

FROM THE DIRECTOR'S DESK

Welcome to the 2019 Spring Term of the Course of Study School of Ohio (COSSO)!

E. Stanley Jones (1884–1973), a missionary to India for over six decades, was one of the most prominent American missionaries and mission theologians of the twentieth century. He was the author of twenty-six books selling more than four million copies in eighteen languages. I still use his *The Christ of the Indian Road* (published in 1925) as a textbook, and students find it surprisingly fresh and relevant.

Jones's *Victory Through Surrender* has been formative in my own spiritual journey. According to Jones, the last thing that humans are willing to let go of is the self. Yet at the heart of conversion is the conversion of the self by self-surrender—the surrender of the center of one's life to Christ or a reorientation of life around Christ as the new center. "Until we let the self go," said Jones, "we are trifling with this business of being a Christian." Only when our self is fully surrendered to God, we are liberated from the life of self-centeredness and self-preoccupation, and start to live a life of genuine freedom and service. Self-surrender is, however, not simply what God demands of us; it is at the very heart of God and God's redemptive mission as demonstrated in the self-giving life and death of Jesus. The season of Lent would invite us to reflect on the meaning of "self-surrender" and its implications for our life and ministry.

As has been announced, the GBHEM Division of Ordained Ministry has approved a new prerequisite policy as follows: "Effective June 1, 2019, COS 121 (Bible 1: Introduction) and COS 122 (Theological Heritage 1: Introduction) will be prerequisites for enrollment in any other Course of Study courses."

Since these are foundational courses that provide basic instruction and a shared language for biblical interpretation and theological reflection in the *United Methodist ethos*, GBHEM believes that it would be crucial that they be taken prior to other COS courses. During the transition period (June 1, 2019–June 1, 2020), I will work with students on a case-by-case basis to determine the best way for them to both continue the studies and meet this new requirement.

As some of you would already know, Sister Terri Litchfield retires after the first weekend of this term. I would like to take this opportunity to express my deep appreciation to Sister Terri for her faithful and committed service as the Coordinator for over 10 years. She has been a great gift to both the COS program and students, and will be dearly missed. Please join me in wishing God's blessings on her and her retirement.

All of us on the COSSO staff are excited to welcome you all—including seventeen new students and three graduating students—and pray for God's continued guidance and grace through your COS journeys.

Lenten blessings,

Joon-Sik Park

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



COSSO NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE WRITING INSTRUCTOR

There is a brief but memorable scene from the film *Dead Poet's Society*, in which the English teacher, Mr. Keating, discourages his students from using the word "very" in their writing. "A man is not very tired, he is exhausted." His point is that the English language is far too rich and diverse to resort to using the same descriptions over and over. With more words, by far, than any other language, English is a wonderful language for expressing complexity, nuance, and clarity. Even still, some laudable writers feel the need to make their own descriptive words to great effect, such as James Joyce when he writes: "The sea, the snotgreen sea..." He could have described the sea merely as "green," but by associating it with "snot" he imbues the sea with a nauseous, sickening quality. You do not have to invent adjectives like Joyce to make this effect happen in your writing; a thesaurus will work just fine. You may have had an experience that was literally indescribable for you, but this is not a good reason to avoid making an attempt. Words, though they cost us nothing to produce, should be precious to us, as they are the only tools we have to describe what goes on inside our minds and hearts. Without a diverse tapestry of descriptors, everything we experience gets reduced to its most basic quality. Without the words, how are we supposed to distinguish between feeling sorrow-stricken and feeling disappointed, or contentment and euphoria? Experiences must be funneled through a narrow conduit of varying degrees of good or bad. Life is about much more than just good and bad experiences, and writing about them necessitates an ever-expanding vocabulary.

Dr. Trad Nogueira-Godsey
Writing Instructor



CHOIR NEWS

Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises. (Psalm 98:4)

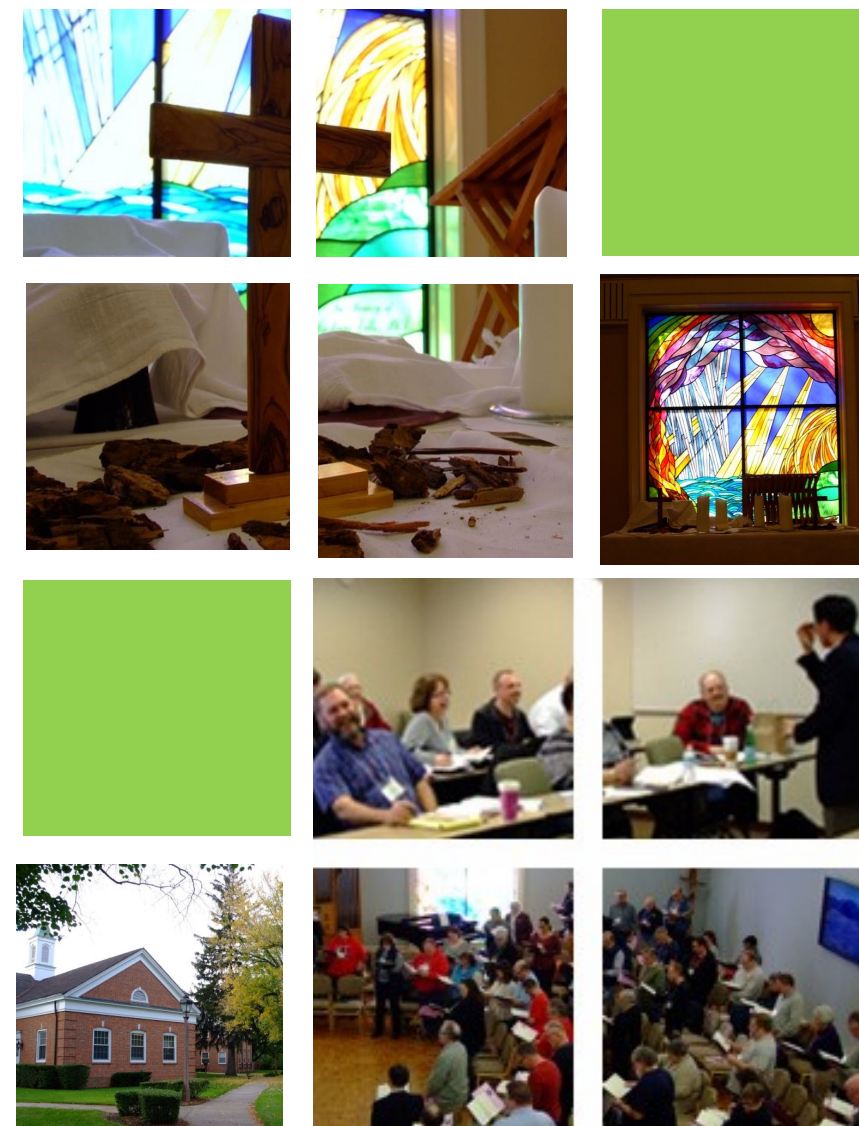
The COSSO choir rehearses in the choir room (off the centrum) on Saturday morning from 7:30-7:45, right before the Morning Prayer Service. We provide the special music for the Eucharist Service which occurs later the same morning. The choir needs people who enjoy making a joyful noise through singing and the playing of musical instruments. The ability to read music is never required. For more information or to receive the music ahead of time,

Lori Douglas Weaver, Music Director



Michael Hill, Albert Rush, Jon Little, Michael Queen

2019 WINTER COS GRADUATES

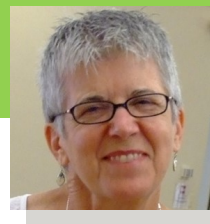


Course of Study School of Ohio www.cosohio.org

Term	Class Dates	Registration Deadline	Dorm Available
2019 Summer	June 21-22 & July 12-13	4/22/2019	NO
2019 Summer 2-Week	Aug 5-9 & 12-15	6/6/2019	NO
2019 Fall	Sep. 27-28 & Oct. 25-26	7/29/2019	NO
2020 Winter	Feb. 14-15 & Mar 13-14	12/16/2019	YES

2019 SPRING COS FACULTY

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION



Rebeka Maples

VIEW FROM THE COORDINATOR



Terri Litchfield



Randy Litchfield

COS 123: Formation & Discipleship

Dr. Randy Litchfield received his Master of Religious Education from Anderson University School of Theology and his Ph.D. from Claremont School of Theology. He currently teaches Christian Education at MTSO.

Norman "Ned" Dewire

COS 224 Administration & Polity

Rev. Dr. Norman Dewire received his M.Div. from Boston University School of Theology and his D.Min. from McCormick Theological Seminary. A retired elder in the West Ohio Conference, he served as the third president of MTSO.



Jeff Jaynes

COS 222 : Theological Heritage II : Early Church

Rev. 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.

Wray Bryant

COS 421 Bible IV: Prophets, Psalms & Wisdom Lit

Dr. E. Wray Bryant received his M.Div. from Trinity Lutheran Seminary and his Ph.D. in Hebrew Bible from the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville. He is Assistant Professor of Religion at Capital University.



Jeff Greenway

COS 524: Theological Reflection: Practice of Ministry

Rev. Dr. Jeff Greenway received an M.Div. from Asbury Theological Seminary and a D.Min. in Evangelism from Wesley Theological Seminary. He serves as Lead Pastor of Reynoldsburg UMC in Reynoldsburg, OH.

Just a Little Kindness

You have heard it said, "a little kindness goes a long way," and it does. Kindness, whether we are the recipient or the giver, opens our hearts and draws us nearer to the heart of God. The more we practice kindness, the more we learn about ourselves and the less likely we are to condemn the other. We remember the times when we were not so kind and we see ourselves for who we really are, broken and forgiven human beings, like everyone else. We remember the times when kindness was given to us, unexpected moments of grace, and we see ourselves as blessed. Grace upon grace poured out for us, always binding our wounds, the wrongs, the pain, and showing a way to free ourselves from the traps of unkindness and become doers of kindness. And yes, a little kindness goes a long way.

Joan Chittister (in Illuminated Life) suggests that our memories of unkindness give meaning to our understanding of kindness. Remember those times when you were the victim of cruelty as a child or harassment as an adult, and the feelings of rejection and heart ache that they left in you. Remember, too, the feelings of love and belonging that you felt when you were the recipient of unexpected acts of kindness. We experience both at some time and even at the same time. We live in a world that seems overly focused on degrading the other in order to promote the self, as if your demise will advance my success. It is a backwards and distorted view of the guidance we receive in the gospels. Jesus never degraded or ignored people, in fact he gave us the greatest commandments: to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves, so that we would know the basic tenets of kindness. He's not only talking about turning someone else's life around, he's talking about turning our own lives around with everyday acts of kindness, of respect and hospitality that can make a difference in someone's life – a smile, a friendly hello, small gestures of consideration, like holding open a door for someone, sending a card, and so on. Kindness, large or small, is an act of God, an act of grace. By being the recipients or the givers of kindness, we come closer to seeing the living God and closer to knowing what grace really is.

I am saddened that Terri Litchfield is leaving our Course of Study staff. We have worked together for the past 12 years and I have come to appreciate the ways in which kindness naturally flows from her in the way she lives and interacts with people. I am sure many of you will say "Amen" to that as well. I thank God for the time and privilege I have had working with her. She has taught me that even the littlest act of kindness goes a long way. I am also thankful for the opportunity I have had to witness the ease with which she balances the intricacies of COS and MTSO operations with offering hospitality. Someone else will work in Terri's position and that person will fulfill those duties with her or his own skills and gifts. But that person will not be Terri, and yet I am sure Terri's kindness will continue to flow among us, as we adjust and grow to become all that God has called us to be. And yes, even a little kindness will go a long way in the process.

The Course of Study Coordinator position has been a wonderful place for me. More than a job, of course, it's been a calling. Some of you heard in March that I am retiring from COS and MTSO and this is my last weekend as COS Coordinator. In addition to helping my parents relocate from Connecticut to Ohio, I look forward to having time to devote to other organizations and activities. But I will miss COS so much!

In 2007 when Randy Litchfield came home and mentioned a dire need for someone to cover COS because of the sudden resignation of the person hired to replace the outgoing COS Coordinator, Jessica Spillman, I wanted to help. I had created the COS database for Jessica a few years prior to this so I thought I could handle the data side of things. I volunteered to cover while MTSO's Dean went through the hiring process again. Well, as they say, the rest is history! This quickly became the hardest job I'd ever done. I was comfortable with the database side of things but needed to learn EVERYTHING else about COS. I was overwhelmed at the sight of a blinking light on the phone because I knew I wouldn't know the answer to whatever the question was. I was a bundle of nerves that first weekend of the 2007 Fall COS term. As an extreme introvert, COS sessions were a challenge!! Do you know what made it work? You did! In other words, COS students, faculty, and staff made it work. (And of course, it was by God's grace.) Everyone was patient and forgiving, and over the next few weeks and months, I caught on. Course of Study became a place where I could hone my skills, even as it stretched me in so many positive ways. I loved being able to help students navigate through Course of Study and I will miss greeting you as you arrive on campus.

I will miss working with others in the MTSO community. Their work with COS is behind the scenes and often goes unacknowledged. I'd like to thank the following colleagues for their help and friendship over these years: Diane (Business Office); Tammy (Housing Director) and Leslie; Keith, B.R. and Chase (Maintenance); Chefs James and Brian, and Daejah (Dining Hall); Shannon and Matthew (IT). I also want to thank Deans past and present: John Kampen, Randy Litchfield, Lisa Withrow and Valerie Bridgeman, and President Rundell. I'm grateful for their responsiveness and support. Molly (Financial Aid) and Tammey Wilden (Field Education) have been a great support and good friends although their responsibilities don't overlap with COS.

It has been an honor to serve on the COS staff. Dr. Park and Dr. Maples bring exceptional leadership to the program. (The worship services are a balm for my soul.) COS Student Assistants have helped with the workload, and I'm grateful that Shin Sung has been able to extend his service. His calm presence and willingness to assist in any capacity are so helpful! Grace Wallace, while being the newest member of the team, has become indispensable. She worked with COS briefly a few years ago, so she is already familiar with, and comfortable using, the database. She has far exceeded expectations. As a team, the COS staff has worked hard AND had fun along the way.

I am thankful. Peace be with you.

Terri