

- Orientation Sunday. We particularly invite you to fill out the form that is in the bulletin which lists some of the work the chapel is engaged in and it gives us a chance to get to know you and to fit you into various activities of the chapel. We particularly invite the students to fill out the form. It's a special Sunday not only because it's for us the beginning of the new year and we welcome freshmen of the chapel for their first Sunday but it is a special Sunday because we welcome our new director of chapel music who is Doctor Rodney Wynkoop. Doctor Wynkoop is no stranger to the Duke community having come here five years ago to teach in the Department of Music. He's done marvelous work there and as director of the Duke Choral and now we welcome him to Director of Chapel Music. He has directed choirs at Battell Chapel at Yale University and then he was choir director at Rockefeller Chapel at the University of Chicago, which we thought working at these minor institutions prepared him now to work here. And we've had a wonderful summer and as you will hear today, he's off to a wonderful beginning and we welcome him to the chapel to this great new beginning for us. Welcome. Now let us continue our worship. (lively orchestra music) (lively organ music) ♪ Christ the Lord is here ♪ ♪ The Lord and king of all ♪ ♪ Rejoice in thanks of him forevermore ♪ (congregation singing) ♪ Rejoice him our savior has won ♪ ♪ Rejoice our savior reigns ♪ (congregation singing) (lively organ music) (congregation singing)

- Lord of all power and might, the author and giver of all good things. Graft in our hearts the love of your name. Increase in us true religion, nourish us with all goodness and bring forth in us the fruit of good works, through Jesus Christ our Lord who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God forever and ever, amen.

- Let us pray.

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

- The first lesson is taken from the book of Jeremiah. In that same year, at the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah, in the fifth month of the fourth year, Hananiah the son of Azzur, the prophet from Gibeon spoke to me in the house of God in the presence of the priests and all the people, saying, thus says the Lord of hosts, the king of Israel, I have broken the yoke of the king of Babylon. Within two years I will bring back to this place all the vessels of the God's house, which Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon took away from this place and carried to Babylon. I will also bring back to this place Jeconiah the son of Jehoiakim, king of Judah, and all the exiles from Judah who went to Babylon, says the Lord, for I will break the yoke of the king of Babylon. Then the prophet Jeremiah spoke to Hananiah the prophet in the presence of the priests and all the people who were standing in the house of the God and the prophet Jeremiah said, amen! May God do so, my God make the words which you have prophesied come true, and bring back to this place from Babylon the vessels of the house of the God, and all the exiles. Yet hear now this word which I speak in your hearing and in the hearing of all the people. The prophets who preceded you and me from ancient

times prophesied war, famine, pestilence against many countries and great kingdoms. As for the prophet who prophesies peace, when the word of that prophet comes to pass, then it will be known that the God has truly sent the prophet. This ends the reading of the first lesson.

- Let us stand for the Psalm. Psalm is number 84, the women read the bold faced type, the men read the regular type.

Men: How lovely is thy dwelling place.

Women: O Lord of hosts!

Men: My soul longs, yea, faints for the courts of the Lord.

Women: My heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.

Men: Even the sparrow finds a home, and the swallow a nest for herself, where she may lay her young.

Women: At thy altars, O Lord of hosts, my King and my God.

Men: Blessed are those who dwell in thy house.

Women: Ever singing thy praise!

Men: Blessed are the men whose strength is in thee.

Women: In whose heart are the highways to Zion.

Men: Oh Lord God of hosts, hear my prayer.

Women: Give ear, O God of Jacob!

Men: Behold our shield, O God.

Women: Look upon the face of thine anointed!

Men: For a day in thy courts is better than 1,000 elsewhere.

Women: I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God than dwell in the tents of wickedness.

Men: For the Lord God is a sun and shield, he bestows favor and honor.

Women: No good thing does the Lord withhold from those who walk uprightly.

Men: O Lord of hosts.

Women: Blessed is the man who trusts in thee! (lively organ music) (congregation singing) (tranquil organ music) (choir singing)

- The second lesson is taken from Paul's letter to the Hebrews. For you have not come to what may be touched, a blazing fire, and darkness, and gloom, and a tempest, and the sound of a trumpet, and a voice whose words made the hearers entreat that no further messages be spoken to them. For they could not endure the order that was given, if even a beast touches the mountain, it shall be stoned. Indeed, so terrifying was the sight that Moses said, I tremble with fear. But you have come to Mount Zion and to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to innumerable angels in festal gathering, and to the assembly of the first-born who are enrolled in heaven, and to a judge who is God of all, and to the spirits of just who are made perfect, and to Jesus, the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks more graciously than the blood of Abel. See that you do not refuse the one who is speaking. For if they did not escape when they refused one who warned them on Earth, much less shall we escape if we reject the one who warns from heaven. His voice then shook the Earth but now it has promised, yet once more I will shake not only the Earth but also the heaven. This phrase, yet once more, indicates removal of what is shaken, as of what has been made, in order that what cannot be shaken may remain. Therefore let us be grateful for receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, and thus let us offer to God acceptable worship, with reverence and awe for our God is a consuming fire. This ends the reading of the second lesson. A reading from the gospel according to St Luke. Jesus went on his way through towns and villages, teaching, and journeying toward Jerusalem. And someone said to him, Lord, will those who are saved be few? And Jesus said to them, strive to enter by the narrow door for many, I tell you, will seek to enter and will not be able. When once the householder has risen up and shut the door, you will begin to stand outside and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, open to us. You will be answered, I do not know where you come from. Then you will begin to say, we ate and drank in your presence, and you taught in our streets. But you will be told, I tell you, I do not know where you come from, depart from me, all you workers of iniquity! There you will weep and gnash your teeth, when you see Abraham and Isaac and Jacob and all the prophets in the kingdom of God and you yourselves thrust out. And people will come from east and west, and from north and south, and sit at table in the kingdom of God. And behold, some are last who will be first, and some are first who will be last. This ends the gospel reading. (tranquil organ music) (congregation singing)

- I know that many of you are new here and if you are new, welcome. If you are a new student, a particularly welcome to you because after all, this is your chapel. And I want you to feel, what it is I want you to feel? I almost said this is your chapel and I want you to feel right at home or I want you to feel comfortable but it's hard to feel that way in Duke Chapel because the place is dark, real dark and it's big, real big and the seats are hard, real hard and the organ plays loud, real loud and the preacher is up, way up and it makes you feel small, doesn't it? The space dominates you, overwhelms, overpowers sight and sense. Big Duke Chapel. Little you. Even smaller me. That's right, even though I work here, been here a while, the place still has a way of overpowering me, stepping on me, even on Mondays but particularly on Sundays. I summon the courage to climb up in this pulpit and tell myself I only gotta hang on up here about 20 minutes, reassure

myself that the people seated behind me are really nice, average people and that it really is not all that big a deal but it doesn't work. I still get the chills, still get the shakes, still keep stomach medicine in my gothic ministerial washroom. The place is just big, it's dark, it's threatening and overpowering and you're gonna find that there are Sundays, Sundays even though the staff has got it all planned and nailed down and the order of worship is all worked out, there are Sundays when God Almighty manages to reach in here and grab us by the neck and shake us up and down. And then this isn't anymore a limestone pulpit but it's a rocket to unknown space and you aren't just bright boys and girls who scored 1350 on your SATs and always did what your mother told you so that's why you're in church but you're a wild, spirit-filled mob, set loose to roam in unchartered territory. It doesn't happen often, but it does happen, and knowing that it can happen, keeps me reaching for the Maalox. The place is big, dark, threatening, it was built that way to overpower you. And so is today's scripture from the letter to the Hebrews. I bet that you never heard this text before. Back home at Sunday school they may tell you about the Prodigal Son and they'll tell you about the Good Samaritan, they'll tell you what a nice person Jesus was but you gotta wait 'til you grow up and come to college before you're old enough to hear a strange, big, dark, threatening text like this one. You have not come to what can be touched, you've come to a blazing fire, darkness and gloom and tempest, the sound of a trumpet and the voice of one whose hearers begged it to be silent. This isn't kids stuff to be spoonfed by pet preachers to house-broken congregations who've lost their teeth, this is a dark, threatening big word for they couldn't endure the order, if even an animal touches this mountain, it shall die. It was so scary that even a big man like Moses said I tremble with fear. He's talking of course about Mount Sinai, the holy mountain of God where Moses went up to meet God, to listen, to receive God's commandments, to figure out what God wanted Israel to do. God's voice shook the Earth, then says the writer to Hebrews and it can still shake and still inflame. And I dare say that's not a common experience for modern people. Today we don't build our churches like Duke Chapel, we build our churches like great carpeted living rooms, no bedrooms, where every hard edge is cushioned and little preachers pat around in bathrobes and slippers lest somebody be mildly disturbed. And mostly we don't get disturbed, we come out of church not much different from when we came. Once again reassured that God is silent or if not silent, at least speaking in a voice that sounds suspiciously like our own. Our pastors are now relegated to the ranks of the helping professions, chaplains to the occasionally afflicted affluent, reassurers of the status quo, affirmers of things as they are, the Earth is not shaken by such silliness but the text says that there were those, there were those even at the time of Moses who made God, this great Earth and heaven-shaking, fire-filled God into a good friend. While Moses was up lost in the mountain, trying to listen to God without getting blown away by it, there were others down in the valley says the text, the flat cool valley, making up gods more to their own liking. They said to themselves, what good is religion if it doesn't make you feel better? What good is religion if it doesn't kind of help you make it through the week and so, they devised gods in their own image, gods cut down to their size, squeaking in their own voices. See that you do not refuse the one who speaks warns the writer to the Hebrews 'cause our God is a consuming fire. I said this is not a typical experience, as atypical as our architecture itself. Friends, are you lonely? Is there a little something missing in your life? Would you like to have peace and joy and love and self-fulfillment and happiness and good health and good sex and good times? Come to Jesus, he'll fix it. God is a good friend, Jesus is a free therapist. And it comes in more sophisticated versions. The philosopher Feuerbach charged that religion is nothing more than just a projection of our own ego needs. We make God because you see, we just have this innate human need for gods. And so, I take every virtue that I wish I had and every desire that I wish to be fulfilled, and I just project

that out somewhere as God. And Feuerbach's charge against religious people becomes difficult to refute, as modern Christianity is rendered into therapy and religion is judged on the basis of its alleged utility. What good will this do for me? TV preachers promise to make Jesus work for you but it comes in more sophisticated varieties. Some feminist theologians vote biblical images up or down solely on the basis on their alleged therapeutic value or lack thereof. If the Bible's word clashes with my human experience, so much worse for the Bible. If the Bible doesn't meet my needs as I define my needs, well, there's not much shaking going on 'cause I don't need to plug up my ears to the words of a God who talks just like me. This is important because the foundation of a Christian view of ethics or a Christian view of politics or a Christian view of anything else begins in worship in that sometimes dark, always passionate scary, fiery tempest of a God and a people colliding on a Sunday morning. For our God is a consuming fire, this God, this great I am is a real God, not some pale idolatrous projection of our egos. I mean, if we were thinking up a God, we wouldn't have thought up this God. I've seen this God make sophomores sick. I've seen this God cause otherwise rational philosophy majors to lose control. I've seen this God make people feel guilty about what they did last Saturday night even in a society that says if it feels good, do it. I've seen this God break apart nice families, drive people out of graduate school and into the jungles of Honduras, I have seen, you won't believe this, I have seen this God reduce to tears and confusion someone who was captain of his prep school lacrosse team and a national merit scholar, by God I've seen it. Is his word not like some fire? At the base of this pulpit, there is a Christian symbol consisting of three triangles. Don't get up and look for it, take my word, it's down there, it's a symbol, three triangles, it is a historic symbol for the Trinitarian God, Father, Son and Holy Spirit. Now one of you was heard to ask on Parents Weekend, was heard to ask his old man, why have they got the warning symbol for nuclear radiation on the pulpit? (congregation laughing) Well, I looked at it and sure enough it really does look like the international warning symbol for nuclear radiation. But it's not a symbol for radiation, it's a symbol for God, the living God. But go ahead and take it as a warning. Don't come around here unprotected, don't come around here without lead underwear and all your modern flattened philosophical rational wits at your disposal because I promise you that I and I know that I speak for Miss Ferree-Clarke and Dr. Wynkoop, the choir, the organist, the architect of this building and everybody else who who conspires to enable God to get in here on Sunday morning, we're gonna do everything in our power to expose you to this consuming fire because of our conviction that only thereby will you be enabled to rise above your present situation, to be free from the servitude to what is, to roam, to wander, to sore, to be saved, to hear, to see. When I was in preaching classes, believe it or not I've been to preaching classes, when I was in preaching classes, they always told us the task of the modern preacher is to close the gap between the Bible and the modern world. The preacher, they told us, is the one who stands in the pulpit with a Bible in one hand and today's newspaper in the other. And in 20 minutes I'm supposed to close the gap between this old outmoded, old-fashioned sheep and shepherds world of the Bible and this new, fresh, interesting, skeptical modern world in which you live. The preacher is the one who stands with one foot in the Bible and then one foot 2,000 years over here in the modern world, a recipe for a hernia. No, no. Because whenever we do that, have you noticed, whenever we do that, the traffic always moves in one direction on that hermeneutical bridge. It's always the modern world telling the Bible what's what, so we come up with a bunch of modern infatuations, what good is this gonna do me? And then we go rummage around in the Bible for acceptable answers. Thereby it's the modern world determining what's true, not the Bible. And that's odd 'cause I remind you it was the modern world that gave us not only Galileo, the telephone and the TV but also Deng Xiaoping, Hiroshima, Auschwitz, the murder of a million Native Americans because they

would not go modern. This is a modern world to which I'm supposed to make the old Bible credible? Forget it. I've decided since being in this big, dark, beautiful, overpowering place, since being confronted with big dark, beautiful, overpowering texts like this one from Hebrews, I decided that my task as a preacher is to somehow make the modern world credible to the Bible, to somehow make you the sort of people that's able to hear a fiery word like that spoken today without killing the preacher for saying it, to dare you to listen to this troublesome voice more than to your own. Not to close the gap between you and God but to open it up because it's in the gaps, in those great, big, wide, dark threatening gaps that you're free to roam and to envision and to dream dreams and to hear a new word and sing a new world. It's in the gaps when you're stripped of all your modern defenses and your modern secular veneer has been peeled away, naked and unsteady that this great loving God can just come and shake you. Come to this kingdom that cannot be shaken. Let us offer to God acceptable worship with fear and awe because our God is a consuming fire. (lively organ music) (man singing operatically)

- The Lord be with you.

Congregation: And also with you.

- Let us pray. Oh eternal God, from everlasting to everlasting, the alpha and the omega of this vast universe, we worship thee in the mystery of all thy greatness, thou hast created each of us as a unique stripe in the multi-textured fabric of humanity yet we remember the bond which unites us with our sisters and brothers around the world even in our diversity. Hear now these prayers offered for the entire human family as we acknowledge our oneness with them. Let us pray for all who face new beginnings, most especially the class of 1993. We pray for all who live with anxiety, fear or self-doubt asking that they may receive a renewed vision of thy purpose for their lives and to reassure us of thy unfailing love and acceptance. Deliver to their sides, oh God, good friends and wise counsel. Let us pray for all poor and neglected persons, forgotten in the eyes of the world yet beautiful in thy sight, the homeless, the destitute, the hungry, the sick, nourish their souls, oh God and comfort them in thy healing presence, inspire each of us in the name of Christ on ministry to them. Let us pray for all who live with injustice, terror, disease and death as their constant companions, especially the people of Lebanon, Northern Ireland, South Africa, Nicaragua, Colombia. Look on them with compassion, gracious God and strengthen their faith. Guide us all in our struggle for justice and truth, teach us to confront one another without hatred or bitterness and to work together with mutual forbearance and respect. May we become reconciled even with those whom we call our enemies. Let us pray for all seek to discover their vocation, for the unemployed who suffer want and anxiety for lack of work, for the undereducated who enjoy few opportunities for fulfilling employment, for the overeducated, the dissatisfied and the restless, who struggle to discern their calling and to act decisively on it. Guide us in utilizing the resources of this land that all may be afforded the opportunity for meaningful work. Let us pray for all who feel unwanted or rejected, for those who resort to violence or prejudiced behavior, for those who indulge in material excess, attempting to fill an interior void, for those addicted to substance abuse, unaware of the destruction they inflict upon their own lives and others, for those who live within institutions surrounded by people yet lonely beyond words. Oh gracious God, we lift these prayers unto thee as well as the deep and unspoken needs of this congregation. Bless us in our waking and in our sleeping, in times of contentment and distress, that thy name may be praised forever more. Amen. And now in the spirit of

thanksgiving, let us offer our gifts and ourselves unto God. (lively organ music) (lively band music) (choir singing) (lively organ music) (congregation singing) ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ (congregation singing) ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Amen ♪

- With a song on our lips, we offer you our thanks and praise, Almighty God. We thank you for the mystery of life, for the beauty of this world and for the splendor of the whole creation. We thank you for beginnings and endings that life unfolds itself in a series of new opportunities and relationships. Most of all we thank you for your Son Jesus Christ, for his life, death and resurrection in which we are raised to new life with him. Grant us the gift of your spirit that at all times and in all places, we may give thanks to you in all things. This we pray in the name of Jesus Christ, who taught us boldly to pray.

All: Our father who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done on Earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread and forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us and lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil for thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory forever. Amen. (lively band music) (congregation singing)

- And now go forth in peace and be of good courage, hold fast to that which is good, rejoicing in the power of the Holy Spirit and may the blessings of God, creator, Christ and Holy Spirit be with you all now and forever more, amen. (choir singing) (lively organ music)