

— The May Issue 2026 —

Shaw University Divinity School

Closing the Academic Year in Faith, Celebration, and Gratitude



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A Message from the Dean

Dear Shaw University Divinity School Community,

As we close the academic year, I extend gratitude for all that has been accomplished through the dedication of our students, faculty, staff, and partners.

This year has been marked by growth, faithful learning, and meaningful preparation for ministry. We especially celebrate the Class of 2026 for their perseverance and commitment to their calling.

As we move into the summer season, let us remain prayerful and expectant for all that God continues to do through Shaw Divinity.

Thank you for your continued support of our mission.

Grace and peace,
Dr. Mark G. Harden
Dean, Shaw University Divinity School

Baccalaureate Service: Honoring the Class of 2026

Shaw University Divinity School joyfully celebrated and honored the Class of 2026 during our annual Baccalaureate Service held on May 8, 2026, at Thomas J. Boyd Chapel.

This sacred service reflected the heart of our mission—centering faith, scholarship, and spiritual formation as we prepare students for ministry and leadership.

“The Lord bless thee, and keep thee: The Lord make his face shine upon thee, and be gracious unto thee: The Lord lift up his countenance upon thee, and give thee peace.”

— Numbers 6:24–26



The service featured meaningful worship moments, including:

- A reverent Call to Worship by Dr. Mark G. Harden, Dean of the Divinity School.
- A heartfelt Hymn of Praise, “Blessed Assurance,” by Mrs. Quienn Surgeon-Witcher, Master of Divinity.
- A stirring Litany in Praise of Wisdom by Martha Evans, Master of Arts in Theology and Ministry.

Surrounded by loved ones, the atmosphere was one of gratitude and celebration, highlighting that theological education encompasses both academic training and spiritual formation. The service showcased the commitment and spiritual depth of the graduating class as they prepare for ministry and leadership, equipped with knowledge and a strong faith.



Caption (Left to Right):

Martha Evans (Master of Arts in Theology and Ministry); Dr. Paulette R. Dillard, President of Shaw University; Dr. Mark G. Harden, Dean of Shaw University Divinity School; Reverend Dr. Darian C. Bouie, Senior Pastor, First Baptist Church, Raleigh, NC; Mr. Cameron Kelly; and Mrs. Quienn Surgeon-Witcher (Master of Divinity candidate, Class of 2026).

Shaw University Commencement: A Legacy of Excellence

Held on May 9, 2026, at the Raleigh Convention Center, the commencement ceremony of Shaw University was a powerful celebration of academic achievement, resilience, and purpose. Graduates from across disciplines were honored for their perseverance, discipline, and commitment to excellence, marking the culmination of years of hard work and preparation.

For Shaw University Divinity School graduates, this moment carried an even deeper significance. Beyond academic completion, it represented a sacred commissioning into ministry, theological reflection, and servant leadership. These graduates now move forward equipped to serve churches, communities, and the world with both intellectual preparation and spiritual grounding.

As caps were turned and degrees were conferred, the ceremony reflected Shaw University's enduring legacy of excellence—rooted in faith, strengthened by scholarship, and committed to impact. We extend our heartfelt congratulations to the Class of 2026 as they step boldly into their next chapter of leadership and service.

*"You have made us for
Yourself, O Lord, and our
hearts are restless until they
rest in You."
— St. Augustine,
Confessions*



From left to right: Dr. Seth Klayman, Dr. Annie Tinsley, Rev. Dr. Tiffany Bennett-Cornelous, Dr. Joe Stevenson, and Dr. Madeline McClenney-Roseboro are distinguished faculty members whose scholarship and service shape the institution's mission and academic life.

Day of Giving: Thank You & Continued Support



We extend our deepest and most sincere gratitude to everyone who supported Shaw University during our Day of Giving on May 1st. Your generosity is not simply a financial contribution—it is an investment in purpose, in calling, and in the future of theological education. Because of you, the mission of Shaw University Divinity School continues to grow stronger, reaching further, and impacting lives in meaningful and lasting ways.

Through your support, students are being equipped, mentored, and prepared to serve as pastors, scholars, chaplains, educators, and faith leaders across the globe. Every gift helps shape classrooms, strengthen academic resources, expand ministry preparation, and ensure that our students are fully supported as they pursue their divine calling. In a very real sense, you are helping to change lives—one student, one calling, and one ministry at a time.

While the Day of Giving has officially concluded, the opportunity to make an impact remains open. The work continues, and so does the need. We invite you to continue partnering with us in this mission by giving today. Your support ensures that Shaw Divinity remains a place where faith is formed, leadership is developed, and futures are transformed.



Your support bolsters Shaw University Divinity School's mission, preparing future faith leaders. Every contribution significantly impacts students, programs, and communities. Please scan the QR code or visit <https://www.shawu.edu/giving/> to donate, designating your gift to “Divinity School.”

Closing Reflection

As we conclude the academic year, Shaw University Divinity School offers heartfelt gratitude for a season marked by spiritual growth, meaningful worship, academic achievement, and impactful community engagement. We have witnessed God's faithfulness throughout every lecture, chapel service, student milestone, and moment of ministry formation.

As we transition into the summer season, we do so with expectation and renewed vision for the year ahead. We remain steadfast in our commitment to forming faithful, theologically grounded, and socially engaged leaders who are equipped to serve the Church and the world with excellence, integrity, and compassion.

We look forward with anticipation to the new academic year and all that God continues to do through Shaw University Divinity School.

Grace and peace,
Shaw University Divinity School

“Faith does not make things easy, it makes them possible.” — Luke 1:37

