

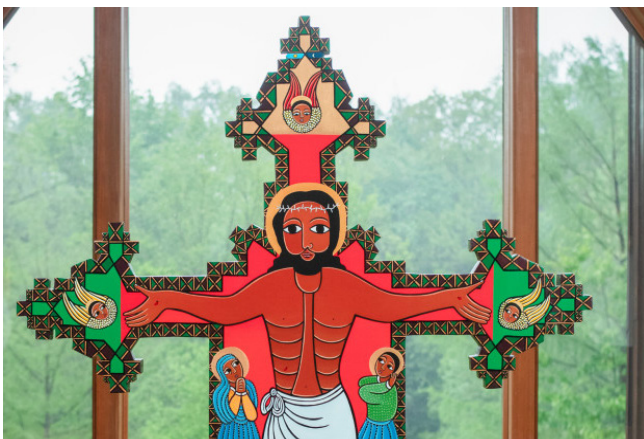


## **“Christ in Full Color” at Sewanee School of Theology RE-SOURCE #1 — February 2- May 27, 2023**

Sewanee University of the South is a liberal arts college in Sewanee, Tennessee. The university’s school of theology is rooted in the Anglican tradition and committed to preparing lay and ordained leaders for service to the church and world. For seminarians who study and live at the school of theology, the “Chapel of the Apostles” is regarded as “the real and symbolic heart of seminary life.”



**He is the image of the invisible God ... Col 1:15**



New crucifix created by artist Laura James and blessed by Bishop Tenganena, at its dedication within the Chapel of the Apostles at the Sewanee School of Theology, September 27, 2022.

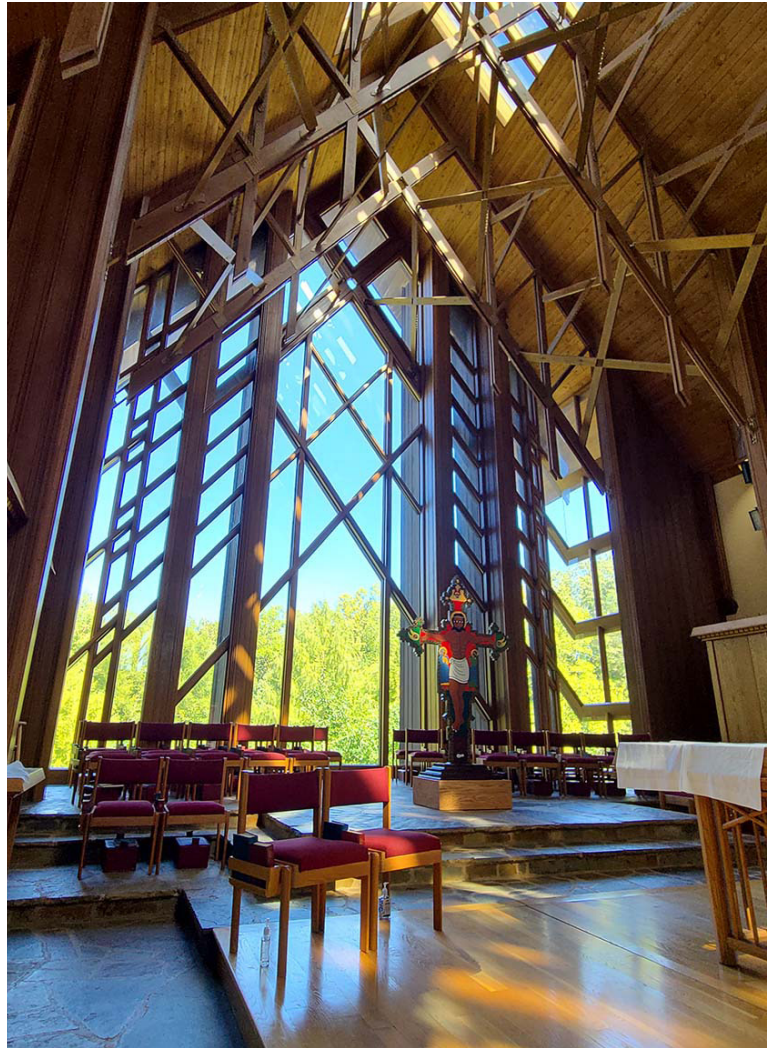




When the chapel was built in 2000, it featured a European-style crucifix with the body of Christ represented as a white, European man. Twenty years later the faculty unanimously recommended replacing the white crucifix with a new one both truer to the image of the historical Jesus and indicative of the University's desire to make reparation for past racial injustices. **"It was a radical and unexpected move. While a part of the larger picture of racial reconciliation at the University, the decision also acknowledged the distance many Christians feel from the depiction of Jesus as a white European."**

.... Led by Bishop James Tengatenga [of southern Malawi] a committee of students, alumni, and faculty discerned a vision for the new crucifix **"that would better reflect Jesus' historical identity as a Middle Eastern Jew."** <https://theology.sewanee.edu/media/features/a-crucifix-of-color/>

Ultimately, they commissioned Laura James to create the new crucifix. Of the details of her commission, James says, "They specifically asked me for Christ standing on the Cross, as opposed to slumping over the Cross. They also wanted a piece that was rendered in the Ethiopian Christian art style, with his eyes open and the tree of life on the back .... **I thought it was brave to have a Black Jesus in a church represented that way. And not just any church, but a church that is on land that was given by a slave owner and which has such a strong connection with the Confederacy, and which is now used to train future clergy."** <https://theology.sewanee.edu/media/features/christ-in-full-color/>



Laura James shows the Tree of Life on the back of the crucifix

**"I'm also working on a series of paintings about race and reparations .... To reveal why reparations are an act of justice .... I want us to elevate our consciousness and it's time to do that. It's time to come to common ground and work toward actually living while loving one another."**

See Laura James' presentation at <https://vimeo.com/761590520>