FROM THE WRITING LAB

The son and brother of two different U.S. Presidents, Jeb Bush sought the presidency in 2016, but withdrew after receiving a disappointingly low level of voter support. The failure of his campaign has been summed up by his own words and became a “meme” for others to borrow. Those words were spoken at a campaign event, when after delivering part of his speech that he expected would thrill the crowds but was met with only silence, he begged his listeners, “Please clap.” Just like voters sussing out candidates, no reader, be it a professor or a devourer of romance novels, likes to be told how to react or what to think. For this reason, we should avoid reacting in the text of our writing. Exclamations in the midst of our narrative or argument distract the reader from having their own reaction. For example, while it may feel perfectly natural to pause to express a feeling such as, “Wow!” or “Praise the Lord!” it is not natural for a reader to be told to have a reaction of the same type. Therefore, it is much better to write in such a descriptive way that the reader, of their own accord, can have the reaction you desire, such as “Amen!” without reading it in the text. This can be counterintuitive to experienced sermonizers, because in oral communication it is expected to prompt your audience: “Can I get an amen?” This is an important distinction between academic writing and speech, and while we may think of them both as language, they have much less in common than people suppose. If you write an academic essay according to the conventions of spoken English, you will always be disappointed by the effect it has on the reader.

FROM THE DIRECTOR

Let me welcome all of you, including three new and one graduating student, to the 2020 Spring Term of the Course of Study School of Ohio (COSSO)!

For all us, a Lenten journey with social distancing was a strange and unprecedented experience. There probably was a great sense of loss in not being able to be physically together to commemorate the passion of Jesus and share the overflowing joy of his resurrection. Yet I trust that God’s grace was sufficient, and that you and your congregations had a meaningful and blessed Easter!

In this new reality affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, we would need a “resurrection imagination” more than ever. We would need to be able to see and discern the life-giving presence of Jesus and signs of resurrection in the midst of fear and death. As New Testament scholar Stan Saunders well put it, without a resurrection imagination, Christians and churches will “inevitably become blinded by the ‘realities’ of this world” (“Discernment on the Way to Emmaus: Resurrection Imagination and Practices in Luke 24:13–35,” Journal for Preachers 20/2 [1997]: 44–49).

A faithful Christian witness requires seeing clearly and proclaiming boldly that it is the resurrected Lord who now reigns, and not the principalities and powers of this world. This “resurrection imagination” can be cultivated and nurtured as the community of faith seeks to be faithful to both the gospel message and its own ministry context and is prayerfully committed to discerning and making a fitting response to the activity of God in history.

Since COSSO finds great value in holding face-to-face classes, it was not an easy decision to offer the spring term courses fully online. Yet I am confident that this new format could still help you have an enriching, transformative learning experience with the COS faculty working hard to adapt their class for an online environment and the COSSO staff being committed to providing needed support. All of us—students, faculty, and staff—would need to be a little more patient and generous to each other while adjusting to new ways of teaching and learning.

Remembering those facing acute health and economic concerns worldwide, please join with me in praying a prayer written by the National Council of Churches in Australia:

Gracious God,

We give thanks anew for your providence and presence.
We prayerfully seek your grace, amidst COVID-19 here and overseas.
We pray for those in need of healing.
We pray for your peace with those who are anxious or grieving.
We pray you will continue to strengthen and sustain all those who are serving in response.
We pray for your Holy Spirit’s discernment amidst the many choices and decisions facing our national, community and medical leaders.
We pray we each might see quickly what more we can do to help those who are vulnerable.
This prayer for our nation in the family of nations, with all that is on our hearts, we gather now and pray through Jesus Christ our Lord. AMEN.

Peace,

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

Course of Study School of Ohio
www.cosohio.org

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**MEET YOUR PROFESSORS**

**Rev. Dr. Gary Campbell**
COS 122: Theological Heritage I: Introduction

**Rev. Dr. J. Gary Campbell** received his Th.M. from Harvard Divinity School and his D.Min. from Asbury Theological Seminary. A retired elder in West Ohio Conference, he served in numerous states as District Superintendent and pastor.

**Rev. Tom Snyder**
COS 124: Transformative Leadership

Rev. Tom Snyder received his Th.M. from Boston University School of Theology. A retired Elder in the East Ohio Conference, he served United Methodist congregations for 36 years.

**Dr. Tejai Beulah**
COS 222: Theological Heritage II: Early Church

Dr. Tejai Beulah received her MTs from Methodist Theological School in Ohio and her Ph.D. from Drew University. She is currently Coordinator of Partnerships and Black Church and African Diaspora Specialization at MTSO.

**Rev. Dr. Britt Leslie**
COS 321 Bible III: Gospels

Rev. Dr. Britt Leslie received his Th.M. and Ph.D. from Lutheran School of Theology at Chicago. A United Methodist elder, he is currently Adjunct Professor of Biblical Studies at Manchester University in Indiana and South Dakota.

**Rev. Dr. John Wallace**
COS 423: Mission

Rev. Dr. John Wallace received his M.Div. from Candler School of Theology and Ph.D. from Michigan State University. A retired elder of the West Ohio Conference, he served churches in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Ohio.

**Rev. Dr. Sarah Lancaster**
COS 522: Theology in the Contemporary Church

Rev. Dr. Sarah Lancaster received her M.Div. from Perkins School of Theology and her Ph.D. from Southern Methodist University. An elder in the North Texas Annual Conference, she is Professor of Theology at MTSO.

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**SPIRITUAL FORMATION**

**Rev. Dr. Rebeka Maples**
Spiritual Formation Director

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**FROM THE CHORO ROOM**

As the old saying goes, “the one who sings prays twice.” We look forward to singing together again when we can safely meet in person.

***Thank you all for your adaptability and graciousness in these difficult times!***

As your classes start online, please note that I have posted directions for Populi and Zoom our website at [https://cosohio.org/populi](https://cosohio.org/populi). If anything isn’t covered there, please ask me! My office phone is redirecting to me at home so you can still call. I’ll also be available whenever your online class meetings begin to meet, so if you have tech issues then, please get in touch!

**COURSE PLANNING NOTES:**
- **2020 Summer COS 323: Congregational Care** is full. COS 323 is next offered in 2021 Spring term.
- **2020 Summer COS 422: Theological Heritage IV: Wesleyan Movement** is full. COS 422 is next offered in the 2021 Fall term.
- **2020 Fall COS 223: Worship & Sacraments** is full. COS 223 is next offered in the 2021 Summer and 2021 Summer 2-week (afternoon) terms.
- **2020 Fall COS 324: Preaching** is full. COS 324 is also offered in the 2020 Summer 2-week (morning) and 2021 Winter terms.

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**FROM THE COORDINATOR**

Thank you all for your adaptability and graciousness in these difficult times!