For immediate release

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Women in Christianity: A Community and Academic Conference Sponsored by UNCW

Wilmington, N.C.—The Department of Philosophy and Religion of the University of North Carolina Wilmington is hosting the region’s first-ever academic and community conference exploring women in the Christian religion Friday and Saturday, March 18 and 19. The two-day event will feature keynote speaker Amy-Jill Levine of Vanderbilt Divinity School, presentations by Wake Forest University’s Mary Foskett and Valerie Cooper. A panel of local women Christian leaders will conclude the conference. The events, except for the lunch, are free. All events are open to the public. Babysitting will be provided Saturday from 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

This conference will examine the role of women in Christian communities from the earliest times into this century, highlighting the role of local Christian church communities. The aim of the conference is to increase awareness of the important contributions made by women in Christian history, as well as local women in positions of religious leadership may share their knowledge and concerns with other women of the community, creating a process of dialogue of mutual interest and concerns.

Amy-Jill Levine, E. Rhodes and Leona B. Carpenter Professor of New Testament Studies at Vanderbilt University, will present the B. Frank Hall lecture entitled “Women and Jesus” at 8 p.m. Friday, March 18 in Kenan Auditorium. This event is free, but tickets are required and obtainable either before or at the event. Contact Kenan Auditorium box office at 910/962-3500 or 800/732-3643.

Levine’s numerous publications address Christian origins, Jewish-Christian relations and sexuality, gender, and the Bible. She has recorded the "Introduction to the Old Testament" as well as "Great Figures of the Old Testament" and "Great Figures of the New Testament" for the Teaching Company's "Great Lectures" series. Her current projects include the editing of the fourteen-volume series, The Feminist Companions to the New Testament and Early Christian Writing (Continuum/Sheffield University Press).

At 9 a.m. Saturday, March 19 in Warwick Center at UNCW, the program begins with “Women in Early Christianity,” focusing on the first and second century of Christian women and presented by Mary Foskett, the Zachary T. Smith Associate Professor at Wake Forest University. UNCW’s George Zervos will provide the response for this presentation.

Following that discussion at 11 a.m. Valerie Cooper, an instructor at Wake Forest University, will present “Women in Contemporary Christianity.” This discussion will lend special focus to African-American women in Christianity and Samuel Murrell, of UNCW, will provide the response.
Saturday, during a luncheon at 12:30 p.m., Lou Buttino from UNCW’s Department of Film Studies will present a film he is producing about local Christian leaders. Contact Diana Pasulka at 910/962-7750 with the UNCW Department of Philosophy and Religion for more information about the cost of the luncheon.

“Women as Christian Leaders,” a panel discussion with five local Christian leaders, is scheduled for 2:30 p.m. Saturday, March 19. The panel will include Rev. Cami Capps, Glory Dance Ministries; Deacon Susan Dankel, Church of the Servant Episcopal; Rev. June Highfill, Pearsall Memorial Presbyterian; Sister Mary Slawter, Catholic Women’s Health Care, along with other panelists.

The UNCW Philosophy and Religion Department, College of Arts and Sciences/Academic Affairs Cultural Affairs Funds, Office of Campus Diversity, Honors Scholars, the Center for Social Work Research and Practice, the American Academy of Religion, the Practicing Our Faith Institute and local churches are providing sponsorship and co-sponsorship of this first-time event.

More information is available from the UNCW Department of Philosophy and Religion at 910/962-3406, Diana Pasulka, 910/962-7750, or George Zervos, 910/962-7383. Information is also available at the event’s Web site www.uncw.edu/women-in-christianity.

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**Media Contact:** For specifics about the event, contact Diana Pasulka, 910/962-7750 or pasulkad@uncw.edu, or George Zervos, 910/962-7383 or zervosg@uncw.edu, with the UNCW Department of Philosophy and Religion.

Arrangements for interviews with speakers, organizers or panelists may be coordinated through Elizabeth King Humphrey, university relations, at 910/962-7223 or humphreye@uncw.edu.