

(organ music)

- Good morning. We welcome you to Duke Chapel on this Sunday. This week we began the Christian season of Lent. We call your attention to the announcements of the Lenten schedule here at the chapel. Beginning with our Ash Wednesday services, this Wednesday in the morning and in the afternoon. We also remind you of the Memorial, the AIDS Quilt that is located in the Bryan Center that is sponsored in part by the chapel and the other activities that are listed in the bulletin. It is our privilege again this year to be sending a work team and to an area of need in the world again, our United Methodist Campus Minister Olly Jinkins is leading a team, like those students who will be participating in this year's work team, to just come up and stand so that you can see them. And Scott Cooper, a freshman, Jackson Tennessee is going to just say a word about the work team which will be the recipient of today's offering. Scott.

- Good morning. We are the Duke Work Team en route to Honduras during spring break this year. We are a group of 17 undergraduate and graduate students from various faiths and denominations. We are working for the Ecumenical Christian Commission on Development, which is the only ecumenical organization in Honduras. They have assigned us to begin construction on a desperately needed school and a church center. The church center will be used as a place to worship as well as a training center for teachers, farmers, medical personnel. Many have asked me why I volunteered to spend my spring break doing missions work in a third world nation. I reply that as a Christian, I am called to help those in need. My help should extend beyond the borders of our nation. We are going to an area that desperately needs our help. Honduras is the second poorest country in the western hemisphere. I also reply that I go not only to help, but to learn also. I want to see what it is like to live a third world nation. I want to meet new friends of a different nationality, yet a similar faith. Our trip will cost over \$20,000. Your offering this morning will be used to cover part of these expenses. You will know that what you give this morning will go directly to help those who need your help. Thank you very much.

- Go down with them. Thank you Scott and Work Team. The Work Team has raised their own expenses themselves, the money that you will provide will help to go for materials which the Work Team will be using and also for the leaders. Now let us stand and, for the greeting. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Audience: And also with you.

- The splendor of Christ shines upon us.

Audience: Praise the Lord. (organ music) (congregation singing) (words drowned out by organ and echo)

- Oh God you are the one who on the first day of creation declared, "Let there be light." And there was light.

And you saw that it was good. Since the beginning your light has shone within us, but our sinfulness has eclipsed its brightness. We can no longer see the sun you set above us to illumine our way. Come to us oh healer of blindness, and shine your glory upon our hearts that we might be your witnesses once again. Amen.

- Let us pray.

All: Open our hearts and minds oh God, by the power of your Holy Spirit so that this word is read and proclaimed, we might hear with joy what you say to us this day. Amen. The first reading is taken from the book of Job. Why is light given to one in misery? And life to the bitter in soul who long for death, but it does not come, and dig for it more than for hidden treasures, who rejoice exceedingly and are glad when they find the grave? Why is light given to one who cannot see the way, whom God has fenced in. For my sighing comes like my bread, and my groanings are poured out like water. Truly the thing that I fear comes upon me. And what I dread befalls me. I am not at ease, nor am I quiet. I have no rest but trouble comes. Do not human beings have a hard service on earth? And are not their days like the days of a laborer? Like a slave who longs for the shadow, and like laborers who look for their wages, so I am allotted months of emptiness and nights of misery are apportioned to me. When I lie down I say, when shall I rise? But the night is long and I am full of tossing until dawn. My flesh is clothed with worms and dirt. My skin hardens and breaks out again. My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle, and come to their end without hope. Remember that my life is a breath, my eye will never again see good. This is the word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

- Please stand as we join together as singing responsibly Psalm 50 verses one through six found on page 783.

♪ The mighty one, God the Lord, ♪ ♪ Speaks and summons the Earth ♪ ♪ From the rising of the sun to its setting ♪ (congregation's response drowned out by organ) ♪ Our God comes and does not keep silent ♪ ♪ Before whom is our devouring fire ♪ ♪ Round about whom is a mighty storm ♪ (congregation's response drowned out by organ) ♪ Gather to me my faithful ones ♪ ♪ Who made a covenant with me by sacrifice ♪ (congregation's response drowned out by organ) ♪ Oh glory be to you oh, God ♪ ♪ And to Jesus Christ our savior ♪ (congregation's response drowned out by organ) ♪ As it was since time began ♪ (congregation's response drowned out by organ)

- This reading is from the gospel according to Saint Mark. Six days later, Jesus took with him Peter and James and John, and led them up a high mountain apart by themselves. And he was transfigured before them. And his clothes became dazzling white, such as no one on earth could bleach them. And there appeared to them Elijah with Moses who were talking with Jesus. And Peter said to Jesus, Rabbi, it is good for us to be here. Let us make three dwellings, one for you, one for Moses and one for Elijah. He did not know what to say, for they were terrified. Then a cloud overshadowed them and from the cloud there came a voice. This is my son, the beloved, listen to him. Suddenly when they looked around, they saw no one with them anymore. But only Jesus. As they were coming down the mountain, he ordered them to tell no one about what they had seen until after the son of man had risen from the dead. This is the word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God. ("Warum ist das licht gegeben" by Brahms) (choir singing in foreign language)

- These are words, out of chaos these words of Brother Job. Why is light given to one in misery? Life to the bitter in soul? Job has lost his family, he's lost everything he has, now he sits on an ash heap, body covered in sores. He asks God, "Why?" And these words are being addressed to you in chaos. CNN visions of Persian Gulf water fowl blackened with oil, the doll of an Iraqi child amidst bombed rubble, the beaten face of an English pilot, an old man that has nowhere now to live in Israel. Chaos News Network. Job asks God, "Why is light given to one in misery?" It is dangerous to be invited by the Bible in Job or today's anthem to speak to such a question, to such chaos. Any time a preacher, or I think any of you, attempt to speak about God and human suffering, there's always a danger that we'll risk sounding like Job's friends, Zophar, Bildad, Elihu, Eliphaz, preachers all. Job is their unwilling congregation. And in the face of his loathsome sores and the tragedy of his life, what do these friends of Job preach? Eliphaz. Think now Job, who that was innocent ever perished? Are you perishing? Well let's sit down and figure out what you've done to deserve this. Bildad. Are you suggesting God is unjust? No, you are unjust. Zophar. How dare you ask such questions? Would great God take the time to explain himself to a liar like you? Get well soon, love Zophar. But have we no sympathy for Job's friends? Just listen to us sometimes when we are explaining chaos. It's just God's will. You'll have to learn to accept it. God never puts more on us than we can bear. AIDS? It's their own fault. I'm sure the president knows more what to do in this situation than we do. Oh, we mean well, we mean well, but just pause for a moment and just listen to us as we're busy talking about chaos. And all of our explanations are just this pitiful, Tinker-Toy bridge built over some great abyss. Little mumblings that explain nothing. Upon being told upon the death of her beloved daughter by a friend, this is just God's will, I heard her say, "Listen to yourself." In the face of such pitifully inadequate platitudes no wonder that some are driven to even great despair. She said, "If this is God's will, "then I want no more of this God." Or as Job said, "Why "did God even go to the trouble "to give light to one in such misery?" So most of us, realizing the inadequacy of our theology of chaos have learned to mutter something a bit more sophisticated like, "Uh uh uh" or "Well, we'll be thinking about you." Night before Thanksgiving NPR reporter Linda Wertheimer interviewing children at an elementary school in Texas, interviewed a little boy about 12 years old, I think, whose mother had, whose single parent mother had been deployed in the Gulf during August. He said, "She writes to me nearly every day. "She tells me to do my work, study hard. "But she also tells me she's scared. "And all I pray every night is God, "don't let my mother die." And Miss Wertheimer had enough sense not to say anything. Job says that this world sometimes, all sermons by the Bildads and Zophars and Elihus be damned, this world is not in order, it is not fair. Things don't work out. Why is light given to one in misery? In Robert Coles' new book "The Spiritual Life of Children," he interviews little Margarita. Margarita's life is circumscribed by the brutal reality of her hillside favela overlooking Rio. She says, "When I look at Jesus up there," and here she points to the well known Christ of the Andes overlooking Rio, "When I look at Jesus up there, "sometimes I wonder what he's thinking. "He can see all of us, he's got to have an opinion. "I try to talk to him, 'cause he's all I have. "Mamma still works as a maid in Copacabana "even though she coughs and she bleeds." Coles says the mother had tuberculosis and died shortly after this conversation. "A lot of times I ask him why he does things like this." And she waved then her hand in an arc over the squalid favela. "He's got to see what we see. "Mother used to tell us that we'll go to heaven "because we're so poor. "I used to believe her. "But now I know that she just tells us that "to shut us up when we're hungry. "Now when I hear her say it, I look up at him "and I ask him, well what do you say, Jesus? "Do you believe her? "Do you believe the priest who says

the same thing? "Do you notice the big car he drives? "Do you notice the nice house he lives in? "What do you think of him? "I shouldn't blame Jesus. "I do though, sometimes. "He's right there, that statue keeps reminding me of him. "And I'm either upset with him, or I'm praying to him "to tell me why the world is like it is." Well Margarita, we could explain to you the historical roots of Brazilian poverty, the difficulties of third world debt. We could mix in a little Augustinian theodicy. But I bet after everything had been said and done, and it took Bildad, Zophar and Elihu about 30 chapters to explain it to Job, I bet after all that's said and done, I bet a smart girl like you, an honest confronter of the chaos like you, would still ask why. I look up at him and I say, "Well, what do you think, Jesus?" And thus Margarita prepares us for Job's second move. Job, man on the ash heap of life, moves from resignation, quiet resignation, oh let the day perish wherein I was born. Why is light given to one in misery? He moves from resignation to clenched-fisted defiance. "You're all miserable comforters!" Cries Job. "Shall your vain words have no end? "I am sick of your preachments. "God has broken me. "God has taken me by the neck and just shaken me. "Will God hear my cry? "Oh that he would hear me! "Oh that the All Mighty would answer me." And I think this is when you just love Job. If you've ever been a fellow sufferer, fellow questioner. Ya just love it when he finally rises up off that ash heap, clenches his fist, raves at God, defiantly demands to know why. Job's friends become preachers, Bildad, Zophar, Elihu, Eliphaz, respond to the horror of the chaos in Job's life with the same old tired cliches. God is all powerful. Amen. God makes the rules. Amen. You obey the rules, life will go fine for you. You disobey the rules you're gonna be cursed. Everything is so nice and stable and mathematical. Religion as reassertion of time-honored platitude. This'll all work out for the best. Who that was innocent ever perished? But Margarita looks up into the face of that stone Christ and demands an answer. Job defiantly tells God, see you in court. And finally, finally after the gauntlet is thrown down, 38 chapters late, God shows up. "Then the Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind." Job 38:1. And what a God Job gets. Who is this one that dares to speak to me? Where were you when I laid the foundations of the Earth? Can you create an ostrich? Have you ever tried to make a giraffe? Who are you? I'm sorry for those of you who thought that we had a smooth talking, well spoken God. This God takes on Job with bombastic, whirlwind rhetoric. Enough of these preacherettes and their sermonettes. I'll do the talking now. And when God answers, God answers Job with a bunch more questions. Insolent questions. Where were you? Who are you? What can you do? In other words, God said to Job, "Shut up." And Job does just that. Oh behold, I've uttered questions, I did not know. I've spoken once, I will not speak twice. I put my hand over my mouth. Dumb, numb, stupefied resignation. I mean, what would he say after all that bombast about can you create a giraffe? Where were you when I made the sun to rise for the first time? Can you make an ostrich? What else could Job do except just to resign himself to silence? Margarita, who do you think you are? Poor, uneducated, young. Your poverty is a complex global, economic, culturally conditioned phenomenon. How in the world could we ever explain it to somebody like you? "We are in our times of chaos but the dumb playthings "of the gods," said Homer. But not of this God. 'Cause the story isn't over. If Job's forced resignation, his quieted, dumb capitulation were the end, then we really are to be pitied. Since God has got no answer, I suppose any answer you pick, no matter how trite or nihilistic, is as good as any other answer. Just go ahead, take an answer. But that isn't the story, the end of the story of Job. God speaks a second time. Will you overturn my justice? Will you make me out evil in order to preserve your innocence? Want you to remember those questions, 'cause I think they're pivotal here. "Behold," God says, "Behold now behemoth, "which I made even as I made you." Behold behemoth, I made him just like I made you. Behemoth? What is behemoth? Well the footnote in my RSV Bible says, "Behemoth is a Hebrew word for hippopotamus." But no that's not

the word. The word is behemoth. Can you draw out leviathan with a fish hook? Will leviathan speak soft words to you? The footnote in my bible says, "Leviathan, that's a Hebrew word for crocodile." No, no that's not the word. The word is leviathan. Leviathan which Isaiah speaks about is that dark torturous serpent. Behemoth. Leviathan. These are two dark ugly creatures known in Canaanite mythology picked up by the Hebrews. Primeval forces which embody great power. They live somewhere down in the depths of the world. Behemoth, leviathan. See what God has done in the second speech? First speech God was talking about the ostrich, the giraffe, the natural world. Now God has moved Job way, way down deep, deep, to the supernatural world. The world way down there, where behemoth and leviathan lurk. And thus God reveals to Job something of what it's like to be God. God reveals something to Job of what it's like to have to run this kind of world. But the vision he gives Job is not of the God or the world that Job or Eliphaz or Bildad or Zophar thought they wanted to see. That is a world of nice, flat, easy moral equations, tit for tat, this for that, no no. God shows Job a deeper cosmos, confusing creation, he takes him way down deep, underneath the surface where behemoth and leviathan live. Can you manipulate behemoth? Well, I made him, just like I made you. Can you pull up mighty leviathan with a fish hook? Can you press down his tongue with a cord? I don't think so. In other words, I hear God say to Job, "Job if you think you can do a better job "with this ambiguous, dark, threatening, "sometimes chaotic, creation, "if you think you can do a better job, go ahead. "Be my guest. "And you may find out something of what it's like to be God. "You'll find out that justice in this world "is a good deal more complicated than you think." Leviathan and behemoth, they just give us just a little, just a hint of that chaos down deep at the heart of the world, that God must wrestle with every day. Can you draw up leviathan with a fish hook? Can you press down his tongue with a cord? I doubt it, and yet I have to get out of bed as God and do that every day. I gotta go out and confront leviathan every day of the week. See, Job has cried out in his chaos, he is desperate to sustain his own innocence. But how much greater the chaos against which God strives? I didn't say this was an answer. At least not the answer Job or we would like. I said it was a picture of reality, against which God struggles. 'Cause human suffering, as bad as it is, it's just one little corner of the great chaos of this cosmos. The chaos against which God must battle. So as it turns out God and Job do have a lot in common after all, because like Job, God is also busy attempting to bring some order out of the chaos, some sense out of the craziness. And like Job, God says, I will not give up the battle. For some reason, some reason we do not know, behemoth and leviathan have a place in this world. Even the rule of Almighty God doesn't destroy them. But God will fight them. He's gonna press down leviathan's tongue with a cord. Oh, it's a vision, a big vision of a world that's complex, not simple. It's a world that is full, not only of seemingly pointless animals like the ostrich and the giraffe, but a world that's also filled of chaos. This world is not some mechanism to be picked apart by physicists and biologists, nor is it to be explained to you by preachers, with our little cliches and little moralisms. We can't explain it to you. Simplistic explanations only lead, from what I've observed, to even greater despair when you're walking down some dark alley at 50, and you meet behemoth and leviathan face to face. And these little Sunday school explanations just crumble. God says, "I made behemoth, "just like I made you." Behemoth, that beast, I made him, yeah, just like I made you. And sometimes I don't know which beast causes me the most trouble, behemoth or you. Of all the confusing, chaotic, troubling creatures in this cosmos, are there any so confusing as Job and his brothers and sisters? The trouble that God has handling behemoth and leviathan is nothing compared to the trouble with us. Of what creature could it be said in the bible, the thoughts of his heart are evil from the days of his freshman year? Genesis 8:21. If you think it's tough for me to tangle with leviathan, you oughta see the trouble I have with sophomores and people up at

the Pentagon and people, wow it's tough. Yeah, I made behemoth, I made leviathan. And you. And I'm gonna continue to struggle with all of you. So Job says something beautiful. Now, I had heard of you, I had heard of you, but now my eyes see you. Previously Job had heard of a God. A simple God who sat around meting out justice in a stable, orderly clockwork of a world. But now he sees a God who is busy, deep, struggling with chaos, suffering the darkness. And now this God proudly addresses him as my servant Job, and God tells the preachers to shut up. Job, so defiant and questioning, is made in God's very own defiant image. The questions can continue, that's okay. But now we've seen a God. We've seen a God that struggles with the chaos and promises us never to defy it, to give up on it, and always to defy it. So Margarita looks up into that cold stone statue overlooking such human misery, and says Margarita, "My little sister's always crying, "cause she doesn't get enough food. "I hope Jesus sees everything that goes on down here. "I hope he doesn't just stare out into the ocean "like that statue." Margarita, Jesus is not up looking over Copacabana as some stone-faced statue, impervious to human misery below. No no, Jesus is where we put him. We, put him. Behemoth, leviathan, and us. He's on a cross, beside two thieves, overlooking a garbage dump. And I'll tell you there, he just didn't stare out into the ocean. But he took up the cross. He made war on our chaos, and the world's, as a fellow sufferer. He asked God why, as a fellow questioner. As a fellow defier. (organ music) (choir and congregation singing) (words drowned out by organ and echo)

Nancy: The Lord be with you.

Audience: And also with you.

- Let us pray. Once again, gracious God, we have gathered to praise your name. That with all the suffering, the sadness and broken dreams which befall us, it is still a gift to be alive. We thank you for the small blessings of the week just past, for the silent reminders of your continuing presence in our lives, for the sun and the rain and the promise of springtime which nature foretells. We thank you even for the coldness and bleakness of winter, without which the splendor of springtime could never be. So too, we thank you for the bitter medicine that heals and for the failures from which we learn more than our successes. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

- Hear now our prayers of intercessions for those who are in need this day. Let us pray for all who cry out for healing. That you will give patience, courage and faith to all who are disabled by injury or sickness. That you will comfort those who endure continual pain, pouring upon them the healing balm of your spirit. That you will grant fearless confidence to all children stricken with chronic or terminal illness. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

- Let us pray for all who suffer mental and emotional distress, that you will abide with all who are depressed or despondent, having no one to comfort them. That you will restore all who struggle with demons of the mind to soundness of mind and cheerfulness of heart. That you will draw near to all who have no alternatives to spending their lives within institutions, surrounded by people, yet lonely beyond words. Lord

in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

- Let us pray that you would grant eternal rest and peace to those victims of AIDS who we honor through the AIDS quilt, and for all other victims of AIDS, both unknown to us and those whom we name at this time. Steven, Michael, Jim, Roland, Jack, Thomas, Gary, Norb, Woody, Sheldon, David, Wayland, Anson, Tony, Robert, Ed, Jeffrey, Jim, Al, Richard, Gary, Christofer, Vern, Kenny, Scott, Rick, Billy, Michael, Kay, Mark, Kathy, Mimi, Kelly, Tony, Jan, Irma, Ben. Let us pray you would give your wisdom in ample measure to those doctors and researchers seeking a cure for AIDS that you would strengthen family and friends who mourn the loss of loved ones, many in the prime of life and that you would take away the fear and apprehension which distort our understanding of this dreaded disease. Lord, in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

- Let us pray for our enemies not by naming their sins, but by remembering our own. Save us from weak resignation to violence. Forgive us from becoming hardened to the news of their suffering and remind us that they too are fed by the same food. Wounded or killed by the same weapons, have children for whom they have the same high hopes as do we, that we might pray without ceasing for peace in our world. Lord in your mercy,

All: Hear our prayer.

- Oh Lord our God, accept the fervent prayers of all your people. In the greatness of your mercy, look with compassion upon us and all who turn to you for help. For you are gracious oh lover of souls and to you we give glory, now and forever. Amen. In thanksgiving for the mighty acts of God let us offer our gifts and ourselves unto God. (organ music) ("Lass dich nur nichts nicht dauren" by Brahms) (choir singing in foreign language) ♪ Amen ♪ (organ music) ♪ Praise God from whom all mercy flow ♪ ♪ Praise God all creatures here below ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Praise God above in heavenly host ♪ ♪ Praise father, son and holy ghost ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪

- Oh eternal God, giver of life and health and peace, we thank you for the good news which you have revealed to us this day, that you will abide with us until the end. We thank you for peace makers who seek to build bridges of reconciliation in the midst of our broken world. For faithful friends and caring teachers who see the best in us when we only can see the worst. For good will from unexpected sources in times of misery and despair. We thank you especially, oh saving God for your love in Jesus Christ who is for us, the way, the truth and the life and in whose name we pray.

All: Our father, who art in heaven, hallowed by thy name. Thy kingdom come, they will be done on earth as it is in heaven, give us this day, our daily bread, and forgives us our trespasses as we forgive those who have trespassed against us. And lead us not into temptation, deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever.

- Amen. May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing so that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit. ♪ Amen ♪ (organ music) (choir and congregation singing) (words drowned out by organ and echo) (organ music)