



Course of Study School of Ohio

<https://cosohio.org/>

Term	Class Dates	Registration Deadline	Dorm Availability
2024 Summer	July 12-13 & Aug. 2-3	5/13/24	Online term
2024 Fall (COS 324: Preaching is FULL)	Sept. 13-14 & Oct. 11-12	7/15/24	Hybrid term: rooms available
2025 Winter	Feb. 7-8 & March 7-8	12/10/24	Online term
2025 Spring	April 4-5 & May 2-3	2/4/25	Online term

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Easter greetings! Let me welcome all of you, including nineteen new students and four graduates, to the 2024 Spring Term of the Course of Study School of Ohio (COSSO)!

Grace Upon Grace, an important United Methodist statement on mission, states: “We call persons to be incorporated into the Body of Christ. All who are ‘in Christ’ share in the mission of Christ” (Para. 59). Central to Christian mission is our witness to the transforming grace of Jesus. We proclaim the gospel and invite persons to decision for and commitment to Jesus and his cause. This paragraph calls attention, first, to the fact that the invitation is also to the fellowship, which is not only with God but also with one another. Second, those who are incorporated into the Body of Christ above all share in the mission of Christ.

When the Good News is shared, the lives of the witness and the one invited to the Christian faith are also to be shared. Most important questions in Christian witness then are whether we are willing to share our lives with others and to share in the lives of others, and whether our community of faith is willing to be a home for all with a place even for strangers. Do United Methodist congregations engaging in mission seek to build relationships across racial, cultural, and socioeconomic differences? Or do they still pursue exclusive forms of Christian witness and church formation?

We also need to be mindful that “all who are ‘in Christ’ share in the mission of Christ.” As the International Missionary Council at Willingen well put it, “There is no participation in Christ without participation in his mission to the world.” When we are incorporated into Christian fellowship, we are also called to participation in and service of Jesus’ mission; our experience of the transforming grace of Jesus should lead to our becoming a witness to that grace. Do United Methodist congregations view mission as central to who they are? I hope that the courses you take at COSSO would help you see and be committed to the missionary nature and vocation of the church—mission as intrinsic and integral to the very life and calling of the church.

With regret, I inform you of the closing of the United Course of Study Extension School. I thank God for its vital educational ministry over the past fifteen years which has provided

FROM THE DIRECTOR, cont.

transforming theological education to United Methodist local pastors. I appreciate Dr. Pete Bellini for his prayerful and effective leadership as the Director of the school.

All of us on the COSSO staff look forward to journeying with you this term, and pray for the continued guidance and blessings of the risen Jesus on your studies and ministry.

Peace,

Joon-Sik Park

Dr. Joon-Sik Park

Director of the Course of Study School of Ohio

E. Stanley Jones Professor of World Evangelism at MTSO



2023 FALL GRADUATES— CONGRATULATIONS!



L-R: John Armstrong (East Ohio), Dave Warner (West Ohio), Rhonda Osterman (Michigan), Dean Durant (West Ohio), Christine Fodrea (Indiana), Dwayne Brown (West Virginia), Stephen Luzader (West Ohio).

Not pictured: Dave Burriss (West Ohio)

MEET YOUR INSTRUCTORS



Dr. Miranda Zapor Cruz

COS 122: Theological Heritage I: Introduction

Dr. Cruz received her M.Div. from Princeton Theological Seminary and Ph.D. from Baylor University. She is Associate Professor of Theology at Indiana Wesleyan University and Director of the Sacred Alliance Center at Wesley Seminary in Indiana.

Rev. Dr. Steve Trefz

COS 124: Transformative Leadership

Dr. Trefz received his M.Div. and D.Min. from Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary. An ordained elder in the Dakotas Conference, he is Professor of Practical Theology and Director of the Wesley House of Study at Kairos University in Sioux Falls.



Rev. Dr. Brian White

COS 222: Theological Heritage II: Early Church

Dr. White received his M.Div. from Asbury Theological Seminary and D.Min. in Congregational Leadership from Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary. A United Methodist Elder, he serves St. Mark's UMC in the Indiana conference.



Rev. Dr. Mark Powell

COS 321: Bible III: Gospels

Dr. Mark Allan Powell received his M.Div. from Trinity Lutheran Seminary and his Ph.D. from Union Theological Seminary in Virginia. He is retired Professor of New Testament at Trinity Lutheran Seminary.



Dr. Sarah Werner

COS 424: Ethics

Dr. Werner received her M.Div. from Candler School of Theology at Emory University and Ph.D. from University of Florida. She is Communications/Climate Justice coordinator for Mennonite Church USA and a facilitator in the PATHWAYS Theological Education program.



Rev. Dr. William Wilson

COS 522: Theology in the Contemporary Church

Rev. Dr. Wilson received his M.Th. from Perkins School of Theology and his D.Min. from Drew University. A retired elder in the West Virginia Annual Conference, he served as Director of Connectional Ministries and Assistant to the Bishop from 2004 to 2013.



SPIRITUAL FORMATION

ALLELUIA! HOPE IS ALIVE!

Welcome to Eastertide! We've been through the long season of Lent. We started in the ashes and soon moved into the emptiness of wilderness space, taking on or giving up, a fast to help us make our way. We went through Holy Week (at least we clergy did) following the road to the cross, waving our palms then wiping away our tears. The Great Vigil on Holy Saturday carried us along to sunrise on Easter morning! Then, "Alleluia He is Risen! He is risen, indeed!" Oh my, what a morning! And now we move through the Easter season.

Hopefully, you planned a get-away or a few days off to just catch your breath and do nothing!! But I know many of you did not or could not plan that into your schedule. Whatever you are doing in this season of Eastertide, be sure to set aside some time during the day to sit quietly and pray, reflect on your journey through Lent. What were the moments that brought you closer to God? And what, besides busyness, did you experience on Easter morning? What about Easter will carry you forward?

It is so easy to move quickly beyond Easter in our planning and overlook what Easter gives us - hope! Hope for our weary bodies. Hope for our chaotic and messy world. Hope that God, the Risen Christ and the Holy Spirit are with us, indeed! Not just on Easter morning but forever and beyond! Without this hope, there is little meaning for the future. So, spend some time reflecting on this extraordinary gift that Easter gives us.

When I look back on the Easter services that I have led and the many ways we celebrated, I am overwhelmed with memories, especially, of the Easter Sunrise services when we gathered outside the church around a small bonfire, celebrating the ancient tradition of the "First Fire" of Easter. That was when villagers prayed through Holy Saturday and waited for the first light of Easter to sing "Alleluia! He is risen!" They each would take one of the embers from the fire to light the hearths in their homes, symbolizing the light of Christ would be in their homes for another year. I loved those services. They marked the beginning of Easter for me, as the youth led us in the first prayers of Easter, and one of them would light the Christ candle from the fire. Then we followed the light into the church singing "This is the day." With the sound of a lone flute greeting us at the door, we placed flowers on the empty cross that stood stark and bare after the Good Friday service.

The "first fire" of Easter reminds me that hope is not dead. Hope rises from the ashes and new life comes with a certainty that God's love is with us. That is the hope that we and our weary bodies need to move forward. That is the hope that defines us and all Christianity. Hope will never die as long as we keep the embers alive. Christ paid the price to keep God's love alive. Now with Easter in our hearts and hope in our lives, we can face the future knowing God's love is everywhere and in everything. And that is why we can say now and for all eternity:

"Alleluia, Christ is risen! Hope is alive!"

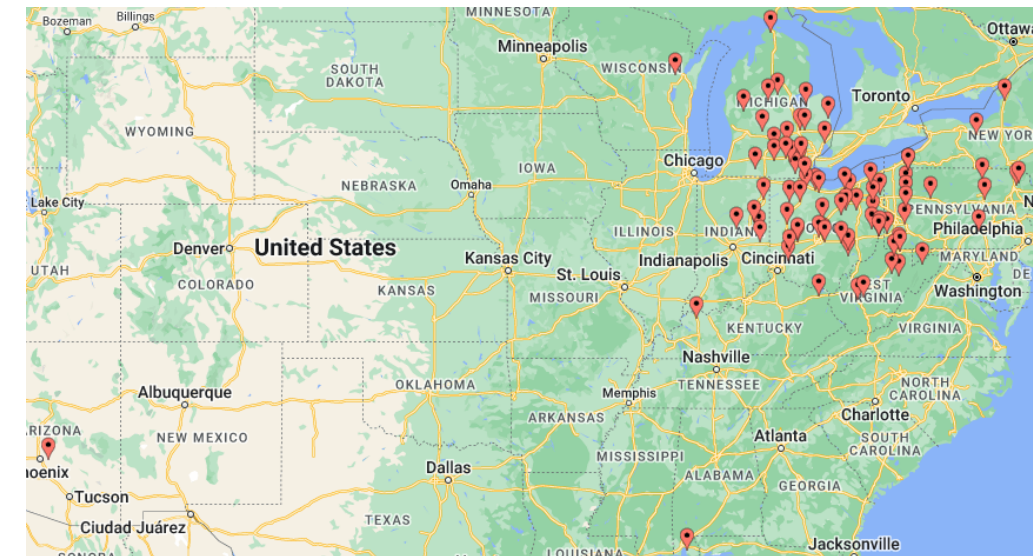
Rev. Dr. Rebeka Maples
Spiritual Formation Director



FROM THE COORDINATOR

- Registration for 2025 COSSO classes opened on **4/2/24**
- **The United COS Extension School is closing.** We are grateful for the service they provided to local pastors!

Students from 12 Annual Conferences are taking classes in the 2024 Spring term:



Grace Wallace
Coordinator



FROM THE CHOIR ROOM

As the old saying goes, "*the one who sings prays twice.*" We look forward to singing together again when we can safely do so in person.



Lori Douglas Weaver, MMEd

