

NOVEMBER 2025

OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF SHAW UNIVERSITY DIVINITY SCHOOL



A Message from Dean Harden

*Greetings Shaw Divinity Family,
As we enter the season of Advent, we are reminded of the profound anticipation and preparation for the coming of Christ. Advent is a season of hope, reflection, and renewal — a time to prepare our hearts for the joy and peace that His presence brings. During this sacred season, let us embrace the spirit of giving, community, and worship as we reflect on God's grace in our lives and in the world around us.*

May this Advent season be a time of spiritual growth and meaningful connection for all of us.

*"The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of deep darkness a light has dawned." —
Isaiah 9:2*



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SUDS on the Air with 103.9 The Light



Dr. Telika McCoy



Dr. Miriam Phillips-Stephens



Bishop Joe L. Stevenson



Dr. Seth Klayman



Dean Mark Harden

We are beyond excited to spotlight our ongoing partnership with 103.9 The Light! Every Sunday, the SUDS family takes over the guest DJ segment, bringing powerful ministry insights, soul-stirring music, and uplifting messages straight to the community.

We've been blessed to feature an incredible lineup of guest DJs who have made each broadcast unforgettable, including Dr. Telika McCoy, Dr. Miriam Phillips-Stephens, Bishop Joe L. Stevenson, Dr. Seth Klayman, and our very own Dean Mark Harden. Each brought their unique energy, perspective, and passion, helping amplify our mission and connect with listeners in meaningful ways.

Don't miss a beat — tune in and catch our daily commercials on 103.9 The Light! It's a fantastic way to stay connected, share the incredible work happening at Shaw Divinity, and celebrate the voices and vision of our extended SUDS family. We are truly grateful for this platform to inspire, engage, and showcase the heart of our ministry.

***Stay tuned for
upcoming Sundays,
where even more
guest DJs will join us
to share their
insights, music, and
messages — you
won't want to miss it!***

***Every Sunday
5 - 7 pm***

SHAW UNIVERSITY FOUNDERS DAY 2025

Honoring a Legacy of Faith, Scholarship, and Service

The spirit of Shaw Divinity was deeply felt during Shaw University's Founders Day Celebration. Our faculty and leaders proudly represented the Divinity School, standing as living examples of our continued commitment to excellence in ministry and education.

Featured in this celebration:

Dr. Annie Tinsley – Assistant Dean and Assistant Professor of New Testament Studies

Dr. Sandra Coley – Assistant Professor of Christian Education, pictured with **Dr. Seth Klayman** – Assistant Professor of Biblical Studies and Student Services Coordinator

Dr. Telika McCoy – Director, Nurturing Children and Youth for the Future (NCYF) Program and Assistant Professor of Practical Theology, pictured with Dr. Annie Tinsley

Beneath this section is a special highlight of **Dean Mark Harden**, whose leadership continues to inspire the Divinity community to live out Shaw's mission of ***Pro Christo et Humanitate — For Christ and Humanity.***



Pre-Minister's Conference Advent Celebration – December 6th

We are incredibly excited to invite you to this year's Advent Celebration, held in conjunction with our Pre-Minister's Conference! This special day will be filled with fellowship, inspiration, and worship as we come together to reflect on the spirit of Advent and the powerful work happening within our community.

This year's celebration will unfold across two meaningful parts — each designed to connect, uplift, and renew your spirit:

Alumni Celebration Luncheon



Time: 11:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.



**Location: The Red Bird Event Space –
Residence Inn, Downtown Raleigh
616 S. Salisbury St., Raleigh, NC 27601**

The Pre-Conference Advent Celebration Luncheon will begin the day, themed around the four weeks of Advent — Hope, Peace, Faith, and Love. During this special gathering, Shaw Divinity alumni will share brief reflections on each of these meaningful themes, helping us center our hearts on the true message of the season. This luncheon will be a time to reconnect with classmates, celebrate the impact of our alumni in ministry and service, and be reminded of the enduring strength of our Shaw Divinity community.

Following the luncheon, we will move into the Advent Worship & Celebration, led by Dr. Telika McCoy, Ph.D., Director of Nurturing Children and Youth for the Future. Prepare to be inspired by powerful preaching, heartfelt music, and a joyful worship experience that captures the essence of Advent — hope, peace, joy, and love.



We can't wait to celebrate this memorable day with you! Come ready to connect, worship, and rejoice as we prepare our hearts and spirits for the Advent season together.

Celebrating Our Endowment Goal: \$50,000

Thanks to the incredible support of our community, we have reached our \$50k Endowment Goal! This milestone ensures that the Divinity School continues to provide exceptional programs, resources, and opportunities for our students.

We still encourage giving today to strengthen our future and maintain momentum.



Two ways to give:

Online Giving:
Donate securely via shawu.edu/giving/

Please designate your gift to "Shaw University Divinity School" to ensure proper allocation.

By Mail:
Make checks payable to Shaw University
Divinity School and mail to:
Shaw University Divinity School
816 S. Wilmington Street
Raleigh, NC 27601

***Every contribution continues
to shape the next generation
of ministers, leaders, and
changemakers.***



Calling All Shaw Divinity Alumni

Alumni — your voice, your experience, and your presence are essential to the continued growth and success of SUDS! Staying connected allows us to celebrate your achievements, mentor current students, and strengthen the bonds that make our alumni network so powerful. Your involvement ensures that our community thrives, our programs remain vibrant, and our shared mission continues to impact lives.

We are especially excited to invite you to be part of our Alumni-Focused Advent Luncheon, happening December 6th. This event is designed to bring together graduates, faculty, and students to celebrate faith, fellowship, and the work of our Divinity School. Your participation is crucial — your ideas, testimonies, and energy will help make this celebration truly memorable. Together, we can create an event that inspires, uplifts, and showcases the strength of our alumni network.



Alumni Spotlight: Dr. Sandra G. Coley

We are thrilled to announce **Dr. Sandra G. Coley** as our official SUDS Alumni Liaison! With over a decade of service as an Adjunct Professor at Shaw Divinity, Dr. Coley brings unmatched passion, mentorship, and connection to our alumni community. She is your primary contact for getting involved, sharing ideas, and participating in alumni events — including the Advent Luncheon.

Reach out to Dr. Coley at: scoley@shawu.edu — and join us in making this December celebration a true success!

Honoring Rev. Dr. Lafayette Maxwell — 46 Years of Faithful Service

For more than four decades, Rev. Dr. Lafayette Maxwell has been a pillar of faith, scholarship, and community service. His work has shaped Shaw University Divinity School and beyond. As Pastor of Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Apex, North Carolina, since 1979, Dr. Maxwell has faithfully shepherded his congregation with wisdom, compassion, and a steadfast devotion to Christ. His journey of academic excellence—from earning his Bachelor of Science at the University of Florida to completing his Doctor of Ministry at Virginia Union's Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology—reflects both his intellectual rigor and his commitment to lifelong learning.



Dr. Maxwell's impact at Shaw University Divinity School has been nothing short of transformative. As an Adjunct Professor for both the Divinity School and the Department of Religion and Philosophy, he has inspired generations of ministers and scholars through his teaching, mentorship, and leadership. His work with the Black Church Leadership Academy, a partnership between Shaw University, the Lilly Foundation, and the General Baptist State Convention, has further extended his reach—equipping leaders across North Carolina to strengthen their ministries and communities. A former recipient of the Distinguished Teacher of the Year Award, Dr. Maxwell embodies the very essence of servant leadership, blending academic excellence with spiritual depth and unwavering dedication.

Beyond the classroom, Dr. Maxwell's ministry stretches across continents—from empowering young people in Durham to sponsoring educational initiatives for students in Rwanda through Africa New Life Ministries. His voice continues to uplift and inspire as a lecturer, missionary, and advocate for social and spiritual transformation. As we celebrate his 46 years of service, we honor not only his achievements but the profound legacy he leaves in every student he's taught, every sermon he's preached, and every life he's touched. Dr. Maxwell stands as a shining example of what it means to live For Christ and Humanity—a true reflection of the heart and mission of Shaw University Divinity School.



“His master replied, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master’s happiness.’”

— Matthew 25:21 (NIV)