

Volume LXII
Fall 2023

THE STORY

MAGAZINE AND ANNUAL REPORT

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revisions
streamline
degree programs

MAPT becomes
the MA
in Public
Theology

MTSO welcomes
five new faculty
members

Community Food
and Wellness
Initiative offers
food for thought
– and action

Incoming
students share
their vocational
aspirations

Schooler Institute
will address the
gift of lament



Methodist Theological School in Ohio

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A garden for all ✨
Just west of Dunn Dining Hall, a new accessible garden area has been built. Its raised herb and vegetable beds will give people with differing abilities the opportunity to

participate in growing food. The new beds are among the many contributions of MTSO's Community Food and Wellness Initiative. Read more about it on page 6.

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Founded in 1958, Methodist Theological School in Ohio is one of 13 seminaries formally affiliated with and funded in part by the United Methodist Church. Located in Central Ohio, MTSO offers five graduate degree programs: Master of Divinity, Master of Arts in Public Theology, Master of Arts in Social Justice, Master of Theological Studies and Doctor of Ministry. It also offers graduate-level certificate programs in United Methodist Deacon Studies and the Advanced Course of Study in the United Methodist Church. In addition, MTSO provides courses for General Board of Higher Education and Ministry certifications.

MTSO is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada and the Higher Learning Commission. Its degree programs are authorized by the Ohio Department of Higher Education and approved by the University Senate of the United Methodist Church.

We welcome your comments. Please send them to drussell@mtso.edu, or Danny Russell, MTSO, 3081 Columbus Pike, Delaware, Ohio 43015.

We don't do our work in isolation

By Jay Rundell
President

It is a privilege to reach out to our extended seminary community with this edition of *The Story Magazine*. I trust you will read with interest of the ways we engage in the preparation of leaders who will work through churches, agencies and communities to help make the world more just, sustainable and generative for all.

This fall, we've been blessed and strengthened by a great new incoming class of students responding to God's call on their lives, eager to deepen their understanding of that call and prepare themselves for ministry and service in the years ahead. What many of them may just be discovering is how different they are from one another and how much each of them will shape us as a community of learners. They no doubt came looking for answers, but it is so often the questions we ask of them – and the questions they ask of us and of one another – that make the biggest difference.

This new class is our largest in more than 10 years. Approximately half are persons of color. It also is likely the most diverse class we've had in terms of sexual orientation and gender identity. There are at least 12 denominational traditions and 18 United Methodist annual conferences represented. They come from six countries and more than 20 U.S. states.

You will read of wonderful additions to our faculty. They fill positions left by those who, like our students and most of society, move to the next phase of life or take new vocational steps. We celebrate with them and count ourselves fortunate to be able to attract an ever stronger and more diverse scholarly teaching corps.

This work never happens in isolation. We are always shaped by context and the events of the day and do this work against the backdrop of exceedingly challenging times. The world is in deep pain, particularly in Israel/Palestine and in communities around the globe with connections to that place and history.

Six years ago, Dean Valerie Bridgeman and I spent 10 days as part of an immersion for academic leaders in Israel/Palestine. We were hosted by both Israelis and Palestinians. We spent a day in an Israeli kibbutz less than a kilometer from the Gaza Green Line and then walked along the wall that surrounds the strip.

We spent another day touring the Golan Heights and the Lebanese and Syrian borders with an IDF officer pointing out ISIS and Hezbollah camps a short distance away. Yet another day was spent with an Israeli rabbi and a Palestinian activist in the

West Bank, learning of their partnership for peace. Several meetings with Palestinians in and around Ramallah further defined for us this challenging place. We experienced a deep and shared commitment from nearly all of our contacts to find a way forward, though with little agreement as to how. Our limited experience can hardly provide adequate perspective and understanding of such complex matters. There were, however, some common attributes among those who seemed most likely to contribute to a new reality.

They seemed interested in history, and not just their own. They demonstrated an understanding of religion beyond their own. And, importantly, they exhibited a willingness to let others define themselves and their communities. None of this should be mistaken for simple agreement amidst profoundly differing perspectives, but rather an intentionality toward recognizing the humanity and even sacred worth of the other.



This wasn't observable in everyone we met, and I doubt it was consistently true for anyone we met. But we were struck by the ability and inclination of some leaders to aspire to this kind of regard and respect for those who are both enemy and neighbor, and sometimes friend and loved one.

Our work at MTSO may seem distant from the acute crisis unfolding amidst generations-old struggles, but we are likely all more connected than we may think. A mission of deepening religious understanding and working for just relationships has likely never been more important.

While most of us can't act directly in these recent world events and may even be uncertain as to how exactly we feel about them, we can commit ourselves to doing everything we can to understand the world's complexities, foster love for all its peoples and work for the kinds of justice that might lead to peace, at least in our own corner of the world.

Thank you for your engagement with us and for your support of our mission and ministry as we expand the resources which undergird our endeavors.

Our work at MTSO may seem distant from the acute crisis unfolding amidst generations-old struggles, but we are likely all more connected than we think.

New students share aspirations

From the elementary school principal to the Marine Corps veteran, these six individuals epitomize the breadth of experiences and gifts with which MTSO's newest students have energized our

learning community. Their profiles below include quotes from their admissions essays.

CARING FOR THOSE HARMED BY RELIGION

Sue Webley believes "that my life's purpose is to care for those harmed, particularly by religion." She is an associate pastor at Rivers of Living Water UCC in New York and New Jersey and has served since 2017 as the national minister of youth and young adult ministries for The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries. TFAM promotes radical inclusivity for people who have traditionally lived at the margins, including those suffering from substance abuse, those living with HIV/AIDS, same-gender-loving people, the recently incarcerated, and sex industry workers.



Webley is committed to radical inclusion and affirmation. "One cannot include and condemn with the same breath!" she said. "Many in the LGBTQ+ community believe, as I once did, that they cannot have a relationship with the Divine because of who they are. Because of this, I endeavor to bring the church to them."

"While I am already an ordained minister, I recognize the importance of investing in myself and integrating academic pursuits into my faith and vice versa," said Webley, who is completing her Master of Divinity degree at MTSO. "A mere sense of 'calling' is insufficient; as stewards of the Divine's gifts, we are obligated to develop ourselves to better guide others."

PREPARING TO SERVE HIS FELLOW TANZANIANS

Jackson Swallo grew up in the small Tanzanian village of Kibao before moving on to the port city of Dar es Salaam, where he earned a bachelor's degree in education, history and Swahili from the University of Dar es Salaam, along with a diploma in theology and pastoral leadership from Reach Tanzania Bible College.



"I am glad that I have lived in both rural and urban settings and had to experience a large variety of things," he said. "One of the things that I have discovered throughout the years is the lack of well-trained preachers who preach on the word of God with a good understanding of the scriptures."

Over a number of years educating children and youth, Swallo has served as a language tutor, vocal trainer and soccer coach.

"Getting a Master of Divinity degree will help me acquire more knowledge in my field and be able to provide a good service to my people," he said. "I am looking forward to pursuing this course so that I can be of help in finding solutions to the problems and to ensure my country progresses in terms of spiritual matters."

A PK SEEKS HIS OWN UNIQUE CALLING

"Well, what a surprise," **Alex Giffin** said. "A preacher's kid is applying to attend seminary." Though his path doesn't mirror his dad's, he finds himself seeking a Master of Divinity degree, with plans to pursue ordination as a United Methodist deacon.

Giffin recalled a youth spent "running around the empty hallways after hours at the church with a questionably 'borrowed' set of keys, looking to see what kind of trouble I could get myself into." Now he realizes, "I wasn't yet able to articulate how God was wooing me and nurturing me into what I would someday be able to articulate as a call to full-time ministry."

He's still no stranger to church life. Giffin has served congregations as a communications director for eight years and is a familiar face – albeit one behind a camera – at major West Ohio Conference events.

"As I lean into this call," he said. "I want to have a solid theological foundation for my ministry so that the communication vehicles I create are grounded in sound theology."

"So, the question of my childhood, 'Are you going to be a preacher like your dad?' The answer is still the same. Not what he was called to, but what I'm called to: ministry of sharing the good news of Jesus Christ through my gift of communication."



DRAWN BY A SENSE OF INCLUSIVENESS

Katie Heck took advantage of a unique opportunity to evaluate MTSO: Her husband, Daniel, enrolled at the start of the 2023 Spring Semester, giving her a close-up view. "I love the theology of inclusiveness that is articulated and evident at MTSO," she said, "and I love the diversity that speaks to health and trust in God."



Heck brings an appreciation for what church can be, along with concern for the ways it can do harm. In the early 2000s, she was serving in an evangelical church with "a lot of unhealthy dynamics and damaging ways of treating people that I was ultimately unwilling to adhere to and perpetuate."

After leaving, she earned a Theology Graduate Certificate from Ohio Dominican University, an "enriching and enjoyable experience," though she realized she had no intention of converting to Catholicism.

In 2007, Heck began attending a Vineyard church, where she served as a volunteer for years before joining the staff in 2017. In her MA in Practical Theology classes, she said, "I do not expect to agree with everything and everyone, but I do look forward to hopefully not being the most liberal Christian in the room."

"I am hopeful that theological study at MTSO will help me articulate a gospel that I can proclaim honestly and gladly, without silencing my conscience."

CALLED TO BE A MILITARY CHAPLAIN

The convergence of two family traditions has brought clarity to the vocational aspiration of **Christian Locke**.



Immigrating from South Korea in the 1980s, "my grandmother and my mother's family brought with them a deep-rooted connection to the Kumnan Methodist Church in Seoul, where my grandmother served as a devout lay minister," he said.

Years later, standing at the pulpit to eulogize his grandmother, "I surveyed the gathering of individuals whom my grandmother had touched throughout her life. In that instant, I recognized that God had placed her in my life to inspire me to follow the same path."

Honoring his family's commitment to military service, Locke enlisted in the U.S. Marine Corps, where he observed the "devotion and selflessness" of military chaplains. During a chapel service, a chaplain asked him to assist with communion. "In that moment, I became aware of God's calling for me not only to be a pastor but a U.S. military chaplain, recognizing the pressing need for individuals with military experience like mine to provide support and compassionate care for those who serve in our armed forces."

As he begins pursuing his Master of Divinity degree, Locke said, "I am excited to delve into pastoral academic programs to gain a better understanding of pastoral care while also meeting new people and exploring their different theological perspectives."

MINISTERING IN CHURCH WHILE SERVING IN SCHOOL

By the time **Michael Warren** was 6 years old, he had lived in six homes, a child of the foster care system in Pittsburgh. And, he said, "School was never something I was passionate about from an academic point of view."

That changed thanks to Warren's middle school choir teacher, who inspired him to pursue a music education degree and "was also my reason for accepting Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior."

Today, 12 years after his high school graduation, Warren holds a doctorate and serves as principal of the Columbus City Schools' Preparatory School for Boys. Before becoming an administrator, he taught music in a suburban Pittsburgh district. While there, "I was

able to start a social justice group and partnered with a neighboring district to find ways to highlight student voice while truly establishing a culture of belonging."

His doctoral research was "centered around policy as it relates to students experiencing homelessness and how educational entities and nonprofits can utilize student voice and the lived experiences of youth in homelessness to implement programs that promote effective change for said youth."

"As a school administrator," he said, "I believe my ministry is largely a part of the day-to-day operations of the schools which I serve in." He is pursuing a Master of Divinity degree "with the hopes of serving in a more official capacity in the church as well."



CURRICULUM REVISION

Degree requirements streamlined; MAPT redefined

Beginning in the fall of 2024, MTSO will offer incoming master's degree students a slate of revised programs, offering most students the opportunity to complete their degrees in less time.

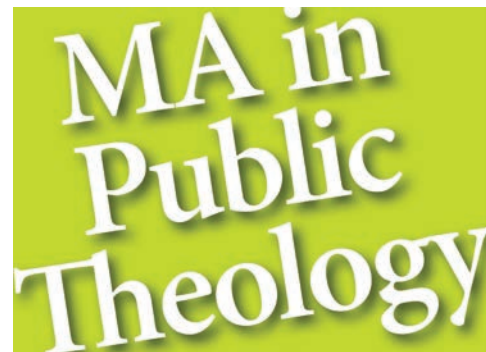
MTSO's four master's degree programs will have the following requirements for students enrolling in Fall Semester 2024 and beyond:

- **Master of Divinity**, 75 credit hours, achievable in three years.
- **Master of Arts in Public Theology**, 39 credit hours, achievable in two years.
- **Master of Arts in Social Justice**, 39 credit hours, achievable in two years.
- **Master of Theological Studies**, 39 credit hours, achievable in two years.

Reducing credit-hour requirements for most degrees, including the Master

of Divinity, is one of several ways the curriculum has been updated.

- The newly revised MA in Public Theology degree (formerly the MA in Practical Theology) deepens the knowledge and skills of those working to build societal peace, justice and the common good.
- The courses within each master's degree program will be organized into four cores – Values, Methods, Vocational Electives and Integrative.
- MTSO's Seminary Hill Farm will enhance the academic program in new ways through the Practicing Ecotheology course, which serves as the primary introduction to MTSO's unique ethos.
- A cross-cultural immersion trip, previously required for Master of



Divinity and MA in Social Justice degrees, will be required in all master's degree programs. These trips nurture a global perspective and serve as a foundation for learning to respect the rich diversity of beliefs and practices in the wider church.

To learn about the curriculum revision in more detail, visit mtso.edu/degreetupdates.

Three Mount Awards presented during Alumni Day

MTSO President Jay Rundell presented Judy Alston, Barbara Fant and Colleen Ogle with the John and Ruth Mount Alumni Awards for Distinguished Service, the school's highest honor for graduates, during an Oct. 26 Alumni Day luncheon.

Alston, who earned a Master of Divinity degree from MTSO in 2016, is chair of the Department of Educational Leadership at Miami University and the associate pastor of Woodland Christian Church in Columbus.

"I've been teaching for 36 years – 27 years at the university level," Alston said. "And there's not a day that I step in a classroom when I am teaching that God is not present and standing all around me as I'm speaking the words that God gives me to give to the people."

"This place really is special to me," she



Honorees * Fant, Ogle and Alston

said. "It bookended my education and was what I needed when God said, 'It's your time.'"

Fant is a renowned poet, voice-over talent, host, and corporate and nonprofit

storyteller. She graduated from MTSO with a Master of Theological Studies degree in 2012.

Fant said that as a young poet, "I felt too spiritual sometimes for the open mic and too edgy for the church. But MTSO embraced me. And they not only embraced me – they affirmed me and they affirmed the call on my life."

Ogle earned two degrees from MTSO: a Master of Theological Studies in 1985 and a Master of Divinity in 1987. She serves as lead pastor at Bexley United Methodist Church.

Praising MTSO for the founding of Seminary Hill Farm, Ogle said, "They made a statement to everyone who comes here that the church needs to look at the future and not only at the past."

FEB. 28 AND 29

Schooler Institute addresses ‘The Gift of Lament’

What is the value of lament? What is its place in effective preaching? These questions will be front and center when MTSO hosts the 2024 Schooler Institute on Preaching Feb. 28 and 29.

Under the theme “The Gift of Lament: A Journey from Struggle to Hope,” Schooler will be led by three members of the MTSO faculty: Professor of Worship, Music and Spirituality Lisa Allen-McLaurin, Assistant Professor of Homiletics Eugene Gibson Jr., and Associate Professor of New Testament Ryan Schellenberg.

Allen-McLaurin and Gibson, who are in the midst of their first year teaching at MTSO, are profiled on pages 9 and 13 of this magazine.

“We are pleased to have three of our



Schooler leaders * Allen-McLaurin, Gibson and Schellenberg

own lead the Schooler Institute, as they are in demand beyond the school and thus scholars we want you to know better,” said MTSO President Jay Rundell. “Their chosen theme of lament seems highly appropriate for Lent and quite timely given the current struggles in the world around us in this season.”

Schooler begins with lunch Wednesday, Feb. 28, followed by an overview of the

theme, with a conversation between the leaders considering lament through biblical, homiletical and liturgical lenses. In concurrent workshops, participants will discuss personal lament and communal lament. The first day will end at 5 p.m., after all participants come together to receive instructions for Day 2.

Thursday begins with a 9 a.m. plenary session considering where God is found in lament. The 11 a.m. closing worship will serve as a model for moving through struggle to hope.

Thanks to the generosity of the Schooler Family Foundation, the Schooler Institute on Preaching is presented at no cost to participants. Registration is required and available at mtso.edu/schooler.

MTSO hosts Chloe’s Circle with WomanPreach!

MTSO will host Chloe’s Circle April 19 and 20. This gathering will prepare women from diverse racial and ethnic backgrounds to focus on justice in their preaching and speaking.

The Chloe’s Circle model was created by WomanPreach! Inc., and the April event is made possible by the collaboration between WomanPreach! and MTSO.

In the fall of 2023, Lilly Endowment Inc. awarded MTSO a five-year supplemental grant of \$250,000 to support compelling preaching through WomanPreach! The supplemental grant augments a five-year, \$1 million grant awarded in late 2022 through Lilly Endowment’s Compelling Preaching initiative, launched in 2022 to support projects that help to nurture the religious lives of individuals and families and foster the growth and vitality of Christian congregations in the United States.

WomanPreach! was founded in 2010 by MTSO Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs Valerie Bridgeman, who serves as the program’s CEO. Begun as a way to train women, WomanPreach! has since grown to include programming for people of all genders and speakers that serve as community organizers and in various other vocational spaces where faith-based, justice-centered proclamation is necessary.

Chloe’s Circle will feature wisdom partner Gail Song Bantum, a WomanPreach! board member and lead pastor of Quest Church, an urban, multi-ethnic and inclusive community in the heart of Seattle. A second-generation Korean-American, formed in the Korean immigrant and Black Pentecostal traditions, Song Bantum seeks to cultivate advocacy, liberation and belonging for the marginalized within the life of the church.



Leading April’s event * Song Bantum

Chloe’s Circle begins with dinner Friday, April 19, and continues through 5 p.m. Saturday. Additional information and registration opportunities will be shared by MTSO and WomanPreach! in early 2024.

Food for thought – and action

The Community Food and Wellness Initiative take’s MTSO’s values on the road

By Katherine Dickson

In her role as MTSO’s director of vocational discernment and community engagement, Dickson oversees the school’s Community Food and Wellness Initiative.

In the early days of Seminary Hill Farm, there was a lot of dreaming of what could be. As a number of us talked together and in our respective areas, one thing we knew was that we didn’t want the farm’s benefits limited to MTSO.

Yes, we knew we would end up with one of the shortest food supply chains in Ohio, with the farm providing food for our Dunn Dining Hall kitchen and sharing it via our Community Supported Agriculture program. But we wanted to make a difference in the broader community.

Those conversations led to the birth of the MTSO Community Food and Wellness Initiative, established a few years after Seminary Hill Farm’s 2013 founding. Patrick Kaufman, an alum of MTSO and co-founder of Franklinton Farms, an urban farm near downtown Columbus, was one of the architects of the CFWI. He helped envision how we could combine our campus commitments to ecotheology, sustainability, and environmental and social justice to serve Columbus and surrounding communities. He frequently reminded us, “We always have to stop and ask: What do the neighborhoods want?”



Olentangy Schools students tend raised beds next to Dunn Dining Hall

The CFWI was first funded in 2016, thanks to a grant from the Harry C Moores Foundation, which continues to support its work. Kaufman served as the initiative’s first project coordinator, working to launch our first projects before his death from cancer in 2018.

In September 2016, a bus from the Gladden Community House in Franklinton arrived at MTSO, and out streamed 30 preschoolers, teachers and parents. After a farm tour, they made their own pizzas featuring tomatoes grown steps away. It was the initiative’s first event, inspiring us with a glimpse of the connections we could form.

Each year since, the CFWI has evolved and grown, supporting food justice and education in Greater Columbus through partnerships, educational opportunities and produce sharing. Much of this has been achieved by MTSO students who serve as CFWI associates with specific projects in Central Ohio.

Our work has taken many forms. A sampling:

- Assisting with victory gardens in Franklinton.
- Producing instructional cooking videos and recipes to go with meal kit boxes distributed by Community Development for All People.
- Supporting a pilot project with Ohio State University, Franklinton Farms and others to research food hub needs in Columbus.
- Hosting children from YMCA summer camps and undergraduates from local colleges on the farm.
- Funding deliveries of Seminary Hill Farm produce to organizations including the Linden Market; the Lutheran Social Services Food Pantry; Sanctuary Night Columbus; Food Leads; Community Development for All People’s Healthy Eating and Living program; and Delaware People in Need.



Students from the Academy for Community Transition pause for a photo



Children from the Hilltop YMCA visit Seminary Hill Farm

- Providing vocational training to high school interns in the dining hall

MTSO student associates have been a major part of our work. They have served as interns with many of the above listed partners, receiving stipends through the Moores grant. We've sent interns to work on farms and startup gardens; do community food work; create programming and Bible studies around ecotheology for churches; prepare sermons and book clubs with food- and justice-related themes; and bring visiting groups to our farm and campus.

Danielle Jones, a recent CFWI student associate and 2022 MA in Social Justice graduate, now serves as the co-executive director of Food Leads, which empowers the community to build nourishing relationships with food to reduce racial and socioeconomic health disparities that contribute to chronic disease. As an intern with Food Leads and Franklinton Farms, Jones coordinated produce pickup and drop-off logistics from Seminary Hill Farm and created educational opportunities.

On Earth Day this year, she gathered representatives of Food Leads, MTSO and Seminary Hill Farm staff for an event at Shady Lane Elementary School in Columbus, where students learned about their relationship to the earth. Activities included composting, spaghetti sauce tasting and raised-bed planting. Our current student associates are looking to develop a church's learning garden and build programs for a nonprofit to fight hunger across Ohio.



"Collaborative Salsa" shared at the Ohio Food Policy Network's annual summit

The CFWI also provides an opportunity for college students to learn about food-justice work. Over the summer, MTSO hosted the Stinner Summit Climate Ambassador program, co-sponsored by Ohio State, with funding from MTSO's Pathways for Tomorrow grant from Lilly Endowment Inc. and supported by the CFWI. Fourteen undergraduate interns participated in a six-week program through which they were exposed to projects throughout Ohio, expanding their knowledge around climate and regenerative agriculture.

We build relationships in ways big and small – sometimes small enough to fit in a jar. As part of the Ohio Food Policy Network's annual summit held in October, the CFWI organized and covered the costs of providing participants with "collaborative salsa" featuring produce from Seminary Hill Farm, South Side Family Farms and Glass Rooster Cannery. And, for the past two years, the CFWI paid for students and staff to attend the summit, giving them the opportunity to network and learn together about pressing equity issues and policy needs. More, the CFWI supports the new Community Growers' Network in hosting quarterly gatherings and through offering support as needs arise.

Though much of our initiative's work takes place with partners miles from our campus, MTSO's students, faculty and staff see the most consistent evidence of it during weekday lunches. Since January 2019,



Shady Lane Elementary School students learn about composting on Earth Day

our dining experience has been enhanced by high school students participating in Olentangy Schools' Academy for Community Transition. ACT is designed to help students with special needs prepare for life after graduation.

The CFWI has coordinated bringing the program to MTSO and pays the ACT interns for their work with events and other service. They work under Dunn Dining Hall Chef Brian Murphy as part of the dining hall team, clearing tables, washing dishes, plating food, and even learning to prepare certain menu items. Murphy has used raised beds outside of the dining hall for planting and harvesting activities with the high schoolers. A new, larger raised-bed area, designed to be accessible for gardeners of differing abilities, has been constructed west of the dining hall, with the CFWI funding the project.

These are highlights the Community Food and Wellness Initiative's work over the past seven years, living into MTSO's mission and values one project, one neighborhood and one organization partner at a time. We look forward to finding and working with our next partners. ✨

The view from on high

Drone photos offer an opportunity to take in a beautiful campus from a new angle



The full campus, viewed from the west



*Helen Werner
Apartment Building*



*Kleist Manor Townhomes
and Seminary Hill Farm*



Werner Hall



*Dunn Dining Hall
and Dewire Residence Hall*

LISA ALLEN-McLAURIN, PROFESSOR OF MUSIC, WORSHIP AND SPIRITUALITY

Teaching a OneWord worship model

After Lisa Allen-McLaurin earned her doctorate in music education from the University of Southern Mississippi in 1993, she said, “I never intended to go back to school.” She was engaged in “my utmost passion,” serving as a school music teacher for K-12 students and a musician in a United Methodist church.

“But God called me into ordained ministry in church while I was at the organ,” she said. “And so I got up under the unction of the Holy Spirit and preached that Sunday. I mean, it was a surreal experience.”

“But I knew that I needed theological education. I told my then husband, ‘I’m going to have to go back to school.’ And he was very supportive. I quit my job and enrolled in Candler School of Theology at Emory University.”

Allen-McLaurin’s Master of Divinity degree from Candler followed her Ph.D., a Master of Music Education from Southern Mississippi, and bachelor’s degrees in piano performance and music education from Millsaps College. Initially ordained in the United Methodist Church, she transferred her orders to the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church in 2014. She is married to Thomas McLaurin.

In August, Allen-McLaurin was appointed professor of music, worship and spirituality at MTSO. She arrives after 18 years at the Interdenominational Theological Center in Atlanta, where she served as the Helmar Emil Nielsen Professor of Church Music and Worship.

“We are enriched by Dr. Allen-McLaurin’s expertise and energy throughout our learning community,” said MTSO President Jay Rundell. “Her classroom teaching and her contributions to our weekly chapel services are elevating the way we learn about and practice worship.”

Allen-McLaurin spent the first half of 2023 living and working on the left bank of the Seine River as music scholar and director-in-residence at the American Church in Paris.

“They wanted to diversify their music and their worship,” she



**“If we have one word that is going forth, then nobody’s confused” ✱
Allen-McLaurin**

said. “I was able to teach the choir and teach the congregation some different traditions out of African-American worship. We did some things out of Caribbean traditions. We did some things out of South American traditions. It was wonderful.”

A composer and author, Allen-McLaurin premiered *Christmas Is Waiting to Be Born: An Advent Cantata Inspired by the Works of Howard Thurman* in 2019. Her most recent book, published in September, is *The OneWord Worship Model: A New Paradigm for Church Worship Planning*.

“The model begins with the biblical text,” she said. “In a lot of worship services I’ve observed, there are a lot of different messages that go forth, and they’re not all connected. It’s kind of like the old joke where the pastor gets up and preaches, ‘I wish we could take drugs and crime and whatever, and dump them in the river.’ And then the choir gets up to sing the invitational hymn and sings, ‘Shall We Gather at the River?’”

“If I’ve got to keep together four separate messages in my mind as an attendee, I don’t know what it is I’m supposed to do in response to that. So rather than that, if we have one message, one word that is going forth, then nobody’s confused.”

Speaking as a musician, she adds, “There are messages that can be communicated in music, but is it serving the larger message? Or is it just a way to showcase our wondrous choir, our liturgical dance team, our great orchestra?”

MTSO’s Tuesday afternoon chapel services provide Allen-McLaurin an opportunity to encourage OneWord thinking. She consults with Chapel Coordinator Richard Hinkelman and the student members of the planning team in shaping a service that differs in a number of ways from a Sunday morning in church.

“The main difference would be that the worshipping body is primarily constituted of scholars,” she said. “So in a chapel service, not only are we facilitating encounters with the divine, but we’re also trying to teach students and show the community best practices for putting worship together.” ✱

TONI BOND, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF ETHICS

Viewing ethics through unique lenses

As fall transitions into winter, Central Ohio is providing Toni Bond with a refresher course on Midwest weather. She and her two dogs, Satchmo and Count Basie, moved here in August after she accepted a position as MTSO's associate professor of ethics.

"I was in Las Vegas, where it is probably in the 70s or 80s right now," Bond said with a chuckle on a chilly autumn day. Not that this will be the first encounter with a blustery winter for the Chicago native. And it helps that she has received a warm welcome to campus.

"The reception has been amazing. The students are wonderful. They are very engaged, very insightful," said Bond, who taught two semesters as an MTSO adjunct faculty member prior to her current appointment. She also has taught at Claremont School of Theology, where she earned her Ph.D. and a Master of Arts in Theology/Ethics. She holds a bachelor's degree in Women and Gender Studies from DePaul University.

"During her time as an adjunct with us, Dr. Bond was highly respected by her students and colleagues," said MTSO President Jay Rundell. "We're happy to have her here now as part of our learning community on a full-time basis."

Bond said she first entered academia "well into my adult life," after years as an activist and nonprofit leader. She worked as a medical advocate at a rape crisis center before serving from 1994 to 2000 as executive director of the Chicago Abortion Fund. In addition, she was the co-founder, president and CEO of Black Women for Reproductive Justice, and was a project director for the Religious Coalition for Reproductive Choice.

"I and 11 other Black women in 1994 coined the term 'reproductive justice' and started the reproductive justice movement," Bond said. The movement "looks at the intersections of race and class and gender, and how they impact Black women's ability to lead healthy reproductive and sexual lives."

"During that time, I always wondered: What did God have to



"How do we support people in the midst of these moral dilemmas?" Bond

say about not just social-justice issues but how we ought to love people? What's the ethical thing to do in these instances when people are confronted with having to make moral decisions about their reproductive lives? How do we support people in the midst of these moral dilemmas? And the only way I knew to do that was to go back to school and go to seminary."

Bond has packed a lot into a relatively short time in the academic world, delivering lectures, leading panels, and writing for journals and popular media. She has contributed a chapter, "The Dobbs Decision, God, and Moral Conscience," to the forthcoming book *Resistance! Health Professionals, District Attorneys, Politicians, Religious Leaders, and Others Fight the End of Roe v. Wade*.

In the classroom, she prompts students to wrestle with thorny ethical issues. One recent question pitted civic duty against parental duty: "So the authorities show up at your house. They are looking for your son, who has allegedly broken into your neighbor's house. You are a parent of color, and your son is Black. What do you do? Do you tell them that your son is downstairs in the basement?"

Some students told her that, considering the injustices faced by people of color, their answer was no. "I said, 'Even if you knew that more than likely your son had committed this crime?' And they said, 'Yeah, I would be afraid to just hand my son over.'"

"We can't disregard the unique lens through which MTSO students look at how they offer pastoral care, how they pastor to members of the congregation," Bond said. "Because they understand the particularities of the lives of the people that they are ministering to."

By design, her class is not a place for easy answers.

"It's very complicated. But we need to ensure that our religious leaders are as prepared as possible to have these conversations and to be sources of support for their congregants in the communities where they are." ✱

CHRISTOPHER CARTER, ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF THEOLOGY, ECOLOGY AND RACE

A significant voice on food justice

As a boy, Christopher Carter would visit his grandparents in Three Rivers, Michigan, each summer. After morning chores, he was free to explore the town's woods and streams with his cousins and friends. In the evenings, he would learn about grandparents' personal histories.

Reflecting today, he sees how those days were shaping him for his work as a significant voice in the theological space where racial justice, ecology and food justice intersect.

This fall, Carter joined the MTSO faculty as associate professor of theology, ecology and race. He is teaching remotely from Los Angeles, where he serves as a United Methodist pastor and lives with his wife, Gabrielle, and their son, Isaiah. He comes to campus for significant events throughout the year.

Carter's grandparents were raised in Mississippi. "My grandfather would say, 'Hey, this is just life: If you want to have some stability, you have to work harder than white people.'"

"It wasn't until I got into undergrad and graduate school that I began to connect the environmental justice," Carter said. The connection reached back to the joy of youthful summers outdoors in Michigan. "What's so profound is that I didn't have the words to express what I felt. I wouldn't have called it environmental justice or stewardship. I just called it playing outside."

After high school, Carter got a job and volunteered in his Methodist church. It took some prodding by his then-fiancée, Gabrielle, who "saw in me something I couldn't see in myself," to convince him to give college a try. After getting average grades in high school, he excelled in college and beyond. He graduated from Cornerstone University with a bachelor's degree in business administration before earning a Master of Divinity and Ph.D. from Claremont School of Theology.

Grad school helped Carter see how his interest in the environment and commitment to racial justice were connected: "I started to see how people of color were victims of environmental injustice – how we were more likely to live near environmental polluting plants, how we had less access to clean water."



"I am in the place that God has called me"
* Carter

He was a doctoral student when the third component of his work came into focus. In November 2011, he was driving north on Interstate 5 toward San Francisco for the American Academy of Religion (AAR) Annual Meeting.

"When you drive that way, you see all the factory farms," he said. "I see all these people working in these fields, and it looks terrible. And it's all brown people. I could feel their suffering. And then it's like this bolt of lightning: *It's just like your grandpa.*"

Carter recalled how, during trips to Mississippi for family reunions, his grandfather would point out the fields where he had worked. "When I was able to connect the suffering of those migrant workers with the suffering of my grandfather, it just became really personal for me."

As he considered the toll food production takes on farm workers and animals, he began asking, "How can I eat in a way that doesn't harm others?"

How can I eat in a way that's in alignment with my morals and my values?" He addresses that question and others, along with providing well-received vegan recipes, in his 2021 book, *The Spirit of Soul Food: Race, Faith, and Food Justice*.

In 2014, Carter met MTSO President Jay Rundell at an AAR meeting, and the two discussed food justice and MTSO's Seminary Hill Farm. So began a relationship that has culminated with Carter's appointment to the faculty. He comes to MTSO from the University of San Diego, where he was an associate professor in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies.

"My meeting with Dr. Carter at AAR coincided with a growing awareness of the connections between theology, ecology and race," Rundell said. "For years, we have hoped the day would come when we could welcome him to our faculty, and we're happy to do so now."

Carter shares his enthusiasm: "When I came out here to visit the first time, I thought, man, everything I want to do with food is right on this campus. I am in the place that God has called me." *

KATE COMMON, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF PRACTICAL THEOLOGY

Bringing a designer's eye to the church

It's possible you've seen the work of MTSO's newly elected assistant professor of practical theology without knowing it. Until a few years ago, Kate Common was designing attention-grabbing ads for distribution to the 2.5 million customers on the email list of the clothing retailer Marshalls.

At the same time, she was finishing a Ph.D. in theological studies from Boston University School of Theology to go with her master's in theological research from Andover Newton Theological School and her Bachelor of Fine Arts degree in visual communication design from Kent State University.

Common is no stranger to MTSO. She is in the fourth of four academic years teaching here as a Louisville Institute postdoctoral scholar, during which the institute provides her salary, benefits and travel expenses.

"Thanks to the Louisville Institute, Dr. Common and our school have had several years to learn that we really work well together," said MTSO President Jay Rundell. "I am grateful for everything Kate brings to our shared work and look forward her teaching and leadership in the years to come."

Common, who lives in Northampton, Massachusetts, with her wife, Kysa Nygreen, their two children and three dogs, teaches primarily remotely, coming to campus in person for significant events throughout the year.

Growing up in rural northeastern Ohio, Common learned a lot about herself during high school: She aspired to be a graphic designer; she was good enough at softball to be recruited by Division I universities; and she was gay.

Raised by conservative Christian parents, "I had grown up in an environment thinking that being gay was a sin."

She attended Kent State during the turn of the 21st century. Struggling to reconcile her faith and her sexuality, she delved into gay theology books and also connected with a warehouse-based church community that she found welcoming despite its conservative theology. Eventually, she chose to declare herself ex-gay, to the delight of her church: "I became a poster child."

But then, she said with a chuckle, "As things happen, you end up



"I really like being connected back to Ohio" * Common

meeting someone. And I met a woman who was set to become a campus minister. After a few months we realized, 'Oh, this feels like more than a friendship. Well, we've gotta tell our ministry teams.'" The ministry teams responded by shutting both women out of leadership roles.

After college, Common moved to Boston, joined an open and affirming church, and rose through the ranks of a design firm, eventually managing multimillion dollar accounts. "It was a great career. But I couldn't get theology out of my head."

Now, two graduate theological degrees later, she is finding innovative ways to blend her vocational passions as a member of MTSO's faculty. Among the courses she teaches is Transformational Leadership by Design.

"If you think about design," she said, "you work on a project, you hang it up, you get feedback, and you go back and work on the same project."

"A big part of it is not assuming you know what the problem is. Like, 'There's not enough youth in our Sunday school. Is the problem with the youth, or is there something bigger? Is the problem that you've created an isolated community so that it's not welcoming for people with young families?'"

Common's first book, *Undoing Conquest: Ancient Israel, the Bible, and the Future of Christianity*, will be published by Orbis Books in February 2024. It argues that archaeological discoveries across Israel and Palestine reveal a liberating origins story of ancient Israel that contradicts conquest-based interpretations of its history. Her next book project is *Imagining Utopia: The Four Marks of a Queer Feminist Church*.

Common is excited to be doing this work through a school in her home state.

"I really like being connected back to Ohio," she said, "because that's where my roots are, and that's where my real heart for ministry and wanting to create change in the church emerged from. It's really coming full circle to be in Ohio teaching folks that are in ministry and are in many ways still dealing with some of the issues that I dealt with 20 years ago." *

EUGENE GIBSON JR., ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HOMILETICS

‘I want people to love preaching’

Fifteen years ago, while serving as senior pastor at the Place of the Outpouring, a Baptist congregation in Memphis, Tennessee, Eugene Gibson Jr. preached at a youth revival. One of those in attendance was Valerie Bridgeman, at the time a faculty member at Memphis Theological Seminary. Gibson remembers their conversation after the service well.

“She said, ‘You need to be teaching that,’” he recalled. “Two weeks later, the dean from Memphis Theological asked me to come do a class, and the rest is history.”

Gibson served as an adjunct seminary professor in Memphis until 2020, when he moved north to become senior pastor of Mt. Olivet Baptist Church in Columbus. His leadership of one of the city’s best-known churches led to a renewal of his friendship with Bridgeman, who became MTSO’s dean in 2017. In mid-2023, Gibson invited Bridgeman to preach at Mt. Olivet.

“She preaches and does a wonderful job,” he recalled. “The next day, she texts me early in the morning. ‘Can you call me?’ I call her. She says, ‘I might have a teaching position for you.’ I said, ‘Get outta here!’”

“I love preaching, but I love teaching more,” Gibson said. “I like the light bulb to go off. I like somebody to encounter the Bible.”

In August, Gibson began teaching at MTSO as assistant professor of homiletics. A Ph.D. candidate at Christian Theological Seminary, he was inducted into the Martin Luther King Jr. Board of Preachers at Morehouse College in 2012.

Gibson and his wife, Shakitha Boone Gibson, share four children: Trinity, Taylor, Jaden and Kyndall.

“We’re excited to offer our students the opportunity to study under an active and accomplished preacher,” said MTSO President Jay Rundell. “Rev. Dr. Gibson’s love for his vocation and enthusiasm



“I love preaching, but I love teaching more” *
Gibson

for the homiletic craft are infectious.”

Though his father and namesake was a preacher, Gibson’s first leadership role in the church was away from the pulpit. He served as a minister of music for 11 years, directing a 100-voice youth choir called Joyful Noise. But in his mid-20s, “I sensed a call to ministry.”

“You know, people have call stories, especially in the African-American community, where they ran from God and all that,” he said. “I didn’t. When I felt that I was called, I told my dad the next day.”

Gibson served under the renowned preacher Frank Thomas, who led MTSO’s Schooler Institute on Preaching in 2019, at churches in Chicago and Memphis. Thomas, whom Gibson still considers “my pastor and mentor,” wrote a book titled *How to Preach a Dangerous Sermon*.

While Gibson doesn’t aspire “be a provocateur for provocation’s sake,” he doesn’t avoid the

homiletic danger zone. Fraught personal and public events are among the things he looks forward to addressing with students in his Spring 2024 course Preaching and Worship for Special Occasions: “How do you do a funeral sermon? How do you do a national tragedy sermon? How do you do a political sermon?”

In his Fall 2023 Introduction to Homiletics class, Gibson has exposed his students to the history of preaching, “so that you realize that you’re not the first person to ever utter a gospel.” And he has stressed the development of a system for writing sermons, “whether you have a week or two days to prepare.” In fact, he encourages new and aspiring preachers to write or at least outline a sermon every week, even if they aren’t planning to preach.

“I want people to love it,” he said. “I want them to be excited about practicing and getting better. You can’t tell me you love it if you don’t do it. You can’t tell me you love it if you won’t study it.” *

Beyond the classroom

Faculty activities 2022-23



**Tejai Beulah
Howard**

**Assistant Professor
of History, Ethics,
and Black Church
and African Diaspora
Studies**

Publications

“How Pauli Murray Masterminded Brown v. Board,” in *Black Perspectives*. Oct. 13, 2022.

“Freedom and Liberation: Bounce Music Roundtable Introduction,” in *Black Perspectives*, Oct. 24, 2022

“Howard Thurman’s Biographer: An Author Interview with Peter Eisenstadt,” in *Black Perspectives*, April 11, 2023.

Academic lectures and presentations

“Howard Thurman and the Luminous Darkness,” Spirituality and Social Change Leadership Class, Drew Theological School, Madison, New Jersey (virtual), March 2023.

“Black Church Leadership in U.S. Social Movements,” Freedom Church of the Poor Minister’s Training Program, the Kairos Center, New York, New York (virtual), April 2023.

Professional and guild activities

Panelist, “The Nuts and Bolts of Publishing,” African American Intellectual History Conference, Charlotte, North Carolina (virtual), 2023.

Church and popular speaking

“John Wesley, C.S. Lewis, and Enduring English Christian Ideas,” East Shore United Methodist Church, Cleveland, October 2022.

“Pauli Murray: Twitter Chat,” with the Pauli Murray Center and the National Coalition on School Diversity (virtual), November 2022.

“Jesus and John Shaft: How Tom Skinner Created and Spread the Black Power Gospel,” paper presented at New Directions in Black Power conference, Goethe University, Frankfurt, Hesse, Germany, June 24, 2023.



**Valerie
Bridgeman**

**Dean
Vice President for
Academic Affairs
Associate Professor of
Homiletics and Hebrew Bible**

Academic lectures and presentations

“When is an ‘A’ a ‘C+’? The Insidious Nature of Unexamined Bias in Grading and Assessment,” presented in the “Racism, Pedagogy, and Biblical Studies” program of the Society for Biblical Literature, Nov. 20, 2022.

Professional and guild activities

Member, Committee on Women in the Profession, Society of Biblical Literature, renewed 2022-25.

Juror, American Academy of Religion Textual Studies Book Award Jury, 2022-23.

Interviewer, fireside chat with Nuria Calduch-Benages, International Society of Biblical Literature Conference, Salzburg, Austria, July 17-21, 2022.

Presider, “Sisters(s) Act 2/Too: A Womanist ReVision of Women’s Relationships in/and the Bible in the 21st Century,” Womanist Interpretation Program Unit, Society of Biblical Literature, Nov. 19, 2022.

Church and popular speaking

Delegate, Black Church Summit, invitation-only gathering of participants by the Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, to engage current and future challenges of the church, Aug. 3-5, 2023.

Lecturer, Upper Room Academy for Spiritual Formation, theme: “Meeting God in Our Reconciling,” online, Aug. 11-13, 2022.

Lecturer, with Yani Davis, “The Word Made Flesh: Poetry and Spoken Word in/as Worship,” Inaugural Julius B. Dotson Institute for Music and Worship in the Black Church and Beyond, Atlanta, Aug. 17-20, 2022.

Opening preacher and panelist participant (“Embodying Hope”) for the Nevertheless She Preached: Embrace Healing, Embody Hope Conference, Sept. 19, 2022.

Conversation partner, “Fitness Motivation,”

Harmonize Your Life Podcast with Dr. Toni G. Alvarado, aired Sept. 19, 2022.

Ritualist, PowerRising Conference (a gathering of Black women from various public and private sectors), Sept. 22-25, 2022.

Preacher and panelist, United Church of Christ Antoinette Brown Clergywomen’s Leadership Gathering, Sept. 27-29, 2022.

Opening preacher, Girlfriend’s Getaway Health Conference, St. Maarten, Oct. 8-12, 2022.

Guest speaker on mentoring, Lott Carey Literary Circle: Impact Together, Oct. 13, 2022.

“Dangerous Uses of the Bible/Old Testament,” Seminary Saturday Series, Alfred Street Baptist Church, Jan. 21, 2023.

Other activities

Presented with Distinguished Scholar Award by the Black Religious Scholars Group in its 24th-year gathering, Denver, Nov. 18, 2022.



Kyle Brooks
**Assistant Professor of
Homiletics, Worship,
and Black Church and
Diasporic Studies**

Publications

“The Morning After: Black Women and the March on Washington,” in *Black Perspectives*, Dec. 12, 2022.

“Free Your Mind: Funkadelic and the Nitty-Gritty Hermeneutic,” in *Theology and Protest Music*, edited by Jonathan H. Harwell and Heidi M. Altman, Lexington Books/Fortress Academic, 2023.

Academic lectures and presentations

“Beyond Aesthetic Blackness: Black Religion as Sacred Choreography,” African American Legacy Lecture at Colgate Rochester Crozier Divinity School, Rochester, New York, Sept. 22, 2022.

“Ghostly Ideals: The Hauntology of Black Religious Leadership,” University of San Diego, February 2023.

“Waiting to Exhale: The Ethics and Aesthetics of Black Love in Conversation with bell hooks’ *Communion*,” Center for Black Studies, Denison University, March 2023.

Professional and guild activities

Annual Meeting of the Academy of Homiletics, Louisville, December 2022.

Church and popular speaking

Sermon, McKinley United Methodist Church, April 7, 2023.

Sermon, New Salem Baptist Church, May 28, 2023.

Other activities

Inductee, Martin Luther King Jr. Collegium of Scholars at Morehouse College, April 2023.



Kate Common
Visiting Assistant
Professor of Practical
Theology
Louisville Institute
Postdoctoral Scholar

Academic lectures and presentations

Planner and resource person for the Louisville Institute Vocation of Theological Education Winter Gathering; presenter on the panel “Rest and Resistance – Whole Beingness,” February 2023.

Guest classroom speaker on “Design Thinking for Ministry,” MTSO, 2023.

Professional and guild activities

Publications coordinator for the Association of Practical Theology.

Church and popular speaking

Interviewed as co-founder of *Fusion Magazine* at Kent State University, for the 20th anniversary edition. *Fusion* is the first LGBTQ+ magazine to be published on a college campus.

Other activities

Developed and launched a theology course, *Undoing Conquest*, through the Seekers Table course platform, with the goal of connecting and inspiring pastors and other church folks to consider integrating a “Season of Origins” into liturgical practice.

Attended the Mount Union Peace and Justice Studies Conference on behalf of MTSO admissions, October 2022.

Served on the MTSO Curriculum Committee. Created and edited video for board of trustees meeting; met with faculty and board group to revise curriculum for approval in May 2023.

Met with group from MTSO and Claremont School of Theology to discuss potential joint UMC grant for imagining the future of

theological education, May 2023.

Signed a contract with Orbis Books for *Undoing Conquest*, April 2023. The book is due out by February 2024.



Paul Kim
Professor of Hebrew
Bible

Publications

Editor, with Tyler D. Mayfield and Hye-Kyung Park, of *Historical Settings, Intertextuality, and Biblical Theology: Essays in Honor of Marvin A. Sweeney*, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2022.

“Abraham’s Migration and Name Change: A Story for the Babylonian Exiles,” in *TheTorah.com*, 2022.

Editor, with Shelley L. Birdsong and J. Cornelis de Vos, of *Judges, Gender, and Intertextuality*, Atlanta: SBL Press, 2023.

Academic lectures and presentations

“Sheol, Saul, Solomon: Upside-Down Regimes between 1-2 Samuel and Isaiah,” Society of Biblical Literature annual conference, Denver, November 2022.

Professional and guild activities

Co-chair, “Israelite Prophetic Literature” unit at Society of Biblical Literature, Denver, November 2022.

President, Korean Biblical Colloquium affiliate unit at Society of Biblical Literature, Denver, November 2022.

Church and popular speaking

Four keynote lectures on “Re-reading Genesis,” Hanshin Church Symposium, South Korea, June 13-16, 2022.

Sermons at First Presbyterian Church, Marysville, Ohio, May 29; July 3; Aug. 7, 21 and 28; and Sept. 4, 2022.

Co-speaker, Conference on Trauma and Community Wellbeing, MTSO Thriving in Ministry Initiative event, Oct. 27-28, 2022.



Sarah Lancaster
Professor in the
Werner Chair of
Theology

Publications

“Baptism and Justification: Evangelical Conversion and Infant Baptism,” in *New Life in the Risen Christ: A Wesleyan Theology of Baptism*, edited by Jonathan Powers, Cascade Books, 2023.

“Explanatory Notes Upon the New Testament,” in *Routledge Companion to John Wesley*, edited by Clive Murray Norris and Joseph W. Cunningham, Routledge, 2023.

Other activities

Planning for the Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies, to meet in Oxford, England, in 2024.



Elaine Nogueira-Godsey
Assistant Professor
of Theology, Ecology
and Race

Publications

“Race, Religion and Environmental Racism in North America,” co-authored with Laurel Kearns and Whitney A. Bauman, in *Bloomsbury Religion in North America*, edited by Laurel Kearns and Whitney A. Bauman, London: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2022.

“A Decological Way to Dialogue: Rethinking Ecofeminism and Religion,” *The Routledge Handbook of Religions, Gender and Society*, edited by Emma Tomalin and Caroline Starkey, New York: Routledge, 2022.

Academic lectures and presentations

Keynote, “Ecofeminism and Interreligious Dialogue,” Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counseling general meeting (virtual), July 8, 2022.

Keynote, “Rethinking Ecofeminism and Religion: A Decological Perspective,” virtual conference of the Diversity Reading List, Oct. 19, 2022.

“A Decological Way to Dialogue and Learn,” Drew Theological School, Feb. 1, 2023.

Keynote, “Ecofeminism, Faith Traditions & Spirituality: A Decological Way to Dialogue,”

Continues

from previous page

Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counseling conference, May 29, 2023.

Organizer and presenter, “Emerging Scholars: Religion and Reproductive Liberation,” AAR/SBL Women’s Caucus, American Academy of Religion annual meeting, Denver, November 2022.

Organizer and president, “Book Roundtable – *Valuing Lives, Healing Earth: Feminist Liberation Theologians in Honor of Rosemary Radford Ruether*,” AAR/SBL Women’s Caucus, American Academy of Religion annual meeting, Denver, November 2022.

“Decological Teaching Practices,” co-sponsored session of Feminist Theory and Religious Reflection Unit and International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture, American Academy of Religion annual meeting, Denver, November 2022.

Professional and guild activities

“Teaching Borderlands in Theological Education: Latinx Learning Reimagined,” Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary, April 24-25, 2023.

Society for Intercultural Pastoral Care and Counseling general meeting, July 8, 2022.

Member, Reproductive Ethics Workgroup.

Co-chair, American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature Women’s Caucus.

Member, steering committee, Latina/o Religion, Culture and Society Unit, American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature.

Treasurer, International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture.

Member, board of directors, CreatureKind.

Assistant editor, *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture*.

Member, editorial board, *Journal for the Study of Religion*.

Other activities

Co-director, with Elonda Clay and Tejai Beulah Howard, MTSO Science for Seminaries project.



Paul D. Numrich
Professor in the Snowden Chair for the Study of Religion and Interreligious Relations

Publications

The Religious Dimensions of Shared Spaces: When and How Religion Matters in Space-

Sharing Arrangements, Lanham, Maryland: Lexington Books, 2023.

“Selective Appeal to the Negus Narratives: A Case Study in Interreligious Relations,” in *Journal of Interreligious Studies*, January 2023.

Other activities

Attended the Interfaith Association of Central Ohio’s Main Event, Aug. 14, 2022.

Attended the Church of the Brethren Illinois/Wisconsin District Annual Conference, Nov. 5, 2022.

Attended the Kristallnacht Commemoration, Congregation Beth Tikvah, Worthington, Nov. 9, 2022.

Source for “A mosque, a synagogue, and an unlikely friendship,” in the *Columbus Dispatch*, April 13, 2023.



Fulgence Nyengele
Professor of Pastoral Care and Counseling in the L.A. Beeghly Chair

Director, Doctor of Ministry Program and Master of Arts in Counseling Ministries Program

Academic lectures and presentations

“Cultivating Postcolonial Consciousness: Reading John Wesley’s *Thoughts Upon Slavery* Side by Side with Frantz Fanon’s *The Wretched of the Earth* with Eyes on DR Congo, in Conversation with Achille Mbembe,” research seminar presentation, Wesley House, Cambridge, England, March 9, 2023.

Professional and guild activities

Co-chair, Postcolonialism, Globalization, and Pastoral Care Study Group, Society for Pastoral Theology annual conference, June 16, 2023.

Church and popular speaking

“When Life Becomes Overwhelming: Understanding the Effects of Trauma and the Need for Trauma Informed Ministry” and “Mitigating Vicarious Traumatization, Compassion Fatigue and Burnout in Ministry: Practices of Resilience,” Conference on Trauma and Community Wellbeing, MTSO Thriving in Ministry Initiative event, Oct. 27-28, 2022.

Other activities

Attended Clinical Pastoral Education Advisory Board meetings, Nationwide Children’s Hospital,

Sept. 19, 2022; Jan. 30, 2023; and June 13, 2023.

Organized and planned conference on trauma and community wellbeing through MTSO’s Thriving in Ministry Initiative, Oct. 27-28, 2022.

Attended Lilly Endowment’s Thriving in Ministry Annual Conference, Indianapolis, Nov. 2-4, 2022.

Attended Templeton Foundation’s First Global Scientific Conference on Human Flourishing (virtual), Nov. 29-30, 2022.

Organized and planned retreat on pastoral flourishing through MTSO’s Thriving in Ministry Initiative, Jan. 26-28, 2023.

Attended “Being United Methodist in the Public Square,” Bishop Palmer’s Leadership Clinic talk by former White House Press Secretary Mike McCurry, Church of the Messiah United Methodist Church, Westerville, May 11, 2023.

Facilitator, West Ohio Information and Listening Session on Recommendation #8 – Affirmation for Full Inclusion of All People in the UMC, West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church, May 12 and 17, 2023.

Conducted exit interviews/appreciative inquiries with clinical pastoral education students for the Clinical Pastoral Education Advisory Board, Nationwide Children’s Hospital, May 15, 2023.



Joon-Sik Park
Professor in the E. Stanley Jones Chair of World Evangelism
Director of the Course of Study School of Ohio

Publications

“The Missional Implications of the Theology of H. Richard Niebuhr,” in *International Bulletin of Mission Research* 47, no. 3, 2023.

Academic lectures and presentations

“The Missional Implications of the Theology of H. Richard Niebuhr,” at the American Society of Missiology annual meeting, South Bend, Indiana, June 19, 2022.

Church and popular speaking

“Remember the Lord Your God,” sermon at Korean Church of Columbus, Nov. 20, 2022.

“The Steadfast Love of God,” sermon at Amen Methodist Church, Seoul, South Korea, Jan. 22, 2023.

“God’s Providence and Our Responsibility,” sermon at Bethel International United Methodist Church, Columbus, June 18, 2023.

Other activities

Contributing editor, *International Bulletin of Mission Research*.

**Susan Ritchie**

**Fully Affiliated
Faculty, Theology
Director, Unitarian
Universalist House of
Studies**

Publications

Dark and Stormy: Unitarian Theology in Gothic and Ghostly Literature 1789-1912, Cambridge: Harvard Square Press, 2022.

“Enthralling Narratives: The Theological Gothic and the Myth of Disenchantment,” in *Narrative Knows No Boundaries*, edited by Ann K. Ferrell and Martha C. Sims, Oxford: University Press of Mississippi, forthcoming 2024.

Academic lectures and presentations

“What Not to Wear: The History of Unitarian Universalist Vestments and Clericals,” Unitarian Universalist Ministers Association Ministerial Formation Network, video lecture, spring 2023.

Professional and guild activities

Director, Harvard Square Library (digital library for Unitarian Universalist history).

Advisory Board Member, James Luther Adams Foundation.

Advisory Board Member, Unitarian Universalist Historical Society.

Editorial Board Member, *Journal of Unitarian Universalist History*

Church and popular speaking

Preach every Sunday at the North Unitarian Universalist Congregation in Lewis Center, Ohio.

**Ryan Schellenberg**

**Associate Professor
of New Testament**

Publications

“Epistolary Affects: An Introduction,” in *Biblical Interpretation* 30, 2022.

“On Pauline Indeterminacy,” in *Recovering an Undomesticated Apostle: Essays on the Legacy of Paul*, edited by Christopher B. Zeichmann

and John A. Egger, Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2023.

“While We Were Still Criminals, Christ Died for Us,” in *Christianity Today*, Jan. 12, 2023.

Academic lectures and presentations

“I Am Initiated and Become Holy’: An Affective History of Baptism,” Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting, Denver, Nov. 19, 2022 (with Colleen Shantz).

Respondent, book review panel for *Abject Joy: Paul, Prison, and the Art of Making Do*, Society of Biblical Literature annual meeting, Denver, Nov. 20, 2022.

“Reading Philippians in the Shadow of Mass Incarceration,” Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana, March 7, 2023.

“Romans 8 and the Spirit of Paul’s Gospel,” Anabaptist Mennonite Biblical Seminary, Elkhart, Indiana, March 7, 2023.

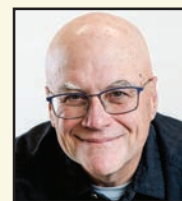
“The Marks of Christ: Glory, Lordship, and Violence in Paul’s Christological Imagination,” University of Münster Religion and Politics Excellence Cluster workshop, “Kosmokratie im Schatten von Krieg und Kriegserfahrungen: Frühchristliche Kontingenzen und Konzepte,” Münster, Germany, May 19, 2023.

Church and popular speaking

“Reading Philippians as an Ancient Prison Letter,” Worthington United Methodist Church, Worthington, Sept. 1, 2022.

Other activities

“Integrating Prison Education into the Theological Curriculum,” Wabash Center Large Project Grant, 2023-25.

**Timothy Van Meter**

**Associate Professor
in the Alford Chair of
Christian Education
and Youth Ministry**

Coordinator of Ecological Initiatives**Academic lectures and presentations**

“Grounding Hope: The Tensions and Possibilities Between Regenerative Agriculture and Black Veganism,” with Dr. Christopher Carter, May 2023.

Professional and guild activities

Executive board member, Ohio State University Agroecosystems Management Steering Committee.

Board member, Hispanic Summer Program.

Church and popular speaking

Keynote, “Earth Day and Creation Care,” for East Ohio Justice conference, April 2023.

Other activities

Lilly Pathways grant director, leading young adult retreat, June 2023.

Stinner Pathways interns leadership, June and July 2023.

**Yvonne Zimmerman**

**Associate Dean
Associate Professor
of Christian Ethics**

Publications

“Teaching for Communication, Collaboration, and Community-Building in Queer Theological Ethics,” in *Religious Studies News* Spotlight on Teaching, July 2022.

“Learning from Black Lives Matter: Resisting Purity Culture in U.S. Antitrafficking,” in *Religions*, March 2023.

Academic lectures and presentations

“Religious Responses to Sex Work and Sex Trafficking,” panel discussion, MTSO, April 26, 2023.

Church and popular speaking

“Human Trafficking: Framing Pastoral Responses to Forced and Exploited Labor,” webinar for “Creating Vital Congregations,” Lexington Theological Seminary, Oct. 15, 2022.

“Professional Sexual Ethics,” staff training for Community Development for All People, Columbus, Dec. 20, 2022.

**Get timely news
in *Campus View***

If you don’t receive MTSO’s e-newsletter, *Campus View*, visit www.mtso.edu/update to provide your current email address for our mailing list. Current and archived issues of *Campus View* are always available at www.mtso.edu/campusview.



Alum news

If you're an alum or former faculty or staff member of MTSO and have news to share about your vocational or personal milestones, please submit it via the link at www.mtso.edu/update. If you don't have an internet connection, you may mail your news to us at Alum News, MTSO, 3081 Columbus Pike, Delaware, Ohio 43015.

1972

George Davis has retired from St. Mark's UMC in Carmel, Indiana. He has been employed by the Carmel Police Department as senior chaplain and was recently recognized for his 20 years of service to the department and to the city. He is certified as a master chaplain by the International Conference of Police Chaplains. He and his wife, Karen, continue to reside in Carmel. gk28@sbcglobal.net

1974

As a permanent deacon, **Sherry Brown** is volunteering in worship, teaching Bible classes and confirmation, officiating in community outreach marriages, and providing other help at Morningstar UMC in Las Cruces, New Mexico. sbrown.i.b@gmail.com

1976

After 22 years of clinical art therapy at a psychiatric hospital in Columbus, and another 22 years in academia, **Bruce Moon** has retired to become a vagabond singer-songwriter. bclunar@att.net

Karl Watkins taught preaching at the Upper Midwest Extension Course of Study School in the fall of 2023. karl.watkins@iaumc.net

1980

Sylvia Howe and her husband, Paul L'Herrou, have moved to Westerwood, a continuing-care facility in Columbus. Sylhowe42@gmail.com

1981

John Schluep retired in 2017 from the First Congregational Church United Church of Christ of Tallmadge, Ohio. Since his

retirement, the ministry he founded in 2003, Warriors Journey Home Ministry Inc., has grown and expanded in northeast and southern Ohio, northern Kentucky, and Wisconsin. WJH works with multiple courts in Summit County and consults with local VA entities and county veterans service commissions. "WJH has a proven record of helping veterans and their families heal from the invisible wounds of war." warriorsjourneyhome@gmail.com

1983

After 41 years of pastoral ministry, the last eight as a conference superintendent and the last three of those as dean of the Susquehanna Conference cabinet, **Barry C. Robison** retired June 30. Beginning July 1, he began a full-time position with the United Methodist Foundation of Pennsylvania as the director of relationships and stewardship development. In addition, he was elected as the president of the Conference Board of Trustees, the second time he has held that office. He and his wife, Joni, celebrated 43 years of marriage in 2023 and now have three grandchildren. brobison@susumc.org

1987

Sue Chidley retired June 30 after 35 years of service in the East Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church. suechidley1@gmail.com

Theodore D. Whitely Sr. has published his second book, *Proverbial Reflections*, by the Author House Publishing Co. He is a retired elder and pastor of the Michigan Annual Conference. He serves as chaplain of the Tuskegee Airmen Detroit Chapter and of the Southfield Michigan Police Department. He

is married to Betty J. Whitely, also an alum of MTSO. bettytedwhitely@att.net

1997

Linda Carter has moved to the Ohio Living Swan Creek retirement community. "There I will enjoy a new villa with my 8-year-old dachshund, Charlie, without the responsibilities of home ownership." In addition, she has accepted the call to be a court-appointed special advocate/guardian ad litem in service to the children of Lucas County. carter.linda.290@gmail.com

Judy Johnson has published her second book of meditations, *Cancer Songs: Psalms for Pilgrims on the Cancer Journey*. The book contains 50 meditations on five emotions – fear, anger, sorrow, joy and gratitude – experienced by patients with cancer or other serious illnesses. An original poem and abstract watercolor introduce each section; a verse from the book of Psalms begins every selection. Designed to be a companion for those with cancer and their caregivers, it also can be used as a tool in ministry to the ill. jjwrites.23@gmail.com

2000

Lynda McClanahan had four pieces accepted into the Ohio Arts Council's "Arts Beacon of Light" show in the Riffe Center Gallery January through April 2023. knepp4350@aol.com

2002

Karen Cook was appointed director of connectional ministries for the West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church on May 1. kcook@wocumc.org

David MacDonald will be appointed Jan. 1, 2024, as the executive director at the Osage

Forest of Peace, an interspiritual retreat center located in Sand Springs, Oklahoma. macdonde@gmail.com

Mark Alton Plummer retired in 2021 after serving 16 years in the Episcopal Church as a transitional deacon and priest. His last call was as rector of Grace Church in Lexington, North Carolina, and his diocese of residence remains North Carolina. He and his wife, Kate M. Carey, reside on the beach in Surf City, enjoying life one day at a time, traveling, doing hand tool woodworking, playing golf, writing and gardening. fr.plummer@gmail.com

2003

Jackie Burns is an oblate with the Erie Benedictine Sisters in Erie, Pennsylvania. “It is both a humbling and great joy that the Erie Sisters selected me to be their delegate to the Fifth International Congress of Benedictine Oblates held in Rome, Italy, Sept. 9-17, featuring a series of workshops designed to further the strengthening of Benedictine communities, both one’s respective community as well as connecting globally to continue the Benedictine spirituality through radical hospitality to all persons.” jaslan@columbus.rr.com

2004

Karen Muntzing began serving as senior pastor at King Avenue UMC in Columbus on July 9. karen@kingave.org

2005

Lauren Roe has been called as the senior minister of First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Zanesville. revroe3000@gmail.com

2006

Jerry Krueger and his wife, Teresa, have moved home to Texas. Both retired from their churches in June after many years of service. jkru421066@aol.com

2009

Jay Anderson retired from pastoral ministry effective July 1. Jay served several churches in the Columbus area as an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church. He and his wife, Lynn, most recently served at Church of the Master UMC in Westerville. The Andersons are now living in New Albany, Ohio. jayanderson1959@gmail.com

2011

David Sears is serving as a missionary and teacher at the Rivers of Mercy Children’s Home in Ciudad Juárez, Mexico. noogalator@yahoo.com

2016

Kenya Cummings is the director of the South Carolina Housing Justice Network. kenyac@schjn.com

2018

Lorenzo Thomas was installed as the settled pastor of Plattsburg United Church of Christ in South Charleston, Ohio. “They are a rural congregation of mostly farmers, and my ministry there is experienced very close to the land. My MTSO Ecology and Justice specialization is serving me well as a minister to a community that is formed by the seasons.” revlorenzo3685@gmail.com

2022

In December 2022, St. Paul’s UMC in Parkersburg, West Virginia, led by Senior Pastor **Brian Daugherty**, voted unanimously to join the Reconciling Ministries Network. “Full inclusion of all people in ministry and the life of the church was central to my studies while at MTSO.” brian.jesus.freak@gmail.com

2023

After serving six years at Hope UMC and two years at Welcome Corners UMC in Hastings, Michigan, **Kim Metzger** accepted the call to serve Open Door UMC in Burton, Michigan. “Open Door represents a merger of two churches who were, and are, determined to serve, uplift, and promote Christ-centered teaching in the community with compassion and inclusiveness.” pastorkimmetzger@gmail.com

Jacob Tipantasig-Wolverton has been appointed senior pastor of Naperville Community UMC in the Northern Illinois Conference. jrwolverton@gmail.com

Students and alums ordained and commissioned

We recognize and congratulate our alumni and students who have recently been ordained and commissioned, along with those taking other significant leadership steps. The list below is arranged by conferences of the United Methodist Church.

East Ohio

Deacon commissioning:

- **Tammy Palermo**, serving Mentor UMC

Deacon ordination:

- **Stanley Wertz**, serving as chaplain of TA Truckstop Transport for Christ Global Ministry and at Mansfield Trinity UMC

Elder commissioning:

- **James Lance**, serving as pastor of Wooster Church of the Cross

Elder ordination:

- **Jennifer Whitmore**, serving as pastor of Paradise Hill and Nankin Community UMCs
- **Jonathan Williams**, serving as pastor of Cortland and Fowler UMCs

Michigan

Elder ordination:

- **Suzanne Todd**, serving as associate pastor of Plymouth First UMC

West Ohio

Deacon commissioning:

- **Lucy Kelly**
- **Ashley Wynn**
- **Elder commissioning:**
- **Mary Collins**
- **Jennifer Miller**
- **Carrie Schwab**
- **Shin Sung**

Western Pennsylvania

Elder ordination:

- **Derek Platt**, serving as lead pastor of the Bedford County/Somerset County Cooperative Parish

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Continues

IN MEMORIAM

We have learned of the deaths of the following alumni and friends of the school since the publication of last year's magazine. We mourn their passing and

give thanks for the many ways they contributed to MTSO.

John D. Bailey '00
 Norman L. Gearhart
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 Dorothy Himes

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from previous page

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 Kimberly Milliren
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The Sterling Society

These individuals have named MTSO in their estate plans.

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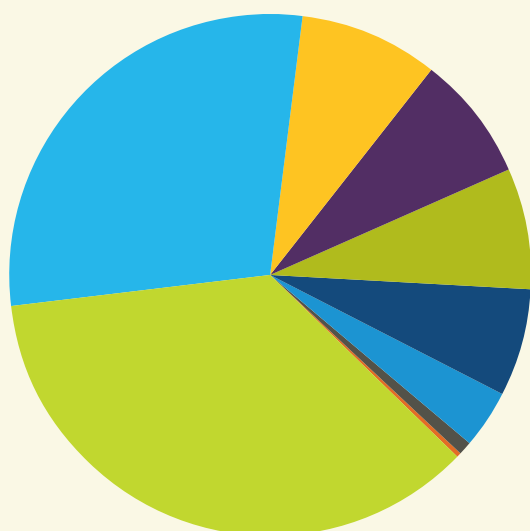
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Financial information

In the fiscal year ending June 30, 2023, Methodist Theological School in Ohio had revenues and expenditures of \$8,342,508.

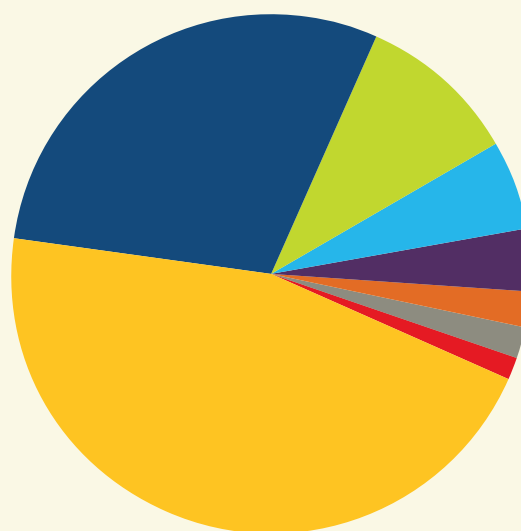
Revenue and expenditures for Fiscal Year 2022-23

Revenue



	Revenue	Percent of total
Endowment	\$2,995,906	35.9%
Tuition	2,410,626	28.9%
Ministerial Education Fund	\$719,307	8.6%
Operating reserve	\$650,091	7.8%
Current grants and gifts	\$620,633	7.4%
Programs and services	\$549,664	6.6%
Methesco Fund gifts	\$307,316	3.7%
Student aid gifts	\$70,400	0.8%
Federal work study	\$18,565	0.2%
Total revenue	\$8,342,508	100%

Expenditures



	Expenditures	Percent of total
Compensation and benefits	\$3,815,416	45.7%
Scholarships	\$2,459,953	29.5%
Programs and services	\$814,071	9.8%
Buildings and grounds	\$481,866	5.8%
General administration	\$312,387	3.7%
Academic support	\$180,173	2.2%
Information systems	\$170,153	2.0%
Enrollment and advancement	\$108,489	1.3%
Total expenditures	\$8,342,508	100%

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