

(orchestral music)

- Grace be unto you and peace from God our father and our Lord Jesus Christ. It is an awesome experience, to come into the living presence of God who is holy love. Let us therefore acknowledge that we are creatures and sinners so that by God's grace we may be forgiven and renewed. Let us now offer to God our prayers of confession as we pray together. O' Lord you are before and after all things, the last of all the powers of this world, by whom and before whom everything exists that exists and then whose hands lie the mysteries of each yesterday, tomorrow and today. We are those who knowing the wonder filled dread of your presence, have lacked the courage of our awareness. Vainly striving to hide ourselves from you. We are those who knowing that life is good, have murmured against our fate, abusing the world about us and all their in. Who knowing that life is given to us only in the present, desperately clinging to false images about the past and our imagined fantasies concerning the future. Knowing that we are received in being do not choose to be, knowing that we are mission, do not elect to be called, have mercy upon your children O' Lord. O' Lord have mercy upon us. Let us continue in silence with our personal prayers to God. Beloved in Christ, God has mercy upon us. We are free to live because we are a forgiven people. If we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus Christ His son cleanses us from all our sin, amen. (organ music)

- Let us hear the word of God. The reading from the old Testament is Isaiah 49:8-13. "Thus says the Lord, in a time of favor, I have answered you. In a day of salvation, I have helped you. I have kept you and given you as a covenant to the people, to establish the land, to apportion the desolate heritages, saying to the prisoners come forth. To those who are in darkness, appear. They shall feed along the ways on all bear heights shall be their pasture. They shall not hunger or thirst, neither scorching wind nor sun shall smite them. For he who has pity on them will lead them, and by the springs of water will guide them and I will make all my mountains away and my highways shall be raised up. Lo thee shall come from afar and lo these from the north and from the west and these from the land of Sinim. Sing for joy O' heavens and exalt O' earth. Break forth O' mountains into singing for the Lord has comforted his people and will have compassion on his afflicted." The new Testament lesson is Romans 12. "I appeal to you therefore brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship. Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that you may prove what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect, for by the grace given to me I bid everyone among you not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think with sober judgment, each according to the measure of faith, which God has assigned him. For as in one body, we have many members and all the members do not have the same function so we though many, are one body in Christ and individually members of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them. If prophecy in proportion to our faith, if service, in serving, he who teaches, in his teaching, he who exalts, in his exaltation, he who contributes, in liberality, he who gives aid with zeal, he who does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be genuine. Hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good. Love one another

with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor. Never flag in zeal. Be a glow with the spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in your hope. Be patient in tribulation. Be constant in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints, practice hospitality. Bless those who persecute you, bless and do not curse them. Rejoice with those who rejoice, weep with those who weep. Live in harmony with one another. Do not be haughty, but associate with the lowly. Never be conceited. Repay no one evil for evil, but take thought for what is noble in the sight of all. If possible, so far as it depends upon you, live peaceably with all. Beloved never avenge yourselves, but leave it to the wrath of God, for it is written, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," says the Lord. Know if your enemy is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him drink, for by so doing, you will heap burning coals upon his head. Do not overcome by evil but overcome evil with good." (organ music)

- With one voice now 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 true man Jesus, to reconcile and make new. Who works in us and others by his spirit, we trust him. He calls us to be his church, to celebrate his presence, 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.

- And with your spirit.

- Let us pray. The Lord our God, you see us and hear us, you know us and understand us, you respond to us when we ask and even before we ask, you have given us life, may we use it to the fullest. You have given us a new year, may we make the most of it for your glory and the good of our neighbors. You have given us the beginning in this place of a new semester. May we truly seek to increase in wisdom, in the weeks ahead. You have given us one another. May we see all persons as brothers and sisters in Christ and give of ourselves to them. O' God, you know us far better than we know ourselves. You love us without our deserving it. You have set any eternity in the hearts of us all. We know that you could never leave us alone, if we but seek you. Bring on a new year, a new age of salvation, a time in which peace and truth and righteousness will become real. In peace and in hope we pray to you O' God for all peoples in their daily lives and works for our families, our friends and neighbors, and those who are alone. For this university, this community, this nation, the world, for all who work for justice and freedom and peace, for the victims of hunger and fear, injustice and oppression, for all who are in danger or sorrow or in any kind of trouble, for those who have known special joy this week, and those who have special need, for those who care for the sick, the friendless and the needy, for the peace and unity of your holy church, for the special needs of this congregation, hear us O' Lord, for your mercy is great. We thank you O' God for all the blessings of life. We praise your name now and forever. Uphold each of us by your spirit, that we may live and serve you in newness of life, through Jesus Christ our Lord, who taught us as we pray to 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, 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. The week of January 18 through 25, is being observed by Christian churches as a week of prayer for Christian unity. We will observe this week with a special service here in the chapel on Wednesday at five o'clock. Father Roland Murphy, professor of Old Testament in the Divinity School will lead us with a meditation and the service will be led by members of the Duke University Christian Council. I urge you to come and share in this special service with us. You will note an announcement in the bulletin indicating the results of our Oxfam Relief for Hunger drive last fall. A special project which was carried out by the Duke University Christian Council, and they have no intention to let this particular program, this particular work end. So those of you who are interested in continuing to work on this particular problem are invited to meet Wednesday at seven o'clock, with members of the Duke University Christian Council in 206 Union, to plan to see where we go from here in trying to do our part to help with this drastic need. Prophetic voice, able administrator, person with a keen and perceptive and sensitive mind and warm person, Teresa Hoover, is associate General Secretary of the board of global ministries of the United Methodist church. She has served with the former board of missions of the United Methodist church for a number of years and with the current board since its reconstitution. She travels widely, preaches often and witnesses for those causes which were important to all of us. We welcome her to Duke University, to Duke chapel and to this service of worship, as she proclaims God's word to us, diversity of gifts, unity of purpose. Let us hear the word as she brings it to us.

- Good morning, you can say good morning, good morning.

- Good morning.

- Perhaps one of the most fascinating things that happens to a person in the course of our career, is to find oneself in many and varied situations. No one of which one could predict well in advance, and so for those of us who sit as participants in the service of worship, oftentimes play an unseen but very supportive role for persons who are called upon to speak, as that person understands the word of God at a given moment in time, and so it is for that reason I insist on your saying good morning, because there are some dark spots in the sanctuary and I wanted to make sure enough of us were awake, that it was sufficiently important that I continue. You've heard read in your presence, a passage from Romans 12, and this passage really has been read, that it might be supplemented by us in many other passages from the New Testament. Now I find myself almost in perpetual argument with Saint Paul, especially when he succumbs to theologizing out of a cultural conditioning and concludes such things as women be silent in the church, obey your husbands, et cetera, et cetera, but even with persons with whom I often disagree, I occasionally discover points of agreement, and I've tried to condition myself that I would not overlook those points of disagreement or agreement simply because there were so many with which I disagree. So it is with Paul and his teachings. I believe in this passage of Romans 12, which we have heard read, that Paul is really speaking to all of us, of Christian behavior and in the days when we have in many ways an educational or scientific institutions go on the gamut of technological developments and understandings and projects and testings, when we as the generic man have made many new discoveries about ourselves and with little buttons and little pills and little capsules, we can control and direct, you know many peoples and things, but in the midst of it all, we have yet to learn and practice, even those of us in the church, Christian behavior. Discoveries, the gifts of

research, the combination of elements of the universe as we know it, under certain conditions reveal for us certain facts, we have knowledge and I believe that there is still yet knowledge to be revealed to us. The question is, how do we use that knowledge? What is the very core of our existence, that gives to us some dictation of what our behavior should be? I particularly like this because I think Paul is speaking to us, about Christian behavior. He's speaking of the gift of grace, which allows each individual gifts and also offers the admonition that we use those gifts for the sake of the kingdom. Now in many of our... If we were to be reading the scripture directly this morning in this part of the service, you would find that, and you have heard that the passage speaks of our many parts yet one body in union with Christ, and I think many times we have played up on the many parts and used the physical body as a way to make a graphic for us of how, you know you can just, you never really think about your index finger, but the very moment it's out of commission, you realize how often you use it, you simply accept it and so we've used those illustrations I think quite often to help us understand how important it is that we use what we have for the sake of the whole generation and yet I think that perhaps, another portion of the admonition is one we should also keep in mind in union with Christ and we constantly strive to understand what is the central message of any act that we might convey about our sense of understanding of our partnership with Christ in his world. I personally am committed to a congregation being one, and while here in the Duke University community, you may not think of this particular chapel and this particular time of Sunday morning as a congregational expression, because it is conceivable that many of you have your membership in other congregations, but for the sake of our life of academic community in Duke University and the experience of worship here together, I suggest to you that we are a congregation and we have many of the responsibilities that are incumbent upon the more formal, organized and accepted local congregation but whereas I am committed to a congregation being one, I'm even more committed to a congregation being in union with Christ and constantly searching, not in a myopic fashion, but in a fashion that is open to all the new insights and critiques and judgements on us, that come from the outside. Increasingly we're developing our own critique with them, but I still think sometimes the most advantageous judgments come to us from without, because they tend to irritate us most and we tend to think well these people don't know what they're talking about. They don't know us and maybe it is in the mere fact of their not knowing us that makes the judgment valid. If we can be open to it and say, "Well perhaps we are what they think we are if that's the way we have come through to them." and therefore it seems to me that we have to strive to be in union as a group with Christ. To be less than this is I believe, to lose sight of our reason for our being. This passage also allows for a focus on the diversity of gifts, the diversity is we hold between us and the congregation. Now of course we are mindful of the many tasks that must be done in order for the congregation to operate and it is no less true here I'm sure than it is in my own local church this morning where if you were to find 50 people in the congregation the minister would probably really preach a sermon, but you would also find that these diversities, the gifts are really required, and many of us grow stale in using them. We haven't seen them in terms of the great gifts of God that have somehow come to us. All of us know that, you know you need, most of us would say the financial administration. I have some people who tell me that is very basic to the church. If you didn't have that, you wouldn't have a church well I don't accept that. I think they are theologically unsound. You can have the church without the financial, you know infrastructure that is if you think in terms of the church as the spirit that moves and we have homes, we have schools or all other kinds of places where we could house ourselves in the physical sense, but some of us do have the financial administrative skills and those are needed. Some of us have the skills of music ministry, and I feel particularly ministered to

this morning as I stood in the back and marched up the aisle and have since listened to the music as ministry from your own choir. Some of us have the skills of teaching, some in preaching, but no one of these gifts alone, is sufficient for the total task of ministry in and through any congregation. All gifts brought together through a union in Christ, provide the conditions of unity of purpose. Now what is that unity of purpose as of this moment? I believe it to be that our purpose is really to be a witnessing community for Christ. Now what you know those are such loose sounding words and in our time when we so accustomed to having a 0.1, a, b, you know down to the zillionths point to substantiate it all with fact, it is very difficult to accept that a purpose of a community might well be witnessing. To be a witnessing community for Christ. Some of you know I come from New York city, and on occasion, when I get tired of the hassle of running fast to pay my 35 cents to ride underground, I take a bus and pay my 35 cents to ride above ground and when I go across 42nd street, which is getting to be the turf of many and varied groups, on yesterday about 12:30 in the day I rode across 42nd street. and I was very... Let me tell you for the benefit of those of you who may not read all the right papers. 42nd street is you know sin city of New York city. You read it, fine. This is where you can go and get anything you want and a lot of what you don't want. All the marquees are blazing, all the little people, places you know, increasingly now I've noticed young men and women standing on the streets soliciting, and you can go up to the second floor and there's alive something they say up there, it makes life quite different. You know, all of this, it's really sin city personified, but yesterday as I rode across I kept seeing groups of people who didn't look like the 42nd street type and they were passing out handbills and then I rode on another block and here was another group and they had children just like these children here, small you know up to about age 10 to 12 in mobs, sort of standing around the marquees with all these blazing live go, go girls on the billboard, you know what I thought now really, you know, what's going on here? Then I finally passed the bus, kind of you know one of those Vauxhall kinda deals and here it was a religious witnessing group of some kind. I don't know the name of it and probably shouldn't say it if it did, but they were passing out and I kept wanting to get off the bus, but I was too cheap to spend another 35 cent fare. My idea was to find out, get a bill, you know, see what's going on but I finally saw a person who'd got on the bus with one, and it was a declared witness on the part of this group to remove pornography from our city streets. Well, I had a lot of things going through my mind. Now, it's a great temptation to make judgements on another person's witness, but that was their witness and I would assume it had validity for them. I in my own mind had to say, "But why if they were going to declare a war on pornography, why bring those six and eight, nine year olds down there and stand them before those billboards with all the naked women and funny looking men on it you know?" but that was their way of beginning their witness and many of us tend to think in that kind of a way, when we say, "Well she's talking about a witnessing community, that's a little corny. I'm not gonna stand on any corner with you know my tambourine and and my open Bible." but you see I would say when I speak of witnessing community, I am trustful enough in God's ability to provide witnesses that I don't really feel I have to pass judgment on everyone's witness, but I have to struggle with what it means to me, to be part of a witness community, and I think we are being called into witness in a way we have not yet perceived, in the Christian churches particularly in the Western world. We have often, and I happened to have spent my professional life working for a mission oriented group in the United Methodist church, but we are coming more and more to see that our understanding of mission is one that has to be constantly challenged and changed in light of the change in the world and the people in their mindsets and their understandings of themselves and their understandings of the world, but at least we know that being a part of a witnessing community can be a gift and we can begin to raise the right questions

about life and the meaning of life. Do I really believe that I Teresa Hoover I'm somehow saved because I can speak in Duke chapel to all those nice people who come from all those nice home and churches, who have been the groups that have basically supported the mission program of the church all these years. I think I have to ask of myself and of you, is what we have done enough? I would say that when we take a look, at some of the things that confront us in the world, there are obviously differences between us as Christians. I think there are a lot of differences between Christians and church members. I believe Christians live in Christ letting that example challenge and direct her life or his. I believe the latter church members, live in and for often the congregation only. Their boundaries are tied up in the beauty of that edifice and how they can keep it looking as spiffy as the Baptist down the street and how can we keep it as a nice place to which we can retreat at the end of the week from ordinary daily routines in the hope of achieving some moral results. It's a nice hour. We've stamped it for God and we're gonna keep his place beautiful and slightly holy, and if that is the end of church membership, then I submit to you it has become a barrier to Christian living. I do not believe it has to, but I think it is quite often happening. I think that we are as Christians expected to reach a more exacting standard of performance in life for ourselves and for the world in which we worked. Many of us have confused church membership and morality, which is on a fluctuating scale of do's and don'ts. Some of the things that pass from morality 10 years ago, are not now acceptable as morality, and so we find that the scene is constantly shifting and perhaps this is why we find some groups who are more and more inclined to interpret witness as what I have heard them say the purity of the gospel. Well that is always one that is subject to the understanding and the acceptance of the individual. No one person or group has purative gospel. It is a constantly changing, not that the gospel changes, but the people who are trying to live by changing their understanding of what it might mean for them and for their lives. Let me give you two examples and I'll try to do them very quickly now. Some of you, all of us I dare say no matter where we've lived in the last so many months are aware and probably remember and we're a part of all the anguish surrounding the Watergate and the subsequent fallout. Some of us in the churches felt it was very important and strategic to say to the people of the churches, you again are a citizen of a country. You have a citizenship in a sense as a Christian in two worlds, whatever is your geographical state and whatever is that little colony of heaven on earth the scripture speaks about, and how can you bring these two in your understanding together? And there's an age old argument among people of the churches as to whether or not Christians or the churches they say should be involved in politics. Well I think it is very interesting if we find ourselves with what we believe to be some understanding of what life is about, that we should call and make judgment upon that life around us including the life of the church and ourselves and so as a result some churches called for the constitutional provision which allowed for impeachment to proceed. Now that was not saying they believe impeachment you know should be the conclusion, but if the constitution that we as citizens believe in has validity, the process should be allowed to work, when there's question so then decision can be made and a nation and the people can move forward. Well there was a considerable fallout at that time and much of the fallout that came was largely from people of the churches who said, "You have no business doing this," or "You were a bunch of so-called, you know party people who were against so-called president because he was of another party." You know the kind of thing you see that made us more and more, made me more and more as I read through some of the mail, get the feeling that somehow flag in our mind had superseded cross and I have to say a word as I said, quite often in those hectic months, God will not tolerate us as Christians, when we lift respect for our nation above respect for God. God will not forgive us when we make a God of an American civil religion, and I say to you this day, if I were to make a list

of the things that I think in the next five years we as Christians across this country are gonna be called to face in a way we've never done before, I think it would start off, for example with a new understanding of ourselves as a nation among nations, not as a superior among equals. A nation among nations, and you can go back and trace the last few days of news about things that were happening in the UN and how we were understanding ourselves there and the kinds of threats, overt and covert that we were making. Well that's all right, that's a part of the political scheme. That's the way the scenarios are written, but if we begin to believe that, then I say that we as a nation, may not deserve the right to be a peer among peers, but that's gonna be a very hard lesson for us because we have been so accustomed to being the superior among not even peers. I think another issue that I would feel, we have to put our test as to whether or not faith somehow can instruct citizenship and that's how you'll feel the hunger. I applaud you. I read about the Oxfam contributions, but if you think that is going to be it, you've done too much. It isn't sufficient to feed the hungry with a few thousand dollars, on one Sunday or over a one, three month period, and then return to our same expectations of life for ourselves. 35% of the world's non-renewable resources are consumed by the Americans, and if we think we can live into another age doing that, then we've misunderstood I think the meaning of God's world and so I submit to you that this use of hunger, to which we have contributed and I applaud and I contribute and encourage you to continue, but we must begin to look under it at the cause. Drought, is drought something we simply have to accept? Go back and read the history of the development of farming in our own country. We didn't just accept it and bow down we discovered ways of trying to control water so that in dry periods you know, we can irrigate. There all kinds of things that are possible. At the moment some of us are financing, a very short term exploration study into what is really being done and sea beds. There are a lot of groups and nations and private foundations that are involved in trying to discover the potential for food stuffs in the sea beds. So I say to those of you who have the inquiring researching minds, that this might be the way that you might offer for yourselves or for yourself and your gift on behalf of a whole. I would call that being part of a witnessing community, concerned about the resources that are possible in the world, God's creation and concerned about the distribution and use of those resources on behalf of all the world's people. I think we look pretty bad when we consume 35% of the earth's non-renewable resources and then we lead the debate and the proposals on limiting world population, and don't think that many, many peoples in many nations of the world including our own, don't see the discontinuity in that. There are a lot of others, I could turn within the church, but there isn't time. There never is time to return within the church, but there are a lot of issues that are gonna face us in terms of polity and doctrine in the next five to 10 years within our own church, but I simply would like to say that we all feel threatened in the midst of change, and I'm very happy to know or to believe that the next five to 10 years, that face many of you who will be entering into your full time kind of professional involvement will be years of great promise and hope and in many ways, nothing that any of us have done in generations preceding will prepare you for those years, and that is the reason, our sense of understanding the nature of our gifts, that those gifts have been for us, a part of God's grace to us and are to be used on the behalf of all of us and that is the reason our education must be an education that builds into us the possibilities of change. I say that the Lord promised to satisfy every need. I don't think that included a promise to satisfy our every want. We look forward mainly in the church to big celebrations, birth, marriage and death. Perhaps we need to prepare ourselves for these celebrations by allowing life to reveal its many small ones. Three things seem necessary to keep life from being so daily for us, can be very daily and very boring and very ordinary but I think there are three things that might give it a lift, love, believe and hope. Three things

that relate to the ordinary people and stuff around us and every generation hope is one of the first casualties, and perhaps it is recovered only as men and women learn to see hope in you. I believe the mission outreach to the churches around the world, but it is also found in every corner and in every place where I sit. In the spirit of unity of all creation, we must pray and work that our Lord will grant us sanity enough to make a justice, that will not kill anyone's love for life. Make a justice that will not kill anyone's love for life, and when we're seeing those thousands of starving emaciated children in our press and on our media, you have to ask yourself the question, where did justice go astray. Dear God I pray constantly let us celebrate the past, the present and the future for all belong to God. The past is filled with mistakes of ignorance and the triumphs of vision. The present is consumed by the tragedies of hate and greed and made bearable only by the glimmerings of love and generosity. Only the future is clean. Yet we know it will not remain so, for we are selfish beings, yet we must trust in God's great love. We must even have faith in our own faltering efforts, that we might use our gifts towards one purpose, peace and justice, which makes the future worth living, amen. (organ music)

- Grant we ask of you all mighty God, that our gifts being dedicated now to your service, may be used for the good of your church, and the care of your children through Jesus Christ our Lord, amen. (organ music) The grace of our Lord and savior Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship and communion of the holy spirit, be with you and with those whom you love, now and forever. ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪