

Furman University Baccalaureate Celebration

May 4, 2024

There is something in every one of you that waits, listens for the sound of the genuine in yourself and if you cannot hear it, you will never find whatever it is for which you are searching and if you hear it and then do not follow it, it was better that you had never been born...

You are the only you that has ever lived; your idiom is the only idiom of its kind in all of existence and if you cannot hear the sound of the genuine in you, you will all of your life spend your days on the ends of strings that somebody else pulls...

There is in you something that waits and listens for the sound of the genuine in yourself and sometimes there is so much traffic going on in your minds, so many different kinds of signals, so many vast impulses floating through your organism that go back thousands of generations, long before you were even a thought in the mind of creation, and you are buffeted by these, and in the midst of all of this you have got to find out what your name is. Who are you? How does the sound of the genuine come through to you...

The sound of the genuine is flowing through you. Don't be deceived and thrown off by all the noises that are a part even of your dreams, your ambitions, so that you don't hear the sound of the genuine in you, because that is the only true guide that you will ever have, and if you don't have that you don't have a thing.

You may be famous. You may be whatever the other ideals are which are a part of this generation, but you know you don't have the foggiest notion of who you are, where you are going, what you want. Cultivate the discipline of listening to the sound of the genuine in yourself...

-Excerpt from Howard Thurman's Commencement address at Spelman College on May 4, 1980.

*Prelude

Air from *Water Music* (Suite in F major)

Evening Prayer from *Hansel and Gretel*

Drei kleine stücke

Maestoso alla Marcia

Andante con moto

Allegro grazioso

Brass Quintet

G.F. Handel

Engelbert Humperdinck

Ludwig Mauer

*Processional

"Praise the Source of Faith and Learning"
Setting by Mark E. Britt, Professor of Music

Praise the source of faith and learning who has sparked and stoked the mind with a passion for discerning how the world has been designed. Let the sense of wonder flowing from the wonders we survey keep our faith forever growing and renew our need to pray:

God of wisdom, we acknowledge that our science and our art and the breadth of human knowledge only partial truth impart. Far beyond our calculation lies a depth we cannot sound where your purpose for creation and the pulse of life are found.

May our faith redeem the blinder of believing that our thought has displaced the grounds for wonder which the ancient prophets taught. May our learning curb the error which unthinking faith can breed lest we justify some terror with the antiquated creed.

As two currents in a river fight each other's undertow till converging they deliver one coherent steady flow, may we blend our faith and learning till they carve a single course and our seeking and our yearning join in praising you their source:

Praise for minds to probe the heavens, praise for strength to breathe the air, praise for all the beauty leavens, praise for silence, music, prayer, praise for justice and compassion and for strangers, neighbors, friends, praise for hearts and lips to fashion, praise for love that never ends.

Words of Greeting

Rev. Alexis Carter Thomas
Associate University Chaplain

Recognition of Land Acknowledgment

Chloe Sanderson, '24
VP of Native American and Indigenous Peoples Association

Prayer for the Community

Melanie C. Gordon

Leader: In this place, we seek to be lifelong learners, humbly sharing our deepest truth, and trusting that in so doing, we are paving new roads for tomorrow's servant leaders.

Faculty and Staff: We give thanks that our labor and gifts shape our communities and our world.

Leader: In this place, we have entrusted the ones we love to a difficult and challenging process. We have grown and we have witnessed one another's transformation. It with great love that we honor this special threshold in the lives of our loved ones.

All: We give thanks that our labor and gifts shape our communities and our world.

Leader: In this place, we have challenged our presumptions, exposed our ignorance, reformed our thinking, and re-imagined our world. We have celebrated, mourned, struggled, loved, lost, given, and received.

Graduating Seniors: We give thanks that our labor and gifts shape our communities and our world.

Leader: In this place, we have honored the value of human dignity, we have learned the richness of exchanging ideas, we have heard the yearning within us to serve others, and we have claimed our shared reality as members of the global community.

All: May we go forth from this place bound deeply by our sense of community, by our unified depth of spirit, and by our shared desire to serve the world with gladness. In these moments of remembrance and celebration, may we heed the voice that calls us deeper into our selves, and may we follow with joy and thanksgiving. Amen.

Words of Celebration

Dr. Elizabeth Davis
University President

A Reading in the Jewish Tradition

Miles Rogers, '27

A Reading in the Christian Tradition

President of Furman University Gospel Ensemble

Myla Crosby, '24

Anthem

Precious Lord
arr. Arnold Sevier

Furman University Singers
Stephen Gusukuma, Director

A Reading in the Islamic Tradition

Misbaah Muqri, '24
President of Muslim Student Association

A Reading in the Hindu Tradition

Disha Patel, '25
President of Exploration of Vocation and Ministry

Reflections on Faith

Ruthie Richardson, '24
President of Religious Council

A Reading in the Eastern Orthodox Tradition

Evan Hucke, '24

Baccalaureate Address

Dr. Vaughn CroweTipton
Associate Vice President for Spiritual Life
University Chaplain and Associate Professor of Religion

***Choral Benediction**

God Be in My Head
John Rutter

Furman University Singers
Stephen Gusukuma, Director

***Final Blessing**

Dr. Vaughn CroweTipton

***Postlude**

Gaudeamus Igitur (*De Brevitate Vitae*)
Brass Quintet

Anonymous

*Please rise in body or spirit

Brass Quintet Members

David “Buddy” Deshler - Trumpet, Assistant Professor of Music

Craig King – Trumpet, Furman University, 2001

Ericka Tyner-Grodrian - Horn

Mark E. Britt - Trombone, Professor of Music

John Grodrian – Bass Trombone