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.
Bishop Yvette A. Flunder

Rev. Dr. Yvette A. Flunder, a native of San Francisco and a third-generation preacher, has dedicated herself to promoting justice and taking prophetic action for over three decades. Her mission to blend proclamation, worship, service and advocacy for marginalized individuals in both the church and society led her to establish the City of Refuge United Church of Christ in 1991. In addition to her remarkable pastoral achievements, Rev. Dr. Flunder is characterized by her unwavering support for the LGBTQ+ community. As a leader and a trailblazer, she has played a pivotal role in advocating for LGBTQ+ rights within religious institutions and society, including her advocacy on the steps of the Supreme Court before the landmark decision granting Marriage Equality in 2015.

In 2003, Rev. Dr. Flunder became the Presiding Bishop of The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries, a coalition comprising primarily African American Christian leaders and laity. Her leadership in this organization has been instrumental in promoting inclusion and acceptance of LGBTQ+ individuals within the African American Christian community. In 2015, she served on the Presidential Advisory Council on HIV/AIDS and was one of five LGBTQIA faith leaders invited to participate in President Joe Biden’s inaugural prayer service in January 2021.

Bishop Flunder’s educational background includes a Certificate of Ministry Studies and a Master of Arts degree from the Pacific School of Religion, as well as a Doctor of Ministry from San Francisco Theological Seminary. In 2022, she was awarded an Honorary Doctorate from Chicago Theological Seminary. In 2024, Bishop Flunder was inducted into the 38th class of the Morehouse College Martin Luther King, Jr. Board of Preachers, Sponsors, and Collegium of Scholars. She is highly regarded in academic circles and serves as a DEMOS class of the Morehouse College Martin Luther King, Jr. Board of Preachers, Sponsors, and Collegium of Scholars. She is highly regarded in academic circles and serves as a DEMOS class of the Morehouse College Martin Luther King, Jr. Board of Preachers, Sponsors, and Collegium of Scholars. She is highly regarded in academic circles and serves as a DEMOS class of the Morehouse College Martin Luther King, Jr. Board of Preachers, Sponsors, and Collegium of Scholars.

Besides her religious leadership roles, Bishop Flunder is an accomplished gospel music artist who has received awards for her work. Her passion for music is a testament to her ability to connect with people on a deeper level and inspire them through her artistry. Bishop Flunder is characterized by her unwavering support for the LGBTQ+ community. As a leader and a trailblazer, she has played a pivotal role in advocating for LGBTQ+ rights within religious institutions and society, including her advocacy on the steps of the Supreme Court before the landmark decision granting Marriage Equality in 2015.

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Bishop Flunder is a proud mother and grandmother, and recently celebrated 40 years of commitment and marriage to her partner in ministry and life - Ms. Shirley A. Miller, a renowned Gospel music artist.
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Spelman College
Commencement Exercises
Sunday, May 19, 2024
Three o’clock in the afternoon
Georgia International Convention Center
2000 Convention Center Concourse
College Park, Georgia 30337

Tickets are required.