

(organ playing)

- Grace and peace to you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We welcome you to this service of worship at Duke University Chapel on the second Sunday after Pentecost. We also extend greetings to those in our radio and television audiences. We pray that each of you will receive a blessing during this hour. Our preacher for this morning's service is the Reverend Doctor Ted Campbell, Assistant Professor of Church History at Duke Divinity School. Having been at Duke for two years, Doctor Campbell teaches in the fields of Wesley studies and church history. He is also author of "The Apostle of United Methodism." Doctor Campbell is experienced as a parish minister coming from the Texas annual conference of the United Methodist Church. We welcome Doctor Campbell to our pulpit today. Please note the other announcements as they are printed in your bulletin and now let us continue our worship. (choir singing) (organ playing) (everyone singing) Oh God, from whom all good doth come, grant that by Thy inspiration, we may think those things that are right and by Thy merciful guiding may perform the same through Jesus Christ our Lord who liveth and reigneth with Thee and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever, amen.

- Let us pray. 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 is taken from the Book of Genesis. Jacob left Beersheba and went toward Haran and he came to a certain place and stayed there that night because the sun had set. Taking one of the stones of the place, he put it under his head and lay down in that place to sleep and he dreamed that there was a ladder set up on the earth and the top of it reached to Heaven and behold, the angels of God were ascending and descending on it. And behold, the Lord stood above it and said, "I am the Lord. "The God of Abraham, your father, and the God of Isaac. "The land on which you lie "I will give to you and your descendants "and your descendants shall be like the dust of the earth "and you shall spread abroad to the west "and to the east and to the north and to the south "and by you and your descendants shall all "the families of the earth bless themselves. "Behold, I am with you and will keep you "wherever you go and will bring you back to this land "for I will not leave you until I have done that "of which I have spoken to you." Then Jacob awoke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place and I did not know it." And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place? "This is none other than the house of God "and this is the gate of Heaven." This ends the reading of the first lesson.

Woman: He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High,

Congregation: who abides in the shadow of the Almighty,

Woman: will say to the Lord, "My refuge and my fortress"

Everyone: "My God, in whom I trust."

Woman: For he will deliver you from the snare of the fowler and from the deadly pestilence; he will cover you with his pinions, and under his wings you will find his refuge;

Congregation: his faithfulness is a shield and buckler.

Woman: You will not fear the terror of the night,

Congregation: nor the arrow that flies by day,

Woman: nor the pestilence that stalks in darkness,

Congregation: nor the destruction that wastes at noonday.

Woman: A thousand may fall at your side, ten thousand at your right hand;

Congregation: but it will not come near you.

Woman: You will only look with your eyes

Congregation: and see the recompense of the wicked.

- Because you have made the Lord your refuge,

Congregation: the Most High your habitation,

- no evil shall befall you,

Congregation: no scourge come near your tent.

- For he will give his angels charge of you

Congregation: to guard you in all your ways.

- On their hands they will bear you up,

Congregation: lest you dash your foot against a stone.

- When he calls to me, I will answer him;

Congregation: I will be with him in trouble, I will rescue him and honor him.

- With long life I will satisfy him,

Congregation: and show him my salvation. (organ playing) (everyone singing)

- The second lesson is taken from Romans. Therefore, as sin came into the world through one human being and death through sin, and so death spread to all humanity because all sinned, sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sins were not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if many died through the trespass of one, much more have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of that one person Jesus Christ abounded for many. And the free gift is not like the effect of that one's sin. For the judgment following one trespass brought condemnation, but the free gift following many trespasses brings justification. If, because of the trespass of one, death reigned through the one, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the free gift of righteousness reign in life through the one person Jesus Christ. Then as the trespass of one led to condemnation for all, so the act of righteousness of one leads to acquittal and life for all. For as by the disobedience of one, many were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, many will be made righteous. This ends the reading of the second lesson. (organ playing) (choir singing)

- Hear this reading from the gospel according to St. Matthew beginning at the 10th chapter and the 24th verse. A disciple is not above his teacher, nor a servant above his master; it is enough for the disciple to be like his teacher, and the servant like his master. If they have called the master of the house Be-el'zebul, how much more will they malign those of his household. So have no fear of them; for nothing is covered that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known. What I tell you in the dark, utter it in the light; and what you hear whispered, proclaim upon the housetops. And do not fear those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; rather fear him who can destroy both body and soul in hell. Are not two sparrows sold for a penny? And not one of them will fall to the ground without your Father's will. But even the hairs of your head are all numbered. Fear not, therefore; you are of more value than many sparrows. So every one who acknowledges me before men, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven; but whoever denies me before men, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. Here ends the reading from the gospel. It's a great honor and privilege to be able to speak from this pulpit in Duke Chapel. I couldn't help but noticing something about this pulpit when I first come to see it this morning. And that was that this is actually an adjustable pulpit, a real work of engineering that you should come and see. I recall the story that's told by my family about the small, semi-rural church in Texas where they grew up. According to the story, my father, when he was in high school, observed that the Methodist preachers sent to this church every four years did not come in uniform sizes. So he got the idea in his mind to construct an adjustable pulpit. He built it so that it had a trap door on the back and a crank inside where it could be moved up and down to suit the size of the person standing behind it. On the first Sunday after it was installed, the minister demonstrated this adjustable pulpit to the congregation and showed it so that everyone could see it, cranked it up and down, and so forth. Now my uncle Thomas Benton Spell never said much but when he did say something, it was usually worth recording. And that morning as Uncle TB greeted the minister at the back of the church, he was heard to say, "Well preacher, I've never seen a crank inside a pulpit "before but I've seen plenty behind them." In this case, the crank is behind the pulpit. As you have visited around from church to church in this

country, you may have found yourself wondering sometimes whatever becomes of those omnipresent registration of attendance pads, the filling out of which seems to be as much a part of orthodoxy in middle class American religion as the eucharistic prayer itself. Well as the newly appointed assistant pastor of Sunset United Methodist Church in Pasadena, Texas, the task fell to me of reading the attendance registration forms every week. I remember regarding this as a duty more appropriate, I thought, to the church secretary but my supervising pastor suggested that this would be a good way to get to know the congregation as he said and so every week, I read these forms, made up lists of visitors, and marked the attendance of regular members in a great bound book which I supposed would be opened and read only at the time of the Judgment Day. A few weeks after I came to this church, I found to my great surprise that someone had actually checked the little box marked, "I wish to speak with a minister." And so on a sultry, summer weekday afternoon, I called on this person, a high school junior, who explained that she was worried because she had never been confirmed and joined the church as a full member. In western churches that practice infant baptism, it's customary to confirm children at some point when they can make their own profession of Christian faith and be received as a full, mature member of a congregation. In most churches, there's a set time when children are taken through a process leading up to confirmation, but in this case, something had gone wrong and this person had been left out. I asked our church secretary to check the rolls of the church to find out if there might be other youth in her position. And out of a congregation of about 1200 members, the secretary identified at least 50 youth of about high school age who had never been confirmed and had never made a public profession of their Christian faith. We were amazed, although I've come to believe that this may not be unrepresentative. In this case, we organized a special confirmation class for older youth interested in being confirmed and we had about 18 takers. These young people, we found, were far more serious about their Christian profession than your usual 6th grade confirmation class. And when the day came for making their profession of faith in Christ, our congregation rejoiced as they responded affirmatively to this question: Do you confess Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, and pledge your allegiance to his kingdom? This morning, I would like to consider our Lord's challenge given in the 10th chapter of St. Matthew's gospel, that we should confess him openly before our fellow human beings. I'm concerned that for many persons, the only open confession of Christ they have made, besides reciting the creed in church, was a more or less perfunctory confession made at the time of their confirmation. I'm concerned moreover for our children, members of our congregations, and other persons who may know us that we are not making our commitment to Jesus Christ consistently and publicly known. There can be no doubt that in the Jewish and Christian scriptures, a consistent public confession of one's religious commitment is expected of every believer. The people of Israel were commanded not only to meditate on God's law day and night but also to talk about it in their homes. Hear oh Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord and you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might. And these words which I command you this day shall be upon your heart and you shall teach them diligently to your children and shall talk of them when you sit in your house and when you walk by the way and when you lie down and when you rise. These very words, hear oh Israel, became a confession of faith for the Jewish people, recited in their worship and in their homes and taught publicly to their children. Christian scripture focuses and holds up the confession of Christ as a consistent theme. The gospels of Matthew, Mark, and Luke recount St. Peter's confession of Christ as the moment when our Lord's identity was first recognized by the disciples and as the founding confession of the Christian church. Now when Jesus came into the district of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, who do men say that the son

of man is? And they said, some say John the Baptist, others say Elijah, and others Jeremiah or one of the prophets. He said to them, but who do you say that I am? Simon Peter replied, you are the Christ, the son of the living God, and Jesus answered him, blessed are you Simon Bar-Jonah for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you but my Father who is in heaven and I tell you, you are Peter and on this rock I will build my church and the powers of death shall not prevail against it. Then he strictly charged the disciples to tell no one that he was the Christ. To tell no one he was the Christ because Jesus' identity was revealed only gradually during his lifetime. But in fact, he had already indicated to his disciples that the time would come when they should acknowledge him openly as we have heard in the gospel lesson for today. So everyone who acknowledges me before other people, I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. But whoever denies me before other people, I also will deny before my Father who is in heaven. For the first Christians, the public confession of Christ was an event of momentous importance. According to St. Paul's epistle to the Romans, it was considered necessary for salvation. If you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For a human being believes with his heart and so is justified and he confesses with his lips and so is saved. In the decades that followed St. Paul, when Christians faced persecution and a new generation of Christians had come along, the New Testament writers had to urge Christians to hold fast to the confessions they had made. Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, wrote the author of Hebrews, let us hold fast to our confession. The last book of the New Testament describes the Christians who had borne a faithful testimony to Christ in spite of persecution. When he opened the fifth seal, I saw under the altar the souls of those who had been slain for the word of God and for the witness that they had borne. They cried out with a loud voice, oh Sovereign Lord, holy and true, how long before Thou wilt judge and avenge our blood on those who dwell upon the earth. Then they were each given a white robe and told to rest a little longer until the number of their fellow servants and their brethren should be complete. These were the Christian martyrs. The word martyr itself coming from the Greek word meaning a witness. One who had given testimony to her faith in Christ regardless of the consequences. In fact the early Christians seemed to have imagined the consummation of the whole universe in the universal confession of Christ's Lordship. St. Paul wrote to the Philippians, therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus, every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord to the glory of God the Father. Christians continued to be persecuted for their faith through the fourth century A.D. In these early centuries, a Christian's confession of faith in Christ was made usually at the time of her baptism, usually on Easter or Pentecost season and only after an extensive period of training and discipline that the early Christians called catechesis. To make this confession of faith in Christ, meant to renounce not only the worship of the genii of the Roman emperors which was sometimes required of citizens, but it also meant to renounce the common religious practices and ceremonies that were a part of daily life in the ancient world, to make the confession of faith in Christ meant to become a part of a new community, a new family, it might mean submission to public ridicule. St. Augustine of Hippo described in his confessions the Christian profession of a neo-platonic philosopher named Marius Victorinus. In this case, the elders of the church at Rome actually offered Victorinus the option of making a private profession for fear of public recrimination but Victorinus decided to go public. St. Augustine wrote, when the hour was come wherein he was to make a profession of his faith which in Rome it was the custom of those that were shortly to come to thy grace to do, in a set form of words, gotten by heart, standing aloft in a more imminent place where they might well be seen of all the

faithful people, there was an offer made as he said by the priests unto Victorinus that he might make his profession more privately as the custom was to offer that courtesy to some others who were likely to be bashful and fearful at this matter. But Victorinus chose rather to profess his salvation in the presence of the holy assembly. For whereas that was no salvation that he had taught in rhetoric and yet he had made a public profession of that, how much less therefore ought he to dread that meek flock of thine in the pronouncing of thy word so as soon as he was mounted up aloft to make his profession, everyone that knew him whispered his name one to another with the voice of congratulation. And who was there that did not know him and there ran a soft whisper throughout all the mouths of the rejoicing multitude, Victorinus, Victorinus. Quickly they spake of him with triumphing for that they saw him, and as quickly were they whisted again, that they might now hear him. He pronounced aloud the true faith with an excellent boldness and every man would gladly have plucked him to them into their hearts yea greedily did they snatch him in by loving of him and rejoicing for him. Such was the drama of confession of faith in Christ in the early church. But as the number of adult converts to Christianity lessened and as it became more and more customary to receive children of Christian parents into the faith, the drama of Christian confession naturally lessened. Confirmation by a bishop at the age of seven became the normal practice in the western church and became the custom in Protestant churches as well. But for Protestants and Catholics alike, the discipline of confirmation could become relaxed and confessions of faith in Christ made more because it was the right thing to do than because of genuine commitment. Evangelical Protestants rejected what they saw as the perfunctory practice of confirming children. For the Evangelicals, nothing could take the place of a personal religious experience and a personal confession of Christ made before the believers' class meeting or congregation. But then again if you grew up in an Evangelical church, I'm sure you'll know very well how frequently perfunctory professions of conversion can occur. You know it's supposed to be the sort of thing that you can write down in the back flap of your Bible and note the day and the hour it happened. But believe me, I've got Evangelical friends who could fill a database with their conversion experiences. Every time saying this is the real thing, the last one was just a perfunctory experience so their must be a lot of perfunctory conversions going on out there. The fact of the matter is that the confession that Jesus Christ is Lord, normative as it is in Christian scripture and tradition, becomes all too easily a rote matter and not a matter of ultimate commitment for us. The reason why that confirmation class in Texas was so exciting to me was not because the youth were older, it was I think because they were genuinely concerned about the matter and had been worried about it for some time. If we simply change the age and said confirmations will now take place at the age of 16 instead of the age of 12, I'm sure that eventually that too would become rote and institutionalized and probably less meaningful. But why is it then that if we believe that Jesus Christ is Lord and if we love Jesus Christ above all else, why is it that of all the names that we name, the name of Christ is so seldom on our lips. Why is it that when we are sitting in our houses or walking by the way or lying down or rising up, we so seldom give testimony to our faith in Christ. I'm afraid there's a tendency within each of us to shy away from revealing our most deeply held convictions. There is, for example, in Divinity Schools, and certainly at Duke Divinity School, a very peculiar flavor of theology that I have tentatively identified as fudge divinity. Fudge divinity is the art of framing non-controversial theological statements. Statements that sound really nice but wouldn't offend anyone and so say very little. Statements like this, Christmas means that God shows his love to us in Jesus. Fudge divinity, you see that's wonderful, no one would disagree with it. But if you think about it, of course, God shows his love to us in so many different ways, in the smiles of children, in the little flowers that we see in Duke garden and so forth.

The question is can you confess any more about the Savior of humankind than you would confess about a flower? Is Jesus Christ God and Savior, as the constitution of the World Council of Churches states? Should we worship him? Was he miraculously conceived by a virgin? Was he raised bodily from the dead? And if you had something substantial to say about Jesus Christ, can I ask to whom you would be willing to say it? To your friends, your congregation, your family? Most persons I fear would feel uncomfortable speaking about their religious faith to friends for the fact is that most of us don't have an opportunity to speak about our faith even in our homes or in our churches. Please don't try to evade the issue by saying well I make my confession of Christ in the way that I live. I hope that's true, of course, but you know that your other commitments, your love for your friends, for your spouse, your love and commitment to your family would be incomplete if it was not stated explicitly. Surely our commitment to Jesus Christ is no different in this respect. It too will be incomplete and shallow if not expressed with the gift of language that God has given to us. You may think that the idea of giving a personal testimony of faith in Christ is sort of old-fashioned and unnecessary. I can't do that because it was in fact the testimony of other Christians that brought me to an experience of Christian renewal and helped me find my calling to ministry. I'm convinced that our lack of an explicit testimony to Jesus Christ is a hindrance to the renewal of the church in our generation. And so this morning I want to ask you to join with me briefly in a meditative exercise. I'm going to ask that you think about two things and then think about them together. Please bow your heads with me and close your eyes for a few moments. First I want you to imagine as concretely as you can our Lord Jesus Christ. Utilize the best of your knowledge of scripture to think about Christ just for a few moments. Secondly, I want you to imagine, again as concretely as you can, what it is that you actually say, what it is that comes from your lips during the course of a day. Spend a few moments dwelling on that image in your mind. Now imagine that these two images are like slides or transparencies, and you're going to place them on top of each other. Imagine Christ encountering you and the things that you say from day to day. Imagine Christ saying to you, everyone who acknowledges me before other people I also will acknowledge before my Father who is in heaven. Eternal God, you have heard the prayers of your people. You have heard our thoughts, the images in our minds. You know the things that are on our lips from day to day. We pray in this hour that your grace would strengthen us in the week to come as we seek to give testimony to the world of our faith that Jesus is the Christ. In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, amen. (organ plays) (everyone sings)

- The Lord be with you.

Congregation: (murmuring)

- Let us pray. Oh eternal God, Mother and Father to us all, who in love has made us and through love has kept us and who by love would make us perfect. Once again, we pray for Thy help. Not that we might do greater things but that we might do better things. Not that we might be spared life's pain but that we might become wise. Not that we might have all things to enjoy life but that we might be grateful that Thou hast given us life to enjoy all things. We lift these prayers for others before Thee grateful for the abundance of Thy mercy towards us. Bless O Lord all those who would make credible the gospel in an unbelieving age. All who earnestly work for peace, all who live on less in order to share with those who have less than they need, all who plead the cause of the orphan, the prisoner, and the oppressed, all who stand in any company to

challenge slurs against any group and to expose prejudice, all who have trained themselves to listen with genuine concern to those who seek a consoling presence. We pray O gracious God for those of us burdened not by too little but by too much. For those who have so much power that they have grown indifferent to the gifts and claims of others. For those who have so much knowledge that they have grown proud and self sufficient and lost the common touch. For those who have so much wealth that they prize possessions more than people. For those who have so many choices, they can hardly see the way clear to know their own hearts and minds. We beseech Thee eternal God for the deep and unspoken needs that fester within many of us. Bless this gathering, whatever our reasons may be for coming here and may the light of Thy love shine through each of us eternally as we confess the name of Jesus Christ our Lord and Savior, amen. And now in the spirit of thanksgiving, let us offer our gifts and ourselves unto God. (organ plays) (choir sings) (everyone sings) Almighty God, we thank Thee for the mystery of our years and the will to live, for difficult choices that help us discover who we are, and for the gift of faith which makes Thy love through Christ the sure foundation on which we build. We offer now these gifts unto Thee as signs of our gratitude and expressions of our joy that Thou hast called us to follow Thee. This we pray in the name of Jesus Christ who taught us to pray with confidence.

Everyone: 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, the power, and the glory, forever, amen. (organ plays) (everyone sings) And now go forth in peace and be of good courage. Hold fast to that which is good, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit and may the blessing of God, Creator, Christ and Holy Spirit be with you all, now and forever more. (choir sings) (organ plays)