

(lively organ music)

- Good morning. Welcome to Duke University Chapel for this joyous service of worship. This begins a week of celebration of Duke employees and if you're an employee of Duke, we welcome you today. We're particularly grateful to have present with us those for whom this weekend is a time of great celebration in their lives. This is Cancer Survivors Weekend at Duke and we are grateful for all of those who are part of that grand celebration who are present with us. We dedicate this service to you, to the celebration of your lives, for strength during adversity and for all of the goodness of God that we experience even in times of adversity. We're glad to have you with us. Tonight, there will be a concert here by the North Carolina Boy Choir and information on that concert is in your bulletin. Our preacher today is the Reverend Debra Brazzel, the Associate Dean of Duke Chapel. And now let us stand for the greeting. Christ is risen.

Congregation: Glory be.

- Glory and honor and dominion and power be to God forever and ever.

Congregation: Christ be with you always. (lively organ music) ♪ Praise to the Lord, the Almighty, ♪ The King of creation ♪ O my soul, praise Him, for He is thy ♪ Health and salvation ♪ All ye who hear ♪ Now to His temple draw near ♪ Sing now in glad adoration ♪ Praise to the Lord, who o'er all ♪ Things so wondrously reigneth ♪ Who, as on wings of an eagle ♪ Uplifteth, sustaineth ♪ Hast thou not seen ♪ How thy desires all have been ♪ Granted in what He ordaineth ♪ Praise to the Lord, who hath fearfully ♪ Wondrously, made thee ♪ Health hath vouchsafed and, when ♪ Heedlessly falling, hath stayed thee ♪ What need or grief ♪ Ever hath failed of relief ♪ Wings of His mercy did shade thee ♪ Praise to the Lord, who doth prosper ♪ Thy work and defend thee ♪ Who from the heavens the streams ♪ Of His mercy doth send thee ♪ Ponder anew ♪ What the Almighty can do ♪ Who with His love doth befriend thee ♪ Praise to the Lord ♪ Oh, let all that is in me adore Him ♪ All that hath life and breath, come ♪ Now with praises before Him ♪ Let the Amen ♪ Sound from His people again ♪ Gladly for aye we adore Him ♪

- Let us pray. Lord, we pray not for tranquility, nor that our tribulations may cease. Lord, we pray for thy Spirit and thy love to enfold us during all the days of our lives. We've come here to this service of worship seeking that you would grant us strength and grace to overcome adversity. Through Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit one God now and forever. Amen. Be seated.

- Let us pray together the prayer for illumination.

All: Open our hearts and mind, oh God by the power of your Holy Spirit so that as the word is read and proclaimed, we might hear your word with joy this day. Amen.

- The first lesson is taken from I Samuel, the eighth chapter, verses four through 20. Then all the elders of

Israel gathered together and came to Samuel at Ramah. And said to him, you are old and your sons do not follow in your ways. Appoint for us then a king to govern us like other nations. But the thing displeased Samuel when they said give us a king to govern us. Samuel prayed to the Lord and the Lord said to Samuel, listen to the voice of the people and all that they say to you for they have not rejected you but they have rejected me from being king over them. Just as they have done to me from the day I brought them up out of Egypt to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so also they are doing to you. Now then, listen to their voice. Only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them. So Samuel reported all the words of the Lord to the people who were asking him for a king. He said, these will be the ways of the king who will reign over you. He will take your sons and appoint them to his chariots and to be his horsemen and to run before his chariots and he will appointment for himself commanders of thousands and commanders of 50s and some to plow his ground and to reap his harvest and to make his implements of war and the equipment of his chariots. He will take your daughters to be perfumers and cooks and bakers. He will take the best of your fields and vineyards and olive orchards and give them to courtiers. He will take 1/10 of your grain and of your vineyards and give it to his officers and his courtiers. He will take your male and the female slaves and the best of your cattle and donkeys and put them to his work. He will take 1/10 of your flocks and you shall be his slaves and on that day you will cry out because of your king whom you have chosen for yourselves but the Lord will not answer you in that day. But the people refused to listen to the voice of Samuel. They said no but we are determined to have a king over us so that we also may be like other nations and that our king may govern us and go out before us and fight our battles. This is the word of the Lord.

All: Thanks be to God.

- Today's Psalm is number 138 found on page 853 in the hymnal. Please stand and sing the Psalm and Gloria responsively. (tranquil organ music) ♪ I give you thanks, oh Lord ♪ ♪ With my whole heart ♪ ♪ Before the gods, I sing your praise ♪ ♪ I bow down toward your holy temple ♪ ♪ And give thanks to thee ♪ ♪ For thy steadfast love and faithfulness. ♪ ♪ For you have exulted your name ♪ ♪ And your word above everything ♪ ♪ On the day I called ♪ ♪ You answered me ♪ ♪ Your strength and my life ♪ ♪ All the waters of the Earth shall praise you, O Lord ♪ ♪ For they have heard the words of your mouth ♪ ♪ And they shall sing of the ways of the Lord ♪ ♪ For great is the glory of the Lord ♪ ♪ For the Lord is high ♪ ♪ But regards the lowly ♪ ♪ Yet knows the haughty from afar ♪ ♪ Though I walk in the midst of trouble ♪ ♪ You preserve my life ♪ ♪ You stretch out your hand ♪ ♪ Against the wrath of my enemies ♪ ♪ And your right hand delivers me ♪ ♪ O Lord, fulfill your purpose for me ♪ ♪ O Lord, make your steadfast love endure forever ♪ ♪ Do not forsake ♪ ♪ The works of your hands ♪ ♪ All glory be to you, creator ♪ ♪ And to Jesus Christ our Savior ♪ ♪ And to the Holy Spirit, blessed Trinity ♪ ♪ As it was at time began ♪ ♪ Is God and will be forever more ♪

- You may be seated. (choir singing)

- The second lesson is taken from II Corinthians, chapter four, beginning with verse 13 through chapter five verse one. But just as we have the same spirit of faith that is in accordance with scripture, I believed and so spoke, we also believe and so we speak because we know that the one who raised the Lord Jesus will raise us also with Jesus and will bring us with you into his presence. Yes, everything is for your sake so that grace

as it extends to more and more people may increase thanksgiving to the glory of God. So we do not lose heart. Even though our outer nature is wasted away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal wait of glory beyond all measure because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen. For what can be seen as temporary but what cannot be seen is eternal. For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. This is the word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

- The Gospel is taken from Mark, the third chapter, verses 20 through 35. And the crowd came together again so that they could not even eat. When his family heard it, they went out to restrain him for people were saying he has gone out of his mind. And the scribes who came down from Jerusalem said, he has Beelzebub and by the ruler of the demons, he casts out demons and he called to him and spoke to them in parables. How can Satan cast out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. And if a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand. And if Satan has risen up against himself and is divided, he cannot stand but his end has come. But no one can enter a strong man's house and plunder his property without first tying up the strong man. Then indeed, the house can be plundered. Truly I tell you, people will be forgiven for their sins and whatever blasphemies they utter. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit can never have forgiveness for is guilty of an eternal sin. For they had said he has an unclean spirit. Then his mother and his brothers came and standing outside, they sent to him and called him. A crowd was sitting around him and they said to him, your mother and your brothers and sisters are outside asking for you. And he replied, who are my mother and my brothers? And looking at those who sat around him, he said, here are my mother and my brothers. Whoever does the will of God is my brother and sister and mother. This is the word of the Lord.

Congregation: Thanks be to God.

- So we do not lose heart even though our outer nature is wasting away, our inner nature is being renewed day by day. For this slight momentary affliction is preparing us for an eternal wait of glory beyond all measure because we look not at what can be seen but at what cannot be seen. For what can be seen is only temporary but what cannot be seen is eternal. Had I searched the scriptures for an appropriate word, I could not have found a more poignant passage than this lectionary text for today when we celebrate life and hope as we remember National Cancer Survivors Day. There are many cancer survivors among us today who have much to teach us about what it means to not lose heart. For you have learned what it means to keep on believing in life and health even when the outer nature is wasting away. You know what it means to look beyond what is seen to what cannot be seen but only hoped for. You know what it means to triumph against the odds and to cherish every day in spite of the afflictions you endure. The scripture has much to say to cancer survivors but not to you alone. For the loss of heart is a threat to everyone. All of us get discouraged from one time or another. Sometimes things don't turn out the way we expected. Perhaps we didn't get the job we wanted or got the job and lost it. Maybe someone we cared about let us down or a relationship turned sour. Maybe we disappointed a parent or friend. Maybe the cancer treatment wasn't as effective as we'd hoped or perhaps the scientific breakthrough we'd been working on in the lab turned out to be a dead

end. There are many things that cause us to be discouraged and discouragement is hard to deal with but it isn't the same as loss of heart. Loss of heart is much more devastating because it is connected to the will, the will to strive for goals, the will to care about the outcomes and finally, the will to live. Loss of heart results in despair and it is the most difficult thing to overcome in a relationship, in business, in a community, in medical treatment and in faith. When a person or community loses heart, they despair that anything can get better and they quit trying and they abdicate responsibility for life. Loss of heart is one of the greatest challenges that humanity faces because it threatens our will to make a difference in the world. Paul knew that loss of heart was the very worst threat that he and other Christians faced for it, more than anything else, could cause them to despair of the faith. He had known persecution, ridicule, imprisonment, beatings, illness and even the threat of death. In fact, in the beginning of his letter, he told the Corinthians that in Asia, he and his colleagues were so utterly and unbearably crushed that they despaired of life itself. They felt they had received the sentence of death so that they had nothing left to fall back upon except the God who raises the dead. As one who was then delivered from the brink of death, Paul had an unshakable hope in the power of God. He had learned not to trust his external circumstances but to hold fast to the knowledge that he was being renewed from within day by day, each day given the power and the courage sufficient to that day's need. Most of us haven't faced such drastic hardship as this and yet sometimes our spirits lag and sag as if our life and faith were oppressive burdens. Keeping our heart and hope in the midst of whatever hardship we face is just as important for us as it was for Paul. What causes us to lose heart? One of the things that most burdens humanity in the 20th century is fear. Fear of the present, fear of the future, fear of the consequences of the past. Fear is rampant. One of the fears that most pervades modern life is fear of violence. Given the pervasiveness and inclusiveness of crime, there's no place that seems safe anymore. I have a good friend who told me that she didn't feel comfortable at work because a colleague had been attacked there and then recently she had an intruder in her home. Even though she was able to get away safely, the sanctuary of her home had been violated. We cry together in anger at the loss of her safe haven. When we don't feel safe at home or at work or shopping or jogging, our spirits get sick and it's easy to lose heart. The threat of violence is very real. We see its consequences nightly over the local news. We've been sick at heart witnessing the carnage in Rwanda and Bosnia. We're fed up with the daily violence in Durham and we're angry at our sense of helplessness. Violence is a global threat that has come to haunt us. How do we keep from losing heart and hope because of the fear and reality of violence? Paul also knew what it was like to be afraid of violence. For him, the threat had too often become a reality but no matter what was done to him, he never lost hope. In his words, we are afflicted in every way but not crushed, perplexed but not driven to despair. Persecuted but not forsaken, struck down but not destroyed. Always carrying in the body the death of Jesus so that the life of Jesus also may be made visible in us. He didn't lose heart because he believed that Christ lived in him and every believer, because he believed that we carry both the death and resurrection of Christ in our bodies, he believed that the final victory had already been determined in our favor. God will raise us up with Christ. Violence and death have already been faced and overcome by Christ. Any experience of violence, any threat of death that we face now must be viewed in the light of that eternal victory. But the danger of a text like this is that we can use it to trivialize life and deny suffering. Don't worry about violence or injustice or pain, everything will be made right in the next world. This other worldly theology has been used through the ages to justify and maintain all sorts of oppression. In the movie "The Color Purple," Celie was often beaten by her husband Mister. And she told her son-in-law to beat his wife, Sophia. When Sophia found out about it, she was furious and she went to Celie to ask why, why would a

sister betray another sister in this way? Celie, reflecting upon her own beatings, responded, "This world be over soon, "Heaven last forever." And Sophia said, "You oughta bust Mister's head "and think about Heaven later." Belief in the eternal is not an excuse to tolerate injustice today. Nor does it trivialize the beauty or the suffering of this life. Every person is unique, each life is a precious gift, every day is meant to be lived fully and enjoyed. Every person's pain matters. Indeed, it matter eternally because this isn't all there is and the final judgment about worth and value and justice will be made. Life has even more meaning when we live it in the light of eternity. So don't let fear of violence or the reality of violence cause you to lose heart. When we aren't paralyzed by fear, we can have the will and the power to do something about it. Like the students at Duke who've created the Safe Haven as a safe place for women and men. Or the jogging club or the neighborhood watches or the marches to claim back our streets or the parents and teachers committed to teaching non-violence or the Red Cross and UN relief workers who continue to offer humanitarian aid in spite of the violence. When we aren't controlled by fear, then we may find the courage to act to stop the violence one day at a time as we are renewed and empowered from within. Another fear that can cause us to lose heart is the fear of death. Many of us fear our own death or the death of those we love. We may fear death by accident, quick and unexpected or by slow, lingering degrees. This is especially relevant for cancer survivors and their families but death is a fact that all of us must face. Many of us deny the reality of death by avoiding anything that reminds us that we must one day die. Others of us obsess about it until it consumes our thoughts and haunts our dreams. Death is inevitable but the fear of death can be demoralizing. Elizabeth Kubler-Ross who made the study of death and dying her life's work says that those who have the strength and the love to sit with a dying patient in the silence that goes beyond words will know that this moment is neither frightening nor painful but a peaceful cessation of the functioning of his or her body. But the fear of death tragically demeans the care of the dying for when family members or doctors or nurses deny death, they can't be fully present to the dying so that they fall short of giving the care that is needed and deserved. In her work with patients who've had an out-of-body experience, either while near death or while being resuscitated from death, Dr. Ross found that no one is afraid to die again ever. In more than 25,000 cases studied worldwide, this was a common characteristic of children and adults across racial, religious and cultural lines. Whatever the circumstances of death, each person described incredible peace, love, wholeness and joy. They described this feeling as their immortal self was separated from their physical body, the temporary home. Paul describes our immortality in this text in a very similar way. What can be seen is temporary but what cannot be seen is eternal. For we know that if the earthly tent we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens. Paul often faced death but he didn't fear death because he knew that death didn't have the final word. We have the courage to face death, both our own and that of loved ones, when we have the assurance that death is not the end but only a transition to another reality fashioned by God. When we trust the end to God, then we are also freed to live fully with nothing held back knowing that death, as life, is in God's hands. Another thing that can cause us to lose heart is guilt about the past. We can worry ourselves sick by reliving every mistake we've ever made. Sin is a fact of human existence. Everyone has made decisions that we have lived to regret. Acknowledgement of our mistakes and confession of our sin is necessary if we're to move beyond them but that's the key. Forgiveness is God's gift to empower us to move beyond the past, to put it behind us so that we may be free to live another way. If Paul had obsessed about the ways he had persecuted the Christians, he would have been of no use in God's ministry. Guilt can cause us to lose heart and to despair of our worthiness. It can cause us to reject God's love and the ways that God is calling us to Christian service.

Forgiveness is God's gift of unconditional love that renews us from within and frees us from the past. We also can lose heart because of anxiety about the future. We're bombarded by news of daily catastrophe on a worldwide basis and many of us have come live with an overwhelming, unspecified sense of anxiety about life. We worry about the survival of our planet, we worry about the ability of humankind to deal with the scope and number of problems we face, we worry about our own inability to find our place and role in a changing world. We worry about a future that we can't control and the loss of security. A sense of anxiety can sap all the joy out of living and tempt us to lose heart. During the Depression, the business tycoon, J.C. Penney suffered tremendous financial losses. He worried so much that he had a nervous breakdown and was confined to a sanitarium for months. Though the doctors worked with him, he became steadily worse until one night he was so near death, he wrote farewell notes to those he loved. The next morning, he was surprised to find that he was still breathing and he awoke to the sound of music. When he struggled down the corridor, he found a group of people in a prayer meeting singing, be not dismayed what'ever betide. God will take care of you. Beneath wings of love abide. God will take care of you. He remembered the song from his childhood and it evoked an overwhelming sense of the care, the kindness, the love of Almighty God. Suddenly, he began to get better. He remembered the family, friends, and business associates who had stood by him. He thought of the opportunities that still lay ahead and he began to replace fear of the future with faith in a God who would take care of him no matter what. From that moment, his healing became so rapid that the doctors marveled at his recovery. When we're focused on controlling the outer circumstances of our lives, it is easy to lose heart because so much happens in life that is beyond our control. But when we can live with the trust that it is not up to us alone to hold our lives and the world together, when we can really believe that there is a God who is sovereign over all creation, then we have the kind of hope that can withstand the uncertainty and difficulty of life. It is this kind of hope that gives us the will to overcome paralyzing fear. It is this kind of faith that gives us the courage in the face of death, whether our own or someone we love, it is this assurance that frees us from the numbing power of guilt and it is this confidence that empowers us to move into the future trusting the outcomes to God. Brothers and sisters, hold fast to the faith we share. And do not lose heart. (tranquil organ music) (congregation singing)

- The Lord be with you.

Congregation: And also with you.

- Let us pray. Be seated. Gracious God, whom to know is to love and to love is to serve. We come before you this bright summer morning seeking to praise you, desiring to hear you and wanting to follow you. Lord, hear our prayer. Hear us as we commit our lives to you today. Bless the work done here at Duke University so that all who labor and learn here may walk worthily in each of our vocations. Rekindle in each of us the flame of dedication to our work, realizing the treasure which has been committed to our care in our work here at Duke. This beautiful campus, bright, young minds, sophisticated research, honorable athletic endeavor. May each of us to realize the importance of the part which each of us plays in the mission of this university.

All: Lord, hear our prayer.

- Particularly do we pray for those doctors and nurses and orderlies and clerical workers and others who work in the Duke hospitals. Oh Lord, and giver of life, use their gifts. Enliven their spirits in the service of your healing arts so that your holy work of healing and wholeness might occur through them. Lord.

All: Hear our prayer.

- This day do we especially pray for those among us who struggle with cancer. In this life, as beautiful as it is, there is still occasion for pain, for fear and for struggle. We thank you for your sustenance of those who struggle with cancer, for the care of their doctors and the support of their families and friends. And for their quiet courage in the face of threatening illness. Lord.

All: Hear our prayer.

- Gracious God, take our pain and our fear, our diverse troubles and minister to us. Help us to use even these dark aspects of earthly life to draw us toward your light. Make our awareness of the fragility and the impermanence of life to teach us to value and to glory each moment of life. May our experiences of pain and our need make us more sensitive to the needs and the pains of others. Lord.

All: Hear our prayer.

- And now we pray in the silent secrecy of our hearts for those whom we love and hold dear, who have need this morning. Praying also for sisters and brothers who though they are not near to us, are still made dear to us through your love of them by the way you have made each of us part of your family and your kingdom. Hear us as we pray now for those whose needs have been laid upon our hearts. Lord.

All: Hear our prayer.

- Amen. As is the custom at Duke Chapel, all of today's offering goes directly to alleviate human misery and need at home and afar. We invite you to give generously. (tranquil organ music) ♪ Hallelujah, halle-halle-hallelujah ♪ Amen ♪ Hallelujah, halle-halle-hallelujah ♪ Amen ♪ Hallelujah, halle-halle-hallelujah ♪ Amen ♪ Hallelujah, halle-halle-hallelujah ♪ Amen ♪ Hallelujah, halle-halle-hallelujah ♪ Amen ♪ Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice ♪ Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice ♪ Rejoice, rejoice, rejoice ♪ (choir singing) ♪ Hallelujah, halle-halle-hallelujah ♪ Amen ♪ Amen ♪ Amen ♪ Hallelujah ♪ Amen ♪ (tranquil organ music) ♪ Praise God, from Whom all blessings flow ♪ Praise Him, all creatures here below ♪ Hallelujah, hallelujah ♪ Praise Him above, ye heavenly host ♪ Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost ♪ Hallelujah, hallelujah ♪ Hallelujah, hallelujah ♪ Hallelujah ♪

- Gracious God, we have moved in this hour from silence to listening to questions to offering and now unto thanksgiving. We give you thanks for all the ways that you bless us in this life, ways that we too easily take for granted, except during times of worship when we are made to see how precious are our lives and our good are your gifts. We thank you for the blessings you have given us, for our jobs, for our friends, our health, our children, for summer, for vacations and all the other means, large and small, whereby you enrich

our lives and strengthen us for the task ahead. We give you thanks, praying as our Lord and Savior Jesus has taught us boldly to pray.

All: 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 forever. Amen. (tranquil organ music) (congregation singing)

- The grace of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you now and always. Amen. ♪ Hallelujah, amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ (lively organ music)