

January 6, 2022

I hope you enjoyed the holidays and were able to spend some good time during the Christmas break with your soon-to-be graduate. We thought it might be a good time to begin thinking about Commencement Week at Sewanee. Here is some information that we hope will be helpful as you make your plans. We have also set up a Commencement website that will include this information along with any updates. This website link is: <https://new.sewanee.edu/parents-families/commencement/>.

There is a lot of information to share – especially information regarding the ceremony so please review it with your graduate.

**Baccalaureate Service, Commencement Service and Conferring of Degrees:**

**The Baccalaureate service** will take place in All Saints' Chapel on Saturday, May 7 at 10 a.m. Graduates process in and a speaker (to be announced later) addresses the graduates during this service. There are no tickets required for this service and seats are offered on a first-come, first-served basis, until the chapel is filled to capacity. Nearby Guerry Auditorium will be available for overflow seating or for those who prefer to watch the service there. It will be live-streamed and shown on the large screens in the Quad as well.

**The Commencement service** will be held on Sunday, May 8, and will also take place in All Saints' Chapel followed by the **Conferring of Degrees** outside in the Quad. Graduates and members of the faculty will process into the chapel, while ALL other guests will gather on the Quad. No guests will be permitted into All Saints' chapel during the service. Guests will be seated in the Quad and will watch the service on jumbo monitors. The conferring of degrees will immediately follow the service and graduates and faculty members will move outside for that part of the service. (More explanation below)

Both services begin at 10 a.m., and access to seats will open beginning at 9 a.m.

For many of you, this is your first Sewanee Commencement. Others may have had another student graduate or may have attended a previous Commencement on the Mountain. Regardless, we want to make the experience as wonderful as possible. This year, there are over 400 students graduating in May. The faculty participating in the service will add another 100 people. All Saints' Chapel only holds 650 people before adding additional chairs. With the larger graduating class, we can no longer accommodate guests inside All Saints' chapel.

The commencement service will remain the same for the graduates as in previous years – they will line up, process into All Saints' behind the faculty and participate in the service. For the conferring of the degrees, the graduates will leave the chapel and receive their diploma outside on the Quad, (where guests will be seated).

The seats on the Quad will be divided into two sections - priority seating and general admission. Each graduate will receive two tickets for the priority seating for guests (these tickets will be necessary to have in the severe weather plan). Tickets will not be required for the general admission seating. All seats are excellent and you will likely not even sit in the priority seating section (if sunny, they are in direct sunlight!)

**Alternate Viewing Sites for Commencement Service**

There will be enough space for you and your guests to attend the Commencement service on the Quad. For those who prefer NOT to sit in the quad area, there will be another option for those guests. Guerry Auditorium will be available for additional seating. This venue provides excellent visibility via closed-circuit television projected on a jumbo screen monitor. No tickets are needed for this venue.

## **Commencement Party Planning**

To assist families with some of the logistics and event planning details for individual parties, the University offers a variety of venues and service packages. To have an on-campus party, your student must attend one of the two information sessions that will be announced to them very shortly. At these meetings, students will be given specific instructions on registering parties on a first-come, first-served basis.

## **Graduation Announcements**

Graduation announcements are an ideal way to commemorate this special occasion. Announcements are personalized with the graduate's name and degree to be awarded and include an embossed pearlized University seal on the outside cover. Each announcement also includes mailing envelope, inside envelope, and card announcing the Baccalaureate service. If you or your son or daughter is interested in purchasing graduation announcements, you may order them at this website: <https://new.sewanee.edu/parents-families/commencement/commencement-announcements/>. To ensure delivery by April 15, orders should be placed online by March 10, 2022. These are the official University announcements.

## **Baccalaureate Lunch and Commencement Luncheon:**

A Baccalaureate Lunch will be offered after the Baccalaureate service and a Commencement luncheon will follow the Commencement service. We hope you will plan to attend both events. If you choose to order Baccalaureate lunch tickets for your family, you will need to purchase a ticket for your graduate too.

The graduates, their families, and guests are invited to the Commencement luncheon in Burwell Gardens behind All Saints' chapel following Commencement. Each graduate will be provided three (3) complimentary tickets. If there will be more than three in your party (including your graduate) and you plan to attend the luncheon, you will need to purchase additional tickets. Registration for tickets will open later this month.

A Commencement 101 Workshop will be offered next month to explain the details and answer questions. We will send you the information soon. I know there is a lot of info to digest, so we want to try to share the info with you in multiple ways.

Please be aware that the School of Theology Commencement will be held on Friday, May 6. Accordingly, there will be many visitors on the Mountain, and local and nearby accommodations and restaurants will be busy. Therefore, we encourage you to make your arrangements as soon as possible, if you have not already done so.

We are looking forward to sharing this exciting time with you and your family. For further information please call us toll free at 888.867.6884 or visit our Commencement Central website at <https://new.sewanee.edu/parents-families/commencement>.

Best wishes,

Susan Askew, C'86

Associate Vice President of Alumni and Parent Programs