



Course of Study School of Ohio

www.cosohio.org

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

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Let me welcome all of you, including five new students, to the 2024 Winter Term of the Course of Study School of Ohio (COSSO)!

More often than not, our ministry is a reflection of our own ecclesiology, that is, our own understanding of the nature and purpose of the church. As Orlando Costas well put it, “The church grows [only] in accordance with its self-understanding” In other words, the church grows only as its self-understanding grows, or only as it better understands its own nature and purpose in the world. Thus, “What is the church?” and “What is the church for?” are crucial questions to grapple with. Through your COS education and beyond, I hope that you would continue to engage with the question of what it means to be an authentic church in your own ministry context.

The church has been called to be a missionary community, bearing witness to God’s redemptive purpose and act revealed in and through Christ. Therefore, the church which is self-concerned and inward-oriented contradicts its very nature and purpose. To be a witness is central and integral to who the church is as a community of faith. The church is to be an instrument of God’s reign as well as a visible embodiment of God’s purposes.

What is needed is a fundamental transformation in our ecclesiology. It should be biblically and theologically grounded and missionally shaped. I hope that the courses you take at COSSO would help you engage in critical reflection on missional ecclesiology and cultivate integral missional practices.

I thank God for the transforming educational ministry of the West Virginia Extension School—a vital, exemplary COS school over the past thirty years. It is unfortunate that the school had to close last fall due to declining enrollment and financial hardships caused by denominational circumstances beyond its control. I greatly appreciate Rev. Greg Markins, the Director of the West Virginia Extension, for his prayerful and effective leadership under which the school faithfully provided integral theological education to United Methodist part-time local pastors these past ten years.

FROM THE DIRECTOR, cont.

All of us on the COSSO staff look forward to journeying with you this term, and pray for God’s continued guidance and blessings 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



Rev. Dr. Brenda Buckwell
COS 123: Formation and Discipleship

Dr. Brenda Buckwell received her M.Div. from Boston University and D.Min. from Garrett Evangelical Theological Seminary. An elder in the West Ohio Annual Conference, she is the founder and spiritual director of Living Streams Flowing Water.

Rev. Dr. Paul Kim

COS 221: Bible II: Torah & Israel's History

Dr. Paul Kim received his M.Div. and Th.M. from Princeton Theological Seminary, and his Ph.D. from the Claremont School of Theology. A Presbyterian elder, he is Professor of Hebrew Bible at MTSO.



Rev. Dr. Jeff Jaynes
COS 322: Theological Heritage III: Medieval-Reformation

Dr. Jeff Jaynes received an M.Div. from Fuller Theological Seminary and a Ph.D. from Ohio State University. A Presbyterian elder, he currently teaches Church History at MTSO.

Rev. Glenn Rowley
COS 423: Mission

Rev. Glenn Rowley, a retired UM elder, received his M.Div. from Iliff School of Theology. Previously, he served as the Director of the Mission and Global Justice office of the VA Conference, and as a missionary with GBGM over 24 years serving as the Director of Mission Personnel Training and working in diverse mission settings in Mozambique, Senegal, and Mexico.



Rev. Dr. Mark Powell
COS 521: Bible V: Acts, Epistles, and Revelation

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.

SPIRITUAL FORMATION

TURNING BACK AND MOVING FORWARD

Here we are moving into another season of Lent, calling people into the desert, to separate themselves and do the inner work of praying and listening. The Lenten journey is another part of the spiritual journey, an ongoing story of letting go and taking on, of turning back and moving forward.

The spiritual journey is a confusing process, a story of separation and community. Separation to reflect, pray and listen, in order to go deeper into the scriptures and grow closer to God, which requires some isolation and time alone with God. At the same time, it is a story of relationships, of crossing boundaries and working with others to build community. So, the spiritual journey calls us to both isolate ourselves from others and come together with others. How do we do both? Can we do both? As pastors, we are called to do this, to be the spiritual leaders in the church and the community, and to guide others in this spiritual process.

All spiritual work, like prayer, is an ongoing process, of turning back to God and moving forward to do God's work. A major part of this process is listening, always listening, to God and to others. Maybe it would be more accurate to call us spiritual listeners, as we listen and respond to the One who calls us to this holy work. And Jesus is our best role model for knowing when to listen and when to get involved. He sent his followers into the world to affect positive change, and he knew when he needed to step away and be alone with God.

And so, instead of completely withdrawing from the world, we are called to be fully engaged in whatever season it is, wherever we are. Offering what we have and asking for what we need, as Jesus did, and our prayer practices help us do this: to listen to God and guide others.

One of the things that being in quiet prayer space does for me is that it helps me let go of my own stories. When I pray, I practice letting go of all the words and busyness going through my head, whether I'm walking down the street, running on the trail or sitting in my prayer room. I'm letting go of all the stories for that moment and simply listening, listening to the One for whom my soul yearns. That's what I love about prayer, it invites me to be in that listening space at all times, in all places. May it be so with you on your spiritual journey, and may God bless you through this Lenten season and all seasons.



Rev. Dr. Rebeka Maples
Spiritual Formation Director

FROM THE COORDINATOR

Here's a quick review of the past year:

	2023
Students who took classes at MTSO:	164
Classes completed:	296
New students:	34
Graduates:	18

2023 COSSO students came from these Annual

Conferences: East Ohio, Florida, Illinois Great Rivers, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan, North Carolina, North Georgia, Pacific Northwest, Susquehanna, Tennessee-Western Kentucky, West Ohio, West Virginia, Western Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

The West Virginia COS Extension School closed at the end of their 2023 Fall term. We are grateful for the service they provided to local pastors over the last 30 years!

Students from 9 Annual Conferences are taking classes in the 2024 Winter 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