

"As It Is In Heaven: The Politics of Jesus"

Black History Month theme highlights justice and change

SCHEDULED EVENTS FOR BLACK History Month 2018 included short course, chapel and forum programming; vespers and church services; panel discussions; book club meetings; and entertainment such as roller-skating, a story slam and spirit week.

The central celebration weekend took place February 16–17, beginning with Friday’s “Seeing the Invisible” vespers in the Howard Performing Arts Center. The program was designed for attendees to feel the weight of the Black journey in America then to move forward in hope. Artist, speaker and urban missionary Sharona Drake shared musical numbers that spoke to the Black experience.

Claudia Allen, Andrews alumna and featured speaker for the evening, noted that society has said an African American is a nobody. She told the story from the Gospel of John about the man by the pool of Bethesda, saying, “In spite of society’s attempt to erase this man, Jesus saw this man. And when Jesus sees you, no matter your condition, you can no longer remain unseen.” She closed her presentation with the thoughts, “I believe Jesus shows us how to make the invisible visible...may we see like Him, sense like Him, speak like Him.”

The Sabbath church service, “#FreedomCulture,” also took place in the Howard Center. Deliverance Mass Choir began the program with a powerful rendition of “Lift Every Voice.” The sermon, “Catalyst,” was delivered by Tanya Loveday. Beginning with the story in John 4:46–54, she outlined distractions to sparking real change—questions of how to properly enact change, what people should

be praying for, and why certain things happen to certain people. She stated, “It is hard to reject what’s in front of us because we’re so used to the dysfunction. We have to sometimes keep ourselves away from thinking only about the miracle and look toward the change God is calling us to make.” She reminded those in attendance that as a church and as a people, there is a responsibility to face discomfort and refuse the status quo.

A fellowship dinner followed the service. Yasmine Siagian, a sophomore psychology major and member of DMC, said, “It was a great time where we could talk about some of the issues that were present on campus and in the world. It was a fantastic experience to be a part of.”

The Black Student Association of the Seminary (BSAS) sponsored Sabbath afternoon’s The Justice Lab, a panel discussion with Claudia Allen and Rebecca Murdock, a graduate theological studies student at the Seminary. Allen addressed the crucial role of language to both create sin and redemption in the Bible—as words and concepts create action, we have a responsibility to use our words in responsible and empowering ways. Murdock spoke on the apparent dichotomy between the truth’s priority to focus on self-expression and love’s priority to sacrifice for others.

Danielle Barnard, BSAS president, said, “I feel that the presentations complemented one another well. I believe that participants were equipped to examine how they speak and advocate for justice. It was a great afternoon with truly riveting dialogue.”



TOP: Sabbath church service at the Howard Performing Arts Center featured Deliverance Mass Choir and Tanya Loveday as guest speaker

MIDDLE: Alumna Claudia Allen and Rebecca Murdock, seminary student, spoke at The Justice Lab on Sabbath afternoon in Newbold Auditorium of Buller Hall

ABOVE LEFT: Dynamic performer Kane Smego, a spoken word poet, hip hop artist and educator, was the guest presenter at University Forum on Feb. 22

ABOVE RIGHT: Ezekiel Azonwu performs at “Black Like Me III, A Comedic Story Slam Event” on Feb. 24