

("Angels We Have Heard On High" by the bell choir)

- Grace to you and peace from God, our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ. Welcome to the service of worship for the first Sunday following the Epiphany. We are very pleased to have with us today as guest musicians the bell choir from the First Baptist Church of Henderson under the direction of Mr. Philip Young. I call your attention to the announcements in the bulletin and remind you of an additional worship service scheduled for next Sunday evening at 6:30 here in the chapel as part of the university's observance of the Dr. Martin Luther King weekend. The service will be at 6:30, the preacher will be the Reverend Bernice King, daughter of Dr. King, and music will be provided by the Modern Black Mass Choir. Will you please stand for the call to worship. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you.

Congregation: And also with you.

- The splendor of Christ shines upon us.

Congregation: Praise the Lord. ("We Three Kings" organ introduction) ♪ We three kings of orient are ♪ ♪ Bearing gifts we traverse afar ♪ ♪ Field and fountain, moor and mountain ♪ ♪ Following yonder star ♪ ♪ Oh, star of wonder, star of night ♪ ♪ Star with royal beauty bright ♪ ♪ Westward leading, still proceeding ♪ ♪ Guide with thy perfect light ♪ ♪ Born a King on Bethlehem's plain ♪ ♪ Gold I bring to crown him again ♪ ♪ King for ever, ceasing never ♪ ♪ Over us all to reign ♪ ♪ Oh, star of wonder, star of night ♪ ♪ Star with royal beauty bright ♪ ♪ Westward leading, still proceeding ♪ ♪ Guide with thy perfect light ♪ ♪ Frankincense to offer have I, ♪ ♪ Incense owns a Deity nigh ♪ ♪ Prayer and praising, voices raising ♪ ♪ Worshiping God most high ♪ ♪ Oh, star of wonder, star of night ♪ ♪ Star with royal beauty bright ♪ ♪ Westward leading, still proceeding ♪ ♪ Guide with thy perfect light ♪ ♪ Myrrh is mine, its bitter perfume ♪ ♪ Breathes of life of gathering gloom ♪ ♪ Sorrowing, sighing, bleeding, dying ♪ ♪ Sealed in the stone-cold tomb ♪ ♪ Oh, star of wonder, star of night ♪ ♪ Star with royal beauty bright ♪ ♪ Westward leading, still proceeding ♪ ♪ Guide with thy perfect light ♪ ♪ Glorious now behold Him arise ♪ ♪ King and God and Sacrifice ♪ ♪ Alleluia, alleluia ♪ ♪ Earth to heaven replies ♪ ♪ Oh, star of wonder, star of night ♪ ♪ Star with royal beauty bright ♪ ♪ Westward leading, still proceeding ♪ ♪ Guide with thy perfect light ♪

- Let us pray. Eternal God, at the baptism of Jesus you revealed him to be your son, anointing him with the Holy Spirit. Keep your children, born of water and the spirit, faithful to their calling and may we who have been baptized in his name never turn away from the world, but reach out in love to rescue the wayward. By the mercy of Christ, our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, amen.

- Let us pray together the prayer for illumination as found in your bulletin. Let us pray.

- [With Congregation] Open our hearts and minds, oh God, by the power of your Holy Spirit so that as the word is read and proclaimed we may hear with joy this day, amen. The first lesson is from Luke 3:15-17 and

21-22. As the people were filled with expectation and all were questioning in their hearts concerning John whether he might be the Messiah, John answered all of them by saying, I baptize you with water but one who is more powerful than I is coming. I am not worthy to untie the thong of his sandals. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and fire. His winnowing fork is in his hand to clear his threshing floor and to gather the wheat into his grainery. But the chaff he will burn with unquenchable 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 like a dove. And a voice came from heaven, you are my son, the beloved. With you I am well pleased. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God. Please stand and let us read responsively, Psalm 29 as found on page 761 in the hymnal. We'll follow this with the Gloria printed in the bulletin. Ascribe to the Lord, O heavenly beings, ascribe to the Lord glory and strength.

Congregation: Ascribe to the Lord the glory due his name; worship the Lord in holy splendor.

- The voice of the Lord is upon the waters; the God of glory thunders, the Lord, over many waters.

Congregation: The voice of the Lord is powerful; the voice of the Lord is full of majesty.

- The voice of the Lord breaks the cedars.

Congregation: The Lord breaks the cedars of Lebanon.

- The Lord makes Lebanon to skip like a calf, and Sirion like a young, wild ox.

- The voice of the Lord flashes forth flames of fire.

Timothy: The voice of the Lord shakes the wilderness.

- The Lord shakes the wilderness of Kadesh.

- The voice of the Lord makes the oaks to whirl and strips the forests bare.

Congregation: And in his temple all cry, glory.

- The Lord sits enthroned over the flood; the Lord sits enthroned as ruler forever.

Congregation: May the Lord give strength to his people. May the Lord bless his people with peace. ♪ Glory be to God in heaven ♪ ♪ Praise to the redeemer, God ♪ ♪ Glory be to Christ, the Savior ♪ ♪ Ever man and ever God ♪ ♪ As it was in the beginning ♪ ♪ Now and ever more shall be ♪ ("Bring a Torch, Jeanette, Isabella" by the bell choir)

- The Old Testament lesson is taken from the book of Isaiah 43:1-7. But now thus, says the Lord, he who created you, oh Jacob, he who formed you, oh Israel. Do not fear for I have redeemed you. I have called you

by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you and through the waters, through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you. When you walk through fire you shall not be burned and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the holy one of Israel, your Savior. I give Egypt as your ransom, Ethiopia and Seba in exchange for you because you are precious in my sight and honored and I love you. I give people in return for you, nations in exchange for you life. Do not fear, for I am with you. I will bring your offspring from the east and from the west I will gather you up. I will say to the north, give them up, and to the south, do not withhold. Bring my sons from far away and my daughters from the end of the earth. Everyone who is called by my name, whom I created for my glory, whom I formed and made. This is the word of the Lord. Thanks be to God.

- Christian friends, I bring you greeting in the name of our Father, in the name of the Son and the Holy Spirit. I am especially grateful for this opportunity. Especially joyful when I have the opportunity to share with Dr. Paula Gilbert, who I said only this morning while we were talking, is in many ways responsible for me being a Duke graduate. At that time, Paula worked as a recruiter for the Divinity School and she has been a source of inspiration. For many here in Duke Chapel I continue to give thanks to God for this opportunity of serving in this environment especially to members of the congregation. Today as I share with you the word of God, I would like us to meditate on the portion of scripture taken from Isaiah 43:1-7. We find ourselves at the beginning of a new year. A time when New Year's resolutions are still very fresh on our lips. Many of us are a bit apprehensive and fearful about what the new year will bring. The year is only eight days old. But alas, already we have challenges to face, new challenges, misfortune and unpleasant circumstances have already struck. For example, some members in our congregation here are attending their wounds as they mourn the passing of young, innocent lives. An unpleasant accident that occurred in Haiti while they lived out their commitment to missions and reaching out and bringing the message of hope and resurrection to others in our hemisphere. I spent Christmas in Guyana with my family. And it was wonderful to be in the tropical weather. To experience the 60s and the 70s at Christmastime. I know for some of you that is not exciting. Some children say it's not Christmas unless they see the white stuff. But for me, where I long for the summer and the sunshine, it was heavenly to be home. However, the economical and political climate in Guyana is not so heavenly. There is a climate of fear and uncertainty. Even among the well educated and the so-called middle class. They too live daily in the fear of being able to provide the basic necessities for their families. I recall not so long ago in Guyana when the dollar was strong and when the rate of exchange was two Guyana dollars to one U.S. dollar. Today it's 142 Guiana dollars to one U.S. And you did not hear me incorrectly. It is 142 to one. Upon my return in the U.S. I was reminded that the climate in Guyana is just a microcosmic reflection of what is taking place in our hemisphere. I learned from the news that the Mexican pesos had been devalued. And how adversarially this devaluation may affect the stock market. The people in Mexico and North American businessmen are fearful. Fearful of how the devaluation of the pesos will effect their daily lives. Throughout the hemisphere there is similar fear. Recently all the nations except for one in this hemisphere met recently in Miami at a conference of the Americas to discuss economic stability. Today for many of us, currency devaluation, economic stabilization and structural adjustment programs are abstract concepts. But for those of us who live in developing countries, their impacts are devastating. For example, when I was home I visited a very dear friend of mine. Before I had left Guyana we had worked together in the public service. It was great seeing her since we had not had the opportunity to visit each other about nine years. We went out and we talked at length about everything and about everyone we knew. How she was

doing. She had gone on to school, she had gotten her master's in agriculture development and she was working with an Agri bank. And I thought, oh, things are going great. But as we got to the economic situation it was painful to learn that her salary of \$10,000, Guyanese that is, per month, is not sufficient to pay her monthly rent which is more than twice her salary. A direct result of devaluation. Her monthly rent is 25,000 Guyanese dollar. If your rent is more than your salary, what do you do for food? And she's not living above her means. Her living space is a bottom flat, as we call it back home, with basics. But she is middle-class. A junior bank manager. It brought me to tears. But amidst those tears she reminded me there is still community. And it's because of such community that she still makes it. In our text today, the children of Israel are in Babylonian captivity. They have been crying desperately for God's redemption. And finally a redemption was on its way. They were at the threshold of a new day. But they did not know what to do with it. This redemption brought with it fear and trepidation. Babylon was about to fall as they had prayed. On every side there was victory. But the poor, crushed Israelites were terrified of the very thing they had so long prayed for. The chaos seemed too great, the tumult so bewildering, the confusion so puzzling, the demands of the moments so mountainous. To have dreams for the future, to have nursed lofty visions of tomorrow, to have labored and sacrificed, to make those dreams and vision a reality and then to watch them twisted out of design, cruelly broken by some unkind circumstances or betrayed and destroyed by some harsh, uncaring bureaucracy or person is enough to make the best among us despair and grow disillusioned and cynical. But to give up on life because of fear is for us to enter into an understanding of what the children of Israel were saying when the prophet Isaiah wrote in Isaiah 21:4. The twilight we longed for has been turned into trembling. The Old Testament uses a fear often indicate the all too familiar feeling of terror. Adam and Eve fled from God in the Garden of Eden. Adam explained later, I heard you in the garden. And I was afraid because I was naked. The basic cause of fear is the awareness of vulnerability. Because of sin or because of the perceived power of another to do harm. Fear is often portrayed as aroused by intellectual anticipation of what might happen. At times such anticipation does not create terror but finds expression in worry and anxiety. Fear causes us to look upon our circumstances in life as barriers to attainment. But too often the perceived barriers are really open doors of opportunities. I am fully aware that open doors come with opposition. The writer of First Corinthians 16:9 says, a great door and effectual is open unto me. And there are many adversaries. There is an opportunity in every difficulty, a difficulty in every opportunity. But that is why so many blessings are missed. So many heights left unscaled. So many fine chapters of service left unwritten. Most of the finest foreign missionaries are those who never went. They heard the call, they felt the urge, they were keen to go, they saw an open door, they saw also adversities, obstacles, heard discouragements. There was hesitation. There was fear. The vision faded and the grand vocation was never fulfilled. It's not that people who yield to fear lack faith. Often they have faith. But only a short-term faith. The kind of faith that causes them to flare up with fine enthusiasm over some planned project of theirs, some excellent cause of life's prospect. They firm up their plans, blow on their hands, and hope to get it done tomorrow. Or the next tomorrow or a row of tomorrows. But alas, tomorrow never comes for some because of unforeseen circumstances. Such as the change in political climate or reorganization of the workplace or simply because of the carelessness on somebody's part. Jesus knew of such short-term faith. He addressed this in his parable of the sower. He said that such seed grew. But they died when they were exposed to the scorching sun because the roots had not pushed down far enough to the water. Friends, as we look to the future, what we need is faith. As we embark on '95, what we need is a long-term faith. The kind of faith that is rooted and grounded in God. The kind of faith that has long vision of the future, that

breeds patience. And with that patience, hope that with God all things are possible for us in God's good time. It is not easy to have such faith. It is not easy to say to somebody or to have somebody say to us, wait. What person said to God, during Isaiah's time, they're still saying yet, let God make speed. Let God hasten the work that we may see it. This is a very human response to grim situations. Even with the gloom of this new year as many of us in this hemisphere face gloominess, let us not despair. For despair only breeds hopelessness which is the mother of impotence. Second, Isaiah reminds us, fear not for I have redeemed you. I have called you by my name, you are mine. Christian friends, the antidote to fear is the fear of God. This is a fear that donates reverence and awe to God. We who fear God recognize God as the ultimate reality. And we respond to God as such. The writer of the wisdom literature says to us, fear is the beginning of knowledge, that is, taking God into account is the foundation of a holy life. Fear is expressed by walking in God's ways, by loving God and serving God with all our hearts and with all our souls. To fear God means to recognize God as creator and to know that God's plan stands forever. Thus, those of us who fear God can say with the Psalmist, we wait in hope for the Lord, God is our help and our shield. I read a story of a woman who was stricken with paralysis. She had been stricken since she was a girl. She made a new friend, someone who had just moved into town and the person went to visit her. And this friend, wanting to say something appropriately sympathetic remarked, affliction does so color life. Yes, said the paralytic quietly. And I propose to choose the color. I pray that God would give us such faith that we can believe even at the beginning of a new year with all the circumstances around us that we are not consumed by our circumstances. Last year we were fearful of what would happen with national healthcare reform but our nation failed in its attempt to legislate healthcare reform at a national or a state level. This year our fears are about the de facto healthcare reform that has penetrated the local market and has challenged leadership especially in medical centers like ours, to engage in right-sizing initiative that would threaten job security for many of our workers in the medical center. Let us be reminded that God has not promised us a trouble free life but God has promised us abiding present and strength not merely to sustain us but also to help us to live creatively and well amidst the changing fortune of our circumstances. As we embark on a new semester, here in this institution, we must face more uncertainties. For the students who are coming back it will be new friends, new classes. For the seasoned faculty it would be making old material interesting. For the administrators, meeting growing needs while heeding budgetary constraints. As we face the uncertainties of the year I would like to ask, like the Apostle Paul, what can separate you from the love of Christ? Can affliction or hardship? Can persecution, hunger, nakedness, peril of the sword? Let us be reminded that Jesus contended with evils in all forms. He faced crises of great proportions that were calculated to make him grow weary and to give up. But he remained faithful to his mission. One asks, whence then did amazing strength of courage and unfailing sense of triumph? Surely it was in his daily renewal of his trust in God as he conversed with the Father and meditated on his will in those frequent retreats. But it was also in his ability to live in religious community. Such a community was essential for his earthly ministry. You recall that his final hour approached, when he went up to pray, he took with him three disciples and asked them to tarry with him. And when they fell asleep he rebuked them. On this, the first Sunday after Epiphany, when we celebrate and commemorate the baptism of the Lord we are invited to renew our own baptismal vows so that we can heed the call to inner sanctuary but also the call to live faithfully in Christian community. For it's as we find strength in community and quietness in God that we can face the challenges of this day and hear clearly the words of second Isaiah, fear not for I have redeemed you, I have called you by my name. You are mine. When you pass through the waters I'll be with you. And

through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you. And when you walk through fire, you shall not be burned and the flame shall not consume you for I am the Lord, your God, the holy one of Israel, your Savior. God bless you. ("Away In The Manger" organ introduction) ♪ ♪ Away in a manger, no crib for His bed ♪ ♪ The little Lord Jesus lay down His sweet head ♪ ♪ The stars in the sky look down where He lay ♪ ♪ The little Lord Jesus asleep on the hay ♪ ♪ The cattle are lowing, the baby awakes ♪ ♪ But little Lord Jesus no crying He makes ♪ ♪ I love Thee, Lord Jesus, look down from the sky ♪ ♪ And stay by my cradle 'til morning is nigh ♪ ♪ Be near me, Lord Jesus, I ask Thee to stay ♪ ♪ Close by me forever and love me, I pray ♪ ♪ Bless all the dear children in Thy tender care ♪ ♪ And fit us for Heaven To live with Thee there ♪

Paula: The Lord be with you.

Congregation: And also with you.

- Let us pray. Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten son of God, begotten of the Father before all worlds, God of God, light of light, very God of very God, hear us as we pray to you this day. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Oh Christ, by your epiphany, light has shown on us to assure us of the fullness of salvation. Grant your light to all whom we shall encounter today. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Oh Christ, you humbled yourself and received baptism at your servant's hands, showing us the way of humility. Grant us to serve humbly all the days of our life. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Oh Christ, by your baptism you washed away every impurity making us children of the Father. Grant the grace of adoption as God's children to all who are searching for him. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Oh Christ, by your baptism you sanctified the creation and opened the way of repentance and new life to all who are baptized. Make us instruments of your gospel in the world. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Oh Christ, by your baptism you revealed the Trinity. Your Father calling you his beloved son, through the Spirit descending upon you. Renew a spirit of true worship in the royal priesthood of all the baptized. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Oh Christ, from the waters of your baptism you rose up to fulfill your ministry, to preach good news to the poor, to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed and to heal the sick and feed the hungry. Empower us who are called by your name to go forth this day to take up the ministries to which you have called us that we might serve you faithfully. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Oh Christ, made manifest as the true light of God, gladden our hearts on the joyful morning of your glory. Call us by our name on the great day of your coming and give us grace to offer unending praise with all the host of heaven, now and forever, amen. The author of the book of Hebrews reminds us not to neglect to do good and to share what we have, for such offerings are pleasing to God. Let us now offer both our lives and our gifts to Almighty God. (Christmas carols by the bell choir) ♪ Praise God, from whom all blessing flow ♪ ♪ Praise God, all creatures here below ♪ ♪ Alleluia, alleluia ♪ ♪ Praise God, the Father, Lord of Hosts ♪ ♪ Praise God, Son, and Holy Ghost ♪ ♪ Alleluia, alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia, alleluia ♪ ♪ Alleluia ♪

- Let us pray. God of heaven and earth, you call us to come in humility before you, bringing the offering of our very selves. As you reveal Jesus to be your son in his baptism at the hand of John, so you claimed our lives in baptism, that we might die to sin and be raised with him to new life. By your Spirit, confirm in our hearts the witness that Christ is Savior of the world and our own Lord. Accept all we have and all that we are,

oh God, in the service of Jesus Christ and strengthen us with your Spirit's power. We make this our prayer in the name of Jesus the Christ who taught us to say as we 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 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. ("Joy To The World" organ introduction) ♪ ♪ Joy to the world, the Lord has come ♪ ♪ Let earth receive her King ♪ ♪ Let every heart prepare Him room ♪ ♪ And heaven and nature sing, and heaven and nature sing ♪ ♪ And heaven, and heaven and nature sing ♪ ♪ Joy to the world, the Savior reigns ♪ ♪ Let all their songs employ ♪ ♪ While fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains ♪ ♪ Repeat the sounding joy, repeat the sounding joy ♪ ♪ Repeat, repeat the sounding joy ♪ ♪ No more let sins and sorrows grow ♪ ♪ Nor thorns infest the ground ♪ ♪ He comes to make His blessings flow ♪ ♪ Far as the curse is found, far as the curse is found ♪ ♪ Far as, far as the curse is found ♪ ♪ He rules the world with truth and grace ♪ ♪ And makes the nations prove ♪ ♪ The glories of His righteousness ♪ ♪ And wonders of His love, and wonders of His love ♪ ♪ And wonders, wonders of His love ♪

- The Lord says to you, fear not for you are God's redeemed. Go forth from this place in the knowledge of that power of God to redeem and save us. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God and the encouragement of the Holy Spirit be with you this day and forevermore, amen. (classical organ music)