

(soft instrumental music) (choir music)

- Please be seated. Dearly beloved to the scriptures move us to acknowledge and confess our sins before all mighty God our heavenly father. With a humble, lower penitent and obedient heart to the end that we may obtain forgiveness by his infinite goodness and mercy. Therefore I pray and besiege you as many as I hear present, to accompany me with a pure heart and humble voice unto the throne of heavenly grace, let us confess our sins to Almighty God. Have mercy upon us Oh God, according to the love and kindness, according to the multitude of light, tender mercies lout out our transgressions. Wash us thoroughly from our inequities and cleanse us from our sins, for we acknowledge our transgressions and our sins are ever before us. Cast us not away from the presence and take not thy Holy Spirit from us. Restore unto us the joy of thy salvation and uphold us with thy free spirit. Let us continue in personal silent meditation and confession. This is the message which we have heard from Him and proclaimed to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. If we walk in the light as He His in the light, we have fellowship with one another and the blood of Jesus His son, cleanses us from all sin. Amen. (soft instrumental music) (choir music)

- People of God, God's word comes to us this morning first in the Old Testament, from the book of Isaiah, the 26th chapter beginning with verse one. "In that day, this song will be sung in the land of Judah. We have a strong city, he sets up salvation as walls and bulwarks. Open the gates that the righteous nation which keeps faith may enter in. Thou thus keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee because he trusts in thee. Trust in the Lord forever, for the Lord God is an everlasting rock, for he has brought low the inhabitants of the height the lofty city. He lays it low, lays it low to the ground, casts it to the dust, the foot trams it the feet of the poor, the steps of the needy. The way of the righteous is leveled, now that make smooth the paths of the righteous. In the path of the judgments Oh Lord, we wait for thee. Thy Memorial name is the desire of our soul. My soul yearns for thee in the night, my spirit within me earnestly seeks thee, for when by judgements are in the earth the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness. If favor is shown to the wicked he does not learn righteousness. In the land of uprightness he deals perversely and does not see the majesty of the Lord. Oh Lord, thy hand is lifted up, but they see it not. Let them see thy zeal for thy people and be ashamed. Let the fire for the adversaries consume them. Oh Lord, thou will ordain peace for us thou has rot for us all our works." The Epistle this morning is Paul's Epistle to the Romans. And the word will come to us beginning in the eighth chapter commencing with the 18th verse. "I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed to us. For the creation weights with eager longing for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility not of its own will, but by the will of him who subjected it in hope, because the creation itself will be set free from its to decay and obtain the glorious liberty of the children of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail together until now, and not only the creation but we ourselves, who have the first fruits of the spirit grown inwardly as we wait for the adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies, for in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is not hope, for who hopes for what he sees, but if we hope for what we do not see we wait for it with patience." Will the people rise for the reading of the

Gospel? The gospel reading is in Mark's Gospel the fourth chapter beginning with the 21st verse. "And he said to them, is a lamp brought in to be put under a bushel or under a bed and not on a stand? For there is nothing hid except to me made manifest, nor is anything secret, except to come to light. If any man here has ears to hear, let him hear. And he said to them, take heed what you hear, the measure you give will be the measure you get, and still more will be given to you, for to Him who has, will more be given. And from him who has not, even what he has will be taken away." Thou end God's reading for this morning. May He add an understanding to this reading of His word. Amen. (soft instrumental music) (choir music)

- Let us affirm what we believe. 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 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. And then our prayers this morning we, we'll want to remember especially Tom Davis, who has read our lessons for us and will be installed this afternoon as the Presbyterian United Methodist Campus minister here at the university. Let us pray. We turn to thee Oh Lord, in Thanksgiving, We praise thee for the gospel of our love to men and women. The word of salvation to all people and for the revelation of their glory among all the nations. We bless thee for faithful ministers of every age, who have born their witness to the truth. We bless thee for the labors of those who first brought the gospel to us and who continue in that noble task. Especially this day we bless thee for the life and ministry of Tom Davis. And we beseege thee our father that your blessings will be upon him as he seeks to minister in your name, to your people, in this place. We turn to thee Oh Lord, in penitence besieging thee that thou will forgive us for all of the sins, we've committed by word, thought and indeed. Begging of thee Oh God, that we might hear thy word of forgiveness even while we pray with the assurance that we are your children. We turn to thee Oh Lord, because we need you this morning, more even than we know we need you Oh God. And we pray that in this hour while we tarry in this place, you will make us more aware of our need. Make us to have open hearts to receive your presence. We need you to forgive our sin. We need you to give us strength. We need you to give us purpose. We need you to heal our bodies. We need you to bring peace to our minds. We need you our father, to give us life everlasting. So come Lord Jesus and abide with us and teach us to rest upon your power and upon your presence all the days and all the years of our lives. In joy and in sorrow, in peace and in pain, in light and in darkness, in sickness and in health, in life and death, keep us so close to you that we may know you and knowing we may love you and loving we may serve you. While we ask it all in the name of your son and our savior even Jesus Christ, who taught us to pray. Our father who art in heaven, hallowed to 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 thy is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.

- Do you know what today is? Oh, I know it is all hallows even that it is Halloween. It is the day before All Saints' Day. It's the day after we beat Georgia Tech worse than we ever have before. It's 60 days before the Bicentennial year ends. It's two days before election day '76. Surely it is all of these, but it's also my friends a day for writing a letter. Will you join with me this morning in writing a letter to the president? Will you give me your attention, focus, your thoughts and feelings and dreams and hopes and longings all together. As we

write a letter to the soon to be elected president of the United States. Mr. Roy E Stryker, famous photographer of another generation, writing in the preface to a book of his pictures entitled "In this Proud Land" says, "We have lost many of the important things from our good way of life." Bishop James Armstrong, Bishop in the United Methodist Church asks the question, "Do we as individual human beings have any real significance beyond the space which we occupy, or the air which we breathe, do we really?" David Wilson syndicated columnist writes. "Sure there are good, decent, honest, compassionate people around, but in the mass, Americans seem more like a herd of immoral, mutually suspicious, ruminant consumers, heedless of their enlightened self interest and heedless of the rights and feelings of others. What sort of government he asks, does such a people deserve?" What sort of government do we deserve? I do not know what we deserve in the way of a government to lead us this morning. I have some ideas about what we need in the form of a government to lead us, but for the few next few moments ahead of us I want us to write of the longing that we have in our land, the longing or the longings that you and I and countless other persons in this nation of ours have. Now I know as well as you do that politics and government and US news stories about our past and present and future and about presidential campaigns have been front and center for a long, long time. It surely seemed like it's been forever. 1976 has covered a lot of ground and many of us will be also glad when the Bicentennial year is over, when the campaigns are finished and when the election is passed and we can see and hear and read about something other than politics and government. But as we think about Tuesday, as we all make plans to vote on election today, let us join together in writing a letter to the president of the United States, whomever he may be. Because I don't really care who wins on Tuesday, our longings and our needs are going to be the same. My dear Mr. President, we write to congratulate you on your election as president of the United States. This is an office only 37 other persons in all of history of hell, you have been entrusted with the highest position of responsibility we Americans can give to one of our own. You have campaigned long and hard. You have sought eagerly and extraneously, your efforts have been rewarding. You have been chosen to serve as leader of us all. And so my first word is congratulations. And may the grace of God bless your life, enlighten your mind, strengthen your will and direct your spirit as you lead us from this moment until a new decade, the decade of 1980 dawns in our midst. We write also Mr. President, to share some of our feelings about our nation, where we are, what our moods are and where we hope to move. We write as concerned citizens who wish you well in your efforts to lead us with justice and with mercy and with humility. We ask only for your serious consideration of this message we write to you, because we write to you now not as a partisan politician, because as of Wednesday you belong no more to your party, you belong to all of us. We agree with Robert Bellah, the sociologist who writes in his book, "The Broken Covenant." The redemption of a corrupted society is nearly unprecedented in history. We realize that. And we do see that our contemporary society is corrupt in many, many ways. We do understand that the healing of such a society is virtually unprecedented. But we Americans have never been known to let precedents stand in the way when we wanted to accomplish something. Usually if we agree on a goal and put ourselves to achieving it, we make it. Unfortunately, not all the goals for which we have strived in recent history have been worthy or commendable, but to set our minds and hearts, souls, and wills to redeeming society may well be worth all of the necessary costs involved. Let me assure you though, let us assure you though, Mr. President, we do not expect you to solve all of our problems, to give us all of the answers or to do all of the leading. We do not expect miracles from you either now or any of the time you are in office. We ask only for responsible stewardship of your abilities and responsible stewardship of the abilities of those persons accountable to you. As you have campaigned and as you have worked with your most ardent and

faithful supporters, you have doubtless heard and seen much about the moods and the needs of America. However, you have probably been sheltered and protected and your staff have probably not let you see or read or hear all of the story. So we share some of our feelings. There is much discontent among us now. We are a restless, nervous, anxious, uneasy and worried people. There is much apathy among us, Mr. President. Needs and problems that once excited us and stirred us and moved us to act now leave us quiet and indifferent and unconcerned. Our public schools are still with tension and fear and unrest. Minority and ethnic persons are yet to be treated as full citizens with equal rights and equal opportunities. Women are misused, manipulated and treated unfairly in many educational and business and governmental agencies. Our elderly are just as lonely and neglected as ever. We have more poor now than we have ever had, 25 million of us, over 10% of us below the poverty line. These problems once moved us to try to get help and action, but we seem apathetic now. There is hurt in our land now, Mr. President. There are folks who have suffered deprivation ever since the first day of their lives. As one example, Mr. President, the migrant workers who move among us in various parts of the country, some of them picking beans, some of them picking apples, some of them picking grapes, those who work with these people tell us that they suffer virtually everything shameful about our society. That there is poverty almost beyond belief, that there's rampant disease and malnutrition, that there's racism filled and swallowed, we can't even guarantee that they'll have a bathroom nearby to use. Pitiful children drained of pride and hope, exploitation and powerlessness. There is hurt at a distance for all of us. When we read of the young New York woman, whose three day old child was chewed up and killed by their dog. There is hurt among us Mr. President. There is disappointment and even disgust rather widespread. Perhaps it began several years ago now when we were lied to about the Bay of Pigs Invasion, when we relied to about how many troops we had in Vietnam, about the bombing in Cambodia and Laos, which was denied for months and still we really don't know of our involvement in Chile and Watergate, yes, this brought great disappointment and much disgust to all of us and the presidential part and only compounded it for us. More recently the sexual exploits of congressional leaders have repulsed us, the abuse of congressional power, the sneaky way that Congress raises its salary every year. Yes, there is widespread disappointment and disgust among us Mr. President. Perhaps underlying all of these negative feelings is a very basic fear about the future, which is prevalent among us, the future some say, what future will it be, can it be, is it to be? Ours is the first generation to exist in all of history where there was some power other than the power of Almighty God, which was able to destroy the world. Mr. President, you and the head of the Soviet Union can order that destruction in a flash and we can all be annihilated in a moment. And that's a fearful thought. And so Mr. President, we sense also much suspicion about what goes on in Washington, much disrespect for those who lead us and little for the words and actions of you and your colleagues but now, may we respectfully say some other things, Mr. President. The state of affairs which we have lived with under Democratic and Republican leadership, the conditions described above, this is not the way that we want life to be in our country. This is not the way it should be. This is not the way it can be. So we hear the words of Isaiah this morning, "My soul yearns for thee in the night, my spirit within me earnestly seeks for thee, or when thy judgments are in the earth the inhabitants of the world learn righteousness." Then we hear the word to Paul. "For the whole creation waits with eager, longing for the revealing of the sons of God. We know that the whole creation has been groaning in travail until now. And we've grown inwardly as we wait for the redemption of our bodies. We in this hope we were saved. Now hope that is seen is hope, for who hopes for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see we wait for it with patience." And then the words of stark surprise from Jesus where he says, "There is

nothing hid except to be made manifest, nor is anything secret except to come to light. If anyone has ears to hear let him hear. Yearning, longing, waiting, eager longing, groaning, and waiting, hoping, hidden to be revealed, secret to come to light, let those who can hear, let them hear." There is a longing in the land, Mr. President. There is a longing in the land and although we do not expect you to do it all for us, we're convinced that you can have more influence in fulfilling these longings than any other one person in our midst. There is a longing for us to be healed. We ache, we long, we have had inner turmoil and outer conflict. Help us, Mr. President, to become a healed, healthy, whole people. At heart we are one, we do belong to one another. There is a longing Mr. President, that you will give us a sense again of what is decent. We're tired and sick of rudeness and immorality being portrayed as good and right, of bribes that are called simply inappropriate gifts, of crime that is only misguided zeal, of lies being only misspoken words, of power corrupting and of absolute power corrupting absolutely. As Malcolm Boyd, the Episcopal priest puts it, "Just give us the guts to practice what we preach." Help us to know the truth. The truth which will set us free. For there is something indecent about laws that require a teenage girl to have her parents consent before she can have her ears pierced, but she needs no one's permission to buy a gun or to get an abortion. Help us define again a sense of decency in our midst to where schools and church can help us really to learn, where hospitals can help us to be healed, where universities can help us to gain understanding, where marriage can help us to know faithfulness, where families can help us to be secure, where our communities can give us a sense of belonging. Maybe the wretchedness the sword in the indecency of our lives is our own fault. If so Mr. President, help us to see it and know it and do something about it. Perhaps Dag Hammarskjöld was right when he wrote, "Is life so wretched? Isn't it rather your hands which are too small, your vision which is muddied. You are the one who must grow up." Help us Mr. President, to recover again a sense of decency, help us to grow up. There is a longing in our land for you to help us to regain a sense of trust, trust in ourselves and trust in others, help remove the constant suspicion that seems to be ever present among us. Everyone is suspect, everyone may be out to get me or to do me in, everyone is trying to find some information about me for the FBI, the IRS, or the CIA, something to tell my boss or something in our case here to tell my professor or my Dean or my girlfriend or my boyfriend, or my parents. Who has control of all of the information about us now held in computer banks. Whose mail is being opened, whose telephone is being tapped, whose car is being followed. Is it only the rich and the powerful and the wealthy and the underworld or could these things happen to any one of us? Give us again the assurance that we can trust and can be trusted, deliver us from the nightmare of Big Brother. We don't want to live in the hell of 1984, May 1984, never come either in 1976 or '77 or 1984, may it never come. We want to trust, we can trust, we will trust again. Let your actions and your words and those of your colleagues be worthy of our trust. There is a longing in our land that you may help us recover the desire to care, but we feel we are basically a caring people, but much of that has been lost. There is a longing that one day we will be motivated as much by love for others as by our lust for dollars, that one day we will be respected as a nation as much for our charity, as for our technology. That one day our desire to share will match our demands for respect. That others will rise up and call us blessed rather than arrogant, merciful rather than mighty, helpful rather than exploitative. That one day it will be as newsworthy to show an act of compassion as it is now to commit an active of crime. There is a longing that one day we will know that it is not being liberal or conservative or Democratic or Republican to want the hungry fed or the naked cloth, the stranger taken, the prisoner visited, the mentally and physically sick made, the oppressed said free. As a matter of fact, one does not even have to be Christian to care like that. All that is necessary is to show human concern. We really don't

need anymore of big government, big city or county or state or federal government, a big daddy or big mama or big any kind of thing, all we need is to see the value and the worth of each individual human being as a person. Martin Buer reminds us, every person born into this world represents something new, something that never existed before, something original and unique and valuable. There is the longing Mr. President, for us to care again. Help us to know that to suffer is not the worst thing that can happen to us, the worst thing is not to believe in anything worth suffering for. The needs and hungers and desires of other people are worth suffering for. Help us to care again. There is a longing in the land, Mr. President, for divine guidance for you. We hope you will share with us some of your relationship with God. We don't want to invade your privacy. We don't want you to bury your soul anymore than you want to. But let us know that you are aware of your own humanity. And this means that know that you know that you are dependent upon God and you are dependent upon other people. You really cannot lead us by yourself, you do need God's guidance and the guidance of other people. So we ask you to pray, to seek God's blessing, to seek God's wisdom. One of the greatest of your predecessors, Abraham Lincoln once said, "I should be the veriest shallow and self conceded blockhead upon the foot stool, if in the discharge of the duties put up on me in this place, I should hope to get along without the wisdom of God." There is a longing in our land, Mr. President. There is a longing for you to get on with leading us today, Mr. President. To lead us, inspire us, challenge us, demand something of us, ask us for sacrifice, call upon us to give of ourselves. Provoke us, inform us, be real, be honest, be open, be candid. And as you lead, as you serve, our prayers will be offered for you. And as we close this letter, Mr. President, may you and we indeed may all of us find meaning and hope in this word from the late Dr. Martin Luther king, Jr. He said, "I still believe that standing up for the truth of God is the greatest thing in the world. This is the end of life. The end of life is not to be happy. The end of life is not to avoid pleasure, to enjoy pleasure and avoid pain. The end of life is to do the will of God come what may." Mr. President, thank you for your willingness to read our words. May strength and wisdom and peace and good health be yours. With affection and esteem, your people. In the name of God who creates us, redeems us and sustains us, Amen. (soft instrumental music) (choir music)

- Oh God, of whose bounty we have all received, accept this offering of thy people, remembering thy love those who have brought it and those for whom it is given. And so follow it with thy blessing that it may promote peace and good will among people and advance the kingdom of our Lord in savior Jesus Christ. Amen. (soft instrumental music) (choir music) The peace of God which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds and the knowledge and love of God and of your son Jesus Christ our Lord, and the blessings of God Almighty, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit be with you and remain with you always, Amen. ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ (bell ringing) (instrumental music) (audience applauding) (indistinct chattering)