

(orchestral music)

Priest: In the name and in the loving spirit of Christ, I greet you. Let us pray. Oh God, You are present, we are present. You have called us, and we have responded. You want us to live in Your love and with Your love. So we have come now to worship, to give thanks for what You have done to us and for us, to listen to what You have to say to us, and to share with You the joy that You have given to each of us and to us together. Help us to make good use of this time as we worship. And when we go out, help us to share Your love with others through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. (orchestral music) (orchestral music continues) One proof of God's amazing love is just this, that while we are sinners still, Christ died for us, and loves us. And it is in this same Jesus, because we do have faith in Christ, that we dare to approach God with confidence, to receive forgiveness and strength. As we offer God our prayer of confession, will you join with me in this particular prayer? Let us pray. God, we come before you knowing we have tried to hide from you, from one another, and from ourselves. Somehow we have felt that by depending upon our own powers we could solve the problems of life. We have tried to escape by withdrawing from the difficult, the challenging, the crucifying experiences of life. We have become trapped in a meaningless round of insignificant activities, while we have added project we ought to have done. We have strayed far from the fullness of life You have promised us. Forgive us for our self-centeredness, our proudness, our weakness, our blindness. Have mercy upon us that we may become your people anew. Amen. My friends in Christ, these words are completely acceptable and reliable. Christ Jesus entered the world to give meaning to our lives, to forgive, to heal, to bind, to restore, to renew. If one is in Christ, one becomes a new person altogether. The past is finished and over, everything becomes fresh and new. God's mercy is ever present. I tell you in the name of Christ, we are forgiven. Amen. (orchestral music) Let us hear the Word of God. "And Jacob was left alone and a man wrestled with him until the breaking of the day. When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he touched the hollow of his thigh, and Jacob's thigh was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. Then he said, "let me go for the day is breaking." Jacob said, "I will not let you go unless you bless me." And he said to him, "what is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." Then he said, "your name shall be called Jacob, no more, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with man and have prevailed." Then Jacob asked him, "tell me, I pray, your name." "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there, he blessed him. So Jacob called the name of the place, Peniel saying, "for I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved." "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen, for by it the men of old received divine approval. By faith, we understand that the world was created by the Word of God, so that what is seen was made of things which do not appear. By faith, Abel offered to God a more acceptable sacrifice than Cain, through which he received approval as righteous. God bearing witness by accepting his gifts, he died, but through his faith, he is still speaking. By faith, Enoch was taken up so that he should not see death, and he was not found because God had taken him. Now, before he was taken, he was attested as having pleased God. And without faith, it is impossible to please God, for whoever would draw near to God must believe that God exists, and that God rewards those who seek him. By faith, Noah being warned by God concerning events as yet unseen, took heed and constructed an Ark for the saving of his household. By this, he

condemned the world and became an heir of the righteousness, which becomes the faith. By faith, Abraham obeyed when he was called to go out to a place in which he was to receive an inheritance, and he went out not knowing where he was to go. By faith, he sojourned in the land of promise as in a foreign land, living in tents with Isaac and Jacob, heirs with him of the same promise. For he looked forward to the city which has foundations, whose builder and maker is God. By faith, Sarah herself received power to conceive, even when she was past the age, since she considered him faithful, who had promised. Therefore, from one man and him as good as dead, we're born descendants as many as the stars of heaven and as innumerable as the grains of sand by the seashore. These all died in faith, not having received what was promised, but having seen it and greeted it from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth. For people who speak thus, make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had opportunity to return, but as it is, they desire a better country that is a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. Here ends the reading of the lessons for the day. May God's Spirit speak to you and to me through these words. Amen. (orchestral music) In one voice, let us affirm our faith. We are not alone. We live in God's world. We believe in God who has created and is creating, who has come in the truly human Jesus to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others through the spirit. We trust God who calls us to be the church, to celebrate life and its fullness, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus crucified and risen, our judge and our hope in life, in death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God. The Lord be with you.

Congregation: And with your spirit.

Priest: Let us pray. Oh God, once present in Christ, always present in the Spirit, once near, always near, once loving, always loving, what a day to be alive, alive in honesty about who we are, alive in sensitivity to our own feelings and the feelings of others, alive in hope, that we may yet find more in life than we have known thus far. This is the day which you have made, a day of sunshine, singing birds, warm breezes, refreshing rain, moments of reflection, touches of care and concern, smiles of acceptance and affirmation, eyes that glow with love and trust, glad handshake and words of support. Oh God, we need to be aware of our need for others, and aware of others needs of us. And so we thank you for this day, this moment, and for one another. But there are other thoughts and other prayers, oh, God, friends and loved ones of ours have had tough times this week. Neighbors who are ours literally, and neighbors who are ours symbolically, have walked in darkness, have sat in the shadow, have suffered on beds of pain, have struggled through endless nights, have endured separation and heartache have faced difficult and irreversible decisions, and longed for more love in the midst of life. So God be present with our friends, and family, and neighbors of the world with grace, with strength, with insight, and with assurance. Create in each of us, oh God, larger and deeper capacities for indignation as well as sympathy, for anger that burns against all that exploits youth, or takes advantage of the middle-aged or ignores the elderly. Teach us both the time and the place to be intolerant. Teach us, oh God, that there is approval that is not worth our having, and that there are enemies any good person ought to have. Teach us not to be surprised if our love divides as well as unites. So as we pray for others and for ourselves, may we all always be constrained by the love of Jesus Christ. That same Jesus who gave us His love and His life, and who calls us to do the same. Hear us as we pray, and hear us as we offer the prayer which our Lord has said that his disciples should pray. "Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be

Thy name, Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread, and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us. Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil, for Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory forever. Amen. In the name of Christ, I welcome you to this service of worship, and say that we are pleased that you have chosen this place, this time, to come together in the name of God. We particularly welcome two groups of persons whom I know are here. Those who are here from afar, attending the campus ministers continuing education program, and those who are involved in the late pastor studies in Duke Divinity School, and all others who come to this place in this hour. As our most days and most experiences of life, this particular service brings to many of us, a moment of joy and a moment of sadness. Joy because, once again, we are aware of the very significant contributions that Floyd Goolik has made to the life and worship of this chapel for three years now. And as you have heard him play thus far and will hear him play throughout the rest of the service, you know exactly what I mean, and of which I speak. And at the end of his three years of service here, I, on behalf of literally thousands and thousands of persons who have been blessed and inspired, and touched by his music on the organ, wish to express to him publicly, our deep appreciation, and our very best wishes. That's the note of sadness, because this is the last Sunday he will be playing with us as the chapel organist. So Floyd, to you, we extend our thanks and our best wishes, and pray God's blessing upon you. At 6:30 this afternoon in Duke Gardens, there will be a service of worship to which you are invited. So in addition to worshipping in this majestic chapel, we invite you to come and worship on the green grass. 6:30 this afternoon in Duke Gardens. It's our privilege today, to have with us to preach, the Reverend Dr. Peter Gomes. In the fall of 1974, Dr. Gomes was appointed to one of the most distinguished pulpits and positions in the country, as he was named Minister in Memorial Church at Harvard University, and Plummer Professor of Christian Morals in the school of divinity there. He is here this week to lead a group of campus ministers in exploring some of their own struggles, and in finding some meaning and some ways in which to apply ministry to the world today. We welcome him on his first visit to Duke University. We welcome him now to Duke Chapel, and in the name and in the spirit of God, we hear word which he brings to us.

Floyd: I should like to paraphrase the late Dean of St. Paul's Cathedral in London and say, before I begin my sermon, I have something to say, and that is, to express my great joy at being able to worship with you in this house and to thank you for the kind hospitality, which you have extended to me, Mr. Dean, and to the members of this community who have been so gracious to me. It is good to bring you greetings from your sister church in Cambridge, Massachusetts. My title is on "Being Uneasy in Zion." And the text is the first verse of the sixth chapter of the prophecy of Amos. "Woe to those who are at ease in Zion, and to those who feel secure on the mountain of Samaria." 10 years ago, when I entered the Harvard Divinity School as a first year student, not many people there or anywhere else gave much hope for the future of the church. We were told that we were preparing for a profession, which was in a state of rapid retrogression. The priests and the pastors were now but pale shadows of the psychiatrists, the sociologists, and the prophets of the streets. Indeed, we were enjoying to be honest to God in our uncomfortable pews in the secular city. The ministry was now simply one of the helping professions, and the one, obviously, in need of the most help. It was in bad shape, but it had a chance if it could be liberated from the clutches of the even more cancerous church. For the church, like the house of peers throughout the wall, did nothing in particular, and did it very well. God was in the final stages of His terminal illness, and while the attending physicians, doctors, all times are Hamilton and Van Buren, would not pronounce him officially dead until Good Friday, 1966. Everyone in the

know knew that there was little left by the sweeping up. And those tentative formative years, I remember a classmate of mine in the divinity school, upon returning from his field work assignment at one of our hospitals in Boston, recalled in a lot of detail, his encounter with one of the medical residents there. They were both concerned about a terminally ill patient on the floor. The seminarian wanted to minister as best he could to the dying man, and so too did the young medical student, who had little respect for whatever it was the seminarian could do. They engaged in a verbal tussle outside of the patient's room. And finally in a violent rage, the medical resident forbade the seminarian access to the patient saying, "you people, you church types, you deal in failure, we deal with success." Such were the cold realities of those days, but a decade ago. Seminarians who once dreamed of the combined splendors of Rome and Barchester Towers were now reduced to service as menial acolytes at a Requiem with precious few mourners ever. From the pinnacles of power, they were cast to subsidiary roles in society, not so much hostile to them as simply indifferent. Professors, lawyers, civil servants, and doctors, these journey come lately professions, the secular secretariat as it were, had in fact come into their own, leaving priest and church in the lurch. A few weeks ago, a colleague of mine in the divinity school, speaking of the relationship between medicine and divinity, shared the following story. "An Anglican Bishop died, and surprisingly enough was translated to heaven. When he arrived there, he was met at the gates by Gabriel and St. Peter, who were to brief him on celestial protocol. They told him that heaven, unlike the earth where rank and privilege abounded, was an egalitarian place. He would have to stand in line in the divine cafeteria, just like everybody else. His dignity hurt, but not destroyed, his grace lined up. As the line made its way, the Bishop was alarmed to see a rather tall figure dressed in white, spotting a stethoscope round his neck break ranks and stride toward the head of the line. Furious, the Bishop took the matter up with Gabriel and St. Peter demanding to know who this fellow thought he was. "Well," explain the angels, "you see, that's God. He just loves to play doctor." "Who needs the church?" We are asked. Dr. Gallop and Mr. Harris tell us that fewer and fewer people do each year. When the youthful reporter from Harvard's undergraduate daily, The Crimson, came to interview me upon my appointment as preacher at the university this past fall, he asked, "I guess I should congratulate you, sir, but isn't this a bit of an anachronism these days? Saint and sinner tell us that the church is sick, the clergy dispirited that all is not well in Zion. The institution suffers from a colossal loss of nerve, it gropes through a world in which it is increasingly unnecessary, and with which it is increasingly unfamiliar. It has twitches and spasms, which to the eye of the optimist, suggests yet a little life and the old beast, but to the pessimist and his first cousin the realist, suggest the last rattle before death. God's frozen people suspended between life departed and death not yet arrived. (indistinct), where has the glory departed, when the prayers of the faithful could move mountains and the righteous fist of the clergy could move kings, emperors, and city councils?" Surely, it wasn't always this way. There were once palmy days, days of power and influence. The kingdom of God on earth, our own local Zion filled with the saints of Rome, or Geneva, or Boston, or Dorham, or the Western Imperial. But in those days of splendor and might, those days when buildings like this dotted the landscape of Western Europe and were filled, in those days, the chances are very good that the church was not able to hear the message, it so desperately needed to receive, because it was so busy sending out its own signals. Look, if you will, at the history of the Western church, wherever the church has been successful and powerful, and influential in terms of the world's measure, it has also been at its most venial and culpable self. It was the powerful and influential Christendom that waged the holy wars, and the crusaders. It was the mind of infallible Rome that bade 15th and 16th century science keep silent. It was praise God bare-bones, Oliver Cromwell and his praying Presbyterians that ravaged the head of Charles I,

and rampaged throughout England. And it was their American brethren of Massachusetts Bay, who by their theocratic excesses, embraced the hysteria of witchcraft and the genocide of the native Americans. And indeed it was a Christian nation, a Christian south. The most enlightened and literate nation in the world, which trafficked inhuman slavery, and invoked God's very name to do so. Imperial or national Christendom, has left to us a frighteningly mixed legacy. The church was not built for power. At least, not for the sort of power which comes easily to humankind. And every time it has had power, it has managed to mismanage it. Every metaphor of the Bible which endures beyond its own captivity in time, and as long as it's instructive to us, is a metaphor whereby what the world calls power is in fact weakness, and what the world despises as weak and of low degree, is a vehicle by which the power of God is transmitted. Think of it, a baby born of a virgin in an abandoned stable, a teacher who published no books, a prophet whose failure to communicate was exhibited upon a cross. A community of persecuted, disappointed, and dispersed folk, lost and insecure. Our failure as a church and as Christians is not that we have failed in this world. It is that we have failed to see the golden calf of success for what it really is. Failure. That is the only real failure in which we can stand indicted. Only when we will have come to the point of other disaster, only when we will know what failure, and disappointment, and defeat really are, only when we will be able to embrace suffering and abandonment as the way of the cross, only then will we be able to perceive yet one more change in us. That which was once dead, now becomes alive with new life. It is here that we pitch our tent, here that we learn how to be uncomfortable and uneasy in Zion. Rather than rushing about in a futile attempt to protect our eroding flank from the forces of the secularists, we yield to the doctors such glory as is theirs, to the civil servants, such power as is theirs, to the academics, such security as is theirs. They play a game in which we cannot and must not compete. We have seen the failure of that success before. We as Christians are led to a struggle. A struggle, however, not for success, but rather for hope. Jake Lou tells us, "if it is true that the world in which we live is a world of abandonment, if it is true that God is silent and that we are alone, then it is under these circumstances, and at this moment, that the preaching, the proclamation, the declaration and the living of hope is urgent. In the absence of all of the world promises confronted by the astounding lack of visible evidence, we join the audacious Paul in saying, "who hopes for what he sees, hope indeed is the passion for the impossible." Restless struggle, militant confrontation between what we are and what we would be, that is what we are called to embrace. The church fathers were fond of referring to the living Christian community on earth as the church militant, the fighting church. And they didn't mean it in the sense that most Methodists and Baptists understand the fighting church. They meant, the community that was always struggling to become what it would be, and could not be without an ample supply of God's grace. And to this church, this militant struggling fighting church, the patron Saint is our good friend and our brother, Jacob. His cosmic struggle by night becomes the pattern of our own. His faults and sins are ours. And so too, pray God, is his hope. He was denied his night's ease, a painless and unimpeded progress. He was brought low and bruised, and yet he persevered, and in the process won for himself a new name, a new destiny. His was neither a cheap grace nor an easily bought identity. He bore the bruises and the limp of his cosmic confrontation all the days of his life. And yet bruised and lamed, he moved onward, transformed by the holy collision between the divine and the human. The father saw in Jacob, a type and sign of the church. He struggled for the heavenly vision, was granted it in grace, and allowed to continue not the same, but transformed. So Jacob called the place Peniel saying, "for I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved." The restlessness of our ancestor, his struggle, his perseverance, his preservation, to what end? To find a comfortable spot where in the words of the old spiritual, the wicked will cease from troubling, the

weary will be at rest, and every day will be Sunday by and by. Not as scripture has anything to say to us. We are enjoined in the fiery words of Amos, not to be at ease in Zion. This Zion, because this Zion is not where we are to lay down our burdens. Jacob's struggle and our own are worthwhile and necessary, not because of where we are, not even because where we have been, but because of where we are going. It is the pilgrims' vision that makes the pilgrimage worthwhile. And this life is that pilgrimage. To be at ease in Zion is to grow lazy in the struggle, tired in the journey, to build premature temples in the place of our more practical tents. The journey is the context of the struggle, and for the Christian and the church, the journey and the struggle become real and worthwhile only when the goal, the end, the purpose, is clearly in mind. The hope of eternal Felicity in Christ, the vision of the glorious golden city, the Zion or other worldly Jerusalem, which blew the mind of John in his revelation, and which tantalizes all of us who hope for more than we can see. It is indeed the figure of pilgrims on pilgrimage, that Hebrews cast for us. That roll call of saints among whom is Jacob, who all died in faith not having received what was promised, but having seen it and greeted it from afar, and having acknowledged that they were strangers and exiles on the earth, All people who speak to us make it clear that they are seeking a homeland. If they had been thinking of that land from which they had gone out, they would have had the opportunity to return. But as it is, they desire a better country that is a heavenly one. Therefore, God is not ashamed to be called their God, for he has prepared for them a city. The idea of a pilgrim people is rather hard for us to take. Few of us go on pilgrimages to even fewer holy places. Most of us believe that we have arrived at the place of a pilgrimage, we have come to our Zion and our mountain of Samaria in Cambridge, or in Durham, or wherever, we are one with the hermit who when asked why he didn't retravel replied, "I am where I'm going." It is such clouded vision that obscures the perspective and distorts the priorities of the Christian and the church. But as far as struggle is to have any meaning at all, any purpose, we cannot believe that we are where we are going. Like Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, we too must look forward to that city which has foundations, whose builder and whose maker is God. We are in St. Augustine's words, "a colony of heaven." To mistake this outpost, this frontier, this feeble replica for the real thing, is again, in the metaphor of Hebrews, to mistake Mt. Sinai for Mt. Zion. Or if you prefer a secular and a classical metaphor, it is to take comfort from the shadows in Plato's cave, and mistake that illusion for the reality, of which it is, but an approximation. Now, before you think that I am off on an other worldly kick, and I'm suggesting that Christians need to look beyond the pressing needs of their present environment, let me hasten to assure you that that is precisely what I am saying. It is not council born out of despair, but rather out of confidence. we are not called to an other worldly gospel because the heat is too hot in this world, almost as hot as it is in this chapel, we are called to manage, and struggle, and engage in this world because we are constrained by a vision that is greater than this world. That is what perspective can do. Perspective is a vision that extends from what is, and can be seen to an end that exceeds our capacity to understand and contain it. Now, doubtless, you've heard all of this before. "We are in the world, but not of it." We cannot avoid this world and its demands upon us, it's complex, social, and moral agenda anymore than Jacob could avoid his great and cosmic struggle. Such confrontation where across the crowded ways of life is the process to which we are called, and through which we are sustained by none other than Jesus Christ, the author and perfecter of our faith. But we make a terrible mistake, a profound miscalculation if we neglect to remember that this process while worthy in itself, has its ultimate meaning in the end, toward which we strive. Unlike general electric, progress, some enlightened notion of better and better every day is not our most important product. Success is not our bag, faithfulness is. Wherever there are tensions and conflicts, we Western academics, we,

the misbegotten heirs of Hagle, we run looking for a synthesis, anything to relieve us of the terrible burden of ambiguity. There is no synthesis, no happy middle ground between our profession as citizens of a city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God, and our citizenship in any of our prefabricated zions. While there is time, there is tension, and there is ambiguity, the stuff of which this world is made. When we will have found it comfortable, pleasant, successful, easy in Zion in other words, we should realize that we have taken a dangerous detour in our pilgrimage. We have become seduced by a mirage rather than enchanted by a reality. In our power, in our might, in our success, and in our achievement, we find this message difficult to hear, and unpleasant to understand. For power, and might, and success, these are the things that make living in Zion tolerable, living in Samaria comfortable. We have security in our institutions, and positive thinking in our egos. We can play with the idols of success and relevance, attaching ourselves to their inexorable circles. Indeed, blessed are they that go round and big circles, for they should be called big wheels. But in that awful silence, when the captains and the kings depart, the tumult and the shouting dies, when nobody is listening to us anymore, perhaps, we will then be able to hear in that silence, that message so necessary to our preservation as pilgrims. Do not rest easy here, neither be so easily satisfied with success nor intimidated by failure. The struggle and the pilgrimage are possible because we are led by one who has endured all that, who has been where we are going. We have one who has been before us and is yet with us. We have his swift witness and his sure promise, for it is Jesus Christ which makes it all possible, who redeems both the times and us. And for that, we bless God and say again with Hebrews, "lift up your drooping hand and strengthen your weak knees, make straight paths for your feet so that what is lame may be put out of joint and rather healed. See that you do not refuse him who is speaking. And let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken. Let us pray. Master of all things who has so ordered it that life from the beginning shall be a struggle throughout the course and even to the end, so guide and direct that struggle within us, that in a pilgrimage, what is good in us may conquer, and all things may be brought into that ultimate harmony, which is found in Jesus Christ, our Lord through whom we pray. Amen. (orchestral music) (orchestral music continues)

Priest: Oh, Lord, our God, send down upon each of us now, Your holy spirit to cleanse our hearts, to hallow our gifts, and to perfect this offering of ourselves to You through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. (orchestral music) The grace of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, the love of God, the fellowship of the holy spirit, be with you now and forever. (orchestral music) (bell chimes) (orchestral music continues) (crowd applause)