

COSSO Newsletter

Course of Study School of Ohio (COSSO)

2008
Summer

From the Director's Desk

Rev. Diane Turner-Sharazz



Greetings to All!

I hope that you are enjoying the summer, basking in the weather, and feeling excited and renewed as you begin this new conference year.

We at COSSO are excited about the new possibilities for our program. As you know, COSSO is a joint program of the Methodist Theological School in Ohio (Delaware, OH) and United Theological Seminary (Dayton, OH). For quite awhile, courses have been taught on the MTSO campus. We are now ready to expand and to begin teaching some courses at the Dayton campus. Let me tell you what we're doing.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS

We are in the midst of developing blended courses to be taught on the UTS campus. What is a blended course? A blended course is one in which half of the course is taught online, and the other half in residence. For us, that means that what is ordinarily taught in the first weekend will be done entirely online. The second weekend will be in-residence on the UTS campus. This is a first for any of the courses of study schools, so we will be venturing into new territory.

Our hope is to begin offering courses in 2009. We would offer two courses in the winter, one course in the spring, and two in the fall. The courses will complement our present schedule, and would not offer the same courses on both campuses at the same time. The cost of tuition (\$260/course) would have an additional technology fee of \$50 added for each course. (Think of how much you won't be paying for gas, food, and lodging for one weekend in residence!). Spiritual formation experiences would also be available.

We are awaiting a final ok so that we can move forward with this. We anticipate that expanding to some blended courses, while maintaining our regular in-residence program at the MTSO campus, will greatly enhance the overall quality of our total program, while offering students different options in the way the courses are taught, and a larger quantity of courses to meet students' needs.

THIS SUMMER ON MTSO CAMPUS

INTRODUCING OUR FACULTY –

In the summer weekend session (July 11-12 and August 8-9), the following persons will be teaching:

Rev. Jay Rundell (COS 114) – President of MTSO, elder and former pastor in the Rocky

Mountain Conference;

Dr. Randy Litchfield (COS 213) – Teaches Christian Education at Methodist Theological School in Ohio;

Dr. Emma Justes (COS 314) – Teaches Pastoral Care and Counseling at United Theological Seminary.

Rev. Randall Haase (COS 414) – Elder and pastor in the West Ohio Conference; adjunct instructor in Ethics at Terra State Community College.

Dr. Elizabeth Rand (COS 513) – Deacon in the West Ohio Conference.

For our summer intensive session (August 11-22), our faculty will be:

Rev. Susan Bowman (COS 111) – Elder and former district superintendent in East Ohio, with links to the Iowa conference.

Dr. Vergel Lattimore (COS 314) – Teaches Pastoral Care and Counseling at Methodist Theological School in Ohio.

Dr. Paul Kim (COS 411) – Teaches Hebrew Bible at Methodist Theological School in Ohio.

Rev. John Wallace (COS 514) – Elder and pastor in West Ohio Conference; presently involved in additional post-graduate courses.

Dr. Fulgence Nyengele (COS 113) – Teaches Pastoral Care and Counseling at Methodist Theological School in Ohio. Elder in West Ohio Conference.

Arlene Webb (COS 211) – Graduate of MTSO. Looking forward to further post-graduate work.

Dr. John Lepp (COS 412) – Retired elder in the West Virginia conference. Serves as counseling pastor and elder for people beginning ministry studies or in probationary membership.

SUMMER ENRICHMENT SESSIONS

We are planning a number of interesting enrichment sessions this summer, designed to supplement your learnings and to be of help for your ministry.

In the summer weekend session, on Fridays, 4:00 -4:30 p.m., Margaret Van Sickle, our writing coach, will offer a writing session (July 11). In the 2nd weekend (August 8th), Rev. Lynn Pease, chaplain at Children's Hospital, Columbus, Ohio, will lead a session on ministry with children in the hospital setting.

For the summer intensive, August 11-22, from 3:30 – 4:15 p.m., we will offer a variety of sessions:

Monday, Aug. 11 – Writing Session with Margaret Van Sickle

Tuesday, Aug. 12 – Exegesis Session

Wednesday, Aug. 13 – Hispanic ministry – Rev. Guadalupe Villalpande-Stewart (missionary and consultant on Hispanic ministries, West Ohio Conference)

Monday – Wednesday, August 18-20, Conflict Management in the Church – John Crampton

We look forward to seeing you soon!

Blessings and Peace,

Diane Turner-Sharazz, Director

JULY 11-12 WEEKEND FACULTY



Jay Rundell



Randy Litchfield



Emma Justes



Randall Haase



Elizabeth Rand

2008 SUMMER INTENSIVE FACULTY



Susan Bowman



Arlene Webb



Paul Kim



Vergel Lattimore



John Lepp



Fulgence Nyengele



MORE NEWS about Spiritual Formation

From Rebeka Maples, Ph.D., Director of Spiritual Formation



Claiming Spiritual Space:

Retreat? Who has time for a retreat? I've got a church to pastor, district and conference committees to attend, community functions, Course of Study work to do, meals to cook, and a family to see once in awhile. How could I make time for retreat? Does that sound familiar? Well, it's been my mantra for almost a year now, but finally I blocked out a week and did it. I took time to retreat from the phone calls, the meetings, and everything else that fills up the day. And now, I am reminded that as spiritual leaders, we owe it to ourselves, and to our congregations, to take retreats every year. The work will always be there, and with some nurture and open communication so will the family.

Retreat means stepping away from the daily routine, stopping, being still, and listening to God and to our own yearnings. When we do that, we notice the space around us, and the emptiness within us. I am convinced that without retreating from the daily routine, there is an emptiness that grows into a spiritual void. Only God can fill the emptiness, and only we can decide to be filled. Retreats have a way of renewing our souls and reminding us why we are doing this kind of work. Now I'm not talking about going to a cabin with all your sermon topics and lectionary aids in order to work out your worship schedule for the next six months. That's a good thing to do, but it's not a spiritual retreat.

Your spiritual retreat begins when you mark out the time on your calendar and reserve a place to go. There are many retreat centers with reasonable rates, and your church may also reimburse some of your expenses, because this is not a vacation. In fact, it should not be considered part of your vacation time; this is a form of continuing education and spiritual renewal. Before you leave, start thinking of a question or theme you want to explore with God, and when you go take several devotion books and a Bible along. Leave your laptop at home, turn your cell phone off, and only check messages once a day. Some retreat centers have spiritual directors on staff, and you can arrange to meet with one for an hour each day to help reflect on how God is speaking to you. It will take a few days to settle in and relax, and your head will be spinning with what you "should" be doing. You will ask yourself, why are you here and think that you can't spend the rest of the week just walking around praying, but stick with it. You can, and God's grace will surround you. You may sleep a lot, which simply means your spirit is tired, so sleep. You may cry or feel sad. Explore those emotions. Always ask yourself, where is God in this? By the end of the week, you will be surprised at the small (or big) ways that God speaks to you.

And be sure to tell your church what you are planning. It models for others the importance of nurturing our souls, and tells others there is nothing automatic about building a spiritual life. It takes intentional time and effort. We must claim spiritual space in our lives because no one will give it to us. Very few people even recognize the value of a retreat, nor is it emphasized in our training for ministry. However, we can claim spiritual space and reclaim the sacredness of our calling. For it is holy work that we are called to do, but it is easy to turn it into programming or counseling or administration or anything else that uses up the day and justifies our busyness.

Some resources for spiritual retreat include: [Crossing](#) by Mark Barrett, OSB (Harrisburg: Morehouse Publishing, 2001); or [Seven Sacred Pauses](#) by Macrina Wiederkehr (Notre Dame: Sorin Books, 2008), and there are many others. Choose something that seems to speak to you at the time. Please talk to me or email me, if you would like more information on spiritual retreat. Remember I am available for spiritual direction when you are on campus. Honor the sacred space in your life and reclaim the spiritual way of living.

Words Words Words

From Margaret VanSickle, Writing Coach



We all need to be careful as we write assigned papers for the courses we are taking. It is much easier to write in the same style in which we speak, but we need to be careful to follow the basics of formal written communication: use of correct grammatical constructs, careful organization of ideas in a logical order, and good stewardship in designing our written work to be the most effective we can create.

We did not learn to walk, talk, ride a bicycle, learn algebra or a foreign language, or preach a sermon in an instantaneous, miraculous way. These skills required careful and often painful practice to achieve our goals; writing also demands the same dedication on our part to develop an efficient way of communicating with our congregation or with those outside the church. Because we never know what "surprises" God has for our ministry, we must prepare ourselves to preach, teach, write, and communicate with those who share our faith journey.

See at the writing lab!

Blessings and prayers,

Margaret

TIME CHANGE FOR GRADUATION & EUCHARIST SERVICE

As most of you know, the graduation ceremony is part of the Eucharist service on the second Saturday of COS weekend terms. For that day only, there will be a slight change in the schedule in order to allow more time for the graduation ceremony.

That means, **ON THE SECOND WEEKEND ONLY** Saturday morning class will be held from 8:00 -10:45 am.

The Eucharist service will begin at 10:50 am instead of 11:25.

And, there will be no 8 am Morning Prayers on the second weekend.

The schedule will be available online in advance of the term.

FALL DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION

JULY 15, 2008

DON'T BE LATE!

Views from the Coordinator

By Terri Litchfield



As most of you know, the current grade sheets include the information “**Student attended ___ Worship/Enrichment opportunities.**” All students are encouraged to participate - please be sure to sign in for each spiritual formation gathering as well as all enrichment sessions. These opportunities for personal and spiritual growth are provided by professionals in a variety of fields. Here is a sample of sessions from the last few years:

Family Systems

Dealing with Loss and Grief

Writing workshops (variety of topics)

Global Trip-tik: Christianity on World Maps from the Ancient World to the Present

El Salvador Cross-Cultural Immersion

Taize African-American spirituality and other helpful topics

Note: Friday dinner during COS weekend terms is scheduled from 4:30-5:30 pm. Please do not arrive at the dining hall early; this will allow the dining hall staff to prepare the meal without interruption.

As most of you know, we include a graduation ceremony as part of the Eucharist service on the last Saturday of COS weekend terms. For that day only, we are considering a slight change to the schedule in order to allow more time for the graduation ceremony if the number of students completing COS warrants the change. If so, Saturday morning class will be held from 8:00 -10:45 am. The Eucharist service will begin at 10:50 am instead of 11:25. (There will be no 8 am Morning Prayers on these days.) The schedule will be available online in advance of the term.

Check the Homepage of the website when registering for classes. The ANNOUNCEMENTS (right-hand pane) currently indicates that 2008 Fall COS 311 is closed, and on-campus housing for the 2008 Fall term is full.

Registration reminders: Students can do several things to help COS class registration go smoothly.

- 1) Always use a registration form downloaded from the website. We've recently made some changes to the registration form based on current practices and will be posting the new form soon. (The changes are minor and there are no fee changes so the version currently posted will work fine until the new one is available.)
- 2) Register early - this will help ensure you get into the class, as well as help in our planning. Most classes are limited to 30 students.
- 3) Allow plenty of time to get the required signatures on your registration form before you send it to the COS office. When I receive forms without signatures, I must hold them aside and complete the processing later. This is inefficient since I often need to make follow-up calls or emails.
- 4) Include the registration fee of \$30 per course.
- 5) Shortly before or after the registration deadline for any course, registered students will receive an email confirmation from the COS office. Please check it carefully, and watch for additional announcements. If you don't receive this email confirmation, please contact me.

TRIVIA QUESTION #2: What event prompted the change in the registration form to collect cell phone#?

Trivia Answer: The great snow storm of 2008.



COURSE OF STUDY SCHOOL OF OHIO

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