffered so much the death of someone very near and dear to you. A moment of sheer and explicable tragedy and heartbreak, a broken dream, a shattered promise. You really felt like your world had tumbled in so much that you looked around and cried, doesn't anybody else see or know or believe what's happening? How can the rest of the world go on? I remember a little of something of what this is like. I remember I've always had a terrible fear of going to dentists. You may share that. But I remember when I was a little bitty boy, the dentist's office that I went to was right on the sidewalk and he had a window that opened right out on the sidewalk. And for goodness sakes, dentists shouldn't have that kind of setup. But as I sat there one day in that dentist chair and that drill boring into my head and people walking up and down the sidewalk, just as happy as they could be, just as if nothing were happening to me. I've been there. You have. And Mary was there. That's why it is impossible to read the story of the passion, suffering, death, crucifixion, burial, and resurrection without some depth of feeling coming out from us. You cannot hear or read or retell or relive the story of this week without in some way or other being overcome with emotion and feeling. Notice if you will, how deeply John talks about Mary's feelings here. Where John writes, Mary stood weeping outside the tomb, not just crying but weeping. And then John continues a verse later. And as she wept, she stooped to look in, and then the two angels said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" And then Jesus said to her, "Woman, why are you weeping?" These words from Jesus Christ Superstar when Mary sings, tells the message, "Don't you think it's rather funny "that I should be in this position? "I never thought I'd come to this. "What's it all about? "He scares me. "So I want him, so I love him." So how dare the world to keep on living? But it did. And it does. I can imagine that very Mary was very much like the younger brother in Thomas Wolfe's "Look Homeward, Angel." In the play based on Wolf's book, the younger brother has seen his very, very much adored elder brother, Ben die after a long illness. And the younger brother is left all alone, out on the front porch of their big old sprawling house. And suddenly the weight of sorrow of Ben's death breaks over him. And in a moment of desperate, unselfish need to express his longing for Ben's safety, he cries out to the God that he does not know, "Whoever you are, be good to Ben tonight." Oh, how many times have we heard that cry? How many times have we uttered that cry? Oh, whoever you are, wherever you are, whatever you are, be good to somebody today or tonight. Mary weeping, weeping, weeping. And

John says she turned and saw Jesus standing, but she really didn't know that it was Jesus. Supposing him to be the gardener. We're always seeing the gardener, aren't we? It's a common theme for the biblical interpretation of God's encounter with men and women, Moses looked and he didn't see God. What he saw was a burning Bush. Isaiah looked in the temple and he didn't see God. What he saw was some seraphim. Jacob wrestled all night, but he wasn't wrestling with God. He was wrestling with another man. People have always had a hard time realizing that God is present and that God is real. And so this was just one more in a long line of experiences where Jesus was not recognized for who he was. Even Jesus' mother and father did not understand him when they found him teaching in the temple. John the Baptist's disciples came to Jesus and said, "Are you he who is to come? "Or shall we look for another?" His neighbors in Galilee said about him, "Is not this man just plain old Jesus, "the son of Joseph, the carpenter?" And when Jesus was with the disciples in the boat, in the storm at sea, they asked, "Who is this? "Who is this that even the wind and the sea obey him?" And in Caesarea Philippi when he asked them who people said, he was, he was told that others called him Isaiah, Jeremiah, one of the prophets. And then finally, "You are the Christ, "the son of the living God." Before Pilot, the Roman ruler really did not know who Jesus was. As a matter of fact said, "Hey, you tell me who you are." And then later on, Thomas would not recognize him or know or believe that it was Jesus. The disciples on the road to Emmaus could not believe, did not know, did not see. So it really was nothing new to Jesus to have Mary look around and see him and think that he was just the gardener. Besides, it probably was still dark then. And we know from what John tells us that her eyes were filled with tears and after all, why should she expect to see Jesus? He was dead. Why should he be seen up walking around and talking to her like another human being? So she saw the gardener, but there was one word, Mary. And Mary knew with just this one word that this man was not the gardener. Here was Jesus, the Christ, the son of God. Here was the word become flesh, living right in her midst, right beside her. Here was the person of God present, alive and real and right with her. It's like George Bernard Shaw said once, "Beware of the person whose God is up in the sky." And Mary knew in this moment that her God was not up in the sky, but was right beside her. Or it's like I read where Albert Einstein once wrote that the Lord, God may be subtle, but he is not just plain mean. God in Christ here was not being mean or playing games. Subtle, maybe, but present. I believe that there are some times when we do not have to know who someone is or why something happens as it does. I believe that. Robert Raines writes in his book, his latest book, "Living the Questions," "Standing on the deck late at night, "looking into the glittering dark, "my friend said to me, 'I love the mystery. 'I don't have to know who or what it is.'" Yes, there are some times we really don't have to know. But then there are times that we need to know. Supposing him to be the gardener. I think there are two very important messages in these words. The first is that sometimes in the midst of the darkest loss and deepest pain and loneliest hour, it is very hard to see the real strength that is close at hand. We're always looking for more, always wanting someone else, trying to find some other help when often the power and the presence which we need are with us all the time. How often do we look around and see someone with us or beside us and wish that it were someone else, not really realizing that who we need is really right beside us. All of this happens in husband, wife, relationships. How many times have you husbands or how many times have you wives said, "Oh, if I were only married to somebody else." Yeah. How many times with parents and children, how many times have we, as parents said, "Oh, if so-and-so were only my child," you know, and how many times have children said about their parents, "Oh, if so-and-so were only my mother and my father." We often view feel this way, even about a doctor. You know, we go to a doctor and he can't cure us. And we say, "Oh, if only I could get an appointment "with Dr. So-and-So, then I could be made well,"

when really the person who could heal us is right there if we would only take advantage of it. How many times is this true of our friendships? How many times about a boyfriend or a girlfriend or a woman friend or a man friend. And we say, oh, you know, if only that person were my friend, I think my life would all fall in place. Or if she, or he were only my friend, how much better life would be? The same is true about us, about the things of life, better homes. Oh, if only they had a better home or a better car or a better job, or if I belonged to another church or if I went to another university or if I made better grades or if I had nicer clothes, or if I heard better music or if I ate better food and on and on and on, always wanting something different or better or something more than what we have that is right beside us and right with us at the very present moment. How often, how often do we have something or someone or some experience or some relationship or some meaning right beside us, right with us? And we look around always seeing the gardener and cannot see or know or understand or believe or accept the depth of goodness and joy that is near at hand. As near to us as breathing, as close to us, his hands and feet. Yes, there Jesus was right beside her. And she thought he was the gardener. How often have you looked around and seen only the gardener when someone very, very special was there? You see, I have come to believe that part of the beauty and the richness of the glorious presence of Christ is that we really never know when or how, or in whom this love of God will be made known to us. It's like Carlyle Marney writes in his book, "Priests to Each Other," disconcerting, he says, "Disconcerting to say the least never to know around "what corner you will run head on into Messiah. "Disconcerting this, to be talking to a rank stranger "for hours on the road, "to sit with him at meat, your heart burning "over something which you cannot identify, "then to see him break and hear him, "bless your bread and recognize Messiah, "only to have him gone again." "Does he never stay? "Messiahs ought not to be so unpredictable, "much less ordinary people. "Disconcerting never to know over what hilltop "you may run head on into some new demand for Messiah. "Who knows in advance which hymn or set of eyes or touch "or prayer will bring some new word from Messiah?" "You have to be braced for this. "If you can go meeting Messiah on any road, "if any human voice can bear his call, "if he is liable to keep appearing to you as his own, "then you had better be careful. "Yes, it is terribly disconcerting "to have Messiah and no schedule." Jesus said, "Mary" and she knew. That's why she could say, as Jacob said, "I have seen God face to face and I have been preserved." And so that's a second message in this experience of Mary for us today. We have a Messiah who has no schedule. The great affirmation, the real affirmation, the good news of this word is that the gardener is the Christ, the risen Christ. Who then is the gardener in your life? Who is the one, or who are the ones who are going to bring life changing or life shaping or life renewing our life fulfilling experience to you? Who is this he or she? Who are these they, who is the gardener in your life? Do you notice the care with which Jesus relates to Mary here? I think this is very, very important. Jesus is very personal as he speaks to Mary. Personal and intimate, but very, very respectful. He was not intrusive. He did not overwhelm her or impose himself on her or assert his influence over her or overpower her whatsoever. Here is where and how we see again, the utter loveliness, the sheer matchless beauty of Christ's love for us. For you see, love is respectful. And Jesus knew that, and he lived that The poet Rilke says, "Love consists in this, "that is two solitudes, "which protect and touch and greet each other." And so the solitude of Jesus and the solitude of your life and of my life, protect and touch and greet each other. It's almost as if Jesus knew that one day Saint Irenaeus would say, "The glory of God is a human being fully alive." And it's almost as if Jesus knew that he had come to make each of us as God wants us to be and as the glory of God is namely to make us fully alive. And in the midst of our daily struggle and our search to be fully alive, we come to know as Henry Nowlan says, that being alive means being loved. This experience tells

us that we can only love because we were born out of love, that we can only give because our life is a gift to us, that we can only make other people free because we have been given freedom. Been given freedom by him whose heart is greater than ours, even the Christ. And so now my friends, a word of confession of mine, about the Christian faith on this holy day. I have real trouble. I have a very hard time trying to understand how the crucifixion of Jesus Christ can save me. How one person's dying for me, even if it is God in Christ dying for me, how God's dying for me can actually save me for this life and for the life to come. I just don't understand how the crucifixion can do that for me. It's a real mystery. Also, I don't understand how the resurrection of Christ can save me. I don't understand how another person's rising from the dead can give new life to me. Even the resurrection of God in Christ or God in Jesus the Christ. I don't understand how that kind of resurrection can give me new life. But I do understand, I do believe, I do know how the presence of another person can give me new life. Yes, I know how when someone else stands with me and beside me, there is hope and there is promise. How someone else's affirming me and believing in me and caring for me and trusting in me can indeed fill my weeping moments with joy, my despairing moments with companionship, and my lonely moments with a presence. This presence is the pure, simple, often hidden, surely undeserved love of God, which we experience in Christ. And so does it matter? Does it really matter to you or me or anybody else whether Mary saw Jesus or whether she just saw the gardener? Sure it does. You better believe it does. It absolutely does. Jesus Christ. "If Jesus Christ has not been raised," Paul wrote, "then our preaching is in vain and your faith is in vain." If Christ has not been raised then your faith is futile and you are still in your sins. If for this life only we have hoped, just hoped in Christ, we are of all people, most miserable, but in fact, in fact, Christ has been raised from the dead. The first fruits of them who sleep, as in Adam, all die. So in Christ shall all be made alive. Lo I tell you a mystery. We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed. And then she'll come to pass the saying that is written, which we heard sung so triumphantly, death is swallowed up in victory. Oh, death, where is thy victory? Oh, death where is thy sting? Thanks be to God who gives us the victory through our Lord. Jesus Christ. No, I don't understand how the death of somebody else can bring life to me. I don't really understand how the resurrection of somebody else, even God, can bring new life to me, but I know the power of a presence. And that's what Mary experienced. There's some beautiful lines in the closing of Dickens, "A Tale of Two Cities." "The carts were rumbling through the throng streets of Paris "to the guillotine. "In one of them, there were two prisoners, "a brave man who had lost his life, but had found it again, "and was now laying down his life for a friend. "And beside this man, there was a little girl, "a girl who was a little more than a child. "In the prison she had observed the calmness of his face. "And she had said to him, "If I may ride with you, "will you let me hold your hand? "I am not afraid, but I am very small "'and it will give me courage.' "So when they rode together, now her hand was in his, "and even as they reached the place of execution, "there was no longer any fear in her eyes. "And she looked up into the strong face "of the man beside her and said, "'I think you were sent to me by heaven.'" The power of a presence. Let us pray. Yes, oh Christ, we do believe that you were sent to us by Heaven. On this resurrection day, help us oh, Lord to see thee more clearly, to love thee more dearly, and to follow thee more nearly day by day, day by day, day by day. Amen. (triumphant organ music) (organ drowning out singers) (soft organ music) ♪ Oh beloved ♪ (indistinct singing) ♪ As they did (indistinct) ♪ ♪ I will die (indistinct) ♪ ♪ As they are singing ♪ ♪ I will (indistinct) ♪ (indistinct singing) (singers singing in foreign language) (dramatic music) (singers singing in foreign language) (triumphant music) (organ drowning out singers) (singers singing in foreign language) (music drowning out singers) (bright organ music) (organ drowning out singers) ♪ Alleluia, alleluia ♪ ♪ Praise him from whom all blessings flow; ♪ ♪ Praise God, all

(indistinct) here below ♪ ♪ Alleluia, alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia, alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪

- Oh God of grace and love and power, were the whole realm of nature ours, that would be an offering far too small. Love so amazing, so divine demands our souls, our lives, our all. Use oh God our offering, our lives, our all for your glory. We pray in the spirit of the risen Lord. Amen. (dramatic music) (music drowning out singers) Go forth with the assurance and the expectation that you will meet the risen Christ around the corner, in your neighbor and the gardener, and know that the love of God is yours this day and forever. ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen, amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ (bright music)
(congregation chattering)