

A CONVOCATION
OF
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH
FOR
THE ADMISSION TO THE ORDER OF THE GOWN



ALL SAINTS' CHAPEL
SEWANEE, TENNESSEE

4:30 p.m.
FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18, 2026

CONVOCAATION OF THE UNIVERSITY

At 4:20 p.m. the Mildred and George Bentley Change Ringing Bells in Breslin Tower ring and the Academic Procession leaves Walsh-Ellett Hall.

As the Procession enters the Chapel, the congregation stands and joins in the singing of this Hymn.

OPENING PROCESSION Lobe den herren

Descant

4 Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me a -

1 Praise to the Lord, the Al - might - y, the King of cre -
2 Praise to the Lord; o - ver all things he glo - rious - ly
3 Praise to the Lord, who doth pros - per thy way and de -
4 Praise to the Lord! O let all that is in me a -

dore him! All that hath life and breath come now with

a - tion; O my soul, praise him, for he is thy
reign - eth: borne as on ea - gle - wings, safe - ly his
fend - thee; sure - ly his good - ness and mer - cy shall
dore him! All that hath life and breath come now with

prais - es be - fore him! Let the a - men sound — from his

health and sal - va - tion: join the great throng, psal - ter - y,
saints he sus - tain - eth. Hast thou not seen how all thou
ev - er at - tend thee; pon - der a - new what the Al -
prais - es be - fore him! Let the a - men sound from his

peo - ple a - gain; glad - ly for ev - er a - dore him.

or - gan, and song, sound - ing in glad ad - o - ra - tion.
need - est hath been grant - ed in what he or - dain - eth?
might - y can do, who with his love doth be - friend thee.
peo - ple a - gain; glad - ly for ev - er a - dore him.

The Chaplain opens the Convocation, saying

Send out your light and your truth, that they may lead me, and bring me to your holy hill
and to your dwelling. *Psalm 43:3*

Chaplain The Lord be with you.

People And also with you.

Chaplain Let us pray.

Almighty God, you declare your glory and show forth your handiwork in the
heavens and in the earth: Deliver us in our various occupations from the service
of self alone, that we may do the work you give us to do in truth and beauty and for
the common good; for the sake of him who came among us as one who serves, your
Son Jesus Christ our Lord, who lives and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one
God, for ever and ever. *Amen.*

The congregation is seated.

THE FIRST READING.....Proverbs 2:1–11

My child, if you accept my words and treasure up my commandments within you,
making your ear attentive to wisdom and inclining your heart to understanding,
if you indeed cry out for insight and raise your voice for understanding, if you seek
it like silver and search for it as for hidden treasures—then you will understand
the fear of the Lord and find the knowledge of God. For the Lord gives wisdom;
from his mouth come knowledge and understanding; he stores up sound wisdom
for the upright; he is a shield to those who walk blamelessly, guarding the paths
of justice and preserving the way of his faithful ones. Then you will understand
righteousness and justice and equity, every good path, for wisdom will come into
your heart, and knowledge will be pleasant to your soul; prudence will watch over
you, and understanding will guard you.

The congregation remains seated as the choir sings Psalm 133, the source of the University’s motto.

PSALM 133: “Ecce quam bonum” Anglican chant by C. Hylton Stewart
(1884–1932)

Behold how good and pleasant it is, when kindred live together in unity!
It is like fine oil upon the head that runs down upon the beard,
Upon the beard of Aaron, and runs down the collar of his robe.
It is like the dew of Hermon that falls upon the hills of Zion.
For there the Lord has ordained the blessing: life forever more.
Glory be to the Father, and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost:
As it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end. *Amen.*

Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice. Let your gentleness be known to everyone. The Lord is near. Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. And the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus. Finally, beloved, whatever is true, whatever is honourable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is pleasing, whatever is commendable, if there is any excellence and if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things. Keep on doing the things that you have learned and received and heard and seen in me, and the God of peace will be with you.

All stand, as the University Chaplain invites the community to prayer.

Chaplain and People Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy Name, thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Chaplain Almighty and everlasting God, by whose Spirit the whole body of your faithful people is governed and sanctified: Receive our supplications and prayers which we offer before you for all members of your holy Church, that in their vocation and ministry they may truly and devoutly serve you; through our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

The Choir then sings the following Anthem.

ANTHEM: “Jubilate Deo in F” John Ireland
(1879-1962)

- 1 O be joyful in the Lord, all ye lands:
 serve the Lord with gladness,
 and come before his presence with a song.
 - 2 Be ye sure that the Lord he is God:
 it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves;
 we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture.
 - 3 O go your way into his gates with thanksgiving,
 and into his courts with praise:
 be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name.
 - 4 For the Lord is gracious, his mercy is everlasting:
 and his truth endureth from generation to generation.
- Psalm 100

Glory be to the Father, and to the Son:
and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be:
world without end. Amen.

THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF AWARDS AND HONORS
Scott H. Wilson
Provost

A WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF THE CONVOCATION SPEAKER
BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

CONVOCATION ADDRESS
Renia R. Dotson
Chair, Board of Regents

THE ADMISSION TO THE ORDER OF THE GOWN
BY THE VICE-CHANCELLOR

The congregation remains seated as Betsy Baker, president of the Order of the Gown, announces the new members of the Order.

The Vice-Chancellor closes the gowning ceremony with the following:

By virtue of the authority vested in me as the Vice-Chancellor, I declare you members of the Order of the Gown and confer upon you all the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of the Order. Please accept your gowns.

All stand and sing.

ALMA MATER Newton Middleton, C'1909

Al - ma Ma - ter Se - wanee, my glo - rious Mo - ther e - ver be.

5 I will give my all to thee, God bless thee to e - ter - ni - ty.

9 Thou canst make me worth the while, Oh guide and shel - ter me. And

13 All my life, through storm and strife, my star thou'lt be.

All remain standing as the Chaplain closes the Convocation, saying

Let us pray.

ALMIGHTY GOD, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, we thy servants implore Thy blessing upon this University. Give the spirit of Wisdom to all those to whom Thou hast given the authority of teaching and of government. Let the students grow in grace day by day; enlighten their minds, purify their hearts, and sanctify their wills. Bless all who have contributed to this institution; and raise up to the University, we humbly pray Thee, a never-failing succession of benefactors; through our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

The Chaplain then blesses the People.

As the Procession leaves the Chapel, all sing the Sewanee Hymn. The congregation is asked to stay in place until the Procession has left the Chapel.

RETIRING PROCESSION.....*Abbot's Leigh*

God of Light, whose face be - hold - ing, Is - rael's lea - der learn'd thy will,
On the world now grows the us, vi - sion Love of coun - try free - doms call;
For the war - fare train the us, Fa - ther, God of ba - tles, God of might,

9

Fire and storm the rock en - fol - ding, Where the voice was calm and still,
Gage of batt - le, life's de - ci - sion, Faith will see the ob - scure through all,
That no mists of Hell may ga - ther, Dar - ken or the right.

17

Give thy chil - dren on this moun - tain Grace and pow'r thy truth to know;
Clea - rer, sur - er, rings the sto - ry, "Christ our bro - ther, God most High!
Gird our souls with thy com - pas - sion, Purge our minds with fire di vine;

25

O - pen here a li - ving foun - tain, Whence thy praise shall e - ver flow,
Through Earth's va - pors sweeps the glo - ry, Wrong, thy in - jus - tice, sin must die,
Light of Light, the Truth in - car - nate. Make our lives and thoughts like Thine.

The Rt. Rev. Thomas F. Gailor (1856–1935). Cyril V. Taylor (1907–1992).

THE BELLS OF THE UNIVERSITY CARILLON

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CONVOCATION SPEAKER

RENIA DOTSON

Renia Dotson, MD, FACS, MPH, MBA, is Mississippi's state epidemiologist and the first Black woman to hold the position. A board-certified colon and rectal surgeon, she has practiced in Greenville, Mississippi, for over 20 years, and has served as chief of staff, chief of surgery, and regional medical director of trauma at Delta Regional Medical Center.

A native of Monroeville, Alabama, Dr. Dotson graduated from Sewanee in 1988 with a degree in biology. She earned her medical degree from the University of South Alabama College of Medicine and completed her general surgery residency at Boston University and a fellowship in colon and rectal surgery at the Colon and Rectal Clinic at the University of Texas in Houston. She also holds an MPH in healthcare organization and policy and an MBA from the University of Alabama at Birmingham.

Dr. Dotson serves on the Board of Trustees of the Mississippi State Medical Association and the Mississippi State Board of Medical Licensure. She is a fellow of the American College of Surgeons, a member of the American Medical Association, and serves on the advisory board for the Office of Mississippi Physician Workforce. She is chair of the Board of Regents at the University of the South, concluding her term in October 2026.

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ORDER OF THE GOWN

Among Sewanee's many customs, none perhaps is more distinctive than the wearing of the gown by students and faculty. Gowns were originally authorized to be worn by all students in 1871, and the Order of Gownsmen was established in 1873 at the instigation of Chaplain William Porcher DuBose. The students who are members of the Order of Gownsmen have worn the gown as a badge of academic distinction ever since. The Order of Gownsmen (shortened to the Order of the Gown in March 2017) was the original and only form of the student government until the 1960s, when the Delegate Assembly was created. Today, the Order advises the Student Government. It is also uniquely charged with the maintenance and promotion of the spirit, traditions, and ideals of the University.

Hymn at the Procession: "Praise to the Lord the almighty," Hymn 390 from *The Hymnal* 1982. Words: Joachim Neander (1650–1680); tr. *Hymnal* 1940, alt. Copyright © The Church Pension Fund. Music: *Lobe den Herren*, melody from *Erneuerten Gesangbuch*, 1665; harm. *The Chronicle Book for England*, 1863; desc. Craig Seller Lang (1891–1971). Descant, Copyright © 1953, Novello and Company Limited. Used by permission. Reproduced by permission of Church Publishing, CCLI #383702, or One License.net, #541481-L.



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Vice Provost for Academic Affairs and Dean of the College

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Vice Provost and Dean of the School of Theology

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Dean of All Saints' Chapel and University Chaplain

THE REV. LEIGH C. PRESTON, A.B., B.S., M.Div.
Associate University Chaplain

GEOFFREY H. WARD, B.Mus., B.Ed., A.R.C.T., M.Mus., A.R.C.C.O., D.M.A.
University Organist and Choirmaster

DAVID H. W. SHIPPS SR., B.A., M.B.A.
University Marshal



ECCE QUAM BONUM