



*Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*  
**Convocation Service**

Hicks Memorial Chapel  
Tuesday, September 8, 2015

**GATHERING**

**Prelude**

*Trumpet Tune*

Richard E. Frey

**\*Call to Worship**

Kimberly Merrell

*Leader:* The Lord has called you here this day.

***People:* Lord, prepare us to hear your word.**

*Leader:* Open your hearts to receive God's good news.

***People:* Lord, give us the courage and faith to follow where you lead.**

*Leader:* Come, let us worship God!

***People:* Let us sing our praises to the Almighty One. AMEN.**

**\*Processional Hymn**

*Gather Us In*

GtG #401

**\*Invocation**

Byron H. Jackson

*Leader:* Praise the Lord!

***People:* The Lord's name be praised.**

*Leader:* O God of Abraham and Ruth, you have called us to embark on a journey of faith. We stand before you in thanksgiving, ready to hear you and to follow where you lead, for you have claimed us by your mercy and set before us eternal promises in Jesus Christ, with whom we live to give you all glory.

***People:* Amen.**

\* Please rise in body and/or spirit

**\*Prayer of Confession**

**People:** Almighty and most merciful God, whose Son is the Light of the world,  
in his penetrating light we acknowledge our brokenness:  
In his constant grace, our careless love;  
In his generous giving, our selfishness;  
In his strength, our lack of faith;  
In his inclusive love, our continued exclusion of others.  
But in his cross is our forgiveness and in his resurrection our enduring hope.  
So we ask for cleansing and forgiveness for our sins;  
through Jesus Christ our Lord.  
Amen.

**\*Assurance of Pardon**

**People:** This is the Good News which Christ makes known to us. We are forgiven!  
Because we are forgiven, we have peace to share;  
because we are loved so much, we have love to give;  
because we are touched by God's mercy, we have grace to share;  
Thanks be to God!

**\*Response**

*Gloria Patri*

GtG #581

**\*The Passing of the Peace**

*Leader:* The peace of Christ be with you all.

**People:** And also with you.

*A sign of Christ's peace may be exchanged by all.*

**Tribute to the late Rev. Dr. Johannes "Jannie" Swart (October 27, 1962-September 8, 2014)**

*Friendship and hope*

R. Drew Smith

*Community-building and hope*

Lisa Franklin-Robinson and Shane Siciliano

*Perseverance and hope*

Alina Kanaski

*Resurrection and hope*

Erin Angeli

**People:** Thanks be to God, who gives us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ.

## THE WORD

**Prayer for Illumination**

John Welch

**Scripture Reading:** Luke 4:14-30

*Leader:* The Word of the Lord.

*People:* Thanks be to God.

**Sermon**

*Good News for the New Year*

David Esterline

**\*Hymn**

*O for a World*

GtG #372

**Greetings**

Patrice Fowler-Searcy

**Prayers of the People and the Lord's Prayer**

Allan Irizarry-Graves

## SENDING

**Academic Announcements**

**\*Declaration of the Beginning of the New School Year**

**\*Benediction**

**Postlude**

*Postlude*

Douglas E. Wagner

*A buffet luncheon is being served in the William Kadel Dining Hall at 12:15 p.m.  
You are the Seminary's guest.*

## Leaders in Worship

Erin Angeli, *M.A. student*  
David Esterline, *President*  
Patrice Fowler-Searcy, *Board of Directors Vice Chair*  
Lisa Franklin-Robinson, *D.Min. student*  
Allan Irizarry-Graves, *Student Association President*  
Byron H. Jackson, *Dean of Faculty*  
Alina Kanaski, *M.Div. student*  
Kimberly Merrell, *Director of the Metro-Urban Institute*  
Shane Siciliano, *M.Div. student*  
R. Drew Smith, *Professor of Urban Ministry*  
John Welch, *Dean of Students*



Kendra Buckwalter Smith, *worship coordinator*  
Michael P. Frank III, *chapel musician*  
D. Mark Blank, *sound technician*

## The Story of Our Worship Space

As part of an ongoing revitalization of worship life at PTS, Hicks Chapel has undergone significant changes over the past few years. The intimacy and flexibility of our renovated space now support the diversity and creativity of worship planning and leadership that we encourage through our chapel program.

The process began in the summer of 2012. We first removed the pews of the lower part of the sanctuary and replaced them with chairs. We then installed carpeting and repainted the walls, contributing to the space a sense of warmth that was previously lacking. Finally, we ordered a liturgical suite made by Erich Thompson. Rev. Thompson is a Presbyterian minister who has found a calling in the design and construction of liturgical furnishings. You can read more about his work at [www.erichthompson.net](http://www.erichthompson.net).

The sanctuary's "default" set-up embodies a theological understanding of God's church. Upon entering the sanctuary, worshipers are immediately greeted by the Baptismal font as a reminder that we do not enter God's presence on our own accord, but because God reached out to us in the covenant of baptism. The chairs are arranged in a circle, creating an intimate atmosphere that allows us to integrate worship leaders, musicians, and choirs into one community. It is from this community that God calls upon members to proclaim His Word. Therefore, the pulpit is placed as a part of the community circle. The pulpit is "flexible," but not "multi-functional" – it can be moved, but not because it is merely a lectern. When we preach, we speak not in our own name, but in the name of the Lord. To symbolize this, our pulpit reflects the shape of a traditional pulpit in which the preacher, as it were, disappears into the structure that surrounds. In this way, the worshipping community's focus is directed toward the Word, rather than the speaker.

At the center of the sanctuary is a large, square communion table. It is supported by three legs on each of its four sides. According to the designer, this four times three scheme aims to remind us of the Trinity, the four Gospels, and the twelve Disciples. Additionally, the face of each side shows the Hebrew symbol *shin* – standing for *shalom*, *Shaddai*, and *shakina*. It is around this table – the Lord's Table – that the community gathers. Because the table is square, there is no definitive "head." This reminds worshipers that in our celebration of the Lord's Supper, it is not the presider who is the host, but Christ himself.