

Multireligious Commencement Service for the

CLASS OF 2023



THE DIVINITY SCHOOL

HARVARD UNIVERSITY

MAY 24, 2023

3:30PM

*Please remember to turn off all personal communication devices
and refrain from any flash photography during the service*

Welcome to this multireligious service of prayer, meditation, and worship in thanksgiving for and with the Harvard Divinity School Class of 2023. Upon the occasion of this graduation, we join across the many religious and spiritual traditions represented within our School and within this year's graduating class. We gather in joy to give thanks for and to celebrate the diverse ministries, vocations, and aspirations of our graduates. The prayers, readings, and music for this service, drawn from the wide array of faiths and backgrounds that animate the intellectual and spiritual life of Harvard Divinity School, were selected by the students who lead us this day.

PRELUDE

Minuet

Henry Purcell

Phyllis Pawa, MTS '23, harp

Please rise in body or in spirit for the processional.

PROCESSIONAL

Drums:

Atéha Bailly

Isaiah Briggs

Xavier I. Sayeed

Please be seated.

WORDS OF WELCOME

David N. Hempton

Dean of the Faculty of Divinity, Alonzo L. McDonald Family Professor of Evangelical Theological Studies, and John Lord O'Brian Professor of Divinity

Kayla Blythe Bach, MTS '23

GATHERING IN WORDS, PRAYERS, AND SONG

From the Traditions of the African Diaspora

Calling Upon the Ancestors: A Libation

Kevin Ross, MRPL '23

Sound Meditation

Joyous Noise, HDS' Chanting Community

HDS Commencement Choir

The sound meditation opens and closes with the ringing of the singing bowl. You are invited to join in the singing when you are so moved or silently let the music embrace you.

RECEIVING THE WISDOM OF OUR TRADITIONS

From the Traditions of Ecological Theology

"Thinking Like a Mountain," excerpt

Aldo Leopold

Owen Yager, MTS '23

From the Islamic Tradition

Surat al-Alaq, verses 1–10, the *Qur'an*

Jenna Rifai, MTS '23

Esedullah Uygur, MTS '23

From the Protestant Christian Tradition

Isaiah 58:11–12, the *Bible (New International Version)*

Nathan Samayo, MDiv '23

Ebony West, MDiv '23

Meditation

“In Your Hands”

Jojo Sounds

Atéha Bailly, MDiv '23, voice and guitar
Isaiah Briggs, MDiv candidate, guitar

Your love must surely be the answer to
These questions that I have
But life loves throwing out its craziness
And though I'm told you have my back

Sometimes I fall down
Don't know if I'll get up again
I've laid my head to rest
And hope I don't wake up again

All my life
I've been dreaming about it
Every night
Somewhere in this world
I can be free

A deeper source is what sustains me here
A firm ground in this abyss
And like a songbird sure of every note
I'll find out what my purpose is

I'll sit in the presence of now
In the still of the moment
Not the stress of tomorrow
Spiraling towards the sun

All my life
I've been dreaming about it
Every night
Somewhere in this world
I can be free
In your hands...

From the Traditions of the African Diaspora

“A Journey” and “Choices”

Nikki Giovanni

Aliyah Collins, MDiv '23, and Kenashia Thompson, MDiv '23

From the Sikh Tradition

Raag Gauree, Bhagat Kabeer Ji

Sri Guru Granth Sahib Ji, Ang 340

Prabhroop Chawla, MTS '23

Poetry

"Visitations"

Monique Lanier

Monique Lanier, MTS '23

Meditation

Allemande from Partita No. 2

Johann Sebastian Bach

Meghan Murphy, MDiv '23, violin

Poetry

"We Must Own It"

James Arnold Lewis

James Arnold Lewis, MDiv '23

Please rise in body or in spirit and join in singing.

From the Unitarian Universalist Tradition

“My Life Flows On in Endless Song”

Early Quaker song and American gospel tune

Meghan Murphy, MDiv '23, violin, and Isaiah Briggs, MDiv candidate, guitar

HDS Commencement Choir

1 My life flows on in end-less song a-bove earth's lam-en-ta-tion.
2 While though the tem-pest 'round me roars, I know the truth, it liv-eth.
3 When ty-rants trem-ble as they hear the bells of free-dom ring-ing,

I hear the real though far-off hymn that hails a new cre-a-tion.
What though the dark-ness 'round me close, songs in the night it giv-eth.
when friends re-joice both far and near, how can I keep from sing-ing!

Through all the tu-mult and the strife I hear the mu-sic ring-ing.
No storm can shake my in-most calm while to that rock I'm cling-ing.
In pris-on cell and dun-geon vile our thoughts to them are wing-ing;

It sounds an e-cho in my soul. How can I keep from sing-ing!
Since love pre-vals in heav'n and earth, how can I keep from sing-ing?
when friends by shame are un-de-filed, how can I keep from sing-ing?

Please be seated.

From the Hindu Tradition

“One Who Is Intelligent,” the *Vachanamrut*, Panchālā 1
Bhavi Bhagat, MTS ’23

From the Latter-day Saint Tradition

“A Latter-day Saint Theology of Suffering”
Jaxon Washburn, MTS ’23

Francine R. Bennion

Holding All Our Losses and the World’s Grief

“I Trust Deeply in My Life as a Prayer”
Morgan Curtis, MTS ’23
Emma Thomas, MDiv candidate

Justine Epstein

All are welcome to join in singing the chant.

I trust deeply in my life as a prayer,
may I be well used, may I be well used,
for healing, liberation and repair.

From Those Redefining Religious Affiliation

“Song of the Soul”
Jenn Louie, MRPL ’23

Khalil Gibran

From the Roman Catholic Tradition

“Prophets of a Future Not Our Own”
Adapted from the writing of Ken Untener, inspired by martyred St. Oscar Romero of El Salvador
Eoin Lyons, MTS ’23
Virginia Schilder, MDiv ’23
Rebecca Tweedie, MDiv ’23

From the Traditions of Queer Spiritualities

“A Pride Blessing”
Fernando Benetti, MDiv ’23

Sam Lundquist

Meditation

“Farewell/Songbie” (送别)

Lyrics: Rev. Li Shutong (李叔同)

Music: John P. Ordway

Tianyi Yuan, MDiv '23, xiao (箫), Chinese vertical bamboo flute

Isaiah Briggs, MDiv candidate, guitar

Faculty Address

David N. Hempton

Dean of the Faculty of Divinity, Alonzo L. McDonald Family Professor of Evangelical Theological Studies, and John Lord O'Brian Professor of Divinity

WORDS AND MUSIC TO LEAVE AND LIVE BY

Meditation

“A Parting Blessing” Old Irish prayer, arr. Jerome Williams, Nicole Newell, and Sophia Doescher

Sophia Doescher, MDiv '23, voice

Nicole Newell, MDiv candidate, voice

From the Buddhist Tradition

Catuhśataka (Four Hundred Verses), 1.20

Aryadeva

Keila Franks, MDiv '23

Justin Janesko, MDiv '23

Maya Peers Nitzberg, MDiv '23

Chantal Sanchez, MDiv '23

All are welcome to join in singing the chant.

If you like being together

then why do you dislike parting?

Doesn't experience show

that meeting and parting go together?

From the Jewish Tradition

Adapted from a prayer traditionally offered at the end of the study of a sacred text

Aliza Abolafia, MDiv '23

Anna Eisenstat, MTS '23

Phyllis Pawa, MTS '23

Meditation

“A Change Is Gonna Come”

Sam Cooke

Teddy Hickman-Maynard, Associate Dean for Ministry Studies, voice
Atéha Bailly, MDiv '23, guitar
HDS Commencement Choir

I was born by the river in a little tent
Oh and just like the river
I've been running ever since
It's been a long, a long time coming
But I know a change gonna come,
oh yes it will.

It's been too hard living but I'm afraid to die
Cause I don't know what's up there
beyond the sky
It's been a long, a long time coming
But I know a change gonna come, oh yes it will.

I go to the movie and I go downtown
Somebody keep telling me don't hang around

It's been a long, a long time coming
But I know a change gonna come, oh yes it will.

Then I go to my brother
And I say brother help me please
But he winds up knockin' me
Back down on my knees.

There been times that I thought
I couldn't last for long
But now I think I'm able to carry on
It's been a long, a long time coming
But I know a change gonna come, oh yes it will.

Please rise in body or in spirit for the recessional.

RECESSIONAL

Drums:

Atéha Bailly

Isaiah Briggs

Xavier I. Sayeed

Family and friends are asked to wait for the recessional to conclude before exiting. Following the service, a **class photograph** will be taken on the steps of the Campus Green side of Swartz Hall or, if it is raining, in the Swartz Hall tower lobby. Information on how to purchase a copy of this photo will be sent to you by GradImages (gradimages.com). You may also contact them at 800.424.3686.

Following the class photo, **refreshments will be served from 5 to 6:30pm on the Swartz Lawn (Francis Ave. side)**. All are welcome to attend, including graduating students, their families, and HDS faculty and staff. Tickets are not required.

PROGRAM NOTES

The multireligious banner is carried by
Kenashia Thompson, MDiv '23.

The hypnotwisters are carried by
Justin Janesko, MDiv '23, and Courtney Godwin, MDiv '23.

The HDS Commencement Choir is conducted by Christopher Hossfeld,
Director of Music and Ritual. Members of the choir include:

Jude Ayua, MTS candidate
Sophia Doescher, MDiv '23
Courtney Godwin, MDiv '23
Elsa Kunz, MTS '23
Virginia Schilder, MDiv '23
Amelia Shenstone, MDiv '23
Ebony West, MDiv '23
Eve Woldemikael, MDiv candidate

We thank today's ushers, who are members of the HDS community under the direction of Katie Caponera, Director of Student Life, and Lauren Jung, Student Services Coordinator.

We hold in our memories and hearts today Judith Giller-Leinwohl, MDiv candidate, who died in August 2022. Had she lived, Judith would have graduated this week. A chair is reserved in her name among the seats for the graduates at this service. May her memory be a blessing.

ABOUT THE ART IN TODAY'S SERVICE

"All of the Above" by Denise Gieseke-Penizzotto, MTS '23, came about as a result of conversations on diversity and inclusion in our multi-faith canon.

Denise is a multi-media visual artist, traveling archivist, and student of religion and the arts. Her interests lie in the sacred in our midst. Her recent work focuses on regeneration, reminding us of what has been lost but also to recognize and exalt in the regeneration that abounds. Generating ideas from exuberant life encounters with the natural world, she incorporates the literal with the allegorical in her visual storytelling.

"I have deep concerns about the health of our planet earth and the living beings that have less control of their existence as climate conditions rapidly shift; I also have great hope in the many regenerative actions that are being taken by those who have similar concerns about all living things."

Bringing the arts into the conversation as an educational and communication tool fosters conversation that leads to action.

We congratulate members of the Class of 2023 who have been recipients of the following honors during their time at Harvard Divinity School:

Class Speaker for the Graduating Class of 2023

Breana Norris, MTS '23

Finalists:

Martha Durkee-Neuman, MDiv '23

Suzannah Omonuk, MDiv '23,

Kevin Ross, MRPL '23

Class Marshals for the Graduating Class of 2023

Justin Janesko, MDiv '23

Chantal Sanchez, MDiv '23

John E. Thayer Scholarship for Meritorious Students, est. 1857

Naomi Fastovsky, MTS '23

Billings Prize for Excellence in Preaching

2023 Finalist:

James Lewis, MDiv '23

2021 Finalist:

Suzannah Omonuk, MDiv '23

Buechner Prize for Excellence in Writing

Rebecca Mendoza Nunziato, MDiv '23

Suzannah Omonuk, MDiv '23

The Hopkins Shareholders Prize, est. 1657

2022:

Judy Beals, MDiv '23

Maria Castaneda Soria, MDiv '23

Shao Wei Chew Chia, MDiv '23

Nathan Rubright, MDiv '23,

Virginia Schilder, MDiv '23

Kenashia Thompson, MDiv '23

Stendahl Symposium Presenters

2022:

Maya Pace, MTS '23

Tianyi Yuan, MDiv '23

