

(bright organ music)

- Welcome to Duke Chapel on this fifth Sunday in the season of Lent. We call your attention to the schedule in the bulletin, beginning on Palm Sunday at Holy Week with our full round of services and we hope that you will join us for those services. And this afternoon at 4 p.m., the Duke Chapel Choir and Orchestra will present Haydn's Creation. Tickets are still available and can be purchased at Page Box Office beginning at three this afternoon for Haydn's Creation at four. The Annual Crop Walk leaves from the steps of Duke Chapel after the service today and winds its way through the city of Durham. This has become an important annual event here and will be today. Today in Duke Chapel, we honor the life and the work of James T. Cleland, Dean of the Chapel for many years and beloved presence of Christ and Christ's church here on this campus. And today's bulletin has an imitable statement that typified the humor and the thought of Jim Cleland. A number of years ago, friends of Jim Cleland established the Cleland Fund here at the Chapel, which is one of the major endowment funds that Duke Chapel uses. Over the years, the Cleland Fund has continued the work of Jim Cleland in providing funds for distinguished and world-renowned guest preachers, for special musical events, for student mission projects, and a wide array of ministry and a very fitting tribute to Jim Cleland and we're delighted to have Alice Cleland and friends with us in the service today honoring this great spirit who continues to pervade the life of the Chapel, Jim Cleland. Now, let us continue the worship of God. Stand. ("Jesus, Priceless Treasure") (singing in foreign language) ♪ Jesus, priceless treasure ♪ ♪ Source of purest pleasure ♪ ♪ Truest friend to me ♪ ♪ Long my heart hath panted ♪ ♪ Till it well-nigh fainted ♪ ♪ Thirsting after thee ♪ ♪ Thine I am O spotless Lamb ♪ ♪ I will suffer nought to hide thee ♪ ♪ Ask for nought beside thee ♪ ♪ In thine arms I rest me ♪ ♪ Foes, who would molest me ♪ ♪ Cannot reach me here ♪ ♪ Though the earth be shaking ♪ ♪ Every heart be quaking ♪ ♪ Jesus calms my fear ♪ ♪ Sin and hell in conflict fell ♪ ♪ With their heaviest storms assail us ♪ ♪ Jesus will not fail us ♪ ♪ Hence, all thoughts of sadness ♪ ♪ For the Lord of gladness ♪ ♪ Jesus enters in ♪ ♪ Those who love the Father ♪ ♪ Though the storms may gather ♪ ♪ Still have peace within ♪ ♪ Yea, whatever here must bear ♪ ♪ Still in thee lies purest pleasure ♪ ♪ Jesus, priceless treasure ♪

- Almighty God, you alone can bring into order the unruly wills and affections of sinners, grant your people grace to love what you command, and desire what you promise. That among the swift and varied changes of the world, our hearts may surely there be fixed where true joys are to be found. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you in the Holy Spirit, one God now and forever, amen.

- Let us pray together the prayer for illumination. Open our hearts and minds, oh 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 lesson this morning is taken from the prophet Ezekiel, chapter 37. The hand of the Lord was upon me and brought me out of the spirit of the Lord and set me down in the midst of a valley. It was full of bones. And God led me round among them, and there were very many upon the valley, and they were very dry. And God said to me oh son of man, can these bones live? And I answered oh Lord God, you know. Again, God said to me prophesy to these bones and say to them oh dry bones, hear the word of the Lord. Thus says

the Lord God to these bones I will cause breath to enter you and you shall live. And I will lay sinews upon you and will cause flesh to come upon you and cover you with skin and put breath in you and you shall live and you shall know that I am the Lord. So I prophesied as I was commanded and as I prophesied there was a noise and a rattling and the bones came together, bone to its bone. And as I looked, there were sinews on them and flesh had come upon them and skin had covered them, but there was no breath in them. Then God said to me prophesy to the breath, prophesy, oh son of man, and say to the breath thus says the Lord God come from the four winds, oh breath, and breathe upon these slain that they may live. So I prophesied as God commanded me and the breath came into them and they lived and they stood upon their feet in exceedingly great post. Then God said to me oh son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel, they say our bones are dried up and our hope is lost, we are clean cut off. Therefore prophesy and say to them thus says the Lord God, I will open your graves and raise you from your graves, oh my people. I will bring you home into the land of Israel. This ends the reading of the first lesson.

- Please stand as we join in singing responsively Psalm 116 found on page 837 in your hymnal. (Psalm 116) ♪ I love the Lord, because he has heard my voice ♪ ♪ And my pleas for mercy ♪ ♪ Because he inclined his ear to me ♪ ♪ Therefore I will call on him as long as I live ♪ ♪ The snares of death encompassed me ♪ ♪ The pangs of Sheol laid hold on me ♪ ♪ I suffered distress and anguish ♪ ♪ Then I called on the name of the Lord ♪ ♪ O Lord, I pray, deliver my soul ♪ ♪ Gracious is the Lord, and righteous ♪ ♪ Our God is merciful ♪ ♪ The Lord preserves the simple ♪ ♪ When I was brought low, the Lord saved me ♪ ♪ Return, O my soul, to your rest ♪ ♪ For the Lord has dealt bountifully with you ♪ ♪ For you have delivered my soul from death ♪ ♪ My eyes from tears, my feet from stumbling ♪ ♪ I walk before the Lord in the land of the living ♪ ♪ I was faithful to you when I was suffering ♪ ♪ Though in my confusion I said I can't trust anyone ♪ ♪ What shall I render unto the Lord ♪ ♪ For all his benefits toward me ♪ ♪ I will take the cup of salvation ♪ ♪ And call upon the name of the Lord. ♪

- The epistle lesson is taken from the book of Romans, chapter eight. To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the spirit is life and peace. For the mind that is set on the flesh is hostile to God and does not submit to God's law, indeed it cannot. And those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh, you are in the spirit, if in fact the spirit of God dwells in you. Anyone who does not have the spirit of Christ does not belong to Christ, but if Christ is in you, although your bodies are dead because of sin, your spirits are alive because of righteousness. If the spirit of the one who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, the one who raised Christ Jesus from the dead will give life to your mortal bodies, also through that same spirit which dwells in you. This ends the reading of the second lesson. (inspirational organ music) (singing in foreign language)

- Today's gospel is from the 11th chapter of John. Now, a certain man was ill, Lazarus of Bethany, the village of Mary and her sister Martha. It was Mary who anointed the Lord with ointment and wiped his feet with her hair whose brother Lazarus was ill. So the sister sent to him saying Lord he whom you love is ill. But when Jesus heard it, he said this illness is not unto death, it is for the glory of God so that the son of God might be glorified by means of it. Now Jesus loved Martha and her sister and Lazarus, so when he heard that he was ill, he stayed two days longer in the place where he was. And then, after this he said to his disciples, let's go to Judeah again. The disciples said to him rabbi, they are seeking to stone you and you're going there again? And Jesus answered if anyone walks in the day he does not stumble because he sees the light of this world.

But if anyone walks in the night, he stumbles because the light is not of him. And then he said to them our friend Lazarus has fallen asleep but I go to wake him out of his sleep. The disciples said Lord if he's fallen asleep, he'll recover. Now Jesus has spoken of his death but they thought he meant taking rest in sleep. So Jesus said to them plainly Lazarus is dead and for your sake I am glad that I was not there so that you may believe, but let us go to him. Thomas called the twin said to his fellow disciples let us also go that we may die with him. Now when Jesus came, he found that Lazarus had already been in the tomb four days. When Martha heard Jesus was coming, she went and met him while Mary sat in the house. Martha said to Jesus Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died. And even now I know that whatever you ask from God, God will give you. Jesus said to her your brother will rise again. Martha said to him I know that he will rise again in the resurrection at the last day. Jesus said to her I am the resurrection and the life and he who believes in me, though he die, yet shall he live. And whosoever lives and believes in me shall never die. Do you believe this? She said to him yes Lord, I believe that you are the Christ, the son of God, he who is coming into the world. When she had said this, she went and called her sister Mary saying the teacher is out here and he is calling for you. And when she heard it, she went to him. Now Jesus had not yet come to the village but was still in the place where Martha had met him. Then Mary, when she came where Jesus was, saw him and fell at his feet saying Lord, if you had been here my brother would not have died. Jesus saw her weeping and the Jews who came out with her also weeping and he was deeply moved in spirit and said where have you laid him? They said Lord come and see, and Jesus wept. So the Jews said see how he loved him? But some said could not he who opened the eyes of the blind have kept this man from dying? Jesus, deeply moved, came to the tomb. A stone lay upon it, Jesus said take away the stone and Martha, the sister of the dead man said Lord by this time there will be an odor for he has been dead four days. Jesus said did I not tell you that if you would believe, you would see the glory of God. So they took away the stone and Jesus lifted up his eyes and said Father, I thank you that you have heard me. I knew that thou would hearest me always but I said this on account of the people standing by that they may believe that you sent me. And when he said this, he cried out in a loud voice, Lazarus, come out and the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, his face wrapped with a cloth and Jesus said unbind him and let him go. The chief priest and pharisees gathered the council and said what are we to do? This man performs signs and if we let him go on thus, everyone will believe in him. And so from that day they took council how they might put Jesus to death. We're in Lent, the season of the cross, that season when we move inexorably toward the death of Jesus. Which makes it all the more surprising that the church should have put this story about the raising from the dead of Lazarus here on this fifth Sunday of Lent. And makes surprising that John should put the story of Lazarus right before Palm Sunday, when Jesus was going to the cross. And we wonder why it's here in Lent, the season of death. But no matter, it's a good story. Lazarus is living over in Bethany with Mary and Martha, and you remember Mary just before Palm Sunday, she anoints Jesus with sweet-smelling oil and lets down her hair, but it's Lazarus who is the center of this story even though, interestingly enough, Lazarus never mutters a single word in the gospels. And that tips you off that, though Lazarus is the center of this story, that Lazarus probably functions here to tell you something about Jesus rather than to show off Lazarus. And John goes to great lengths to show you what good friends Jesus and Lazarus were. And maybe Jesus liked Lazarus because like a lot of preachers, Jesus enjoyed hearing himself talk and quiet Lazarus enjoyed listening, well John doesn't say. All he says is that Jesus loved Lazarus and his sisters Mary and Martha. When Jesus got to the tomb where Lazarus was buried, he wept and the people standing round know what those tears mean, see how he loved him. But the beginning of the story finds Jesus out

somewhere working and Mary and Martha send Jesus the bad news. Lord, the one whom you love is sick unto death. Well Jesus plays down the news, he says this isn't a sickness unto death, it's for the glory of God that the son of God might be glorified by means of it. Now we don't know whether it made Lazarus feel better to know that his sickness would provide a good sermon illustration for Jesus. All we know is that upon receiving the news of Lazarus' illness, that Jesus sort of plays down the news and stays there wherever he is a few days longer. He doesn't rush to Lazarus' bedside, no matter how close a friend they are. And finally, Jesus says to his disciples let's go back to Judeah because Lazarus, our friend, has fallen asleep but I'm gonna wake him out of his sleep. And typical of the disciples in John's gospel, they misunderstand what Jesus is saying. They think that Jesus means that Lazarus is now resting comfortably after his recovery. But no, Jesus says, Lazarus is dead. Well off they go, but not before Jesus' disciples remind him that in going back to Judeah, there may be one more corpse other than that of Lazarus. Lord, it was in Judeah that they're trying to kill you, they say to Jesus. Do you wanna go back there? And Jesus replies by saying those who wander around in the dark stumble a great deal, whatever that means. But death, darkness be damned, off they go. Now when Jesus finally gets to Bethany, Martha runs out to meet him and she lets Jesus have it. Lord, if you had been here, my brother wouldn't have died. And Mary doesn't even come out of the house she's so mad at Jesus. And Martha then adds that she thinks Jesus might help, since it appears that anything Jesus asks, God will grant. But Jesus isn't interested in what Martha thinks, he's more concerned with what Martha is able to believe, her faith. And so Jesus reassures her, your brother is going to rise again. Your brother will rise again. So, says Martha, so what? Let's say that maybe Mary and Martha and Lazarus were members of the Jewish sect called the pharisees, who believed in the relatively new Jewish notion of a general resurrection of the dead in the future. And so, when Jesus says that Lazarus is going to raise from the dead, Martha repeats what she already knows about the resurrection, yeah yeah yeah, I know. I know all that, I know that in some day, sometime, somewhere, he's gonna be raised on the last day. She's just repeating something she learned in the creed, something they taught her in Sunday school. But you see, that isn't a whole lot of help for Martha right now because she wants life for Lazarus today, not someday. And you can try this yourself. A family emerges from the intensive care unit at the hospital, they are met by their pastor. They say to their pastor she's gone, mama's gone, she's dead. And the pastor says why those tears? Don't you believe in the resurrection? Haven't you repeated the words of the creed? Well mama's dead and we don't want her back 2,000 years from now, we want her living back now. But what Jesus says to Martha is more radical than what the pharisees had in mind by the general resurrection of the dead. He says to her no, your brother is not going to rise on the last day, your brother's gonna rise now. Because you see, I am the resurrection and I am the life and he who believes in me is gonna live. And then Jesus puts it to her, "Do you believe this?" You see, he's challenging Martha to put her trust not in something somebody else has told her, not in some words of creed, not in some theological proposition, but in him. Do you believe this? And Martha comes through. "Yes Lord, I believe. "You are the Christ, the son of God, "he who is coming into the world." Old radical F.D. Maurice said that this little exchange between Martha and Jesus depressed him because 2,000 years after this conversation, most of us Christians have not yet got beyond the pharisees to the point of Martha's confession. We still think like the pharisees, that resurrection is some time in the future, something that happens to you later in the sweet by and by. But Jesus brings Martha to the radical, stunning confession that resurrection is now, present, in the flesh standing toe to toe, face to face with her. I am the resurrection, he says. And it's not some wild theological idea just concocted in the gospel of John. In Luke 7, Jesus raises the widow's son, followed in Luke 8 by the raising of Jairus'

daughter. And then we get to John's gospel and there's Lazarus. Because that's the kind of effect Jesus had on people. They all rise. That's the effect Jesus has on the dead. They rise, they rise months, years before we ever get to Easter while we're still deep in Lent because they are face to face with Mr. Resurrection, even before he gets resurrected. Jesus is the in the flesh presence of the kingdom in which everybody rises. No matter whether they meet Jesus in Lent or they wait until Easter, whenever Jesus gets out to the cemetery, everybody rises. Well, Martha goes in and tells her sister, Jesus is out here and he's looking for you. You might as well come on out. And Mary comes out and says bitterly Lord, if you'd managed to get here on time, my brother would still be alive. But Jesus doesn't reply. 'Cause maybe he's as angry and as upset about Lazarus' death as Mary. Because we learned that being Jesus doesn't mean that he's not angry over death and he lets Mary vent her anger because he understands, he shares her anger. He hates death as much as anybody else, he weeps over it. But then Jesus moves on. Because you see, he's here not to just wring his hands over a deadly situation, he's not here just to blame or transfer or to deny or resignedly accept, 'cause that's the way we deal with death. But he moves on out to the cemetery, he leads a great procession out there and then he orders that the stone, the door to the tomb be rolled away. And ever practical, good old down to Earth Martha notes that Lazarus has been in there for a good four days and in the elegant words of the King James English, he now stinketh. Jesus simply reminds Martha of what he said, he lifts up his eyes towards Heaven, he prays and then in a voice loud enough to raise the dead says, "Lazarus, come out of there!" And the dead man came out, his hands and feet bound with bandages, his face covered with a cloth. And Jesus commands again unbind him and let him go. And that was so much for dead Lazarus. And in a way, it was also so much for Jesus because Lazarus' new beginning was the beginning of the end for Jesus because after he raised Lazarus, the powers that be, the authorities, the death dealers at last got their act together and they stopped pussyfooting around and, says John, from that day on they took council as to how they might put him to death. It was just a little too much resurrection for one day. It was just a little too much Easter set loose. The folks up in the Pentagon just can't stand so much life bubbling up, even in Lent. The powers that be, the defenders of the status quo, the watch dogs who keep everything in place and everybody tied down, they just love darkness rather than light. They always choose death over life. And so they immediately set at work to find a tomb for Jesus, but this time with a stone bigger than the one that they used to seal Lazarus shut. And so it's all downhill now, down towards darkness, down towards death. A little later, Jesus comes out of hiding just long enough to have a meal with Mary and Martha and Lazarus over in Bethany. And during the meal, Mary comes out and lets down her hair and she anoints Jesus with some sweet-smelling oil and Judas rebukes her, saying she shouldn't do this act of extravagance, she oughta take that money she spent on that oil and use it to feed the poor. And Jesus tells Judas to back off because he knows that her act of extravagance is in response to his coming act of extravagance on the cross. You see, she is anointing Jesus for burial with the same oil with which she anointed the body of Lazarus for burial. And Jesus leaves Martha's table still smelling of the sweet oil, the sweet funeral oil. And he moves on toward Palm Sunday, on to the cross, on to death, which is of course where you and I are also headed. In that, like Lazarus, none of us is going to make it out of here alive. But in the meantime, on the way to the cross, to death, deep in Lent, I want you to ponder what Jesus told Martha. Resurrection is not something that you have to wait for until we get to Easter. It's not some forthcoming day in a still undetermined future. Resurrection is now, it is a present reality, not just a coming one because any time Jesus arrives, the dead are set loose. You see, if resurrection and raising of the dead and unbinding corpses were events just for Easter, then that overlooks a number of places in the gospels where Jesus

raises the dead and kicks death in the teeth. The resurrection of the dead is not just confined to Easter, it's here at all times and places. Not just an isolated event in some distant past or not just some hoped for event in a distant future. What God did in Jesus and Easter is what God was busy doing all the time, bringing the dead back to life. The same God who reached down and brought creation out of nothing brings life out of death. The same God who breathed life into those dead bones that Ezekiel speaks about, this is the same God. This God, for whom all creativity is required, is nothing. And all his resurrection needs is death. Now look, death is death. Lazarus wasn't asleep like the disciples thought, he was dead. He was dead as dead could be. When we say resurrection, we Christians aren't talking about some pagan drivel about the immortality of the soul or that some there's some eternal flame within each of us that keeps burning on and on. No, in a sense we do agree with those non-believers who say that when you're dead, you're dead. Death is death, and when you're dead, you're dead. But the joke is that it's the dead that Jesus just loves to raise. All he needs to get real creative is a bunch of nothing. He is most glorious when things are most hopeless. He is most alive when things are most deadly. This past week in troubled little Lithuania, life squared off against death. A group of young soldiers, about the age of Duke students fled the Red Army into a hospital. And when it became apparent that there are limits even to Gorbys glasnost, when it became obvious that our country was once again willing to let Lithuania perish. After all, we so want to sell burgers and fries in Moscow. The president of little Lithuania told the frightened young men look, go to the churches, it's your only hope. And so they can call out the National Guard and they can sew you back up and shake their heads and send you from the oncologist to the mortician. They can send in the tanks and they can seal the borders. They can go ahead and try to entomb you in sarcophagi of race and color and gender and class. They can tell you the game's over, the jig is up, you can't fight City Hall, they can tell you we've done all that medical science can do. But once resurrection is cut loose, unbound, then your only hope is if Mr. Resurrection will again do his life-giving thing and snatch life from the jaws of death. Because the powers of death that so trap us, so defeat us, are little more than just a good excuse for Jesus to show off his glory. Amen.

- The Lord be with you. Let us pray. God of the living and of the dead, as we feel the power of your word proclaimed, we sense the movement of your spirit which is beyond our capacity to explain. We acknowledge your power to set us free from bondage in the present as Lazarus himself was raised from the dead 2,000 years ago. Trusting in your eternal goodness, confident in your desire to save us, we offer these prayers for the entire creation that we may be reconciled to you and to one another, able truly to live. Let us pray for the Church of Jesus Christ that begun, maintained, and nurtured by your spirit, it may be strong, engaging, grateful, and true, ever doing your will. We thank you for faithful servants of the church, especially Dean James T. Cleland. Let the church be always faithful, dear God. Let us pray for people who do not believe, who are tormented by doubt or have turned against you. Open their eyes to see the wonders of your love revealed in Jesus of Nazareth and to follow when he calls them to arise. Conquer their doubt with faith, oh God. Let us pray for those who are sick, for all who suffer with pain or struggle with demons of the mind, that their valley of dry bones may become a place of healing and renewal. Heal the sick and troubled, oh God. We pray for peace and reconciliation in our world. Resolve ancient conflicts, silence weapons, create goodwill among every race and nation. Especially we pray for the people of Lithuania and the government of the Soviet Union in their time of struggle. Bring peace to all the Earth, oh God. Let us pray for people who are alone and lonely, who have no one to call a friend. May they be remembered, befriended, and know your

care for them. Visit lonely people, oh God. We pray for the dying who face the final mystery. May they enjoy light and life intensely, maintain their dignity, and greet death unafraid. Have mercy on the dying, oh God. We pray for those whose tears refuse to dry, who listen for a comforting word and look for a familiar face in their time of loss. May they affirm all that you promise in Jesus who prepares a place for us within your spacious love. Comfort those who sorrow, oh God. We pray for families, for parents and children, brothers and sisters, may they enjoy each other, honor differences, and forgive as happily as we all are forgiven in your great mercy. Shelter families with your love, oh God. We pray for people everywhere, that they may come into their own as children of God and inherit the kingdom prepared in Jesus Christ, the Lord of all and savior of the world. This we pray in the name of Jesus Christ who prays with us and for us to whom be praised forevermore. Amen. As a forgiven and reconciled people, let us offer our gifts and ourselves to God. (bright organ music) (singing in foreign language) (singing in foreign language) ("Praise God, from Whom All Blessings Flow") ♪ Praise God, from whom all blessings flow ♪ ♪ Praise Him, all creatures here below ♪ ♪ Praise Him above, ye heavenly host ♪ ♪ Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ♪

- Almighty God, we offer you thanks and praise for your promise of resurrection to all who believe. Now we pray that you would bring new life to the mission of the church, which we support through our prayers and our offerings. As Christ sacrificed life for us, so may each of us commit ourselves to carrying forward the work to which we are called in our own day. Bless us and all the gifts we bring in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray with confidence. 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 of power and the glory forever, amen. Go forth into the world forever changed. Share God's gift with all who are in bondage, longing to be set free, and may the blessings of God, creator, Christ, and Holy Spirit be with you all now and forevermore. ("Amen") ("The God of Abraham Praise") ♪ The God of Abraham praise ♪ ♪ Who reigns enthroned above ♪ ♪ Ancient of everlasting days ♪ ♪ And God of love ♪ ♪ Jehovah, great I am ♪ ♪ By Earth and Heaven confessed ♪ ♪ I bow and bless the sacred name ♪ ♪ Forever blessed ♪ ♪ The great I am has sworn ♪ ♪ I on this oath depend ♪ ♪ I shall, on eagle wings upborne ♪ ♪ To heaven ascend ♪ ♪ I shall behold God's face ♪ ♪ I shall God's power adore ♪ ♪ And sing the wonders of God's grace ♪ ♪ Forevermore ♪ ♪ The heavenly land I see ♪ ♪ With peace and plenty blest ♪ ♪ A land of sacred liberty ♪ ♪ And endless rest ♪ ♪ There milk and honey flow ♪ ♪ And oil and wine abound ♪ ♪ And trees of life forever grow ♪ ♪ With mercy crowned ♪ ♪ The God who reigns on high ♪ ♪ The great archangels sing ♪ ♪ And holy, holy, holy cry ♪ ♪ Almighty King ♪ ♪ Who was, and is, the same ♪ ♪ And evermore shall be ♪ ♪ Jehovah, Lord, the great I am ♪ ♪ We worship thee ♪ (bright organ music)