



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

4 September 2013

Historic Black Church, Local Seminary Teach Queer Theology

Union United Methodist Church, Boston's only LGBTQ-affirming black church, and Boston University School of Theology, the "School of Prophets", will co-present a graduate-level course on Queer Theology. Beginning September 5th, the class will meet Thursdays 6-9pm at the Union Church, 485 Columbus Avenue, in Boston's South End. The site was a station for enslaved blacks on the Underground Railroad to Canada. The South End is the center of Boston's LGBTQ life.

Rev. Pamela Lightsey, PhD, United Methodist ordained elder and Clinical Assistant Professor of Contextual Theology, will instruct the course. "That this course will be located at Union UMC is phenomenal! It meets our school's desire to do relevant contextual education and it will do so in a way that is good for our students, good for the church, and good for those who will come from surrounding communities."

Rev. Jay Williams, Lead Pastor of Union and PhD candidate in religion at Harvard, will host. "It's simple: God knows no limits. Christ calls us to love everyone. And the Spirit empowers to seek justice for all. We are a radically welcoming congregation, and we strive daily to stand on the right side of history. With this course we practice our faith," says Rev. Williams.

This Queer Theology course is groundbreaking, and will likely be the first such graduate class taught inside a mainline church. The location of the course at Union is part of the School of Theology's initiative to be a "classroom in the community." This seminar will acquaint students with the history of the term "queer", its challenges, its reappropriation and the impact queer theology is having on the Christian faith and practices. Further, it will especially investigate how "queering" may contribute to theology as academic discipline, church practice and as an instrument of social justice.

Rev. Dr. Mary Elizabeth Moore, Dean of the School of Theology witnesses: "Never have I been more proud of the Boston University School of Theology. Partnering with Union and blazing trails in public dialogue on a theological subject of urgent human concern is our vocation. May the dialogue open new paths of understanding and vision, which the church and world badly need!"

The course is open to the public, although registration is required. Seminary credit is available through the Boston Theological Institute and continuing education credit is available through the Pastor-Scholar Program.

Boston University School of Theology was formed in 1839 as the first Methodist seminary in the country, as well as the founding school of what is now Boston University. The School's history of

marrying academic rigor with social justice is still vital and effective nearly two centuries later. It continues to attract students who seek the best theological training to take action in their local, national, or global context. This is a major distinguishing factor of the School of Theology: to want to change the world is more than cliché--it is actually possible.

Union United Methodist Church is a vibrant and diverse, multiethnic faith community in Boston's historic South End. It is an urban, lgbt-friendly church and its doors are open to all people regardless of age, race, color, physical challenge, sexual or affectional orientation. Union is also home to the Hispanic Black Gay Coalition. Union worships Sundays at 8am and 11am in the Africana celebration tradition, incorporating a blend of gospel, hymns, anthems, and contemporary praise and worship.

After a multi-year study and discernment process, Union became a "reconciling congregation" in 2000, the first predominately African-American United Methodist congregation to do so. Long-time church member June Carter, who participated in the study process, recalls, "We wanted to be even better neighbors." She continues, "Based on our extensive study of the bible and issues related to LGBTQ persons, we came out as an inclusive congregation." The church released a "[Full Statement as a Reconciling and Inclusive Church](#)".

For more information and registration, please see unionboston.org/queertheology

For media inquiries, please call the School of Theology at (617) 353-3050 or the Union Church at (617) 536-0872.

###