

(bright organ music)

- Good morning, we'd like to welcome you to Duke Chapel on this Trinity Sunday, like to extend a special warm welcome to all the employees who are worshipping with us today, and thank you for your contribution throughout the year to Duke University. We're also pleased to welcome and rejoice with those individuals and families who are celebrating life during National Cancer Survivors Day, and we pray for your continued healing. Like to call your attention to a couple of announcements. This week we will feature music in Duke Chapel this evening, Sunday June second, at 7:30 pm, the north Carolina Boys Choir will be presenting their concert. And then next week on Thursday evening at 7:00 pm J Samuel Hammond, the University carillonneur will present a carillon concert, and we hope you will be able to attend for those events. Please stand as we join now in the call to worship. How Majestic is the name of the Lord. (congregation murmurs) We have been made little less than God (congregation murmurs) (bright organ music) (choir vocalizes)

- Let us pray. Holy God, you have given us grace by the confession of the faith of your Holy Church to acknowledge the mystery of the Eternal Trinity and in the power of your Divine Majesty to worship the unity. Keep us steadfast in this faith and worship, and bring us at last to see in Your eternal glory one God now and forever, amen. May be seated.

- Let us pray the prayer of Illumination. Open our hearts and minds, O God, by the power of your Holy Spirit so that, as the word is read and proclaimed, we may hear Your message with joy this day, amen. The first lesson is from The Book of Genesis, chapter one through chapter two verse four. In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was formless void and dark covered the face of the Earth while a wind from God swept over the face of the waters. Then God said, "Let there be light", and there was light. And God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day. And God said, "Let there be a dome "in the midst of the waters, "and let it separate the waters from the waters." So God made the dome and separated the waters that were under the dome from the waters that were above the dome. And it was so. God called the dome Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day. And God said, "Let the waters under the sky "be gathered together into one place, "and let the dry land appear." And it was so. God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let the earth put forth vegetation: "plants yielding seed, "and fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit "with the seed in it." And it was so. The earth brought forth vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the third day. And God said, "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky "to separate the day from the night, "and let them be signs, for signs, and for seasons, "and for days and years, "and let them be lights in the dome of the sky "to give light upon the earth." And it was so. God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night, and the stars. God set them in the dome of the sky to give light upon the earth and to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God

saw that it was good. And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day. And God said, "Let the waters bring forth "swarms of living creatures, "and let birds fly above the earth "across the dome of the sky." So God created the great sea monsters and every living creature that moves, of every kind, with which the waters swarm, and every winged bird of every kind. And God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters in the seas, "and let birds multiply the earth." And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day. And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures "of every kind: cattle and creeping things "and wild animals of the earth of every kind." And it was so. God made the wild animals of every kind. And God saw that it was good. Then God said, "Let us make humankind in our image, "according to our likeness, "and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, "and over the birds of the air, "and over the cattle, "and over the wild animals of the earth, "and over every creeping thing that creeps upon the earth." So God created humankind in His image, in the image of God He created them; male and female He created them. God blessed them, and God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth and subdue it, "and have dominion over the fish of the sea "and over the birds of the air "and over every living thing that moves upon the earth." God said, "See, I have given you every plant "yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, "and every tree with seed in its fruit, "you shall have them for food. "And to every beast of the earth, "and to every bird of the air, "and to everything that creeps on the earth, "everything that has the breath of life, "I have given every green plant for food." And it was so. God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the Sabbath day from all the work that he had done. So God blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation. These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created. This is the Word of the Lord. (congregation murmurs) The second lesson is from Saint Paul's second letter to the Corinthians, chapter 13 verses 11 through 13. Finally brothers and sisters, farewell. Put things in order, listen to my appeal, agree with one another, live in peace and the God of love and peace will be with you. Greet one another with a holy kiss. All of the saints greet you. The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with all of you. This is the Word of the Lord.

Priest: Thanks be to God.

- Today's Psalm is Psalm eight, found on page 743 and 744 in your hymnal. Please stand and sing the song "In Glory" responsively. ♪ O LORD, our Lord ♪ (congregation vocalizes) ♪ Your glory is chanted above the heavens ♪ ♪ By the mouth of the babes and infants ♪ (congregation vocalizes) ♪ When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers ♪ (congregation vocalizes) ♪ What are human beings that you are mindful of them ♪ (congregation vocalizes) ♪ Yet you have made them little less than god ♪ (congregation vocalizes) ♪ You have given them dominion over the works of your hands ♪ (congregation vocalizes) ♪ All sheep and oxen ♪ (congregation vocalizes) ♪ The birds of the air, and the fish of the sea ♪ (congregation vocalizes) ♪ O Lord, our Lord ♪ (congregation vocalizes) ♪ All glory be to You, Creator ♪ ♪ And to Jesus Christ, our Savior ♪ (congregation vocalizes) ♪ As it was at time began ♪ (congregation vocalizes) Please be seated. (soft organ music) (choir vocalizes)

- The Gospel lesson is found in the Book of Matthew's, chapter 28, verses 16 through 20. Now the 11

disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him, but some doubted. And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. "Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, "baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, "and teaching them to obey everything "that I have commanded you. "And remember, I am with you always, "to the end of the age." This is the Word of the Lord.

Congregation: Praise be to God.

- Today is Trinity Sunday, when we celebrate and remember the mystery of the Trinity, the Christian belief that God has revealed Godself, one God in three persons: Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, Creator, Redeemer, Sustainer. During the Easter season, we focused upon God revealed as the Son who died and was raised from the dead in order that we might be redeemed from a life of sin and restored to life abundant. And last week we celebrated Pentecost, the coming of the gift of the Holy Spirit, God's presence, which sustains us and empowers us for the ongoing work of being the church, the body of Christ in the world. So it is appropriate that our lectionary texts for today focus upon God the Creator, the first person of the Trinity. In Genesis scripture makes the bold theological assertion that God created the heavens and the earth, pushing back the chaos and the formless void to bring forth a creation characterized by both intricate order and radical freedom. Scripture is not interested in how God created. This is not a historical account, there is no scientific explanation offered, only the proclamation, that it was God who created the universe, and that we have a place in it. Science tells us that the Universe with its one trillion galaxies has approximately an 18 billion year history and the more scientists learn the more they're led to a sense of wonder at the mystery of creation. They tell us, that all the elements of our bodies, were birthed by a supernova explosion 5.5 billion years ago, and that in the first seconds of the fireball, all the conditions had to be just right: the temperature had to be within one degree, the force and the speed of the explosion had to be just as it was, in order for this planet to ever evolve. If any of the elements present have been missing or even a fraction off, then the conditions necessary to bring forth life would never have existed; that the universe has such order to permit life to exist in endless variety with the ability to reproduce itself and adapt in order to survive is remarkable. As Rilke says, "Truly it is glorious, our being here." In reflecting upon creation, Einstein said that one who cannot stand wrapped in awe is as good as dead. When we think about the universe and all its endless variety and meticulous order, how can we fail to respond to the one who created it with praise? The psalmist says it best, "O Lord, our Lord, "How Majestic is your name in all the Earth, "when we look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, "the moon and the stars that you have established, "what are human beings that You are mindful of them?" For Genesis also asserts that human beings enjoy a special relationship to the Creator, because we are created in the likeness of God and called blessed. Elizabeth Achtemeier says that in the Hebrew scripture the language used for *Imago Dei*, the image of God, points to the resemblance of human beings in their total person to God. She says "The concept of the *Imago Dei* "is a confession of the glorious nature of human beings." It is this glorious view of human nature made in the image of God, that prevents every cheapening of the human personality. Surely, that fact should be emphasized, for in our time there are many who try to make us less than we are. Bureaucrats repeatedly turn us into statistics, for advertisers we can be only targeted consumers, the military reckons our humanity in the grizzly figures of body counts and acceptable loss. Medicine can view us as collections of cells with

DNA to be manipulated, and we ourselves, on the other hand, often define our relatives and friends by what they do in their jobs, as engineers, housewives, salespersons, lawyers, and when they can no longer work, we relegate them to the status of useless. But the creation story challenges any diminished notion of human value. We are created *Imago Dei*, in the image of God, that we are, our very existence is of great value, apart from anything that we do. We are of high birth and high calling. We are created to image God both in our being and in our doing. What an incredible claim to make! God is imaged, represented, seen in us. If we truly believed it, I wonder how much human suffering would be avoided, for each of us, each child would start life knowing, that we are incredibly precious, we are God's Own creation, God's Own likeness, and as such of an estimable worth. We would be told from the beginning, that we are uniquely valued and blessed by God for being who we are. There would be nothing to prove, no need to earn love, it would be given as a birthright, because we are children of God, *Imago Dei*. How many psychosis and neurosis and social disorders would be eliminated if we came into the world knowing, that we are blessed and loved? Our nation's children are in desperate need of this knowledge, that they are created in God's Own image, precious, infinitely valuable. For then surely, we would not have the statistics that led to the need for yesterday's stand for Children March on Washington DC, where almost 8,500 cases of abuse or neglect are daily reported in America, and three children die of abuse. Where daily six children commit suicide, and 13 children are homicide victims, or 15 children are killed by firearms, and more than 6,000 children are arrested. Where nearly 3,000 children drop out of school, and 1,400 children are born to teen mothers. Where daily 2,600 babies are born into poverty to become part of the shameful statistic, that one of every four children of America lives in poverty. If we started with the concept of the preciousness of human life, how might it drastically alter what we prioritize, both personally and corporately. I think we could no longer justify spending more on military technology and defense, than any other industrialized country, while ranking 16th in the living standard for the poorest 1/5 of our children. We could no longer tolerate having the highest standard of living in the world, and the largest number of millionaires and billionaires, while at the same time being 18th in the gap between the richest and poorest children. We could no longer be comfortable with having more than 200 million guns floating around on American streets and owning the dubious distinction of being one of the most violent societies in the world. If we truly believed in *Imago Dei*, the stamp of God in every human person, then we could not so easily throw away human life and potential. We must start by valuing ourselves more highly, so that we can pass that on to our children. It is not possible to love another, unless one first knows oneself to be loved. We need parents who know the value of their own lives, and we must learn how to treat every living being, as if in them we are dealing with the very being of God. When we hurt another, we hurt God, and when we love another, we love God. Simple but profound. We must teach these values to our children. Our children and we also need to be taught that we have an important part to play in the world, for each person is not only loved for who they are, they are also given an important and distinctive role to play in the world, to be God's image, to act as God would act in their place. It is our task as doctors and lawyers, and researches, and nurses, and financial planners, and teachers, and students, and parents, and grandparents, and neighbors, and friends. It is our task to figure out how God would act in our place, what would God value, how would God interact with co-workers, how would God deal with conflict or hurt or anger, how would God resolve injustice. The creation story tells us that the world wasn't created once and for all. It is being created right now, and you and I, and our children and grandchildren yet-to-be-born, all have a role to play in it. The opening verses of Genesis can be translated, "When God began to create." We are co-creators with the God who is still creating, and that is both an incredible gift and an

awesome responsibility. Genesis says, that in creation God spoke only to human beings to tell them to be fruitful and multiply, and fill the Earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and every living thing. We have been charged with the care of creation. This is an awesome and incredible gift. But a misunderstanding of what this means has resulted in perhaps more suffering, more harm, than any other passage of scripture that I can think of. What it means is that we are charged with the opportunity and responsibility to act like God acts in creation, to care for and build up what already exists, to use our gifts, our wisdom, our energy, our strength, our creativity to benefit and bless the creation. In creation, God's power is poured out on behalf of the other. The model of care God gives us is servanthood, the shepherd who lays down his life for the sheep. But instead we have acted like gods in our own right, exploiting, manipulating, and using creation for our own ends, without regard to the consequences. As a result our planet is suffering on an unprecedented scale, with grave implications for future generations. Many of the world's crisis of disease, famine, and floods are due to deforestation, air pollution, ozone depletion, water degradation and destruction of species. Matthew Fox says that we are losing soil at the rate of 24 billion tons per year, that's the amount of the entire area of India. Water tables worldwide are falling dramatically. In Chapala, Mexico, the third largest freshwater lake in Latin America has fallen from a depth of 30 feet to less than 9 feet, and all the white fish are gone. In the U.S. disease is wiping out rainbow trout, and a mysterious bacteria killed millions of fish in the Neuse River this year. Human health is also being affected. In Czechoslovakia, there has been a 60% increase in cancer since 1970, in Los Angeles and Calcutta thousands of children are diagnosed with permanent respiratory damage by the age of 10, in Mexico City every citizen, including every child, is breathing the equivalent of two packs of cigarettes a day because of fouled air, and in the U.S. there are 200,000 new cases of cancer yearly. Immune systems are breaking down among humans as well as non-humans. Thomas Berry alerts us to the price we are paying for neglecting our home. When he warns that we are involved in a supreme pathology as we go about closing down the major life systems of the planet. As he puts it, "We are upsetting the entire Earth system, "that has over some billions of years "and through an endless sequence of experiments "produce such a magnificent array of living forms, "forms capable of seasonal self-renewal, "over an indefinite period of time." What a responsibility we bear! For God has entrusted creation to our care, but also given us radical freedom to choose what we will do with that trust. We are free to live out God's blessing in ways that bless the creation in its human and non-human dimensions. And we are free to misuse our freedom, to abuse, exploit, and destroy. I'm afraid the evidence speaks loudly, that we have more often than not chosen to abuse our freedom and creation has kept the ledger, in the ozone layer, the pollution of the atmosphere and waters, deforestation and the destruction of species. In the 12th century, Hildegard of Bingen said, that there is a web of justice between humanity and all other creatures, and if humanity breaks this web of justice, then God permits creation to punish humanity. It is not an avenging God, but the human and non-human creation, that is responding to our abuse with disease and sickness. Our life is inextricably linked with the life of creation. We've learned a great deal about our interdependence in the last 50 years. We now know, that it is not possible to harm creation without harming ourselves. And that it is not possible for us to harm ourselves without harming creation. We're bound together inextricably, an intricate web of life floating in a sea of space with the forces of chaos pushed back but not defeated. We will thrive or perish as creation together. The blessed world, the world that is whole and healthy, and fruitful is the world that God intends, and God continues to work through us and in creation to create that world. It is our privilege as those made in the image of God to be co-creators with God, working to push back the forces of chaos, to bring healing

and wholeness and blessing to the world. There is so much that we can do together, that we have begun to do together, and with God's creative power, there's so much that we can do to recover the blessing that God intends. But we must start with a sense of the preciousness of life and the sacredness of all creation. It is not enough to value our own lives, for we share creation with other human beings, with the creatures who fill our skies, and land, and sea, with the plants in the soil and the waters, with the sky and the planets, and the stars. God is expressed in us in a special way, Imago Dei, but God is also expressed in all of creation. There's so much that we can do to bring about that wholeness that God intends. Everything that exist, everything that is, everything in the world participates in this life of God. If we would but recognize its sacredness. Christian Theology and mysticism teaches us that God is not an absentee landlord but the very heart of being that exists in and through and around everything that is. Julian said we are in God, and God, whom we do not see, is in us. Mechthild of Magdeburg, a mystic and social activist of the 13th century said that the day of her spiritual awakening was the day she saw and knew that she saw all things in God and God in all things. Meister Eckhart said God is round about us, completely enveloping us. And Acts 17 verse 28 says that God is the one in whom we live and move and have our being. Nothing exists outside of God's own being, so in a very real sense, when we abuse creation, we crucify God all over again. And when we love what God has created, we love God the Creator, who is above and beyond and through and in all things. The creation story invites us to look at creation with eyes of awe and wonder, recognizing that it is the outpouring of God's gracious blessing upon the world. Rabbi Heschel says, that without awe, everything becomes an object of consumerism. Forfeit your sense of awe, let your conceit diminish your ability to revere, and the universe becomes a marketplace for you. Cultivating a sense of awe means developing the ability to recognize the sacredness, God's divine blessing in things and beyond them. For after each phase of creation God evaluated what had been made and pronounced it good. And three times in the story a blessing was pronounced, first, upon the living creatures, then, upon human beings, and last, upon the Sabbath, the day when God rested and delighted in what had been created. As God delights in us in creation, so we are also called to take delight in one another and in all that God has made. When is the last time that you stood and really looked at a tree with awe and noticed the way the trunk is bound to the earth and the way its roots reach deep down, grounding it, seeking the nourishment of water, and the way its branches reach out toward the heavens as if they were praising God? When is the last time that you stood under the coolness of its shade or smelled its fragrance? When is the last time that you really thrilled to hear the song of a bird or to watch its effortless flight or to marvel at its brilliant coloration? When did you last watch a child at play, observing her wonder at the most simple things, her ability to endlessly be fascinated by a pile of leaves? When did you last laugh for the sheer joy of laughter? It is said that adults laugh spontaneously 20 times a day and children more than 100 times a day. When is the last time that you let a child lead you into wonder and delight? We can discover delight and wonder almost anywhere, if we will but take the time to rest and appreciate the blessings of God in creation. It might be in the company of a grandparent or the tender touch of a friend or the glorious majesty of a mountain, or the soaring voices of a choir, or the soothing rhythm of the ocean surf. Genesis invites us to take time to pause in awe before God's creation, and by so doing to discover a closeness and a passionate love for both the creation and the One who stands behind and through, and around it, naming it good and blessed. O Lord our Lord, How Majestic is your name in all the Earth. We stand in awe before the creation that You have made. (uplifting organ music) (choir vocalizes)

- You may be seated. I invite you to join with me in the Prayers of the People. At those moments of the close

of each set of petitions, when I offer the words "Lord, in Your mercy," I invite you to respond "Hear our prayer." Let us pray. O God, whose Word is the force that turned nothing into the creation of everything, we give You thanks for the light and warmth of the sun, that is creating the gift of yet another new day. And we give You thanks for the billions of suns and the countless worlds, that are mysteries to our minds and yet are the work of Your Word. We give You thanks for all the creatures with which You have filled the world, and for the gifts that You have granted to humanity across the earth, gifts of music and art, gifts of skill and invention, gifts of individual dignity and community integrity, gifts of discovery and understanding, gifts of love and commitment to one another. O God, we praise You, for creating us and for making us co-creators with You. Lord, in Your mercy, (congregation murmurs) O God, whose Word became flesh in a Son named Jesus, we give You thanks for love that is infinite, for love that cannot be killed by suffering, for love that cannot be destroyed by death. He taught us to know You as a loving Father, He taught us to depend upon You as if we were Your children, so we come to You on behalf of all of Your children, those who are ill with diseases of body and mind, those who are victims of abuses by strangers, family members and friends, those who are ignored by political processes, those who fail to learn, because others fail to teach. O Jesus who descended to hell that not even the lost could fail to be found. Enter into the pockets of hell that hold so many captives here, captives to the curse of addiction, captives to the crimes of violence, captives to uncured cancers. O Jesus, find Your people and set them free. Lord in Your mercy, (congregation murmurs) O God whose Holy Spirit moved over the face of the waters in creation, and whose Spirit moves even today through the waters of baptism, we pray for Your church in all its forms and places, in small houses and great cathedrals, in open spaces and quiet chapels, in elegant liturgies and simple songs, and we pray for the witness of Your church in the institutions it created, for the witness of Your church to the Holy Spirit in hospitals, in homes for children, in great universities. We pray for this University and for all who labor in it for those who care for its books and for those who care for its grounds, for those who work with their hands, and for those who work with their minds, for those who manage investments and for those who mop floors, for those who successfully treat cancers, and those whose research may in the end successfully treat AIDS, bless the president of this institution and all in her administration, deans and directors, specialists and secretaries, and care for all who are in transition from their present responsibilities to their retirements or to new vocations. Lord, in Your mercy, (congregation murmurs) O God, who has created us, who was crucified for us, and who comforts us, comfort those who are ill, who are grieving, who are anxious, all whom we now name in the silence of our hearts. Lord, in Your mercy, (congregation murmurs) All these things we ask in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, amen. In thanksgiving for all the gifts of God to us, the people of God are moved to return signs and symbols of gratitude. Among the signs and symbols, these material gifts, which we are now invited to present. Offering of thanksgiving to God who gives us everything. The ushers will be among you. (soft orchestral music) (dramatic organ music) (choir vocalizes) (dramatic organ music) (choir vocalizes) Let us give thanks to the Lord, our God. Almighty God who created us, who endowed us with gifts, who lavished love upon us, who has died for us, and now lives with us, grant that we in our humble moments of thanksgiving and in tokens and signs of gratitude, will live our lives and symbolize Your love with songs, and gifts, and deeds of thanksgiving to You, and service to all of Your people in the name of Jesus Christ Our Lord, amen.

- Let us joined in praying together the prayer that 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. And 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, and the power, and the glory for ever, amen. (bright organ music) (choir vocalizes) May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you and keep you. ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ (slow organ music)