

(gentle organ music) (choir singing) (cheerful organ music) (choir and organ together)

- God calls unto the creation, oh my beloved creation, I have breath for you. Oh my beloved creation, I have love for you. Hear the cry of Yahweh, oh my beloved creation, I have life for you. Gathering in this place of old stones and sacred stories, let us remember why we are here, and who draws us to this place. Be you doubting or believing, sad or joy-filled, broken or whole, come to the one God who creates us and loves us and redeems us. And to God, let us make our confession. Oh Lord whom we are called to love with heart, soul, body, and mind, we journey in search of your grace and its mending power. The depths of the seas we explore into the heavens we travel, we discover a vast and wonderful universe, yet our deepest yearnings are not met. Excuse, oh Yahweh, our confused wanderings cause us now to be vulnerable to your redeeming presence. In our honest confessions, enable us to experience the word become flesh in Jesus Christ, and with hope alive in each of us, move us to participate most fully in the reconciling work of your son. In the name of the risen one, amen.

- My sisters, my brothers, here, believe the good news. There is no thing, no one, that can separate us from God's love. Come to each of us in Jesus Christ. In him, we are saved, we are quickened, we are made whole again. On this new morning, experience God's presence. Savor God's grace. You and I are forgiven. Let us give thanks, for God is good, and God's love is everlasting. Thanks be to God, whose love creates us. Thanks be to God, whose mercy redeems us. Thanks be to God, whose grace leads us into the future. To each of you on this second Sunday in Lent, I welcome you to this service of worship. And I want to extend a special welcome to those who are at Duke University and on the campus here because of Black Student Weekend. And I thank too, those folks who are hosting our guests for this special weekend. I draw your attention to the announcements in your bulletin this morning. Especially I would ask you to take note of the fact that our offering this morning will be used to help fund the first humanitarian service award here at Duke University, an award that is under the hospices of the Duke Campus Ministry. It is an award which will recognize one person each year because of their simple lifestyle and their involvement in service to others. It is our way here at Duke of recognizing in fact all persons around the world who involve themselves in humanitarian services and responsibilities. And for this reason I ask you and urge you to be generous in your giving this morning. Says Luke when he was at table with his disciples, he took the bread and blessed it, and broke it, and gave it to them and their eyes were opened, and they recognized him. Remembering those words of Luke, I invite you to the Lord's table, and to the celebration of the Eucharist at that table which will take place in Memorial Chapel immediately after this service this morning. All who claim Jesus Christ as their Lord and savior are invited to that table and to the celebration of holy communion. For almost a year now, Dr. Randolph Taylor has been away from his pulpit, and his people at Charlotte's Myers Park Presbyterian Church where he is senior minister. Being for these last several months, not pastor to one congregation, but to an entire denomination. Listening, clarifying, counseling, healing, making believers out of skeptics, and helping the already convinced understand just why it is that the United Presbyterian Church in the USA merged last June with Presbyterian Church US to become the Presbyterian Church USA. Realizing I think the toil and the travel that laid before him, as moderator of the general assembly of that new denomination, Dr.

Taylor was heard to muse aloud that he'd entrusted his soul to God, and his body to United Airlines. (audience laughs) For 14 years, he has co-chaired the reunion committee that finally made that ecclesiastical marriage take place. And the Celtic cross that he wears this morning is a striking symbol of that reunion. For it was by fusing two older crosses, one from the southern church, and one from the northern church, that that new cross was made. Perhaps it is appropriate that this missionary to the people of a new denomination be himself a son of missionaries. Born as he was in China to Presbyterian missionaries in that country. Educated at Davidson College, Union Seminary in Richmond, and the University of Aberdeen, Scotland, Dr. Taylor has also pastored churches in Washington, D.C. and Atlanta, Georgia. He and his wife Arlene are the parents of one son, and five daughters. I am honored this morning, as are we here at Duke University, to welcome this scholar and pastor, this preacher and poet, to the Duke Chapel pulpit, and his wife and family here this morning. I want to say a personal word of thanks to the James T. Cleland Chapel Endowment Fund Committee for designating Dr. Taylor one of their visiting preachers and for bringing him to Duke University. Renewal is the title of Dr. Taylor's sermon.

- Let us pray. Oh Lord, our God, you have given your word to be a lamp unto our feet, and a light unto our path. Grant us grace to receive your truth in faith and love. That by it, we may be prepared unto every good word and work. To the glory of your name, through Jesus Christ our Lord, amen. Hear this witness from the faith of Israel. The Old Testament lesson is from the book of Isaiah, chapter 58, verses 6-12. Listen for the word of God. Is not this the fast that I choose to loose the bonds of wickedness, to undo the thongs of the yoke. To let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke. Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and bring the homeless poor into your house? When you see the naked, to cover him, and not to hide yourself from your own flesh. Then shall your light break forth like the dawn, and your healing shall spring up speedily. Your righteousness shall go before you, the glory of the Lord shall be your rear guard. Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer. You shall cry, and the Lord will say here I am. If you take away from the midst of you the yoke, the pointing of the finger and speaking wickedness. If you pour yourself out for the hungry, and satisfy the desire of the afflicted, then shall your light rise in the darkness. And your gloom be as the noon day. And the Lord will guide you continually and satisfy your desire with good things. And make your bones strong, and you shall be like a watered garden, like a spring of water whose waters shall not fail. And your ancient ruins shall be rebuilt. You should raise up the foundations of many generations. You shall be called the repairer of the breach. The restorer of streets to dwell in. Here ends the reading from the Old Testament, amen. Our memory continues in the faith of the early church. The Epistle lesson is from the second letter of Timothy. First chapter, verses 8-14. Listen for the word of God. Paul speaks. Do not be ashamed then of testifying to our Lord, nor of me, his prisoner. But take your share of suffering for the gospel and the power of God. Who saved us, and called us with a holy calling. Not in virtue of our works, but in virtue of God's own purpose. And the grace which God gave us, in Christ Jesus ages ago. And now has manifested through the appearing of our savior, Christ Jesus, who abolished death and brought life and immortality to light through the gospel. For this gospel, I was appointed a preacher, an apostle, and teacher. And therefore, I suffer as I do, but I am not ashamed, for I know whom I have believed, and I am sure that he is able to guard until that day what has been entrusted to me. Follow the pattern of the sound words which you have heard from me. In the faith and love which are in Christ Jesus, guard the truth that has been entrusted to you by the holy spirit who dwells within us. Here ends the reading from the Epistle, amen. (organ and choir together)

- Will the congregation please stand for the reading of the gospel lesson? The gospel lesson is from Luke, chapter 24, versus 13-35. Our story begins following the discovery of the empty tomb. Listen for the word of God. That very day, two of them were going to a village named Emmaus about seven miles from Jerusalem. And talking with each other about all these things that had happened. While they were talking and discussing together, Jesus himself drew nearer, and went with them. But their eyes were kept from recognizing him. And he said to them, what is this conversation which you are holding with each other as you walk? and they stood still, looking sad. Then one of them, named Cleopas answered him. Are you the only visitor to Jerusalem who does not know the things that have happened there in these days? And he said to them, what things? And they said to him, concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a prophet, mighty indeed in word before God and all the people. And how our chief priests and rulers delivered him up to be condemned to death and crucified him. But we had hoped that he was the one to redeem Israel. Yes, and besides all this, it is now the third day since this happened. Moreover, some women of our company amazed us. They were at the tomb early in the morning, and did not find his body. And they came back saying that they had even seen a vision of angels who said he was alive. Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said. But him, they did not see. And he said to them, oh foolish ones, and slow of heart, to believe all that the prophets have spoken. Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things, and enter into his glory? And beginning with Moses, and all the prophets, he interpreted to them in all the scriptures the things concerning himself. So they drew near to the village to which they were going. He appeared to be going further, but they constrained him, saying, stay with us. For it is toward evening, and the day is now far spent. So he went in to stay with them. When he was at table with them, he took the bread and blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. And their eyes were opened, and they recognized him, and he vanished out of their sight. They said to each other, did not our hearts burn within us while he talked to us on the road? While he opened to us the scriptures. And they rose that same hour and returned to Jerusalem. And they found the 11 gathered together, and those who were with them. Who said, the Lord has risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon. Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he was known to them in the breaking of the bread. Here ends the reading from the Gospel, amen. (organ music) (organ and choir together)

- It is a great personal pleasure for me to come and share with you in worship here in this beautiful and bold preaching point that has had its significant witness not simply in our state, and in our region, but throughout the nation, and throughout the world. It is a particular pleasure to come and to call to memory James Cleland, who was for me a model of a preaching minister. I bring you greetings from three and a quarter million Presbyterians, now in all 50 states, and Puerto Rico. With partnership relationships with churches in 53 different countries around the world. As Mike has indicated, something good has happened to Presbyterians in this past year. We have reconciled a difference that has stood there far too long. And Presbyterians north and south, and east and west, are celebrating wherever we have traveled to find them. It is simply that we were in the right place at the right time, and we did the right thing, and we so seldom do that, we want to celebrate it when it takes place. Now the truth also is that Presbyterians are not terribly gifted at celebration. I do not know whether you've ever noticed that. It may be the influence of John Calvin, or perhaps it is the strain of English puritanism that is part of our past. Or it may be due to Scott, who is part of our background. Or it may simply be our Presbyterian theological understanding that we have within

ourselves the capacity to muck up even the happiest situation. But whatever it is, or in spite of it, Presbyterians have recognized that we have been able by the grace of God to receive a gift, a gift of unity. And it is not that we are larger, it is that we are more whole. That we've experienced the reconciling presence of the risen Christ, and we have found again the power of God to break down dividing walls of hostility to make of us one. So then I am glad to come and share with this ecumenical gathering this event and celebration in the life of your Presbyterian cousins. And to say that the future is open for those kind of relationships which will make us aware of additional walls that need to recede and be broken down from within. The truth is that as Presbyterians have come to this moment, we have joined with a host of other denominations and Christian bodies in a great quest for renewal. And the expectation and hope is that being together now, we have an opportunity to do a new thing. To sit down with new partners and rethink who we are, what we believe, and what we intend to do about it. This quest for renewal is deep and pervasive throughout the Christian community around the world. The fact is that we need to understand what renewal is about. For it is not something superficial or sentimental. It is something deep and abiding. And renewal is not something we ourselves can accomplish. You cannot appoint a committee on the renewal of the church. You can do that, but you ought not to expect it to accomplish a great deal. The fact is, renewal comes by the power of God. The power to renew the church is the power that raised Jesus Christ from the dead. And the ultimate witness to that resurrection power is not an empty tomb, it is the testimony of living men and women who recognize that they are not alone, and they walk in the presence of a powerful Christ. The story which Mary read for us this morning details the experience of two persons who were the first, among the first at least, to understand that presence and that power. Their story is told with such vividness, it is one of the great short stories of literature, and if it were not for its heavy theological and eschatological content, it would be recognized by everyone as such. It's the story of two men who were walking northwest from Jerusalem. Seven miles to the little town of Emmaus. They were walking into the sunset, and they could not see. But their inability to see was not simply the sun, it was in fact their own doubt, and their own despair. Jesus comes to walk with them, and because of their doubt, they cannot recognize him. It is a story not just about the Christ, it is a story also about the church.