

2012 Laws Lecture To Focus on Achieving Healthy Communities

William R. Laws, pastor of First Presbyterian Church between 1950 and 1976 was a civil rights leader, youth advocate, beloved pastor, and first and foremost a peacemaker. The annual lectures, funded at the time of his death by family and friends, aspire to keep the vision of what God promises and requires before us all.



This year's series will be on Healthy Communities: An Issue for People of Faith, and will be presented by Dr. Stephanie Paulsell of Harvard Divinity School on Saturday, October 6, 4:00-5:00 p.m. "The issue of healthy communities is as much a spiritual and religious issue as it is a social, political, and medical one, but we often neglect to draw upon the powerful resources our religious traditions hold for the development of healthy communities, such as religious understandings of the goodness of creation, convictions about human being made in the image of God, and the prophetic call for peaceful communities where none are harmed and all are cared for. This lecture will explore the religious imperative for healthy communities and draw on resources from our religious traditions to help us imagine and achieve them."

Stephanie joined the faculty of Harvard Divinity School in 2001 as Lecturer on Ministry and was appointed associate dean for ministry studies in 2003. She served in the post of associate dean until 2005, when she was appointed Houghton Professor of the Practice of Ministry Studies. Before coming to Harvard, she served as director of ministry studies and Senior Lecturer in Religion and Literature at the University of Chicago Divinity School. She studies the points of intersection between intellectual work and spiritual practice, between the academic study of religion and the practices of ministry, and between the contemplative and active dimensions of the vocations of minister and teacher. She is the author of *Honoring the Body: Meditations on a Christian Practice* and co-editor of *The Scope of Our Art: The Vocation of the Theological Teacher*. She is an ordained minister in the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ). Her father, William (Bill) was pastor of North Christian Church in Columbus.

The lecture is sponsored this year by First Presbyterian Church at 512 7th Street in Columbus in collaboration with Healthy Communities Initiative of Bartholomew County and InterFaith Forum Columbus and is free and open to the entire community. Elementary school aged youth are invited to come to the gym during the lecture to participate in Dances of Universal Peace and other activity. Following a brief Question and Answer period, a reception is planned. Stephanie will also be available at First Presbyterian Sunday School on Sunday morning October 7. For information visit fpccolumbus.org.