

(pipe organ music) (peaceful organ music)

- Good morning and welcome to this service of worship here at Duke University Chapel on this ninth Sunday after Pentecost. We are delighted to be able to welcome so many visitors today, so many that in fact we think we ran out of bulletins. So if you see someone on your pew who does not have access to a bulletin please share. If we may be of any assistance to you during your visit to the Duke campus please let us know. I would like to thank our presiding minister, the Reverend David Ollie Jenkins, campus minister for the Wesley Fellowship here at Duke for assisting in leadership of our service and also our lector Mr. Robert Booth, member of the congregation and Duke Chapel. We are truly indebted to the singers of the Bright Leaf Music Workshop and their directors, Mr. Fritz Monford and Tom Saber for participating in our service. I believe that was Tom Jaber, excuse me. They number around 340 or 350 and they hail from at least 20 different states, from as far away as Alaska and even London, England. They are completing a very intensive week-long workshop here at Duke which we understand has both been very demanding and extremely invigorating. So we are truly grateful for your presence today. Please note the remaining announcements as they are printed in your bulletins. And now let us continue our worship as we stand together and sing praise to God. ("Stand Up, and Bless the Lord") ♪ Stand up, and bless the Lord ♪ ♪ Ye people of His choice ♪ ♪ Stand up, and bless the Lord your God ♪ ♪ With heart, and soul, and voice ♪ ♪ Tho' high above all praise ♪ ♪ Above all blessing high ♪ ♪ Who would not fear His holy name ♪ ♪ And laud and magnify ♪ ♪ O for the living flame ♪ ♪ From His own altar brought ♪ ♪ To touch our lips, our mind inspire ♪ ♪ And wing to heav'n our thought ♪ ♪ God is our strength and song ♪ ♪ And His salvation ours ♪ ♪ Then be His love in Christ proclaimed ♪ ♪ With all our ransomed powers ♪ ♪ Stand up and bless the Lord ♪ ♪ The Lord your God adore ♪ ♪ Stand up, and bless His glorious name ♪ ♪ Henceforth for evermore ♪

- Let us pray. Lord, we have come here to worship you, so we ask that you enable us to do that, that you transform us into worshipful people. Collect our prayers and preaching, collect our reading and hearing of your word. Collect our silence and our singing and raise it up where it might be a joyful noise to you, and a faithful witness to our God. In the name of the blessed trinity, Amen. (footsteps)

- Let us pray.

Congregation: Open our hearts and minds, O God, by the power of your holy spirit, so that, as the 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 Exodus. The Lord said to Moses and Aaron in the land of Egypt, "This month shall be for you the beginning of months, "it shall be the first month of the year for you. "Tell all the congregation of Israel that on the 10th day "of this month each of them shall take a lamb according "to their family's houses, a lamb for a household. "And if the household is too small "for a lamb, two households shall take "according to the number of persons. "According to what each can eat, "you shall make your

count for the lamb. "Your lamb shall be without blemish. "A male, a year-old. "You shall take it from the sheep or from the goats "and you shall keep it until the 14th day of the month, "when the whole assembly of the congregation "of Israel shall kill their lambs in the evening. "Then they shall take some of the blood and put it "on the two door posts and the lintel "of the houses in which they eat them. "They shall eat the flesh that night, roasted, "with unleavened bread and bitter herbs, they shall eat it. "Do not eat any of it raw or boiled with water, "but roasted, its head with its legs and its inner parts. "And you shall let none of it remain until the morning. "Anything that remains until the morning, you shall burn. "In this manner you shall eat it, "your loins girted, your sandals on your feet, "and your staff in your hand, and you shall eat it in haste. "It is the Passover of the Lord, "for I will pass through the land of Egypt that night "and I will smite all the firstborn in the land of Egypt, "both human and animal, and on all the gods "of Egypt, I will execute judgment. "I am the Lord. "The blood shall be a sign for you "upon the houses where you are, and when I see the blood, "I will pass over you and no plague shall fall upon you "to destroy you when I smite the land of Egypt. "This day shall be for you a memorial day, "and you shall keep it as a feast "to the Lord throughout your generations, "you shall observe it as an ordinance forever." This is the word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks God.

- The song this morning is 143, verses one through 10, found on page 856 in the back of the hymnal. Let us stand and proclaim our praise responsively. Hear my prayer, O Lord. In your faithfulness give ear to my supplications. In your righteousness answer me.

Congregation: Enter not into judgment with your servant, for no one living is righteous before you.

- For enemies have pursued me, they have crushed my life to the ground. They have made me sit in darkness like those long dead.

Congregation: Therefore my spirit faints within me, my heart within me is appalled.

- I remember the days of old, I meditate on all that you have done. I muse on what your hands have wrought.

Congregation: I stretch out my hands to you, my soul thirsts for you like parched land.

- Make haste to answer me, O Lord, my spirit fails.

Congregation: Hide not your face from me, lest I be like those who go down to the pit.

- In the morning, let me hear of your steadfast love, for in you, I put my trust.

Congregation: Teach me the way I should go, for to you I lift up my soul.

- Deliver me, O Lord, from my enemies.

Congregation: I have fled to you for refuge.

- Teach me to do your will, for you are my God.

Congregation: Let your good spirit lead me on a level path. ("Praeludium Et Fuga In Es") (singing in foreign language)

- You may be seated. The second reading is taken from Paul's letter to the Romans. What then shall we say to this? If God is with us, who is against us? God, who did not spare God's own son, but gave up that son for us all, will not God also give us all things with Christ? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is to condemn, is it Christ Jesus who died? Yes, who was raised from the dead, who is at the right hand of God, and indeed intercedes for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation or distress or persecution or famine or nakedness or peril or sword, as it is written, for your sake, we are being killed all the day long. We are regarded as sheep to be slaughtered. No, in all these things, we are more than conquerors through the one who loved us, for I am sure that neither death nor life nor angels nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation will be able to separate us from the love of God and Christ Jesus our Lord. This is the word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God. ("Surely He Hath Borne Our Grief") ♪ Surely, surely ♪ ♪ He hath borne our griefs ♪ ♪ And carried our sorrows ♪ ♪ Carried our sorrows ♪ ♪ Carried our sorrows ♪ ♪ Our sorrows ♪ ♪ Carried our sorrows ♪ ♪ Carried our sorrows ♪ ♪ He was, he was wounded for our transgressions ♪ ♪ He was bruised for our iniquities ♪ ♪ The chastisement of our peace ♪ ♪ Was upon him ♪ ♪ And with his stripes we are healed ♪ ♪ Surely, surely ♪ ♪ He hath borne our griefs and carried our sorrows ♪ ♪ Carried our sorrows ♪ ♪ Carried our sorrows ♪ ♪ Our sorrows ♪ ♪ Surely ♪ ♪ And with his stripes, ♪ ♪ We are healed ♪ (pews creaking)

- This reading is taken from the gospel according to Saint Matthew. Jesus withdrew in a boat to a lonely place apart, but when the crowds heard it, they followed on foot from the towns. Going ashore, Jesus saw a great throng, and had compassion on them, and healed their sick. When it was evening, the disciples returned, saying, "This is a lonely place, and the day is now over; send the crowds away to go into the villages and buy food for themselves." Jesus said, "They need not go away; "you give them something to eat." They replied, "We have only five loaves here and two fish." Jesus said, "Bring them here to me." Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, Jesus looked up to heaven, and blessed, and broke and gave the loaves to his disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds. And they all ate and were satisfied. And they took up twelve baskets full of the broken pieces left over, and those who ate were about 5000 men and women and children. This is the word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

- I have something of a personal question for you this morning. Have you ever thought about what your least favorite stereotype of a Christian is? Now, assuming that you agree with me that such stereotypes do in fact

exist, I would expect your nominations to cover anything from, all Christians are goody two shoes, to, Christians never get angry. Perhaps one of the most widespread stereotypes that causes me great impatience at least, is that of the overly clean-cut, slightly smug Christian who projects an air of unflappable cheerfulness. You know, the kind that says, for a true disciple of Christ, life is a bowl full of cherries. Just keep a smile on your face and a song on your lips, and God will take care of you. That, I think, is about my least favorite stereotype of a Christian. Not only does such an attitude seem a little arrogant to me, but it seems so out of touch with reality. Who do you know that really has a good excuse for smiling all the time? And so right in the middle of my discomfort, with self-confident, overly cheerful Christians, drops today's epistle lesson by the supremely confident apostle Paul. If God is for us, who is against us? Who shall bring any charge against God's elect? The original proof text for confident Christians. Indeed, according to Paul, we have every reason to be confident that God is on our side because of the mighty acts of God. Since God did not spare His own son, but gave him up to benefit us all, we may be certain, after such a gift, He will not refuse anything He can give. Paul writes to the Romans, "God is in solidarity "with us thanks to the gift of Christ "and that is a cause for celebration." In calling him Emanuel, which means God with us, we recognize that God shares our joys and our pain, defends and protects us. Not that He takes away the source of our grief, rather He suffers all of life with us. Jesus is a concrete embodiment of divine compassion in our world, a compassion that truly, we can never be separated from. And so conveniently, today's gospel provides one of the best examples of scripture of the depth of solidarity Christ felt with the people to whom he ministered. In this passage, Jesus has just heard the news of Herod having John the Baptist beheaded as a gift to Herodias' daughter, and so he withdraws in a boat to a lonely place to grieve, to ponder the future perhaps, to rest from the demands of an exhausting ministry, but still, the people pursued him. Going ashore, Jesus saw them gathered in a great throng. He had compassion on them, and he healed their sick. And so, by evening, the disciples suggested that, maybe it was about time for everybody to pack up and go home. Jesus had done what he could, it was an isolated place and there was no food for the people to eat. But Jesus answered the disciples, "They need not go away. "You give them something to eat." Well, the disciples must have been a little stunned by such a response, for they only had five loaves of bread and two fish, but they gave Jesus their meager offering and he blessed and broke them and gave them to the disciples, who in turn gave them to the crowd. And they ate and were satisfied. All 5000 of them, with 12 miraculous baskets full of leftovers. Such an amazing act of compassion highlights the image of a Christ who truly understands the human condition, which we see time and time again in the new testament. There's an expression in the gospels, found in today's text and only 11 other places, used exclusively in reference to Jesus and to God, and that expression is, "to be moved with compassion." In the Greek, this phrase refers to the entrails of the body, of as we might say, the guts, the place where our most intimate and intense emotions are located. When the gospels speak about Jesus' compassion as his being moved in the guts, they are expressing something very deep and mysterious. This word is related to the Hebrew word for compassion, which refers to the womb of Yahweh. Indeed something so powerful and life-giving as Jesus' compassion can only be described as a movement of the womb of God. There, the power to call forth new life, to nurture and to protect, lies hidden. There, God is father and mother to us all. Sister and brother, son and daughter to us all. Such is the experience of the thousands that Jesus fed throughout his ministry, of the blind men and women that he healed, of the Widow of Nain, who was burying her only son, of the leper who fell to his knees in front of Jesus, they moved him. He became lost with the lost, hungry with the hungry, and sick with the sick. Christ lives our broken humanity, not as a curse, but as a blessing. This is what we mean

when we say that Jesus Christ reveals God's solidarity with us. In and through Christ, we know that God is for us. A God who has embraced everything human with the infinite tenderness of His compassion. A God so loving that He went to the cross for our sins, but so powerful that He was resurrected from the dead and who now intercedes on our behalf. Truly nothing can separate us from this God. And so Saint Paul had every reason, as do all Christians in fact, for being confident that the love of God shall prevail over any power or circumstance, and in Romans 8, he is proclaiming exactly that. What he was not saying was that the aches and pains of life would thereby disappear. And that the Christian could be assured of a happy, unruffled existence. In fact, it is expected that God's children will suffer, he writes earlier in the same chapter. As he knew from his own experience, forces that might threaten our relationship to Christ are a reality, and thus he speaks to those concerns directly. First, Paul addresses the everyday menaces of life, like being troubled or worried, or being persecuted or lacking food or clothes, or being threatened or even attacked. And on those accounts, Paul surely knew what he was talking about. Conflict, struggle in the inward man and the outward situation, characterize Paul not only before his conversion to Christianity, but afterward as well. As he wrote to the Romans, "I do not do the good I want, "but the evil I do not want is what I do." And conflict was the very breath of his life as a missionary, persecuted, imprisoned, and eventually executed, if anything could lead to pessimism and despair, it should have been the circumstances under which Saint Paul labored. Hardly a letter he wrote omits this note of struggle. Paul also spoke eloquently of forces that are larger than life, bigger than any one of us. Death, life, spirits, superhuman powers, the world as it is, the world as it shall be, forces in the universe, heights, depths. These are the forces that threaten our very existence. That hover above us as they oppress and dominate, striking terror in our hearts, yet they too are vanquished by the love of God through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and we have no reason to fear. Paul clearly grew to be a man of great inward peace and joy. Outward turmoil, circumstances of plenty or of hunger, abundance or want, did not phase him. "I can do all things in Him who strengthens me," he wrote to the Philippians, or as we heard in last Sunday's epistle, Paul believed in everything, God works for good with those who love Him. Whatever scars of his tumultuous life plagued him, he came to know a radiant oneness and wholeness in life that enabled him to confidently, fearlessly proclaim that nothing could separate us from the love of God, and so, to a world full of discouragement and anxiety, Paul brings to us an important word of hope and reassurance. How many of us are inclined to believe that every nagging headache will turn out to be a malignant brain tumor, or that every teenager who fails to arrive home on time is stretched across a deserted highway somewhere in a fatal car accident? Reports just this week of children being murdered in their mother's arms, whether in Liberia or New York City, and of yet another dictator invading an innocent land, causes us both to want to rise up in anger and, at the same time, to wallow in our despair. Truly Paul knew the forces of darkness firsthand but, even as he acknowledged their existence, he persisted in his optimism. "Have no anxiety about anything," he wrote to the Philippians from his prison cell. "Rejoice in the Lord always, again, I will say, rejoice." But such words seem a little out of joint to us today, they come from another age, a simpler world, we say, and so we begin to ask the troubling question, does such Christian hope still have any meaning in our own time? Some of you may have been present when Archbishop Desmond Tutu visited the chapel one evening back in January of 1986. Even more of you may have watched him at home on television that night, certainly a more comfortable alternative than for those hard pews that people occupied for several hours, waiting for him. In any case, the chapel was packed, as was the main quadrangle outside, and the whole campus was buzzing. What challenging word will this Nobel Peace prize winner bring to us? What new insight can we gain into the oppression in South Africa? The

setting couldn't have been more dramatic for his arrival, for you see, he was over half an hour late arriving at the chapel and the television cameras, the live television cameras, were already rolling. After having prayed the prayers, heard the choir and received the offerings, there was nothing left for us to do except wait for Bishop Tutu. And so, Will Willimon began to call out hymn numbers at random for the congregation to sing, just like an old-time revival preacher would have done, and he did a pretty good job. We sang our hearts out for 20 minutes or so, in hopes that he make it, until finally, the crowd began to rise to their feet while singing the hymn "How Firm a Foundation," when through fiery trials, thy pathways shall lie, my grace all sufficient, shall be thy supply. People were clapping and cheering, and even weeping for joy over the arrival of the long-awaited Bishop Tutu, and as he made his way down the long aisle toward the pulpit, the spirit moved in a mighty way as the congregation sang the final verse, "the soul that on Jesus still leaves for repose, "I will not, I will not desert to his foes. "That soul, though all hell should endeavor to shake, "I'll never, no never, no never forsake." Well, we could've gone home right then and it would have been all worth it. There wasn't a dry eye left in the chapel, so moving was that moment, and even Bishop Tutu called it spine-tingling. But as he proceeded with his sermon, it was clear that the message he was bringing to us fit that hymn like a glove. He told us of a time he felt so low in his work with the South African Council of Churches in their struggle against apartheid that he hardly knew where to turn, when he received a letter from a pastor in Alaska. In that letter, the pastor explained that Bishop Tutu and the other members of the Council were being prayed for by name in each of their Sunday services and he included a bulletin all the way from Alaska, which listed their names to prove it. In another letter, he had heard from an elderly widow, who said she prayed for the Council at two a.m. every morning. These letters were obviously a great source of delight for Bishop Tutu, and as he told these stories, in his light-hearted way, he asked us with a knowing look on his face, "What chance does the government "of South Africa stand when the Council of Churches "is being prayed for by name at two a.m. every morning? "We should say to the perpetrators "of injustice and oppression, you are lost, you are lost." He went on to tell us, "Who are you to take on God? "You are lost." Bishop Tutu's optimism was so infectious and his message so powerful that I think we were all a little more fearless in our convictions afterwards, at least for a few days. But if the apostle Paul had only been available to us to follow up on that visit, I dare say he would have prodded us to be even more optimistic in the strength of God's promise and without apologizing for it, to act as if we believed it. Have you met any overly confident, overly cheerful Christians lately? If so, try not to hold it against them. Indeed, Christians have every good reason to be of good cheer. Light has prevailed over darkness, life has prevailed over death. Laughter, hope, joy, peace, compassion, have prevailed over evil through Jesus Christ our Lord. What is left to dread? God is with us through it all. Thanks be to God. (footsteps) (pews creaking) ("Be Thou My Vision") ♪ Be thou my vision, O Lord of my heart ♪ ♪ Naught be all else to me, save that thou art ♪ ♪ Thou my best thought, by day or by night ♪ ♪ Waking or sleeping, thy presence my light ♪ ♪ Be thou my wisdom, and thou my true word ♪ ♪ I ever with thee and thou with me, Lord ♪ ♪ Thou and thou only first in my heart ♪ ♪ Great God of heaven, my treasure thou art ♪ ♪ Great God of heaven, my victory won ♪ ♪ May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's sun ♪ ♪ Heart of my own heart, whatever befall ♪ ♪ Still be my vision, O ruler of all ♪

- The lord be with you.

Congregation: And also with you.

- Let us pray. You may be seated. (pews creaking) Lord, you have called us to be a confessing people, trusting you to forgive and renew us, so in this silence, we offer you all our sin and admit to being the people we are. In silence, let us pray. That you do forgive us is such good news. That we can live in this joy and hope enables us to be gospel people and we give you thanks. Enable us to forgive one another Lord, as you have forgiven us. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. We thank you for the seasons Lord, for this summer time and also for the seasons of the church. Enable us to be faithful to this season of Pentecost and to your Holy Spirit, who has gifted each of us for the church. We pray now for those who will never know themselves to be gifted, never offer their giftedness to the church. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. We thank you for the Holy Spirit, our comforter, and pray especially for those in great need of comfort. For children, the thousands in this country who are homeless, the children beaten, the children afraid, the children abandoned. For those children, because of war, who have been tortured and left orphaned. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. We pray for the comfort for all those dying or suffering, that your comforter might bring meaning to their suffering, might bear witness to the cross and even, in these times in our lives, bear witness to our hope and joy, and not to death's despair. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. For all the world leaders, that you would give them a new vision for this world in which you can make us friends and true neighbors. We pray especially this hour for Iraq, Kuwait, and the mid-east. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. We pray for our own lives, for all of those times of darkness, when we believe there is no hope and no joy and no reason to be eternally optimistic. Forgive us for those times, and as a church, hold us accountable to one another to always living and saying good news about Jesus Christ to one another, always reminding one another about our true story, about our true past on the cross and our true future with God. Transform us into people of joy, always and everywhere. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. And for those saints who have gone before us to give us hope, for the parents or grandparents, for the saints like Bishop Tutu, and Mother Teresa, and Dorothy Day, who offer hope in the midst of incredible suffering and struggle, we give you great thanks and praise and ask that you enable us to take those risks, the kind of risk that lead to joy. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. And for prayer itself, O God, we give you thanks. For being made in such a way that we desire your friendship, and you ours, enable us to pray well, truthfully, praisefully, constantly, that you are the God of our prayers is good news for us and gives us hope. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. In the name of the Blessed Trinity, amen. The Lord has gifted us with everything in our lives, which is good, and true, and beautiful. Let us now offer to God signs of our gratefulness. (inspiring organ music) ("Gloria" by Poulenc) (singing in foreign language) ♪ Praise God from whom all blessings flow ♪ ♪ Praise Him all creatures here below ♪ ♪ Hallelujah, hallelujah ♪ ♪ Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ♪ ♪ Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ♪ ♪ Hallelujah, hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah, hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪

- Lord, you have given us our lives and given us one another. You have given us yourself. Let all that we have and all that we do be of thanksgiving for your goodness. We give you thanks this morning for this time to worship and for these people who have given their lives in song and joy. Transform us into the likeness of Jesus, even as we pray his prayer, saying,

Congregation: 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. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, the

power, and the glory forever. Amen.

- Go now in peace to love and serve the Lord, and remember this light, that it has overcome the darkness. And remember our God of the cross who has overcome all of the evil of our lifetime, all of the evil of this world. So go in hope. In the name of the Blessed Trinity, amen. ("My Hope is Built on Nothing Less") ♪ My hope is built on nothing less ♪ ♪ Than Jesus Christ, my righteousness ♪ ♪ I dare not trust the sweetest frame ♪ ♪ But wholly lean on Jesus' name ♪ ♪ On Christ, the solid rock, I stand ♪ ♪ All other ground is sinking sand ♪ ♪ All other ground is sinking sand ♪ ♪ When darkness veils His lovely face ♪ ♪ I rest on His unchanging grace ♪ ♪ In every high and stormy gale ♪ ♪ My anchor holds within the veil ♪ ♪ On Christ, the solid rock, I stand ♪ ♪ All other ground is sinking sand ♪ ♪ All other ground is sinking sand ♪ ♪ His oath, His covenant, His blood ♪ ♪ Support me in the whelming flood ♪ ♪ When all around my soul gives way ♪ ♪ He then is all my hope and stay. ♪ ♪ On Christ, the solid rock, I stand ♪ ♪ All other ground is sinking sand ♪ ♪ All other ground is sinking sand ♪ ♪ When He shall come with trumpet sound ♪ ♪ Oh, may I then in Him be found ♪ ♪ Lest in His righteousness, alone ♪ ♪ Faultless to stand before the throne ♪ ♪ On Christ, the solid rock, I stand ♪ ♪ All other ground is sinking sand ♪ ♪ All other ground is sinking sand ♪

Man: Let us go forth in the name of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God. (playful organ music)