

(light orchestral music) (energetic orchestral music) (lively orchestral music) (light orchestral music)
(energetic orchestral music) (lively choral music) ("Sing Praise to God Who Reigns Above") ♪ Sing praise to
God who reigns above ♪ ♪ The God of all creation ♪ ♪ The God of power, the God of love ♪ ♪ The God of our
salvation ♪ ♪ With healing balm my soul is filled ♪ ♪ And every faithless murmur stilled ♪ ♪ To God all praise
and glory ♪ ♪ What God's almighty power hath made ♪ ♪ His gracious mercy keepeth ♪ ♪ By morning glow or
evening shade ♪ ♪ His watchful eye ne'er sleepeth ♪ ♪ Within the kingdom of His might ♪ ♪ Lo all is just and
all is right ♪ ♪ To God all praise and glory ♪ ♪ The Lord is never far away ♪ ♪ But through all grief distressing ♪
♪ An ever present help and stay ♪ ♪ Our peace and joy and blessing ♪ ♪ As with a mother's tender hand ♪ ♪ He
leads his hope, his chosen band ♪ ♪ To God all praise and glory ♪ ♪ Thus all my toilsome way along ♪ ♪ I sing
aloud thy praises ♪ ♪ That earth may hear the grateful song ♪ ♪ My voice unwearied raises ♪ ♪ Be joyful in the
Lord, my heart ♪ ♪ Both soul and body bear your part ♪ ♪ To God all praise and glory ♪ ♪ Let all who name
Christ's holy name ♪ ♪ Give God all praise and glory ♪ ♪ All he who own his power proclaim ♪ ♪ Aloud the
wondrous story ♪ ♪ Cast each false idol from its throne ♪ ♪ The Lord is God and Him alone ♪ ♪ To God all
praise and glory ♪ ♪ Amen ♪

- Let us come to prayer in God asking forgiveness of our sins. Let us pray. Our God, creator of all things, and
source of all truth, we ask your forgiveness for the sins of the mind, the pride of thinking that we are masters
of creation and history, dishonesty and slackness in our studies, doubts about your power to make all things
new, for our fear of the future and the unknown. Cleanse our minds from unbelief and false doctrines that
we may move into the future. Friends and brothers and sisters in Jesus Christ, hear this good news, that
Christ died for us while we were yet sinners. That that is God's own proof of his love for us in the name of
Jesus Christ our Savior, our Lord, I rejoice and declare that we are forgiven. Let us give thanks for God is
good and God's love is everlasting. (congregation murmuring) (light organ music) (singing in foreign
language)

- Let us pray that God may illumine our hearts. Lord, open our hearts and minds by the power of your Holy
Spirit, that as the Scriptures are read and the power of the word proclaimed, we may hear with joy what you
say to us today, amen. Will the congregation rise for the reading of the gospel. The gospel is Luke's. Chapter
12, verses 32-48. Fear not little flock, for it is your father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Sell your
possessions, and give alms. Provide yourselves with purses that do not grow old, with a treasure in the
heavens that does not fail, where no thief approaches, and no moth destroys. For where your treasure is,
there will your heart be also. Let your loins be girded and your lamps burning. And be like people who are
waiting for their master to come home from the marriage feast so that they may open to him at once when
he comes and knocks. Blessed are those servants whom the master finds awake when he comes. Truly I say
to you, he will gird himself and have them sit at table, and he will come and serve them. If he comes in the
second watch or in the third, he finds them so. Blessed are those servants. But know this. That if the
householder had known at what hour the thief was coming, he would have been awake and would not have
left his house to be broken into. You also must be ready. For the son of man is coming at an hour you do not

expect. Peter said, Lord are you telling this parable for us or for everyone? And the Lord said, who then is the faithful and wise steward whom his master will set over his household to give them their portion of food at the proper time? Blessed is that servant whom his master when he comes will find so doing. Truly I tell you, he will set him over all his possessions. But if that servant says to himself, my master is delayed in coming and he begins to beat the manservants and the maidservants, and to eat, and drink, and to get drunk, the master of that servant will come on a day when he does not expect him and at an hour he does not know, and will punish him, and put him with the unfaithful. And that servant who knew his master's will but did not make ready or act according to his will will receive a severe beating. But the one who did not know and did what deserved a beating shall receive a light beating. Everyone to whom much is given, of that person will much be required. And of the one to whom men commit much, they will demand the more. May God bless us, give us understanding to this reading of his word, amen. (light organ and choral music)

- Just one little word of warning. You may want to be prepared because I have an idea that about 20 minutes til 12, or a quarter of 12, there may be some folks who will come wandering in having forgotten to move their clocks forward. So there may be those to join us a little later. There's some very simple things I want to say this morning. Simple, clear, I hope understandable. Real, honest, words of warning to you and to me, words of opportunity, words of hope. We come now to this, the end of another academic year, 1977-78. It seems like a very short time since we began the new year with worship here the last Sunday in August. For some, these days have come and gone very quickly. For some, these days have come and have gone very slowly. The days have been heavy and light, happy and sad, hopeful and despairing, satisfying and frustrating. The times have been trying, tear-filled, traumatic, and tense. The moments have been joyful, happy, exciting, rewarding, good, and pleasing. And for most all of us I'm sure, really good during the latter part of the basketball season. There has been death. There has been life. There has been success. There has been failure. We have seen integrity. We have known deceit. We have felt acceptance. We have known prejudice. Regardless of what has happened to any of us or to all of us, none of us today is the person he or she was in September. We come to the end of this academic year. I come also to the end of my fifth year here as in service as minister to the university. There are many things around this place that thrill me, and excite me, and make me feel very hopeful. There are some things around here that I find very disturbing, and about which I am most concerned. Using Jesus' words in Luke chapter 12 as an opening, I want to share some words of love and concern with you today as I look upon this university as a community of faculty, staff, and students. We are a very privileged community. Frankly I have pondered that sentence. And to be quite honest with you, I can think of no way in which we are not a privileged community. And Jesus says, everyone to whom much is given, of him or her will much be required. I say we are a privileged community this morning not to make any one of us feel guilty, but to make each one of us feel responsible. We're privileged with rooms, apartments, or homes we live in. We are privileged with the clothes we wear. Even with or maybe especially with the jeans we now wear that cost \$25-\$30 a pair. We're privileged with the healthcare which we have to give to ourselves and to offer to others. We're privileged with the food we eat in the dining halls, or in our rooms, or apartments, or homes. We're privileged with the education we have or are getting at a cost of some six to \$7,000 per year. You say, education a privilege? Yes, and particularly in North Carolina where still even today, only 5% of the adult population in North Carolina has a college education or better. We're privileged with the beauty of buildings, and grounds, and space, and acres of open and uninhabited land, not like many other spots for living and learning set aside anywhere else on the

face of this earth. Privileged, yes. You, me, all of us here this morning. And you ask me, and I think quite rightly so, is there anything wrong with being privileged? I say no. Nothing at all except that we need to be reminded, as William Barclay does, that knowledge and privilege always, always bring responsibility. He says sin is doubly sin to the person who knows better. Failure is doubly blameworthy to the person who has every chance to do well. That's really all I want to say this morning. Privilege is ours, yours and mine. Responsibility is ours also. There's some real dangers in being among the privileged. We begin to feel that we are privileged because of something we have, or something we own, or something we have done. We begin to feel that others owe us something, that the world is ours simply for the asking, or the taking. We often begin to use others as tools toward an end and not treat them as real persons. We begin to think that life ought to go smoothly, and happily, and successfully for us. We begin to feel that we have every right to what we want or to what we would like to have. Often with privilege comes isolation and estrangement. We close everyone else, including God, out of our lives and live life just on our own. And Jesus says, everyone to whom much is given, of him or her will much be required. Joanna Dewey in her book *Disciples of the Way* warns those of us who claim to want to follow in the way of our Lord. The way of Jesus and the way of the disciples following in his path is contrary to the way of the world. It goes against all natural or worldly expectations we may have. Life indeed may be the greatest value. But we only receive life at the cost of giving it up. Service to others is the way of this strange life that God reveals through Jesus. We cannot earn life no matter how hard we try. The way is given us by Jesus, but it is very hard indeed. I guess the reason I think we are privileged, and this concerns me, is that as I think about the world around us as I see it and believe it is today, and as I recall the world as it was say five years ago, or 10 years ago, or 15 years ago as we knew it around us, it seems to me that we who are privileged have not made much progress in healing the hurts of the world. Or in helping our neighbors who are different to find more meaning and dignity in life, or in helping the hungry to be fed, or those in ghettos to find a better way. In spite of all of the turmoil, and trauma, and struggle, of the '50s, and '60s, and '70s, we are still living in a land of racism, of separatism, and segregation, and discrimination. In spite of all of the publicity and the periodic outcries of bread for the world, there are still literally millions of starving, suffering, malnourished, and hungry peoples on this earth. There is war and rumor of war. The arms race is still going frantically on. The proliferation of nuclear arms and weapons of war continues unabated. The threat to the ecological imbalance of the world continues with large scale strip mining, offshore drilling, and the pollution of air, and water, and land. No, as I look around, it seems to me that we who are privileged still have much to do with that which has been given to us. And there's a word of warning for us in Ecclesiasticus who writes, one man grows rich by carefulness and greed. And this will be his reward. When he says, now I can rest and enjoy my goods, he does not know when the time will come when he will die and leave them to others. We do not know. We who have been given much are not to hoard or hold back, or be greedy, or lay aside, or just use for ourselves, or for pleasures, or for waiting until tomorrow. This it seems to me is a constant theme in Jesus' teaching and preaching. This is the message in the story of the prodigal son. Use what is yours but use it well and use it responsibly. This is the message in the parable of the talents. Use what you are given and use it now. Do not bury it. This is the message in the parable of the good Samaritan. Care for others even with the risk. Care for and love your neighbor who is in need. This is the message and the parable of Dives and Lazarus. Use all that you have been given to help heal those around you now. This is the warning Jesus gives us about the last judgment. If you have fed the hungry, and clothed the naked, and visited the sick, and gone to those in prison, then you have done those very living, caring things to Jesus himself. Enter in, the word is, inherit the kingdom which

has been prepared for you. So we of the Judeo-Christian tradition have been given much. God's word, God's love, God's care, God's call, God's claim have come to us. This is why the series week before last about the Holocaust and all of the thinking that some of us have been doing about the Holocaust. This is why all of this was so utterly devastating and so totally destructive to Jews and to the Christian way of life. When you can stand singing Christmas carols around the piano as they did in that movie and talk about destroying children, and young men, and women in gas-filled chambers, there's something wrong with what we have inherited. But one reason that this was so utterly destructive was that all of our religious heritage, all of it for 5,000 or 7,000 years, seemed to be going for naught. It meant absolutely nothing when the real test both to Christians and Jews came. Obedience to God was not thought of. Cooperating with the state, obeying the state was the only thing for most Christians and Jews. But we have been given a story from Abraham's day to our own day. We have been given a gospel of God's unending love, of God's ceaseless demand and command. The story is old but true. Love God with all your heart and soul, and mind, and strength, and your neighbor as yourself. This is the story. And we're called as Chad Walsh says, to sing the story, that is to live the story. To sing the story until you and the story, and the music are one. Everyone to whom much is given, of him or her will much be required. We really are a privileged community. We really are a community of privileged persons. Much has been given to each of us and to all of us. And as I think of the ending of this year, I can't help but think about oh how great it would be to know that out of this class of graduates, or out of those who have been here this year, that there is someone who would leave this place, or even someone who would stay around, or maybe many someones, who would take what has been given in mind, and body, and spirit. Someone or many someones who would take your life and give it to feeding the hungry, really working to see that food is found and distributed to the hungry and the starving. To healing the sick and the diseased in places of the world where there are no doctors, or nurses, and the need is great and the pay is nil. Not go to places like Boone, North Carolina where 10 years ago there were five doctors in that little town. And now that it has become a very popular resort area, we're told, my wife and I were told the other day, that there are now 28 doctors in that little town. Give your life to visiting and caring for those in prison. In North Carolina where this concern is needed desperately to bring redemption and hope to those broken. Broken in mind, and body, and spirit. Where there are more people on death row in this one state than in all the other states put together. Giving yourself to going to the lonely and the shut-in. Those in rest homes, and nursing homes, and high rise apartments for the elderly. Going anywhere where we have chosen to put the elderly out of sight and out of the way and care for them. Show concern and love and bring hope to them. Maybe there is one person, just one from this year's class or this university this year who will end this year with a new commitment to care in the name of Jesus, the living Christ, to use all or even most of what has been given. Not to get to be the richest doctor or surgeon, or the most affluent business man or business woman, or to gain a place with the most prestigious law firm, or to study religion at the most noteworthy university. But maybe just maybe, there will be one from our midst who will be religious. With all of your heart, and soul, and mind, and strength, with your whole self. Someone who will take what God has given you and do as God requires and wants. Give your all to God in service to others. And be willing, as Wallace Fowlie suggested to us from this same pulpit last Sunday, to take the kind of blind risk, that blind faithful risk, that the thief did on the cross who believed in Jesus our Lord, and give yourself to him, and to love in his name. There's a beautiful passage of scripture. Some of the football players here this morning may just by some quirk of fate remember it. Because it was the basis of the first meditation I had with the football team four years ago. That passage of scripture where Jesus says, greater love has no one

than this, that one should lay down one's life for one's friend. I used to read those words, I would read that passage, or I would hear somebody read it and I would say, well you know, that really doesn't apply to me. That word has not come to me. It has not spoken to me. I have never been in a place, or in a situation where I have had the opportunity to literally lay down my life for someone else. I have never been out in a boat, or swimming, when someone was nearly to drown, and had the opportunity, the tragic opportunity to try to rescue them. I have never come across an accident where someone was near death and I had to risk my life. I've never been near a burning house where someone was dying or near dying and had to risk myself. I've never been in war. I have never had, and I'm not sure that I want it, but I have never had the opportunity of literally laying down my life for someone else. And I would read those words and say, that really doesn't apply to me after all. But then one day, I read those words in a new light, and in a new way, and I said, they do speak to me. And I think they speak to all of us, whether you have ever had the opportunity or will ever have the opportunity of literally laying down your life for someone else. Because as I see, and read, and understand those words now, they say to me that anytime anyone lays down a part of himself, or herself for somebody else, if you give somebody a little bit of your time, if you really listen, really listen and hear the hurts and the longings of somebody else, if you reach out with your hand and tenderly, lovingly, caringly take somebody else's hand when they are hurting, and help them to know a way of life again, if you put your arms around somebody, if you really give of yourself to somebody else, that's all you can give. That is your life. Your time and yourself. And greater love has no one than this than to lay down some of one's self for somebody else. Those to whom much is given, of him or her will much be required. Teilhard de Chardin has a line that is filled with beauty and meaning I think. Someday, he writes, after mastering the winds, and the waves, and the tide, and the gravity, we shall harness for God the energies of love. And then for the second time in the history of the world, we will have discovered fire. Someday, someday when we have harnessed all else, maybe for God we will harness the energies of love and will have for the second time in the history of us all discovered a fire that can never be quenched, never be put out, and will continue burning and reaching out to others. Someday, someday. Could that someday not begin today? Amen. ("Oh God of Earth and Altar") ♪ Oh God of earth and altar ♪ ♪ Bow down and hear our cry ♪ ♪ Our earthly rulers falter ♪ ♪ Our people drift and die ♪ ♪ The walls of gold entomb us ♪ ♪ The swords of scorn divide ♪ ♪ Take not thy thunder from us ♪ ♪ But take away our pride ♪ ♪ From all that terror teaches ♪ ♪ From lies of tongue and pen ♪ ♪ From all the easy speeches ♪ ♪ That comfort cruel men ♪ ♪ From sale and profanation ♪ ♪ Of honor and the sword ♪ ♪ From sleep and from damnation ♪ ♪ Deliver us, good Lord ♪ ♪ Tie in a living tether ♪ ♪ The prince and priest and thrall ♪ ♪ Bind all our lives together ♪ ♪ Smite us and save us all ♪ ♪ In ire and exultation ♪ ♪ Aflame with faith, and free ♪ ♪ Lift up a living nation ♪ ♪ A single sword to thee ♪ ♪ Amen ♪

- Let us affirm what we believe.

Congregation: 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 by 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.

Congregation: And with your spirit.

- Let us pray. We have felt your presence here among us oh God. And knowing that you are here, we call upon you now daring to presume that you care about your children. You who are both guiding father and nurturing mother to us. Take us under your wing oh holy God, protecting us when we need comfort in a cold and harsh world, and pushing us out when we can make that world less harsh, less cold for someone else. There are many in this community for whom we would pray now. There are students here who still have work to do, exams to take. We ask for them clear minds, confidence in their abilities, and a singleness of purpose for the time being to complete the task at hand. There are faculty persons here who must give the exams, and who must make decisions about quality of work done over a semester's time. For them we pray a fairness of spirit and the wisdom to make decisions in the best interest of the students. We ask your presence as we and this community draw to a close another academic year. We have finished another step, another year and it is time now to move on. Challenge us to meet the future with hope and with responsibility for that future, whether we find ourselves going home for a time, continuing as usual on this campus, perhaps beginning a new job, leaving good friends behind, and hoping to make new ones. We pray for the larger community represented here this morning. You know the individual needs oh God. Make your presence known even as we lift these people before you in this time of prayer. We are grateful for this time of joining together in prayer and worship. May the resources of this university and this city be joined together to meet the needs of our community, feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, rehabilitating the prisoners, fighting prejudice, comforting the sad and weary. And may we reach beyond the walls of this university, and the boundaries of Durham, and make our influence felt even to the ends of the earth. For we know we are among the world's most fortunate and so we do have much to give. Make us aware of those to whom we can minister. And as you touch the lives of the needy, use us to touch them also. As we approach election day in this community and state, we pray, oh God, for those who are running for office, and for those who will be electing the officeholders. We ask your blessings on the candidates, for those who will lose, though they may have given the race their best, and for those who will win. We pray for compassionate and fair-minded leaders who will be making decisions on our behalf. Give the voters a sense of responsibility for helping to choose our leadership. Let us not be ruled by apathy or despair, but give us the knowledge that each vote is important. And may we find hope always for a better government, knowing that you have given us the right to hope through your love, and the gift of your son Jesus who taught us to pray this prayer together.

Congregation: 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. ("Lord, Thou Hast Been Our Refuge") ♪ Lord, thou hast been our refuge ♪ ♪ From one generation to another ♪ ♪ Oh God ♪ ♪ Our help in ages past ♪ ♪ Before the mountains were brought forth ♪ ♪ Or ever the earth and the world were made ♪ ♪ Our hope ♪ ♪ For years to come ♪ ♪ Thou art God ♪ ♪ From everlasting and world without end ♪ ♪ Thou turnest man to destruction ♪ ♪ Our shelter ♪ ♪ From the stormy blast ♪ ♪ Again Thou sayest ♪ ♪ Come again ye children of men ♪ ♪ For a thousand years in Thy sight are ♪ ♪ But as

yesterday ♪

♪ And our eternal home ♪ ♪ Seeing that is past as a watch in the night ♪ ♪ As soon as thou scatterest them, ♪
♪ They are even as asleep ♪ ♪ And fade away suddenly ♪ ♪ Like the grass ♪ ♪ In the morning it is green and
groweth up ♪ ♪ But in the evening it is cut down ♪ ♪ Dried out and withered ♪ ♪ For we consume ♪
♪ For we consume ♪ ♪ Away in thy displeasure ♪
♪ Away in thy displeasure ♪ ♪ And are afraid at thy wrathful indignation ♪ ♪ For when thou art angry, all our
days are gone ♪ ♪ We bring our years to an end ♪ ♪ As a tale that is told ♪ ♪ The days of our age are threescore
years and ten ♪ ♪ And though men be so strong that they come ♪ ♪ To fourscore years ♪ ♪ Yet is their strength
then but labor and sorrow. ♪ ♪ So passeth it away, and we are gone ♪ ♪ Turn thee again, oh Lord ♪ ♪ At the
last ♪ ♪ Be gracious unto thy servants ♪ ♪ Oh satisfy us with thy mercy ♪ ♪ And that soon ♪ ♪ So shall we
rejoice and be glad all the days of our life ♪ ♪ Lord, thou hast been our refuge ♪ ♪ From one generation to
another ♪ ♪ Before the mountains were brought forth ♪ ♪ Or ever the earth and the world were made ♪ ♪
Thou art God from everlasting ♪ ♪ And world without end ♪ ♪ And the glorious Majesty of the Lord ♪ ♪ Be
upon us ♪ ♪ Prosper Thou ♪ ♪ Oh prosper Thou the work of our hands upon us ♪ ♪ Oh prosper now, prosper
now ♪ ♪ Prosper now Thou our handy work ♪ ("Doxology") ♪ Praise God from whom all blessings flow ♪ ♪
Praise Him all creatures here below ♪ ♪ Hallelujah, hallelujah ♪ ♪ Praise Him above ye heavenly host ♪ ♪
Praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost ♪ ♪ Hallelujah, hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah, hallelujah ♪ ♪ Hallelujah ♪ ♪ Amen
♪

- Holy God, accept these gifts, a mere symbol of our sacrifice to thee. May we ever keep in mind that with our blessings come responsibilities, and that these gifts are but the beginning of our commitment to you and to the world, amen. ("Rejoice, the Lord Is King") ♪ Rejoice, the Lord is King ♪ ♪ Your Lord and King adore ♪ ♪
Rejoice, give thanks, and sing, and triumph evermore ♪ ♪ Lift up your heart ♪ ♪ Lift up your voice, rejoice ♪ ♪
Again I say, rejoice ♪ ♪ Jesus, the Savior, reigns ♪ ♪ The God of truth and love ♪ ♪ When He had purged our
stains ♪ ♪ He took His seat above ♪ ♪ Lift up your heart ♪ ♪ Lift up your voice, rejoice ♪ ♪ Again I say, rejoice ♪
♪ His kingdom cannot fail, ♪ ♪ He rules o'er earth and Heav'n ♪ ♪ The keys of death and hell are to our Jesus
giv'n ♪ ♪ Lift up your heart ♪ ♪ Lift up your voice, rejoice ♪ ♪ Again I say, rejoice ♪ ♪ Rejoice in glorious hope ♪
♪ The Lord, the Judge shall come ♪ ♪ And take His servants up to their eternal home ♪ ♪ Lift up your heart ♪ ♪
Lift up your voice, rejoice ♪ ♪ Again, I say rejoice ♪ ♪ Amen ♪

- The sermon this morning suggests that the benediction should also be a charge. And so here is our blessing, that we are the chosen children of God. And here is our charge, that we should go forth into the world with our good news, proclaiming the love of God to others, healing the sick, strengthening the weak-hearted, grappling with the powers and principalities, and in everything we do, showing to the world who the Lord of our lives is, amen. ♪ Amen, Amen, Amen ♪ ♪ Amen, Amen ♪ ♪ Amen, Amen ♪ (upbeat orchestral music) (congregation buzzing)