

(upbeat music)

- The sacrifices acceptable unto God are a broken and contrite heart. Let us join together in the prayer of confession. Oh God, we confess that we like to believe that the more we learn, the more we know, we dare not admit our ignorance, forgive us our learning, we mistake it or true. We confess that we'd like to believe that all persons are our neighbors. We dare not admit, we are not prepared to do anything about her world of inequality. Forgive us, the chart will smile. The comforter king resolution. We mistake them for a while. We confess that we like to believe ourselves, persons of integrity and responsibility. We dare not admit our Jekyll and Hyde existence. Forgive us the stiff upper lip. We mistake it for an expression of ourselves. We confess that we'd like to thank God is always running after us. We dare not admit that we are not prepared to deny ourselves and take up our cross daily. Forgive us our piety. We mistake it for loving God with heart, mind, soul and strength. Lord have mercy, Christ have mercy, Lord have mercy, Amen. Let us continue in personal and silent confession. Create in us clean heart oh, God, and put new and right spirits within us. Cast us not away from thy presence, and take not thy Holy Spirit from us. Restore to us the joy of thy salvation, and uphold us with a willing spirit, Amen. (upbeat music)

- The scripture lessons this morning are taken from the Old Testament, Exodus chapter 14, verses 11 and 12. And they said to Moses, is it because there are no graves in Egypt, that you have taken us away to die in the wilderness? What have you done to us in bringing us out of Egypt? Is this not what we said to you in Egypt? Let us alone and let us serve the Egyptians or it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than to die in the wilderness. And then from the New Testament, Galatians chapter three verses one through five. Oh, foolish Galatians who has to be wretched you before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this, did you receive the spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun with the spirit are you now ending with the flesh? Did you experience so many things in vain? If it really is in vain, does he who supplies the spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law or by hearing with faith. Here ends the reading. (upbeat music)

- 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 the 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. Let us pray. Oh, thou God of our very being, the goal of our desire, the guide and the stay of these are Pilgrim days. We turn aside now from the fret and routine of life to consider the pattern our life is taking, to consider the substance and direction of our days and weeks. Against thy saving word, oh God, we have been contempt with little comforts and provincial expectations, righteous anger, and passionate hope have not been on our lips nor have they governed our lives. We have easily resigned ourselves to cheap pleasures and to the conventional wisdom. And our way has been determined by the reigning gods of our culture, our

sex, our class, our nation. Oh, thou God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, of Sarah, Rebecca and Mary, show us once more the promise of redemption in our history. Raise up once more prophets in our midst, that we might hear the thunder of justice. Let the cry for compassion. The hope in a believable future, be proclaimed amongst us and by us, grant us the gift of living communities of faith, where in persons are nourished by a word beyond all of the narrow and convenient ideologies and parties of our choosing. So prepare us the days ahead oh, Lord, to be ever watchful, to be genuinely hopeful, and grant both the innocence of doves and the wisdom of serpents, that we might know when to be hard and when to be soft. Teach us to care and not to care, to work and finally trust. And teach us ever to pray as our Lord was bold to do, 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 and the power and the glory forever, Amen. I would call your attention to the other worship opportunities of the week in the bulletin, and especially call your attention to the two performances of Benjamin Britten's Opera, Noah's Flood on Friday and Saturday evenings.

- In the name of God, our Creator, Sustainer and Redeemer, Amen. Each Sunday, we affirm that this is God's world, that God works in us and in others, that we ought to seek justice and to serve others. We can say with certainty that the good news which we received through Jesus Christ is that we can live as loved and forgiven people, that God is concerned for those who are in need, the hungry, the lonely, the oppressed, the imprisoned, and the sick. We can say with certainty that God acts to bring about a society of justice and mercy, for the present and for the future. And we say, that God works through us and through others. But then we pause for to understand what that means specifically is not easy. One of the expectations we bring is to understand the implications of this for us personally, but more, that when we leave, we shall share a common commitment in our obedience to God. This is difficult, in some ways we are like Sally, one of the peanuts people, who reports on how she spent her summer. My plans for the summer were ambitious, Study French, listen to Bartok Quartets, read war and peace and start my own vegetable garden. Actually, I spent the whole summer watching game shows on TV and the most serious thing. We understand the student who anguishes. I know I should be concerned about the hungry, but it's difficult when I and all the people I know have plenty to eat. It's difficult for me to remember and to believe that people do not have enough to eat. I remember for while, but I soon forget. There are so many forgotten people. Our society psychologically and socially represses its pain at the suffering in the world, and pushes people who suffer to the fringes of society, in order to live more comfortably unaware of this suffering. And we knew that the people who are in need of justice and mercy and love are not all removed from us spatially. They're all forgotten people, in our midst, in this congregation. Here's some comments. It's hard for me to find any woman who cares. I'm hurting, I'm lonely, I'm afraid, my sister has cancer. My parents are getting divorced. We have our PhDs, but we cannot find work. I cannot find any reason for continuing living. I reach out and there's no one there. I'm terrified about what the sexist revolution is going to mean to me as a man, my whole identity and understanding of myself is being radically called into question, help me. You've heard of failed the echoes of these statements within the university and within your community. Now being in the university brings special privileges and special problems. In our understanding of what it means to live responsibly. For our very reason for being here tends to turn us in on ourselves as we spend more and more of our time in search for knowledge and wisdom and our becoming educated people. And this is heightened

as the university becomes more and more competitive. And being in the university can separate us from other members of the university, but even more so from the world out there. It is possible for some of us to live a seemingly self-contained existence, unaware of our dependence on others and of the crises facing our neighbors and the world. This is a human condition, though, not just a university condition. Now we are the elite, the privileged, when the people of the world are seen in a pyramid arrangement, with the people who have ample resources and opportunities being at the top of the pyramid, and the people at the bottom are those who do not have food or freedom or education. We know that we find ourselves at the very top, at the very point. And even those of us who do not see ourselves in this way and do not claim this to be true are up at the top of this pyramid. And when we see this, we better understand why the people at the bottom talk about our social consciousness as a luxury, not something to which we are driven because of our situation. This is our situation. We affirm that we are to love and serve others, that we are to work, to bring about a just and loving society. And we find ourselves in a very privileged position. The Israelites who lived under severe oppression had trouble moving into the unknown with its suffering and hardships saying that if we had known it was going to be this bad, if we are going to die anyway, why didn't we stay in Egypt where at least we had enough food? We are tempted not to risk our comfort and our security, or even to risk giving up our present discomfort and security, to move into the unknown, to respond to our needs and other human needs. And it is only as we are committed, it is only as we take seriously our understanding of what it means to love and care for our neighbor, to be used by God, as agents of healing, of grace, of love, that we can move into this future, only by self emptying and encounter with that which is alien, unknown, and different. Do we, in losing our present lives become the new creation. This is a choice we make, to be human means to be able to say yes or no, to be able to respond and move out with Israel into the unknown or to stay where we are, safe and hidden. And man's search for meaning, Frankl says that life ultimately means, taking the responsibility to find the right answers to its problems and to fulfill the task, which it constantly sets before each one of us. And that our last human freedom is to choose our own attitude in every given set of circumstances to choose our own way. Now in discussing our movement into the future, Jurgen Moltmann says that, only the crucified Christ can bring the freedom which changes the world because it is no longer afraid of death. And it is in Moltmann discussion of believing hope that we found the image of the passion for the possible. It is believing hope, which provides the unending resources for the creative imagination of love which is ours to use. This believing hope, this gift of grace, constantly provokes and produces thinking which not only anticipates, but give shape to the possibilities, which are open to us. And empowers us to act and to respond to our neighbors need. What has been promised to us, a society of justice and mercy and love. The society of God is within the bounds of possibility. So this believing hope will constantly arouse in us, the passion for the possible, and provide creativity and mobility in self-transformation and breaking with the old and coming to terms with the new, and the God of the Exodus, the God of the covenant, the God of justice and mercy and grace and love, the God of Jesus Christ, who is our God, the source of our believing hope, calls us to a passion for the possible, calls us to creative self-transformation, to inventive imaginative responses of love. This passion for the possible calls forth, not only the excitement and enthusiasm that the future can be different, but also grounds are solidly in some simple, realistic expectations and responses. The realism of not choosing impossible, unachievable task. It's difficult for us to take seriously the images of the mustard seed and the yeast. We want to do big, important task. We want to solve major world problems overnight, usually working through a committee. And when we don't, we are crushed, paralyzed, and we say, what's the use, what we do doesn't make any difference. So we need constantly to recall Paul's words.

We are God's agents. Each of us performed the task, which the Lord allotted. Paul planted the seed, a policy watered it, but God made it grow. It does not all rest on our shoulders. This is a freeing word. And the wounded healer now in discusses, a very different, realistic expectation and our passion for the possible. Our task is to prevent people from suffering for wrong reasons. Many people suffer because of fault suppositions on which they have based their lives. That is that there should be no fear or loneliness, no confusion or doubt. But these sufferings, he says can only be dealt with creatively when they are understood as wounds integral to our human condition. Therefore ministry is a very confronting service. It does not allow people to live with the illusions of immortality or wholeness. It keeps reminding us that we are mortal and broken, but with the recognition of this condition, liberation starts. We who are pained and wounded can offer ourselves, as guidance to fearful people. It is precisely, and this guidance at the first signs of hope become visible. This is so because shared pain is no longer paralyzing, but mobilizing, even away to liberation. When we become aware that we do not have to escape pains, but that we can mobilize them into a common search for life, those very pains are transformed from expressions of despair into signs of hope. And we are no longer afraid to move out into the unknown, the future to risk pain. And one further word, and we hear part of it from what may be for some of you, a surprising source. Author White Scale, Former National Secretary of SDS, now on the Staff of the Institute of Policy Studies in Washington. He is discussing his perception that the religious recommitted Jews and Christians, so seldom have been among the people to move human beings to change. And he wonders why it's been so easy for believers to cramp and reduce the living God to a deadening idle. He sees that we have been committed to our technology with an absence of a commitment to God, to the non-human. And he calls us to turn our faces to God, essential and this struggle against the dehumanizing forces in our society is our relationship with our divine comrade, with whom we talk and wrestle and who infuses our struggle with law. Another dimension of this word we hear, and a question and the letter to Galatians, does God who surprise the spirit to us, and works miracles in us do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith. The inner experience of the spirit and faith and prayer are just as essential and the anticipation of the future of Christ, and the liberating of creation as the opening of a ghetto, the healing of a sick person or a successful revolution for independence. These two dimensions cannot be separated. Our basis for action must be grounded, in the crucified risen Christ. The source of our hope, which frees us to take risk, to move into the unknown. The context of our action must be where we found ourselves. And for those of us in this university, it will mean bringing all of these resources to prepare us, to respond to those needs, to which we will give our lives. And we begin by acting by responding now, immediately and small, specific ways to our neighbor's needs those near, and those separated from us by the great distance of that pyramid. Reach out, risk being hurt, risk making a mistake, risk asking someone to help you to love you. If we see that our pains and our hurts and our wounds do not have to paralyze us, but can be instruments of healing love then we can risk loving, caring, sharing, giving, serving, dreaming, changing, and our passion for the possible will surprise us for what has seemed impossible may soon move into the realm of the possible. Let us pray. You have given Yourself to us Lord. Now we give ourselves for all others. Your love has made us a new people, as a people of love, we will serve You with joy. Your glory has filled our hearts, help us to glorify you in all things, Amen. (upbeat music)

- Oh, Lord of quiet power and lowly love, let these gifts be, but token and promise of the more difficult gifts of hearts and minds. So shed thy light upon us that we might see our way, that we might find our neighbor and share the love of Christ with them, Amen. (upbeat music) Grant oh, Lord, that what we have here said

with our lips, we might truly believe in our hearts. And so believing act out in the days before us in the power and in the spirit of Christ Jesus, our friend and Lord. (upbeat music)