

- Sunday Worship Service, January 13th 1980, Duke Chapel. (choir singing) ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ (organ playing) (choir singing) (organ playing) (choir singing) (organ playing) (solo singing) (organ playing) (solo singing) (choir singing) (organ playing) (choir singing) (organ playing) (choir singing) (organ playing) (choir singing) ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ (coughing) (coughing) (coughing) (organ playing) (congregation singing)

- You may be seated. If we claim to be sinless, we are self-deceived and strangers to the truth. But if we confess our sins, God is just and maybe trusted to forgive every kind of wrong. Let us admit our sin before God. Almighty God, You search the hearts of us all and know our sin even before we acknowledge it, and love us in spite of it. In the presence of Your love and our neighbors need, we make our confession. We acknowledge our cowardice, which does not let us see the truth, our laziness, which will not let us learn the truth, our prejudice, which will not let us see the truth, our stubbornness, which will not let us except the truth, our pride, which will not let us seek the truth. We are deaf to conscience, weak in will, lovers of ease, lacking in perseverance. Grant us wisdom to know and power to fulfill faithfully Your commands. Forgive us when we falter, and renew us in Your grace. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, amen. Let us confess our personal sins in silence. Friends, hear and believe these words of the Psalmist. "For as the heavens are high above the earth, "so great is God's steadfast love towards "those who fear God. "As far as the east is from the west, "so far does God remove our transgressions from us. "We are forgiven, let us forgive one another. "Let us give thanks for God is good, "and God's love is everlasting." Thanks be to God, whose mercy comes to us as forgiveness. Thanks to be to God, whose love comes to us as justice. Thanks be to to God, whose hope comes to us in Jesus our Christ, amen. We welcome each of you today to this University Service of Worship, here at Duke University. We extend a special welcome to those of you who are listening to us by radio. To the members of the Raleigh Boy Choir, to their director Mr. Thomas E. Sibley, and to members of their families and friends who join us today, we say special words of greeting. We are blessed by the music and by your presence. A service of worship celebrating the birthday of Martin Luther King Jr. will be held in the chapel on Tuesday night, January 15th at 7:00 p.m. We invite all of you to be present for this service of celebration and commitment, a renewed commitment to the justice, and love, and service to which Dr. King, speaking out of his own deep Christian commitment, called us. Next Thursday, January 17 at 2:30 p.m., a memorial service will be held here in the chancel area to celebrate the life of Charles Eckhart Fox. Kurt was a freshman at Duke, and died December 29th as a result of an automobile accident the day before. Kurt had made many friends here at Duke during the four months he was here, and he will be missed much by those whose lives he touched. To them, and to the members of his family, we extend our sympathy and pray that God will bring them comfort. This afternoon at 3.00 p.m., there will be a memorial service for the Rev. Dr. George Brinkman Elhart, a former Divinity School Librarian and Registrar. We extend our sympathy and offer our prayers for his friends and family, here and elsewhere. The flowers used in the service today are given in his memory by Dr. and Mrs. James Semans and family. Our preacher for today is the Reverend Robert T. Young, minister to the University, we look forward to The Word he will speak to us. And now let us continue our worship of our mighty God.

- Let us pray. Oh God, help us to sense the timeless and majestic truths which are revealed to us in Scripture, and to make the power of Your word a part of our lives. In Christ name we pray, amen. The Old Testament lesson is from the 42nd chapter of Isaiah, versus one through nine. "Behold My servant whom I uphold, "My chosen in whom my soul delights. "I have put My spirit upon Him, "He will bring forth justice to the nations. "He will not cry or lift up his voice, "or make it heard in the street. "A bruised reed He will not break, "and a dimly burning wick He will not quench. "He will faithfully bring forth justice. "He will not fail or be discouraged till "He has established justice in the earth, "and the coastlands wait for his law. "Thus says God, The Lord who created the heavens "and stretched them out. "Who spread forth the earth and what comes from it. "Who gives breath to the people upon it, "and spirit to those who walk in it. "I am The Lord, I have called you in righteousness, "I have taken you by the hand and kept you. "I have given you, as a covenant to the people, "a light to the nations. "To open the eyes that are blind, "to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, "from the prison those who sit in darkness. "I am The Lord, that is My name, "My glory I give to no other, "nor My praise to graven images. "Behold the former things have come to pass "and new things I now declare, before they spring forth, "I tell you of them". The Epistle lesson is from the 10th chapter of Acts, versus 34 through 38. "And Peter opened his mouth and said, 'Truly I perceive "that God shows no partiality, but in every nation "anyone who fears him and does what is right "is acceptable to Him. "You know the word which He sent to Israel, "preaching good news of peace by Jesus Christ. "He is Lord of all. "The word which was proclaimed throughout all Judea "beginning from Galilee "after the baptism which John preached, "how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit "and with power. "How He went about doing good "and healing all that were oppressed by the devil, "for God was with him". Here ends the reading from the Epistle, amen. (organ playing) (choir singing) (organ playing) (choir singing) Will the congregation please stand for The Reading of The Gospel lesson. The Gospel lesson is from the 3rd chapter of Luke, versus 15 and 16, and 21 and 22. "As the people were in expectation, "and all men questioning their hearts concerning John "whether perhaps he were the Christ, John answered them all, "'I baptize you with water, but He who is mightier "than I is coming, the thong of whose sandals I "am not worthy to untie. "He will baptize you with The Holy Spirit and with fire'. "Now when all the people were baptized, "and when Jesus also had been baptized "and was praying, the heaven was opened "and The Holy Spirit descended upon Him "in bodily form as a dove, and a voice came from heaven, "'Thou art my beloved son, with thee I am well pleased". Here ends the reading of The Gospel. All praise and glory be to God, amen. (organ playing) (congregation singing)

- Grace to you and peace from The Lord our God who creates us, redeems us and sustains us, amen. The word reads, "Then Jesus came from Galilee "to the Jordan, to John, to be baptized by him. "Now when all the people were baptized "and when Jesus also had been baptized "and was praying, the heaven was opened "and The Holy Spirit descended upon Him "in bodily form as a dove. "And a voice came from heaven, saying, "'Thou art my beloved son, with thee I am well pleased". A holy moment. A holy moment in the life of our Lord Jesus the Christ. One of many holy moments in the life of our Lord. Jesus birth, a holy moment when God became one with us. Jesus baptism, a holy moment when God became one of us. Jesus death, a holy moment when God became one for us. Jesus resurrection, a holy moment when God became one to us. Holy moments my friends, for Jesus, for you, and for me. Holy moments, birth and death, and much that lies between. Holy moments, when we know life is sacred, life has purpose, life has meaning. When we know that life is authentic and is real, that life is genuine, when we believe that life is whole.

Indeed, when we know that life is holy. Holy moments. When we know that we have come from God, that we go to God, and when we know that in the meantime we belong to God. We are God's children, we are Imago Dei. Persons created, formed, conceived, birthed, alive, living and breathing human beings who are the children of the Living King, The Lord God, The Almighty. Holy moments. Holy moments when we become aware of who we are. That is, that we're human, and finite, that we are dependent, limited and are in need. When we submit who we are to the grace of God, and make ourselves open to that same grace of God. When we are then blessed and receive God's presence, this is what happened to Jesus. He acknowledged His humanness, He submitted to baptism, baptism at the hand of a fellow human being, John, to receive through John, and through baptism, the grace of Almighty God and in that moment He heard and experienced God's voice and presence with Him, and life for Jesus was never to be the same again. From that moment on. He could never look back. He kept His hand to the plow, indeed, He let the dead bury the dead. His relationships with His family, with His friends, with His hometown all changed. The image of who He was changed. His reputation became different, and indeed I'm convinced that His own self-image changed from that moment onward. This is what makes a moment holy. We are seeing, and we see. We hear, and are heard. We know life, and we come alive. We seek, and we find. We knock, and we get some answers. We reach, and we touch. We know, and are known. We care, and are cared about. We love, and are loved. A holy moment. When things change and are never, never ever the same again. When we say with Paul, "By the Grace of God, I am what I am. "By the Grace of God I am who I am." Holy moments however, seldom, if ever, just happen to us. Just come upon us without our taking some initiative, assuming some responsibility, making some move, or making some decision. This as I see it, is what Jesus did. After 30 years He decided at some point, that it was time to make a move, to become more serious about life than He had been, and indeed at that moment to make a commitment. He decided, He moved, He stepped out. There come such moments for all of us, "Kairos moments" would be the Greek way to put it. Moments that are decisive, that are significant, that are critical, that are indeed, life-changing. All of us have faced, and will face holy moments. Moments that are life-changing, that make an indelible mark on us, that are irreversible, that are freeing, and fulfilling, that are promising to us. These are what I would call boundary moments, moments of decision, holy moments, moments that are around us all the time. But a moment? Just a moment? That seems, you say, just such an infinitesimally small portion of time. But life is created, life is made and re-made, shaped and re-shaped, and focused and re-focused often in just one moment of time. All of us do have some holy moments that we go back to. Holy moments that nourish us and sustain us, that guide us and direct us, that name us and re-name us. Moments that tell us who we are, that tell us to whom we belong, that tell us what our commitments are. Moments that give us our sense of direction, our place, our relationship, our status, our sense of belonging and our sense of fulfillment. I still remember, and it's been at least 35 years ago, I still remember the first time that I was aware of my dad ever calling me "son". I was plowing with an old mew, and I guess it probably is the only time in my life that I ever plowed on our little farm. But I was plowing with an old mew, and my dad was trying awfully hard to get me to do something right that I was doing wrong. I don't remember the correcting, or the scolding, or the yelling halfway across the field. What I remember is my dad calling me "son". And I go back to that, every once in a while. Holy moments. Possibly all the moments that we have between life and death. Mary Jean Irion writes, "I have come from infinity, "and I go to infinity, "but between these two events, for a little time, "I can celebrate that miracle "which I never will be able to fathom". Just for a little time, to celebrate a few holy moments. "Just for a moment!", Emily cries in Thornton Wilder's, *Our Town*. "Just for a moment!", she cries

as she stands in the kitchen although no one else can see her, as she has come back to remember her 13th birthday. "Just for a moment!", she cries, "Look at me mamma, "look at me as if you see me, as if you really see me, "I'm here, now, just for a moment!". A moment, just a moment, really can be holy. To paraphrase a line from Henry Nouwen's book, "The Wounded Healer", where he says, "Love not only lasts forever, "it only takes a second for it to come about". May I paraphrase that to say that, "Life may only last forever, "and indeed, it really does sometimes, "only take a second for it to begin to come about". But there's some moments that break us. Moments, and I'm not sure that all of them are always holy, but there's some moments that can break us, when we fall or fail, or are rejected. When we become incurably ill, or are broken, or are defeated. When we know parting, are separated, when we say goodbye, when we see a loved one die, when we are confused, or are depressed, some moments can and do break us, sometimes. At least, they break us for a time. Eugene Kennedy writes, "There can be a lifetime of pain, "a lifetime of pain in an intense moment of separation". Or it's like, Father Paneloux's words in Camus's Play, The Plague, "At first, the priest preaches that the epidemic "in the town of Oran is God's judgment "on a town that deserves it". Later on, he watches a small child afflicted with the plague, and at the height of the child's agony, Paneloux prays, "My God, my God, spare this child." But his prayer is not answered. But that experience changes the priest, no longer can he believe that somehow or other eternal bliss is going to make up for a child's agony upon this earth. Later on he asks, "Who would dare to assert, "who would dare to assert that eternal happiness "can compensate for a single moment's human suffering?" Some moments can just about break us, at least for a time. As Thomas John Carlisle puts it in his poem, "In Touch", "Distress did it", he says, "Not easy street. "Not Acrilon Avenue. "Not Prosperity Place, "or Brightview Boulevard. "Not Fair Haven, "or the Bay or Security "or the Island of Tranquility "but off-course winds "and the Straights of Adversity "and the tempests of disaster "that howled to Charydbis. "The deep was round about me. "Emergency exits were barred. "I was pitted against perdition. "In a ravenous cavity. "I was swallowed up. "Better late than never. "I remembered the Forgotten. "My troubles put me in touch." Some moments seem to break us, and put us in touch again with The Forgotten One. Some moments, and these I do claim are holy moments, there's some moments that make us, when we are affirmed or accepted, when we know deep satisfaction, when we are reunited, reconciled, when we share communion, when deserved victory comes, when new life dawns upon us, when we find, and are found by a new friend, insights come, when new ideas are discovered, when genuine commitments are made, commitments to God, to others and to self. There are some moments that make us. In his book markings, Dag Hammarskjold has an entry dated, "Whitsunday, 1961". He writes, "I don't know who, or what, put the question, "I don't know when it was put. "I don't even remember answering. "But at some moment "I did answer yes to someone, or to something, "and from that hour I was certain "that existence is meaningful and that, therefore, "my life, in self-surrender, had a goal. "From that moment on, I have known what it means "not to look back, and to take no thought for the morrow." From that moment on. Holy moments, for Jesus, for you, and for me. Yes, no, a word, a look, a glance, a note, a call, a report, a meeting, a step, a gesture, a movement, a decision. When who we are, when who we are is confronted, or threatened, or questioned, or confirmed, or affirmed. When who we are, as was the case with Jesus, when who we are is claimed, named and blessed. Holy moments. Just for a moment. Luke writes, "And when Jesus also had been baptized "and was praying, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him". "After Jesus was baptized", Luke writes, "he was praying." That my friends is worth our noting. For perhaps one way that you and I may know more holy moments in the days and months ahead is by praying, even as did Jesus our Lord. The last of July, I began every morning to set aside a half hour for prayer. I had never set

aside a half minute a day before that. Nor five minutes, nor 10 minutes. But I began. Prayers for others, for the world, for the church, for those in need and for myself. And I'm here to tell you this morning, that this half hour of prayer time has made a magnificent difference in my spiritual and personal life. I wouldn't dare to presume to tell you that from now, from that point on, and even now, all of my moments in life are holy, not at all. There are some holy moments now. And I'm convinced that there are more holy moments now than there were before I began to pray every morning. And so as we begin a new year, and a new semester, I invite you my friends, to find some new time to pray. To open yourself more and more to the love and to the grace of God, even as did our Lord. It won't make all of your moments holy, but I have not a doubt in anywhere in the depths of my soul that you will begin to know some new and beautiful and lasting holy moments like you have never known before. Hugh Prather has a little book that a lot of you have read, entitled, "Notes on Love and Courage". In it he has some lines about prayer, he says, "The talking does something to me. "I pray to God, my friend, "and it changes me, "if only for a moment. "I feel myself siding with what is good in me. "I feel cleansed, and I look around with more gentleness. "Relationships appear to reform on a new basis, "the gentleness in me seeing the gentleness in others. "I sense my own beauty and health, "and I see a core of goodness in others. "The world dances for a moment." My friends, in the midst of the wars, and the rumors of wars, and in the midst of all of the enmity and strife, oh how beautiful, how glorious it would be if the world could dance, even for just a moment. Let us pray. Oh God, we ask that You would make this a holy moment, and hear us as we pray. Oh God of yesterday, show us Your way. Oh God of today, hold out Your hand. Oh God of tomorrow, give us a sign, even just for a moment, we pray. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, amen. (organ playing) (congregation singing)

- Let us affirm what we believe. We believe in God, who has created and is creating. Who has come in a truly human Jesus to reconcile and make new, who works in us and others by 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. You may be seated. The Lord be with you. Let us pray. Great God of us all, we praise You for Jesus Christ who came to save us from our sins, and from ourselves. We thank You for the prophets hope, the angels song, for the birth in our hearts of Your love. We thank You that in Jesus You joined us, sharing human hurts and pleasures, and that You bring Your healing to us. We thank You for people like Martin Luther King Jr. who have called us to know Your love. Glory to You for Your wonderful love. All thanksgiving be Yours through Jesus Christ our Savior. Walk now with us God, as we dare to come before You as nothing more than what we are, to talk with You and to hear Your word to us. As we come today, some of us are confused and anxious, some of us are bored, some of us are doubting, some of us are angry, some of us are hurting, some of us are troubled, not by major things oh God, but because our neighbors are different from us, and because we have to think about paying taxes, and the TV's broken, and the car's scratched and the fender's bent, and dishwashers and vacuum cleaners don't work right, and classes are about to start and we aren't ready for classes, or to give up vacations, and backaches, and gallstones, and sore throats, and aching teeth, and bifocals make our world seem all out of joint. But some of us feel pretty good, even joyful. Aware of some of those special holy moments that make us full of thanksgiving. However, all of us know that the world has need of us no matter what our condition, and we don't always know how to respond. We know that the church needs to hear Your word and that as members of the church it is our responsibility to listen to it and pass it along and act it out. And so we need You oh God

to walk with us and call us back to the responsibility of being the church in this place, and with all other Christians around the world. We know that the world waits for us oh God, those people who do not have the power to order their own lives and who suffer injustice. Those who live and die hungry. Those who are subjected to the death and pain of war. Those who are held captive. Those who do not have adequate education. Those who are victims of ungenerous judgements, and suspicions and misunderstanding, and those who are known as oppressors. We feel particularly helpless about the situations in Afghanistan and in Iran. We do not want to play war-games, we realize that things are particularly tense and that a wrong move might result in a war that would involve the whole world. We are more than a little scared. So we ask you to walk with us, and with those leaders of the involved nations, that we and they may move into that world to bring your peace and reconciliation to it. Oh God, we need to hear Your voice in the midst of our lives, in whatever condition we stand before You today. Bring us peace, accept our joy, bring us healing, bring us comfort. We remember those who are sick, walk with them and us, as we seek to minister to them. We remember those who are troubled, and lonely, and despairing, walk with them and with us as we make our presence known to them. We remember those who grieve, particularly the families and friends of Kurt Fox and George Elhart, walk with them and with us as we try to bring them comfort. Walk with us, oh God. We pray in the name of The One who taught us to pray together, saying, 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 playing) (choir singing) (organ playing) (choir singing) (organ playing) (congregation singing) What is small to us oh God, maybe large to You. If the gift we place on the alter represents our lives as well as our material means, bless this offering that it may be greater in meaning than in amount. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, amen. (organ playing) (congregation singing) And now to God who is able to do immeasurably more than all of us can ask or receive. By the power which is at work among us, to God be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus from generation to generation, and forever more, amen. (organ playing)