

Rev. Dr. Willie James Jennings Delivers Stirring Commencement Address at United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities

Rev. Dr. Jennings Addressed Graduates at United's 61st Annual Commencement Ceremony

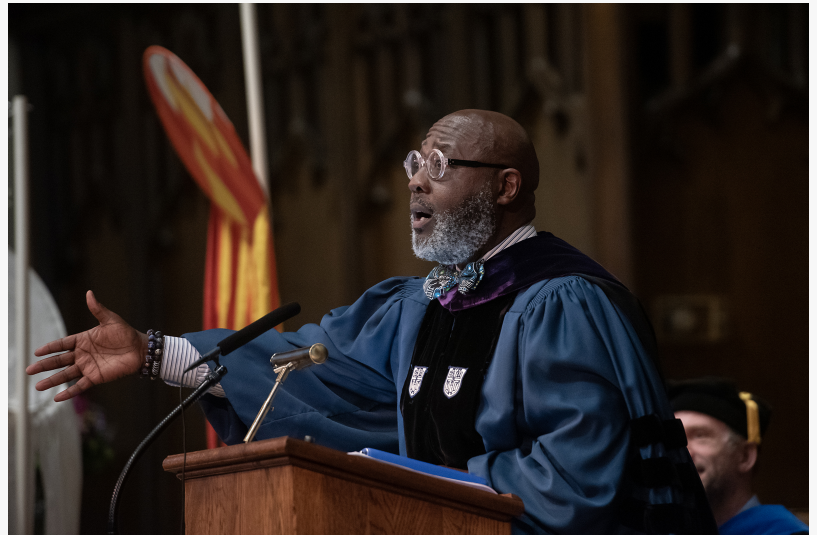
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EINPresswire.com/ -- As [United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities' President Molly T. Marshall](#) recently asserted, it was a "signal honor" to welcome [Rev. Dr. Willie James Jennings](#), Associate Professor of Systematic Theology and Africana Studies at Yale Divinity School and an ordained Baptist minister, as the speaker for United's 61st Annual Commencement. His inspiring speech, titled "We Begin Again," was based on John 1:10-14.

President Marshall, who introduced the speaker, avowed, "I have had the good fortune to cross paths with Willie for 30+ years now, and I can attest that his contributions to the horizons of theological education are transformative. His scholarship is groundbreaking, and he just keeps getting better."

Jennings is the author of "The Christian Imagination: Theology and the Origins of Race," a seminal work, and received the 2015 Grawemeyer Award in Religion for his visionary scholarship around race and Christianity. He also authored "After Whiteness: An Education in Belonging," the inaugural book in the much-anticipated series, Theological Education Between the Times, which won the 2020 book of the year award (Publishers Weekly).

In a stirring conclusion to his address, Jennings urged United graduates to "start again," comparing the auspicious occasion of Commencement to that of a fresh, new beginning. Exhorting graduates to "reject worldly power" and "Christianity woven in whiteness, aiming at control," Jennings prescribed an alternative—to "take hold of a different kind of power, born of



Rev. Dr. Willie James Jennings at United's 61st annual Commencement (photo by Michele Jokinen)



UNITED
THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY
OF THE TWIN CITIES



the life of Jesus, full of grace and truth: the power of the children of God.”

We are tasked with building belonging. You can do this, because you went to United.”

Rev. Dr. Willie James Jennings

He added a note of encouragement, saying, “We are tasked with building belonging. You can do this, because you went to United.”

Later this month, Jennings is traveling to Oxford, England,

to present the prestigious Bampton Lecture at University Church. He is the first African American theologian to be accorded this high honor. The title of his four-lecture program is “Jesus and the Displaced: Christology and the Redemption of Habitation.”

“The best barometer of the impact of a theological educator is what their students say,” President Marshall observed. “Those with whom Dr. Jennings has worked at Duke and now at Yale are unfailingly grateful for his kindness, his wisdom, and his support.” United is deeply indebted to Jennings for delivering a superb address that perfectly captured the import of United’s 2023 commencement.

About United

Founded as a welcoming, ecumenical school that embraces all denominations and faith traditions, United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities has been on the cutting edge of progressive theological thought leadership since it was established in 1962. Today, United continues to train leaders who dismantle systems of oppression, explore multi-faith spirituality, and push the boundaries of knowledge.

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