



From The Director's Desk

Course of Study School of Ohio at the Methodist Theological School

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Profiles of COSSO Leaders



Robin Knowles Wallace, Director of the Course of Study in Ohio

My family from left to right: John Wallace, my husband, the pastor of Christ UMC in Columbus. He also regularly teaches in the COS program and just recently returned from El Salvador where he taught a course for Methesco seminarians. Laura is next, a senior at Kenyon College. Then

there is Grace who is taking a respite from Wesleyan University in Connecticut. I am on the right. John and I met while we both were attending Candler Seminary in Atlanta

I came to Methesco in 1997, very happy to teach in one of the few Methodist Seminaries that has a full faculty position in both Worship AND Music and happy to come back to Ohio. Actually, I had taken a couple of courses at MTSO when I was discerning my call: whether to continue getting an M.Div or go on to Northwestern for a Ph.D. In the end, I moved to Evanston and Northwestern but I had grown up in Toledo—a Preacher's Kid (My father is currently pastor of Otterbein UMC in Baltimore, MD—a church obviously rooted in the Evangelical United Brethren tradition). And I had known about the Seminary since attending High School about forty miles west of the campus.

In the fall of 2002, I accepted the invitation to be Director of the COS in Ohio, a regional school under the supervision of the General Board of Higher Education and Ministry. In fact, one of the joys of the position is the regular discussions on the future of theological education and ministry in which I participate.

I especially enjoy teaching courses in the COS because I get to know the students so much better and on an individual basis. With the full complement of courses and

committee work required of all faculty members plus directing COS, my plate is full but when I can, I take the time to unwind by reading mysteries—particularly those written by women.



Jessica Spillman, Auxiliary Programs Manager I was just a little older than Jesse, my son, who is eight in this picture when I became familiar with the campus of The Methodist Theological School in Ohio. That was when my father, Larry Spillman, became Director of Food Services here. [COS students will remember Larry as a beloved and constant presence at their meals. The Picnic Pavillion behind the Dining Room is a memorial in his name. Editor's note] So the place has always been like a second home to me.

We moved into the house in this photo shortly before Christmas. However, living in Marion, about 20 miles north of the campus, we still don't feel we live that far away from this "home." There we are active in the Prospect Street UMC. In fact, Jesse is in the children's choir which seems to sing at worship every week.

As Auxiliary Programs Manager, I come in contact with many constituencies, but I must say the COS students are my favorites. They are invariably gracious, caring, and grateful, grateful for their congregations, for their professors, for their peers in the program. I feel privileged and grateful to be working with them and for them.



Jenny Bradshaw, Assistant to the Programs Manager

Here I am beside the Pacific Ocean with a friend I met on the beach. I myself come from Iowa but Molly Mosely, a sixth year student at Methesco, and I rented an apartment about a mile and half from campus where we could keep cats. We were in California to visit Molly's parents I am a middler at the seminary. For years I fought my call. While I was

fighting I received a Master's Degree in Linguistics (how languages are structured) at the University of Iowa and then worked in their library for four years. But September 11, 2001 made my call too clear to resist further. On that day, I felt God wanted me to work for peace in the ministry. As I went on line to find a seminary, my first thought was to try Garrett Evangelical. My mother had gone there. Did I mention that I am a preacher's

kid—twice over? Both my mother and father are United Methodist Pastors. But I found the Campus at Methesco irresistible. The fact that the administration offered me an Alford Scholarship (full tuition and a stipend) also helped me to make the decision to come here.

Currently, I am playing with the possibility of continuing my studies in order to get a Ph.D. in Biblical Studies. I'm hoping that my background in linguistics will be a help in learning the Biblical Languages. In the meantime, I'm happy to be taking courses and working with Jessica in the office and during registration. And I'm very happy to be working in the Course of Study, meeting people from so many different places and so many different backgrounds, people who in many cases did something other for years and now are responding to their call. [Jenny has had serious surgery and experienced a number of complications which have made it necessary for her to be out of school. Grace Wallace has been taking her place. See her picture, second from the right in the Wallace family. Editor's note.]



Joanmarie Smith, Director of Spiritual Formation

The photo was taken in New York City in the spring of 2003, just before the Iraq war began. Over a million persons participated in this anti-war protest. On the far left is my good friend, Sister Elaine

Roulet. I am, of course, on the right. We found out that the two strangers with whom we asked to pose (they had placards!) were retired professors from Columbia University. Soon after the protest, I was back in Ohio.

In January 1982 I interviewed for the faculty position in Christian Education even though leaving New York City never seemed like a real possibility. Then I was taken to the Feast of the Epiphany Liturgy in the Centrum. The singing blew me away. It still does.

While I enjoy every aspect of my role in the Course of Study including and especially working with Robin, Jessica, Margaret, Jenny, and Grace, the moments I most look forward to is the Eucharistic Celebration of Graduation. The Centrum is jammed with students/now friends of the graduates, their families and in many cases, members of their congregations. By the time we conclude with "Here I am, Lord" the roof has come off .

In between course sessions I manage to get back to New York to visit my blood sister and the many sister friends I have in my religious order (The Congregation of St.

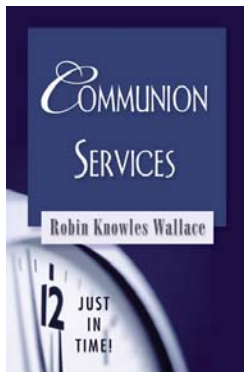
Joseph). But when the plane lands back at Columbus International Airport, I pray a prayer of thanksgiving for the richness of my life in Ohio

Margaret Van Sickle, Director of Music

After teaching High School math and English for many years, I thought God may be calling me to be a Pastor. My husband, Duane, had died in 1997. It was time to take a new direction with my life. I was admitted to Methesco and began to take the prescribed introductory courses: Hebrew Bible, New Testament, Church History, Worship and Music, etc. But in the meantime, I was called to other ministries, namely, Director of Music for the Course of Study and Writing Workshop Coordinator for MTSO seminarians.

Of course, I had been using my music in the local church. For thirty three years I was the organist and choir director at Ashley UMC and still do “organ supply” in emergencies. My mother, had me taking piano lessons when she could no longer stand the random banging on the piano by a six year old. Now two of my grandchildren, Joanne and Jerad

I attribute my enjoyment of this COS ministry to the fact that when I began my work as Music Director in the summer of 2003, I also took the COS course in Music and Worship with Robin. This allowed me to be immersed in the lives of Local Pastors. In class and in conversations, I learned first hand of their joys and challenges. This has allowed me to identify with them in a very special way. Plus it is always fun to play for people who love to sing and the Local Pastors at MTSO love to sing. Moreover, they are so appreciative generally that it is easy to appreciate them.



New book from [Dr Robin Knowles Wallace!](#)

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