

WORSHIP COORDINATOR COMBINES LOVE OF MUSIC AND MINISTRY

Music has always been a significant part of life for Kendra Buckwalter Smith '12/'13. Born into a family of musicians, Kendra explains, "It's how I communicate and how I experience life." Bringing together her love of music and ministry, Kendra serves as the Seminary's worship coordinator.

"When it comes to ministry, I think that music has the power to deepen compassion for others, to heighten praise and adoration of the Triune God, and to humble us in the face of beauty and creativity."

In her work as worship coordinator, Kendra provides guidance in the practical considerations of worship leadership as well as the theological implications of each aspect of the worship service. "As worship leaders, we need to be aware of what each liturgical element tells our congregants about God, how each element helps our congregants to be in relationship with God, and how each element shows our congregants how to be in relationship with the world," she says.

Kendra has written a growing number of works on worship and liturgy. Her master of sacred theology project studied the ways we worship and how it shapes us. Additionally, she wrote an article for *Call to Worship* in which she conducted a comparative analysis of the 1990 Presbyterian Hymnal and the 2013 hymnal, *Glory to God*. There she wrote, "In understanding the church as God's 'continuing prayer for the world,' we are given a robust theological and practical understanding of the ways in which the church is to posture itself toward the world. And it is just this robust eschatological understanding that we find in *Glory to God*."

In the May 2014 issue of *Presbyterians Today*, Kendra drew parallels between the world of worship and the world of popular music. In the church, we've experienced the "worship wars" as "traditional" liturgy was confronted with "contemporary" worship that aimed to be relevant to younger generations. Kendra explains, "What strikes me is the way that millennials are reconstructing the meaning that was inherent in the concept album, which contained a number of songs that were all unified by a theme and meant to be listened to in its entirety, by mashing today's singles together in the form of a playlist." She goes on to say, "While we are constructing playlists that attend to ourselves, we find in liturgy and in the hymnal a playlist that attends to God."

As worship coordinator, Kendra is realizing a vocational application of her diverse interests. "Music creates sound that not only resonates in our ears, but in our hearts as well," Kendra says.

As part of a recent Vital Worship grant from Calvin Institute of Christian Worship, Kendra helped the PTS community push beyond the "traditional versus contemporary" worship split, in part by using global worship resources. Read the full [article online](#) as well as "[Six Tips on Teaching Worship in Seminaries](#)" and "[More Inclusion = Deeply Meaningful Worship](#)" which also highlights the Seminary's chapel program.



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