

NASHOTAH HOUSE NEWS

NEWS RELEASE FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Rev. Dr. Russell Levenson, Jr., to speak at Nashotah House's 177th Commencement

Nashotah, Wisconsin (February 28, 2022) – The Rev. Dr. Russell Levenson, Jr., rector of St. Martin's Episcopal Church in Houston, Texas, and author of *A Witness to Dignity*, will serve as the speaker at Nashotah House's 2023 Commencement.

The seminary's 177th Commencement exercises will be held at St. John's Northwestern Academies on May 18, 2023.

"St. Martin's in Houston has been a beacon of faithful and dynamic ministry, not least as a local parish generously committed to the flourishing of theological education for the good of the whole Church," said Dr. Garwood Anderson, Dean of Nashotah House. "We are honored to have Dr. Levenson as our distinguished Commencement speaker and as the presenter for our Alumni Day and look with anticipation for the wisdom he offers our graduates and alumni."

An Episcopal priest for nearly 30 years, Levenson has spent the past 15 years as rector of St. Martin's Episcopal. With nearly 10,000 members, St. Martin's is the largest Episcopal Church in North America.



The Rev. Dr. Russell Levenson

Last fall, Levenson published *A Witness to Dignity: The Life and Faith of George H.W. and Barbara Bush* (Hachette Publishing), a memoir about his 11-year relationship with the late



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President and First Lady, who were longtime parishioners of St. Martin's. In 2018, Dr. Levenson officiated and preached at the funeral at St. Martin's for the First Lady, and later that same year co-officiated and preached at the State Funeral for the 41st President held at Washington National Cathedral and the Houston-based memorial service held at St. Martin's.

Levenson will discuss his book during the Alumni Day Luncheon on May 17, 2023, at Nashotah House.

Under Levenson's leadership, St. Martin's has completed two significant building projects. In 2012, the parish opened the Hope and Healing Center and Institute, a nonprofit center that offers comprehensive mental health resources, free of charge, to the Houston community. The center serves more than 800 individuals weekly.

In 2022, St. Martin's completed a \$65 million building project to update its longtime facilities, add gardens and spaces for worship, Christian education, administration and outreach.

St. Martin's commits on average 25% of its annual budget to ministries outside of St. Martin's, giving over \$40 million to dozens of ministries since 2007.

Earlier in his ministry, Levenson served as assistant university chaplain at the University of the South; associate rector at St. Luke's in Birmingham, Alabama; rector of The Episcopal Church of The Ascension in Lafayette, Louisiana; and rector of Christ Church in Pensacola, Florida.

In 2015, he was admitted as a member of the United States Priory for the Order of St. John of Jerusalem. In 2020, he was appointed Sub-Prelate of the Order, and in 2021, by appointment of the late Her Majesty, Elizabeth, Queen of England, he was elevated as an Officer for the Priory. The Priory is a public charity that supports the humanitarian endeavors of St. John of Jerusalem Eye Hospital Group, the only provider of expert eye care in the West Bank, Gaza, and East Jerusalem. In the U.S., the group also assists disabled and disadvantaged veterans through the St. John Volunteer Corps.

Fr. Levenson and his wife, Laura, have three adult children.

Levenson will also receive an honorary degree from Nashotah House as part of the Commencement ceremonies. Other honorary degree recipients this year include the Rt.

The banner features the text "NASHOTAH HOUSE NEWS" in white, uppercase letters on a dark blue background. To the right, a faint, circular seal is visible, containing a cross and other heraldic symbols, with the word "Nashotah" partially legible.

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Rev. Brian K. Burgess, Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Springfield, and the Rt. Rev. E. Mark Stevenson ('00), Bishop of the Episcopal Diocese of Virginia.

Nashotah House's Commencement ceremony will be livestreamed beginning at 10 a.m. (CST) on May 18 on its YouTube channel and social media outlets.

Founded in 1842, Nashotah House is a seminary located in Nashotah, Wisconsin, serving the Episcopal Church, Anglican Communion, and other ecumenical partners.