



Contact: Susan Cusick, Director of Communications

Phone: 773.896.2435

Email: scusick@ctschicago.edu

Chicago Theological Seminary Commencement Welcomes Jasiri X and Rev. Dr. Jacquelyn Grant

CHICAGO, May 2, 2016 – Chicago Theological Seminary’s 2016 Commencement will introduce a new generation of dynamic religious scholars, activists, and community leaders. All are welcome to attend the ceremonies at 2pm on May 13 at Trinity United Church of Christ, Chicago. The ceremony will celebrate graduates and award Jasiri X and The Reverend Dr. Jacquelyn Grant with honorary degrees for their work and leadership in community engagement and theology.

The occasion also marks the first class of theologians graduating from CTS’s groundbreaking, rigorous, fully online Master of Divinity program. The seminary received accreditation for the fully online MDIV degree in 2014, making its progressive theology and extensive curriculum is available to students anywhere.

Jasiri X will deliver the commencement address to the graduating class. Jasiri X is a new millennium Civil Rights Activist leveraging the transformative power of Hip-Hop, Social Media and Technology into a new brand of social change. Jasiri has worked in underserved communities as a mentor, educator and community leader. After garnering over 3 million YouTube views for his conscious-elevating Hip-Hop, Jasiri worked to provide training for young people in digital media, empowering them to change their own communities and to tell their own, often maligned and marginalized stories. In 2010, he founded the anti-violence community organization, 1Hood Media Academy in Pittsburgh, where he leads a team of educators and artists in teaching young people media literacy, photography, videography, music production, creative lyricism, entrepreneurship, journalism and other 21st century skills.

The Rev. Dr. Jacquelyn Grant is a leading trailblazing scholar of womanist theology. Dr. Grant is the Fuller E. Callaway Professor of Systematic Theology at the Interdenominational Center (ITC) in Atlanta, GA. She was ordained in the AME church in 1974. In 1981, Dr. Grant founded and remains director of the Black Women in Church and Society (BWCS) program, which advocates for inclusion and full participation of women in the total life and work of the church and the larger society. Her most noted publication, *White Women’s Christ and Black Women’s Jesus: Feminist Christology and Womanist Response*, received the all-time best-selling book recognition by Scholars Press. Dr. Grant is the 1986 recipient of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Ministry Award and is featured in the *Who’s Who of African Americans*.

CTS continues its proud tradition of celebrating alums with the Distinguished Alumni Award. The 2016 Distinguished Alumni Award recipients are **The Rev. Dr. William Craig Rennebohm (BD 1970) and The Rev. Dr. Camilla Scott Tanner (MDIV 2000)**. Both alums are pillars within their communities, contributing to the worlds of mental health, church planting, interfaith engagement, and more. The Rev. Dr. Rennebohm is retired after a long career in chaplaincy and interfaith work. He is the recipient of the National Alliance on Mental Illness’ 2009 Richard T. Greer Advocacy Award. The Rev. Dr. Tanner is currently co-pastor of The Temple of Agape, a non-denominational ministry in the Woodlawn area. She is also the recipient of 2012 Peggy A. Montes Unsung Heroine of Cook County Award.

“What we want our graduates to understand is that there is more than one way for them to use their seminary education,” CTS President Alice Hunt said. “Our commencement speakers and Distinguished Alumni Award recipients have demonstrated that there are many communities that need attention and engagement. We know our graduates have the knowledge and courage to engage with different communities to help create social change.”

The Distinguished Alumni Awards will be presented at the 2016 Luncheon on May 13 at 10:35 am. For tickets or more information please contact Chad Schwickerath at chad.schwickerath@ctschicago.edu.

ABOUT CHICAGO THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Based in Chicago's Southside, Chicago Theological Seminary is committed to creating leaders for the next generation at religious leadership...whatever that may be. A leader in social justice, CTS is committed to LGBTQ and gender issues, interreligious understanding, and racial justice.

CTS is an affiliated seminary at the United Church of Christ. Since its beginning in 1855, CTS has pushed at the growing boundaries of the church in order to make faith more relevant and transform society towards greater justice and mercy. The student body now represents more than 40 different faith traditions, perspectives and denominations.



ctschicago.edu