

(choir singing) (people coughing)

- The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, be with you.

Congregation: And with you.

- Good morning. Welcome to Duke Chapel. Our guest preacher today is the Reverend Dr. Thomas B. Stockton, Bishop of the United Methodist Church, serving the Richmond area. Dr. Stockton is a native of North Carolina and a graduate of Davidson College and Duke Divinity School. Dr. Stockton serves on the boards of many universities and institutions, including Duke's Board of Trustees and the Board of Visitors for the Divinity School. We are pleased to welcome he and his wife, Jean to this service of worship. Today's the first Sunday of Lent, a season of 40 days, not counting Sundays, which began on Ash Wednesday and will end on Holy Saturday. Lent comes from the Anglo-Saxon word "lencten" which means spring. It is a season of preparation for Easter, when we remember our sin in the light of God's redeeming love in Jesus Christ. It is traditional at Duke Chapel to begin this service with The Great Litany, whose extensive list of petitions calls us to repent for our sin. The offertory hymn based upon Psalm 86 is also in the penitential spirit and was written by David Arkis for this service and is being premiered today by our choir. It is our hope that this service, through its prayers, music, readings, and sermon, will prepare us to enter into a Lenten season of prayer, fasting, and self-examination. So that we might prepare ourselves to receive God's great gift of love to us through Jesus Christ, our Lord. We also, in preparing students for the season of Lent, are offering a Lenten meditation guide which is available through the chapel offices in the basement. You can come by either after the service or anytime during the week to pick that up. Let us continue our service of worship with a greeting. Please stand. Create in my a clean heart, oh God. (congregation murmuring an answer) Open my lips, oh Lord. (congregation murmuring an answer) ♪ Oh God, the Father, ♪ ♪ Creator of Heaven and Earth. ♪ ♪ Have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Oh God the Son, Redeemer of the world. ♪ ♪ Have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Oh God, the Holy Ghost, ♪ ♪ Sanctifier of the faithful ♪ ♪ Have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Oh holy blessed and glorious trinity, ♪ ♪ One God ♪ ♪ Have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Remember not, Lord Christ, our offenses ♪ ♪ Nor the offenses of our forbears ♪ ♪ Neither reward us according to our sins ♪ ♪ Spare us good Lord ♪ ♪ Spare thy people whom thou hast redeemed ♪ ♪ With thy most precious blood ♪ ♪ And by thy mercy, preserve us forever ♪ ♪ Good Lord, deliver us ♪ ♪ From all evil and wickedness, ♪ ♪ From sin, from the crafts and assaults of the devil ♪ ♪ And from everlasting damnation ♪ ♪ Good Lord, deliver us ♪ ♪ From all blindness of heart ♪ ♪ From crime, vain glory, and hypocrisy, ♪ ♪ From envy, hatred, and madness ♪ ♪ And from all want of charity ♪ ♪ Good Lord, deliver us ♪ ♪ From all inordinate and sinful affections ♪ ♪ And from the deceits of the world, the flesh and the devil ♪ ♪ Good Lord, deliver us ♪ ♪ From all false doctrine, heresy, and schism ♪ ♪ From hardness of heart and contempt of ♪ ♪ Thy word and commandment ♪ ♪ Good Lord, deliver us ♪ ♪ From lightening and tempest ♪ ♪ From earthquake, fire, and flood, ♪ ♪ From plague, pestilence, and famine ♪ ♪ Good Lord, deliver us ♪ ♪ From all oppression, conspiracy, and rebellion ♪ ♪ From violence, battle, and murder ♪ ♪ And from dying suddenly and unprepared ♪ ♪ Good Lord, deliver us ♪ ♪ By the mystery of thy holy

Incarnation, ♪ ♪ by thy holy Nativity and submission to the Law, ♪ ♪ by thy baptism, fasting, and temptation, ♪ ♪ Good Lord, deliver us. ♪ ♪ By thine agony and bloody sweat, ♪ ♪ by thy cross and passion ♪ ♪ by thy precious death and burial ♪ ♪ by thy glorious resurrection and ascension ♪ ♪ and by the coming of the Holy Ghost, ♪ ♪ Good Lord, deliver us. ♪ ♪ In all time of our tribulation ♪ ♪ in all time of our prosperity ♪ ♪ in the hour of death, and in the day of judgment, ♪ ♪ Good Lord, deliver us. ♪ ♪ We sinners do beseech thee to hear us, oh Lord God ♪ ♪ And that it may please thee to rule and govern ♪ ♪ Thy holy church universal in the right way ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to illumine all ♪ ♪ Bishops, priests, and deacons ♪ ♪ With true knowledge and understanding of thy word ♪ ♪ And that both by their preaching and living ♪ ♪ they may set it forth and shew it accordingly ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to bless and keep all thy people, ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to send forth laborers ♪ ♪ into thy harvest and to draw all people into thy kingdom ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to give ♪ ♪ all people increase of grace, ♪ ♪ To hear and receive thy word, ♪ ♪ And to bring forth the fruits of the spirit ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to bring into the way of truth ♪ ♪ All such as have erred and are deceived ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to give us a heart ♪ ♪ To love and fear thee, ♪ ♪ and diligently to live after thy commandments ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee so to rule ♪ ♪ The hearts of thy servants, ♪ ♪ the president of the United States, ♪ ♪ And all others in authority, ♪ ♪ That they may do justice and love mercy ♪ ♪ And walk in the ways of truth ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to make wars to cease ♪ ♪ In all the world, ♪ ♪ To give to all nations unity, peace, and conquer ♪ ♪ And to bestow freedom upon all people ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to show thy pity ♪ ♪ Upon all prisoners and captives, ♪ ♪ The homeless and hungry, ♪ ♪ And all who are desolate and oppressed ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to give and preserve to our use ♪ ♪ The bountiful fruits of the Earth ♪ ♪ So that in due time, all may enjoy them ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to inspire us ♪ ♪ In our several callings, ♪ ♪ To do the work which thou givest us to do ♪ ♪ With semblance of heart as thy servants ♪ ♪ And for the common good ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to preserve all who are in danger ♪ ♪ By reason of their labor or their travel ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to preserve and provide for ♪ ♪ All women in childbirth, young children and orphans, ♪ ♪ Widowed, and all whose homes are broken or torn by strife ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to visit the lonely, ♪ ♪ To strengthen all who suffer in mind, body, and spirit, ♪ ♪ And to comfort with thy presence those who are ♪ ♪ Failing and infirmed ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to support, help, and comfort ♪ ♪ All who are in danger, necessity, and tribulation ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to have mercy upon all people ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to give us true repentance, ♪ ♪ To forgive us all our sins, negligences, and ignorances ♪ ♪ And to endue us with the grace of thy holy spirit ♪ ♪ To amend our lives according to thy holy word ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to forgive our enemies, ♪ ♪ Persecutors, and slanderers and to turn their hearts ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to strengthen such as do stand, ♪ ♪ To comfort and help the weak hearted ♪ ♪ And to raise up those who fail ♪ ♪ And finally, to beat down Satan under our feet ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to grant to all the ♪ ♪ Faithful departed eternal life and peace ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ That it may please thee to grant that in the fellowship ♪ ♪ With all

sayings, we may attain to thy holy kingdom ♪ ♪ We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord ♪ ♪ Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us ♪ ♪ Son of God, we beseech thee to hear us ♪ ♪ Oh lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world ♪ ♪ Have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Oh lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world ♪ ♪ Have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Oh lamb of God, that takest away the sins of the world ♪ ♪ Grant us thy peace ♪ ♪ Oh Christ, hear us ♪ ♪ Oh Christ, hear us ♪ ♪ Lord, have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Christ have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ Lord, have mercy upon us ♪ ♪ 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. ♪ ♪ Oh Lord, let thy mercy be shown upon us ♪ (congregation singing response) ♪ Let us pray ♪ ♪ Oh mighty God, ♪ ♪ who hast promise to hear the petitions of those ♪ ♪ Who ask in thy son's name, ♪ ♪ We beseech thee, mercifully, to incline thy ear to us ♪ ♪ Who have now made our prayers and supplications unto thee ♪ ♪ And grant that those things which we have asked ♪ ♪ Faithfully according to thy will ♪ ♪ May be obtained effectually ♪ ♪ To the relief of our necessity ♪ ♪ And to the setting forth of thy glory ♪ ♪ Through Jesus Christ, our Lord ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ ♪ The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God ♪ ♪ And the fellowship of the Holy Ghost, ♪ ♪ Be with us forevermore ♪ ♪ Amen ♪ (congregation sitting) (people coughing)

- Let us pray the prayer for illumination. 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 your message with joy this day. Amen. The epistle was from the apostle Paul's letter to the Romans. Chapter five, verse 12 through 19. "Therefore, just as sin came into the world through one man, "and death came through sin, and so death spread to all "because all have sinned. "Sin was indeed in the world before the law, "but sin is not reckoned when there is no law. "Yet death exercised dominion from Adam to Moses, "even over those whose sins were not like "the transgression of Adam, "who is a type of the one who was to come. "But the free gift is not like the trespass. "For if the many died through the one man's trespass, "many more surely have the grace of God "and the free gift in the grace of the one man Jesus Christ "abounded for the many. "And the free gift is not like the "effect of the one man's sin. "For the judgment following one trespass "brought condemnation, but the free gift following "many trespasses brings justification. "If because of the one man's trespass, "death exercised dominion through that one, "much more surely will those who "receive the abundance of grace "and the free gift of righteousness "exercise dominion in life "through the one man, Jesus Christ. "Therefore, just as one man's trespass lead "to the condemnation for all, "so one man's act of righteousness lead to justification "and life for all. "For just as by the one man's disobedience, "the many were made sinners, "so by the one man's obedience, "the many will be made righteous." This is the word of the Lord. (congregation mutters response) (person coughing) (instrumental hymn music) (choir singing hymn)

- Choir, you lift our souls. And you make Rodney look so good. (congregation laughing) In the gospel, Matthew the 26th chapter, may we stand for the reading of the gospel. "When they had sung a hymn, "they went out to the Mount of Olives. "Then Jesus said to them, "'You will all fall away because of me this night. "'For it is written, I will strike the shepherd "'and the sheep of the flock will be scattered. "'But after I am raised up, "'I will go before you to Galilee.' "Peter declared to him, 'Though they all fall away "'because of you, I will never fall away.' "Jesus said to him, 'Truly I say to you, "'this very night, before the cock crows, "'you will deny me three times.' "Peter said to him, 'Even if I must die with you, "'I will never deny you.' "And

so said all of the disciples. "Then Jesus went with them to a place called Gethsemane "and he said to his disciples, "'Sit here while I go yonder and pray.'" And taking with him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, "he began to be sorrowful and troubled. "Then he said to them, 'My soul is very sorrowful "'even to death. "'Remain here and watch with me.'" And going a little farther, he fell on his face and prayed, "'My Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me. "'Nevertheless, not as I will, but as thou will.'" And he came to the disciples and found them sleeping "and he said to Peter, "'So, could you not watch with me one hour? "'Watch and pray that you may not enter into temptation. "'The spirit itself is willing, but the flesh is weak.'" Again, for a second time, he went away and prayed, "'My Father, if this cannot pass unless I drink it, "'thy will be done.'" And again he came and found them sleeping "for their eyes were heavy. "So leaving them again, he went away "and prayed for the third time, saying the same words. "Then he came to the disciples and said to them, "'Are you still sleeping and taking your rest? "'Behold, the hour is at hand "'and the son of man is betrayed into the hands of sinners. "'Rise, let us be going. "'See, my betrayer is at hand.'" This is the word of the Lord. (congregation mutters response) Let us be seated. And may we pray. O God, as we have come in these moments to worship you, we have the deep understanding that each one of us is precious to you. And you know that which is happening in our lives. We present ourselves, our innermost beings to you in these moments. Praying that out of that compassionate love of God, we may experience enabling strength for the living of each day. We pray for others who are hurting, asking that out of your love you will be at work in their lives to provide life. Also, may this worship experience this day be one that is pleasing to you. Through Jesus Christ our Lord, amen. Back during the horror of the Second World War, a Lutheran pastor in Holland took the enormous risk of hiding a Jewish family in his home as they sought to escape the clutches of the Nazi Gestapo. The pastor's family feared that they, too, risked death itself. And one night, the dreaded time came. There was the tromp, tromp, tromp of the Nazi troops, the breaking down of the door, the arrest of the Jewish family and of his family. They were herded into a train, a box car, destined for one of the German' Prisoners of War camps. One of those execution camps. The cattle car was so crowded that they could not lie down, they had to stand throughout the night. As they thought they were going to Dachau or Auschwitz or somewhere where there would be certain death. And then morning came, the train stopped, they were brought out of that cattle car and suddenly they realized, they were not in a prison camp. They were on the edge of Switzerland. They were free. During the night, some local guerrilla group had risked death to change the switches on the tracks so that the train did not go where it was destined to go, it went to the borders of Switzerland. And they were free. And the Dutch pastor, overwhelmed with the prospect, not of death but of life, responded, "What do you do with a gift like that? "What do you do with a gift like that?" Now for those of us who are followers of this Jesus Christ, today is the first Sunday of Lent. A time when we move toward experiencing afresh the gift. What God has done to give us that gift of life. And this is the time for us to examine in the innermost depths of our being, what do we do with a gift like that? One thing that we're doing for a gift like that is we are today. He has called us. He's called us to body, He's called us to fellowship, He's called us to worship. And then He sends us out. He sends us out as servants. Wherever we may live, wherever we may be, He sends us out. And at times, He sends us where we may not want to go. Indeed, Jesus himself was sent where he did not want to go. Matthew describes it. After they had been there in the upper room, they went across the Kidron valley, up to the Mount of Olives, into the Garden of Gethsemane. And Jesus took some of his disciples with him and he flung himself on the ground and he prayed, "Father, "let this cup pass from me. "Nevertheless, whatever it takes to fulfill my mission, "my purpose, I will do it. "If it can be, let this suffering, "this crucifixion pass from me. "But whatever it must take

"to bring life "to your children, then let it happen." And then the soldiers came. Judas came. Arrest came. Caiaphas came. Pilate and that mockery of a trial that walk up the Via Dolorosa. Nails driven into hands and feet and that agonizing crucifixion. He was sent to bring life. And though he did not want to go to the cross, that was essential. And so he went. Where he did not want to go. And he became Savior. And that's why he has the right to say to you and me, "Go, feed, clothe, make disciples. "Go and bring life to others. "Go to the poor." Even when we may not want to go. There is that silly story, and some of my divinity school professors here today would say, "You ought not to tell a silly story like this." But it's about the argument that St. Peter had with Satan. Over a baseball game with a beguiling sneer, Satan proposed that they have a game between a select team of the heavenly hosts and his handpicked Hades boys. "Very well," said the gatekeeper to the celestial city, "But you know we'll win. "We have all the best players, "we have all the best coaches." "I know," Satan said calmly, "but we have all the umpires." (laughter) No. No. Even Coach K wouldn't say the refs make all the bad decisions of life. We make those bad decisions. We sin. And because Jesus went where he did not want to go, you and I experience forgiveness and we experience that renewed relationship with God. And therefore He sends us where we may not want to go. First of all, He sends us to difficult situations of caring. The cross, that ultimate act of caring. And He sends us to care, He sends us as government, as church, as individuals to those who are in sorrow, who are in loneliness, who are in sin, who are in the hospitals, who may be down the hall from you in a dorm room, who may be in your own home. Our phone rang late one night a few years ago. The mother was on the line. A family that always were in trouble. The father had died of alcoholism, she worked on the line at the cafeteria, was in church whenever she could be there. The four children, always problems. This night, it was Melvin. "Would you come take Melvin to the hospital? "He's dying." I didn't want to go. But there was that divine nudge to go. We went to the emergency room. The nurses knew Melvin, he had been there often before, and they said, "Take him over there and "we'll work with him in a little while." Have you ever tried to hold down a bull of a young man who's on drugs? Finally, they came, gave him an injection and took care of him. We moved from that church and just a couple of years later, we received a telephone call. Melvin had died. His kidneys just couldn't handle the drugs. But just a few years ago, I received a telephone call from his sister. And she said, "Tom, Christ has found me. "And now I'm working with other families "who've had problems just like ours and, Tom, "I'm alive, "I'm alive." We're sent where we may not want to go to people who are hurting, to whom we can bring life. And then we're sent to difficult situation of justice issues dealing with racism, or capital punishment, or prison reform, or alcohol and drug abuse, or Palestinian experience of injustice, or environmental dangers, or poverty. Where it may not be easy to go. Where it may not be popular to go. Where we may not want to go. Dr. William Friday, former president of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the light blue school, spoke over here at the dark blue school just a couple of years ago. And he asked some pertinent questions. Have you eaten in a food kitchen lately? Have you attended a literacy class for adults? Have you been to a homeless shelter lately? Dr. Friday said, "I have. "I was self-conscious about going, but I'm grateful I did. "I saw what a million of our fellow North Carolinians "wake up to every morning." Dr. Friday concluded, "Can you imagine what it feels like "to live that way?" Listen to The Observer from rural North Carolina, "Poverty is always being on the edge "of good things going on. "You're never allowed to join in. "You don't ask. "Even for events that are free, "you stand in the shadows and accept. "That's the worst poverty of all, accepting. "Poverty is the color of a bruise, "a birthmark on your soul." I wonder if we here at sophisticated Duke University, or sophisticated United Methodist, wherever we may live. I wonder if we're willing to take that step, to go where we may not want to go, where it may even

be dangerous, but where God is calling us. The Christ says, "If you do not follow me to the poor, "you do not follow me." And thirdly, we're sent to be evangelists. You remember, after the resurrection, Jesus said to the disciples, "Go and make disciples." Go to those that do not know that God cares about them, even to a cross and resurrection, go and share. You do not have to buttonhole people to be evangelists, we merely say, "God's alive in me. "And God can make the difference in your life." You remember Salinger's novel, "The Catcher in the Rye." Holden Caulfield wishes to be somebody who can do something important in his life but he has trouble discovering what he might be. His sister Phoebe asks him, "What do you want to do with your life?" And he said, "You know what I'd like to be "if I had my choice? "You know that song, 'If a body catch a body coming ""through the rye'?" And Phoebe breaks in, "It's if a body meet a body coming through the rye." It's a poem by Robert Burns. Holden continues, "I thought it was if a body catch a body." Well, anyway, I keep picturing all these little kids playing a game on a big field of rye, thousands of little kids and nobody big is around except me. And I'm standing on the edge of this crazy cliff and what I do is, to catch these little children, when they run too close to the edge and are about to fall off, I mean, they're running back and forth and I just step out and catch them before they fall off the cliff. I'd be a catcher in the rye and all. That's what I'd like to be. God in Christ is sending you and me to be catchers. Those who are falling off the edge of life and are missing it. And we draw them back to God's love in Christ so that they may live. Even when we're sent where we may not want to go. Now, back to the master. Sent to be Savior. And he did it. He walked the way of Golgotha, he did not want to go to that cross. He said, "Father, if it's possible for me to "fulfill the mission of bringing life without the cross, "let that be." But in going to be Savior, he came to Good Friday. And so may you and I come to times when we may have to suffer, when we may have to sacrifice and I don't like to think about all of that but that's what we're called to do. That's what Lent calls us to do. To examine where He's sending us, even where we may not want to go. But remember, Sunday came and the Christ walked right through that grave to life. And Sunday comes for you and me. If we have to experience our Fridays, our crucifixions, our sacrifices, there comes that openness of life that nothing finally destroys. Tony Campolo tells of the experience of a school teacher, Miss Thompson. In her fifth grade class, there was a young boy named Teddy Stallard. And Miss Thompson just didn't like him. He didn't study much, he didn't look very neat or clean. She had forgotten that his teachers in the former grades had said that Teddy's mother had died and that Teddy's dad didn't care much about him and didn't help him very much. But at Christmas, all the boys and girls brought gifts to miss Thompson. And after she had opened all of them, she opened Teddy's in a paper bag with a little scotch tape. And out rolled a gaudy rhinestone bracelet with most of the stones missing and a half a bottle of perfume. The children began to giggle but she had sense enough to know to say, "Thank you, Teddy. "I like it on my arm." And she put a little dab of the perfume on her neck. After all of the children had left, Teddy came up to Miss Thompson and said, "Miss Thompson, my mother's bracelet looks so good on you. "And you smell just like she used to smell." Miss Thompson went home that night. Thought about, thought about her approach to teaching. And she became a different teacher. A different teacher to Teddy. Doing things now that she had never wanted to do before. Teddy became a different student. A few years later, Miss Thompson hadn't heard from Teddy for a few years but she received a letter. "Dear Miss Thompson, "I'm graduating from high school. "Second in my class. "Love, Teddy." Four years later, another note. "Dear Miss Thompson, "I'm graduating from college first in my class. "Love, Teddy." And then, a few years later, "Dear Miss Thompson, "I am Teddy Stallard, MD, "how bout that? "And I'm getting married in August, the 23rd, "and I wish you would come and sit "where my mother would normally sit. "You're the only family I have. "Love, Teddy." Miss Thompson went. Went now where she

wanted to go. Because, years before, she had gone where she had not wanted to go but where God had pushed her. And now, she was different. And Teddy was different. Because she was willing to go where she had not wanted to go. Let us bow. God, we're so thankful that your son, Jesus Christ, walked the way he had to walk in order to be that giver of life to us. Even though he did not want a cross, yet he was willing to go the route that was essential to be faithful to you. And now in this Lenten season, enable each one of us to be aware of what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Give us sensitivity. Give us alertness. Give us awareness of people around us with whom we should share life and love. Give us awareness of the issues of life that we should be involved with, even if it's unpopular. Give us the courage to be in the midst of a world that is so contrary to your yearnings, but to be faithful. And in the midst of it all, as we go where we may not want to go, but where you are challenging us to be faithful, give to us that deep inner sense of life that comes only from discipleship with the master. In whose name we pray, amen. (hymn music)

- [Woman With Short Brown hair] As Christ loved us and gave himself up for us, a fragrant offering and sacrifice to God, so let us present the offerings of our life and labor to the Lord. You may be seated. (organ playing a calm hymn) (instrumental hymn music) (choir singing a hymn) (instrumental hymn music) (choir singing a hymn) (organ playing hymn music)

- Let us pray. God of all mercies, we give you humble thanks for all your goodness and loving kindness to us and to all whom you have made. We bless you for our creation, preservation, and all the blessings of life. But above all, for your immeasurable love in the redemption of the world by our Lord, Jesus Christ. For the means of grace and for the hope of glory. And we pray, give us such an awareness of your mercies, that with truly thankful hearts, we may show forth your praise not only with our lips, but in our lives. By giving up ourselves to your service and by walking before you in holiness and righteousness all our days. Through Jesus Christ, our Lord, to whom, with you in the Holy Spirit be honor and glory throughout all ages, amen. (organ playing hymn) (congregation singing hymn)

- May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Ghost be with us all forevermore. Amen. (choir singing hymn) (cheerful organ music)