

## SENDING

### Academic Announcements

#### \*Sending Song

*Go to the World*

GtG #295

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

#### \*Benediction

#### Postlude

*Postlude*

*Douglas E. Wagner*

*A buffet luncheon will be served in the Courtyard at 12:15 p.m.  
You are the Seminary's guest.*

#### Leaders in Worship:

Rev. Dr. John Burgess, *Professor of Systematic Theology, Faculty Marshal*  
Rev. Dr. David Esterline, *President*  
Rev. Patrice Fowler-Searcy, *Board of Directors Vice Chair*  
Gary Glasser, *MA candidate, Student Association President*  
Rev. Dr. Heather Vacek, *Dean of Faculty*  
Rev. Dr. John Welch, *Dean of Students*



Rev. Kendra Buckwalter Smith, *Director of the Worship Program*  
Michael P. Frank III, *Chapel Musician*  
Ciera (Cici) James, *Audio Visual 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 Worship 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 worshiping 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.



*Pittsburgh Theological Seminary  
in its 224th Year of Teaching Ministry*

## Convocation Service

Hicks Memorial Chapel  
Tuesday, September 5, 2017

## GATHERING

#### Prelude

*Processional and Trumpet Tune on CWM RHONDDA*

arr. Wayne L. Wold

#### \*Call to Worship

*Psalm 95:1-7 (The Inclusive Bible)*  
John Welch

*Leader:* Come, let us sing joyfully to God!

Raise a shout to our rock, our deliverance!

***People:* Let us come into God's presence with thanksgiving,  
and sing our praises with joy.**

*Leader:* For the Lord is a great God,

***People:* the great Ruler, above all gods.**

*Leader:* O God, in your hands are the depths of the earth,  
and the mountain peaks are yours.

***People:* Yours is the sea, for you made it,  
The dry land as well, for your hands have formed it.**

*Leader:* Come, let us bow down in worship;  
let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!

***People:* For you are our God,  
and we are the people you shepherd,  
the flock under your care.**

*Leader:* If only you would hear God's voice today!

#### \*Processional Hymn

*God of Grace and God of Glory*

GtG #307

#### \*Prayer of Confession

Gary Glasser

***People:* Merciful God,**

**we confess that we have often failed to be an obedient church.**

**We have not done your will,**

**we have broken your law,**

**we have rebelled against your love.**

**We have not loved our neighbors,**

**and have refused to hear the cry of the needy.**

**We have not lived your Gospel truth with boldness,**

**and have let division, pride, and fear define us instead.**

**Forgive us, we pray, and free us for joyful obedience**

**in unity with all your people;**

**through Jesus Christ our Lord.**

*Silence is kept for personal prayer and confession.*

\* Please rise in body and/or spirit

**\*Assurance of Forgiveness**

*Leader:* Hear the good news: Who is in a position to condemn? Only Christ, and Christ died for us, Christ rose for us, Christ reigns in power for us, Christ prays for us. Anyone who is in Christ is a New Creation. The old life is finished, gone. Behold, new life has begun.  
Brothers and Sisters, believe the good news:

**People: In Jesus Christ, we are forgiven.  
Alleluia! Amen.**

**\*Response** *Glory to God Whose Goodness Shines on Me* GtG #582

**\*The Passing of the Peace**

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

**THE WORD**

**Prayer for Illumination** David Esterline

**Scripture Reading:** Acts 28:11-16, 30-31

*Leader:* The Word of the Lord.  
**People: Thanks be to God.**

**Sermon** *Bold Beginning for the Year Ahead*

**Sung Response** *God Welcomes All* GtG #399  
(three times)

**RESPONDING TO THE WORD**

**Greetings** Patrice Fowler-Searcy

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

**\*Remembrance of Baptism** David Esterline, Kendra Buckwalter Smith  
*The congregation may stand and face the font*

*Leader:* Lead a life worthy of the calling to which you have been called, *Eph. 4:1-3*  
with all humility and gentleness,  
with patience, bearing with one another in love,  
making every effort to maintain the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.

**Profession of Faith**

**Renunciations**

*Leader:* Trusting in the gracious mercy of God,  
do you turn from the ways of sin  
and renounce evil and its power in the world?

**People: I do.**

*Leader:* Who is your Lord and Savior?

**People: Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior.**

*Leader:* Will you be Christ's faithful disciple,  
obeying his Word and showing his love?

**People: I promise, with God's help.**

**Profession**

*Apostles' Creed*

*Leader:* With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

**People: I believe in God, the Father almighty,  
Maker of heaven and earth,  
and in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;  
who was conceived by the Holy Ghost,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried;  
he descended into hell;  
the third day he rose again from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth on the right hand  
of God the Father Almighty;  
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Ghost;  
the holy catholic church;  
the communion of saints;  
the forgiveness of sins;  
the resurrection of the body;  
and the life everlasting. Amen.**

**Thanksgiving for Baptism**

*Leader:* The Lord be with you.

**People: And also with you.**

*Leader:* Let us give thanks to the Lord our God.

**People: It is right to give our thanks and praise.**

*Leader:* Eternal and gracious God, we give you thanks ...

...

... be all glory and honor, now and forever.

**People: Amen.**

**Invitation**

*Leader:* Remember your baptism and be thankful.

In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

**People: Amen.**

*Congregants are invited to approach the font,  
remember their baptism by taking a stone from the water,  
and receive a blessing*

*Those who do not wish to come forward may remain in their seats.*

**Congregational Song** *You Belong to Christ* GtG #492

*After all have been signed and blessed:*

*Leader:* May the Holy Spirit work within you,  
that having been born through water and the Spirit,  
you may live as faithful disciples of Jesus Christ.

**People: Amen.**