

Volume LXIII
Fall 2024

THE STORY

MAGAZINE AND ANNUAL REPORT

From the
president:
This could be our
most important
season

Beth Stroud caps
an amazing
year by joining
MTSO's faculty

New students
bring fresh
energy
to campus

Dean Valerie
Bridgeman
becomes a
United Methodist

New Board
Chair Jeff Taylor
discusses
his unexpected
journey



MTSO

Methodist Theological School in Ohio

www.mtso.edu

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The wind blows where it chooses
✱ *A tornado struck the MTSO campus the night of March 14. While no injuries were reported, a number of mature trees were uprooted, and roofs and farm*

structures were damaged. Repair work and new tree planting has continued into the fall.

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President: Jay Rundell
Dean and Vice President for Academic Affairs:

Valerie Bridgeman
Editor: Danny Russell

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.

An important season for our mission

By Jay Rundell
President

Methodist Theological School in Ohio was born in the relatively stable post-war period of the mid to late 1950s, as the Methodist Church was expanding in Ohio and beyond. Mainline Protestantism was ascendant, and as a tangible sign of the denomination's strength and confidence in its future, new seminaries were approved for Ohio, Kansas City and the Pacific Northwest, the last of which never materialized.

That a school could be created out of whole cloth and a campus assembled with virtually no debt was a clear testament to that hope and faith in the future.

As the first few classes matriculated on the Methesco campus, the world began to be changed by the tremendous social change of the 1960s. Our institutional DNA may have been shaped by the stable and conventional atmosphere of the 1950s, but our first steps were taken amidst the social and cultural upheaval of the civil rights movement and the sexual revolution. Many of the events of those years, on campus and beyond, live large in our shared memory and in our legends and lore.

After years of faithful and fruitful engagement with the world around us, we

are now in a time of tremendous change, with a lot of our school's proclaimed and lived commitments under pressure in a divided and possibly even broken society. Our mission of theological education in pursuit of a just, sustainable and generative world may seem out of step to some, but perhaps we are entering our most important season.

Advent and Christmas might present us with a good time to consider the opportunity of this new season of mission that is before us. We don't have to reduce our perspective to partisan politics to identify those aspects of Christian faith that are germane to our society's struggles.

Jesus and his family fled to Egypt as refugees to escape political persecution. Perhaps that should be on our hearts when we hear spurious claims about migrants.

The prophet Isaiah's words – *"The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light; those who lived in a land of deep darkness, on them*

light has shined" – should remind us that we all need to come to a new perspective of what is right and good.

When we light that advent candle and hear Mary's Magnificat – *"He has shown strength with his arm; he has scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts. He has brought down the powerful from their thrones and lifted up the lowly; he has filled the hungry with good things and sent the rich away empty"* – maybe we could think about economic arguments in a new way.



Christmas is a time to get our heads around the reality that Jesus and his family fled to Egypt as refugees to escape political persecution. And perhaps that should be on our hearts when we hear spurious claims about migrants.

'Tis the season to think of Jesus and those who heralded his arrival. Just maybe not in the watered-down, sentimental way we tend to think of him this time of year.

I find solace and some very real hope in John 1:5: *"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it."* I am grateful for our students who are preparing to make a needed difference in this world and for all of you who support them in this endeavor.

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For more information about MTSO's trustees and the governance of the school, visit www.mtso.edu/governance.

Much to learn and much to offer

MTSO has welcomed an accomplished and widely varied group of new students. Here are profiles of six of them, including quotes from their admissions essays.

ELEVATING A GIFT FOR TEACHING

A retired public-school principal and adjunct instructor at Ashland University,

Deborah Copeland has discerned a need to learn more. "As a Black Christian woman, growing up in a country dominated by a culture of white supremacy, discernment is in my DNA," she said.

"I worked with people who did not grow up with the belief or knowledge that they would ever have a 'boss' with my skin color. My discernment process guided me as I treated teachers as individuals so that I could lead them to become better instructors and exhibit cultural sensitivity toward children who did not look like them."

Now Copeland wants to pursue an MA in Social Justice as she prepares to embark on a new project: "Ultimately, I want to develop a course or series of courses that marry theology, social justice and education."

"I have a desire to learn so that I can teach others," she said. "I am not one who participates in protests or runs for political office to fight for social justice. My gift is teaching."



A PSYCHOLOGIST SEEKS A NEW VOCATION

Maria Evans is a licensed psychologist in the state of Michigan. "My specialty within my work as a psychotherapist is helping people through deep depression and suicidality," she said. Some of those she helps suffer from a damaging misapplication of Christian faith.



"I think about the young people I've worked with who were physically and sexually abused and told by church leaders that they did something to 'deserve' it," she said. "I think about my young patients living in fear of being kicked out of their homes or abused because they are beginning to question their sexuality."

"I've often wanted to begin to teach these patients more about God's grace and love, but in my current role as their therapist, there is only so much that I'm allowed to do."

Now Evans is responding to "a greater and greater 'nudge' to go into ministry" by pursuing a Master of Divinity degree and United Methodist ordination.

"By being a pastor," she said, "I will be able to lead by example of how a faith-filled life connects people – not separates them."

EMBRACING COMPLICATED ANSWERS

David Pate grew up in a nondenominational church in Lancaster, Ohio. "I was born into a set of answers, steeped in certainty about the way the world worked," he said. "No matter how nonsensical those answers seemed in application, they were expected to be repeated and defended under any circumstance."

Even as a child, Pate chafed at pat answers: "I had a talent for asking questions that were apparently off limits. Despite the number of corrections I received throughout the years, I was never able to tune out that curiosity that constantly nagged me, saying, 'There has to be more to it. This doesn't make any sense.'"

Pate, a loan portfolio assistant with the United Church of Christ Cornerstone Fund in Cleveland, is pursuing a Master of Theological Studies degree. With his MTSO education and his skills in videography, film production and music, he hopes to "reach across denominations, faith traditions, and political barriers in order to help better communicate theology, history and the need for active social justice initiatives throughout the church."





COMMITTED TO LAY LEADERSHIP

A lifelong United Methodist, **Rachel Hagewood** is the child and grandchild of preachers, yet she has never felt a call to ordained ministry herself. Instead, she is pursuing a Master of Theological Studies degree as part of her deep calling to serve as the most effective layperson she can be.

"In too many situations, I see us laypeople sitting back and watching as the clergy do the work of the church. I have engaged in a number of roles with my local church and at the conference level, and at many points I see clergy leading and laypersons waiting to follow," said Hagewood, who is a senior developmental editor at The Upper Room in Nashville.

She was drawn to MTSO as "a seminary integrated into the United Methodist system but located in a very different context than my home in Tennessee." MTSO's HyFlex education model made attending a school two states away possible.

"Through hybrid courses, I am able to continue to work and care for my family," she said, "and yet have the structure I need to stay engaged with my classmates and professors."

FROM PRE-MED TO MINISTRY

Madison Cartnal was 9 years old when she first considered a vocation in ministry.

"I was visiting my grandmother's house, and she was telling me about how her church was to get a new pastor and that she was a woman," Cartnal recalled. "She said, 'You could be a pastor someday.' While at that moment I wasn't thinking that I necessarily wanted to be a pastor, that was the first time that I ever thought that maybe I could."

Church life "shaped me during my most formative years," but an upsetting event at the church when she was in eighth grade pushed her away from her faith. It took years for that faith to be rekindled, culminating in her recent time at Ohio Wesleyan University, where she majored in pre-medicine and Spanish.

At MTSO, Cartnal is pursuing a Master of Divinity degree and United Methodist ordination. "My interests have broadened greatly since the start of my time at Ohio Wesleyan," she said. "I found a deeper passion for caring for people's souls rather than just their physical bodies."



A PASTOR DIGS DEEPER INTO THE BIBLE

It's been mere months since **Christian Taylor** received his Master of Divinity degree from Drew Theological School. Already, he has begun extending his graduate theological education by pursuing a Master of Theological Studies at MTSO.

"The Bible is a polyvocal text written for a specific people within a particular era," said Taylor, who serves as pastor of Van Wert First UMC in the West Ohio Conference. "Understanding the relationship the authors and texts have with their original readers is crucial before attempting to extrapolate meaning for our current time. This is the reason for my desire to continue my educational journey."

A member of a musical family, Taylor progressed "from a choir boy to an opera singer," studying classical voice for his undergraduate degree. Now he looks to the ways his MTSO education will inform the vocational skills he already possesses: "This is an opportunity for me to take the work that generations of people have done with biblical interpretation and add my life experiences to develop a new voice for a new generation."



Jee Hyun Baek joins the faculty



Teaching theology ✧ Baek

Jee Hyun Baek has been appointed visiting assistant professor of theology.

She comes to MTSO as a Louisville Institute postdoctoral scholar. The institute is providing compensation, insurance, and housing and moving benefits.

Baek earned a Ph.D from Boston University in theology, ethics and philosophy. She received M.Div. and Th.M. degrees from Duke University Divinity School, as well as a BA and MA from Ewha Womans University in Seoul, South Korea.

“We’re pleased to welcome this outstanding new member of our community,” said MTSO President Jay Rundell. “We are grateful for the Louisville Institute’s support.” ✧

SAVE THE DATE

Schooler Institute welcomes Leah Schade

Author, speaker and educator Leah Schade will lead the 2025 Schooler Institute on Preaching at MTSO Feb. 25 and 26.

An ordained minister in the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Schade is associate professor of preaching and worship at the Lexington Theological Seminary. She serves as the 2024 president of the Academy of Homiletics.

Schade’s most recent book, *Preaching and Social Issues: Tools and Tactics for Empowering Your Prophetic Voice*, was published in November. It equips preachers to craft sermons that help congregations talk about topics of public concern based on strong ethical, biblical and theological foundations.

Among her other books are *Creation-Crisis Preaching: Ecology, Theology, and the*



Leading Schooler Feb. 25 and 26 ✧ Schade

Pulpit and For the Beauty of the Earth, a creation-centered Lenten devotional.

Schade earned her Ph.D. and Master of Divinity degree from the Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia. She holds a bachelor’s degree in mass communication from Shenandoah University.

“We’re pleased to welcome Dr. Schade to our campus,” said MTSO President Jay Rundell.

“Not only is she a national leader in the homiletic craft, but her values around social issues and the care of our planet align tightly with those of this school. We look forward to an invigorating Schooler Institute under her leadership.”

Thanks to the generosity of the Schooler Family Foundation, the Schooler Institute is offered to the public without cost. More details and registration information will be shared in early 2025. ✧

Dean Bridgeman welcomed into the United Methodist Church

MTSO Dean Valerie Bridgeman has worked closely with many United Methodist colleagues for decades. In June, she joined them as a United Methodist elder in full connection. Bishop Gregory Palmer welcomed her into communion through recognition of orders at the West Ohio Annual Conference in Columbus June 1.

Bridgeman was licensed by the Church of God Anderson, Indiana, in 1977 and ordained in that tradition in 1985. It wasn’t long before she found her work intersecting with Methodism.

“My first sense that God may be calling me to the United Methodist Church was the late 1990s, when I was in Austin and in relationship with several United Methodist people,” she said. “Because I’m Wesleyan, it resonated with me.”



No longer just “Methodist-proximate” ✧ Bridgeman with Palmer

Over the years, Bridgeman has served as interim pastor for a UM congregation in Memphis and preacher-in-residence for a UM church in Washington, D.C. She served on a working committee of Methodists and

Wesleyans from other communions on the study that resulted in the UMC’s *This Holy Mystery: A United Methodist Understanding of Holy Communion*, which was adopted by the 2004 General Conference as the official statement of theology and practice.

So, she said, “I’ve been Methodist-proximate for a while.”

In the summer of 2023, she took three courses, in UM polity, theology and history, successfully pressuring herself to earn an A-plus in each: “The dean cannot make a B.” The process culminated in the June celebration.

“It literally is just the next faithful step,” Bridgeman said. “I believe God called me to this some time ago. It’s just taken this long to get to it.” ✧

From attorney to ordained deacon

An unexpected vocational journey brought Board of Trustees Chair **Jeff Taylor** to MTSO

In the late 1990s, Jeff Taylor was a partner in a small Huntington, West Virginia, firm. Though he was a lifelong United Methodist and active in his church, his professional aspirations had nothing to do with ministry. He knew trial law was his calling.

Then Taylor's dad, a lay member to the West Virginia Annual Conference, suggested his son apply to be a lay member as well. "He said to me, 'I think that's something you would like.' And I thought, 'It doesn't sound like *anything* I would like,'" Taylor recalled, laughing.

Father knew best. Taylor attended his first annual conference as a lay member in 1998. It began with a worship service. "From the very beginning, I had a lump in my throat because I had just never heard that many voices in unison." Later, at a service recognizing retiring pastors, he noticed a common theme in the honorees' remarks: *I never wanted to be a minister, but I couldn't get away from it.* And it hit Taylor: "Uh-oh, I think their story might be my story."

Today, a quarter-century later, Taylor is president of the United Methodist Foundation of West Virginia, a past president of the National Association of United Methodist Foundations and – thanks to the years he spent traveling to MTSO for classes – an ordained deacon. He has served as an MTSO trustee since 2015, and on July 1, he began a three-year term as the board's chair.

Four years after the "uh-oh" moment at his first annual conference, Taylor left his law practice for a position at the United Methodist Foundation. He ascended to the foundation's presidency in 2008. While he loved his work, something gnawed at him: "In working with a donor, particularly when you're talking about estate matters and

end-of-life decisions, there's a theological conversation that I felt ill-equipped to deal with."

Because he held a law degree, Taylor could pursue ordination as a deacon by earning a Certificate in Deacon Studies. Though another seminary was closer, his friend and mentor J.F. Lacaria, a United Methodist deacon and MTSO trustee at the time, advised him to look into Methesco.



"I loved my time as a student at MTSO" ✱
Taylor's Certificate in Deacon Studies led to ordination

Taylor liked what he found. In 2010, 24 years after earning his law degree, he arrived for his first class at MTSO. "I walked in with my yellow pad," he said, "and everybody else is plugging in their laptops."

Eventually, he started bringing a laptop, too, and he eventually had his handwritten notes digitized. He still keeps his MTSO

class notes and consults them "at least monthly" in preparing a sermon or a theological reflection.

While Taylor was taking classes, MTSO President Jay Rundell invited him to have a cup of coffee: "Jay told me part of his vision, which included the farm and the solar array. And this greater discussion around sustainability and ecotheology was exciting to me." In 2015, the same year he earned his Certificate in Deacon Studies from MTSO, Taylor joined the board.

"Not only is Jeff a valued MTSO trustee," Rundell said. "His story of an incremental move toward ministry is an inspiring example to others who are deciding how to answer the call they might be hearing."

In addition to Taylor's board service, he and his wife have begun the Mary and Jeff Taylor Endowed Scholarship Fund. "I loved my time as a student at MTSO," he said, "and I know that there has been a struggle on the part of many students to get to seminary. And so those two things are working together to give back to the institution that I care so much about."

As he embarks on his term as board chair, Taylor is optimistic about the future of MTSO and its relationship with the United Methodist Church in light of changes around LGBTQ marriage and ordination approved at General Conference earlier this year.

"I've talked to young people who did not want to go into ministry for the United Methodist Church, either because they couldn't or because they didn't want to be aligned with a church that excluded people," he said. "I think the church is in a better place. I know a lot of churches are struggling because of those decisions, but I think it's growing pains. Nobody said it would be easy." ✱

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.

1966

Robert D. Dobson is now 84 years old and remarried in October. After 26 years as a pastor, he earned an MA degree and taught for another 12 years. He retired to write local history books of the old mining area where he grew up in Michigan's Upper Peninsula. He hopes to hear from his friends. rdejdobson@charter.net

1969

Joe Beavon is serving as pastor of Gainesboro First UMC. He and his wife, Jane, are living in Gainesboro, Tennessee. beavon2@yahoo.com

1972

George Davis was awarded the rank of Range Line Pioneer by Carmel, Indiana, Mayor James Brainard in recognition of his 22 years of service to the community as Carmel police chaplain. gk28@sbcglobal.net

1984

Elaine (Clinger) Sturtz has published her sixth book, *Live Different Moments*, which focuses on embracing change after any loss or grief and how to live differently in the life you

now have. It follows her book on grief, *Living in the Different*. ejsturtz7@gmail.com

After 30 years of active ministry as an elder, **Elizabeth (Betty) Wineland** retired from serving churches in West Ohio Conference in 2015 and continues to enjoy retirement living in Bowling Green, Ohio. She and her husband, Lynn, have one daughter, Katie, who is married to Beth. bwineland56@gmail.com

1989

Lori Burdette-Steele retired July 1 from the East Ohio Conference after 37 years under appointment. She and her spouse, Wes, are temporarily residing in Wadsworth, Ohio. PastorLori2016@aol.com

1993

Rob Grow was ordained in the United Church of Christ on Aug. 3. He has 5 units of CPE and an STM degree from Drew University with a concentration in social ethics. He is now a part-time pastor at Loyal Oak UCC and a full-time chaplain at Ohio Living Home Health and Hospice in his hometown of Akron, where he is in his 18th year of hospice chaplaincy. growrobert0@gmail.com

1994

Dan Jackson retired from the Florida Annual Conference in 2020. He had moved to Florida in 2006 after leading local congregations in the West Ohio Conference. In addition to seven years at New Covenant UMC in the Villages (which grew from 800 in worship to 2,000 during that time), he served in the Florida Annual Conference Cabinet as director of new church development, director of Fresh Expressions and director of the Vital Church Initiative. He retired as district superintendent of the Southeast District. Following retirement, his first book, *Generative Leadership*, was published. He and his spouse, Patti, live in the Columbus area and devote time to their 11 grandchildren. He has taught as adjunct faculty at Christian Theological Seminary and serves as a consultant/coach through Fresh Expressions US. revdanjackson@icloud.com

1996

Margaret (Peggy) Heim is retired and has lived in England since graduating from MTSO. revpeggyheim@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

Elder commissioning:

- **Michael Farmer**, serving Canton Crossroads UMC and Canton for All People

Michigan

Elder commissioning:

- **Nicolas Berlanga**, serving Goodrich UMC
- **Kimberly Metzger**, serving Burton Open Door UMC

Elder ordination:

- **Martin Cobb**, serving Schoolcraft, Pleasant Valley and Three Rivers First UMCs

West Ohio

Deacon commissioning:

- **Bethani Aiello**
- **Xema Rose Whitley**

Elder commissioning:

- **Pamela Connolly**
- **Angela Cox**
- **Ashton Dupler**
- **Charles Ferguson**

Deacon ordination:

- **Alycia Boyer Orcena**, serving as residential life and student work coordinator at MTSO

Elder ordination:

- **Marcella Ciccotelli**, serving Ottawa Trinity and Riley Creek UMCs
- **Audrey McClain**, serving at Richland Correctional Institute, Mansfield

2002

David MacDonald is now serving as executive director of the Osage Forest of Peace, an interspiritual retreat center located in Sand Springs, Oklahoma. macdonde@gmail.com

Lynn Pease retired from Nationwide Children's Hospital in Columbus, where she was a palliative care chaplain, Nov. 30, 2021. She currently serves in part-time ministry at Indian Run UMC in Dublin. "I was 'launched' into seminary and ordination from Indian Run in 2005. I believe that God has brought me full circle back to my roots." lynn.pease@yahoo.com

2003

Richard Wilcox has published a book, *Searching for James Gibson: Unraveling a Two-Century-Old Family Legend*. He serves as clerk of the North Carolina Fellowship of Friends. mudlakefarms@yahoo.com

2005

Liatu Jacob Kane is serving as a district superintendent of the Appawa District, Southern Conference of United Methodist Church Nigeria. "Would love to get in touch with my friends, especially classmates." kaneliatu3@gmail.com

Rebecca Stephens was appointed senior pastor of Bucyrus UMC in 2023. prchrbeck@gmail.com

2007

Ebenezer Appiagyei has been appointed district superintendent of the Colorado Region of the River Conference of the Free Methodist Church. He joined the 17th Judicial District as a deputy district attorney in November 2023. "My degree in MTSO prepared me for both parish ministry and my pursuit of legal education." ebenlaw1@gmail.com

2008

Nancy Day-Achauer has taken a leave of absence from pastoral ministry in the UMC to serve on Columbus City Council after being elected by 72% of voters in 2023. An ordained elder, she has served churches in Columbus since 2012, with a focus on community ministry and addressing human-service needs in disadvantaged neighborhoods. nancypda@gmail.com

2011

David Sears is serving full-time at the Rivers of Mercy Children's Home in Ciudad Juarez, Mexico. It primarily serves children that the Mexican government has taken away from their families because of abuse and neglect. noogalator@yahoo.com

2013

Karen Tate has been appointed to the Capon Bridge United Methodist Charge in Capon Bridge, West Virginia. ktate86@hotmail.com

2014

Lorraine Brown retired as an active pastor from the Baltimore Washington Conference on June 30, 2024. In retirement, she serves as congregational compassion care minister for Goshen UMC in Gaithersburg, Maryland, while working for the extension ministry full-time as founder and executive director for Project SPIRIT Sickle Cell Inc., a 501(c)3 spiritual community-based organization. She is a very proud "mamere" of four granddaughters. rev.rlbrown@gmail.com

2015

Rina Shere received her Doctorate of Ministry from Vanderbilt Divinity School in May 2024, completing a specialization in Mental Health Integrated Chaplaincy. Her research focus examines the role of self-compassion and forgiveness in the healing of moral injury in U.S. veterans. rinashere@yahoo.com

2018

Emily Howard was installed as pastor of Grace United Church of Christ in Uniontown, Ohio, Dec. 1, 2023. howardemilyr@gmail.com

2019

Steven Brown is integrated adult education coordinator for San Juan College in Farmington, New Mexico. bethelbiker1@gmail.com

Faith Van Horne's article "Somatic Pneumatology: A Pentecostal Contribution to Feminist Liberation Theology" was published in the *Journal of Pentecostal and Charismatic Christianity*. The article is open access and available online at tandfonline.com. She presented this research at the Annual

Conference of the Society for the Study of Theology at University of Warwick, Coventry, UK, in April. faithvanhorne@gmail.com

2020

Jacqui Buschor has accepted a call to serve as pastor of Faith Lutheran Church in Little Rock, Arkansas. jacquibuschor@gmail.com

Janelle Ohlemiller is primarily appointed as therapist and clinical supervisor at Willowstone Family Services in Lafayette, Indiana. Her secondary appointment is as associate pastor (aka "therapist") at the Wesley Foundation at Purdue University. janelle.ohlemiller@gmail.com

2022

Tim Wood has been appointed senior pastor of Stevensville UMC, which began as a school in 1885 in the oldest town in Montana. Since 1928, the space served the combined congregations of the North and South Methodist-Episcopal Churches. Over the last four years, the church's "Open Doors for Generational Blessing" project has developed Sapphire Early Learning Center, a self-sustaining nonprofit daycare and preschool; restored the church's historic building; and expanded community outreach work. "I'm excited to help lead a faith community that has such a strong heart for serving their community combined with an amazing worship presence." twood@mtso.edu

2023

Justin McCall and Kayla McCall welcomed a son, Rory James, Nov. 17, 2023. jleemccall@gmail.com

2024

Robert Dean Cole led a West Virginia United Methodist Volunteers-in-Mission short-term mission trip to Guatemala July 7-14, 2024. This year, the team, called "El Grupo de Bob" (after retired UMC minister Robert C. (Bob) Cole), partnered with Common Hope in Antigua, Guatemala. Serving at historic St. John UMC in Vienna, West Virginia, after graduation, "Angie and I also continue to serve the indigenous very poor in the Western Highlands of Guatemala via our respective nonprofit foundations, Portales de Esperanza and Cole Family Foundation." rdeancole@gmail.com

Mount Awards presented during Alumni Day

MTSO President Jay Rundell presented Kenya Cummings and David Mansperger with the John and Ruth Mount Alumni Awards for Distinguished Service during an Oct. 24 Alumni Day luncheon. The Mount Award is the school's highest honor for graduates.

Cummings, who earned a Master of Divinity degree from MTSO in 2016, is executive director of the South Carolina Housing Justice Network – a role, Rundell said, “that makes all the sense in the world.”

“I find myself thinking, wow, we should have had the Master of Arts in Social Justice when you were here,” Rundell told Cummings as he presented the award. “Or maybe we have it because you were here. You were doing that kind of work here before we came up with a way to codify it.”

Cummings said the Mount Award was exciting to her “because it comes from a community who knows my heart and knows that I do this work not just because people deserve a safe, inhabitable and affordable place to live, but also because it is my faith and my theological understanding of how the world should be.”



Honorees ✧ Mansperger and Cummings

Mansperger, a retired United Methodist pastor, earned two degrees from MTSO, the Master of Divinity in 1969 and the Master of Religious Education in 1970.

Noting that Mansperger had long donated his honoraria from weddings and funerals to MTSO, Rundell said, “I’ve always thought of you as serving the local church, serving beyond the church in a wonderful ministry, and supporting this school.” Praising Mansperger’s recent volunteer work with MTSO’s Seminary Hill Farm, Rundell added, “You’ve been central to building the children’s garden.”

Said Mansperger, “There have been a number of things that I’ve realized in the last year are values to me. One is the diversity of individuals in this community. One of the good and positive things about that is not just that diversity, but the fact that most of these are younger than I am.”

Laughing, he added, “At this stage, it’s a good thing to have younger friends.” ✧

A grateful alum pays it forward with a scholarship

Josephine Whitely-Fields was going to be a dentist. In the early 1970s, she had earned a college degree and was enrolled in her second semester of dental school when she felt a call to ministry. It initially went unanswered.

“I ran from the Lord,” she said. “I said, ‘No way, Jose.’” She stopped running when she was just six months from graduation, and so began a pioneering vocation in ministry. Whitely-Fields’ journey included two years at MTSO, where she earned a scholarship and graduated with a Master of Divinity degree in 1984.

“I have nothing but glorious memories of that school,” she said. “From my first contact with Methesco and my admission there, the staff and the faculty were so supportive.”

She generously expressed her gratitude to MTSO in 2021, when she established the Rev. Dr. Josephine A. Whitely-Fields endowed Scholarship fund, created to benefit financially disadvantaged Black women pursuing the Master of Divinity degree and seeking United Methodist ordination.

“I wanted to be encouraging to other African-American women in the way that I was encouraged,” she said. “With sacrifice and prayer and God’s blessing, I was able to do that. I’m hoping it will inspire some other African-Americans to fund scholarships.”



“I wanted to be encouraging in the way that I was encouraged” ✧ Whitely-Fields

Her gift ensures that her scholarship will be an ongoing reminder of MTSO’s relationship with a groundbreaking pastor. In 1986, Whitely-Fields and Linda Lee, who later served as a United Methodist bishop, became the first two African-American women ordained in the West Ohio Conference.

To ensure that the history of Black women’s contributions to the United Methodist Church aren’t lost to time, in 2021 Whitely-Fields authored *Pioneer Black Clergywomen: Stories of Black Clergywomen of the United Methodist Church 1974-2016*.

Completing *Pioneer Black Clergywomen* is just one of the ways Whitely-Fields has continued her ministry since her formal retirement in 2015. She also remains active in her home church, Toledo’s Braden UMC.

“I retired after 40 years, but in the ministry for me, retirement is not an option,” she said. “I’m still in ministry in very definite ways. How do you retire from the Lord?” ✧

'Overwhelmed' and happy to be here

In one momentous year, **Beth Stroud** has her credentials reinstated and joins MTSO's faculty

Whoever said life comes at you fast would get no argument from Beth Stroud. She still shakes her head when she thinks about the stretch from March through May of 2024 that left her "completely overwhelmed."

In early March, Stroud traveled from her East Coast home to MTSO to interview for a faculty position, a process that included meetings and delivering a campus lecture.

On May 1, delegates to the United Methodist Church General Conference voted to repeal the denomination's ban on LGBTQ clergy. A week later, MTSO President Jay Rundell announced Stroud's election to the MTSO faculty as assistant professor of history.

Two weeks after that, the Eastern Pennsylvania Conference of the UMC voted to reinstate Stroud's credentials as an ordained elder – a vote that came two decades after Stroud was defrocked in the wake of her acknowledgement of a committed relationship with another woman.

"Nobody has that kind of bandwidth," Stroud said. But she got through it and caught her breath in time to make the move to an MTSO campus apartment and launch into the Fall Semester as an elected faculty member, a position she had dreamed of "since I first went back to graduate school."

Stroud holds a Ph.D. and an MA in Religion from Princeton University, a Master of Sacred Theology from Lutheran Theological Seminary at Philadelphia, a Master of Divinity from Union Theological Seminary and a bachelor's degree from Bryn Mawr College.

As she researched MTSO in preparation for her interview, she was reminded of the rewarding time she spent at Union, both as a grad student and later as an adjunct



March through May tested her bandwidth ✱ Stroud has been elected assistant professor of history

professor. "I looked at MTSO's website and I thought, 'This place sounds like Union but in the Midwest. And it's United Methodist, and it has a farm. This looks like a really spectacular place.'"

When she experienced the campus community in person, she said, "I just can't even describe how good it felt." She particularly remembers the hospitality and a midweek chapel service that featured "rolling, robust laughter."

Now that she's on the job, Stroud believes the joys and difficulties she has encountered in ministry make her a better resource when meeting with students she advises.

"I think something I can offer students is a very, very deep understanding of how complicated and unpredictable a call to ministry can be," she said. "My advisees this fall have talked to me about where they are in the ordination process or their feelings about interviews that are coming up. Or maybe they're already pastoring and juggling work and seminary. Their

experiences just resonate really deeply with me."

"Dr. Stroud has navigated the polity of the United Methodist Church in its most challenging forms," said MTSO President Jay Rundell. "She has been faithful and gracious to a church that didn't always return that grace. Her journey makes her a particularly valuable resource to our students."

Stroud continues to research liberal Protestantism and eugenics in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the subject of her doctoral dissertation. She has a book in progress on the subject.

As she has done with her own research, Stroud is comfortable taking a warts-and-all approach to teaching history. But she works to ensure that studying a checkered past doesn't let modern-day Christians off the hook: "What I'm trying to do is extend the critique to the present. Look at what they were doing, and they didn't even realize it. And so what are we doing now that we don't see but that people 50 and 100 years from now will critique?"

Just as her initial visit indicated, Stroud finds similarities between Union Theological Seminary and MTSO, including in the vocal, animated way students interact in the classroom.

"Students have very strong and sophisticated ideas about not just what's right and wrong, but what are appropriate and inappropriate kinds of speech in the classroom," she said. "And it's good. I am being challenged to think about how I'm enacting justice in the classroom."

Outside the classroom, Stroud enjoys the benefits of life as a campus resident: "I like the neighbors. I enjoy especially getting to know the international students and their children."

"And you can't beat the commute." ✱

Beyond the classroom

Faculty activities
2023-24



Lisa Allen-McLaurin
Professor of Worship,
Music and Spirituality

Publications

"Overcoming the Violence of 'Virtuous' Womanhood: Liberating Women from the Proverbs 31 Paradigm," in *Religions* journal, August 2023.

The OneWord Worship Model: A New Paradigm for Church Worship Planning, Cascade Books, September 2023.

Academic lectures and presentations

"The Purpling of Abbott Elementary: Breaking Trope Ropes that Bind Black Women," American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Antonio, November 2023.

"Everything New Is Old Again: Worshiping through an Afrofuturist Lens," Phillips School of Theology Pastors' Conference, Atlanta, January 2024.

"The Gift of Lament: A Journey from Struggle to Hope," panel presentation, Schooler Institute on Preaching, MTSO, March 2024.

Professional and guild activities

Panel presenter, "Worship Planning 101," with colleagues Constance Cherry and Barbara Day Miller, Calvin Institute of Christian Worship Winter Symposium, Grand Rapids, Michigan, February 2024.

Participant in music and poetry presentation on "Theopoetics" with Valerie Bridgeman, Emilie Townes and Willie Jennings, Society for the Study of Black Religion Annual Meeting, April 2024.

Guest artist with Cheryl Kirk-Duggan, presenting "Come, Taste and See: Wellbeing and the Arts," in celebration of the 10th anniversary of the Sankofa Center, Oblate School of Religion, San Antonio, April 2024.

"How Black Sacred Music Affirms Full Embodiment and Inclusion," lecture recital, Institute on Theology and Disability, Boston College, June 2024.

Attended the Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies, Oxford, UK, and invited to serve on the 16th OIMTS Institute Planning Committee, August 2024.

Church and popular speaking

Gave Worship Education presentation at Winter Council Meeting of the Sixth Episcopal District of the Christian Methodist Episcopal Church, Warner Robins, Georgia, December 2023.

"No Longer Invisible: Faith and Religion," closing worship sermon at Emory University's Candler School of Theology Disabilities Conference, March 2024.

Preached at Mt. Aery Baptist Church in Bridgeport, Connecticut, in celebration of the 40th pastoral anniversary of Anthony Bennett, May 2024.

Preached Senior Saints Sunday, St. Thomas African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church in Roseboro, North Carolina, June 2024.

Served as music coordinator for the Sixth Episcopal District at two West and North Georgia Region Annual Conferences, July 2024.

Preached for Missionary March Worship Service at the West Georgia Region Annual Conference, July 2024.

Other activities

Awarded the Bishops Marshall Gilmore and Othal H. Lakey Clergy Service Award from the Phillips School of Theology/ITC for outstanding service and support to the seminary, January 2024.

Commissioned to write a theme song, "We Are Children Who Deserve Your Love," for the Interfaith Children's Movement, debuted at annual meeting in Atlanta, October 2024.



Toni Bond
Associate Professor
of Ethics

Publications

"The Dobbs Decision, God, and Moral Conscience," in *Fighting Mad: Resisting the End of Roe v. Wade*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2024.

"Embodiment, Identity, and Sexuality: Reproductive and Sexual Justice and Theological Anthropology," in *Searching for Future in the Past: Reclaiming Feminist Theological Visions*, T&T Clark, 2024.

Academic lectures and presentations

One-on-one videotaping with Grace Kao on how she used the reproductive justice theoretical framework to ground her book, *My Body, Their Baby: A Progressive Christian Vision for Surrogacy*, Marty Center for Religion, University of Chicago, January 2024.

Panel presentation on religion, ethics and abortion at a symposium on religious freedom and abortion rights sponsored by Case Western Reserve University School of Law, April 2024.

Speaker on panel about Christian nationalism and human rights at Make It Work Nevada, July 2024.

Speaker on panel at NAACP Convention sponsored by National Women's Law Center. Presentation on attacks on democracy, justice, and Christian nationalism, July 2024.

Professional and guild activities

Participated in a convening at Chicago Theological Seminary, a part of a committee of theologians and ethicists planning for new Social Ethics and Organizing and Interest group at the January 2025 Society for Christian Ethics conference, January 2024.

Church and popular speaking

Moral Monday CT podcast, hosted by Bishop John Selders. Spoke to audience about Christian ethics and the role of the prophets, June, 2024.

Other activities

Featured in documentary about the founding mothers of the reproductive justice movement. The video is being produced by In Our Own Voices: National Black Women's Reproductive Justice Agenda, February 2024.

Honored at the 30th Anniversary of Reproductive Justice gala for being one of the 12 founding mothers of the reproductive justice movement, June 2024. Acknowledged in gala video from Vice President Kamala Harris as one of the key leaders in the reproductive justice movement.

Invited to attend convening at the White House with other activists around access to reproductive health care, June, 2024.



**Valerie
Bridgeman**

Dean

**Vice President
for Academic Affairs**

**Associate Professor
of Homiletics and Hebrew Bible**

Publications

Commentary on Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67, Workingpreacher.org, July 9, 2023.

Commentary on Genesis 25:19-34, Workingpreacher.org, July 16, 2023.

Commentary on Genesis 28:10-19a, Workingpreacher.org, July 23, 2023.

Commentary on Genesis 29:15-28, Workingpreacher.org, July 30, 2023.

Academic lectures and presentations

"Repairing the Breach, Restoring the Streets: The Academy & the Church Working Together," 43rd Frank B. Mitchell, Jr. Lecture, held at Pinn Memorial Baptist Church in Philadelphia, for Palmer Theological Seminary, Feb. 2, 2024.

Lecturer and preacher, Trout Lectures in Preaching at Trinity Lutheran Seminary, Capital University, Columbus. Two lectures: "Arguing with God in a Sermon: Job as Theologian" and "Arguing with God and Winning: The Sermon Full of Questions and Promises." Sermon: "Faithfully Complaining to God." April 11-12, 2024.

Professional and guild activities

Steering Committee member, Womanist Interpretation Group, Society of Biblical Literature, 2022-25.

Reappointed as judge for a second 2-year term, American Academy of Religion's Textual Studies Book Award Jury, 2024-26.

Reappointed to the Editorial Board of *Homiletic* (The Journal of the Academy of Homiletics), for 2024-27.

Steering Committee member, Committee on the Status of Women in the Profession, Society of Biblical Literature, 2018-24.

Participant, Society for Biblical Literature Workshop "Teaching the Bible to Multiple Publics," Nov. 11, 2023; Jan. 30, Feb. 27, and March 19, 2024.

American Academy of Religion/Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, San Antonio, Nov. 17-21, 2023.

Academy of Homiletics, Atlanta, Nov. 29-Dec. 5, 2023.

Board member, Samuel DeWitt Proctor Conference, Chicago, Feb. 19-22, 2024. Resigned from the board in 2024 after 20 years of service.

Black Methodist for Church Renewal Gathering, Cincinnati, March 6-9, 2024.

Director and poet, dinner theater for the Society for the Study of Black Religion Annual Meeting, Nashville, March 20-23, 2024.

Association of Theological Schools, Biennial Meeting of Presidents and Deans of Theological Schools in the United States and Canada, Atlanta, June 18-19, 2024.

Church and popular speaking

Lecturer, The Fellowship of Affirming Ministries Conference, Las Vegas, July 5-8, 2023.

Evening preacher, "Searching for the Soul of Black Preaching," at the Black Theology and Leadership Institute, Princeton Theological Seminary, Princeton, New Jersey, July 16-21, 2023.

Preacher, the historic Evangelical Lutheran Church of Geneva (English language), July 30, 2023.

Preacher, installation service for elder in full connection, Rev. Annetra Jones, senior pastor at Faith UMC, Fort Wayne, Indiana, Aug. 11, 2023.

Preacher of the week, Lakeside Chautauqua, Ohio, Aug. 27, 2023.

Chapel preacher, Gertrude Hotchkiss Heyn Memorial Chapel, Bethune-Cookman College, Daytona Beach, Florida, Sept. 13, 2023.

Final reflections, Fishing Differently Conference, an entrepreneurial gathering for ministries seeking to impact their communities, Sept. 20-22, 2023.

Dean for seminary students, Christian Unity Gathering for the National Council of Churches, Washington, D.C., Oct. 10-12, 2023.

Instructor, "Sacred Conversations to End Racism," two 90-minute sessions, for Education for Faithful Action of the National Ministries of the United Church of Christ, online, Nov. 28, 2023.

Workshop leader, Harmonize your Life Wellness Conference, for the Dr. Toni Ministries Gathering, Montego Bay, Jamaica, Jan. 4-8, 2024.

Conversation with the congregation: "The State of Theological Education," West Berlin Presbyterian Church, Delaware, Ohio, Jan. 21, 2024.

Preacher, Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, Columbus, March 3, 2024.

Preacher, North Broadway UMC, Columbus, March 10, 2024.

Bible study teacher, "Our Faith: As Told by Black Women," Lenten and Women's History Series, Kenwood United Church of Christ, Chicago, March 27, 2024.

Speaker, "Celebrate the Diversity and Strength of Women: My Story," Women of Diversity Brunch honoring Women's History Month, Otterbein University, Delaware, Ohio, March 25, 2024.

Womanist Leadership Conclave, Austin, Texas, April 15-17, 2024.

Preacher, Family Fellowship Church, Columbus, April 21, 2024.

Preacher, the historic West Hunter Baptist Church, Atlanta, April 28, 2024.

Preacher, Mt. Aery Baptist Church, Bridgeport, Connecticut, May 12, 2024.

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“Womanist Bible Talk: A Podcast for Womanist Bible Readers and Friends, Episode 8: Isaiah, Metaphors, Children, and Corporeal Punishment,” Conversation regarding my essay in *Womanist Interpretations of the Bible: Expanding the Discourse*, edited by Gay L. Byron and Vanessa Lovelace, June 7, 2024.

Lecturer, “When Trust is All You Have Left,” Multi-Generational Vacation Bible School, Oakley Full Gospel Baptist Church, Columbus, June 17, 2024.

Plenary leader and preacher for the Jarena Lee Preaching Academy of WomanPreach! held at MTSO, June 23-29, 2024.

Scholar/activist roundtable: “Pride as Protest and Ekklesia (Gathering), Then and Now,” Sponsored by the Center and Library for the Bible and Social Justice, June 27, 2024.

Other activities

Visited the Ecumenical Institute at Château de Bossey of the World Council of Churches, attached to the University of Geneva with an MTSO D.Min. cohort. Served as one of the professors on the trip, July 27-Aug. 5, 2023.

Co-director on the five-year Enfleshing Witness Preaching Project, a \$1.25 million Compelling Preaching Initiative funded by Lilly Endowment Inc., St. Luke Episcopal Church, Atlanta. Awarded in September 2023.

Elected to the University Senate of the United Methodist Church during the 2024 General Conference for the 2025-28 quadrennium, April 23-May 3, 2024.

Appointed to the Advisory Committee for the Faith in Public Life/Faith in Public Life Action National Coalition.



Elonda Clay
Director of the Library

Academic lectures and presentations

“#golaydown: Viral Musicking, Digital Antiphony, and Collaborative Performances of Virtual Spirituals on TikTok,” presentation at American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Antonio, November 2023.

“#RIPBlackTwitter, #twitterhomegoingservice, and Mourning Memes: Twitter’s Digital Apocalypse and Black Twitter’s Irreverent Religious Protest,” presentation at American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, Boston, November 2023.

Book panel respondent, *Poor Technology: Artificial Intelligence and the Experience of Poverty* by Levi Checketts, Grefenstette Center for Ethics in Science, Technology, and Law, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, April 2024.

Participant, Food, Wealth, and Ecological Well-Being Program, Ecowomanist Collective Workshop, School of Divinity, Wake Forest University, Winston-Salem, North Carolina, May 2024.

Participant, Digital Ethics and Embodiment Project, Stead Center for Ethics and Values, Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary, Evanston, Illinois, June 2024.

Professional and guild activities

Member, Board of Directors, International Society for the Study of Religion, Nature, and Culture, 2021-24.

Founding member, Technology, Ecology, Religion and Art (TERA) Collective, 2021-24.

Church and popular speaking

“Liberation After AI? The Rise of Intelligent Machines and the Future of Social Justice,” Black History Month lecture at Urban Missiology, February 2024.

Other activities

Co-taught virtual digital humanities research project “Religion and/as Big Data: Mothers in the Movement” with Roseta Ross of Spelman College and Claudia Engel of Stanford University, June 3-21, 2024.



Kate Common
Assistant Professor
of Public and Practical
Theology

Publications

Undoing Conquest: Ancient Israel, the Bible, and the Future of Christianity, Orbis Books, February 2024.

Academic lectures and presentations

“Undoing Conquest,” author talk hosted by Professor Yara González-Justiniano, Vanderbilt Divinity School, Feb. 29, 2024.

“Let’s Get Dirty! Archeology and Theology in Dialogue,” Wesleyan Theological Conference, March 1, 2024, Nashville.

“Undoing Conquest,” *WATERtalk*, video interview hosted by Mary Hunt, March 6, 2024.

Professional and guild activities

Publications coordinator, Association of Practical Theology.

Attended AAR/SBL.

Church and popular speaking

Orbis Author One-on-One Interview with Publisher Robert Ellsberg, Feb. 27, 2024.

Hosted three *Undoing Conquest* webinars, one-hour informational sessions and Q&A for book and course, the Seeker’s Table, Feb. 27, March 21 and April 23, 2024.

Undoing Conquest Book Launch, book talk in conversation with biblical scholar Brandon Simonson of Boston University and Anna Woofenden of St. John’s Episcopal Church, held at St. John’s, Northampton, Massachusetts, April 10, 2024.

Taught *Undoing Conquest* public theology course, three sessions, the Seeker’s Table, April 29, May 5 and May 11, 2024.

“Undoing the Bible’s Conquest Story with Dr. Kate Common,” *One Question with Pastor Adam* podcast, May 28, 2024.

Other activities

“So, You Want to Get a Ph.D.?” Two-hour-long seminar explaining Ph.D. processes of application and program, taught to students during South Africa cross-cultural immersion trip, January 2024.



Eugene Gibson
Assistant Professor
of Homiletics

Publications

“The United States vs. Hagar and the Right to Choose,” in *Encounter Journal*, Christian Theological Seminary, 2023.

“True Disciple: Minister Louis Farrakhan’s Eulogy of Dr. Clay Evans and the Emergence of The Son of Abraham Rhetoric,” in *The Art of Black Preaching and the Rhetoric of the Black Sermon*, forthcoming 2024.

Academic lectures and presentations

“The History and Theology of African American Preaching,” Compelling Preaching Initiative instructor, Christian Theological Seminary, May 2024.

“Hallelujah Anyhow: Preaching Despite the Bones” (sermon), “A Worthy Call” (sermon) and “Preaching Despite the Bones” (lecture), Schooler Preaching Institute, MTSO, February 2024.

Church and popular speaking

Weekly sermons as senior pastor of Mt. Olivet Baptist Church, Columbus.

Covenant United Church of Christ, Chicago, January 2024.

My father-in-law’s funeral, Memphis, February 2024.

Emmanuel Baptist Church, Brooklyn, New York, April 2024.

Greater 12th Baptist Church, Columbus, May 2024.

St. Paul Baptist Church, Charlotte, North Carolina, July 2024.

Bates Memorial Baptist Church, Louisville, Kentucky, July 2024.

Bible Tabernacle Christian Church, York, Pennsylvania, September 2024.

New Calvary Baptist Church, Norfolk, Virginia, October 2024.

Other activities

Traveled to Ghana, February 2024.

Toured the Seven Churches of Asia Minor, February 2024.



Paul Kim
Professor of Hebrew
Bible

Publications

Editor, with Kristine Henriksen Garroway and John W. Martens, *Violence Against Women and Children in the Hebrew Bible: Between Trauma and Resilience*, London: Bloomsbury T&T Clark, 2024.

“Isaiah in Intertextual Perspective,” in *Cambridge Companion to Isaiah*, edited by Christopher B. Hays, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2024.

“E Pluribus Unum: Finding Intertextual Threads That Unite the Book of Isaiah,” in *The Unity in the Book of Isaiah* edited by Benedetta Rossi, Dominic S. Irudayaraj and Gina Hens-Piazza, London: T&T Clark, 2024.

“Two Brothers, Two Communities, Double Themes: Reading the Jacob-Esau Narrative in Dialogue with the Korean Hungbu-Nolbu Folktale,” in *Theology of the Hebrew Bible, Volume 2: Texts, Readers, and Their Worlds* edited by Soo Kim Sweeney, David Frankel and Marvin A. Sweeney, Atlanta: SBL Press, 2024.

“‘Seed of Babylon’ (Zeru-Babel), ‘Seed of Cyrus’ (Zera’-Koreš), or ‘Seed of Holiness’ (Zera’-Qodeš)?: Readers in Isaiah vis vis-à-vis Readers in Ezra-Nehemiah,” in *The Function of the Reader in the Formation and the Reception in the Book of Isaiah*, edited by Archibald van Wieringen and Sehoon Jang, Leiden: Brill, 2024.

“Is the Book of Jonah an Inner-Biblical Exegesis on Isaiah 36-39?” in *Isaiah and Intertextuality: Isaiah amid Israel’s Scriptures*, edited by Wilson de Angelo Cunha and Andrew T. Abernethy, Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2024.

Academic lectures and presentations

Presider, special joint session with a tribute to Walter Brueggemann, “The Prophetic Imagination: A Tribute and Reassessment,” Society of Biblical Literature Annual Meeting, San Antonio, 2023.

Professional and guild activities

Editor, Hebrew Bible Series, Resources for Biblical Study, SBL Press.

Co-chair, Israelite Prophetic Literature unit at the Society of Biblical Literature.

President, Korean Biblical Colloquium.

Editorial Board, *Journal for the Korean Society of the Old Testament Studies*.

Wabash Peer Mentoring Cluster (“From Striving to Thriving: Korean American Men at Midcareer”).

Church and popular speaking

Guest preacher at local churches, including Korean Presbyterian Church of Columbus, Marysville First Presbyterian Church and Ostrander Presbyterian Church.

Presenter, Toro Nagashi Interfaith Peace Prayer, Chicago, Aug. 16, 2023.

Other activities

Attended opening day, Parliament of the World’s Religions, Chicago, Aug. 14, 2023.

Co-speaker (with Fulgence Nyengele), “Conference on Trauma and Community Wellbeing,” Thriving in Ministry, MTSO, Oct. 19-20, 2023.



Sarah Lancaster
Professor in the
Werner Chair
of Theology

Publications

“United Methodist Doctrine After Disaffiliation: Learning to Teach Our Teachings,” in *Methodist Review* 16, 2024.

Academic lectures and presentations

Response to *The Power of the God Who Can’t: God Always Does Everything God Can Do*, by Russ Dean, at Open and Relational Online Conference (Ortline 24), Feb. 23, 2024.

Professional and guild activities

North American co-chair, Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies, Aug. 4-11, 2024, Oxford, UK.

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Paul D. Numrich

**Professor in the
Snowden Chair for
the Study of Religion
and Interreligious
Relations**

Publications

“Attending to Religion in Religiously Competent Health Care,” in *Bio Quarterly: A Publication of the Bioethics Network of Ohio* 34, No. 1, 2024

“Aging with the Buddha: Observations from a Christian Seminary Professor and Scholar of Buddhism,” four-part blog post series, Society for Buddhist-Christian Studies, beginning Sept. 13, 2023.

“When Congregations Share Space, It’s Not All About the Money,” for *studyingcongregations.org*, July 12, 2024.

Academic lectures and publications

Presenter, Toro Nagashi Interfaith Peace Prayer, Chicago, Aug. 16, 2023.

Keynote speaker, McNamara Workshop in the Social Scientific Study of Religion, Loyola University Chicago, April 18, 2024.

Other activities

Attended opening day, Parliament of the World’s Religions, Chicago, Aug. 14, 2023.

Attended Interfaith Association of Central Ohio’s online forum, “How to Do Interfaith Engagement?” Dec. 13, 2023.

Attended Religions for Peace USA’s webinar “Peace Based on Justice in the Holy Land,” Dec. 21, 2023.



Fulgence Nyengele

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

Director, Doctor of Ministry 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, Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies, Practical Theology Working Group, Aug. 5-11, 2024.

Professional and guild activities

Society for Pastoral Theology, New Brunswick, New Jersey.

Book signing for my book on United Methodism in DR Congo, with the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry, United Methodist Church General Conference, Charlotte, April 30-May 1, 2024.

Planning meeting for the 15th Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies (virtual).

Church and popular speaking

Preached at Ebenezer United Methodist Church, Columbus, Feb. 11, 2024.

Other activities

Planned and hosted the Thriving in Ministry Retreat, Jan. 25-27, 2024.

CPE Advisory Committee, Nationwide Children’s Hospital, Jan. 29, April 29 and Sept. 16, 2024.

Lilly Grant Ecumenical Affinity Group Meetings (virtual) in February, March, April, May and September, 2024.

Alford-Cantlin Fellowship D.Min. Luncheon, West Ohio Conference, Columbus, April 18, 2024.

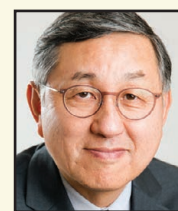
West Ohio Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church, Columbus, May 29-31, 2024.

Society for Pastoral Theology, New Brunswick, New Jersey, June 5-7, 2024.

Attended the Lilly Grant Ecumenical Affinity Group Retreat, Santa Fe, New Mexico, June 25-27, 2024.

Co-led the Thriving in Ministry Spiritual Renewal Retreat (with Paul Kim and Eugene Gibson), MTSO, July 11-12, 2024.

Convener, Practical Theology Working Group, 15th Oxford Institute of Methodist Theological Studies, Aug. 4-11, 2024.



Joon-Sik Park

**Professor in the E.
Stanley Jones Chair
of World Evangelism**
**Director, Course of
Study School of Ohio**

Publications

“The Worldwide Nature of The United Methodist Church: A Historical and Missiological Reflection,” in *Methodism and American Empire: Reflections on Decolonizing the Church*, edited by David W. Scott and Filipe Maia, Nashville: Abingdon Press, 2023.

Professional and Guild Activities

Convener, Association of Pan-Wesleyan Missiologists, June 13, 2024.

Church and popular speaking

“A Time of Waiting,” sermon at Amen Methodist Church, Seoul, South Korea, July 16, 2023.

“The Journey of Faith,” sermon at Korean Church of Columbus, Feb. 11, 2024.

“Crucified with Christ,” sermon at Bethel International UMC, Columbus, May 5, 2024.

Other activities

Contributing editor, *International Bulletin of Mission Research*.



Bradford Price
Fully Affiliated
Faculty, Pastoral Care

Academic lectures and presentations

"The Process of Addiction Assessment,"
Alternative Paths, Medina, Ohio, Sept. 13, 2024.

"The Playfulness of Spirituality: Using Play
in Therapy to Enhance Meaning and Mental
Health," All-Ohio Counselors Conference, Oct.
29, 2024.

Professional and guild activities

ACPE Annual Conference, Pittsburgh, May 21, 2024.

Other activities

Weekly consultation with the staff and clients of
Psychotherapy Care and Counseling Services,
Mutare, Zimbabwe.



Susan Ritchie
Fully Affiliated
Faculty, Theology
Director, Unitarian
Universalist House
of Studies

Publications

"Systemic Benevolence: Notes on the History
of Congregational Fundraising in Unitarian,
Universalist, and Unitarian Universalist
Churches," harvardsquarelibrary.org, April
2024.

"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, fall 2024.

Academic lectures and presentations

"Poetic Necessities: Professions of Faith in Non-
Creedal Universalism" National Universalist
Convocation, Sept. 21, 2024.

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

"On Pauline Indeterminacy," in *Recovering an
Undomesticated Apostle: Essays on the Legacy
of Paul*, edited by Christopher B. Zeichmann
and John A. Egger. Studies in Christianity and
Judaism. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University
Press, 2023.

Review of *Power and Emotion in Ancient
Judaism: Community and Identity in Formation*
by Ari Mermelstein, in *Review of Biblical
Literature*, October 2023.

Review of *How God Becomes Real: Kindling the
Presence of Invisible Others* by T.M. Luhrmann,
in *Biblical Interpretation* 32, 2024.

Academic lectures and presentations

"Biography, Theology, and Ethics in Romans
15," Faculty of Protestant Theology, University
of Münster, June 27, 2024.

Church and popular speaking

"Paul, Prison, and the Justice of God: Reading
the New Testament in the Shadow of Mass
Incarceration," East Shore UMC, Euclid, Ohio,
Sept. 30, 2023.

"Contentment and Constraint: Reading
Philippians in the Shadow of Mass
Incarceration," First Mennonite Church of
Bluffton, Ohio, Jan. 27-28, 2024.

"Justice and the Prison in Ancient Christianity,"
Westerville Community United Church of
Christ, Feb. 1, 2024.

"Professional Mourners, Grieving Mothers,
and the Divine Politics of Lament," Schooler
Institute on Preaching, MTSO, Feb. 28-29, 2024.

Other activities

Visiting research fellow, Religion and Politics
Cluster of Excellence, University of Münster,
June-July 2024.



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

Coordinator of Ecological Initiatives

Publications

"Distorted Imagination: Land, Food, and
Economies," in *Liberating People, Planet, and Religion:
Intersections of Ecology, Economics, and Christianity*,
edited by Terra Rowe and Joerg Rieger, Rowman and
Littlefield Publishing, forthcoming November 2024.

Academic lectures and presentations

"Climate Change Responses: Food Sovereignty
and Animals within Regenerative Agriculture,"
Rome and Assisi Spirituality and Sustainability
Conference, June 2023.

"Climate Anxiety and Hopeful Vision" Duke
University, Social 210: Contemporary Social
Problems, guest of Maria Febbo, Sept. 5, 2023.

"Institutional Commitments to Sustainable
Practices at MTSO," Food, Faith, Farms
Conference, Interfaith Food Cooperative,
Petaluma, California, May 8, 2024.

Professional and guild activities

American Academy of Religion, November 2023.

Church and popular speaking

"Uncomfortable Choices: Climate Justice for
Generational Thriving," Sprague Lecture, North
Broadway UMC, Columbus, Sept. 30, 2023.

"Faith and Resilient Farming," Ohio Farmer's
Union meeting at MTSO, January 2024.

"Living into Resilient Church in Challenging
Times," Faith United UMC, North Canton,
Ohio, March 2024.

Other activities

Executive Committee member, Agroecosystems
Management Program, Ohio State University,
August 2020-present.

Pastoral Influence for a Climate Changed World,
retreat for pastors and lay people, planned and led in
partnership with Creation Justice Ministries and the
Anabaptist Climate Collaborative, Oct. 16-18, 2023.

Lilly Pathways grant leadership, through May 2024.

Board member, Hispanic Scholars Program,
member of three-person team writing grants for
program development.

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from previous page

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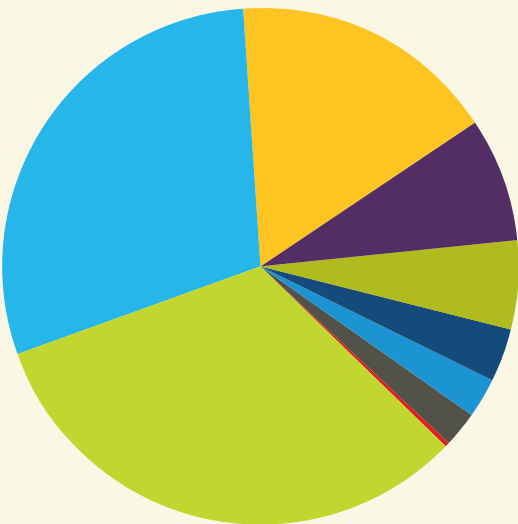
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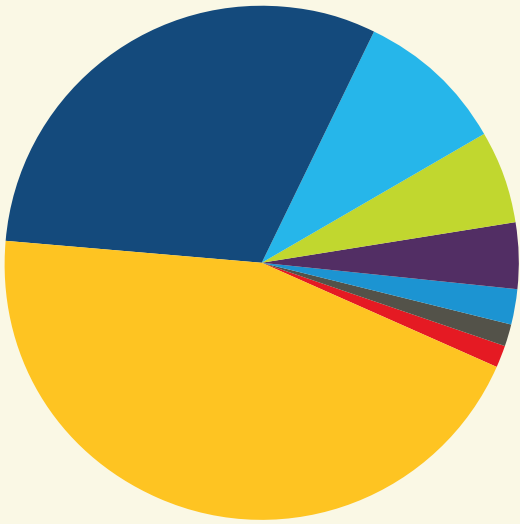
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Revenue



	Revenue	Percent of total
Endowment	\$2,885,823	32.4%
Tuition	\$2,608,410	29.3%
Current grants and gifts	\$1,498,390	16.8%
Ministerial Education Fund	\$678,168	7.6%
Programs and services	\$486,671	5.5%
Operating reserve	\$308,876	3.5%
Methesco Fund gifts	\$221,993	2.5%
Student aid gifts	\$191,200	2.1%
Federal work study	\$16,220	0.2%
Total revenue	\$8,895,751	100%

Expenditures



	Expenditures	Percent of total
Compensation and benefits	\$3,985,585	44.8%
Scholarships	\$2,751,717	30.9%
Programs and services	\$832,092	9.4%
Building and grounds	\$525,546	5.9%
General administration	\$363,773	4.1%
Academic support	\$197,016	2.2%
Information systems	\$131,825	1.5%
Enrollment and advancement	\$108,197	1.2%
Total expenditures	\$8,895,751	100%



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