

(gospel singing)

- [Rev. Nancy Ferree-Clark] Grace and peace to you on this second Sunday after the epiphany. We welcome you to the celebration of the Lord's supper here at the chapel, and we are especially glad to see those January freshman who just arrived on campus this week. We wish you well in your first several weeks of your college career, and if we here at the chapel may be of any assistance to you in any way, please let us know. We also extend greetings to those of you in our radio and television audiences. We welcome as our guest preacher this morning Bishop Edwin C. Boulton, president bishop of the East Ohio area of the United Methodist Church. Prior to his move to East Ohio in the fall of 1988, he served as bishop of Dakota's area for eight years, we regret that these locations were reversed in today's bulletin. Bishop Bolton began his ministry in the Iowa annual conference where he served for 16 years, we welcome him as our bishop Kenneth Goodson guest preacher this morning. For those of you who may have written for tickets for the 1989 Christmas Eve service of blessings and carols, we have reconsidered this plan and we have decided not to issue tickets for this service. Admission will be on a first come, first serve basis, as usual. This Wednesday's lunchtime concert has been canceled, there will, however, be the usual organ demonstration at that time: 12:30pm. All Duke undergraduates interested in applying for this year's student preacher competition should note that the deadline is this Wednesday, January 18th. Please call the chapel office for further information. Please note the remaining announcements as they are printed in your bulletins. And now, let us continue our worship. (organ music) (singing) (organ music) (singing) When we gather to praise God, we remember that we are people who have preferred our own wills to the Lord's. Accepting God's power to become new persons in Christ, let us confess our sins before God and one another. Please be seated. Have mercy upon us, oh God, according to thy loving kindness, according the multitude of thy tender mercies, blot out our transgressions. Wash us thoroughly from our inequities and cleanse us from our sins, for we acknowledge our transgressions and our sin is ever before us. Create in us clean hearts, oh God, and renew a right spirit within us. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, amen. Hear the good news, Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. That is God's proof of his love toward us, in the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

All: In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.

- Let us pray, 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. Please stand for a reading from the gospel according to Saint John. On the third day, there was a marriage at Cana in Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Jesus, also, was invited to the marriage with his disciples. When the wine gave out, the mother of Jesus said to him they have no wine, and Jesus said to her, oh woman, what have you to do with me, my hour has not come. His mother said to the servants, do whatever he tells you. Now, six stone jars were standing there for the Jewish rights of purification, each holding 20 or 30 gallons. Jesus said to them, fill the jars with water, and they filled them to the brim. He said to them, now draw some out and take

it to the steward of the feast. So they took it. When the steward of the feast tasted the water now become wine and did not know where it had come from, the servants who had drawn the water knew. The steward of the feast called the bridegroom and said to him, every man's serves the good wine first, and when men have drunk freely, then the poor wine, but you have kept the good wine until now. This is the first of his signs Jesus did at Cana in Galilee, and manifested his glory, and his disciples believed in him. This ends the reading of the gospel. Thanks be to God. (organ music) (singing)

- There he was, on his knees, polishing my shoes. We had met for the first time only a few months before, and so the first thought was if this really was to be a model of how one treated a Bishop, maybe this was the best model I'd ever seen, better than having one's episcopal ring kissed any day. And no more Shinola or Kiwi under the fingernails on Saturday night. He was shining my shoes. This man and I had attended a dinner earlier in the evening at North Dakota state university, and came finally to a church in Fargo for a worship service. There was some snow on the ground that January evening and my shoes were a little smudged. We were in the pastor's study, this shoe-shine man and I, getting into our robes. He too, you see, was a clergy person, a bishop in fact, and so both of us had rings, both of us had shoes. But there he was in front of me, kneeling down in front of me, shining my shoes. A kind of thing, I guess, that my mother had done for years, not necessarily literally shining my shoes, but doing that which she felt I needed done to make me look as good as possible. A task that my wife seems to do with such care and sensitivity and regularity, even now. For, you see, there are some of us who need a little more assistance, it would seem, than others to look our best. But, instinctively, in that moment as I saw this man kneeling in front of me I wanted to say, no Justin, that really isn't necessary and it makes me feel very uncomfortable, but Justin Driscoll, who was the bishop of the Roman Catholic diocese of Fargo, North Dakota was doing something that was profound, instinctive and natural to him. This good man had, along the way, learned to bridge the sacred and the secular, to develop a feel for the ebb and the flow of the stuff of life that insists there is an unbreakable corollary between celebrating mass and shining another person's shoes. A profound insight not very well learned by some others of us. Get up, Justin. But he kept right on shining my shoes. I have long admired the insights of Rabi Abraham Joshua Heschel, and I'm convinced he is right. It is an inherent weakness of religion, he says, not to take offense at the segregation of God, to forget that the true sanctuary has no walls. Religion has often suffered, he says, from the tendency to become self-indulgent, self-seeking, as if the task were not to enable human nature, but to enhance the power and the beauty of the institutions, or to enlarge the body of doctrines. And he goes on to say that it has often done more to canonize prejudices, this distorted religion, to canonize prejudices than to wrestle for truth. And then he comes, lastly, in this remarkable statement of his to this pregnant phrase of the tendency in so much religion to petrify the sacred than to sanctify the secular. It is not an easy assignment this, but a crucial one, to which each of us is called to assure that the things of our faith are not turned into lifeless stone, petrified, and equally to assure that the common things of everyday retain the Imago Dei, the image of God, with which they were created and intended. Dear friends, I am convinced that the profound problem for me, and I believe the profound problem for the church at large, the agonizing problem for people of faith has nothing to do with secularism or humanism, or any other theological, political, or philosophical -ism, it is the constant tendency of our religion to turn inward to become an end in itself, and thus to be self-serving, arrogant, irrelevant, dull, oppressive and insipid. Religion for religion's sake is to violate the commandment against idolatry. Jesus frequently tampered with the sacred fetishes of the Jews, particularly that of the

Pharisees and the Sadducees, the intellectual and social religious elite of his day. Their tendency was to freeze into place the religious experiences, impulses and instincts of the people so that there was really little room for faith, but vast room for absolutes. Jesus, on the other hand, insisted on an openness, a hospitality, an unafraidness of the new, in fact, an expectancy of the unexpected from God. Our Lord insisted that in his preaching and teaching, the law of Moses would be brought to fulfillment, however, because of this age-old tendency in our faith to petrify, literally to embalm, to kill that which is alive, Jesus stood in firm opposition to the religious aristocracy of his day. Three times in the early stages of that classic statement of his, that we sometimes refer to as the sermon on the mount, he said you've heard it said of old but I say to you that is not the way it is. And so, I think we must decide whether in our faith and in what we do in the common course of our common living the net result will be either to petrify the sacred or to sanctify the secular as Rabi Heschel has so pointedly reminded us. Most fair minded and intelligent people want to know the basic answers, the clues, the roadmap, the directions that they can follow in arriving at a viable faith experience. It's no badge of intelligence to forge ahead and to say, I know how to solve that when a fair minded question to a good source in the right spirit might open up a wave for us, asking questions of the right person and in the right spirit can be exceedingly beneficial, sometimes it backfires though, sometimes it's dangerous, sometimes it's embarrassing. A mother just sent her teenage daughter to the sewing room in the basement of the house to sew a button on a pair of slacks that the young woman had been procrastinating about that too long, her mother finally had it up to here and she says, Sally you've got to get down and get that done. Sally went reluctantly and rather begrudgingly, she was gone for long time and finally the mother in continuing despair and anger, hollered downstairs, are you running around down there without any pants on? And husky male voice came back, no ma'am I'm just reading the water meter. Well, to ask questions can be embarrassing but it can also be powerfully revelatory. And so, a bunch of Jews came to Jesus one day with the intent of setting him up, and after at least two aborted attempts to entrap him in which he dealt with them very charitably, really, somebody, we don't know who, a Pharisee, that's all we know, and this man may have done what he did in the right spirit, he finally turned to Jesus and said, master it's tough to know the answers, that's my gloss but I'm sure it was preceded by something like that, and then he did say this, according to the written record, which is the greatest commandment. If it was possible to know this, both as farasee and all of us would have the core of the matter at hand. We would then be able to distinguish good and bad in our religious experience, we could avert the age-old tendency to petrify the sacred, we could be about the business of sanctifying the secular. Would Jesus' answer be contained in one volume or 500? You know the answer, Jesus answered this Pharisee in what we in the English language translate into no more than 50 words. You shall love the Lord your God with all you heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, that is the greatest commandment, it comes first, and the second is like it: love your neighbor as yourself. Everything in the law and the prophets hangs on these two commandments. That's all there is to it, all there is to it. Yes, yes. But, but. There probably is not a person here who has not fallen prey to the temptation to romanticize the experience of loving God. Jesus made that kind of terrible exercise forever impossible. Jesus insisted that if I am serious about loving God, I have to first of all love myself, and that's a bunch. And he also insisted that I have to love you, and that's not always a picnic. You can't romanticize your conversion. You can't romanticize your conversion without doing violence to it, to yourself and to others. Electricity is deadly dangerous if it isn't grounded, so is faith. Jesus took the dangerous voltage of faith in God, with it's compulsion to turn inward and thus to petrify and ran it through a transformer and grounded it in love for self and neighbor. He insisted thereby that cogent faith in God

would always result in the sanctifying of the secular. If our faith is like a piece of petrified wood, and most petrified wood I've ever seen is really quite beautiful, then it's just that: a beautiful piece of deadness, of relatively little worth and, in the arena of faith, inevitably dangerous. I cannot profess to love God until I love myself, I cannot profess to love God until I love you, I cannot profess to love God until I stop throwing stones of fear and derision at other people, the poor, the Jews, the Russians, the Indians, the person with aids, and for a lot of us in the church, the homosexual. Tomorrow, Monday, we remember the mountain climber and the age-old mountain of human dignity climbed by Martin Luther King Jr. The climb has always been treacherous, and always will be because most of us, there may be a few exceptions here, but most of us live in paranoid whirls of fear and pain. A stunning statement on how we live in tragic isolation, each from the other, is made in the current film, Rain Man. Go see it. They're not going to give me a dime for saying this, wish they would. I'd even take three dimes. But it's a classic, powerful statement declaring the fact that we are all autistic. We are all autistic, isolated, alone, mute, foreigners, living in our own pain, knowing tragically too little about each other, racked by secret and not-so-secret fears. Our God is peculiar, strange marching orders have been given to the army of which you and I are a part. Orders of urgent mandate which we cannot countermand that says we must sanctify the secular by loving neighbor as we love ourselves. Justin, get up, you make me uncomfortable down there on your knees, shining my shoes, and he said not a word but just kept on shining. But what he didn't say was infinitely more powerful because of what he was doing, and now we come finally this morning as we do frequently, to the feast, and we do it around the common, get the word, the common elements of bread and wine. God forgive me, did I call bread and wine common? Justin, get up. But he wouldn't.

- The Lord be with you. Let us pray. Almighty God, giver of all things, with gladness we give thee thanks for all of your goodness, we bless you for the love which has created and which sustains us from day to day and which makes all of life sacred. Help us to treasure in our hearts all that our Lord has done for us, and enable us to show our thankfulness by lives that are wholly given to your service. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Save and defend your whole church, purchased with the precious blood of Christ. Give it pastors and ministers filled with your spirit and strengthen it through the word and the holy sacraments, make it perfect in love and in all good works, and establish it in the faith delivered to the Saints, sanctify and unite your people in all the world, that one holy church may bear witness to you, the creator and redeemer of all. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Preserve our nation in justice and honor that we may lead a peaceable life of integrity, grant health and favour to all who bear office in our land, especially to the president of the United States, the Governor of this state and all those who make, administer and judge our laws, and help them to serve this people according to your holy will. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Take from us all hatred and prejudice, give us the spirit of love, and dispose our days in your peace, prosper the labors of those who take council for the nations of the world, that mutual understanding and common endeavor may be increased among all peoples. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Bless the schools of the church and all colleges, universities and centers of research, and those who teach in them. Bestow your wisdom in such measure that our common life may be conformed to the rule of your truth and justice. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. Comfort with the grace of your Holy Spirit all who are in sorrow or need, sickness or adversity, remember those who suffer persecution for the faith. Have mercy on those to whom death draws near, bring consolation to those in sorrow or mourning, and to all, grant a measure of your love, taking them into your tender care. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. We remember with thanksgiving those who have

loved and served you in your church on earth, who now rest from their labors, especially those most dear to us, whom we name before you in our hearts. Keep us in fellowship with all your Saints and bring us at last to the joy of your heavenly kingdom. Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer. All these things, and whatever else you see that we need, grant us, oh God, for the sake of him who died and rose again, and now lives and reigns with you in the unity of the Holy Spirit, one God for ever and ever. Amen. Christ invites to his table all who love him and who desire to live in peace with one another. Let us stand and offer each other signs of God's peace and love. And now, let us offer our gifts and ourselves unto God. (organ music) (choir singing) (organ music) (singing) The Lord be with you.

All: And also with you.

- Lift up your hearts

All: Lift up your hearts.

- Let us give thanks to the Lord our God. Blessed are you, Lord our God, creator and sovereign of the universe. Our light and our salvation. Before the mountains were brought forth or you had formed the earth, from everlasting to everlasting, you alone, are God. Therefore, with your people in all ages and the whole company of heaven, we join in the song of unending praise, saying Holy, Holy, Holy Lord, God of power and light, heaven and earth are full of your glory, hosanna and the highest, blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord, hosanna and the highest. Truly Holy are you, Lord God, in the fullness of time you revealed yourself in your blessed son, Jesus Christ, the light of the world. Through him, we are saved and baptized into your service. You sent a star to guide wise men to where the Christ was born, and your signs and witnesses in every age and through all the world have led persons from far distances to him. In his baptism and in his table fellowship, he identified with sinners, he preached good news to the poor, proclaimed release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, set free the oppressed and announced that the time had come when you would save your people. On the night his disciples betrayed and deserted him, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples and said, take, eat, this is my body which is given for you, do this in remembrance of me. When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples and said, drink from this, all of you, for this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many, for the forgiveness of sins. Do this as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me. By the baptism of his suffering, death and resurrection, you gave birth to your church. His presence has continued with his people as they have been baptized into him and in the breaking of bread and sharing of the cup, in Jerusalem and in all Judia and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth, therefore, in remembrance of all your mighty acts in Jesus Christ, we who in past years have been baptized into the death and resurrection of Christ, now offer ourselves to you and you, in union with Christ's sacrifice for us, as a living and holy surrender of ourselves. Send the power of your Holy Spirit on us and on these gifts, that in the breaking of this bread and the drinking of this wine, we may know the presence of the living Christ, be one body in him, cleansed by his blood and look forward to his coming in final victory. Through him, with him, in him, in the unity of the Holy Spirit, all honor and glory is yours, almighty God, now and forever. Amen. 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. (organ music) (singing) (choir singing) (organ music) (choir singing)

- Pour out upon us the spirit of your love, oh Lord, and unite the wills of those whom you have fed with one heavenly food. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, we pray. Amen. And now may the God of steadfastness and encouragement grant you to live in such harmony with one another in accord with Christ, Jesus, that together you may, with one voice, glorify the God and father of our Lord, Jesus Christ. Amen. (organ music) (singing) (organ music) (bell ringing) (organ music)