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## ITC Professor of Music Dr. Lisa Allen 2007 Charles B. Copher Lecturer

### *Liturgy, Justice and the Future Of The Black Church*

(Atlanta, GA, February 28, 2007) - Dr. Lisa Allen, Assistant Professor of Church Music and Worship at the Interdenominational Theological Center (ITC) will deliver the 2007 Charles B. Copher Lecture, March 21, 2007 at 7 p.m. in the ITC Chapel. Dr. Allen's lecture is entitled **Liturgy, Justice, and the Future of the Black Church**. She states, "In this postmodern society, in which Black people are, according to the law, equal and freely able to pursue happiness as they see fit, in a time when Black people live in some of the most upscale communities in the country, at a moment when mega and "wanna-be" mega-churches focus on individual salvation at death and individual prosperity in life, I ask the question, "Does the Black Church still equate liturgy with justice?"

Dr. Allen is a graduate of Millsaps College in Jackson Mississippi with degrees in Piano Performance and Music Education. She earned the Masters and Ph. D. degrees in Music Education from the University of Southern Mississippi. She moved to Atlanta, Georgia where she began teaching music in the Fulton County School System. Dr. Allen continued her long history of leadership in the church by serving as choir director and Minister of Music for several area churches, including, Cascade United Methodist Church, Ben Hill United Methodist Church.

Currently, she is working on two book proposals *One Word: A Guide to Holistic Worship, and What Pastors Wish Musicians Knew/What Musicians Wish Pastors Knew*. In July 2005, Dr. Allen joined the ITC staff where she specializes in African-American worship, worship and theology and multicultural worship.

Sensing a call to ministry, Dr. Allen enrolled at the Candler School of Theology at Emory University to further her religious education. While at Candler, she received the Margaret A. Pitts scholarship, and was selected as the United Methodist Foundation

Scholar during her middler and senior years. After graduation in 2003, Dr. Allen accepted a position as Associate Pastor of Kingswood United Methodist Church in Dunwoody, Georgia. She has been a leader in the North Georgia Conference, serving as Annual Conference worship leader for the past four years and worship leader for the South Georgia Pastor's School for the past three years. Allen also sits on three conference boards and has led in several conference workshops related to discerning one's call to ministry.

Responding to Dr. Allen's lecture will be Dr. Sharon J. Willis and Dr. Alton Pollard, III. Celebrated composer and conductor, Dr. Sharon J. Willis premiered her first opera titled *The Opera Singer*, in April, 2000. Commissioned by Dr. Alfred Duckett, Conductor of the Atlanta University Centerwide Orchestra, to compose a memorial tribute to the late Dr. Darryl Mitchell in 2001, the orchestral tone poem was presented in an encore performance at the 11<sup>th</sup> Annual SEAAC Music Festival in February of 2002. She has been included in the exhibit of Georgia Classical Composers at the Georgia Music Hall of Fame in Macon, Georgia. Her new opera *Madam C. J.: A Petite Opera in Four Acts* was recently staged at the Callanwolde Fine Art center in January. The opera is based on the life of Madame C. J. Walker and celebrates African-American and women's history. Willis is a graduate of Clark College now Clark Atlanta University (CAU), where she serves as Interim Music Chair, and Director of Music Ministry at Friendship Baptist Church.

Dr. Alton B. Pollard, III is Director of the program of Black Church Studies and Associate Professor of Religion and Culture at the Candler School of Theology. He is also chair of the American Religious Culture Program in the Graduate Division of Religion at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. Pollard, specializes in the areas of African-American Religion and Culture, Sociology of the Black Church, Southern African Studies and Sociology of Religion, to name a few. He is the author of *Mysticism and Social Change*, *How Long This Road: Race, Religion and the Legacy of C. Eric Lincoln*, with L. Henry Whelchel, and numerous other publications. Dr. Pollard holds the Bachelor of Arts in Religion and Philosophy and Business Administration from Fisk University, Master of Divinity from Harvard University, and a Doctor in Philosophy from the Department of Religion at Duke University.

The Copher lecture is free and open to the public. The Chapel at the Interdenominational Theological Center is located at 700 Martin Luther King, Jr. Drive, SW, Atlanta. For additional information, call 404-527-7761.

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*The Interdenominational Theological Center, a cooperative theological academy of six different denominations, the Harry V. and Selma T. Richardson Ecumenical Fellowship, and a Lutheran Center, is in its fourth decade of providing service to the world as the leading academy for African American graduate theological education and training. ITC is the only UNCF institution that offers graduate theological education. The institution engages a world-class faculty, a vibrant and challenging afro-centered curriculum, and national and international outreach programs initiatives that include: Faith and the City, the Health and Faith Leadership Initiative, Black Women in Church and Society, The Continuing Education, Certificate of Theology, and Distance Learning Program, The Institute for Black Religious Life, The Youth Hope Builders Academy, Faith Journey in Pastoral Ministry, Religious Heritage of the African World, and the Urban Theological Institute.*

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