

SPELMAN COLLEGE



Baccalaureate Service

May Seventeenth, Two Thousand Twenty-five
Ten o'clock in the Morning
Georgia International Convention Center
2000 Convention Center Concourse
College Park, Georgia 30337

Dr. Thema Bryant

Dr. Thema Bryant is a psychologist, author, professor, sacred artist, and minister who is leading the way in creating healthy relationships, healing traumas, and overcoming stress and oppression. Dr. Thema Bryant is the author of *Homecoming*, which paints a road map for dismantling fear and shame to live a free and authentic life, *The Antiracism Handbook: Practical Tools to Shift Your Mindset and Uproot Racism in Your Life and Community* and *Reclaim Yourself: The Homecoming Workbook*. Expanding her work, Dr. Thema Bryant partnered with Gwyneth Paltrow's goop on the Audible Original The goop Pursuit: *Coming Home to Yourself*, a four-part audio series taking listeners on an intimate journey of learning and unlearning. Dr. Thema also hosts The Homecoming Podcast, which is dedicated to helping listeners reconnect with themselves and heal from past wounds. In her newly released book, *Matters of the Heart* (2025; Penguin Random House), she empowers readers to connect with themselves and to others, delving into topics such as: control issues, emotional unavailability, practical activation activities, case studies, and teaching how to shift mindset and patterns around romance.

Dr. Thema Bryant completed her doctorate in Clinical Psychology at Duke University and her post-doctoral training at Harvard Medical Center's Victims of Violence Program. Upon graduating, she became the Coordinator of the Princeton University SHARE Program, which provides intervention and prevention programming to combat sexual assault, sexual harassment, and harassment based on sexual orientation. She is currently a tenured professor of psychology in the Graduate School of Education and Psychology at Pepperdine University, where she directs the Culture and Trauma Research Laboratory. Her clinical and research interests center on interpersonal trauma and the societal trauma of oppression. Most recently, she was the 2023 president of the American Psychological Association (APA), the leading scientific and professional organization representing psychology with more than 150,000 members. She is a former president of the Society for the Psychology of Women and a former APA representative to the United Nations. Dr. Thema also served on the APA Committee on International Relations in Psychology and the Committee on Women in Psychology.

Her notable accolades include a 2013 APA award for Distinguished Early Career Contributions to Psychology in the Public Interest. In 2016, the Institute of Violence, Abuse, and Trauma presented her with their media award for the film *Psychology of Human Trafficking*, and in 2018, she received their Donald Fridley Memorial Award for excellence in mentoring in trauma. The California Psychological Association recognized her for Distinguished Scientific Achievement in Psychology in 2015. She is the editor of the APA text, "Multicultural Feminist Therapy: Helping Adolescent Girls of Color to Thrive," and is a foundational scholar on the topic of the trauma of racism. In 2022, the International Division of the APA honored her for her International Contributions to the Study of Gender and Women, recognizing her work in Africa and the Diaspora. Dr. Thema is an ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church and leads the mental health ministry at First A.M.E. Church in Los Angeles. Most recently in 2023, she received the Silverman Lifetime Achievement Award for Social Justice in Psychology.

Dr. Thema has raised public awareness regarding mental health by extending the reach of psychology beyond the academy and private therapy office through community programming and media engagement, including but not limited to Headline News, National Public Radio, CBS, the *Washington Post*, the *LA Times*, and CNN.

Order of Service

Presiding

Dr. Pamela Scott-Johnson, C'82

Provost of Spelman College

PROCESSIONAL

African Drumming

Omelika Kuumba, C'81

and Metropolitan Atlanta African Dancers & Drummers

ORGAN PRELUDE

O God, Our Help in Ages Past

Carleton Palmer

THE OCCASION

Dr. Pamela Scott-Johnson, C'82

HYMN

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Thomas O. Chisholm

Great is Thy faithfulness, O God, Creator, there is no shadow of turning with Thee.
Thou changest not, Thy compassions, they fail not. As Thou hast been, Thou forever will be.

Chorus:

*Great is Thy faithfulness! Great is Thy faithfulness! Morning by morning new mercies I see;
All I have needed Thy hand has provided, Great is Thy faithfulness, God, unto me!*

Summer and winter, and springtime and harvest, sun, moon, and stars in their courses above,
Join with all nature in manifold witness, to Thy great faithfulness, mercy, and love.

Chorus

Pardon for sin and a peace so enduring; Thine own dear presence to cheer and to guide;
Strength for today and bright hope for tomorrow, Blessings all mine with ten thousand beside!

Chorus

INVOCATION

The Reverend Neichelle R. Guidry, Ph.D.

Dean of Sisters Chapel

THE HOLY QUR'AN

Surah Ash - Sharh 94:5-8 & Ali' Imran 3:54

Haniyah S. Hakim, C'2025

An-Nisa Muslim Student Association

THE HEBREW BIBLE

1 Chronicles 28:9-10, 19-21

Kenya Z. Handfield, C'2025

Spelman College Speech and Debate Team

INTERFAITH READING

"Prayer for Humanity" from 'Abdu'l Bahá

Emauni E. Crawley, C'2025

2023-2024 WISDOM Scholar

THE NEW TESTAMENT

Philippians 4:1, 4-8
New International Version

Jedeiah M. Dickerson, C'2025

2024-2025 WISDOM Scholar

WOMANIST HERMENEUTIC

One Day My Soul Just Opened Up
Excerpt from Iyanla Vanzant

Kourtney M. Flowers, C'2025

2022-2024 WISDOM Scholar

& President, Sisters Chapel Student Executive Board

MUSICAL SELECTION

Smile
Kirk Franklin

Spelman College Glee Club

INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER

Provost Scott-Johnson

MINISTRY IN THE ARTS

Sisters Chapel Mime and Liturgical Dance Ministries

BACCALAUREATE SERMON

Dr. Thema Bryant

Psychologist, Minister & Sacred Artist

MUSICAL SELECTION

Order My Steps
Glenn Edward Burleigh

Spelman College Glee Club

BENEDICTION

Dean Guidry

RECESSIONAL

Trumpet Tunes
Hal H. Hopson, D. Johnson, C. Callahan

Joyce F. Johnson, D. Mus.

Reverend Neichelle R. Guidry, Ph.D., Dean of the Chapel
Kevin P. Johnson, D.M.A., Director, Spelman College Glee Club
Joyce F. Johnson, D. Mus., College Organist

The Baccalaureate Service

Custom dictates that there are two graduation ceremonies; Baccalaureate and Commencement. The Baccalaureate service is religious in nature and is held annually on the day before Commencement. It is an occasion for delivering a farewell sermon to the senior class whose members are prepared and qualified to enter the world of graduate and professional school, as well as the world of work. The Baccalaureate service is a reminder that this world is spiritual as well as secular, and that spirituality and faith play critical roles in adding meaning and depth to the human experience.

Spelman College, a historically Black college and global leader in the education of women of African descent, is dedicated to academic excellence in the liberal arts and sciences, and the intellectual, creative, ethical and leadership development of its students. Spelman empowers the whole person to engage the many cultures of the world and inspires a commitment to positive social change. In order to fulfill our mission in the midst of an increasingly multi-faith community, we seek to embrace our common understanding that we are not our own work of art, but are God-created and God-sustained. We, therefore, seek to express in community this understanding in ways that are respectful of our religious differences as well as differences in ability, personal background, ethnicity, age, class and sexual orientation. We welcome all to this Baccalaureate service and hope all will feel included.

Spelman College Commencement Exercises

Sunday, May 18, 2025
Three o'clock in the afternoon

Georgia International Convention Center
2000 Convention Center Concourse
College Park, Georgia 30337

Doors close at 2:00 p.m. Tickets are required.

