



Rev. Kate Foster Connors,
Director of The Center

to receive a

Columbia Theological Seminary
2019 Alumni Award

for

“PIONEER IN MINISTRY”

Columbia Theological Seminary announces recipients of its 2019 Alumni Awards to be presented during their annual **"Homecoming" alumni reunion event**, February 4-6, 2019, on campus in Decatur, GA near Atlanta. Kate Foster Connors (MDiv '01) will receive the Pioneer in Ministry award, as someone who engages ministry with passion, commitment and dedication.

Pioneer in Ministry Award

The Rev. Kate Foster Connors (MDiv '01) is the Executive Director of The Center in Baltimore, MD. She previously served as Associate Pastor at Idlewild Presbyterian Church in Memphis, TN, and Youth Pastor at Brown Memorial Park Avenue Presbyterian Church in Baltimore, MD. Before earning her MDiv at Columbia Theological Seminary, Foster Connors studied government at Wesleyan University (CT).

The website for The Center (www.thecenterbaltimore.org) states, "We offer a different kind of mission experience. Through our model of pairing visiting church groups with local congregations, your group will be led by local leaders to join ongoing ministry in the Baltimore area. Visiting groups are immersed in hands-on experiences with our partners. Groups also spend time with The Center staff, reflecting on shared experiences through the lenses of Christian faith and social change. Our goal is to send participants home with a renewed sense of call, energized to affect change in their own communities."

Katie Ricks (MDiv '02) was the first "test case" as a congregational partner with Foster Connors: "We walked across and along the 'red lines' that separate neighborhoods. We reflected on racism in Baltimore and at home in Chapel Hill. We wrestled with the deep socioeconomic divide in our own group. And, we were challenged to envision our call upon returning to Chapel Hill. After each of those three trips, our youth came back to initiate new programs: a monthly lunch with the subsidized housing community on our street (where some of our youth lived), a revitalized afternoon tutoring program, and a literacy camp before the start of school in the fall. These were each youth envisioned and youth led—inspired by the mission and vision of this work that Kate began."

In 2017 alone, Kate and The Center partnered with 25 churches and community organizations. In 2018, Kate mentored three summer interns—a college student and two seminarians from Columbia Theological Seminary. The Center was designated as the point organization in Baltimore for the PC(USA) Hands and Feet.

The Alumni Association Luncheon and Awards Ceremony will be hosted on February 5, 2019. This year's alumni reunion will include worship, lectures and workshops by Columbia Seminary faculty and professionals, and, for the first time in many years, will include the **2019 Smyth Lectures**. Author, scholar and renowned preacher Dr. Frank A. Thomas, the Nettie Sweeney and Hugh Th. Miller Professor of Homiletics at Christian Theological Seminary, will be the 2019 Smyth lecturer.