



Commencement Exercises

April 17, 2021

Ten O'Clock in the Morning



UNION
PRESBYTERIAN
SEMINARY

Charlotte, North Carolina

WELCOME

My dear graduates of Union Presbyterian Seminary: I greet you warmly with the words that the Apostle Paul shared with his beloved church at Philippi: “I thank God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you. . . .” I am grateful for your wonderful grace and boundless patience throughout the course of this very different year. As a result of the Covid-19 pandemic, we have been unable to gather in person for our classes. And yet you have not only managed to learn and grow through the medium of educational technology, but you have also managed to build community in the process. Indeed, for the first time, because we were meeting virtually, you actually increased the range of our UPSem community. Students engaged one another across the two campus environments, and students on one campus learned from faculty on the other campus. All the while, those of you who virtually march today maintained your focus toward this graduation goal and accomplished with enthusiasm all the requirements necessary to reach it. For this, and so much more, I, with and on behalf of your faculty and staff, give thanks. We have cherished the opportunity to serve you as faculty and staff, to have been witness to your academic and spiritual growth, to have watched you nurture others in your work as interns, and to have advised you as you will now advise others in the faith. Your graduation today brings almost as much joy to us as it does to you. You, because you mark this moment as one that launches you into the next phase of your faith journey. Us, because we have seen you prepare for this launch and because we are overjoyed to see that preparation yield such bountiful fruit. And while we lament the inability to greet you in person and celebrate in the same sanctuary with you and your families, we trust that you know that, though we are physically distant, we are spiritually connected—and forever grateful for the opportunity to have been of service to you on this part of your journey as you follow God’s call. Go forth now in God’s grace. With our admiration. Our thanks. And our love.

—Brian Blount, President, Union Presbyterian Seminary

UNION PRESBYTERIAN SEMINARY

COMMENCEMENT EXERCISES

*Edward L. Robertson III
Presiding, Chair of the Board of Trustees*

Boldness is embedded in Union Presbyterian Seminary's DNA. Since its beginning as a pioneering institution on the Hampden-Sydney College campus, to its foresight in becoming an independent institution, to its commitment to prioritizing Christian education along with pastoral preparation, to its willingness to risk opening a second campus that embraces shifting educational needs, Union Presbyterian Seminary has demonstrated a tradition of boldness. For more than 200 years, Union Presbyterian Seminary has challenged its students to embody this characteristic in their own lives of faith and ministry by engaging in bold Christian service.

Born in 1812 from the cooperative work of two Presbyterian synods, Union Presbyterian Seminary represents a history of ever-expanding collaboration — educating pastors, teachers, missionaries, and scholars for service to Christ and the world. Intentionally, the Seminary seeks to be an advocate for Christ's good news of liberation, forgiveness, equality, and reconciliation, encouraging students, staff, and faculty to devote more of their energy to making a difference in the communities in which the Seminary is located and offering a positive witness to what God has done and is doing through this institution of the church. Since 1898, one campus of the Seminary has been located in Richmond, Virginia. A second campus was started in 2002 in Charlotte on the campus of Queens University. In 2012, the Charlotte campus moved to its current location on Sharon Road. Most recently, the Seminary's bold vision of engaged, expansive Christian service has continued with the establishment of the Katie Geneva Cannon Center for Womanist Leadership and the Center for Social Justice and Reconciliation.

Today marks the seventeenth time commencement exercises have been held in Charlotte. In the 2020–2021 academic year, students at Union Presbyterian Seminary, Charlotte Campus, were taught by six full-time faculty and one affiliate member. These scholars, teachers, and preachers are themselves possessed of a deep and vital faith, which is reflected in their scholarly contributions, their leadership in local congregations, and their offering of their very best to the work of training pastors and leaders for bold commitment to Christ's ministry. ✝

PRELUDE

RESPONSIVE CALL TO WORSHIP:

ISAIAH 43:18-21 & PSALM 16:7-11 The Rev. Jane Mitchell

Chaplain, Charlotte Campus

The Rev. Dr. Sung Hee Chang

Director of Supervised Ministry & Vocational Planning

in Charlotte and Associate Professor of Supervised Ministry

Leader: Do not remember the former things, or consider the things of old.

People: I bless the Lord who gives me counsel; in the night also my heart instructs me.

Leader: I am about to do a new thing; now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?

People: I keep the Lord always before me; because God is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.

Leader: I will make a way in the wilderness and rivers in the desert.

People: Therefore my heart is glad, and my soul rejoices; my body also rests secure.

Leader: The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches.

People: For you do not give me up to Sheol, or let your faithful one see the Pit.

Leader: For I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people.

People: You show me the path of life.

Leader: [You are] the people whom I formed for Myself so that you might declare My praise.

People: In Your presence there is fullness of joy; in Your right hand are pleasures forevermore. Amen.

A WORD OF WELCOME The Rev. Dr. Robert Blumer

Senior Pastor, Sharon Presbyterian Church

ANNOUNCEMENTS The Rev. Dr. Richard N. Boyce

Academic Dean, Union Presbyterian Seminary, Charlotte Campus

For the Trustees:..... Edward L. Roberson III

Chair of the Board of Trustees, Union Presbyterian Seminary

For the Faculty The Rev. Dr. Brian K. Blount

President, Union Presbyterian Seminary

PRAYER FOR ILLUMINATION The Rev. Dr. Paul Galbreath

Professor of Theology

SCRIPTURE READING

A Reading from the Old Testament: Esther 4:1-14 David Mayo

[New Revised Standard Version] *Library Director, Charlotte Campus*

COMMENCEMENT ADDRESS

“Called to Ministry, for Such a Time as This” The Rev. Dr. Ophelia Gammon-Brown

CONFERRING OF DEGREES Edward L. Roberson III, *Board of Trustees*

The Rev. Dr. Brian K. Blount, President

The Rev. Dr. Richard N. Boyce, Dean, Charlotte Campus

Presentation of Candidates for the Master of Divinity

RESPONSE FROM GRADUATES

INTERCESSORY PRAYER AND CLOSING PRAYER The Rev. Jane Mitchell

Chaplain, Charlotte Campus

The eyes of all look to you, O Lord, and you give them food in due season. We thank you that you have fed us with your word this day and have promised to go with us from this place. Prepare us for the long obedience which describes the freedom of your children, and give us the courage to walk with cheerful hearts in the way of Jesus Christ. In his company, may we learn to rejoice in the strange and wonderful fellowship that is your Kingdom, and may we ever delight in him whose grace is obstinately joyful. As we scatter to minister and to teach, help us to remember each other, and to pray for each other, and to comfort and encourage one another. And at the end of our days, gather us to yourself so that in life and in death we may find our only comfort in you. In Christ's name, we pray. Amen.

DECLARATION:

The Seventeenth Spring Session of Union Presbyterian Seminary, Charlotte Campus, is closed The Rev. Dr. Brian K. Blount

CHARGE The Rev. Dr. Brian K. Blount

BENEDICTION The Rev. Dr. Brian K. Blount

POSTLUDE

Registrar: Stan Hargraves, *Union Presbyterian Seminary (Richmond campus)*
Organist: R. Lance Burnette

2021 GRADUATES

Master of Divinity

Jacob Hord III, B.A.
Belmont Abbey College

Selina Malherbe, B.A., J.D.
University of Texas at Austin
New York Law School

Betsy Mitchell, B.S.
Clarks Summit University

Matthew Moorman, B.A.
North Carolina State University

Leslie Oliver, B.A., M.F.A.
Rutgers University
Pull Sail University

Jennifer Powell, B.A., M. Ed., Ed. D.
Bluefield College
University of Virginia

Eric Tang, A.A., B.A., M.B.A.
Louisburg College
North Carolina State University
Campbell University

Serenitye Taylor, B.A.
University of Florida

William Upchurch
Darren Wilson, B.S., M.B.A.
St. Leo University, Norfolk

Flury Wilson, B.S., M.S., Ed. S., Ed. D.
Winthrop University
Nova Southeastern University
South Carolina State University

The list of 2021 Graduates cites the names of those anticipated to graduate at the time this program was printed. Inclusion or exclusion of a name does not confer official status.

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

The James and Elizabeth Appleby Book Awards

The Appleby Book Award was established in 1977 by persons in and around Laurinburg, North Carolina, to express their appreciation for the ministries of Jim and Lib Appleby. These awards provide books for students entering the pastorate and are given to those whose commitment to Christ and spiritual promise indicate particularly fruitful pastorates to the glory of God.

Jacob Hord III, Gastonia, North Carolina
Selina Malherbe, Charlotte, North Carolina
Eric Tang, Kernersville, North Carolina
Serentije Taylor, Pineville, North Carolina

The Beryl and Charles Kraemer Scholarship

The Beryl and Charles Kraemer Scholarship, established by PSCE alumni, is given to a student chosen by the faculty on the basis of a combination of academic and personal qualifications relating to promise in the educational work of the church.

Andi Stern, Summerville, South Carolina

The Eleanor Belk Scholarship Fund for Students on the Charlotte Campus

Established in honor of PSCE graduate Martha Eleanor Belk, longtime director of Christian Education of Youth at Myers Park Presbyterian Church, Charlotte, North Carolina, this fund is given to a Charlotte campus student who shows exceptional promise for education ministry; based on superior scholastic attainment, proven record of service, and sterling character.

Timisha Corpening, Greensboro, North Carolina

Hess Internship Award

The Kurtis Hess scholarship provides students with the opportunity to engage in urban ministry focusing on social justice and the ministry of reconciliation.

Letarshia Robinson, Lake Wylie, South Carolina

Presidential Service and Leadership Award

The Presidential Service and Leadership Award recognizes and celebrates a graduating student's exceptional contributions to the life, work, and mission of the UPem community during the time of their studies.

Jennifer Powell, Roanoke, Virginia

The Everett Scholarship

This scholarship is funded by the generosity of Herschel H. and Cornelia N. Everett. Their foundation, which was established in 1968, was created to express their 'appreciation for the good life which we have been permitted to live in our Father's world and to honor our beloved daughter, Ann Everett Belk.' Their legacy lives on through this foundation, which continues to support the theological studies of a student of good character and scholarship enrolled at Union Presbyterian Seminary in Charlotte in seeking to serve the Church.

Patricia Clominger, York, South Carolina
LaWonder McDowell, Charlotte, North Carolina
Leslie Oliver, Charlotte, North Carolina

The Helen Deans Preaching Award

This award, sponsored by Prospect Presbyterian Church near Mooresville, North Carolina, honors a student at Union Presbyterian Seminary, Charlotte Campus, who exhibits promise for effective preaching in the church.

Betsy Mitchell, Charlotte, North Carolina

The Snytle Award in American Religious History

The Snytle Award in American Religious History is to be given to a student who shows interest and demonstrated academic ability and promise in the pursuit of graduate study focusing on Church History, with particular attention to the development of communities of faith throughout American history.

Dana Purdom, Charlotte, North Carolina

SCHOLARSHIPS AND AWARDS

The Jeanne Gibbs Memorial Award

The Jeanne Gibbs Memorial Award goes to a rising final level student in the MACE or Dual Degree program who is preparing for professional church service and exhibits the qualities of maturity, discipline, commitment to Jesus Christ, concern for others, intelligence, and trustworthiness.

Ashlee Anderson, Charlotte, North Carolina

The Elo Leon Henderson Scholarship

Having overcome many obstacles in the pursuit of his own education, the Rev. Elo Henderson became a leader among African American Presbyterians in the central Carolinas, serving for many years as the executive for the Synod of Catawba of the United Presbyterian Church, U.S.A. This scholarship, established through a challenge grant from a Charlotte business leader and matching gifts from congregations and individuals, supports gifted African American students preparing to become pastors or educators in the life of the church.

Flury Wilson, New Zion, South Carolina

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