

July 16, 2026

Dear Members of the University Community,

I am writing to provide you with updates on campus activities. While Sewanee is typically quiet during the summer, there is still a great deal happening.

Renovation and Repair Work: The summer months are a time of intensive work to address deferred maintenance and renovation needs. This summer is no exception, as our Facilities Management team is coordinating work on the Barnwell Apartments, Hunter Hall, Cleveland Hall, and Elliott Hall, among other projects. These projects will enhance the quality of our residence halls, which is an important factor in recruiting and retaining students. The Facilities Management team is coordinating these important renovations while also preparing rental housing units, academic spaces, and residence halls for the full return to academic operations in August.

Our efforts to improve residence halls also align with the University's sustainability initiatives. As an example, the University has contracted to lay pipes from the University's central chiller to Hunter, Elliot, Tuckaway, and Cleveland Halls. Chilled water from the central system is used by air conditioning units in the residence halls (and, in the case of Cleveland Hall, its future air conditioning system) to cool the air circulating through the buildings.

The technology allows the University to provide air conditioning with a lower utility cost and carbon footprint than would be the case with standard practices.

Summer Conferences: Although most students depart from campus each May for summer recess, the campus springs to life with a large number of adult, collegiate, and pre-college camps and programs. Some of the programs are as short as just a couple of days, while others extend to six weeks. In total, by the end of the summer, the campus expects to have hosted nearly 2,400 participants in 34 camps and programs. These camps offer the participants opportunities to enjoy the peace and quiet of Sewanee for their study, performance, and training. They also provide vitality to Sewanee residents who can enjoy the many literary readings and musical performances. While there are too many program leaders to thank individually, the Sewanee Dining staff and our Conference Services team, led by Chris Carlson, have been instrumental in providing food service and accommodations for participants. The Technology Access and Support team also ensures that the sound systems operate well at the many events during the summer.

Sewanee School of Letters: The Sewanee School of Letters has enjoyed another excellent summer of courses and public readings by its faculty members. This summer, their offerings included a fundraising event to celebrate its twentieth anniversary. At the large gathering of supporters, speakers included Natasha Trethewey, Poet Laureate of the United States (2012-14); Maggie Bailey, graduate of the School; John Grammer, founding director of the School; Justin Taylor, current director of the School; and Vice-Chancellor Pearigen. The event allowed faculty, students, and friends of the School to reconnect and reflect on the past twenty years while imagining the future direction of the School. The School of Letters will hold its commencement exercise on Saturday, July 18.

St. Mark's Community Trail: Recently, the University was notified that it was the recipient of a \$154,068 grant from the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation funded by the Tire Environmental Act. The grant will provide funds for the purchase of a trail-building material – akin to a rubber mulch – produced with recycled tires. The surface will help to reduce erosion of the trail and make use of recycled materials. The trail is planned to connect the area around the St. Mark's Community Center to the downtown Sewanee by cutting a path through the woods. We hope that this will provide a new, safe walkway from the St. Mark's Community that connects them to the village and the Mountain Goat Trail. Many thanks to the Corporate and Foundations Relations team and Facilities Management for working on the grant initiative and to the Office of Environmental Stewardship and Sustainability who will assist Facilities Management in the future maintenance of the trail.

A Final Note: I hope you enjoy the second half of your summer and have the opportunity to recharge. For many of our staff, summer is a busy time on campus. We can all benefit from the many arts offerings available during the summer, and we will surely appreciate the completed renovation projects in the coming months.

Best Wishes,

Scott Wilson
Provost