The Office of Black Church Studies at Duke Divinity School is a thoroughfare into the theological project of the School and the intellectual purpose of the University. Standing at the threshold of our Semi-Centennial or Golden Jubilee, we testify that “Through many dangers, toils, and snares/we have already come/’Twas grace that made [us] safe thus far/And grace will lead [us] home.” Or perhaps, “We are not what we ought to be, but we are not what we used to be.”

We join many others in emerging from the intense pressures of the pandemic(s). We rejoice that recent graduates in the OBCS@DDS family are deepening their impacts where they serve, joining new church and organizational staffs, and starting new ministries. Current students are serving in field education placements in the Triangle, in other states, and in other countries. Not all of us can say, “[We] don’t feel no ways tired,” but we do know that “We are hard-pressed on every side, but not crushed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not abandoned; struck down, but not destroyed.”

While many in higher theological education vacate after the semester ends, your OBCS@DDS has hosted a consultation for Black Church Music Professors and Directors. Our multi-disciplinary research team is working toward a book on leadership lessons from the Black Church. We are facilitating an ecumenical and multi-ethnic travel seminar on global ecumenism to Germany. And we are solidifying plans for our regular and special programming during our 50th year of service to and through Duke Divinity School. We hope that the snapshots you see and soundbites you hear will inspire you to offer a prayer of thanksgiving and a commitment to partnership as we help form new generations of good and faithful leaders for the church, academy, and world.

Rev. David Emmanuel Goatley, PhD
Associate Dean for Academic and Vocational Formation
Ruth W. and A. Morris Williams, Jr. Research Professor of Theology and Christian Ministry
Director of the Office of Black Church Studies
Duke University Divinity School
FALL EVENTS & EXPERIENCES 2021
The Gardner Taylor & Martin L. King lectures were highlights of the academic year—both left an impression upon the divinity school.

Joseph Robbins, ThD 2023
"The first year of Duke Divinity School can be quite challenging, but the Office of Black Church Studies became my home, my place of comfort. They recognized and pushed me in my call and gifts. The OBCS will remain an integral part of my DDS journey."  Angelicia Simmons, MDiv 2024
Burden film screening and conversation with the film’s Director, Andrew Heckler.

Burden is a 2018 American drama film inspired by true events, written and directed by Andrew Heckler. The film stars Garrett Hedlund, Forest Whitaker, Andrea Riseborough, Tom Wilkinson, Tess Harper, and Usher. The film, which is rated R for mature content and language, premiered at the 2018 Sundance Film Festival and won the U.S. Dramatic Audience Award.

Roundtable Discussion on Burden and theology of Repentance and Reconciliation, featuring Director Andrew Heckler and Jay Augustine.

Panelists reflected on questions, such as, what does Christian theology have to learn from and to offer a film like Burden? What is distinctive about how the film presents a story and engages the imagination of its audience? And what are both the possibilities & limitations of the way a film like Burden depicts sin, forgiveness, and individual and community transformation?
SPRING 2022

EVENTS
LECTURES
& EXPERIENCES
In memory of Deron Keys, remembering him and thankful for the gifts and service to the Office of Black Church Studies

“Sankofa specifically, the opportunity for further learning with the lunch and learn sessions with the speakers. These opportunities allowed students to meet in a smaller group with the speaker to ask questions about theology, preaching, life experiences, etc. These things demonstrate OBCS’s commitment to being a state-of-the-art resource that strengthens the faith community and positively contributes to Duke Divinity students’ education.”

Grace McGee, M.Div. 2023
"I was both nourished and deepened by the Good Friday Preaching opportunity. To have the chance to not only proclaim the Word of God, but to be preached to by my fellow siblings in Christ was both a gift and a privilege. I am grateful to the OBCS, Rev. Regina Graham, and all others who played a role in putting the event together."  
-Yazmin Spearman, M Div. 2023
PAULI MURRAY
NANNIE HELEN BURROUGHS
Lecture Series

LECTURER
Sarah Azaransky, PhD
Assistant Professor of Social Ethics
at Union Theological Seminary

Lecture
Monday, March 14, 2022 - 3:30 pm
LOCATION
WESTBROOK 0016

FILM SCREENING OF
“My Name Is Pauli Murray”
Tuesday, March 15, 2022 - 7:00 pm
LOCATION
GRIFFITH THEATER

The Office of Black Church Studies
INVITES YOU TO A SPECIAL SCREENING OF

My name is
Pauli Murray

Tuesday, March 15, 2022
7:00 pm
Griffith Theater

Healing Through Art

GUEST SPEAKER
MONICA DAVE
MS-BCP, CA
Executive Director

Friday
MARCH 25
10:30 am - 12pm
Location: York Room

“Using the arts as a therapeutic way to heal, Monica Daye shares the approach StandUp SpeakOut uses to support survivors of Gender-Based Violence.”
"In the 2022 Martin Luther King Jr. Lecture Series, Dr. Martin opened our eyes to how the instruments of surveillance and sabotage have underwritten government attempts to discredit black people in positions of influence for generations. Grounded in research and conviction, narratives like the one Dr. Martin presented are critical for helping students, as well as faculty and staff, understand their identity in the world and work toward the vision of freedom and justice God intends for all of us."

- Colin Yuchman, Th.D.
Senior Director of Digital Learning Formation

“This event was paradigm shifting for me! As a creative and aspiring writer and womanist theologian, I have been seeking tangible examples of what working in this space could look like. I'm grateful for OBCS presenting us with an unapologetically bold black woman writer who is making an impact in the theological space in unconventional ways. I was able to deeply identify with her and gain more clarity regarding the call on my own life.”

~ D’Andrea Fanning, M.Div. 2023
Facebook: 342 Fans by the end of 2021

Instagram: 256 Followers by the end of 2021

Twitter: 962 Followers by the end of 2021
Thanks for your investment in leadership development through the Office of Black Church Studies.

Dr. Norbert Wilson


Dr. Luke Powery


NEWS ARTICLES

Gifts & Donations go to OBCS: www.gifts.duke.edu/divinity