



SMU PERKINS
SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

November 10, 2009

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**Fiftieth Anniversary of *Christmas Worship Services*, Perkins Chapel at SMU on
December 3, 2009**

Dallas, Texas – For the fiftieth consecutive year, Perkins School of Theology will present an inspiring Christmas worship celebration with readings and music on Thursday, December 3, 2009 at 4:00 and 8:00 p.m. in Perkins Chapel. The Chapel is located at 6001 Bishop Boulevard on the SMU campus and parking for the two identical services will be available in front of the Chapel.

To mark the fiftieth anniversary of these Christmas worship services at Perkins, the theme of the *Magnificat* has been chosen. Services will feature Mary's canticle from Chapter 1 of the Gospel of Luke as seen from a global perspective. For the occasion, three choral selections on the Magnificat have been commissioned from around the world. Ulston Smith, a current Master of Sacred Music student, is from the Caribbean island of Antigua. His *Magnificat Soca* incorporates steel pan drums from this region. Perkins alumnus Edgardo Macapili MSM '01, a native of the Philippines now teaching in Taiwan, has composed the *Song of Maria*. Finally, Dr. Andrew Donaldson, a church musician from Toronto, Ontario, and the father of current MSM student Hilary Donaldson, has composed *Mary's Magnificent Song*, also incorporating steel pan drums and guitar. Ms. Donaldson, assistant director for Seminary Singers, will conduct her father's composition.

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Meadows Chorale, directed by Pamela Elrod, will contribute various chorale selections that comment on Mary's role in the Christmas narrative, including music by Franz Biebl, Benjamin Britten, Maurice Duruflé, Charles Theodore Pachelbel, and Alan Smith.

The Christmas Worship Services, sponsored by Perkins, were instituted by Professors Grady Hardin and Lloyd Pfautsch in 1959. The services are a tradition closely tied to the development of the Master of Sacred Music Program, established in 1960. A forerunner to this tradition was established in 1948 when Perkins Professor Fred Gealy led the Seminary Singers and seminary community in a program of Christmas music during the last chapel of the fall semester.

In 1959 Professor Richey Hogg, in his capacity as chair of the Community Affairs Committee, recommended to the Perkins faculty a Perkins community Christmas dinner followed by a service, a practice followed at Yale Divinity School. This service included scripture, prayers, choral music, congregational singing and a Christmas sermon drawn from church history. Under Pfautsch's tenure, one of Martin Luther's Christmas sermons became a staple of this service, as well as the pattern of including a choral group from Meadows School of the Arts along with the Seminary Singers, a tradition maintained to the present day. Professor Carlton Young collaborated with Pfautsch between 1964 and 1975 in this endeavor. Between 1976 and 1990, the collaboration continued with the late Professor Roger Deschner from Perkins. Pfautsch (1921-2003) retired in 1992.

Following the appointment of C. Michael Hawn to Perkins and Constantina Tsolainou to Meadows in 1992, the service structure became a variation of the Nine Lessons and Carols of King's College Cambridge. Upon his appointment to the faculty of Perkins School of Theology in 2006, Professor Christopher Anderson M.S.M., M.M. '91 became the service organist. Joining the SMU faculty in 2007, Professor Pamela Elrod, Director of Choral Activities in the Music Division of the Meadows School of the Arts, will direct the Meadows Chorale, continuing the long-established relationship between the two schools for these services.

Robert Anderson (1934-2009) joined Pfautsch on the SMU faculty in 1960 and, though appointed in the School of the Arts, was a primary influence on the development of the M.S.M. Program. Anderson, University Distinguished Professor of Organ and Sacred Music, was known for his many exceptional organ students, including Dr. Christopher Anderson, this evening's organist. Robert Anderson was the service organist at the annual Seminary Christmas Worship Services from the time he joined the faculty until 1995. He died in Honolulu on May 29, 2009. This year's services are dedicated to his memory.

We invite you to visit our new website at www.smu.edu/perkins to learn more about Perkins School of Theology.

Perkins School of Theology, founded in 1911, is one of five official University-related schools of theology of The United Methodist Church. Degree programs include the Master of Divinity, Master of Sacred Music, Master of Theological Studies, Master of Church Ministries, and Doctor of Ministry, as well as the Ph.D., in cooperation with SMU's Dedman College of Humanities and Sciences.

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