

E ighth A nnu al H onors C hurch at A ndrew s U niversity

" W om en of Faith: Past, Present & Future"

[Campus News](#) | Posted on December 6, 2018



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Hyveth Williams, professor and director of homiletics at the Seminary, delivered a passionate homily about her experiences in ministry and what she has learned from them. (Photo by Lloyd Martinez, University Communication student photographer)

By: Hannah Gallant, University Communication student writer

On Saturday morning, Nov. 10, 2018, attendees gathered in the Howard Performing Arts Center to enjoy the eighth annual Honors Church program, titled "Women of Faith: Past, Present & Future."

The service began with a selection of hymns written and composed by women of faith including Cecil Frances Alexander and Fanny Crosby. Led by Chelsea Lake, honors alum and music director for WAUS, the Honors choir then delivered an introit of Tom Trenny's song "A Place at the Table." After opening prayer, Haley Butler, senior biology major and Honors president, welcomed the congregation. When explaining the inspiration for this year's theme, she said, "At the suggestion of our student leaders, this year's Honors Church focuses on the heritage of female ministry within the Protestant tradition. We do not seek simply to celebrate that history but to also promote action and renew energy after the recent Autumn Council votes."

The service was split into three sections: “Part 1: Created Equal & Fully Human,” “Part 2: The Challenge” and “Part 3: Called to Minister.” Each section included scripture passages, readings, hymns and personal testimonies. The scripture passages centered around affirming the full humanity of men and women, and the readings were a sample of the historic and continuing Protestant debate surrounding the principles of gender equality and the call to ministry. L. Monique Pittman, director of Honors and professor of English, says, “Something I really wanted to be sure we were showing in the readings was the long arc of women actively asking for equal status, for a role— a recognized role— in ministry.”

At the end of the first section, Amanda Bange, theology and speech-language pathology & audiology major and senior Honors scholar, poignantly shared about a negative experience within ministry this past summer. While she admitted that this was very frustrating and discouraging, she passionately addressed how this affirmed her desire to minister to other women who are seeking a place in ministry.

Later, Nancy Kardos-Moldovan, religion major and senior Honors scholar, also reflected on her recent experiences in ministry. Despite the more positive nature of her experiences, she did share how difficult it is to serve and love when there is so rarely a place for women in ministry. After her touching reflection, the audience enjoyed a music arrangement of “Blessed Assurance” played by Honors scholars Danya Wilson, Grant Steinweg and Jesse Gray.

At the end of the third section, Hyveth Williams, professor and director of homiletics at the Seminary, delivered a passionate homily about her experiences in ministry and what she has learned from them. She first reflected on how hard it was to start out as a woman in ministry with no female mentor. After sharing a short list of the people she currently looks to for female mentorship, Williams then went on to share five lessons from 1 Peter 5:1–3 that had been a powerful mentoring force in her life.

After the homily, the song “Precious Lord, Lead Me Home” received its world premiere by the Honors choir and orchestra members. Written and composed by Marguerite Samuel and commissioned by Chelsea Lake, this piece is specifically dedicated to women in all positions of leadership in ministry.

The Honors church service would not have been possible without the hard work and dedication shown by numerous faculty, staff and students in the J.N. Andrews Honors Program; the Honors officers; Danya Wilson, Honors music coordinator; Howard Performing Arts Center staff; Department of Music colleagues; and Hyveth Williams and the members of her Grace Place Congregation in South Bend, Indiana, who willingly joined the Honors worship service.

“I was so moved by it [the service] and really grateful for Dr. Williams who put the punctuation, the exclamation mark, on it. It was such a lovely experience to be worshipping with her congregation, as well,” reflects Pittman.

Kara Herrera, a junior honors biotechnology and English major, shares her response to this year’s service. “Honors church is always a great experience every year. I’ve attended it every year since my freshman year, and it has always been super fun and a joy to attend. The theme this year was

extremely timely, and it was really powerful to hear so many women's voices come to life through the Honors family."