This is Who We Are

The University of the South
Sewanee, Tennessee

This Is Who We Are

As I write this letter, I am looking out my window at the campus of the University of the South, familiarly known as Sewanee, located high above the surrounding countryside on top of the Cumberland Plateau. It is arguably some of the most beautiful terrain in the country, and consistently ranks among the nation's most beautiful college campuses.

People who visit Sewanee often return, somehow changed by the welcoming community and breathtaking scenery. They return to attend college or seminary, enroll in one of our many summer programs, enjoy concerts, plays, or exhibits, hear lecturers from around the globe, or just enjoy hiking our 13,000-acre Domain.

In this issue, you will be introduced to just some of the people and programs that make this such a special place. Sewanee is often referred to as a "thin place," where the mundane meets the divine. Most of us here call it home. These short stories, when read together, will provide you with a good idea of who we are and the values for which we stand.

We believe that everyone deserves to be treated with mutual respect and dignity regardless of difference, to be truly seen and heard, and to feel a strong sense of belonging, connection, safety, and value within our community and with our land.

The priorities and values of The Episcopal Church and those of the University of the South are closely aligned. While the University is one of a handful of institutions of higher learning affiliated with The Episcopal Church, it is the only one governed by 28 constituent dioceses.

The University strives to:

- *be an institution where students flourish in all aspects of their lives;*
- *create a community where all people feel welcome, irrespective of race, gender, religious background, sexual orientation, or other form of difference;*
- *provide a curriculum that attracts students of the highest quality and provides them with the tools to meet the challenges of 21st century citizenship;*
- *use its greatest material asset, its 13,000-acre Domain, as a model for environmental stewardship and scholarship.*

I hope you enjoy this issue, and I hope that after reading these stories you make a trip to Sewanee. When you do, I look forward to welcoming you to the Mountain.

Nancy Berner
Acting Vice-Chancellor and President
The University of the South

THE PILLARS

"What I am seeing here is that whether it's the senior leadership, the Sewanee community, or the Board of Regents, everyone recognizes that we're going to have to work harder to make this into a place where, let's be frank, more African Americans and other underrepresented groups feel like they belong. I see a willingness to engage with this history and not be limited by it."
—Sibby Anderson-Thompkins

To quote the University's former Vice-Chancellor Reuben Brigety, Sewanee still needs to "grapple with these challenging and urgent questions of race and equality" and "to engage the racial and economic disparities that exist in our host communities." To do so holds out the hope and possibility that the people of Sewanee have long imagined as their historical destiny: to make Sewanee a model not just in, but of and for the South and the world beyond it.—**The Roberson Project**

"We've been really good at the academic piece for a long time, but we are also a place that tries to foster a life of prayer, that forms people with the liturgy, and that gives folks what we refer to as 'the pastoral imagination.'"—**The Very Rev. James. F. Turrell**

"I think about my job as being someone who helps Sewanee live into that vision of The Episcopal Church at its best. I think that is profoundly to our benefit as an academic institution, but it's also who I think we want to be as an institution of The Episcopal Church."—**The Rev. Peter Gray**

"Institutions also have an obligation to educate students who have not always had access to higher education, such as first-generation students and students from less affluent backgrounds."
—Lisa Stephenson

"We have a strong identity and relationship to the Church, a fantastic setting on the Cumberland Plateau, a world-class faculty, an engaged student body, and an enviable physical location between Chattanooga and Nashville."—**David Shipps**

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion: Sibby Anderson-Thompkins

Sibby Anderson-Thompkins, the University of the South's chief diversity officer, employs a useful shorthand for describing the three legs of the DEI stool: "Diversity is who we are. Equity is what we do. Inclusion is how we feel." Diversity, she explains, reflects different identities, whether they're related to race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, gender expression, age, religion, or the intersection of identities. Equity encompasses the actions that make people feel included or excluded. And inclusion is about whether individuals feel a sense of connection and belonging in a community.

At Sewanee, Anderson-Thompkins assesses the University's programs and practices—including the recruitment of faculty, staff, and students—to identify barriers that limit progress in the areas of diversity, equity, and inclusion. She partners with students and other University offices to support a welcoming and inclusive campus climate, and coordinate leadership campus-wide to ensure that DEI initiatives are integrated throughout the University.

"I have been so impressed with all the diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives and activities [at Sewanee], but I think my role will be to bring coordination and build a real infrastructure that brings all of the great energy and effort together in a more cohesive, meaningful way," Anderson-Thompkins says. "There is an opportunity here to think about the way we want to express and demonstrate the commitment of Sewanee in this area."

When it comes to recruiting more students and employees of color, Anderson-Thompkins believes that rather than focusing on numbers, the University first needs to build the kind of community people want to join. "Whether you have 20 people or 2,000, it's about how people feel," she says. "That means really making a concerted effort to make sure those who visit us, who choose to join us, have a positive experience. It's demonstrating care, demonstrating a willingness to reach out and take a personal approach to welcoming people here, inviting them in, and saying, 'We want you to come here because you're going to be supported.'"

As the University embarks on a strategic planning process that will include an emphasis on diversity, equity, and inclusion, the University's ongoing Roberson Project on Slavery, Race, and Reconciliation will help inform Sewanee's DEI efforts with a historical perspective. Anderson-Thompkins sees great benefit in that. "The Roberson Project lays the foundation for how we go about this work," she says. "One of the challenges I see that other institutions are having, especially institutions in the South, is reckoning with their own history around race and slavery. What I am seeing here is that whether it's the senior leadership, the Sewanee community, or the Board of Regents, everyone recognizes that we're going to have to work harder to make this into a place where, let's be frank, more African Americans and other underrepresented groups feel like they belong. I see a willingness to engage with this history and not be limited by it."

As Anderson-Thompkins' work continues on the Mountain, she outlines a few of the areas she is focusing on: Using feedback from recent campus-climate surveys to inform her office's work in looking systematically at policies and practices; making sure the University is able to respond to reported incidents of bias quickly and effectively; and offering training to give people the tools they need to understand issues like structural and systemic racism and to manage their own biases. But she also notes that working toward diversity, equity, and inclusion requires the efforts of an entire community. "I find there's a lot of enthusiasm and support from colleagues," she says. "But it's not just the job of the chief diversity officer. It really has to be everyone's responsibility to pick up these issues from where they sit."

Looking Back to Build a Better Future: The Roberson Project on Slavery, Race, and Reconciliation

The Roberson Project on Slavery, Race, and Reconciliation at the University of the South is a six-year initiative begun in 2017 to investigate the University's historical entanglements with slavery, its legacies, and white supremacy. The project's name memorializes Houston Bryan Roberson, the late professor of history and Sewanee's first tenured African American faculty member.

Leading this effort are Dr. Woody Register, C'80, Francis S. Houghteling Professor of American History and director of the Roberson Project; and the Rev. Dr. Benjamin King, professor of Christian History. The Roberson Project Working Group is composed of University students, faculty, and staff.

While the research is continuing, the evidence gathered makes clear several essential facts about the University's past:

1. *The University was the only institution of higher education designed from the start to represent, protect, and promote the South's civilization of bondage; and launched expressly for the slaveholding society of the South.*
2. *A primary justification for the University's founding asserted that the white men of the South were positioned better than any other to make the highest contributions to world civilization because slavery allowed them to devote themselves to higher attainments. The organizational blueprint for the institution indicates the founders envisioned the University as a leading center of scientific scholarship proving white racial superiority and the "aptitude" of people of African descent for enslavement.*
3. *In Sewanee's first several decades after the Civil War, its identity as "a child of the Confederacy" emerged in many ways: Those who held key leadership roles typically had been slave owners, defenders of slavery and secession, and Confederate military leaders; and some of the most consequential donors had been the owners or beneficiaries of some of the largest slavery-based plantations in the antebellum South.*
4. *For a significant portion of the 20th century, policies and practices on campus perpetuated Jim Crow, white supremacy, and mythologies about the honorable causes represented by the Confederacy.*

5. *There remain many buildings and monuments on Sewanee's campus that memorialize slaveholders or supporters of the Confederacy, articulators of scientific and other theories of white supremacy, and defenders of Jim Crow segregation. Many of these memorials promote the "Lost Cause" mythologies about the religious and constitutional righteousness of the Confederacy, the virtuous motivations of the white men who fought for it, and the insignificance of slavery in the founding of the Southern nation.*

To quote the University's former Vice-Chancellor Rueben Brigety, Sewanee still needs to "grapple with these challenging and urgent questions of race and equality" and "to engage the racial and economic disparities that exist in our host communities." To do so holds out the hope and possibility that the people of Sewanee have long imagined as their historical destiny: to make Sewanee a model not just in, but of and for the South and the world beyond it. By knowing and acknowledging the centrality of slavery and its legacies in their history and traditions, the people of Sewanee may pursue this task in a way that binds and heals the wounds of racial injustice.

Fostering the Pastoral Imagination: James. F. Turrell

In his 1941 memoir *Lanterns on the Levee*, William Alexander Percy describes Sewanee as "so beautiful that people who have once been there always, one way or another, come back. He also asserts that the Mountain is "a place to be hopelessly sentimental about and to unfit one for anything except the good life." This is, of course, the same Mountain that trains, equips, and shapes the next generation of leaders in The Episcopal Church. If the Gospel is indeed "good news," then it is fitting that the Mountain prepares its students for the "good life."

The Very Rev. Dr. Jim Turrell, dean of the School of Theology, describes Sewanee's formational role as being one that focuses on the whole being. "We've been really good at the academic piece for a long time, but we are also a place that tries to foster a life of prayer, that forms people with the liturgy, and that gives folks what we refer to as 'the pastoral imagination.'"

In keeping with that goal, the School of Theology has recently transformed its field education program for seminarians, extending it to a second year and requiring additional classes on ministering creatively, as well as extending the Education for Ministry (EfM) program. "What we're really trying to do is give folks that pastoral imagination, so that when COVID comes along and you went to seminary or EfM five years ago or 10 years ago, or perhaps even longer, you still have the ability to think creatively about how to minister to God's people" says Turrell. "It's not that you were specifically taught how to do Zoom church or the relative merits of YouTube Live versus Facebook Live versus Vimeo for your worship service. Rather, you know what the basic parts of ministry are—proclaim the Word, gather the community, find and meet people's pastoral needs. What Sewanee equips you to do is to take the available tools, whatever they are, and harness them to those core missions, goals, and activities of ministry."

This kind of creativity is desperately needed for the future of The Episcopal church, which, like other denominations, is having to adjust to a rapidly changing and politically tenuous world while also having to address its own issues. The need for a transformative center that prepares both ordained and lay leaders for ministry in the world is imperative. "Sewanee creates a space where you can do this really deep work that is identity work," says Turrell. "What we've found throughout the pandemic experience is that anybody can be nice on Zoom for a period of time. But, the experience of disagreeing vehemently over deeply held convictions and then having to live together in the same neighborhood, and gather around the eucharistic table, is a pretty good way of being formed. It teaches us how to disagree with charity, how to live in a Christian community. Residential experience is a crash course in how to do that."

The School of Theology is committed to making this residential model work by ensuring that tuition is covered for all students. In recognizing that training for ministry is a commitment not just for the individual but also for the individual's family, the financial promise that Sewanee has made to students attempts to lessen that burden while also emphasizing the importance of residential formation and what it offers. "The bonds that you establish in seminary are long-lasting and typically forged not in the delivery of content, but in all the stuff that happens around it—hallway conversations, office drop-ins, living with other seminarians." These relationships and the support that the School of Theology extends to its alums are what contributes to Sewanee grads persisting in active parish ministry longer than graduates of any other seminary.

As William Alexander Percy noted, the Mountain is the place you come back to. Once you find your way there, you always find your way back. It is this quality of Sewanee that imbues its students with that transformative imagination. Formation on the Mountain is just not formation for a time, but a permanent transfiguration. The longevity of the School of Theology's ministers is not merely a coincidence, but a result of their time spent on the Domain—being shaped both in the classroom and by the community.

Telling the Whole Truth: Peter Gray

In July 2019, on a train from Oslo, Norway, to Bergen, the Rev. Peter Gray couldn't help but notice how the European landscape reminded him of Sewanee. And Sewanee made him think of family and the summers he spent in Sewanee as a child visiting his grandparents, the Rt. Rev. Duncan M. Gray Jr. and his wife, Ruth. Gray was on clergy sabbatical and traveling through Europe with his wife, the Rev. Giulianna Gray, and their two children. Later, watching his kids play in Bergen, Gray thought to himself, "I wonder what I'm supposed to be doing?" It was just the sort of question a sabbatical makes room for, and for Gray, the beginning of an answer, too. Later on, scrolling through job postings online, a new listing caught his eye. It had just gone up that day: University chaplain at Sewanee.

The Episcopal priesthood is in Gray's blood, and the same could be said of his commitment to fighting racial injustice. "I think it is safe to say that you don't get by in my family without engaging issues of race and racism seriously," he says, adding, "which is not to say we are perfect but it is to say that it weighs heavy on our conscience."

Gray's grandfather, Duncan Gray Jr., who graduated from Sewanee's School of Theology and served as chancellor of the University, advocated for racial equality throughout his career, beginning with his time at Sewanee. In 1953, during his senior year, the University's Board of Trustees voted against integrating the School of Theology. Duncan Jr. was the seminary's student body president and a witness to the uprising within the school as all but one School of Theology faculty member resigned in protest. The decision was overturned a few months later.

Making a space for everybody has never felt more important than this moment. Less than a month after being elected chaplain at Sewanee, COVID-19 unleashed itself on the United States, driving communities into their homes and away from one another. And just three weeks before Gray officially started in his new position, the murder of George Floyd set in motion a wave of antiracism protests and demands for justice. It wasn't lost on Gray that his first sermon as the new chaplain would fall just one day after Juneteenth, the national holiday celebrating the end of slavery in the United States.

"My own personal commitments around antiracism just have a way of bubbling up, especially in contexts as acute as the one in which we are currently living," says Gray. "Sometimes the Sunday sermon is the place to do that reflection."

As the new University chaplain, Gray's aim toward movement along a different path is threefold: worship, welcome, and partner.

"I understand it to be part of my role as a leader of worship to be intentional about how that worship is available to everybody," he shares. "And I also understand in this moment that if I'm not speaking from the pulpit to the realities of the world then I am communicating irrelevance."

Just like for his parents and grandparents, there is a drive to foster community in everything Gray does. And the reality of how difficult that can be, especially now, is a constant in his mind.

"The challenge of being a relevant and contemporary preacher and pastor is to figure out how to both tend to relationships and keep communication channels open, and also not shy away from difficult stuff," he says.

"I think The Episcopal Church at its best is an open and generous expression of the Christian tradition. At its best, it's a big tent, big umbrella," says Gray. "So, I think about my job as being someone who helps Sewanee live into that vision of The Episcopal Church at its best. I think that is profoundly to our benefit as an academic institution, but it's also who I think we want to be as an institution of The Episcopal Church."

Meeting Students Where They Are: Lisa Stephenson

Armed with both data and empathy, the team in Sewanee's new Center for Student Success and Flourishing is working to ensure that all students have the tools they need to succeed. Measuring student success is complicated. Nationally, at liberal arts colleges, just a little more than half of students, 53%, graduate in four years. Sewanee beats that record handily, but the fact remains that one out of every four students who enrolls at Sewanee does not graduate.

That statistic is one of the motivating factors behind a new Sewanee initiative that has been several years in the making—the Center for Student Success and Flourishing. The center is a reframing and strategic coordination of academic advising, career readiness, and student support services to ensure that every student reaches their potential. The idea first gained traction with a strategic plan for the Sewanee Career Center several years ago. As a new vice provost for student success, Lisa Stephenson, was named in 2021, the dream gained the institutional chops to become reality.

Kim Heitzenrater, C'89, who has long been director of the Career Center, has a new role as associate dean for integrated advising and career readiness, reporting to Stephenson. Other key personnel are Nicole Noffsinger-Frazier, C'04, associate dean for flourishing and wellness; Cassie Meyer, assistant dean of student equity and career readiness; and Kate Reed, C'08, director of data and operations.

As this growing team takes shape, they are already expanding how Sewanee attends to the success of every student, not just the superstars but also the people who might struggle during college. This work is not only important for each student; it is also existentially important for Sewanee, as the graduation rate is a key metric of institutional success. Making strides in student success will also make Sewanee more attractive to potential students.

"We know that because of population dynamics, we will have to get more diverse to survive," says Stephenson. "This is not just true for Sewanee but throughout higher education. Institutions also have an obligation to educate students who have not always had access to higher education, such as first-generation students and students from less affluent backgrounds."

Stephenson is a proponent of some key adjustments in institutional culture that she hopes everyone on campus can adopt. "We need to learn better how to meet people where they are," she says. "We need to elevate kindness and ensure that all students have equal access to the resources they need to succeed."

The student success team has been busily identifying barriers and devising approaches for meeting people where they are. Interestingly, the socioeconomic barrier is an issue no matter which side of the divide a student is on. While students from less privileged backgrounds may not understand how to manage the system, often it is the most privileged—and the men—who struggle. Across the nation, there is a 10% gap between men and women in graduation rate. At Sewanee, the gap is 20%. "A big question we are struggling with is how to get our young men to understand that it is OK to seek help," says Stephenson. "If they don't know how to study, we can't just expect that they will ask for help. We have to go to them. This is especially acute for people from privileged backgrounds. How do we help students who may feel like they should know how to navigate college know that they too need help?"

To answer that question, a key part of the strategy for the center is its proactive nature. Across higher education, advising can often be reactive, but a growing number of institutions are starting to be more directly engaged in the lives of their students, using data analysis to identify choke points

in college careers—like a poor grade in a particular course or failure to complete an important application.

To put this more active approach into practice, the student success team has built a new kind of student-facing employee: the success coach. Coaches work alongside the faculty who do most of the academic advising—particularly for the first two critical years of a student's college career. Armed with both data and kindness, coaches step in during times when faculty cannot.

Stephenson points out that students come to Sewanee with extraordinary amounts of stress built into their lives. With a fractious national political life, frequent mass shootings, a pandemic, and news of all of it immediately available on devices in our pockets, there is no question that students are stressed, even if they never consider the high cost of their education. "There has been a massive demand for counseling and psychological services over the past several years, and this is not just a phenomenon at Sewanee," says Stephenson. "What we have learned here—but really across the country—is that you can't staff your way out of the demand for mental health services. So, we have to develop proactive strategies. We have to give students a real understanding of what it means to be healthy and give them the ability to navigate a really difficult time in their lives."

Sewanee has always been a place where extraordinary students could receive a superb education, and it has always been a place where students could discover just how extraordinary they are. The goal of the Center for Student Success is to build on that success, to ensure that every Sewanee student can live their best Sewanee life.

Will that work? Lisa Stephenson thinks so. "We are a small enough place that everyone wants our students to succeed," she says. "We just need to figure out what our priorities are and come together around them."

Progress and Tradition: The Economic Development of the Domain

For David Shipps, C'88, and vice president for economic development at the University of the South, growing up as a clergy kid was great preparation for overseeing development of the University's 13,000 acre Domain. Shipps—whose father, the Right Rev. Harry Woolston Shipps, was a graduate of the School of Theology and later bishop of the Diocese of Georgia—saw firsthand how challenging it can be to effect change within an organization that places a high value on tradition. The same reluctance to change that is often found within the Church also exists at institutions of higher learning, where passionate alumni and supporters can be skeptical of efforts that will alter the institution they treasure. "There's a natural desire to cast the places we love best in amber and preserve them exactly as we knew them," Shipps says. "I understand that. I, my father, and my children all went to the University. We are dedicated to the University. But to serve the mission of this place that we love so dearly, we have to allow the University to evolve."

A crucial part of the University's mission, of course, is to attract and retain the best students, faculty, and staff. Doing so requires respecting and preserving the institution's history while also addressing current needs and preparing for the future. "This translates into making investments that attract the students we seek, strengthen our community, and provide the best possible quality of life for everyone who lives and works in Sewanee," Shipps explains. "In the 1960s, that meant carving out new roads on the Domain and building houses in and around the community. Today, it means investing in new commercial endeavors in the downtown Village, homes for faculty and staff, and new spaces for our growing community to gather." In Sewanee, Shipps says, these investments always have two goals. "A financial return, obviously. But equally important are qualitative returns that align with the mission of the University. We are fortunate to have a management team of administrators and governing boards who are committed to achieving both."

Like other universities, Sewanee is aware of the need to move away from reliance on tuition as a primary revenue stream. "There's a demographic cliff on the horizon," Shipps explains. "As a result of the 2008 economic crisis, there will be far fewer 18-year-olds seeking a college education in 2026. Competition between colleges will only get tougher." The college decision process has also evolved. "Entire families are part of the college selection process now," Shipps says, "not just the prospective students. We have to recognize and honor that."

The University is particularly fortunate when it comes to attracting bright students, Shipps believes. "We have a strong identity and relationship to the Church, a fantastic setting on the Cumberland Plateau, a world-class faculty, an engaged student body, and an enviable physical location between Chattanooga and Nashville." In addition, there is a unique aspect of Sewanee that differentiates it from other universities. "The Sewanee community is incredible," Shipps explains, "and having faculty and staff living on campus is a vital part of our mission. That's why we have to make it possible for those talented people to come here, become part of this community, and make their careers here."

Shipps acknowledges that it can be tough to advocate for change in organizations like the Church and Sewanee that are rich in tradition and history. Yet in any beloved institution, there is a point at which preparing for the future requires action. "We are guided by the tenets of responsible stewardship, sustainability, and consensus building," Shipps says. "So, when planning becomes progress, it's truly exciting."

THE PROGRAMS

Advanced Degrees

In 2021, the School of Theology began offering hybrid classes during the academic year, allowing advanced degree students to engage with instructors either remotely or in person, and to meet via Zoom for small group discussions.

University Farm

The experiences students have on campus influence how they will use their time and talent after graduation. The University Farm not only educates students, it also allows them to develop the habit of doing good while they're still in college.

SUMMA

Participants in the summer camp are given the tools to explore and intellectually understand the Christian faith within a framework that challenges them to debate a given topic.

Names and Places Committee

Bringing the truth to light about the people who formed the University and the voices not heard is the work of the Names and Places Committee.

Contextual Education

Contextual education at the School of Theology includes courses on congregational dynamics, parish leadership, and parish and community engagement. With the addition of a third unit of field education, it has allowed many students to learn and serve in more than one placement.

The Center for Religion and the Environment

The Center for Religion and the Environment revisits the basic sources of Christian faith—the Creed, scripture, the liturgy, the Church calendar—and shows how those are already places that are rich with significance for practicing an Earth-inclusive discipleship."

The Alternate Clergy Training at Sewanee

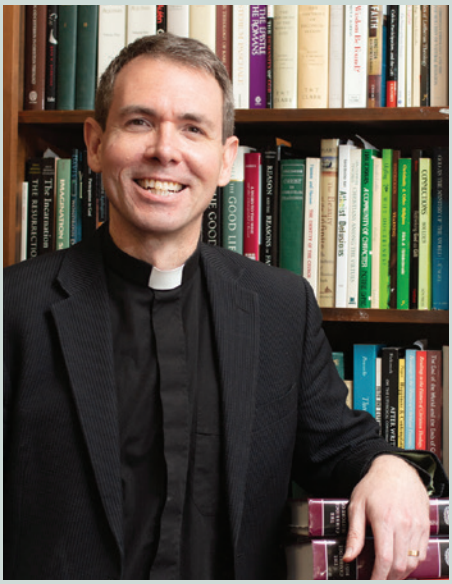
As more dioceses require part-time and non-stipendiary priests, and more people feel called to pursue ecclesial and secular vocations simultaneously, the School of Theology has responded with a course of theological study.

Education for Ministry

This fall, the Beecken Center at the School of Theology will launch a new sister program designed for participants in a Latino/Hispanic context.

Advanced Degrees—More Accessible Than Ever

Every summer, a group of clergy, academics, and other theologically trained professionals gather in Sewanee to work toward obtaining advanced degrees. Students come from New Zealand, Malawi, Brazil, the Caribbean, and across the United States. Once back home, they continue their writing and research throughout the year. While some students remain in Sewanee all year, most have taken four to six summers to complete an advanced degree—until now.



In 2021, the School of Theology began offering hybrid classes during the academic year, allowing advanced degree students to engage with instructors either remotely or in person, and to meet via Zoom for small group discussions. Because students can participate year-round, the hybrid courses greatly shorten the time required to complete the course work for a degree.

The Rev. Dr. Benjamin King serves as director of advanced degrees as well as professor of Christian history and associate dean for academic affairs. King says, "The new hybrid classes allow us to bring this very high level of instruction to our students where they are." This spring, students from across the nation, and indeed the globe, were able to attend Dr. Hilary Bogert-Winkler's course, "The Prayer Book in its Global Context."

The School of Theology offers two advanced degrees: master of sacred theology (S.T.M.) and doctor of ministry (D.Min.). The S.T.M. is an academic degree for those who have already completed a masters-level theology degree. The S.T.M. in Anglican Studies is a concentration that provides formation in the Anglican tradition for students who completed theological training in another Christian tradition. The D.Min. program is designed for clergy who have been active in ordained ministry at least three years to attain excellence in the practice of ministry. As well as a general D.Min. degree, the program offers concentrations in liturgy and preaching.

Advanced degree students will continue to begin their studies with a summer term in Sewanee. As King explains, "We want them to begin here, because it's important to know the place. The experience of the summer term is not only in the classroom but also the experience of daily Eucharist and of communal life. This is a community of prayer and worship." Doctor of ministry students take turns preaching and presiding at daily Eucharist.

"Advanced degree students learn from some of the brightest theological scholars from across the Anglican Communion—not only Sewanee professors, but also visiting instructors from Harvard, Candler, Duke, Vanderbilt, and other research institutions," King continues. "They love to teach here."

As an example, 2022 summer courses and instructors include: The History of Preaching in the North Atlantic Church (Dr. David Stark), Prophecy in the Body (Dr. Anathea Portier-Young), History and Imagination in Church and Parish (Dr. Lauren Winner), and Mapping Liturgical Structures (the Rt. Rev. J. Neil Alexander).

King says, "It is not only the instructors who bring so much to the program, but also studying alongside fellow clergy and professionals of the highest caliber." He quotes a recent D. Min. graduate, Bishop Jim White, of blessed memory: "The real gift is learning as much from your peers as from the instructors."

In addition to courses, each student completes a project or thesis related to their ministry. "No one is required to determine the project before they apply," King says. "Most often, it emerges after taking a few classes and choosing a mentor who helps shape the project. It is a very rewarding process for everyone involved."

No application fee or Graduate Record Examination (GRE) score is required, and financial aid is available to help with tuition. The deadline to apply is April 1, to begin the program in June, or Feb. 1 for international students.

Preparing Seminarians for the Real World

The Rev. Richard Cogill has brought a distinctive perspective to his work as the School of Theology's director of contextual education. Cogill's ministry has taken him from his native South Africa to Palestine, South Korea, Minnesota, and now to Sewanee. While some might express surprise that this globetrotting priest came to a rural corner of Southeastern Tennessee, Cogill is quick to note how deep an exchange—intellectual, relational, and spiritual—exists between those who are residents of the Domain and the wider world.

"Sewanee is not disconnected from 'the real world,' as some have said. People everywhere have the same yearning for God," Cogill says. "For our process in contextual education, there is an ongoing conversation between theory and practice. It's not as though our students are being prepared in seminary and then—only after they graduate—they're sent out into the real world. They are constantly testing and reflecting on the challenges of the surrounding communities and the parishes they serve when they are in the classroom."

Contextual education at the School of Theology includes courses on congregational dynamics, parish leadership, and parish and community engagement. With the addition of a third unit of field education, it has allowed many students to learn and serve in more than one placement.

"The needs of the students and what the students bring to the classroom are always shaping the curriculum," he says. "It's always evolving. For example, a student raised the question of ministry and mental health—recognizing and engaging trauma, partnering with other professionals. Those elements get incorporated into an evolving framework of contextual education so that these students—these practitioners—are adequately prepared for ministry wherever they may go."

Forming priests, however, involves much more than teaching them the practical techniques and skills of ministry. "I try to be keenly aware of the individual student's needs," Cogill says. "In one upcoming assignment, students are tasked with writing about their own leadership style. Are they collaborative? A dictator? But their field education mentors will also write how they perceive them, so that their self-perceptions can be tested and we can address whatever their blind spots may be."

While the School of Theology prides itself on its academics, Cogill makes sure that his students' classwork isn't happening in a vacuum. "When students come here, it is with an embedded theology—things they've inherited or lived. I push them to unpack that, to take a more deliberative approach, to constantly discern how God is showing up in a very particular context. Who is God for the persons entrusted to you, and who is God for you? I want students to engage in intentional theological reflection to open them up to possibility rather than rigid attachment to some commonly held belief."

But that deliberative and intentional approach always leads back to the lived experience. "At the center of every class is this question: who is God for you? People struggle with that," Cogill says. "There's no right or wrong answer, but there is *your* answer. If you don't know, other people will determine that answer for you. And then, instead of a living, breathing, reality, you have a God of only intellectual assent, you get burned out, and your calling becomes merely a job."

Under Cogill's tutelage, The School's Contextual Education program involves much more than teaching the basic requirements for the "job" of parish priest. "My primary concern is that I am forming holy and whole and self-aware individuals, ready and accountable for an ongoing encounter with the living God."

Rooted in the Future: the University Farm

The mission statement of Sewanee's University Farm is succinct: *We farm as though the future matters*. Helping students establish a relationship with the environment, and use that knowledge to benefit the community, is an undertaking University Farm Manager Carolyn Hoagland finds very gratifying. "All liberal arts schools are designed to help students understand their place in the world," Hoagland says. "And the experiences students have on campus influence how they will use their time and talent after graduation. The University Farm not only educates students, it also allows them to develop the habit of doing good while they're still in college."

Despite its bucolic appearance, the University Farm is a hive of activity. In a normal year, students and community members log more than 8,000 hours on the farm, which is home to work-study programs, labs and workshops, community gardens, research projects, volunteer events, and guest speakers. Along with goats, aquaponic structures, and beehives, the farm also contains nearly 7,560 square feet of solar-heated greenhouses and growing beds that yield 2,000 pounds of greens and 1,000 pounds of vegetables annually. The vast majority of what is grown on the farm ends up at the University's dining hall, while 10 percent is diverted to food banks and a local farmers' market. In summer, much of the farm's crops feed local families through the AmeriCorps VISTA program and other community partnerships.

For Hoagland, who has a Ph.D. in microbial ecology and a master's degree in soil and crop science, sustainability has long been a way of life. She relishes the opportunity to share her love of nature with students. "The lives of students today are mediated by electronics," Hoagland explains. "They come to the farm eager to have physical experiences and to learn primary skills. Building a greenhouse, for instance, is so gratifying to them. They return as alumni and are so pleased to see how they influenced the landscape of the farm." Vanessa Moss, C'20, who earned a B.S. in ecology and biodiversity and has won several awards for her creative nonfiction and environmental writing, is one such alumna. "For me, the University Farm was a real-life application of the things I was learning in the classroom, as well as a way to engage with the community. She says, "Plus, it was fun to get my hands dirty. Because of the great experience I had there, I've continued to work on farms, and I suspect farming will always be part of my life and work."

The School of Theology's Dr. Andrew Thompson, assistant professor of theological ethics, whose research and

teaching includes environmental ethics, has taken seminarians to the farm, as has Dr. Rebecca Abts Wright, professor of Old Testament and Biblical Hebrew. The farm provides both undergraduates and seminarians an opportunity to better understand the complex relationship between humans and nature, and furthermore, Hoagland says, to recapture a sense of hope. "We are all aware of the crises facing the environment, and it can be difficult to see, in the face of such large-scale problems, how we can effect change through the remedies that are commonly suggested," she explains. "Yet when the students see, for instance, that farming can be a regenerative, not a destructive, process, it gives them hope."

For Hoagland, the ability to pay forward the generosity she has benefitted from is a daily joy. "When I can mentor a student and pass on the practical knowledge I received from other people," she says, "and give that knowledge to someone who will use it to create a better future, I feel profoundly grateful."

Marrying Religion and Creation: The Center for Religion and the Environment

Collin Cornell first worked at the School of Theology as an Old Testament instructor. Since 2021 he has undertaken a new role as coordinator of the Beecken Center's Center for Religion and the Environment (CRE). The CRE was charged at its founding in 2008 with bringing together students and faculty of the College of Arts and Sciences and the School of Theology to devise programs that would "explore the connections between the environment and religion, both in study and in practice, from a variety of faith perspectives."

It was during his time as a visiting professor that Cornell became acquainted with the CRE. "I liked the people who worked there, liked the work they were doing, helped with their conferences," he says. "But over the past year, the center has articulated its mission in a much more granular way."

The CRE, says Cornell, is neither a think tank nor a para-curricular resource for seminarians. Instead, its focus can be summed up in the term *eco-catechesis*. "It's trying to revisit the basic sources of Christian faith—the Creed, scripture, the liturgy, the Church calendar—and shows how those are already places that are rich with significance for practicing an Earth-inclusive discipleship," he says. "We're reintroducing Christian faith back to practicing Christian people to show how faith already involves ecological ramifications."

While the CRE does work with students, especially the seminary's Creation Care Committee and M.A. degree program in Religion and the Environment (M.A.R.E.), the center's work is concentrated in two outward-facing efforts. First, there are free webinars each month, as well as tuition-based classes lasting several weeks.

Over the past year, however, more and more the center has acted as a consultant to projects from around the wider Church. "Various kinds of creation care commissions, task forces, green teams, environmental justice initiatives have really mushroomed across the Episcopal world," Cornell says. "A lot of them are in the beginning stages of figuring out, what are we really going to do? How do we understand our mission? Are we solarizing the diocese? Providing formation materials? The CRE comes alongside them to advise, instruct, consult and teach."

Earth-inclusive discipleship, another of the CRE's themes, is about centering Earth in Christian theology and practice. "Earth and all our non-human neighbors are objects of our Christian care, our fellow worshippers of God and recipients of God's saving work," says Cornell.

While many church agencies will relegate creation care or environmental justice into its own separate category, the special section for those Christians already convinced of and interested in environmental work, the center hopes to leave that mindset in the past. "We hope to reach people who are committed and steadfast in their faith, but may not yet be convinced of the need for an Earth-inclusive kind of Christian life and practice," Cornell says. "Our audience is folks who aren't already environmentalists. Environmental concern is Christian," full stop.

Cornell points out that some dioceses feel the need to choose between racial justice and environmental work. "For understandable and right reasons, many dioceses are choosing the first," he says. "But we believe this is not a binary choice. These issues belong integrally together: facing up to the church's racial history of injustice and also rectifying our environmental malformation."

The CRE plans for its seasonal course offerings—like the summer course "Greening the Creed"—to continue as part of its regular work, but they are also dedicated to making their expertise available to individual parishes and committees across their church. "If anybody in their church or diocese is looking to start some sort of effort, the Center really does want to offer our resources and counsel," Cornell says.

Creating Space for Teens: SUMMA Theological Debate Society

If you want to get high school students to talk about theology, build a program utilizing their strongest asset—their ability to argue. That was the thought behind the pitch to the School of Theology by the Rev. Dr. Chris Keller about SUMMA Theological Debate Society, his two-year pilot program from Little Rock, Arkansas. It was a hit.

As principal lecturer in theology and debate, Keller travels to Sewanee every July to meet high school students with only one thing in common—"they have accepted an invitation to a theological debate camp—which is something not a lot of kids would do." Under the leadership of Rev. Cindy Fribourgh, SUMMA has been nurturing intellectual acuity while sharpening reasoning skills in a community experience. Ten years in, the long-term sustainability of the program is being put to a second big test. "We passed the first one," affirms Keller.

Though still part of the School of Theology's Beecken Center, SUMMA has shifted its operational leadership to the University of the South's Department of Rhetoric under the newly appointed director, Dr. Melody Lehn. "The reason that this is so promising is that Dr. Lehn is assistant professor of rhetoric and women's and gender studies as well as the assistant director for the Center for Speaking and Listening at the University," says Keller. "SUMMA has become a program similar to the summer youth writer and music conferences." SUMMA is now valued on campus as a way for high school students to be introduced to the University as well as an opportunity to study under professors from the college and the School of Theology. "It's a point of entry, not that every student will enroll at the University, not by a long shot, but if they do, they now have a familiarity with the College," says Keller.

SUMMA's premises are Christian at its core. "We do not ask students to sign a declaration of faith upon arrival; we have students come who do not believe in God," explains Keller. Participants in the summer camp are given the tools to explore and intellectually understand the Christian faith within a framework that challenges them to debate a given topic. "Christianity is in a downturn in our culture, all religion is. Downturns can last for a short while or a long while, and we don't know whether this is short or long. But we do know that for the Church to prosper through a cultural shift, the Church has to be stronger and know what it is about and why it is here," says Keller. He wants a young-thinking community to answer "Why must the Church exist in the economy of God?" SUMMA gives students the opportunity to think about their faith, whether it is the faith handed to them by their parents, their own, or none at all.

Keller's intent was to create a space where students are assured there are no forbidden questions. "We wouldn't have created SUMMA if we didn't feel confident that we could ask all the questions in the world and not be led away from our faith," says Keller. He believes that debating leads to clearer thinking, and that clearer thinking opens pathways, which in turn deepens faith, hope, and love. Not wanting SUMMA to be a cutthroat debate society with a winner-take-all-mentality, SUMMA has created an ethos that "the God we are exploring intellectually is love, so if we talk about God in a way that is not loving, then it is not God we are talking about."

ACTS: Education for the Modern Church

The Alternate Clergy Training at Sewanee (ACTS) program was created to meet a specific need of the modern Church: the need for academic formation without the residential requirements of traditional seminary. As more dioceses require part-time and non-stipendiary priests, and more people feel called to pursue ecclesial and secular vocations simultaneously, the School of Theology has responded with a course of theological study. It provides comprehensive training to deacons and priests, as well as forming them into a cohort in chapel and classroom.This happens by requiring students to come to campus for two weeks each term. Embedded in the design of the ACTS program are the two keys to its success, explains Andrew Thompson, assistant professor of theological ethics at the School of Theology and director of the program. "Flexibility and academic rigor are what make ACTS a success. The courses are taught by Sewanee faculty and held to the same high standards that exist across the College and the School of Theology, but the flexibility of the format makes the program accessible to the many people for whom full-time, residential seminary simply isn't feasible."

The ACTS program comprises eight modules intended to provide academic preparation for priests or deacons. Dioceses are expected to provide the other aspects of formation, such as mentorship and contextual education, although ACTS can offer resources to help with these. The modules operate on a two-year cycle, which students may enter at any time. Seven of the eight modules are taken by all students: Old Testament, New Testament, Christian Ethics and Moral Theology, Church History, Ministry in Contemporary Society, Christian Theology, and Prayer Book and Liturgy. In the remaining module, students seeking to become priests take Pastoral Theology, while those who will serve as deacons take the Diakonia module.

Thompson says he is inspired by the students, many of whom have felt called to a particular ministry in both the community and the Church. This was true of the Rev. Rosie Veal Eby, who credits the flexibility of ACTS for allowing her to continue teaching, as well as serve as her grandfather's primary caregiver, while she was enrolled. Veal Eby, who completed the program in January 2020 and is now the outreach missioner at Church of Nativity in Huntsville, Alabama, and priest-in-charge at Saint Timothy's in Athens, Alabama, says that in addition to academics, ACTS also offered her a new perspective. "ACTS let me discover alternative ministries, like the ministry I am serving in at Nativity, which offers pastoral care and worship in the homeless community," she explains. "ACTS broadened my understanding of what was possible in the Church, in worship, and in the community."

Thompson, who is one of several people engaged in finding new ways to provide academic training within the Church, says that Veal Eby's enthusiasm is not unusual. "The ACTS students are delightful, with a wealth of background and experience. They are eager to be here, and grateful for the flexibility of the program." For Thompson, seeing ACTS respond to the needs of future deacons and priests without compromising the academic rigor for which Sewanee is known, has been very fulfilling. "And," he adds, "I'm just incredibly proud of these students."

Students interested in the ACTS program should speak with their bishop or commission on ministry.

Bringing the Truth to Light: Names and Places Committee

For more than 20 years, the Rev. Dr. Gene Manning, T'01, has been answering God's call to serve The Episcopal Church and the University of the South. When asked to co-chair a committee, seldomly do priests respond with a resounding "Yes!" Instead, the well taught response is usually, "I'll pray about it and get back to you." But by June 2021, Manning had not only answered the call to co-chair the University's Names and Places Committee (NPC), but felt it was "so past time to let God speak in this manner," she says. "The Holy Spirit is still moving through Sewanee and may be moving with a whole lot more passion," reflects Manning.

In September 2020, The University of the South released a statement, "categorically rejecting its past veneration of the Confederacy and of the 'Lost Cause' and wholeheartedly committing itself to an urgent process of institutional reckoning in order to make Sewanee a model of diversity, of inclusion, of intellectual rigor, and of loving spirit in an America that rejects prejudice and embraces possibility." The charge of the NPC is not to erase history. "We are putting together a framework so that when we look at these places, there is a process by which we can make a recommendation to the Board of Regents if the name should remain or be changed," says Manning.

Bringing the truth to light about the people who formed the University and the voices not heard is the work of the committee. "God continues to create anew all the time and God is in this place. The Spirit is bidding us to be the community of the beloved," says Manning. At the heart of the committee is a faithfulness to the charge and integrity of the work. Uncomfortable as it is, Manning believes that telling the truth includes an accounting that the University was founded by people who owned other people. "And we know that this is wrong. Proclaiming the dignity of every human being doesn't fit when you own another human being," she asserts.

The charge of the NPC was completed in June 2022, as recommendations were given to the Board of Regents. She sees this committee, and the many others upon which she has served, as a way to give back to the University that gave her so much when she enrolled in the School of Theology and was subsequently ordained a priest. "The people who have gone before me have made it possible for me to go to seminary, therefore giving back is something I want to continue in my own life." In Manning's view, moving closer to becoming beloved community requires telling the truth in a world that sometimes doesn't want to hear the truth. "I believe deeply in my heart and soul that this is God's work, and it feels awesome. We've got to get it right."

EFML: Educación para la Formación en el Ministerio Laical

This fall, the Beecken Center at the School of Theology will launch a new sister program to Education for Ministry (EfM), designed for participants in a Latino/Hispanic context. The acronym for Educación para la Formación en el Ministerio Laical will be styled EFML.

Karen Meridith, executive director of EfM and associate director of the Beecken Center, has worked toward this launch since she first arrived in Sewanee. In 2010 when she interviewed for a position at the Beecken Center (then called the School of Theology Programs Center), she was asked about translating EfM into Spanish.

"There is a tendency to take what is working well and translate it," Meridith says, "but translating the program wholesale would be an act of colonialism. EfM has an Anglo cultural context. For Anglos, it's important to recognize that we do have a culture." Meridith worked with Eric Law at Kaleidoscope Institute to outline the process of developing a new program, rather than translating the English version of EfM into Spanish.

The program needed to have its own Reading and Reflection Guide, composed by native speakers who write from their own context. Because there is not a single, monolithic culture, the endeavor required input from a diverse group of developers. The new program also needed its own managing editor, its own books—and even, it turns out, its own name.

To that end, Meridith hired Eduardo Solomón Rivera as managing editor for the program. Rivera, who lives in the Chicago metropolitan area, is originally from Puerto Rico. He helped identify contributors of Latin American heritage to provide appropriate texts and write for the new curriculum.

Rather than translating the Reading and Reflection Guide into Spanish, Latinx writers began again from within their own context. They wrote a Reading and Reflection Guide in Spanish—then translated it to English to produce a guide for use in bilingual congregations. Because EfM now uses a collection of texts, EFML is not restricted to the same books EfM uses. The new curriculum incorporates texts from historians and theologians such as Leonardo Boff, Orlando Espín, Elizabeth Conde-Frasier, Justo L. González, Carla Roland Guzmán, Juan Oliver, and Alicia Vargas to name just a few. "We are excited that EFML provides native voices from which to learn and with which to dialogue, voices from our own contexts," says Rivera.

Meridith says EFML shares the same longstanding EfM goal of nurturing an articulate and reflective laity that knows how to think theologically. "The reflective method is adaptable. The major shift is in freeing the new version from concerns unique to white U.S Americans and from Anglo cultural assumptions."

The English program already questions those cultural assumptions. In the four-year cycle of EfM, Reading and Reflection Guides Year B: Living Faithfully in a Multicultural World (assigned for the 2022–2023 academic year) calls on Anglo participants to challenge the idea that their own context is the reality. The first 2022–2023 Interlude book (read by all participants in all years of study) is *Reading the Bible from*

the Margins by Miguel A. de la Torre. The second is *Healing Our Broken Humanity* by Grace Ji-Sun Kim and Graham Hill. These concerns are not new; what is new is the commitment to address them from perspectives other than that of a white U.S. American perspective.

The name of the new program reflects this commitment. Because the English "for" translates to Spanish word "por," a straight translation of the name would lose the F in EfM. EfM as an acronym has endured across decades and cultures, even when different words are used for the acronym. For example, in the UK the program is called Exploring Faith Matters, with the acronym EFM.

Rivera and Meridith both wanted to emphasize formation as well as education. Meridith says, "In workshops and trainings, I have often expanded the 'for' to formation." In EFML, the F is for *formación* and is capitalized because it is not a preposition. In fact, the shorthand name of the program is *Formación*. Meridith says, "Participants will work through the same four-year cycle to explore personal context, multicultural context, living as a mature Christian, and finally theosis or the journey with (not to) God. It was always about formation."

"In many ways theological reflection and various forms of conversation with the divine are woven into the everyday experience of many of us of Latin American heritage," says Rivera.

"In many ways theological reflection and various forms of conversation with the divine are woven into the everyday experience for many of us of Latin American heritage," says Rivera, "Through our model of theological reflection, EFML provides a framework for engaging that dialogue further, sharing it, and allowing it to inform our formation and ministry."

Meridith emphasizes that EFML will be a sister program to EfM, "more a parallel than a subset." EfM already has several international groups in primarily English-speaking countries that function autonomously. They use the same Reading and Reflection Guide but may change up the Interlude books. For example, there may be a book that more accurately addresses issues of racism within their culture.

The current EfM curriculum is the fifth curriculum EfM has offered since 1975, and the new EFML curriculum makes a sixth. However, the premise and implementation of EfM has remained the same. Meridith says, "Everything we do in EfM is based on the conviction that baptized people are called to ministry."

People who are not familiar with EfM may hear the name and assume it is an educational model. Indeed, the idea for EfM was born from the question, "Why can't lay people know what seminarians learn about church history and critical approaches?"

Still, the aim of the curriculum is not to fill the participant with knowledge. "They are learning the language of theology," Meridith says, "not just encountering a parade of theologians. EfM is not the reading; the emphasis is on core practices." She says by taking on the core practices, participants immerse themselves in a rule of life as a community. "We live into that rule of life together, hoping we internalize the practices and take them into the world. If this stuff is not going to change my life, why am I doing it?"

Meridith says the core practices of EfM ground participants in spirituality, giving them strength to perform their ministries. Those practices include: committing to community life, grounding in worship and prayer, learning to think theologically, studying the Christian tradition, and discerning the call to ministry in daily life. These core practices are aided by the building blocks that have been part of every EfM curriculum from the beginning: the spiritual autobiography, the course of study, theological reflection using a four-source model, the learning spiral of action/reflection/action, and the seminar group's mentor as facilitator, not teacher.

Rivera incorporated the same principles and practices as the EFML curriculum was written. "It's the same DNA of EfM," says Meridith, "expressed differently in a different context."

Meridith anticipates a number of pilot groups will begin EFML in the fall. Although the program was designed for people of Latin American heritage in the Spanish language and bilingual formats, the bilingual format is suitable for parishes with mixed groups willing to immerse themselves in the EFML program. Churches may also have one or more groups using each program.

THE PEOPLE

Becca Stevens

"My favorite thing about Sewanee," she says, "is that even though it is a serious university providing a great education, it is still small enough to be a community."

Sara Milford

"Sewanee taught me that we can do hard things! I can be in a very uncomfortable situation and I'm not going to die. I get to read the Gospel. I get to sing and pray in Spanish."

Klarke Stricklen

Sewanee senior Klarke Stricklen, C'22, is one of 32 American students chosen as Rhodes Scholars for 2022, making her the University's 27th Rhodes Scholar—and the first African American to be selected from Sewanee.

Kelton Riley

For those who are interested in Sewanee—especially queer people—but unsure about a seemingly traditional and Southern space, Riley says, "Come visit."

Bishop James Tengatenga

"Being a bishop from a different context means that the way I act, the way I interact with others, represents the larger world here at Sewanee."

Stephanie McCarter

Stephanie McCarter, associate professor of classics, is bringing #MeToo back to 8 A.D. Tapped by Penguin Classics to be the first female English translator of Ovid's Metamorphoses into verse, McCarter is stepping to the front of a male-dominated lineage.

Yuri Rodriguez

"The University community has shown a genuine interest in being in relationship with me, and I have been invited to be part of many important conversations."

Marcus Halley

"I left Sewanee knowing that it isn't enough just to give people facts about Jesus or the Church, the ins-and-outs of exegesis and scholarship—we have to combine that intellectual stimulation with spiritual energizing."

Adventures in Justice: Becca Stevens

On an overcast day in January, Becca Stevens, C'85, knits a moss-green sock while talking about her alma mater. "My favorite thing about Sewanee," she says, "is that even though it is a serious university providing a great education, it is still small enough to be a community. Professors like Bran Potter in geology would be involved with students raising money to help kids in South America. Community helps form students just as much as academic endeavors."

Stevens, who graduated from the University with a B.S. in mathematics in 1985, is an internationally known speaker, author, social entrepreneur, and priest. Stevens has authored a dozen books, including her latest, *Practically Divine* (Harper Horizon, 2021.) She is best known as the founder of Thistle Farms, which she launched in 1997 with a single home for survivors of trafficking and addiction. Thistle Farms has grown into a global movement for women's freedom.

Stevens recalls her undergraduate years at the University of the South as a time when she developed a deeper love for both community and justice. She says, "Sewanee gave me freedom to explore my passions and interests. It gave me enough structure that I had to push myself academically. All Saints' Chapel gave me the opportunity to exercise my curiosity in liturgy and theology. It gave me the woods, 13,000 acres of woods to heal from a lot of the trauma in my earlier life."

Stevens' father, who was also an Episcopal priest, was killed by a drunk driver when she was five years old. She grew up in Nashville, the fourth of five children, in the church her father had founded. Stevens says the tragedy of her father's death changed everything. She was the first child in the family to go to college.

Stevens is part of a continuing legacy of Sewanee Tigers. Stevens' father, Gladstone Stevens, graduated in 1951 and her son, Isaac Caney Hummon, graduated from the college four years ago. When Stevens arrived on campus, she found herself surrounded by a community that supported and encouraged her, not only during those four years, but through the decades as she continues to pursue what she calls "adventures in justice."

The design of Thistle Farms is based on conversations Stevens had with women she met on the streets and in prison while she was serving as chaplain of St. Augustine's Chapel at Vanderbilt. Hearing their stories, she thought, "We can do better than just shelter, treatment, and halfway houses. Out of our theology and faith, we can do it in a lavish and loving way. We can offer something that is practical, relevant, and safe. I wanted to build a shelter like we build a cathedral."

Stevens put together a board of directors and raised her first $100,000 to help women who were addicted and being trafficked. "The idea was, you can come and live here free for two years. We'll help you get whatever resources you'll need, so that you never have to go back to the streets, and you never have to go back to prison."

To date, Stevens has founded 10 justice initiatives and raised over $55 million in private funds. She has appeared on PBS NewsHour, The Today Show, and CNN. She is the recipient of many awards including CNN Hero, White House Champion of Change, Humanitarian of the Year (Small Business Council of America), Nashvillian of the Year, and Tennessee Human Rights Outstanding Service Award. In 2013, Stevens was inducted into the Tennessee Women's Hall of Fame.

But before she was Becca Stevens of Thistle Farms, she was a Sewanee undergrad concerned about a humanitarian crisis in Eritrea. As a student, she organized a campus-wide Harambe Day to raise money and awareness. She sought sponsorship from the seminary, trustees, fraternities, and other Sewanee organizations to fund the event. She brought singers from Nashville.

"Harambe Day was my first big event," she says, "and it was a success! It was the first time I ever undertook to organize an event around a justice issue, which is central to what I am still doing. The Sewanee community encouraged me to exercise creativity, leadership, and passion. From that experienced I learned—I can do this."

A Thin Place in the Woods: Sara Milford

Sara Milford, T'15, applied to the School of Theology at the suggestion of her bishop. Bishop Larry Benfield of the Diocese of Arkansas is a Virginia Theology Seminary (VTS) alumnus, and he invited Milford to choose between VTS and Sewanee. Milford says, "I knew the quality of theological education would be excellent in either place. What drew me to Sewanee was that it looked like our diocesan Camp Mitchell, which is also on a plateau. They are both called mountains, and they are both thin places."

Milford felt she would be better able to focus in the woods. She knew it would be a great place for her children, ages five, eight, 11, and 13. The older children attended St. Andrews-Sewanee School (SAS), with generous scholarships provided by the University and SAS. Milford fondly remembers cookouts in the Woodlands neighborhood, bike rides, and ice cream at the Blue Chair. Her children enjoyed the freedom to explore campus while she spent "nearly every waking moment" in her study carrel or on the third floor of the library looking out at Stirling's Coffee House. "I took all of Mother Juli [Gatta]'s tests in the library," she says, "praying for all the wisdom of the books."

Milford served on the Diversity Committee during her seminary years. Her senior year, she and Katie Bradshaw, T'15, were awarded the Gesell Fellowship in Social Ethics. They studied the St. Mark's Community, where many Black Sewanee families lived during the 20th century. Milford and Bradshaw produced a two-hour video, *Can I Get a Witness?* The video has been used by groups exploring Sewanee's racial history, including the Roberson Project on Slavery, Race, and Reconciliation and the Parish of St. Mark and St. Paul (formerly Otey Memorial Parish).

Since 2017, Milford has served as vicar of All Saints'/Todos Los Santos Mission in Bentonville, Arkansas. She serves alongside diocesan missioner Padre Guillermo Castillo, however, "I am not bilingual," Milford says. She took French in high school, Greek for her M.Div, and just one semester of pastoral Spanish with John Solomon at the School of Theology.

Milford says she is often the only non-Spanish-speaking person in a service. "What I learned from John Solomon was enough to understand and practice in a bilingual mission," she says. "Sewanee taught me that we can do hard things! I can be in a very uncomfortable situation and I'm not going to die. I get to read the Gospel. I get to sing and pray in Spanish. I'm even beginning to understand more of Padre's sermons."

When Castillo took a three-month sabbatical, Milford was left to preach and preside at both English and Spanish services. She wrote a single sermon each week, adapting it for the Spanish service with the help of Google Translate and generous parishioners.

During such challenges, Milford continues to draw on what she learned in the thin place of Sewanee. "When I start to feel overwhelmed, I need to abide where I can feel the presence of the Spirit. I am called to return to the basics—birds, trees, water—to be present, to be still. What is important will surface. Through challenges, through chaos, and even through pandemics, the strong roots of our tradition, of who we are as children of God, will endure."

Sewanee's Most Recent Rhodes Scholar: Klarke Stricklen

Sewanee senior Klarke Stricklen, C'22, is one of 32 American students chosen as Rhodes Scholars for 2022, making her the University's 27th Rhodes Scholar—and the first African American to be selected from Sewanee.

The awards, announced Nov. 21, 2021, provide all expenses for two or three years of study at Oxford University in England. The winners were selected from 826 applicants endorsed by 247 different colleges and universities. The scholars will enter Oxford next fall.

Stricklen is an American studies major and African American studies minor from Chattanooga. She was named a Truman Scholar last spring. Her honors thesis concentrates on Black reparations by arguing for the moral responsibility of higher educational institutions with ties to the slave trade and slavery. At Oxford, she plans to pursue an MSc in economic and social history.

On campus, Stricklen has been a student research assistant for the Roberson Project on Slavery, Race, and Reconciliation, and a member of the Roberson Project working group, the campus chapter of NAACP, and Bairnwick Women's Center. She is a member of Omicron Delta Kappa and history honor society Phi Alpha Theta, and received the Davis Family Scholarship for leadership and community service and the Isabel Caldwell Marks Memorial Scholarship. She previously interned in the office of the U.S. Attorney for the District of Columbia.

"I am so excited to be named a U.S. Rhodes Scholar-elect. My journey in this endeavor has challenged me and pushed me to be a better student, leader, and friend," said Stricklen. "I am grateful to my village for supporting me every step of the way and know that I would not be here had it not been for the people in my life who have continuously taken the time to pour into me."

"Klarke embodies Maya Angelou's idea that 'History, despite its wrenching pain, cannot be unlived, but if faced with courage, need not be lived again.' Through her important work with the Roberson Project, she has helped to uncover and contextualize the University's historical entanglements with slavery and its legacies," said former Vice-Chancellor Reuben Brigety. "While working to understand the University's past, Klarke has also led efforts to move the University community toward a better version of what it could be."

"As the first African American to achieve this honor at the University of the South, I am thankful to every Black student, faculty, and staff member who came before me and paved the way for my success. Thank you to the University of the South for supporting my candidacy, continuously investing in my success, and pushing me to be a better leader," Stricklen said. "I look forward to joining my Rhodes classmates at Oxford next fall and embarking on an educational journey grounded in remembrance and reparations."

Celebrating the LGBTQ+ Community in Sewanee: Kelton Riley

Kelton Riley, T'23, who goes by his last name, says that he has felt "celebrated" at Sewanee.

That statement is quite literally true: the middler from Athens, Alabama, received two of the University's most important prizes last year—the Woods Leadership Award and the Freeman Award for Merit. But the celebration goes much further than any certificate for Riley, the first transgender postulant from his diocese and the first transgender postulant undergoing formation for the priesthood at the School of Theology.

"I feel very well-loved here. As the first trans person, sometimes there is a burden of representation. Sometimes there are questions about terminology, pronouns. But I find that the curiosity is always respectful, and it's always addressed at trying to love and know me better and love and know the LGBTQ+ community better."

It did not take Riley much time to find his niche in the seminary, including what he describes as a "vibrant queer community and robust ally network." As a Southerner from a small town, Riley found a natural sense of home. He was pleasantly surprised, however, by the diversity of backgrounds and perspectives within the seminary. "There are people from all over: California, Bermuda, Malawi. There are different theological orientations, Anglo-Catholics and evangelicals, liberation theology. It's interesting to see the mix, the dialogue. People feel free to be themselves. I like to think we bicker in love."

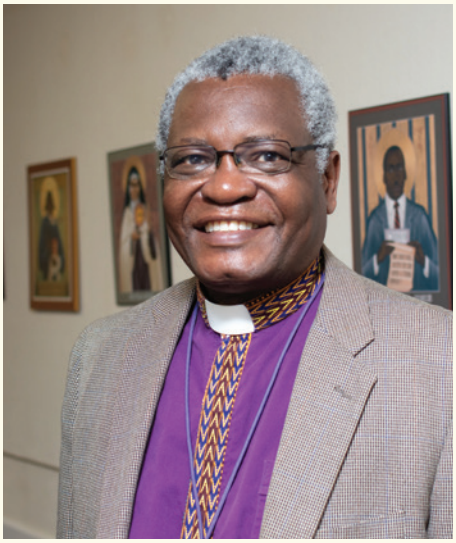
Riley feels that Sewanee is uniquely positioned for a changing Church and a changing world, particularly as a Southern institution. "The weight of Sewanee's history is looming right now, because it's something we're taking seriously," he says. "We're challenging and rewriting some of the old myths, breathing the gospel into some of the painful and wounding parts of this story. There's something magical about being in Sewanee and the South, that so much of the work that needs to be done is happening here and now."

For those who are interested in Sewanee—especially queer people—but unsure about a seemingly traditional and Southern space, Riley says, "Come visit. Do some introspection—are you prepared to come listen and learn before you try to fix things? For those interested in the work—gentle, slow, long-haul kind of work—the opportunities abound here. The new frontier of queer activism is the South. And because we're the South, the Church has to take a leadership role. Sewanee has the unique ability to translate the queer movement into a southern vernacular that will help us be more effective in the South at large."

Sewanee in the World Context: Bishop James Tengatenga

In 2012, the University developed a 10-year strategic plan, which included as one of its four goals *extending the University's reach locally and globally*. Bishop James Tengatenga, the School of Theology's Distinguished Professor of Global Anglicanism since 2014, is a living embodiment of that goal. "I am African, born in Zimbabwe, and educated in Malawi, England, and the United States," he explains. "My very presence is a reminder that The Episcopal Church exists within the larger context of the Anglican Communion and the world, and that if we are truly going to be the beloved community, we need to have knowledge of our siblings in the faith."

Tengatenga, who served on the Anglican Consultative Council for 14 years, including seven years as its chairman, has deep knowledge of the conflicts and differences of opinion within the Anglican Communion, and the necessity of understanding the perspectives of others. As a result, his position on the faculty of the School of Theology offers students a valuable opportunity to place their beliefs, and The Episcopal Church, in a global context. "Episcopalianism is an expression of Anglicanism, and Anglicanism is an expression of Christianity," Tengatenga says. "Christianity is a world religion, not a Western religion, so it is important for students to understand how theologies are formed outside of the Western world." Furthermore, gaining a deeper understanding of the issues that unite and divide the Anglican Communion is an important part of formation, particularly since so many of those divisive issues are also present in Episcopal dioceses and parishes. "My goal is to encourage the seminarians to make space in the theological discourse for others, and to give voice to the perspectives that have been underappreciated or unheard. By doing so, and by understanding the larger context of the Church within the Anglican Communion, we gain perspective and insight into the challenges we face in our own communities." As the interconnectedness of all human beings becomes increasingly evident, Tengatenga says, it is also more important than ever to consider how issues at home impact the rest of the world. "To someone in the United States, for example, climate change may mean turning up the air conditioner," he says. "But to a subsistence farmer in Africa, climate change presents a huge and potentially devastating problem. Understanding the larger picture is critical."



During Tengatenga's time in Sewanee, the School of Theology has continued to welcome students from Africa and the Caribbean each year, and these students add valuable perspectives to the seminary before returning home with the knowledge they gained on the Mountain. Tengatenga says it is particularly gratifying when his own presence, and that of these students, inspires seminarians to consider for the first time what it means to be a Christian from another part of the world. "When I teach a course on Missiology and World Christianities, for example, my perspective is different, because I, myself, am the product of missionary enterprise," he explains. "Being a bishop from a different context means that the way I act, the way I interact with others, represents the larger world here at Sewanee." That not only serves the University's mission, he says, but also the Church's. "Christianity by its nature is communal, far beyond the local community. Therefore, it adds value to all Christian relationships, including within parishes and dioceses, to understand that you are not sufficient unto yourself."

Tengatenga says that the welcome and support he has received from his colleagues at Sewanee "is beyond this world." And most importantly, he says, "their support emboldens me to do what I was brought here to do."

Translation in the Age of #MeToo: Stephanie McCarter

Harvey Weinstein, Roy Moore, Matt Lauer, Charlie Rose, Larry Nassar, Les Moonves. They're a few of the nearly 240 high-profile individuals accused of sexual harassment, assault, or misconduct since October 2017 when the *New York Times* reported that Hollywood media mogul Weinstein was at the center of a more than two decades' long scandal of sexual misconduct allegations and settlements.

Three days later, Weinstein was fired from the production company he co-founded. Ten days after the Times story first appeared, actress Alyssa Milano, on Twitter, sounded a call to victims of sexual harassment or assault to tweet "me too." It was a phrase first used by sexual assault survivor and activist Tarana Burke in 2006 to unite women and girls of color who were also survivors of sexual violence. "Me too" turned into #MeToo, and a movement was born.

Today, #MeToo is shorthand to unify survivors of sexual violence, but it is also a rallying cry for change. Powered by social media, the #MeToo movement, created out of Burke's desire to turn her personal experience into a collective push against systemic sexual violence, is working its way into everything from comment threads to campaign trails, from boardrooms to classrooms.

And for Stephanie McCarter, associate professor of classics, that means bringing #MeToo back to 8 A.D. Tapped by Penguin Classics to be the first female English translator of Ovid's Metamorphoses into verse, McCarter is stepping to the front of a male-dominated lineage—one that finds itself rife with what she calls "distortions, omissions, and mistranslations" in her essay, "Rape, Lost in Translation," published earlier this year in Electric Literature. For the characters of

Metamorphoses—those chased, raped, groped, and assaulted—McCarter could finally lead their #MeToo moment.

At nearly 12,000 lines across 15 books, Ovid's *Metamorphoses* stands as one of the most influential works of art in Western culture, inspiring future literary heavyweights including Dante, Chaucer, and Shakespeare. Completed around 8 A.D., the epic poem, written in Latin hexameter, traces a theme of transformation—and power—through more than 250 myths. Of these 250 tales, more than 50 depict sexual violence or rape.

Many previous translations have turned a blind eye to or reframed these scenes, positioning them as romantic and even titillating encounters where women are "ravished" or "enjoyed" without their consent. Other translations give a nod to rape but forgo more accurate translation in favor of euphemism, like translator Charles Martin's "she gives in to him without complaint" or David Raeburn's "the Sun was allowed to possess her" — each a description of the Sun's rape of Leucothoe, a young woman caught in the crosshairs of a dispute between gods.

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Leucothoe stands at the center of much of McCarter's early inspiration for this new translation project. Before Penguin Classics approached McCarter, who holds a Ph.D. in classics from the University of Virginia, she found herself troubled by the lack of translations from which she could actually teach.

Channeling the frustration produced by inadequate and inaccurate translations, McCarter started her own side project in 2016 of translating Horace's *Odes and Epodes*. Her work was picked up by the University of Oklahoma Press. When the translation is completed early next year, she will also be the first woman to have produced a complete translation of the four books of odes and 17 epodes.

"Ovid is a text I have taught over and over again. So, I started thinking about the Leucothoe episode, which I first taught 10 years ago when I came [to Sewanee]," she recalls. "I remember teaching it out of Rolfe Humphries' translation and thinking something's just not right in the way he's translated this. I didn't have the Latin in class with me that day … so I went back and looked at the Latin [later] and said, 'Of course it's not right, because he's hidden the rape.'"

In Book IV of *Metamorphoses*, Venus, enraged with the Sun for revealing her affair with Mars, the god of war, fills the Sun with desire for Leucothoe, a mortal. The Sun appears to Leucothoe disguised as her mother and then rapes her. Later, when the young woman's father finds out she is no longer a virgin, he buries her alive.

When teaching texts like *Metamorphoses*, McCarter first offers her students a content warning. Beyond just telling them that scenes of rape and sexual violence lie ahead, she provides students access to her motives, revealing how and why they'll be interrogating these types of scenes. "I don't want my students to ever think that the things we're talking about in class are somehow removed from the world in which they live," she says.

"It is possible to do a beautiful poetic translation in pentameter that is enjoyable to read, that is informed by the latest scholarship on gender in the ancient world, and that also takes into account our own cultural moment. These things are not separable. They can be unified, and that is my main goal."

And it's her students she wants to serve first. It was the lack of accurate translations available to them that first inspired the Horace project, and now the *Metamorphoses* endeavor. It is forging connections between academia and art, between antiquity and today, between us and them.

McCarter says, "When you tear apart an ancient text and you think critically about it and you don't put it on a pedestal and then you see something from your own world that speaks to it, that resonates. I think that's the moment where education happens."

A Place of Liberation: Yuri Rodriguez

When seminarians are asked about attending graduate school in a place like Sewanee, they will often say that after visiting, they "just knew" that Sewanee was the place. The same was true for seminarian Yuri Rodriguez, T'22. "When I came to Sewanee to visit and see if this would be a good seminary for me and my family, I was overwhelmed, and I knew in my heart that I belonged." Yet, for Rodriguez, attending the School of Theology was not just a matter of call, but one of risk-taking. "While I am the only Latina student, I have found here a great community, a genuine desire to be together in community, and learning opportunities that are forming me as a strong Latina leader to serve our Church."

Rodriguez has certainly made her mark on the Sewanee community. She plans a multitude of on-campus events, leads several organizations, and sits on many committees for the University. Rodriguez created and leads a new "pick up" choir, called El Coro, which provides worship music for the Spanish Mass at the Chapel of the Apostles. Rodriguez will also be leading worship for the opening Eucharist at the General Convention of The Episcopal Church.

"As a Latina, an immigrant and a person of color, I feel called to participate in liberative initiatives and the work of racial reconciliation, and creating cultural awareness" remarked Rodriguez. "In that sense, I always make myself available to people who want to learn about the things I represent, and I try to support the work of diversity, inclusion and reconciliation."

Rodriguez feels that Sewanee has become a place of liberation for her. "The University community has shown a genuine interest in being in relationship with me, and I have been invited to be part of many important conversations. Most importantly, Sewanee is in radical solidarity with me and my children. I receive a very generous financial aid package, opportunities to work doing what I love, which is singing, and a scholarship for my daughter's education as well."

Sewanee's commitment to diversity, alongside its desire to participate in the growth of Latino ministries in The Episcopal Church are not only evident in the School of Theology's welcome toward Rodriguez, but also in the integration of Latino/a culture into the curriculum. "I have taken classes with professors who have guided me to learn theology, history, and spirituality in the Anglican tradition, but they have also given me the opportunity to create a conversation between that tradition and my own Latinx*culture," Rodriguez stated. "As a result, I am being formed not only to serve a traditional Anglican congregation, but also learning ways to make connections that will help The Episcopal Church answer the question

we have been asking for more than 50 years now—how can we approach our Latinx neighbors?"

As the Church looks toward welcoming more members of the growing Latino population into its pews on Sunday mornings, it will be ever more important to empower leaders like Rodriguez and to invite more Lantino/a members into positions of leadership and ministry. The future of the Church is in this kind of radical welcome and solidarity.

**Rodriguez prefers to use the gender-neutral term, "Latinx"*

Being Formed in a Place Like Sewanee: Marcus Halley

The Very Rev. Marcus Halley, T'15, T'22, has served in parishes, on diocesan staffs in Minnesota and Connecticut, and now works as the chaplain and dean of spiritual and religious life at Trinity College in Hartford. He has authored two books, *Proclaim!: Sharing Words, Living Examples, Changing Lives* (2020) and *Abide in Peace: Healing and Reconciliation* (2021). At the center of his life's work and vocation is the importance of theological formation for all Christians.

Halley came to Sewanee with an M.Div. from a predominantly Black Christian tradition. He was used to rigorous thinking when it came to theology, but he found at the School of Theology a distinctive environment of formation characterized by the total integration of study and prayer. "That connection between prayer and intellectual rigor was something that really transformed my faith," Halley says. "For all the strengths of my previous M.Div., one of the things lacking from that experience was the rhythm of prayer that helps you integrate what you're learning in the classroom with what it means to live the way of Jesus. I left Sewanee knowing that it isn't enough just to give people facts about Jesus or the Church, the ins-and-outs of exegesis and scholarship—we have to combine that intellectual stimulation with spiritual energizing. The two have to go hand in hand. You'll lose your way if your theological exploration isn't grounded in a vital relationship with Jesus."

Relationships in general are essential for formation in the Christian life, says Halley, and Sewanee's rural setting demands that its students "show up" with their entire selves. "You default to showing up in the community in particular ways, because to go anywhere else takes a long drive. Some people would see that as a deficit, but I see it as a strength. It makes you engage with the people who are there, and see them as your community. Even when you disagree, you are going to run into them at the grocery store, at chapel, at Shenanigan's, at the Blue Chair. I was formed in Sewanee to see the people right in front of me as *my* community. How do I enter into those relationships, stick with them when they're difficult, apologize when I've made a mistake? They're the community I'm called to! We can look at our society and see how needed that kind of formation is. I learned I can't throw people away or ignore them."

The flipside of being formed in a place like Sewanee is that students themselves have an outsize impact on shaping the institution. "I realized the Black voices of my previous M.Div. were not as present in the mostly white institutions of The Episcopal Church," Halley says. "I tried to bring that perspec-

tive to the table, to let people know a perspective to be afraid of, and to say that this we can learn from each other. This is not a one-way relationship, but a place where everyone can be transformed by this encounter. Let's be together, because we don't have to be separated—we don't have to live in these traditional silos."

Halley points out a persistent myth about Sewanee within the wider Episcopal Church: that Sewanee is a monolithically white space. "It's funny to me that people within the Episcopal network say that about Sewanee without realizing the irony that people outside the Episcopal Church say that about the whole denomination. While we can admit that historically and currently, Sewanee is a very white space, we risk erasing the experiences of people of color who are actually there, undergrads and seminarians—that many of us have chosen to go there and to be there, that many of us have enjoyed our time there."

Another myth? That Sewanee does not train "missional" priests prepared for ministry in the contemporary Church with its myriad challenges. "I'm basically writing a whole thesis on how that language of 'missional' has become problematic," Halley says. "What Sewanee taught me was how to keep praying and how to keep learning. Honestly, that's what the Church needs to navigate whatever we're going through—a transformation, a decline, whatever you want to call it. We need well-rounded, well-formed priests who are engaged in this life of learning and prayer, and seminaries like the School of Theology are still the best way to do that."

As a leader in the area of theological formation, including his current role as a college chaplain, Halley had this to say: "There are many places where you can study well. There are many places with a rich liturgical and spiritual life. But there are very few places where the two of those match up. Sewanee is one of those places. We have work to do, like every institution. But to have that work grounded in learning and prayer, Sewanee is set up perfectly to engage that work with faithfulness. The Church needs Sewanee and spaces like it."

University Resources

Episcopal Center for Learning:
new.sewanee.edu/episcopal

The Roberson Project on Slavery, Race, and Reconciliation:
robersonproject.sewanee.edu

Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion:
new.sewanee.edu/offices/university-offices/dei

All Saints' Chapel:
new.sewanee.edu/campus-life/believing/all-saints-chapel

University Farm:
farm.sewanee.edu

Names and Places Committee:
new.sewanee.edu/names-places-committee

School of Theology Resources

Advanced Degrees:
theology.sewanee.edu/doctor-of-ministry

Contextual Education:
theology.sewanee.edu/master-of-divinity/contextual-education

SUMMA
summa.sewanee.edu

Center for Religion and Environment:
new.sewanee.edu/cre

EFML:
theology.sewanee.edu/education-for-ministry/program/efml

ACTS:
theology.sewanee.edu/acts

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