

The Installation of
Valerie Bridgeman
as Dean of Methodist Theological School in Ohio



November 2, 2018
10 a.m.
Alford Centrum

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* *You are invited to stand as you are able.*

ENTRANCE

Prelude

* **Processional** *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing*

**Come Thou Fount of every blessing
Tune my heart to sing Thy grace;
Streams of mercy, never ceasing,
Call for songs of loudest praise
Teach me some melodious sonnet,
Sung by flaming tongues above.
Praise the mount! I'm fixed upon it,
Mount of God's unchanging love.**

**Here I raise mine Ebenezer;
hither by thy help I'm come;
and I hope, by thy good pleasure,
safely to arrive at home.**

**Jesus sought me when a stranger,
wandering from the fold of God;
he, to rescue me from danger,
interposed his precious blood.**

**O to grace how great a debtor
Daily I'm constrained to be!
Let that grace now like a fetter,
Bind my wandering heart to Thee.
Prone to wander, Lord, I feel it,
Prone to leave the God I love;
Here's my heart, O take and seal it,
Seal it for Thy courts above.**

**Come thou Storm of trouble-making
shake our lives and interfere.
Wind and water: dare and challenge.
Holy Fire: be thou near.
With your lightning, conquer darkness,
come expose complicity.
In this moment, hearts laid barren
ready for a word from Thee.**

Libations

Gwen Thomas '20

Darius A. Davis
Sure Foundation Fellowship
San Marcos, Texas

Invocation

Gwen Thomas

**“O God, our Help in ages past,
our Hope for years to come,
our Shelter from the stormy blast,
and our eternal Home.”
Meet us in this moment of promises and possibilities
Breathe your Spirit on us and into us now
That we may live into the joy of the call you make
today and always. Amen.**

*** Gospel Song** *Hold to God's Unchanging Hand*

Refrain:

**Hold to God's hand, God's unchanging hand.
Hold to God's hand; God's unchanging hand.
Build your hopes on things eternal.
Hold to God's unchanging hand.**

Time is filled with swift transition,
Naught of earth unmoved can stand.
Build your hopes on things eternal.
Hold to God's unchanging hand.

Refrain

Trust in [God] who will not leave you,
Whatsoever years may bring.
If by earthly friends forsaken,
Still more closely to [God] cling.

Refrain

Covet not this world's vain riches
That so rapidly decay.
Seek to gain the heav'nly treasures.
They will never pass away.

Refrain

When your journey is completed,
If to God you have been true,
Fair and bright the home in glory
Your enraptured soul will view.

Refrain

Welcome and Greetings

Jay Rundell
President, MTSO

Stephen Ray
President, Chicago Theological Seminary
President, Society for the Study of Black Religion

Aundreia Alexander
Associate General Secretary of Action
and Advocacy for Justice and Peace,
National Council of Churches

Darlene Hutto
Director of Strategic Partnerships
for Leadership Networks,
Forum for Theological Exploration

Poetic Response

Dr. Bridgeman

Jaha Zainabu
Artist-in-Residence,
WomanPreach!

PROCLAMATION

Scriptural Reading

2 Kings 22:14-20

Jennifer Fowler '19

Musical Offering

Great Is Thy Faithfulness

Aisha Brooks-Lytle
Tony McNeill

Installation Address

“By What Authority: Huldah,
the Bible, and the Dilemma
of Protestant Womanists”

Renita J. Weems

RESPONSE

Call to Prayer

*Woza Nomthwalo Wakho
(Come, Bring Your Burdens to God)*

Jorge Lockward

**Woza nomthwalo wakho, Woza nomthwalo wakho,
Woza nomthwalo wakho, Uyes'akasozi hayi.**

**Come, bring your burdens to God, come, bring your burdens to God,
Come, bring your burdens to God for Jesus will never say no.**

Prayers of the People

Yvonne Zimmerman
Associate Academic Dean, MTSO

Intercessions

And now we pray together in the spirit of the first disciples
the words offered from our siblings in New Zealand:

**Eternal Spirit, Earth-maker, Pain-bearer, Life-giver,
Source of all that is and that shall be,**

Father and Mother of us all,

Loving God, in whom is heaven:

The hallowing of your name echo through the universe!

The way of your justice be followed by the peoples of the world!

Your heavenly will be done by all created beings!

**Your commonwealth of peace and freedom sustain
our hope and come on earth.**

With the bread we need for today, feed us.

In the hurts we absorb from one another, forgive us.

In times of temptation and test, strengthen us.

From trials too great to endure, spare us.

From the grip of all that is evil, free us.

For you reign in the glory of the power that is love, now and forever.

Amen.

INSTALLATION

Presentation of the Dean

David Wilcox
Board of Trustees Chair

Installation of the Dean

Jay Rundell

Do you affirm the MTSO mission to provide theological education and
leadership in pursuit of a just, sustainable and generative world?

I do.

Will you, as dean and vice president for academic affairs, endeavor to advance MTSO as a vibrant, diverse, inclusive community that faithfully engages the intersections of church, society and academy to prepare leaders for ministry and service in pursuit of a transformed world?

With God's help, I will.

MTSO is deeply committed to transformative, sustaining justice as an expansive theological vision consistent with the creative, renewing, resurrecting activity of God in the world. To this end, we create a new imagination for the church of the future through creative work in institutional programs, relationships and resources to promote equity, justice and integrity. We intentionally connect with social justice movements that attend to sustainable social change, transforming both church and world.

Will you support us in this work, challenging us and holding us accountable when necessary?

With God's help, I will.

Together with all gathered here and all those engaged in the mission of this institution, it is my honor to install you as dean and vice president for academic affairs of Methodist Theological School in Ohio.

CHARGE TO THE DEAN

Be Now My Vision

**Be now my vision, O God of my heart.
Nothing surpasses the love You impart.
You, my best thought, by day or by night
Waking or sleeping, your presence my light.**

**Be now my wisdom and be my true word,
Ever within me, my soul is assured.
Mother and Father, you are both to me.
Now and forever your child I will be**

**Riches I need not, nor life's empty praise.
You, my inheritance, now and always,
You and you only are first in my heart.
Great God, my treasure, may we never part.**

**Sovereign of heaven, my victory won,
May I reach heaven's joys, O bright heaven's Sun!
Heart of my own heart, whatever befall,
Still be my vision, O Ruler of all.**

Charge on Behalf of the Board of Trustees	Maggie Jackson Trustee
Charge on Behalf of the Faculty	John Kampen Professor in the Dunn Chair in Biblical Interpretation
Charge on Behalf of the Staff and Administration	Tadd Petersen Manager of Farm and Food
Charge on Behalf of Students and Alumni	Mary-Kate Myers '16 Pastor, Bethesda UMC and Wesley Chapel UMC Nashville
Charge on Behalf of the Church	Frank A. Thomas Director, Ph.D. Program in African American Preaching and Sacred Rhetoric, Christian Theological Seminary Leslie D. Callahan Pastor, St. Paul's Baptist Church Philadelphia

SENDING FORTH

Ritual of Blessings	Barbara A. Holmes President Emerita, United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities
Responses and Thanksgiving	Valerie Bridgeman Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs
Sending Song	<i>Keep Your Eyes on the Prize</i> Jeffrey White '21

Paul and Silas bound in jail,
Had no money for to go their bail.
Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on.
Hold on, hold on.
Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on.

Paul and Silas thought they was lost,
Dungeon shook and the chains come off.
Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on.
Hold on, hold on.
Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on.

Freedom's name is mighty sweet,
And soon we're gonna meet.
Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on.
Hold on, hold on.
Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on.

I got my hand on the gospel plow.
Won't take nothing for my journey now.
Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on.
Hold on, hold on.
Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on.

Now only thing we did was wrong
Stayin' in the wilderness too long.
Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on.
Hold on, hold on.
Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on.

The only thing we did was right
Was the day we started to fight.
Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on.
Hold on, hold on.
Keep your eyes on the prize, hold on.

Benediction

Jay Rundell

Recessional

Hold to God's Unchanging Hand

Acknowledgements

Worship designer: Jorge Lockward, MTSO worship consultant.

Musicians: vocalist Aisha Brooks-Lytle, executive presbyter, Presbytery of Greater Atlanta; flutist Marelize Bruner '19; pianist Tony McNeill, program director, Certificate in Worship Leadership, Johnson C. Smith Theological Seminary; organist Danny Russell, MTSO director of communications; vocalist Jeffrey White '21.

Composers: *Come Thou Fount of Every Blessing* words by Robert Robinson with final verse by MTSO 2018 Student Worship Team, music by John Wyeth; *Hold to God's Unchanging Hand* words by Jennie Wilson, music by F. L. Eiland; *Great Is Thy Faithfulness* words by Thomas O. Chisholm, music by W. M. Runyan; *Be Now My Vision* words by E. H. Hull to a traditional Irish melody; *Keep Your Eyes on the Prize* adapted during the Civil Rights Era from the negro folk song *Keep Your Hand on the Plow*; *Woza Nomthwalo Wakho* English translation by Barbara Clark, Mairi Munro and Martine Stemerick, based on a South African melody, arranged by Welile Sigobi. All songs covered by OneLicense A-702431.

Today's continuing events

Please be our guest as the celebration continues.

**Noon Lunch of heavy hors d'oeuvres
Dunn Dining Hall**

For those with mobility concerns, golf-cart transportation is available in Dickinson Courtyard.

**1:30 p.m. Panel discussion
Alford Centrum**

“Building a Community of Care and Accountability Around Your Life” will be moderated by Dean Valerie Bridgeman, featuring Leslie D. Callahan, St. Paul's Baptist Church in Philadelphia; Dr. Brittney Cooper, Rutgers University; Leslie Marant, attorney in Philadelphia; Charisse R. Tucker, St. Paul's Baptist Church in Philadelphia; and Melanye Price, Rutgers University.

**3:15 p.m. Jazz concert by the Mark Lomax Trio
Alford Centrum**

Special recognition

I'm honored for the many people who have come to witness this commitment the school and I make to one another, especially my friends who supported me through the years. Thank you all. I won't list everyone here, but I want to especially thank the MTSO community for this opportunity to lead. I am thankful to Jorge Lockward for pulling this worship and commitment ceremony together and providing us a rich experience, and for friends Rev. Aisha Brooks-Lytle and Dr. Tony McNeill agreeing to “pitch in” however I wanted, and doing so with excellence. I thank my family members who have come to share this day with me: my sisters, Pamela Bridgeman, Debra Johnson and Gwen Thomas; my brother-from-another-mother, Antonio Edwards; my son Rev. Darius Davis and my son Deon Davis in his absence; my godsons, Cedrick von Jackson and Sijuwola Crawford; my spiritual leaders over a span of years, pastors (and professors) Rev. Dr. Frank A. Thomas and Rev. Dr. Leslie D. Callahan; the Brunch Crew from St. Paul's Baptist Church (including Pastor Callahan) who agreed to be on the panel, Brittney Cooper, Leslie Marant, Rev. Charisse Tucker, and Melanye Price; the #WomanPreachNation crew (all of you) who showed up, but especially our program manager, Rev. Jené Colvin, and our artist-in-residence, Jaha Zainabu. Finally I want to thank the two most influential scholars and mentors on my career for agreeing to be with us: Dr. Renita Weems, whose prophetic voice has been a constant guide for 30 years and Dr. Barbara A. Holmes whose sisterhood has helped and carried me for years. Indeed, I thank God for you all.

Valerie Bridgeman

Dr. Valerie Bridgeman

Valerie Bridgeman's appointment as dean and vice president for academic affairs follows four years as a member of the MTSO community. After arriving as a visiting faculty member in spring 2014, she was appointed associate professor of homiletics and Hebrew Bible, a title she still holds, in academic year 2015. She served as interim academic dean during the 2017-18 academic year.

In addition to her work at MTSO, Dr. Bridgeman is the founding president and CEO of WomanPreach! Inc., a nonprofit organization bringing preachers to full prophetic voice. Ordained by the Church of God (Anderson, Indiana), she is an advocate and activist for justice, in demand as a speaker and preacher throughout the country. She served as general editor and consultant for the United Methodist Church's Africana Worship project and has published extensively, including as associate editor and contributor for *The Africana Bible: Reading Israel's Scriptures from Africa and the African Diaspora*, contributing editor of *Preaching with Sacred Fire: An Anthology of African American Sermons, 1750 to the Present*, and co-editor of *Those Preaching Women: A Multi-Cultural Collection*.

As an interdisciplinary scholar, Dr. Bridgeman is active in several professional guilds and has been inducted into the Society for the Study of Black Religion. She is the author or editor of several articles and essays on the Hebrew bible, worship, preaching and art. As an activist and advocate, she was inducted into the 2010 class of the Martin Luther King Jr. Collegium of Scholars and Preachers at Morehouse College in Atlanta.

Dr. Bridgeman earned her Ph.D. from Baylor University in biblical studies, with secondary studies in ethics. She received a Master of Divinity degree from Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Trinity University.

Rev. Dr. Renita J. Weems

Renita J. Weems' scholarly insights into modern faith, biblical texts, and the role of spirituality in everyday lives make her a highly sought-after writer and speaker. Among her numerous publications is *Listening for God: A Minister's Journey Through Silence and Doubt*, which won the Religious Communicators' Council's 1999 Wilbur Award for excellence in communicating spiritual values to the secular media.

An ordained elder in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, Dr. Weems is a former member of the faculty of Vanderbilt University Divinity School, where she was the first African-American woman to be tenured. She most recently served as vice president, academic dean and professor of biblical studies at American Baptist College.

