



2026 GRADUATION CELEBRATION

Saturday, May 9, 2026 1:30 PM
First Baptist Church of Glenarden
Ministry Center


DENVER SEMINARY®
Washington DC



GRADUATION CELEBRATION SERVICE

PRESIDENT MARK HUSBANDS, PhD, PRESIDING

Prelude

*Processional

Invocation Iantha Brown, MDiv

Recognition of Denver Seminary Community..Mark Husbands, PhD President

Dr. Don Payne, Vice President of Academic Affairs/Academic Dean

Dr. Carla Michelle Brown, Adjunct Faculty, Black Church Programs

Iantha Brown, Recruiter and Adjunct Faculty, Black Church Programs

Dr. Ken Gilson, Associate Dean for Accreditation and Administration,
Registrar, Assistant Professor of Leadership

Dr. Keith Brown, Adjunct Faculty, Black Church Programs

LaShonda Smith, Assistant Director of Black Church Programs

***Praise Song***Lord You Are Good*

Scripture Reading Jeremiah 29:11-14 Shaakirah Rasaq, MDiv Student

Address “The Glory of All the Gifts” (1 Cor. 12:1-11) Don Payne, PhD

Recognition of Black Church Programs Students Iantha Brown, MDiv
LaShonda Smith

Presentation of Graduates Don Payne, PhD

Granting of Certificates and Presentation of Diplomas..Mark Husbands, PhD

***Praise Song** *I Trust In God*

***>Prayer for Graduates & Benediction**Iantha Brown, MDiv

Postlude

Dessert Social immediately following the service

**Please stand as you are able.*

> Gentlemen, please remove your caps.

Please turn off all cell phones in the sanctuary.

PRAISE SONGS

LORD YOU ARE GOOD

(Israel Houghton, 2001)

Sing Lord, you are good
And your mercy endureth forever
Lord, you are good
And your mercy endureth forever

People from every nation and tribe
From generation to generation

We worship you
Hallelujah
Hallelujah
We worship you for who you are

And you are good
Lord, you are good
And your mercy endureth forever

I TRUST IN GOD

(Elevation Worship, 2023)

Blessed Assurance, Jesus is mine
He's been my fourth man in the fire, time after time
Born of His Spirit, washed in His blood
And what He did for me on Calvary is more than enough

I trust in God, my Savior
The one who will never fail
He will never fail
I trust in God, my Savior
The one who will never fail
He will never fail

Perfect submission, all is at rest
I know the author of tomorrow has ordered my steps
So this is my story and this is my song
I'm praising my risen King and Savior all the day long

I trust in God, my Savior
The one who will never fail
He will never fail
I trust in God, my Savior
The one who will never fail
He will never fail

COMMENCEMENT SPEAKER

DON PAYNE, PhD

VICE PRESIDENT OF ACADEMIC AFFAIRS/ACADEMIC DEAN



Dr. Don Payne has served as Vice President of Academic Affairs, Academic Dean, and Professor of Theology at Denver Seminary since 2021. He began his service on the faculty of Denver Seminary in 1998, working first with the Training and Mentoring program and later teaching in the theology department. Prior to joining the Denver Seminary faculty, Dr. Payne served for eight years in pastoral ministry in Tennessee and Colorado. He holds an MDiv from Denver Seminary and a PhD from the University of Manchester, England. His publications include *Already Sanctified: A Theology of the Christian Life in Light of God's Completed Work* and *Surviving the Unthinkable: Choosing to Live After Someone You Love Chooses to Die*.

Don and his wife, Sharon, have been married for 45 years and are enriched by the company of their three adult children, their spouses, and four grandchildren. Though he hopes to continue teaching theology on a part-time basis, he will retire from his current role at Denver Seminary at the end of this academic year.

BLACK CHURCH PROGRAMS PARTICIPANTS

Denver Seminary serves urban communities through the Black Church Programs. This lay-level program is designed to equip adult men and women to serve more confidently in positions of leadership in their church, Christian organization, or place of work. The following students have satisfactorily completed the Lay Ministry Program.

LAY MINISTRY PROGRAM

CANDIDATE

Sharon Byrd

Fia Mann

Elaine Cornick

Omiome Olaghere-Davis

Gail Duell

Angelique Searuggs

Marilyn Franklin

STUDENT BIOGRAPHIES



Sharon Byrd

Sharon Byrd is a member of First Baptist Church of Glenarden International where she serves in several ministries. She especially loves being part of the prison ministry where she has served for 27 years. Her goal is to disciple as many incarcerated youth and adults as possible. Sharon holds a bachelor's degree in Christian education from Howard University and is blessed with two children and ten grandchildren. Her favorite Scripture is Matthew 22:14, *many are called, but few are chosen.*



Elaine Cornick

Elaine Cornick retired in 2017 after twenty-six years of employment with the State of Maryland. She holds a bachelor of arts in Cultural Anthropology from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. Denver Seminary's Lay Ministry Program was the next best step to enhance her spiritual and educational journey. Her personal statement is, "delayed is not denied." Continue to chase your goals!



Gail Duell

Gail Duell, aka prophetess Monique, is an advocate, international speaker, Amazon bestselling author, and host of *Having a Moment with Moni*. She is the founder of This Ability LLC, serving special needs families through advocacy, education, and support. Inspired by her son with cerebral palsy and her autistic brother, Monique is a multi-award recipient, Partners in Policymaking graduate, prolific author, and respected voice in ministry, caregiving, and disability advocacy.



Marilyn Franklin

Marilyn C. Franklin, aka Platinum, is an author, creative artist, Christian comedienne, Bible teacher, and entrepreneur. She is the founder of Platinum for Laughs Entertainment where she delivers Christian entertainment, online publications and courses, and life coaching to inspire and empower individuals seeking a lifestyle transformation through biblical teaching, spiritual awareness, and personal development. More importantly, she is a vessel of God working to increase the body of Christ through the Great Commission.



Fia Mann

Fia Phenice Mann resides in Prince George's county. Known for her caring nature, Fia plays a leadership role in her church's student ministry and leads a support group for individuals recovering from addiction. Her purpose is to care for others in ways that may seem mundane but allow them to live out their purpose in this world.



Omiome Olaghere-Davis

Omiome Olaghere-Davis is an established real estate entrepreneur, educator and IT consultant spanning 35 years of professional experience. Her near-term primary focus is to couple her professional experience with ministerial work that encourages hope, kindness and overall practice of the beatitudes in the corporate workspaces she engages with. Through her various platforms for education and mentoring, such as hosting podcasts, creating social media content, and writing self-help books, she aims to dedicate her gifts to recruit for the Kingdom of God.



Angelique Searuggs

Angelique Searuggs is a native of Denver, Colorado and a retired single mom of two adult children. She retired from the medical field in 2024 after a thirty-year career. Both of her children, a son and daughter, graduated from college in 2015 and are working in professional careers. She is a proud grandma of three, including two girls, ages 12 and 9, and a 7-year-old boy. She is very active in women's ministry and serves as a deaconess in her church.

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