The Prophetic Church

The Role of the Prophet

- Lonesome, Strong Man
- Speaks in the Name of the Lord
  - God has a will for all men.

1. His will is related to the issue of life
   - Egoism - false uprising
   - Racism - foreign uprising
   - Inequality - the mistreatment of the poor.

Jesus in the Synagogue at Nazareth

"The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captive, and recovering of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed, to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord."
3. Great Prophetic Statement
   - Good News to Poor
   - Release to Captives
   - Sight to the Blind
   - Liberty to the Oppressed

4. Message of Deliverance and Freedom
   - Free Church & House in Place of Temple
   - Royal Passport
   - With All Agency and Any Other Means
     - Vision Reformed
     - Cleric and Sisters
     - Hospitals and Places of Healing
     - Freedom and Mercy to the Oppressed
3. Our Giant Task of Worship
   - The Consecration of the House of God
   - The Holy Arm that Flames Out

2. Called to Purity
   - False Worship and Cheaper Grace
     - Our Crime Situation
     - The White Breakdown of Moral Values
   - The Violation of Person
     - The Exploitation of Anyone at Our Mercy
   - The Cry for Sanity in a War-ridden Culture
     - Nuclear Fear, Man and the Murder of Peace
The Changing of Old Way

- The Gospel coming to Ephesus
  - As people change they no longer buy statues of Artemis.
  - People are written and there is a list.

- When the Gospel affects the economic and political life
  - Wesley Revivals

Our Prophetic Role

- Willingness to listen and learn
  - Revitalizing the Christian conscience

- Obedience to the will of Christ in the word
  - Speak the word and perform the act

- Join with other Christians we are doing
March 5, 1967

A Word of Christian Greeting

1. Welcome

The Word of Concern

1. Gratitude for the flowers
   --given by Mrs. Charles Johnson in memory of her husband.

2. Rosebuds
   --in honor of a daughter, Debra Joy, born to Mr. and Mrs. Garth Neisess
   --in honor of a daughter, Debra Ann, born to Mr. and Mrs. Roger Larson

3. The Evening Worship
   --Service of Communion
March 5, 1967

CALL TO WORSHIP
He that dwelleth in the secret place of the most high shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the Lord, He is my refuge and my fortress, my God. In Him will I trust.

INVOCATION
Lord, we would dedicate this hour to Thee, praying that Thy presence will be near each of us. If we have come in a spirit of fear, give to us peace. If we have come in a spirit of discouragement, give to us Thy strength. If we have come in a spirit of joy, accept our gratitude. For it is our prayer that as we leave this sanctuary we will be able to say that it has indeed been good to be in the house of the Lord, for we ask this in the name of Thy Son who has taught us to pray, saying. . .

CALL TO PRAYER
Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? Or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands and a pure heart, who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive a blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation.
"Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth." Philippians 2:9, 10

LOOK, YE SAINTS! THE SIGHT IS GLORIOUS
Organ Prelude—"Meditation and Adagio" (First Organ Symphony)
Charles Marie Widor

The Chimes
Call to Worship
Processional Hymn—"Holy, Holy, Holy, Lord God Almighty" 107
The Invocation
The Lord's Prayer and Gloria

**Children's Anthems—"Jesus, Our Friend" Elda Baker
"A Happy Day" Esther Frievogel

Service of Baptism
A Word of Christian Greeting

EVERY KNEE TO HIM SHALL BOW
Call to Prayer
Pastoral Prayer
Choral Response

CROWN THE SAVIOUR KING OF KINGS
Receiving Our Tithes and Offerings
*Organ Offertory—"O God I Will Not Leave Thee" Merritt Johnson
**Offertory Anthem—"Let All the World" Robert Baker
Sanctuary Choir
Let all the world in ev'ry corner sing My God and King! The heav'n's are not too high, His praise may thither fly! The earth is not too low, His praises there may grow. The church with psalms must shout; No door can keep them out! But above all the heart Must bear the longest part.

Doxology and Prayer of Dedication
*Anthem—"Alleluia! Sing to Jesus!" Gladys Pitcher
Senior High Choir
Alleluia! Sing to Jesus! His the scepter, His the throne; Alleluia! His the triumph! His the mighty vict'ry alone; Hark the song of Sion thunder like a flood: Jesus hath redeem'd us by His blood.

SPREAD ABROAD THE VICTOR'S FAME
Reading of the Holy Scriptures—Responsive Reading No. 28, New Testament
The Introit
*The Sermon—"A Prophetic Church" Dr. Roger L. Fredrikson
**The Movie—"One Mission"

SAINTS AND ANGELS CROWD AROUND HIM
Hymn of Dedication and Decision—"An Endless Line of Splendor" 534
The Word of Concern
Benediction and Choral Response
Moment of Silence
The Chimes
Organ Postlude

*First Service Only.... **Second Service Only.... ***Ushers May Seat Latecomers
The flowers in the sanctuary today are given by Mrs. Charles Johnson in memory of her husband.

The radio broadcast this morning over KELO is sponsored by Mr. and Mrs. H. S. Messinger.
EVENING SERVICE
7:30 P.M.

Organ Prelude
Hymns of Worship
Evening Prayer and The Lord's Supper
The Invocation to the Lord's Supper
The Solo—"The Lamb" .......................................................... Theodore Chanler
Truman Dalton, baritone
The Communion Meditation—"A New Kind of Place".....Dr. Roger L. Fredrikson
The Eating of the Bread
The Drinking of the Cup
Receiving the Fellowship Offering
Hymn of Dedication and Decision
Benediction
Closing Moments—"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"
Moment of Silence
The Chimes
Organ Postlude

THIS WEEK

SUNDAY, March 5—6:00 p.m.—Adult Membership Class Session IV, "History of the Church," Parlor

MONDAY, March 6—4:00 p.m.—Girl Scouts, Youth Room
4:00 p.m.—Youth Membership Class, Parlor
7:00 p.m.—Explorer Scouts, Youth Room

TUESDAY, March 7—9:00 a.m.—Women's Bible Study, Youth Room
3:30 p.m.—Brownie Scouts, Youth Room
7:00 p.m.—Church Calling

WEDNESDAY, March 8—6:45 a.m.—Women's Bible Study, YMCA
9:30 a.m.—4:30 p.m.—May Basket Project, Youth Room
4:30 p.m.—Junior Choir, Choir Room
7:00 p.m.—Midweek Prayer Service
7:30 p.m.—Workers' Conference, Youth Room

THURSDAY, March 9—12:00 noon—Board of Trustees
1:15 p.m.—Jr. Philathea Class, Parlor
7:30 p.m.—Sanctuary Choir, Fellowship Hall

FRIDAY, March 10—6:45 a.m.—Men's Bible Study, YMCA

SATURDAY, March 11—10:00 a.m.—Children's Membership Class, Parlor

CHURCH STAFF

MINISTERIAL:
Dr. Roger L. Fredrikson ...........Pastor
Rev. J. David Mallgren....Assoc. Pastor
Rev. Daniel W. Holland ....Minister of Christian Education
Rev. Robert Veninga .................Youth

MUSICAL:
Dr. Stanley L. DeFries ...........Director
Dr. Maynard H. Berk ............Organist
Miss Lois Harchanko ...........Children
Mr. Truman Dalton .............Junior High

SECRETARIAL:
Miss LeeDel Howard ..............Financial
Mrs. Clarence Anderson ........Church

JANITORIAL:
Mr. Milo Ehlers ..................Sexton
Mrs. Milo Ehlers ................Assistant
Mr. Lamont Reichelt ............Assistant
RIGHT HAND OF FELLOWSHIP

Bradley Crary
Cathy Church
Mr. and Mrs. Victor Michelson
Samuel Burke
Darwin Ruyter
Sharon Snapper (uncertain)
Doris Henneous
Steve Perrson
Catherine Bones
Mrs. Dennis Stucky
Marvin Menholt
Karen Swenson

[Signature]
The Coffee House
- The Royal at the Window
- People Wondering at Free Help
- Peace of Peace and Groomer

This I Wear Are the Time

"While We Were Yet Summer's Child"

A Place of the Grace

The Difficulty of Accepting Weave
And Annie, An.

Her Story of Mephibosheth

David's Grace & Love
A PROPHETIC CHURCH

My friends, I should just like to say a word of appreciation that many of you have changed your schedule to worship at this hour rather than at 11:00 as you normally do. It was the feeling of our committee—and this was a decision prayerfully arrived at—after we had been through a week of showing a film called ONE MISSION, which many of you, if not most of you have seen—that night after night as we saw people leaving prayerfully and thoughtfully, having caught something of the spirit of what we are trying to do together around the world, and because this film was really like the word of God, that we ought to give a large portion of our congregation the opportunity of seeing this film. So you know that at 11:00 the showing will take place. We do not look on this as something over against a sermon. We look upon this as having in it the possibility of the word of God.

Now dear friends, our congregation has been rising magnificently to a great challenge. I want to say this at the outset of today's message. Because I know that we came to you on rather short notice asking that prayerfully you think about an over and above gift over a three-year pledge to the world mission of our American Baptist fellowship, because this is a necessary and an urgent thing. I am happy and grateful to God that as of yesterday 188 of our people or families have made pledges, and these pledges total $53,343. There are 268 people or families who pledged last fall who might yet pledge. Dear friend, if you are among these and can by the grace of God make your commitment, we hope you will do so. There are cards in the pews and as you leave the service you can leave the card at the office or with one of our ushers. I say this to you prayerfully and openly.
Now dear friends, at the heart of the church there is a great prophetic tradition. I have been trying in these days of Lent to say something to all of us about the meaning of the church—how it has been brought together by the grace of God, how its central task is evangelism, how it exists by the Holy Spirit, and really if it is true to itself it can become a healing fellowship. But there is also a note of the prophet in the life of the church. I want to intimate this today and call you to it.

Now most of you are aware of the fact that the word prophet does not mean necessarily being able to foretell something, like looking down the road and saying that 800 or 300 or 50 years from now this and this and this is going to happen. A prophet is one who speaks the truth in behalf of God and Protestantism by and large has been a prophetic religion. Roman Catholicism has been more a priestly religion.

There are two sides to religion, our faith. One where man speaks for God to other men. The other priestly, when a man tries to speak in behalf of the people to God. For example, in our morning worship—I have intimated this before—the most difficult part of it is when we try to pray. In fact, I have thought quite frequently about going down and kneeling here at the front. We have discussed this, and it may be done. Because there is something wrong about standing up in front of you, facing you, and praying, when somehow the pastoral prayer is trying to lift up before God the longings, the gratitude, the aspirations, the fears of all the people. This is the priestly part of the service.

It is not without reason that in some of our sister churches when the offering is presented that this is done at an altar, and the pastor with his back to the people says to God this we now bring to you. In effect these are the words. Will you hallow and consecrate it. This is the priestly role of the church.
But the other side of it is that somehow the word of God should break through, even using a poor sinful man to be heard. And that somehow thus saith the Lord should be heard. This is the preaching part of the service. This is the prophetic part of it.

Now all of you know that the Old Testament has within it great prophets. And they had unique messages. Elijah came and cried out against false religion. And we have memorably recorded in the early part of the Old Testament the challenge on the mountain where this man faced 450 false priests of Baal, and in the end those priests were humiliated. Or there is the prophecy of Isaiah. Many of us do not realize that much of Isaiah's message had to do with foreign policy. He kept telling the king, so to speak, you're betting on the wrong horses. God says if you walk this way it's going to be ruined. And the kind would not listen to him, and the end of the matter was a sad and a tragic thing as Israel went down.

When Micah came it was a cry on behalf of the poor and the oppressed. He had seen people who had worked the land for years who knew nothing but toil and heartache. And Micah's message was let justice roll down like the rivers. It was a message in behalf of the poor.

Now friends, this strand is in the church. It is the strand of social justice. It is the cry in behalf of the dispossessed. As was said at Amsterdam by the World Council of Churches, we long to be a voice for those who have no voice, a home for those who have no home, a light for those who sit in darkness. That cry in the life of the church, given it by its Lord, is the cry of the prophet, it is the cry thus saith the Lord.

One day Jesus came home. It was the first time he came home since he began his public ministry. And when he entered the temple, the
synagogue where it was his custom to worship undoubtedly as a boy, they all said the boy has come home; Mary's son is here. We heard all kinds of stories about him. I wonder what he'll say. And as the custom was they many times gave a stranger the opportunity to elaborate on the scripture that was read. And that day providentially the scripture was from Isaiah. The spirit of the Lord is upon me; for he has anointed me to preach good news to the poor, deliverance to the captive, sight to the blind. For this is the acceptable year of the Lord. When Jesus put this down, the scripture, he said this day the scripture is fulfilled.

I want to say that at the heart of what we do as a church there is this cry. For it is not only those who are poor in spirit that need deliverance. It is those who are poor in other ways, the cry of poverty. It is not only the people, my dear friends, who sit so to speak in the captivity of the spirit that need deliverance. It is the people who find themselves in prisons, locked in out of the way placed, shunted away. I will never hear this passage without thinking of those men in Jorhat, eight months there, singing that song on a Sunday morning when we were there. The captives of the world.

And it is not without reason that the great Karl Barth's last book of sermons, which were preached in his home town of Bosel, were preached in a little county jail, little more than that. And the title of the book is DELIVERANCE TO THE CAPTIVES. Somehow it is deep in the life of the church to set men free, for the opening of the eyes of the blind.

I want to make it quite clear that this thing that Jesus did that day he spent the rest of his life doing--the leper, the enslaved, the blind, the paralyzed. And that mission has been given to us. This is the prophetic life of the church.
Let me pick up something else. Near the end of Jesus' ministry, because I want to illustrate this so we will understand, there is a fearsome thing that took place undoubtedly the Monday of Holy Week. It was after the triumphant entry into the city of Jerusalem. Hosanna, Son of David, and all the other cries of joy. But on Monday he went to the house that he loved, the temple. Remember that in that day there was but one temple for all people in the capital city of Jerusalem. And to that temple he came. What did he see? This fantastic sight of money changing. Here came the people wanting to sacrifice. But to sacrifice you had to buy a pigeon or a lamb or goat. And in dealing with this, getting that, you see the money was handled by the system that ran the temple. And so it was that the rate of money was lifted up and the prices went up. So that this became a part of a vile and dirty system within the shadow of the house of God. And something within Jesus that was in defiance of all of this, a cry against it, a protest against it, rose within him. And the cry of that day, which we call the cleansing of the temple, has been with us to this day, for he said this is the house of God, the house of prayer, and you have made it into a den of thieves.

I want to remind you that deep within the life of the church is not only the cry of deliverance stated at Nazareth, but the cry of protest stated in Jerusalem. Dear friends, are Christian people always going to let wrong things go by and never say a word? How can we bet on the man in Christ's name when we stand at a crucial point and sell out? One of the frightening things which has come out of the crime commission study, which surely you are aware of, a nationally appointed you might say a gilt-edged committee, which came out with a fantastic study of crime in America which makes clear the fact that systems
cannot operate, crime cannot live like an octopus, unless somehow there is the weak link in the community, the guy who sells out, the easy-going boy who butters his own bread so to speak or feathers his own nest. So that somehow organized crime can live because of weakness among people who call themselves good. Time after time the thing that happens is that good is not done because good men will do nothing. So that rather than speak we end up wanting to be nice fellows.

The Christian church in its great hours has spoken up in behalf of the dispossessed. It has cried out through its membership wherever personality has been violated. And this is why in some deep sense wherever people long and struggle for freedom those who call themselves Christians have a stake there. And it's altogether too easy a thing for us to drift into what becomes a fantastic war system; seventy-five billions out of our monies this year will go to a vast program of armaments, and of warfare. Are Christian people always going to accept these things, never raise questions, that somehow provoke and stimulate, that become a protest in the courts of God?

Within this congregation are people who stand in responsible places—not only in government, but in the affairs of a community. If we all smile and smirk when the dirty story is told, if we never raise a voice of protest when somehow wrong is being done, you can bet your life in the end goodness will have its teeth kicked in and everything that matters will go down the drain. I know it's right that we should love each other. But on the other hand in the heard of God there's holiness that burns. And if all morality, all decency goes down and Christian people say we simply want to be nice people, we don't want to be thought ill of, and never speak the word, you have made my house into a den of thieves. I tell you in the end we will die.
I have to say one last word to you. It comes out of the Acts. It is the story of Paul when he came to Ephesus. Ephesus, because I'm just picking up three illustrations, and I could take a score of them that illustrate this prophetic tradition within the life of the church. When Paul came to Ephesus and began to preach the gospel people stopped buying statues of Artimage. Now the worshippers of Artimage all had statues in their homes. They bought them; they were made of silver. They worshipped them. But when these people started to become Christians and turned from false gods they stopped buying statues. So the business got hit. So a man called Demetrius—and arranged riots have gone on for a long time—Demetrius called together his henchmen and said look at what's happening. This guy Paul has brought this story in here and we have heard that this kind of stuff is spreading all over the empire. You read the story when you get home from Acts. And you will see it reads this way. And if he keep on we're going to not only lose all our business, but Artimage, the goddess, will be in disrepute. Now let's have a big riot. And this is precisely what happened. And in the end Paul got kicked out of the city, and it looked like the whole thing was going down the drain. Except that in the end God had a church planted in Ephesus. It became a mighty hub on the wheel. And it is not without reason that the gospel moved out to seven churches in that area, seven cities from the city of Ephesus. Why? Because people repented and began to live differently.

You cannot talk about the prophetic meaning of righteousness, about social justice, about living as God would have you live—thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, soul, strength, and mind, and love thy neighbor as thyself—you cannot live this way friends without repentance. To affirm the new and give up the old.
And there are some of us who ought to ask ourselves what idols do we worship? And when we ask ourselves that question and values begin to shift, let me tell you it will have economic and political repercussions.

It is thousands of little people who say I will do right that begin to affect the affairs of the whole state. There is no more clear illustration of this than John Wesley. Are you aware of the fact that John Wesley's revivals had their effect on the whole of Britain? Child labor laws came in. There came to be humane working conditions in factories. A new way of life came to Britain, because one man rode a horse and preached the truth, and when men repented they started throwing out their statues and saying we're going to straighten up and make our house right. And in the end it's true to say that Britain was saved from the early ravages of the industrial revolution. All across America are churches. And if the people who populate these churches would find it in their hearts to say we repent, we start over, we change our values.

A man came to my office yesterday. We had a wonderful visit. It was about his own values in his home and how he could live more obediently before Christ. An inspiring, lifting thing.

Now you may say, where do I start? My answer to that is every one of us ought to start small and promptly. The trouble with most of us is we want some great big deal to come down the road. And all the time we do not do the little things that can be done right at hand. In the place where you work and you live, this is the place to start. And I am convinced that one of the basic problems with Christian people like us is we know on the basis of what we're taught in scriptures what we ought to do about love and going the second mile and being our brother's keeper—a lot of things like this. Our
problem is we say it's not practical. And no one ever discovers this way until he tries it. And I can tell you dear friends the proof of the pudding is when you and I take the step he asks us to take. Strange thing about this is when a man puts his foot down and says I will do right, this is going to be tough but I will do right, he somehow gets strength for that. And that leads him to take another step. You see, a long journey is made up of many short steps. This is how we get there. And it is in listening, the Bible, the Christian conscience, the Spirit, the understanding we get from the Christian community, all of this, it is in becoming sensitized through that and then being obedient that we discover the joy of the deliverance of the captives and the opening of the eyes of the blind. And every church dear friends in this hour is called to that kind of obedience.

Let us pray.
He Stoops to Conquer

This Is A Day of Celebration

1. Our King Is Coming Down Out of the Hills.
   - He Has Healed the Sick, Opened the Eyes of the Blind, Forsook Children
   - and Healed the Fruits of Suffering
   - And Now He Is Coming To Our City

2. Do We Greet Him With Love
   - Throw Our Clothes on the Ground
   - Carry Palm Branches
   - About the Horn of His Crown

He Has Come To Claim Thee City

1. He Is The Sacred City
   - The Place of The Temple
   - The Hill Of Zion

2. He Is Our City
   - He Comes In Sowliter and Love
   - And The City Will Not curve For Him
1. He comes to all the areas of life.

2. The great heaving questions of man.
   - What must I do to enter eternal life?
   - Who is the greatest among men?
   - What of the resurrection?
   - By what authority are all these matters done?

3. He comes to our homes.
   - The home at Bethany.
   - An upper room, the night of His betrayal.

4. He faces the place of power.
   - The judgment hall of Pilate.
   - The castle of Herod.
   - The temple of the Jews.
4. The Place To flee from Our Sin
- The Cleaving Needs In The House of God, Our Money Changers.
- Our Betrayal As With Judas
- Our Cowardice As With Peter
- Our Hypocrisy As With The Sadducees
- Our Pleasures.

5. Finally, He Came To Calvary
- A Lonely Garden and His Agency
- The Cry and Battle on The Cross
- He Now Has Stopped His Power
  "He was knew No Sin Became Our Sin"
  "By His stripes We are healed"
  "He descended Into hell"
The Judgment of All

1. Judge taking His Life
2. Jesus Raising Full of Worms
3. The City Destroyed in 70 A.D.
4. The Mutter Years of Mutter

The Awesome Humility of Jesus

1. Kneeling to Wash Their Feet
2. Letting Them Take Him in the Garden
3. A Chain of Wheat Falling into the Ground
4. In the Sun - Their Face

We Who Understood Their Under the Iron Kim

1. Depiring To Five
2. The Narrow Door That Leads To Life
3. The Broken Spirit
The Calling of the Churche
- Count Oliven, Matter
- To hear the Form of A Deane
- Hve he en Artt Vnis, Clereke
- Obedience Hath ben, the Pardoner
- Of Oliven,
The Scripture

P
March 19, 1967

CHRISTIAN GREETINGS

1. Welcome

2. Gratitude to God for the wonder of the day— the singing of the children and adults— the palms— the gift of flowers
   --given in memory of Dr. and Mrs. M. J. Martini by Mrs. Frank Cirksena and Mrs. Robert Scott

3. Moment of Silence
   --for the life of C. Wayne Manning

THE WORD OF CONCERN

1. The evening service of baptism

2. The concerns of Holy Week
   --Thursday, 8:00 p.m., Communion
   --Friday, 1:00 p.m., Good Friday Service in our Sanctuary
   --Monday through Saturday, 5:00 p.m., prayer in the chapel

3. The last phase of the World Mission Campaign
   --283 pledges, $71,016.60
March 19, 1967

CALL TO WORSHIP
Lift up your head, O gates!
and be lifted up, O ancient doors!
that the King of glory may come in!
Who is this King of glory?
The Lord of hosts,
he is the King of glory!

CALL TO PRAYER
Thou hast said, "Seek ye my face,"
My heart says to thee,
"Thy face, Lord, do I seek."
Hide not thy face from me.
Turn not thy servant away in anger,
thou who hast been my help.
Cast me not off, forsake me not.
O God of my salvation!

CONCLUSION OF SCRIPTURE
Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed
on him the name which is above every name, that
at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in
heaven and on earth and under the earth, and
every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord,
to the glory of God the Father.
P A L M  S U N D A Y

"So they took branches of palm trees and went out to meet him, crying "Hosanna! Blessed be he who comes in the name of the Lord, even the King of Israel!" " (John 12:13).

LOOK, YE SAINTS! THE SIGHT IS GLORIOUS
Organ Prelude—"Let All Together Praise Our Lord" ....Dietrich Buxtehude
"Come We Now With Singing" .......................... Jacob Bijster
The Chimes
"Lift Up Your Heads"  MESSIAH  .............................. G. F. Handel
Sanctuary Choir
Call to Worship
The Processional Hymn with Palms—"Crown Him With Many Crowns" .....250
(Congregation will rise on the last verse)
The Lord's Prayer and Gloria
Anthem—"To Zion Jesus Came"  .................................. David H. Williams
Sanctuary Choir and Childrens' Choirs

* * *
Christian Greetings

EVERY KNEE TO HIM SHALL BOW
Call to Prayer
Pastoral Prayer
Choral Response

CROWN THE SAVIOUR KING OF KINGS
Anthem—"Jesus Christ Triumphant"  .......................... F. Broadus Staley
Sanctuary Choir and Childrens' Choirs
Receiving Our Tithes and Offerings
Organ Offertory—"All Glory Laud and Honor"  ....Alexander Guilmant
Doxology and Prayer of Dedication

SPREAD ABROAD THE VICTOR'S FAME
Reading of the Holy Scriptures—Philippians 2:1-11
The Introit
The Sermon—"He Stoops to Conquer"  .......................... Dr. Roger L. Fredrikson
"St. Francis' Prayer"  ............................................ W. B. Olds
Sanctuary Choir

Dedication Holy Communion

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy.
O Divine Master,
grant that I may not so much
Seek to be consoled, as to console;
To be understood, as to understand;
To be loved, as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive;
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying, that we are born
to Eternal life.

SAINTS AND ANGELS CROWD AROUND HIM
Hymn of Dedication and Decision—"In Heavenly Love Abiding" ..........384
The Word of Concern
Benediction and Choral Response
Moment of Silence
EVENING SERVICE
7:30 P.M.

Organ Prelude
The Singing of Hymns
The Word of Welcome and Christian Concern
The Reading of the Evening Scripture
The Evening Prayer
The Singing of a Hymn
The Receiving of the Offering
The Service of Baptism
The Solo
The Meditation ................................................................. Pastor Fredrikson
The Hymn of Dedication and Decision
The Benediction
Closing Moments—"When I Survey the Wondrous Cross"
Moment of Silence
The Chimes
Organ Postlude

THIS WEEK

SUNDAY, March 19—6:00 p.m.—Adult Membership Class Session 6, "The Story of the Christian Church" (Filmstrip), Parlor
MONDAY, March 20—4:00 p.m.—Girl Scouts, Youth Room
4:00 p.m.—Youth Membership Class, Parlor
TUESDAY, March 21—9:00 a.m.—Women's Bible Study, Youth Room
3:30 p.m.—Brownie Scouts, Youth Room
6:30 p.m.—Boy Scout Potluck, Court of Honor
7:00 p.m.—Church Calling
WEDNESDAY, March 22—6:45 a.m.—Women's Bible Study, YMCA
4:30 p.m.—Junior Choir, Choir Room
7:30 p.m.—Board of Christian Education
THURSDAY, March 23—1:15 p.m.—Sr. Philathea Class, Parlor
7:00 p.m.—Diaconate, Parlor
8:00 p.m.—Maundy Thursday Communion, Sanctuary
9:00 p.m.—Church Council, Room 111
FRIDAY, March 24—6:45 a.m.—Men's Bible Study, YMCA
1:00 p.m.—Good Friday Service, Sanctuary
7:00 p.m.—Cub Scouts, Fellowship Hall
SATURDAY, March 25—10:00 a.m.—Children's Membership Class, Parlor

CHURCH STAFF

MINISTERIAL:
Dr. Roger L. Fredrikson ...........Pastor
Rev. J. David Mallgren......Assoc. Pastor
Rev. Daniel W. Holland ...............C.E.
Rev. Robert Veninga ..........Youth

MUSICAL:
Dr. Stanley L. DeFries ...........Director
Dr. Maynard H. Berk .........Organist
Miss Lois Harchanko ..........Children
Mr. Truman Dalton ..........Junior High

SECRETARIAL:
Miss LeeDel Howard .......Pastors
Mrs. Clarence Anderson .......Church
Mr. Daryl Bertsch .............Financial

JANITORIAL:
Mr. Milo Ehlers .............Sexton
Mrs. Milo Ehlers ..........Assistant
Mr. Lamont Reichelt ..........Assistant
HE STOOPS TO CONQUER

My beloved friends, this day is a day of celebration, a day of joy and banqueting, a day of song and dance. Our world is badly in need of celebration. We have much pseudo celebrating, but very little of it that comes out of joy. As we gathered before this service for prayer in our number there were those who prayed that somehow there might be something deep and significant in the President's mission far overseas that somehow the tides of peace might come in again. I repeat there is very little reason to celebrate. And yet here we are in a Christian church doing precisely that. And I want to make it very clear that unless this that we do today is related to our world, then we ought to fold our books and slink quietly home and say what is the use?

I am aware of the fact that in this congregation today are people who may not feel like celebrating. You have known difficulty and heartache. You have walked, some of you, with loneliness and problems greater than you are. And you have felt within an insecurity that has shaken you so that you hardly know if there is any place in which to stand. And yet on this day, on this day, there is a cry that comes through the streets of the city. Hosanna, Son of David. For the Lord God now enters the city. This cry was echoed first of all by Isaiah in the Old Testament, the great prophet. Later on a small, insignificant book records the cry of Zachariah. He spoke of one who would come riding on the back of a lowly ass, an untrained colt, into the city. And centuries later this is what happened. News came, you couldn't help it, that he was coming to the city. Everyone sooner or later had gossipped about it. There were all kinds of stories drifting around. And I prefer to think that this is not
a handful of people at one of the city gates. There was noise and racket about this. For this one of whom it was said had performed miracles of healing and sight to the blind, and cleansing for lepers, one who had given hope where there was no hope, now came to his own city. And one of the tragic statements of the Bible, and it is the depth of the week, is that he came to his home and his own received him not. This was his city. This was the City of Zion. In one sense it is a prototype of all the cities of the world, the ugliness of the back streets and the power in high places, and hypocritical religion and all the rest. Yet he loved it. And I have said this almost every Palm Sunday, but I say it again. The longing of his heart brought him back. He had sat outside the gates of the city and wept because he knew what the city had done to the prophets and he knew that now it would kill him. Yet he came, and the cry echoes through the city streets.

My dear friends, the massive theme of humiliation and transfiguration is caught up in this week. The whole thesis of dying that men can live, that a seed will abide alone unless it falls into the ground and dies, but if it does this it will bear much fruit. This massive paradox at the heart of our faith is in this week, squeezed into the events, recorded with only a few words. But it begins with a song, and I must remind you that next Sunday it ends with a song. Somehow between this anticipation and the fulfillment there is the darkness. Jesus who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross. When Jesus came to the city he was not received. At every point, and I will not delay on this, let me just lift it up, at every point there was rejection. They thought some of them they wanted him, but in the end they turned him away. And all too easily we forget how the cries of Sunday become the annihilation and the darkness of
Friday. He came to claim the city, but the city would not have him. At every area of his life he entered it, but he was turned away. This is the pathos and agony, not only of Jerusalem, but of our town, our life, our world, who will not have this way it seems.

Take for example the questions they put to him that week. The religion of Jesus has never avoided great questions. If we do we are traitors to our faith. What must I do to inherit eternal life? Who will be the greatest among men? What happens after death, they phrased it in the orthodoxy of the day in terms of a question about the resurrection. But it was the old question of life after death. By what authority, they threw in his teeth, do you do these things? Jesus never ducked a question. Yet when he gave the answer both directly and by a parable they finally turned and muttered and marveled, but they lift him.

He came not only to the questions of men; he came to the homes of men. I think of two of the homes of this week that are a part of the Jerusalem experience. About a half day's journey outside the city was a little place called Bethany. It is undoubtedly true that during the week this is where he lived--Martha, Mary, Lazarus. He walked out and slept and he walked in again. This was a home to him. And later in the week he was to climb upstairs someplace in an upper room and there with a handful of men with whom he had lived his short terse life here he was to break bread and drink wine. It was in the home, many believe, of a man named John Mark, who later became a disciple, but it was a home.

But even in those places they did not understand. I cannot speak of this week without wondering in some profound sense whether or not Christ gets into our homes. I do not speak on Sunday now, but of the week--its closets and its back rooms, its attempts to pray, its dark
moments as well as its high times of joy, he knocks and asks admittance. I want to make it clear that Jesus not only came to homes and the questions of men. He came to the places of power. Never forget that. In the last analysis this whole week is a kind of strange squeezing in of both ecclesiastical and political and economic power. Jesus never flinched. In the temple he drove men out and sait you have made what was intended to be a house of prayer into a den of thieves. And when he stood before Herod in his castle somehow the shining moral goodness of Jesus wiggled Herod down to size. He spake never a word. And when he stood before Pilate, this strange man who wanted to do in his soul he could not do, there is something of the fact that the challenge of a kingdom not made with hands stood before the kingdoms of men. It has always been that way. He did not avoid the points of power.

And one cannot help but wonder how far Christ gets in City Hall, or the places where commissioners meet, or the places where somehow decisions are made in offices, those points of power where men somehow draw together the lines of life, whether or not we don't in the last analysis say with sort of a sneer as Clemens said, let's not talk about Jesus Christ at this point. I ask you, what is there left to talk about?

And oh how he came up against our sins. Not the massive, corporate sins that get organized, but the little petty sins that in the last analysis make the massive sins. Peter who couldn't even speak the word before a maid. Judas who had been next to him who for one reason or another tried to force his hand for thirty pieces of silver. Caiphas the high priest who should have known better. And even in the last analysis those who were near him--John and the rest--
running off in all directions. So that in the end the week that started with Hosanna ended in a garden, and he was alone. And when he came out to see how it went with those three that he brought in because all of us need human companionship--even the Christ--and in the darkness of the garden they slept. And one can year echoing down through the centuries the cry, could you not spend one hour with me?

So the end of it, friends, and all drama finds its point here, much of it never uses the word Christ, much of what we see on broadway, read in our books today, and think about that somehow comes to us from many different directions, whenever it touches the depth of human existence it comes up against all that was in the cross--the light and the darkness, the goodness and the evil, the struggle of the power against humility, death and life--it's all here. For in the last analysis the magnificent humility of Jesus said here is my life; I give it; I lay it down; no man can take my life unless I give it. If I could I would call down a legion of angels, but I will not. For I give myself freely. Friends, Christian theology beginning with the Bible itself has reached out to lay hold on the meaning of this final ultimate crass rejection at the end. He who knew no sin, said one writer, became our sin. How can this be? All of us that have carried somehow the burden of someone else, have tried in the loneliness of the night to bear that burden which we felt perhaps belonged to someone else, but we wanted to carry it, have at least tasted a fragment of this. And Paul writing in Romans said, while we were yet helpless Christ dies for the ungodly. This is the final depth. And I do not care who you are, my friend, your cry will never go beyond his cry. My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me.
When the apostles tried to write their creed that came out of their experience, the only way they could say it was, and this has been repeated in many of our sister churches today, he descended into hell.

My friends, that rejection that we made of him then and now, could not finally hold him. I must make it very clear that what we deal with now is not an ethical principle. What we deal with now is not simply comparative religion. What we deal with now is not just an ethic or an idea. We deal with, finally and ultimately, the person. For God has come to us in this one who was obedient, and finally and ultimately became our sin.

It was at this point that redemption was wrought. Judgment had come to its end. May I say this without any sense of vengeance. In 70 A.D. there was not one stone left on top of another in Jerusalem. Herod had died, eaten as it were with worms. Judas had taken his own life. Peter had known the sting of tears that finally brought his repentance. Caiphas was no longer around. The men were talking about one they called Jesus the Christ. And twenty centuries later in a strange, mixed up, dark world, we still say it. We may say it in a curse, but we still say it. We may say it in love, but the name will not out. For that Presence—I remind you people—haunts our world.

I have to ask myself this week whether I am part of the rejection or the acceptance. And I must say at this point what many of us do not want to get into; we want to glance off from it. This is why the text of Philippians laid its grip on me. I do not know or understand the things that have been spoken of this day unless I too die, unless I too join him at the cross, kneeling with Him as he washes their
feet and wipes them. And finally I join him at his death. For blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Unless a grain of wheat fall into the ground and die, it abides alone. I am crucified with Christ. Nevertheless I live, yet not I but Christ liveth in me. Here now is that which blossoms red coming out of the ground. Here is life that is everlasting on the other side, once a man has gone through this side. So that in the end every person here who knows that Jesus Christ is Lord can say this is a day of celebration. This is a day of banqueting. This is a day of newness into which I enter. And even though that death waits in the week I know the final answer is in his hand.

I come to say just in closing a word about the church. You know how I think of the church on a day like this? I think of the church being like the ass that carried Jesus, the donkey that brought him into the city. Could it be in some strange, wonderful sense that the great calling God has laid upon us is to bear Christ into the world, into its cities, into its questions, into its places of power, into all those places into which he would have us go in obedience. But this will not be possible unless the church recovers again the sense that it is a servant, lowly, bearing the Christ where men are.

A friend of mine, Willis Elliott, gave one of the provocative speeches at Miami before the National Council of Churches. One of the main thrusts of the speech which was an electrifying kind of an affair, he raised the issue of the wounds of the church. For somehow we keep coming back to Christ because we know he bears wounds. And the church will only be listened to if it stoops with Christ to discover his lowliness, for in that it discovers his Lordship, and in knowing this it has stooped to conquer. It is that to which we are called this week.
Will you listen to the ending of the scripture again. "Have who this mind among yourselves which you have in Christ Jesus, /though he was in the form of God did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied himself taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men, and being found in human form he humbled himself and became obedient unto death, even death on a cross. Therefore God has highly exalted him and bestowed on him the name which is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father."

Let us pray.
J. B. Phillips's The Way of Truth
The Parables
The Wonder of The Resurrection

1. De Anela and Her Congregation
   - In The Place Of Free Gathering

2. The Roof Top Clumers In Hong Kong
   - The Unanswerable Joy Of These People.

3. How People In Vietnam
   - At The Hospitals
   - Grace Baptist
   - The Chaplains, And The Men.

4. The Nega Country
   - The Little Man From The Hills
   - The Men In The Political Prison

5. The William Carey Clumers
   - Making An Impact On A Back Lot

6. The Deep, Open Safe Fellowship In Burma
   - The Radiance - The Love - The Resurrection
The First Account of the Resurrection

1. Written To the Christians in Corinth:
   - A City of Vice and Depravity.
   - People Burned the Calendar at Both Ends.
   - A Draving, Tough, Sharp City.
   - The Worship of the Goddess of Fire.

2. Yet Here the Power of Christ Had Changed Men and Formed a Community of Faith.
   - The Miracle of Changed Men.

3. The Statement of the Resurrection
   - The First Affirmation in Writing
     - Twenty Years of the Event
     - Ten Years Before the First Gospel
   - It is a Plain, Simple Fact
     - Clearly Stated.
     - These Saw Him and Knew Him.
     - It is Unwrept and Clear.
Face Off All - He Appeared to Me

1. That Life-Changing Encounter
   - In Which All Things Became New
     - Changed Theology
     - Outlook
     - Made Him a Great Messenger

2. The Power of an Encounter
   - Not an Opinion
   - Not an Argument
     - Not a Refutation of Unseen Holes
     - Not a Catalog of Definitions
     - Not True Bible Verses
     - The View
     - Maturity
     - The Institutional Church
     - The Thorn, Thyme, and Sophisticated
     - Clever, Superficial Evasion
   - More a Fusing, Personal Meeting
     - Him Become Truth in Its Deepest Form
     - The Initiative and Power
       - The Great Music or Meaningful Nutritional
       - The Drama or Tone
       - The Idea of the Game
A Message Upon the Grace of God

1. The Power of Holy Presence
   - Joy, Strength, Defense - Free
   - Quiet, Fearless, Burdenless - Forgiving
   - Hostile, Critical, Perfectionist - Full
   - He is the Only Arena of Reconciliation
   - All Creation Groaning for Reconciliation

2. "I Have Loved Herder Than Any Other"
   - That He would be near, That Presence
   - That He would find Him an Answer, A Hope,
     A Healing.
   - Den Staff Meeting
     - The Communion Among Our Students
     - The Joy at the Holy House
     - Gratitude for a Christian Class
     - The Power of All Faith
     - Some People Whom We Can Lean On.
2. "Then when I am dry, the grace of God, his grace that seeker us out, C.S. Lewis's "Surprised by Joy"
I Corinthians 15:1-11 (Phillips)

Now, my brothers, I want to speak about the Gospel which I have previously preached to you, which you accepted, in which you are at present standing, and by which, if you remain faithful to the message I gave you, your salvation is being worked out—unless, of course, your faith had no meaning behind it at all.

For I passed on to you Corinthians first of all the message I had myself received—that Christ died for our sins, as the scriptures said he would; that he was buried and rose again on the third day, again as the Scriptures foretold.

He was seen by Cephas, then by the twelve, and subsequently he was seen simultaneously by over five hundred Christians, of whom the majority are still alive, though some have since died. He was then seen by James, then by all the messengers. And last of all, as if to one born abnormally late, he appeared to me!

I am the least of the messengers, and indeed I do not deserve that title at all, because I persecuted the Church of God. But what I am now I am by the grace of God. The grace he gave me has not proved a barren gift. I have worked harder than any of the others—and yet it was not I but this same grace of God within me. In any event, whoever has done the work, whether I or they, this has been the message and this has been the foundation of your faith.
March 26, 1967

CALL TO WORSHIP
Minister: O all ye works of the Lord, bless ye the Lord; praise him and magnify him forever.

Choir: Bless the Lord, O my soul, Blessed art Thou, O Lord.

Minister: O ye servants of the Lord, bless ye the Lord; praise him, and magnify him forever.

Choir: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name.

Minister: O ye holy and humble men of heart, bless ye the Lord; praise him, and magnify him forever.

Choir: Bless the Lord, O my soul, and all that is within me bless His holy name.

CALL TO PRAYER
And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled away the stone, and sat upon it. And the angel said unto the women, Fear not ye; for I know that ye seek Jesus, who hath been crucified. He is not here; for he is risen, even as he said, Come, see the place where the Lord lay.

CONCLUSION OF SCRIPTURE
The grace he gave me has not proved a barren gift. I have worked harder than any of the others—and yet it was not I but this same grace of God within me. In any event, whoever has done the work, whether I or they, this has been the message and this has been the foundation of your faith.
“And last of all, as if to one born abnormally late, he appeared to me!... But what I am now I am by the grace of God.”

1 Corinthians 15 (Phillips)
First Baptist Church
Sioux Falls, South Dakota

March 26, 1967

Eight-thirty and Eleven o'clock

"God hath brought His people forth into joy from sadness. Now rejoice, Jerusalem, and with true affection welcome in unwearied strains Jesus' resurrection."

CHRIST THE LORD IS Risen TODAY
Organ Prelude—"Christ is A risen" .............................. Hans Buchner
"Elevation" .............................................................. T. Tertius Noble
The Chimes
The Resurrection Greeting
Call to Worship
Processional Hymn—"Christ the Lord Is Risen Today" ............................. 239
The Invocation
The Lord's Prayer and Gloria

**Service of Baptism
Christian Greetings and Announcements

SOAR WE NOW WHERE CHRIST HAS LED
Call to Prayer
Pastoral Prayer
Choral Response

LOVE'S REDEEMING WORK IS DONE
The Receiving of our Tithes and Offerings
Organ Offertory—"The Strife is O'er, the Battle Done" ...................... H. Alexander Matthews
The Doxology and Prayer of Dedication

RAISE YOUR JOYS AND TRIUMPHS HIGH
Anthem—"Fanfare for Easter" ........................................ Jane Marshall
Sanctuary and Youth Choirs

Reading of the Holy Scriptures—1 Corinthians 15:1-11 (Phillips)
The Introit
The Sermon—"The Ring of Truth" ...................................... Dr. Roger L. Fredrikson

MADE LIKE HIM, LIKE HIM WE RISE
Hymn of Dedication and Decision—"Come, Ye Faithful,
Raise the Strain" .................................................... 242

The Word of Concern
The Benediction
"Hallelujah!" MESSIAH ........................................... G. F. Handel
Hallelujah! for the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth. The kingdom of this world is
become the Kingdom of our Lord and of His Christ; and He shall reign forever
and ever, King of Kings, and Lord of Lords.

Moment of Silence
The Chimes
Organ Postlude

*First Service Only  **Second Service Only  ***Ushers May Seat Latecomers

The radio broadcast this morning over KELO is sponsored by Mr. Roy Foster
and Rosemary in memory of Edna Foster.

EASTER LILY MEMORIALS

We appreciate the spirit in which the memorial lilies are provided
and are grateful for the beauty they add to our Easter worship. We are
listing below the lilies and the ones in whose memory they are given. If
word of your particular lily was received after Wednesday noon, it will
be listed in next week's "Times."

In Memory of

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mrs. Elmer Benson</th>
<th>Mr. Elmer Benson and Children</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Robert Klock</td>
<td>Mrs. Robert Klock and daughter, Mrs. Gary Oren</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Lillian McClure</td>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Harley Hoisington (daughter and son-in-law)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Lillian McClure</td>
<td>Mrs. Margaret Murray and James Murray (sister and nephew)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forrest Lee Schrag</td>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. O. L. Schrag and Lori Lynn</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Lena Simpson</td>
<td>Senior Philathea Class</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miss Irene Westphal</td>
<td>Senior Philathea Class</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
FAMILY WORSHIP IN HOMES

It is significant that on that first Sunday Jesus joined two of the disciples on the road home and revealed Himself as the risen Christ in the breaking of bread. Thus we are led to encourage people to gather in homes to have a simple time of fellowship, sharing, and joy in the spirit of the risen Christ. Plans have been made by the family heads for such services in the homes listed below. It may be that your particular family head is not able to have such a service at this time. If so, we then encourage you to go freely to one of the homes listed below or to come to the church. Here the pastors will conduct a similar service in the parlor. It is our hope that this worship in homes will include as many members of the family as possible. However, the pastors will care for the smaller children at the church.

Mr. and Mrs. Abraham Assid ........................................714 S. Thompson
Rev. and Mrs. Ballard Blount ......................................2308 W. 22nd St.
Mr. and Mrs. Harold Cory ...........................................6301 W. 10th St.
Mr. and Mrs. Oliver Clark ...........................................724 S. 9th Ave.
Mr. and Mrs. Kenneth Carstensen ..................................907 S. Walt's Ave.
Mr. and Mrs. Truman Dalton ........................................1805 S. Grange Ave.
Mr. and Mrs. LeRoy Greenfield* ...................................1800 S. Covell Ave.
Mr. and Mrs. Delbert Greenlee ......................................#5 Riverview Heights
Mr. and Mrs. Clinton Hanson* ......................................1900 S. Covell Ave.
Mr. and Mrs. Ron Harless ...........................................1608 S. Dakota
Mr. and Mrs. Max Johnston ..........................................601 E. 26th St.
Mr. and Mrs. Glen Julin ..............................................1118 S. West Ave.
Mr. and Mrs. Don Karlson ...........................................1413 Thompson Drive
Mrs. W. O. Knight ......................................................628 Wiswall Place
Mr. and Mrs. Harold Larson .........................................916 S. Hawthorne Ave.
Mr. and Mrs. Phil Lundquist .........................................715 Wiswall Place
Mr. and Mrs. Victor Larsen* .........................................817 S. 10th Ave.
Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Perron ........................................604 Holt
Mr. and Mrs. Luverne Plucker .......................................Box 18, Lennox, S. Dak.
Mr. and Mrs. Floyd Sorensen ........................................1417 S. Grange Ave.
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Stapleton ...................................."Cut-away-acres," Rt. 3
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Story ..........................................417 N. Nesmith Ave.
Mr. and Mrs. Ray Swift ...............................................1319 W. 24th St.
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Scott ...........................................Pinecrest Motel, 4501 W. 12th St.
Mr. and Mrs. Bill Tyler ...............................................516 E. 31st St.

Services in homes marked with an * are at 7:00 p.m.. All others, including the one at the church, are at 7:30 p.m.

†

Announcements for the coming week’s activities are in the "Times."
"The Ring of Truth"

March 26, 1967

My dear friends, a pastor always comes to a service like this, strangely moved. I know that as Pastor Dave and I and the deacons gather together for a bit of prayer before coming in, there was a kind of paradoxical sense of both fear and anticipation for no one can do justice to this day. It is not anything one says. It is not even the music. It is not what we do that makes the day significant. It is what He has done. And the frightening thing is that for many people this will be another day. Even for multitudes who have their names on church rolls. And my friend, I am grateful you are here, regardless how seldom or frequently you come but the awful thing is that this should be in our hands, just a pious story, that somehow we should be unmoved by this, like folks who have heard a great symphony and yawned in the midst of it or like someone who sees the Niagara Falls and says "Isn't it cute?" This is the great danger for those of us who have lived in the Christian church all our lives. So there is a strange kind of mixture of hope and fear that somehow by some miracle, that we do not control, a presence will come among us as never before. And those of us who find it in our hearts to say "yes" will do so, quietly, with all that we are. I must tell you that for weeks I have been haunted by J. B. Phillips lastes book. Now you will know how I got started. For after four years of being uncreative in a what he calls "the dark night of the soul". J. B. Phillips has written his first little book which is an affirmation of personal faith. He has called this book "Ring of Truth". Not so much meaning a circle as a sound. You know how it used to be when a man struck an anvil with a hammer and he said it rings true or a choir hits the pitch right on the button on the note, it rings true. Or a man says to you "yes" and in the yes of the man is his life, the affirmation of his deepest self and you say "I can bet on that. I'll count on that
even if it costs me my life." It is in this sense that Phillips has written of ringing true. It comes out of a time of agony when he has asked himself many questions and now comes back to his affirmation. And what Phillips essentially is saying is that after spending 20 years with the scriptures as one of the fresh translators of our time, a priest in an Episcopal parish in England. He has a sense of greater authenticity deeper validity than ever before about the gospel message that as he has lived in the matrix of the story, as he has delved into the nuances of words, somehow it has come alive for him again so this becomes his own affirmation. It ends, amazingly, with the resurrection. I read the last chapter on a plane and I want to tell you very frankly, I suppose ministers should not say this but I bowed my head with tears and thanked God He was still alive. And it happened that a stewardess was coming down the aisle of the plane and I said to her, "Do you know that Christ is alive?" And she looked at me like I'd almost put a gun in her ribs. And then she said, "Yes, I do." And that girl and I on that plane had a conversation about things I suppose that no one else on the plane dreamed we were talking about. And ever since that day I knew I had to speak to you about the "Ring of Truth" on this day. Now let me say there are a hundred reasons why you wouldn't have to take this story seriously. I think we ought to be very frank about this and I think if intellectually or spiritually or psychologically you can't swallow it then you shouldn't. I don't think--let me put it positively--I think the day is too late to play with the story, this massive fact of resurrection. But there are a hundred reasons why not to believe it. When we had our board meeting at the end of February, our board of education meeting at Valley Forge, I talked to a girl who at one time attended Sioux Falls College. Her husband took his life on December 29th. He is our pastor of the First Baptist Church in Rochester, New York. He had had flu, a long virus, there had been discouragement in the church. She went to a wedding
reception and she came home and he wasn't around. Forty five minutes later they found him down in the furnace room. Lots of reasons not to believe in the resurrection. My friends, I've been haunted by a hundred arguments for weeks out of Asia why you shouldn't believe in it and I want to remind you that while we sit here in relative comfort and affluence there are multitudes of people who before this night is out will die because they do not have milk or bread. And beyond this is the agony of Viet Nam. My friends, regardless of political persuasion, we are a deeply troubled nation over this one. At best it's dirty business. And I think of chaplains trying to gather a handful of men here and there within the sound of battle and the sniper, trying somehow to affirm in the midst of all the blood and agony that Jesus is alive. I sometimes don't know how men do it. And you can come real near home. For running through this congregation, among all of us there have been little tragedies or great ones or heartbreak or darkness. We've known it through the length and breadth of all of us. Somehow the enemy has come near and smashed our hopes and left us broken and shaken so anybody can sit down and say "I don't believe this thing. It's irrational. It's stupid to believe this." And yet I must tell you the other side of it. The gospel never blanches at the dark side. Never forget this. It's the one religion that dares look at the world through the cross. No other religion does this. We have come to this day through Good Friday, and Good Friday is Viet Nam; it's those hungry children; it's those people in chapels that somehow do not have any sense of direction; it's the mental hospital; it's all of this. Ah, but we finally get to Easter. I think for example of Dianola and his congregation. I know that that little church set up against that hill country skyline with that marvelous tree there with its thorns on it. There have been this day in that place the songs of God. I think for example of over in Hong Kong
on top of those great apartment houses, nine, seven, seventeen stories
the gathering of people who have sung as they did months ago when we
were there singing "He Leadeth Me." Perhaps they sang like we did here
today "Christ the Lord is Risen." I think over in Saigon of the little
Grace Baptist Church. I suppose forty, fifty, sixty gathered there to
affirm some hope this morning. And chaplains, veterans, pros, twenty-four,
twenty-five, twenty-six years. We have fifty-nine men alone from the
American Baptist Convention who are in Viet Nam or who have been there,
trying by the grace of God to affirm that in the midst of death there is
life. And all of this comes home with power first-hand. I think of the
Burma community cut off from almost all semblance of Western life, yet
a strong church with deep roots and a sense of joy and power and meaning
and life. They have met today. Can I come a bit nearer home. Our
staff sat down yesterday afternoon in the library before lunch. It was
not a long meeting. It lasted about a half an hour. But I had a
strange sense that of all the meetings we have had this one came nearer,
in months, of affirming the Resurrection. We tried to gather up the
events of the week. One of our men talked about the joy he had found
in taking communion to shut-ins. A woman who is not able to take the
piece of bread and put it in her mouth, so he did it for her. A man who
spoke in his hospital bed about the wonder of Christ. Someone else
spoke about the joy of being among people drinking coffee and trying to
serve them, and in the midst of the laughter and the fun and the gaiety
having some sense that there was a Presence there, a peace and a power,
which the world cannot put out. One of our secretaries talking about the
wonder of strong lay people who give us support and carry the mission
and go to battle, the strength that is found in this. And a layman who
has been working in our office trying to help us along in our commitment
to missions talking about the great joy he had found in giving these years
that would normally be retirement years to helping in this way. And we
bowed for prayer. And at the end of it I had a wondrous sense we ought
to almost stand and sing the Doxology. Because in the midst of it all,
the prisons, the darkness, the bloodshed, the agony, the mystery, there
is a Presence that will not out. And then my mind turned to Corinthians,
Are you aware of the fact friends that this is the first statement in
writing in the sacred document we call the New Testament that affirms the
Resurrection? Our Bible sometimes throws us off because we assume
Matthew was the first thing written. It was not. It might have been
Galatians or I Thessalonians that was the first epistle written, but
I Corinthians is the one that affirms in a massive way the fact of the
Resurrection. This is twenty years after it happened. How had it been
kept alive except that it spread by word of mouth. And wherever the
story lodged men lived. And in that life they kept it alive before it
got on the printed page in their living. That's the way it still is.
The story lives in a life before you get it on a page. But this came to
them. It was ten years before a gospel got written, probably the gospel
of Mark came ten years later. This was a letter written not to a
comfortable bunch of people in some kind of an easy situation. Corinth
was the toughest city of its day—licentious and brawling and tough from
one end to the other. And Paul had come to it with a message. Now we
kick the word message around a great deal. But somehow burning within the
fiber of this man was the hope, the longing, the gospel, the power of it
all. And finally there were a few people that gathered in homes. They
were strong people. They were leaders. Sosthenes, Gaius, strong men.
And a church was born. And in the sixth chapter in writing to them he
says once you were like the rest of them. But now you are different. It's
the eleventh verse if you want to read it. Think of what it meant to
come out of the cesspool and begin to live like God intended it to be.
And now as he deals with problems, because that's what this letter is
about is problems, all kinds of them, dirty, tough problems that bust
churches all to pieces and tear out the innards of church life, he has
to deal with them. He comes near the end. This is what he says. I
want to tell you about what I first gave you and remind you. This is
not an overstatement. Sometimes you can blast so many trumpets that
when you get through blasting about what you're supposed to be blasting
there isn't anything. This is a simple, quiet, factual statement of
reasonable men. He says, he died, you know that, and he rose again.
And then he lists the witnesses. A man called Cephas, Peter, then
twelve, then five hundred, most of them still alive, although some are
dead, he says, then again to James, then the twelve, and finally, like
we would say today, would you believe it?, he appeared to me. Now
friends, you have to mark it down well that Paul was no backwoods
character, no little snivelling kind of a fellow that couldn't cut
the mustard out in big, tough life. Paul could have risen, if you will
excuse the analogy, to the top of any corporation. He would have been
in the greatest sense a wheeler and a dealer, in the big sense in our
time. He brought massive talent to the gospel. He had fought this
thing with all the life that was in him. This was a superstition. This
was something that would tear down the monotheism of his God. And yet
within him a crack started to come. Why had Stephen died like he had?
Stephen died like he did because Christ was alive. And this thing haunted
him, it pulled at him, it tugged at him, and many students of Paul say
psychologically the end of the old life took place that
day. And on the way to Damascus in an uncontrolled way he was a Presence.
He said it was the resurrected Christ. And everything from that time on
in the life of this man of God became constrained, moved, dictated to,
lived out, because of the Resurrection. He moved across the empire, he
did incredible things, he threw his life down when men would have run
for cover, he sat in prisons, he wrote letters under hectic conditions,
all of it. I am increasingly struck by the greatness of Paul.
Because he said, I am constrained by a Presence. And this is the thing that has changed you in Corinth. This is the things that's gone out across the empire and given hope to people again. And it is the rockbed confession of my own life. Now friends, may I say something about the encounter on the road. And to do this I must speak of truth. There are many ways of knowing the truth. The deepest way is personal, inner, intimate. Let me illustrate. A man walks out of a great drama in which there has been the clash of great forces. It may be even an unresolved drama. And he moves out on the streets. And he is so shaken he does not wish to visit with anyone about this. He wishes to think. Truth has spoken at the deep inner level of life. Or take this. Death comes to a home. We see this happen over and over and over again in our pastoral ministry. And you can come to this home, and it is not the words. It is not the gifts that are brought. It is the fact that you come. And as a friend or a neighbor or someone who has simply stopped by to say I care comes through the door in the kitchen or living room or closet, wherever it is, there are tears, because there has been the communication of oneself to another. Friends, the truth of meeting Christ is at that level. It does not come out of committee. It does not come because there has been much disputation. It does not come because we have organized and categorized life and cut it all up so that we can somehow pigeonhole it all. The assumption of our age is that all truth comes that way. It does not. The deep tides of truth are inner. They carry men by moods and spirit. They somehow are a kind of leap of faith in the midst of what seems to be the light to which I can give myself. This is what happened to Paul. This is what happened to Thomas. And may I say, if you will pardon the personal reference, this is what happened to me. It happened to you. It may have taken a week, it may have taken a year, it may have taken five years, or ten years, but in that encounter, that meeting, that soul of life over against the great
mighty maker of life, so that somehow there is communion, dialogue, conversation. It is the healing power of Resurrection truth that Paul knew and by which he lived and died. Now friends, it did more than just change Paul from a Saul into a Paul. It did more than make out of him a messenger, great as that was. It gave to him a whole new world perspective. It changed everything. Instead of Rome finally being the end of all things, man dominating the end, it was God now. The kingdoms of this world shall become the Kingdom of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. So that the theology that came out of Paul's experience was the theology of hope, a theology of grace, a theology of resurrection. And the last word was not Good Friday. It became Easter, not just for Saul who became Paul, but for the world, for Viet Nam, for China, for our city, for our homes. And I must insist that this comes by that basic reaching out of what we call faith, the betting of the self, the giving of me, freely to God. Let me just say one other things about this. The false assumption that runs its way through us, among us, is that we can stay uncommitted, that we do not need to get into the battle, that we can indefinitely put off decision. This is like a fellow sitting at a point where he is being shot at while he discusses with himself what he ought to do. The hour grows late, and night comes in around us, and decide we must. The Christian church in American is going through its hour now of cleansing. The careless ones, I would say, and I feel this very deeply, in the next ten, fifteen, twenty years, will fall by the wayside. It will all become a myth. And we could well find ourselves where Britain or France is today. But for those of us for whom this is real, the battle has just begun. And the greatest hour of those people of faith is just ahead. Every man, woman and child is called by the One who has nailprints in his hands, who loves us with a love that goes beyond understanding, who becons to us to come to his kingdom. And my friends, he seizes us out, he searches for us, he relentlessly pursues
us, until on some road, Jericho, Damascus, Jerusalem, on some road, we have to deal with him, ultimately and finally. Since I had read Phillips, I thought I ought to read Lewis. And yesterday I read the wonderful personal statement by C. S. Lewis, and man whose mind is not unlike that of Pauls, although temperamentally greatly different. This is the story of his own encounter with God. And that statement comes near the end of the little book which he has called SURPRISE BY JOY. I felt because God works mysteriously and miraculously in so many wondrous ways, I felt that perhaps this said it better than anything I could say.

At the end in the little chapter called "Checkmate" which will have meaning to all chess players, he says, "You must picture me alone." Now this is the great English teacher at Oxford. "In that room at Magdeline" the college in which he has taught until his recent death "Night after night feeling whenever my mind lifted even for a second from my work the steady unrelenting approach of him whom I so earnestly desired not to meet. That which I greatly feared had at last come upon me. In the Trinity term of 1929 I gave in and admitted that God was God and knelt and prayed. Perhaps that night, the most dejected and reluctant convert in all England, I did not see then what is now the most shining and obvious thing, the divine humility which will accept a convert even on such terms." And then he closes with a chapter called "The Beginning." In mature life, interesting to write about the beginning. And says, I quote just one sentence. "I had hoped that the heart of reality might be of such a kind that we can best symbolize it as a place, Instead I found it to be a Person." And that Person is among us, for He is raised from the dead and goes before us into Galilee, the Lord of history and the Saviour of mankind. And He has the Ring of Truth. Let us pray.