



Emerging Unafraid:

Living Out the Courage
of Our Compassion

PACIFIC
SCHOOL OF
RELIGION

2024

157th Commencement



PACIFIC
SCHOOL OF
RELIGION



2024

157th

*Commencement
Ceremony*

May 19, 2024 | 4:00pm PT

First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley

2407 Dana St. Berkeley, CA 94704

Founded in 1866, Pacific School of Religion (PSR) is a progressive Christian seminary, graduate school, and center for leadership development and social impact. PSR transforms individuals and communities through a flexible, stackable curriculum and a collaborative, lifelong learning ecosystem powered by diversity.

PSR offers multiple options for anyone looking to build spiritually grounded leadership skills; or learn from wisdom-based traditions. In addition to PSR's doctoral, masters, and certificate programs we also offer courses through the Ignite Institute and our Theological Education for Leadership (TEL) program. PSR is also home to the Center for LGBTQ and Gender Studies in Religion (CLGS), the first seminary-based LGBTQ+ Center and the Badè Museum of Biblical Archaeology.

Mission

Pacific School of Religion prepares a diverse cadre of spiritually rooted leaders with the vision, resilience, and skill to create a world where all can thrive.

Purpose

Grounded in the rigorous study and faithful practice of progressive Christian faith, PSR partners with students of all backgrounds to deepen their spirituality and enhance their capacity to lead in transformative ways. Connected to a broad network of religious, educational, not-for-profit, and private sector organizations—with a particular commitment to the wisdom of historically marginalized communities—PSR offers an education that is marked by innovation, reflection, and excellence.

Unafraid Since 1866

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Our Legacy



Church ordains homosexual as minister in California

By REV. LESTER KENSMOUTH
Special to the Houston Post
SAN CARLOS, Calif. — Rev. Bill Johnson, a former president of Houston's Christian Youth Center — and the first of a major denomination — were ordained in the ministry of the United Church of Christ Sunday night in this suburb of San Francisco.

In the afternoon prior to the service, Johnson said he had open conversations which led to his decision to be ordained. He said he had been a member of the church since 1969, and a member of the youth group since 1970. He said he had been a member of the youth group since 1970, and a member of the youth group since 1970.

The service was presided by the Rev. James Clark Brown, pastor of the First Congregational Church of San Francisco and a leading supporter of Johnson in his application for ordination.

The Rev. Mr. Brown, whose own congregation was not in broad contact over the ordination, presided on the left.

"The Ministry in which God has called me" — he said — "is the congregation of 17 clergy and 100 members from 12 San Francisco Bay Area churches."

"God is not primarily concerned with whether you are a man or a woman, but whether you are a person. This is the difference between man-made and the divine religion. God is a person and completely dedicated to his own service of God. It took a lot of courage, but I was in the right place. There is a need and a mission for men and women."

The denomination's traditional ordination service also featured "a dramatic script" performed by Cecily Zillmer and Linda Cross of the San Carlos Church's Youth Group.

The ordination's mother, Mrs. Gladys Johnson of Houston, was present at the ceremony, as was his brother, Wayne, a Houston advertising man, who was formerly a commercial artist for the Houston Post.

Mr. Johnson, a member who is a member of Houston's First Evangelical



Rev. Johnson during parade. —AP Wirephoto



1866

Enfranchised Chinese Immigrants Ahead of the Exclusion Act

1895

Enrolled Women During the Heart of Suffrage

1942

Opposed Japanese Internment During WWII

1950

Georgia Harkness becomes First Female Full Professor of Theology at a U.S. Protestant Seminary

1959

Combined Civil Rights Activism & Scholarship

1966

Marched for Farmworkers' Rights

1969

Protested the War in Vietnam

1972

Alumnx Bill Johnson Becomes First Openly Gay Man Ordained in a Mainline Denomination (UCC)

1997

Protested Nuclear Proliferation at the United Nations

2000

Founded the Center for LGBTQ & Gender Studies in Religion (CLGS), The First Seminary-Based LGBTQ Center

2001

Founded the Institute for Leadership Development & Study of Pacific & Asian North American Religion (PANA)

2015

Protested in Support of Black Lives Matter

2016

Stood with Standing Rock

2017

Protested the Militarization of the Police

2020

Included Anti-Racism and Queer Theory into Every Aspect of our Curriculum

2021

Renewed our Commitment to an Emerging Generation of Students of Color

Acknowledgements

Commencement Coordinators

Today's commencement coordinators are Rev. Ann Jefferson, Director of Community Life and Spiritual Care; Janett Cabanero, Associate Dean for Academic Affairs and Registrar; Janneth Orozco, Assistant Registrar and Membership Manager; Laura Rhine, Administrative Coordinator for Academic Affairs; Rev. Tana Roseboro-Marsh, MDiv. '18, Program Coordinator for the Theological Education for Leadership (TEL) Program; Hallie Fryd, Director of Communications and Breana Trejo-Quibelan, Webmaster and Graphic Designer. The Faculty Marshal is Rev. Dr. Jim Lawrence, Director, Doctor of Ministry Program and Faculty Associate in Spirituality.

Gratitude

We extend our deepest gratitude to our Commencement speaker, Rev. Dr. John H. Vaughn, MDiv '85 for his presence and inspiring words and for his ongoing service as a member of our PSR Board of Trustees.

We are thankful for the invaluable contributions of our special guests and staff members: Minister Valerie Joi Fiddmont, guest music director and accompanist, and all who volunteered to sing in today's Commencement Ensemble; Hallie Fryd, Director of Communications and Breana Trejo-Quibelan, PSR Webmaster and Graphic Designer who produced this year's program; Alex Roman and Marco Gonzalez, PSR Mechanical and Facilities Technicians, and Office of Community Life Student Workers: Manuel Falcon Padua and Isa'ako Moeone for their coordination of student volunteers.

Unless otherwise noted, all worship participants and those who submitted video statements are candidates for certificates and degrees today. The PSR banner is carried by Kenneth Watson.



We also extend our most profound appreciation to Rev. Charlene Han Powell, Senior Pastor, and the membership of First Presbyterian Church of Berkeley for the use of their church for today's celebration. We are particularly grateful for the collaborative support of Michele Lebrun, Hospitality Coordinator and Ralph Anderson, Director of Facilities and Safety, Devin Crane, Media and Communications Coordinator and Kay Wolff who provided our beautiful pulpit floral arrangements. We are equally grateful for Douglas Latimer and the team at Big Lake Productions for their collaboration in the hybrid production and live streaming of our 2024 Commencement ceremony. Finally, we extend our gratitude to the Office of the President for the President's Reception provided by Market Hall Catering.

Rev. John H. Vaughn, MDiv '85, DMin

Executive Pastor of Ebenezer Baptist Church (Atlanta, GA)



Rev. Dr. John Vaughn is an ordained minister in the American Baptist Churches currently serving as the Executive Pastor of the historic Ebenezer Baptist Church in Atlanta, Georgia. He works closely with the Church's Senior Pastor, and U.S. Senator, Rev. Dr. Raphael G. Warnock in managing the overall vision, ministries, and operations of this iconic, international congregation. Known as America's Freedom Church and the spiritual home of the Rev. Martin Luther King Sr. and Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, Ebenezer remains at the forefront of the fight for social justice and community transformation.

Previously, Rev. Vaughn served for almost ten years as the Executive Vice President at Auburn Theological Seminary. He has also served as the Program Director for the Twenty-First Century Foundation based in Harlem, New York, a national foundation that advanced strategic giving for Black community change, and as Executive Director of the Peace Development Fund, which provides funding, training and assistance for grassroots peace and justice community organizing.

From 1996 to 2000, Rev. Vaughn served as the Minister for Education and Social Justice at the historic Riverside Church in New York City where fellow PSR alumna, Adrienne Thorne (MDiv '08) is currently Senior Minister. His responsibilities included overseeing the Church's ministries with children, youth, young adults, adult education, social justice, social services and small grants. He has also served as the Director for Community Development at the Community Training and Assistance Center (CTAC) in Boston, Mass; The executive director of East Harlem Interfaith in New York City; The Action Assistant at The Riverside Church, and the Assistant Minister at the Hamilton United Methodist Church in San Francisco, Ca.

In addition to a Master of Divinity from PSR, Rev. Vaughn received his undergraduate degree from Holy Cross College in Worcester, Mass, and a Doctor of Ministry from Drew Theological School. He is married to the Rev. Dr. P. Kimberleigh Jordan, an ordained minister in the United Church of Christ. Together, they are the proud parents of two sons - James and Caleb.

Past Commencement Speakers

2023 Rev. Dr. Mahsea Evans, MDiv '13, MTS '15
Lead Pastor of First United Methodist (Sacramento)

2022 Rev. Marvin K. White
Minister of Celebration at Glide Memorial Church (San Francisco)

2021 Kazu Haga
Founder and Coordinator of East Point Peace Academy (Oakland)

2020 Rev. Kamal Hassan, MDiv
Campus Pastor and Adjunct Professor at Pacific School of Religion (Berkeley); Pastor/Teaching Elder at Sojourner Truth Presbyterian Church (Richmond)

Grace Gilliam, MTS '10
Associate Director of Community Engaged Learning, Pacific School of Religion (Berkeley)

2019 Jeff Chang
Writer and Cultural Organizer

Candidates for Degrees

Certificate in Theological Education for Leadership

Rebecca Choi	Stanley Zirkle Puaa
Patricia Ann Dunham	Linda Riggi
Rev. Dr. Kimberly Fong	Reinalda Gonzalez Vazquez
Robert M. Hill	Min. Rusty Watson
Denise Newman	Patricia Woods
Reginald Louis Nichols	

Certificate of Theological Studies

D.L. Lopez

Certificate of Sexuality and Religion

Bobby Marchessault
The Reverend Dr. Daniel Rodriguez Schlorff

Certificate of Spirituality and Social Change

Janice Marie Beard-Wilcher	Maurice "Mo" King
Melvin Lorey Cobb	Beth Pfeiffer
Chaséte Lattice Harper	Jessie (Jay) Ratcliff
Kizmath Loanna Germaine Hemingway	Jules Sherman
Sanghyeon Samuel Jin	Kenneth D. Watson

Master of Arts in Social Transformation

Janice Marie Beard-Wilcher	Maurice "Mo" King
Melvin Lorey Cobb	Beth Pfeiffer
Chaséte Lattice Harper	Jessie (Jay) Ratcliff
Kizmath Loanna Germaine Hemingway	Jules Sherman
Sanghyeon Samuel Jin	Kenneth D. Watson

Master of Divinity

Melvin Lorey Cobb	Beth Pfeiffer
Chaséte Lattice Harper	Jessie (Jay) Ratcliff
Kizmath Loanna Germaine Hemingway	Christiane Swartz
Sanghyeon Samuel Jin	Kenneth D. Watson

Doctor of Ministry

Vincent Arishvara

"Living Christian Spirituality by Means of Making Art: Inspiration from Vincent Van Gogh's Life and Art"

Erin Edwards

"Marginal Voices, Redemptive Practices: Reimagining the Church"

Elizabeth Alyce English, OSB

"All in the Family: Evolving Diversity of Catholic Denominations"

Siona Falevai

"Tonga Traditional Dancing and Music: An Addition to the Future of the Tongan Church Life"

Andrew Edward Finch

"Do Black Lives Really Matter in the United Methodist Church?"

Lee King

"Blending Biblical Truths with Behavioral Health Practices"

Tera Dawn Landers

"Nature's Rhythms Reflected in Our Spirits: A Seasonal Liturgical Cycle in Unitarian Universalism"

Robert Wright Lee IV

"The Impact of Theology on Two United States Presidencies"

Rabbah Rona Matlow

"Saving Trans Lives: A Holy Obligation"

Geoffrey Smartt

"Trails of Trauma: A Gospel Response to Prison Ministry and the Challenge of Recidivism"

Sarah TevisTownes

"Disorganized Religion: Digital Ministry as Decolonial Praxis"

Miche Ilana Van Essen

"Resonant Leadership and the Case for a Hybrid MDiv/MBA"

Brian Wise

"Roots, Rock, Reggae, Zion: The Story of I, Teach, and Rastafari"

Emerging Unafraid: Living Out the Courage of Our Compassion

Emerging

Prelude "Day of Grace"
Min. Valerie Joi Fiddmont

Processional "Every Step of the Way"
Christopher Grundy

Land & Ancestor Acknowledgement Kizmath Loanna Germaine Hemingway

Gathering Words Sanghyeon Jin & Tera Dawn Landers

One: When the day of Pentecost came, the waiting ones were all together in one place.

One: *And on this day of Pentecost 2024 we are all gathered in this one place.*

ALL: Come, Holy Spirit, come and fall afresh on us.

One: Suddenly a sound like the blowing of a violent wind came from heaven and filled the whole house where they were sitting -

One: *Today we hear and feel the stirring winds of our histories, communities, and change swirling about us even as we are poised to emerge from this place of learning and spiritual formation.*

ALL: Come, Holy Spirit, stir us anew to move by your spirit.

One: Then what appeared to be tongues of fire separated and rested on each of them. All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other languages as the Spirit enabled them.

One: *Today we accept the power to speak in new ways so that all may hear the good news of God's radical welcome into beloved and transformative Kin-dom and kinship.*

ALL: Come, Holy Spirit, fill us with your divine love and justice and grant us courage to speak in truth and power.

One: As we worship today, we offer our gratitude for all the journeys and all the people that have brought us to this momentous occasion.

One: *And we offer our minds, our souls, and our bodies to be renewed in your Presence and in the presence of all those gathered here.*

ALL: *Come, Holy Spirit - we await you with joy and expectation. Blow, Holy Spirit, blow and ignite the flame of our compassion that we may indeed build a world where all can thrive.*

Gathering Hymn "O, For a World"

Miriam Therese Winter, words
Carl Gotthelf Gläser, music 1828

1. O for a world where ev - ery - one re -
2. O for a world where goods are shared and
3. We wel - come one world fam - i - ly and
4. The poor are rich, the weak are strong, the
5. O for a world pre - par - ing for God's

1. spect each oth - er's ways, where love is lived and
2. mis - er - y re - lieved, where truth is spo - ken,
3. strug - gle with each choice that o - pens us to
4. fool - ish ones are wise. Tell all who mourn; out -
5. glo - rious reign of peace, where time and tears will

1. all is done with jus - tice and with praise.
2. chil - dren spared, e - qual - i - ty a - chieved.
3. u - ni - ty and gives our vi - sion voice.
4. casts be - long, who per - ish - es will rise.
5. be no more, and all but love will cease.

Welcome Greetings *Rev. Dr. David Vásquez-Levy*
President, Pacific School of Religion

Dr. Uriah Kim
President, Graduate Theological Union

Unafraid

Graduating Student Videos

Response in Song "We Were Made for These Times"
Linda Noonan (stanzas 1 & 2)

*We were made for these times,
We were made for these times
and like gold we'll keep on shining -
We were made for these times*

*We will hope in these times,
We will hope in these times
and like gold we'll keep on shining
We will hope in these times*

Reading "The Blessing of Courage" by Jan Richardson
*Denise Newman, Mel Cobb, Patricia Woods,
Vincent Arishvara & Miche Ilana Van Essen*

Response in Song "We Were Made for These Times"
(stanzas 3 & 4)

*We will sing in these times,
We will sing in these times
and like gold we'll keep on shining -
We will sing in these times*

*We will work in these times,
We will work in these times
and like gold we'll keep on shining
We will hope in these times*

Graduating Student Videos

Response in Song "We Were Made for These Times"
(stanzas 5 & 1)

*We will rise in these times,
We will rise in these times
and like gold we'll keep on shining -
We will rise in these times*

*We were made for these times,
We were made for these times
and like gold we'll keep on shining
We were made for these times*

Scripture Reading Robert Wright Lee IV & Erin Edwards
Numbers 13: 30 - 33, 14: 5 - 10

30 But Caleb quieted the people before Moses and said, "Let us go up at once and occupy it, for we are well able to overcome it." 31 Then the men who had gone up with him said, "We are not able to go up against this people, for they are stronger than we." 32 So they brought to the Israelites an unfavorable report of the land that they had spied out, saying, "The land that we have gone through as spies is a land that devours its inhabitants, and all the people that we saw in it are of great size. 33 There we saw the Nephilim (the Anakites come from the Nephilim), and to ourselves we seemed like grasshoppers, and so we seemed to them." ...

5 Then Moses and Aaron fell on their faces before all the assembly of the congregation of the Israelites. 6 And Joshua son of Nun and Caleb son of Jephunneh, who were among those who had spied out the land, tore their clothes 7 and said to all the congregation of the Israelites, "The land that we went through as spies is an exceedingly good land. 8 If the Lord is pleased with us, he will bring us into this land and give it to us, a land that flows with milk and honey. 9 Only, do not rebel against the Lord, and do not fear the people of the land, for they are no more than bread for us; their protection is removed from them, and the Lord is with us; do not fear them." 10 But the whole congregation threatened to stone them.

Then the glory of the Lord appeared at the tent of meeting to all the Israelites.

Introduction of Speaker Maurice "Mo" King

Anthem "Guide My Feet" Avis Graves, arr.
Commencement Ensemble

Message Rev. Dr. John H. Vaughn
Executive Pastor, Ebenezer Baptist Church (Atlanta, GA)

Response in Song "The Summons"

Chords: F, C7, Dm

1. Will you come and fol - low me if
 2. Will you leave your - self be - hind if
 3. Will you let the blind - ed see if
 4. Will you love the "you" you hide if
 5. Lord, your sum - mons ech - oes true when

Chords: Dm, Gm7, Gm7, Csus, C

I but call your name? _____ Will you
 I but call your name? _____ Will you
 I but call your name? _____ Will you
 I but call your name? _____ Will you
 you but call my name. _____ Let me

Chords: F, C7, Dm, Dm, Gm7

go where you don't know and nev - er be
 care for cruel and kind and nev - er be
 set the pris - oners free and nev - er be
 quell the fear in - side and nev - er be
 turn and fol - low you and nev - er be

WORDS: John Bell
 MUSIC: Traditional Scottish; arr. by John Bell
 Words © 1987 and arr. © 1995 WGRG The Iona Community (Scotland), admin. by GIA Publications, Inc.

KELVINGROVE
 13 13 77 13

C7 F F Gm7 Gm7

the same? Will you let my love be
the same? Will you risk the hos - tile
the same? Will you kiss the lep - er
the same? Will you use the faith you've
the same. In your com - pa - ny I'll

Bb Bb Am7 Bb

shown, will you let my name be
stare should your life at - tract or
clean, and do such this un -
found to re - shape the world a -
go where your love and foot - steps

Csus C F C7

known, will you let my life be
scare? Will you let me an - swer
seen, and ad - mit to what I
round, through my sight and touch and
show. Thus I'll move and live and

Dm Dm Gm7 C7 F F

grown in you and you in me?
prayer in you and you in me?
mean in you and you in me?
sound in you and you in me?
grow in you and you in me.

Prayer for the Graduates Eun Hye Grace So
Assistant Professor of New Testament & Rhetorical Studies

Living Out the Courage of Our Compassion

Presentation of Class Gift Beth Pfeiffer
Recipients: PSR Student Emergency Fund & the Sogorea Te Land Trust

Acknowledgment of Student Awards Dr. Bernie Schlager
*Associate Professor of Historical & Cultural Studies,
Executive Director, Center for LGBTQ & Gender Studies in Religion*

Presentation of Candidates & Conferring of Degrees Dr. Bernie Schlager
*Associate Professor of Historical & Cultural Studies,
Executive Director, Center for LGBTQ & Gender Studies in Religion*

*Rev. Dr. David Vásquez-Levy
President, Pacific School of Religion*

Valedictory Charge Dr. Alexandra Rosado-Román
Assistant Professor of Gender Studies & Caribbean Decolonial Ethics

PSR Alumnx Council Greeting Rev. Florentino Cordova
President, PSR Alumnx Council

Closing of the Academic Year Dr. Sandra Nathan
Chair, PSR Board of Trustees

Song of Sending "If You Believe and I Believe"
Traditional Zimbabwe, John L. Bell, arr.

*Moderato
a cappella*

The musical score is written for voice and guitar. It consists of four systems of music. Each system has a vocal line on a treble clef staff and a guitar line on a bass clef staff. The key signature is one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 8/8. Chord symbols are placed above the notes in the guitar line. The lyrics are written below the vocal line.

1 G C D7 G C D7 G
If you be - lieve and I be - lieve and we to - geth - er pray,

5 G C D7 G C D7 G
the Ho - ly Spir - it must come down and set God's peo - ple free,

9 G G Am D Au G/D
and set God's peo - ple free, and set God's peo - ple free;

13 G C D7 G C D7 G
the Ho - ly Spir - it must come down and set God's peo - ple free.

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Benediction *Rev. Dr. John H. Vaughn*
Executive Pastor, Ebenezer Baptist Church (Atlanta, GA)

Recessional *Min. Valerie Joi Fiddmont*

**Please join us immediately following the ceremony
for a President's Reception in the plaza outside the
sanctuary entrance doors**





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