

Andrews to Hold Ninth Annual Honors Church

On Saturday, November 16, at 11:45 a.m.

[Campus News](#) | Posted on November 7, 2019



Honors students participate in Honors Church 2018. (Photo by Lloyd Martinez)

By: Hannah Gallant, University Communication student writer

The ninth annual Honors Church will be held at 11:45 a.m. on Saturday, Nov. 16, 2019, in the Seminary Chapel on the campus of Andrews University.

According to the Honors office, this year's church service, "Faith Behind Iron: Marking Thirty Years Since the Fall of Communism," will explore what it means to have faith and act ethically under oppressive regimes. The service will include three parts: The Assault on Truth, The Voice of Truth and The Triumph of Truth.

"Since democracy seems so imperiled of late, now seems the right moment to think about how oppressive regimes take control, maintain power and coerce others into complicity," said L. Monique Pittman, director of the J.N. Andrews Honors Program and professor of English.

With its thematic focus on the anniversary of a significant historical event, this year's Honors Church follows in the footsteps of past years' programs. Since the first Honors Church in 2011,

these annual services have included a variety of topics including a 150-year anniversary celebration of the 13th amendment, a service marking 100 years since the start of World War I and a 500-year anniversary celebration of the 95 Theses. According to the Honors office, all Honors Church services are designed to spiritually benefit the community and incorporate concepts and queries discussed in the core Honors curriculum.

“Such questions are at the heart of the Honors project to be self-aware, self-critical, and ever-growing ethical agents for Christ in a fallen world,” says Pittman.

Ingrid Radulescu, 2019 alumna with a Bachelor of Arts in English literature and previous student assistant to Pittman, was one of the main assistants in preparing the program for this year’s Honors Church. Even though she has been helping with Honors Church programs for the past three years, Ingrid said that “Faith Behind Iron” strikes a personal sentiment as she is an immigrant from a former communist country.

Similar to past services, “Faith Behind Iron” will include material from a number of sources. Within each of the aforementioned parts, Honors students will read biblical and literary selections and lead out in hymns with the Honors choir and orchestra. Led by conductor and student Grant Steinweg, the Honors choir and orchestra will also deliver a special performance of Sergey Andreyevich Batsuk’s “Great and Marvelous are Your Works.”

Some of the reading selections included in the program are excerpts from Psalm 25, Irina Ratushinskaya’s “Beyond the Limit” (1987), Dietrich Bonhoeffer’s letters from prison to Eberhard Bethge (1944) and Miroslav Volf’s “Exclusion and Embrace” (1996). All of the biblical passages will be read in English, and some will be read in Romanian, French and German.

In addition to the readings and musical selections, there will be a brief reflection delivered by Vanessa Corredera, associate professor of English and Honors faculty, and a homily presented by Ovidiu Radulescu, pastor and father of honors alumna Ingrid Radulescu.

Adair Kibble, senior English writing and French for international trade major, says, “I like Honors churches because they are a different approach to worship that includes a variety of voices in theology, not just one speaker’s interpretation of a certain topic.”

According to Maxine Umana, administrative assistant and recruiter for the J.N. Andrews Honors Program, preparation for this year’s program began in May after the spring graduation. The Honors choir rehearsals started on Tuesday, Sept. 3, 2019, and will continue until the Tuesday before Honors Church. Student readers began practicing a month before the program, and those doing special music and praise teams coordinated privately during this time as well.

“The theme this year really touches a tender spot for many Andrews students as the campus is flooded with immigrants and children of immigrants that lived under communist regimes across the globe,” says Ingrid Radulescu. “I hope that the Honors and Andrews community can come together to take the time and reflect on how faith can still grow and thrive in the darkest times.