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(choir singing brightly) ♪ Hallelujah, hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ Amen ♪

- Remember the words from the 1st letter of John. "If we claim to be sinless, we are self-deceived and strangers to the truth. And if we say we have committed no sin, we make him out to be a liar, and then his word has no place in us." And so, in preparation for hearing and receiving God's word again, let us make our corporate confession. Let us pray. Almighty God, we come before you as a disobedient church. Our loyalty to you has been lost in the conflict of human loyalties. Our own self-interest has made us insensitive to your commands. Our past is precious to us and we have allowed it to set limits upon the present and the future. Our worship and service have been feeble. We have not responded in love to you nor to the needs of our neighbors. Break our apathy and our arrogance with the judgment of your love. Then in mercy, heal us, O Holy Spirit, causing us as a community to be born anew, in Jesus Christ our Lord, amen. Hear our prayers, O Lord. Amen. Remember and believe some other words from the 1st letter of John. "If we confess our sins, God is just and may be trusted to forgive our sins and cleanse us from every kind of wrong." Accept this forgiveness and give thanks for this hope which is ours. Amen. (soft pipe organ music) (gentle pipe organ music)

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(choir singing brightly) ♪ Sing to the Lord ♪ (gentle pipe organ music)  
(choir singing brightly) ♪ Sing to the Lord ♪

- The scripture this morning is taken from the letter of James, selections from chapters one, two, and three. "But be doers of the word and not hearers only, deceiving yourselves. For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who observes his natural face in a mirror, for he observes himself and goes away and at once forgets what he was like. But he who looks into the perfect law, the law of liberty and perseveres, being no hearer that forgets, but a doer that acts, he shall be blessed in his doing. If anyone thinks he is religious and does not bridle his tongue, but deceives his heart, this man's religion is vain. Religion that is pure and undefiled before God and the Father is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world. What does it profit my brethren if a man says he has faith, but he has not works? Can his faith save him? If a brother or sister is ill-clad and in lack of daily food and one of you says to them, 'Go in peace, be warmed and filled.' without giving them the things needed for the body, what does it profit? So faith by itself, if it has no works is dead. Who is wise and understanding among you? By his good life, let him show his works in the meekness of wisdom. But if you have bitter jealousy and selfish ambition in your heart, do not boast and be false to the truth. This wisdom is not such as comes down from above, but is earthly, unspiritual, devilish. For where jealousy and selfish ambition exist, there will be disorder and every vile practice. But the wisdom from above is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, open to reason, full of mercy and good fruits, without uncertainty and insincerity. And the harvest of righteousness is sown in peace by those who make peace." Thus endeth the reading. (gentle pipe organ music) (gentle pipe organ music)  
(choir singing brightly) ♪ Amen, amen ♪

- Let us affirm our faith corporately. 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 true man, Jesus to reconcile and make new. Who works in us and others by his spirit. We trust him, he calls us to be his church, to celebrate his presence, to love and serve others, to seek justice and resist evil, to proclaim Jesus, crucified and risen, our judge and our hope. In life and death, in life beyond death, God is with us. We are not alone. Thanks be to God.

- The Lord be with you. (congregation speaking faintly) Let us pray. O Holy God, we bow and wonder at the mystery of all of your creation, the marvel of the changing seasons, the beauty of the flowers and trees, the fierceness of the winds, the joy and pain of friends. We thank you, O God for every triumph of the spirit, for

the joys of truth, for the joys of people know, and the struggle with mystery and the unknown. For the joys of hands at work, at prayer, at play; for the joys of the seeing eye and the understanding heart and the creative spirit. For all these joys and others we know, we give you thanks. O Holy God, we are concerned people. We are concerned for those we love who are suffering, who are in despair, who are sick, who cannot find work, who have unresolved in a turmoil. We are concerned for those we do not know who are suffering because of war or hunger or loneliness or unemployment, many because of our own selfishness. We lift all these people to your loving care. And O God, we know that we are instruments of your loving care. Deliver us from petty concerns about ourselves. That we may respond to that which we value most in ourselves and others. Strengthen us to stand steady in this shaken world and to respond to the needs around us. Discipline us to sharpen our inside and open our hearts that we may share the need and glory of our human destiny with one another. And O God, we are an anxious people. It is difficult for us to take no thought for the moral. We feel the pressure of too much work, of too many demands, of unfinished papers, of approaching exams, of the unending request for our time, our energy and love. When these precious mount upon us, O God, calm our souls that our minds and bodies may function effectively. If we are alone and the tasks seem more than we can do, or if done, not welcome by the world, reveal your presence to us that we may labor with your help, that we may find lasting meaning in our lives. Turn us from dreams of fall glory to work in the commonplace circumstances, and disclose to us the miracle of your grace in unexpected places. All these things we pray in the spirit of our Lord who taught us to pray, 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, for ever and ever. Amen. You are invited to two special gospel sings today: One at one o'clock on the quad, which will be a picnic if you have one to bring. It will be the Mountain Folk singing gospel songs. And then at three o'clock in Baldwin Auditorium, there will be a Black Gospel sing. All of these are free. We welcome to our pulpit today David Lambert. We pray that we may open our hearts, and we give thanks that God will speak through him. Welcome David.

- Thank you. I would first like to say good morning to all of you and to the many of my friends and fraternity brothers who have come this morning and who may have never seen the inside of the chapel before, I would like to say, make yourselves at home. I'm sure I speak to the regular chapel ministry when I say you're welcome to come back at any time. I'm sure many of you are wondering what motivated me, a mere freshman, ex pre-med student here at Duke (congregation laughing) to volunteer to preach a sermon in Duke Chapel. Well, believe me, all through last week as this morning was approaching and I was becoming more and more nervous, I asked myself that same question many times. To answer it, I'd like to bring you up to date on a little personal history. I've attended church in my hometown all my life and I've always found its activities to be worthwhile and enjoyable. Our youth group did things ranging from house painting for an elderly couple to spending all night at a drive-in movie together, which raised a few eyebrows in the church to say the least. But coming to Duke was a different story. I had no group of long-time friends waiting to greet me on Sunday morning. So, I began to ask, "Why go to church?" This question particularly plagued me right after the alarm went off each Sunday morning. So I took a couple of religion courses here and I found them to be very interesting and beneficial. I can't say that I've answered all the questions I have about my faith, but I think I've reached a better understanding of it and of its value to me which I would like to be to

you this morning. I chose the book of James as the scriptural basis for my words because I think its author was faced with and answered many of the same questions concerning Christianity that are facing the church today. James saw his religion as a way of life, not only as a profession of belief. To him belief was a catalyst for action. In his letter, he reiterates Jesus' commandments to be doers of the word and not hearers only. I recently read a magazine article about the conflict in Northern Ireland, and it echoed to me the importance of those words as it be again with an anonymous quote, "Northern Ireland has too many Catholics and twice as many Protestants, but very few Christians." So I think we can see that being a Christian today requires more than a casual association with a certain denomination or institution. So this morning, I would like to examine the conditions and situations affecting the Christian person today, and let's see if we can shape the results into a balanced combination of hearing and doing into a modern affirmation of faith. The first condition I would like to examine is one which many persons see as a stumbling block to the growth and strengthening of their faith, and that is rationalization. I think we can agree that the many advancements and discoveries made in the various fields of science and also the widespread acceptance and use of the scientific method of thinking in general have had a profound effect on the everyday living of each of us. Many feel that these discoveries are showing the Bible to be a little more than a dated book of history and inaccurate history at that. (inhales) Pardon the cold. But a cover story in Time Magazine entitled, "How True is the Bible?" states that recent archeological attempts at uncovering the actual events behind the writings of the Bible are showing that the Bible is a much more accurate book of history than many first thought. This study has enabled us to see the cultural roots behind our religion and to see that many of our sacred writings were a direct result of situations that occurred historically in the lives and time period of the early believers. But this definitely does not mean that because we are in a very different type of civilization now, that the Bible is to be ruled outdated and irrelevant. For the beauty and value of much of our religious writings is that they are universal and transcend any passage of time or change in environment such as the commandment of Jesus, you shall love your neighbor as yourself. Surely those words are as powerful and perfect now as when they were first uttered. So I think that if we combine the rational and faith approaches to the study of the Bible, we can come out ahead with a better understanding of the origins and some insights into the future of our religion. Through scientific study, we can see that much of our Bible is in fact a history of a specific people living in a specific time. This should not however serve to weaken our faith or weaken the impact of the Bible's message. Instead, it should give it new meaning and relevance, where we can then see the Bible not as an entity, but as a foundation on which we can build and keep on building. So as our growing world presents to us new problems, we should look to our religious teachings for inspiration and guidance, and then try our best to create new and better solutions to those problems. This is where faith comes in. Much of the Bible's message will never be able to be proven through archeological research. We must trust then and believe that this message, this guidance and inspiration can enable us to live the kind of life we aspire to live, one which will grant us both happiness and satisfaction. This brings me to the second point in the list of factors which I feel should be a part of our modern affirmation of faith. And I think this second factor is the vital link that holds together our balance of hearing and doing. It is initiative. Initiative is just a more pleasing sounding word for effort. And the best example I can think of to illustrate the place of initiative in a modern affirmation is by recalling the effort it takes for a lot of us to get out of bed and get the church on Sunday mornings. To make it, we have to overcome tremendous temptations to sleep late or sit at home and read the comics. But hopefully, the benefits attained from attending a service outweighs the hardships occurred in getting there. And it takes a good amount of initiative to decide just

how we are going to channel the hearing of the word and to the doing. Our religion teaches us to love. We must decide the specifics of how, who, when and where. I think this need for Christian initiative is very well illustrated in a quote from James Scherer's "Global Living Here and Now." It reads, "We should not only feed the poor, but also seek to uncover some of the root causes of their poverty. Otherwise our children will in the future be condemned to performing the same good works for the children of the poor as was the case in the past." And Henry B. Clark of the Religion Department here at Duke says in his book "Escape from the Money Trap", that if you are not part of the solution, really a part of it, involved with it, committed to it, then you are a part of the problem. But if the doing of the word requires the most initiative, I think it also provides the greatest satisfaction. There are plenty of volunteer opportunities available to us if only we look for them. And the only requirement for many is the giving of one's time and self. The satisfaction received for making this kind of effort can be compared to that of watching someone unwrap a Christmas gift that you have picked out especially for him. Each of you is both giving and receiving joy at the same time. So, initiative balances well on a scale of hearing and doing. I think the wide variety of opportunities for service available and the satisfaction gains from meeting them brings us to the third condition of our modern affirmation, and that is the realization that our faith is both a personal and a positive thing. We must each decide what we believe and just what we seek to accomplish with those beliefs. I'm sure each of you has had a different reaction to my words this morning, but hopefully you can each benefit from them in some way. For some, that may mean getting a better understanding of their own convictions by realizing that they're in complete disagreements with mine. But I think a realization and acceptance of man's differences must be incorporated in our affirmation. This means breaking through many of our handed down prejudices against race, sex, and nationality, and seeing that other lifestyles and cultures are as valid and acceptable as our own. James Scherer says that modern technology and communication are forcing man to see himself not only as a citizen of a certain nation or as a believer in a certain religion, but as a member of the whole human race. Man is becoming a global creature charged with the task of preserving and bettering his world through cooperation with all other men. So I think we must realize that giving love to our neighbor must be done on equal terms. It does not mean trying to shape him into an exact replica of ourselves. So, man the global creature is also man the individual. He is looking for a way of life that will bring happiness and satisfaction to himself, and hopefully he is looking for a way to pass that happiness on to others. So, our modern affirmation should be a positive one. One which gives man a guideline for living and not a set of rules. One which inspires him to give love and allows him the freedom and initiative to choose how. I think we have thus arrived at the right balance of hearing and doing the word, which makes up our modern affirmation. We can see that a combination of rationality and faith will ensure that we continually learn new ways to cope with our existence, and that we make proper use of that knowledge. And a good amount of initiative is required of us to ensure that our faith does not remain merely a spoken set of ideals, but that through our efforts, it becomes a real and thrusting force as we try to make those ideals a reality to help us better ourselves and our world. We can see that our faith allows each of us to choose his own paths by which he wishes to live. Using that faith to bring him enjoyment and fulfillment. I never used to like reciting the Confession of Sin in the bulletin each week because I felt a little offended at being told that I was not giving and doing as much as I should, but I finally saw this paragraph as the very positive thing and the eternal thing of our faith. The first commandment of Christianity is to love. And though man has advanced and developed tremendously over the last 2000 years, he has yet to exhaust the many needs and opportunities for the giving of love. And if we will allow our faith to constantly grow and develop as man

himself grows and develops, then I think it can remain a powerful source for the giving and channeling of love and for the betterment of ourselves and our society. Let us pray. Father, help us to live the way we would like to live and the way which you would have us to live. And give us the wisdom to see that we can do both. Amen. (gentle pipe organ music) (gentle pipe organ music)

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(choir singing brightly) ♪ Amen ♪ (soft pipe organ music)

(choir singing brightly) ♪ Amen ♪ (bright pipe organ music) (bright pipe organ music)

(choir singing faintly) ♪ Hallelujah, hallelujah ♪ (bright pipe organ music)

(choir singing faintly) ♪ Hallelujah, hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah, hallelujah, hallelujah ♪ (bright pipe organ music)

- Eternal God, giver of every good and perfect gift, who seeks above all gifts to give yourself to us, grant that with these token gifts of our hands we may more fully give ourselves in joyous obedience and service, and so doing open our hearts to the gift of yourself to us through Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen. (gentle pipe organ music) (gentle pipe organ music)

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(choir singing brightly) (gentle pipe organ music) Grant O Lord, that what has been said with our lips, we may believe in our hearts, and that what we believe in our hearts, we may practice in our lives. And may the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us forever.

(choir singing brightly) ♪ Amen ♪ (bell ringing) (gentle pipe organ music) (gentle pipe organ music)

(congregation speaking faintly)