

Furman University Baccalaureate Celebration
May 9, 2026

***Prelude**

Prelude and Fugue in Eb, BWV 552

Johann Sebastian Bach
Charles Tompkins, Organist

***Processional**

“Praise the Source of Faith and Learning”

Praise the source of faith and learning who has sparked and stoked the mind with a passion for discerning how the world has been designed. Let the sense of wonder flowing from the wonders we survey keep our faith forever growing and renew our need to pray:

God of wisdom, we acknowledge that our science and our art and the breadth of human knowledge only partial truth impart. Far beyond our calculation lies a depth we cannot sound where your purpose for creation and the pulse of life are found.

May our faith redeem the blinder of believing that our thought has displaced the grounds for wonder which the ancient prophets taught. May our learning curb the error which unthinking faith can breed lest we justify some terror with the antiquated creed.

As two currents in a river fight each other's undertow till converging they deliver one coherent steady flow, may we blend our faith and learning till they carve a single course and our seeking and our yearning join in praising you their source:

Praise for minds to probe the heavens, praise for strength to breathe the air, praise for all the beauty leavens, praise for silence, music, prayer, praise for justice and compassion and for strangers, neighbors, friends, praise for hearts and lips to fashion, praise for love that never ends.

Words of Greeting

Rev. Alexis Carter Thomas
Associate University Chaplain

Recognition of Land Acknowledgment

Rev. Alexis Carter Thomas

A Reading from the Wisdom of Indigenous Americans

Hudson Jamison, '27
Vice President of Native American & Indigenous Peoples Association

Prayer for the Community

Kayli Sessoms, '26
President of Religious Council

Leader: In this place, we seek to be lifelong learners, humbly sharing our deepest truth, and trusting that in so doing, we are paving new roads for tomorrow's servant leaders.

Faculty and Staff: We give thanks that our labor and gifts shape our communities and our world.

Leader: In this place, we have entrusted the ones we love to a difficult and challenging process. We have grown and we have witnessed one another's transformation. It is with great love that we honor this special threshold in the lives of our loved ones.

All: We give thanks that our labor and gifts shape our communities and our world.

Leader: In this place, we have challenged our presumptions, exposed our ignorance, reformed our thinking, and re-imagined our world. We have celebrated, mourned, struggled, loved, lost, given, and received.

Graduating Seniors: We give thanks that our labor and gifts shape our communities and our world.

Leader: In this place, we have honored the value of human dignity, we have learned the richness of exchanging ideas, we have heard the yearning within us to serve others, and we have claimed our shared reality as members of the global community.

All: May we go forth from this place bound deeply by our sense of community, by our unified depth of spirit, and by our shared desire to serve the world with gladness. In these moments of remembrance and celebration, may we heed the voice that calls us deeper into ourselves, and may we follow with joy and thanksgiving. Amen.

Words of Celebration

Dr. Elizabeth Davis
University President

A Reading in the Jewish Tradition

Mayah Nussbaum, '28
Representative from Jewish Student Association

A Reading in the Christian Tradition

Gretchen Stern, '26
Treasurer of Exploration of Vocation and Ministry

Anthem

Precious Lord
arr. Arnold Sevier

Furman University Singers
Stephen Gusukuma, Director

A Reading in the Islamic Tradition

Baseer Muqri, '26
President of Muslim Student Association

A Reading in the Hindu Tradition

Dipak Malla, '26
President of Exploration of Vocation and Ministry

Baccalaureate Address

Rev. Alexis Carter Thomas

***Choral Benediction**

God Be in My Head
John Rutter

Furman University Singers
Stephen Gusukuma, Director

***Final Blessing**

Katie Rudins, '26
President of Orthodox Christian Fellowship

***Postlude**

Allegro con brio
(from Organ Sonata in B-flat, Opus 65 No. 4) Felix Mendelssohn
Charles Tompkins, Organist

**Please rise in body or spirit*