

SPELMAN COLLEGE



Baccalaureate Service

May Sixteenth, Two Thousand and Twenty-Six
Ten o'clock in the Morning

The Reverend Gina Marcia Stewart, D.Min.

The Reverend Dr. Gina Marcia Stewart is an accomplished pastor, preacher, visionary leader, teacher, and community advocate with a heart deeply devoted to God and God's people. She has served as the Senior Pastor of Christ Missionary Baptist Church (CMBC) in Memphis, Tennessee since March 1995, becoming the first African American woman to lead an established African American Baptist congregation in the city of Memphis, Tennessee and Shelby County.

Dr. Stewart is a graduate of the University of Memphis (BBA), Trevecca Nazarene College (M.Ed. in Administration and Supervision), Memphis Theological Seminary (M.Div.), and the Interdenominational Theological Center (D.Min.). She also attended the Harvard Divinity School Summer Leadership Institute for Church-Based Community and Economic Development. Currently, Dr. Stewart is a candidate for the Ph.D. in African American Preaching and Sacred Rhetoric at Christian Theological Seminary in Indianapolis, Indiana. She has also received an honorary Doctor of Divinity from the Samuel Dewitt Proctor School of Theology at Virginia Union University.

Dr. Stewart's leadership extends far beyond her local congregation. She served as the immediate past President of the Lott Carey Foreign Missions Society (August 2021-August 2024), the nation's oldest Baptist missionary society whose work is anchored in the theology of justice and equity for all. She serves as Chairwoman of the Religious Affairs Committee for the National Board of the NAACP, a trustee for the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, and a Co-Convener for the Women in Ministry Conference. In addition, Dr. Stewart serves on the advisory board for the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology.

Dr. Stewart is a former board member of the Advisory Board for *The African American Pulpit*, The National Civil Rights Museum, and Bread for the World. Additionally, she is the founder of *Greater Works, Inc.*, a non-profit organization dedicated to philanthropy and ministry development. A member of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Incorporated and the River City (TN) Links, Dr. Stewart has received numerous awards for her contributions to the church, community, and society. Among her accolades are the *Women of Excellence Award for Global Impact* from Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Incorporated, the *Trailblazers Award* from Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc., and the *Visible Portraits of Light Award* (2024).

She was inducted into the Martin Luther King Jr. International Chapel Board of Preachers at Morehouse College in 2018. She was honored to receive the *President's Volunteer Service Award*, presented by President Joseph R. Biden in June 2021. She is also a 2026 recipient of the Faith and Community Impact Award from the YWCA of Memphis. She has honorary Doctorate degrees from Virginia Union University and Wayland Seminary.

Dr. Stewart is also a prolific practitioner-scholar whose sermons have been featured in various respected publications, including *The African American Pulpit*, *What We Love About the Black Church: Can We Get a Witness*, *Audacity of Faith: Christian Leaders Reflect on the Election of Barack Obama*, *Care-full Preaching: From Sermon to Caring Community*, and *Black Practical Theology*. Her work in these publications has made a significant impact on preaching and theological scholarship, reaching diverse audiences and continuing to inspire pastors and church leaders around the world.

Under Dr. Stewart's leadership, CMBC has become a vibrant and compassionate community, committed to proclamation, protest, and practice. Through her vision and dedication, the church has remained a beacon of hope, ensuring that the hungry are fed, the naked are clothed, and the broken are healed by the grace and love of Jesus Christ.

A gifted preacher and teacher, Dr. Stewart travels extensively, leading workshops, preaching revivals, and delivering seminars across the nation and abroad. With her skillful hands and integrity of heart, she continues to inspire others and fortify the souls of the faithful wherever she goes. Dr. Stewart is a woman with a heart for God and God's people.

Order of Service

Rosalind Brewer, C'84
Interim President and Chair Emerita of Spelman College
Presiding

PROCESSIONAL

Omelika Kuumba C'81 and
Metropolitan Atlanta African Dancers & Drummers

ORGAN PRELUDE

Andante Religioso

Alec Rowley

THE OCCASION

President Rosalind Brewer, C'84

HYMN

Joyful, Joyful, We Adore You

Henry Van Dyke

1. Joyful, joyful, we adore You, God of glory, Lord of love;
Hearts unfold like flow'rs before You, Op'ning to the sun above.
Melt the clouds of sin and sadness; Drive the dark of doubt away;
Giver of immortal gladness, Fill us with the light of day!

3. Always giving and forgiving, Ever blessing, ever blest,
Well-spring of the joy of living, Ocean-depth of happy rest!
Loving Creator, God our Maker, Let Your light upon us shine;
Teach us how to love each other, Lift us to the joy divine.

2. All Your works with joy surround You,
Earth and heav'n reflect Your rays,
Stars and angels sing around You, Center of unbroken praise;
Field and forest, vale and mountain, Flow'ry meadow,
flashing sea, Chanting bird and flowing fountain,
Praising You eternally!

4. Mortals, join the mighty chorus, Which the morning stars
began;
God's own love is reigning o'er us, Joining people hand in hand.
Ever singing, march we onward, Victors in the midst of strife;
Joyful music leads us sunward, In the triumph song of life.

INVOCATION

The Reverend Neichelle R. Guidry, Ph.D.
Dean of Sisters Chapel & Director of the WISDOM Center

THE HOLY QUR'AN

Surah Al-Furqan (Chapter 25), Verse 58
Surah Ash-Shu'ara (Chapter 26), Verse 62
Surah Ali 'Imran (Chapter 3), Verse 173

Adji Ndiar Keinde
Spelman Muslim Student Association

THE HEBREW BIBLE

Proverbs 2:1-11
New Revised Standard Version

Taryn V. Slayton
2024-2025 WISDOM Scholar

INTERFAITH READING

No Future Without Forgiveness
Desmond Tutu

Madison J. Conyers
2023-2025 WISDOM Scholar

NEW TESTAMENT

Philippians 1:6
New International Version

Sequoia A. Simmons
2024-2025 WISDOM Scholar

WOMANIST HERMENEUTIC

One Day My Soul Just Opened Up
Iyanla Vanzant

Aniyah G. Pouncy
2025-2026 WISDOM Scholar

MUSICAL SELECTION

My Soul's Been Anchored in the Lord
arr. Moses Hogan

Spelman College Glee Club

INTRODUCTION OF SPEAKER

President Brewer

MINISTRY IN THE ARTS

Movements of Praise Liturgical Dance Ministry of Sisters Chapel

BACCALAUREATE SERMON

The Reverend Gina M. Stewart, D.Min.
Senior Pastor
Christ Missionary Baptist Church
Memphis, TN

MUSICAL SELECTION

You Brought the Sunshine
Elbernita "Twinkie" Clark & The Clark Sisters

Spelman College Glee Club

BENEDICTION

Dean Guidry

RECESSIONAL

March Jubilant
Sortie

G. F. Broadwood
Healey Willan

The Reverend Neichelle R. Guidry, Ph.D., Dean of Sisters Chapel & Director of the WISDOM Center
Ariel A. Alvarado, C'2021, M.M., Interim Director, Spelman College Glee Club
Joyce F. Johnson, D. Mus., Spelman 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 religion and faith play critical roles in adding meaning and depth to the human experience. At Spelman College, the Baccalaureate service honors the spiritual growth that graduates have accomplished during their undergraduate journey.

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. To fulfill our mission amid an increasingly multi-faith community, we seek to embrace our common understanding that each human being is a unique expression of the creativity of God, and is fully known, loved, and embraced as a Child of God. We seek to express 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
Georgia International Convention Center
2000 Convention Center Concourse
College Park, Georgia 30337
Sunday, May 17, 2026
Two-thirty o'clock in the afternoon
(Doors close at 2:30 p.m. Tickets are required.)

