

(congregation sings)

(lively organ music)

- We have been challenged. Let us now 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. Eternal God, source of all life, the energy behind the vast universe, we praise you. We joyfully declare your Lordship. Since time and space began, the created order has borne witness to your power but ours is now the privilege of bearing witness to your love as revealed in Jesus Christ. Christ be with us all. Into our prayers, oh Lord, we pour ourselves, our gasps, our yearnings, our fatigues, our confusions, our worries, our failures, our expectations. Hear us. Let our cries come, broken though they may be, selfish they sometimes are, as groans though they may sound to our own ears, let them come. By your Spirit, grasp and transform them, that truth they may express and that healing they may accomplish. Remind us that even our groans are to you as a poet's eloquence. Christ be with us all. Know that we are grateful, Lord of the universe, keeper of the high spaces, watcher beyond time, grateful for returning us from our summer journeys and bringing us again to this campus, this windowed church, the family of friends. We thank you for this season that now awaits the blazon trees, the fire tastes, the dark birds going down the ancient sky. We thank you for the great works before us, the new beginnings, hope riding high on the mornings, life gathering us in the nightfall of a million stars. Christ be with us all. Almighty God, we pray unto your grace and power for this Earth beset by earthquakes and famine, the nations broken by war, the peoples crippled by disease, this university community stunned and saddened by the death of one of our own, protect us when nature goes berserk, inspire in all lands the desire to live as one family. Restore health to the ailing, Christ be with us all. Hear oh Lord, our prayers for your daughter and servant Serena who died her promise still ablaze. To your care we entrust her. And for her family and friends we also pray. Grant them a bold faith, even now when a faith in any goodness is sorely challenged. Embrace them, hear their sighs of sorrow, show them how to be angry but not embittered. Help them to cry and not be ashamed. Teach them how to rage but not destroy. Enable them to pour forth their grief that it might not consume them from within. Help them to claim and to experience the hope and the healing of your presence. Christ be with us all. Come now, oh majestic one, to these days of study and our pursuit of truth and our times of play. Inhabit this place and

its peoples, let neither towers nor books nor stones nor silences blind us to our own humanity nor to the humanity of others. Each of us, all of us created in your image. When we take ourselves too seriously, tease us into laughter. When we neglect ourselves, alarm us. When we take too lightly the world's injustices, provoke us into deeds of mercy. And as we discover something of justice and art and nature and society and the human heart, we ask for a commitment to make good use of what we understand, through what we do with our lives, may walls of misunderstanding be breached, old prejudices destroyed, new visions emerge of a world where goodwill takes preeminence over power and where righteousness will be both politic and possible. Christ be with us all. Praying together the prayer of Christ's community.

- Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, they will be done on Earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive 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. (tranquil organ music) (lively organ music) (choir sings) (lively organ music) (congregation sings) ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ (congregation sings) ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Amen ♪

- Remember the words of the Lord Jesus how he said it is more blessed to give than to receive. Open wide your hands now, oh God, to receive these gifts of our lives and service, in your holy name we pray, amen.

- Be seated. God of Abraham, Isaac, of apostles and prophets, in every age you call people to work for you showing justice, doing mercy, giving purpose to an aimless humanity. By your truth, darkness is dispelled and all people set free to mature in wisdom. In pursuit of that truth, we now take our place at Duke University, receive us unto yourself, oh God to use us to accomplish your sacred intention.

- Amen.

- That in this place we will remember those who love us, and whose hopes follow us here. (congregation mumbles) That we may accept the responsibility of our freedom and the burden of our privilege. (congregation mumbles) That we will be curious, imaginative and sufficiently patient to labor for end's sight. (congregation mumbles) That with courage we may doubt but that we will also hold our doubts in the larger faith of Jesus Christ. (congregation mumbles) From insulating ourselves with books and words. (congregation mumbles) From ignorance that feeds injustice, from indifference that yields to cruelty and from blind loyalty to worn out values. (congregation mumbles) From hopelessness that will cripple us, a self-consciousness that would paralyze us and from temptations that would destroy us. (congregation mumbles) Lord God, in a world where justice does not yet roll down as waters nor righteousness as a mighty stream, where knowledge floods in but there's only a trickle of wisdom, we pray for this school, its students and faculty, staff and administrators and for the task in which we now unite, turn our efforts to good that as our understanding increases, our responsibility will deepen. Cause us to finish this year having made ourselves more humane and the world more habitable for our sakes and for the sake of the future that you give us to create.

- Oh Lord, please hear us, amen. (lively organ music) (congregation sings) (lively organ music)

- Deep peace of the running wave to you, deep peace of the flowing air to you, deep peace of the quiet Earth to you, deep peace of the shining stars to you, deep peace of the Prince of Peace, to each of you now and always. ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ (lively organ music) (people murmuring) (tranquil organ music) (lively organ music) (clapping) (people murmuring)