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## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Berkeley School of Theology appoints Rev. Dr. Joseph Evans to the J. Alfred Smith, Sr. Endowed Chair of Theology in the Public Square**

**BERKELEY, CA (December 16, 2022)** In recognizing the amazing life and legacy of Rev. Dr. J. Alfred Smith Sr., Berkeley School of Theology (BST) announces the appointment of Rev. Dr. Joseph Evans to the J. Alfred Smith, Sr. Endowed Chair of Theology in the Public Square.

In addition, Dr. Evans will serve as the inaugural director of the new Center for Truth, Racial Healing and Restorative Justice. The endowed chair and the center was made possible by means of a lead gift from First Baptist Church of Palo Alto and other donors of nearly \$3 million toward an overall goal of \$5 million.

“We are so pleased to have Dr. Evans join the BST community,” said President James Brenneman of Berkeley School of Theology. “Dr. Evans wonderfully embodies the spirit of his mentor, Dr. J. Alfred Smith, Sr. as scholar, pastor, prophet and leader.”

Rev. Dr. Joseph Evans currently serves as Dean of the Morehouse School of Religion (Atlanta, GA), serving since 2016, significantly increasing the school’s enrollment and raising funds to strengthen its mission. He is also Interim Senior pastor of the historic Friendship Baptist Church in Atlanta, GA. He regularly teaches courses at the Interdenominational Theological Center, and previously, the Divinity School at Howard University and Wesley Theological Seminary. He served as Senior Pastor for 16 years at the historic Mount Carmel Baptist Church (Washington, D.C.), overseeing a thriving congregation known for its community engagement and public service.

Dr. Evans holds a B.A. in History and Government from West Virginia Institute of Technology, and an M.Div and Ph.D. from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary. Dr. Evans is an inductee into the Morehouse College, Martin Luther King Jr., College of Preachers (2009) and Morehouse College Colloquium of Scholars (2022). In addition, Dr. Evans is the author of many articles and four books: *The Polished King: Living Words of Martin Luther King Jr.* (2021), *The Art of Eloquence: The Sacred Rhetoric of Gardner C. Taylor* (2020), *Reconciliation and Reparation: Preaching Economic Justice* (2018) and *Lifting the Veil Over Eurocentrism: The Du Boisian Hermeneutic of Double Consciousness* (2014).

Rev. Dr. J. Alfred Smith Sr. said of the appointment, “Rev. Dr. Joseph Evans is a critical interdisciplinary scholar whose expansive knowledge in homiletics, biblical exegesis, theology, philosophy, history, literature, economics, and ethics will be a substantial addition to Berkeley School of Theology and the GTU community. Rev. Dr. Evans filling this chair of Public Theology is a great fit given his dedication to bringing persons and nations everywhere to the table in the public square to engage in reconciling actions for healing and justice.”

Rev. Dr. Evans is married to Patricia and has two adult children and three grandchildren.

## About Berkeley School of Theology (BST)

BST is one of the most culturally diverse seminaries in the country. BST was established in 1871 during the Reconstruction period in U.S. history, along with the historic Black colleges of Spelman, Morehouse, and Virginia Union by the American Baptist Home Mission Society. An early president of BST was one of the presiding ministers in Abraham Lincoln's funeral. Recently celebrating its 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, BST still cherishes those early core values of soul freedom, service leadership, social justice, public witness, religious liberty and free interpretation of Scripture.

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