

COSSO Newsletter

Course of Study School of Ohio (COSSO)

2009

Fall

From the Director's Desk



Greetings!

Fall is upon us already. Where has the summer gone?

We at COSSO have been very busy, with our summer weekend and summer intensive sessions coming back-to-back in August. In our *busy-ness*, however, we have had a good time as we worked, played and fellowshiped together.

Those who were here for the summer intensive session came together in community through times of worship and spiritual formation, through classes and enrichment sessions, through hymn-singing, cooking and eating together, among other things. There was also time for being alone with God, while experiencing rest, relaxation and retreat on the MTSO campus. We had an opportunity to greet new faces, and to bid good-bye to old friends. Summer was great!

The time is fast approaching for us to evaluate our progress for the year. Just as the church has its charge conferences to evaluate from where you have come and where you are going, so we too must look around and forward at COSSO. We must look at the changes that have been made in the program and staff, and to see how we are doing. The hybrid classes at United have been going on since the early part of this year. We look forward to seeing how this program is progressing. And as we move into each new season at COSSO, It is our hope that we continually improve in the ways that we serve our students and the church.

May God bless all of us as we move forward into God's vision, and prepare for times of season changes, times of Thanksgiving, and Advent.

Blessings and Peace,

Diane

**Friday, October 9
COS Choir Rehearsal
2:30-3:30PM in Room L-104**

MORE THAN PRAYER: Spiritual Formation- From Rev. Rebeka Maples, Ph.D., Director of Spiritual Formation



Greetings and Peace,

Once again summer has flown by, and many of us are saying, where did it go? No matter what we do or do not do, summer seems to leave us with an empty feeling, as though we have missed something. However, as pastors, you know that we do not often notice what is missing, because there is no time. It seems as though from graduation parties at the beginning of June to back-to-school events at the end of August, there is something every week to keep us busy. The question is, when did you take time to recover, reconnect and remember why you are so busy? If you have not spent some quiet time, just listening, reflecting or praying, maybe now is a good time to do that...

As we come to the end of summer, we also enter a new season, a time that brings new blessings and busyness of its own. So it might be a good time to ask, what is it that you are building your life on? Then look around – for that is what you are working at becoming...

*Summer is at its end,
flowers are beginning to fade.*

Birds are gathering in treetops, preparing for their long winter flights.

Nature's green is turning into autumn's colors, and so it is with life.

*Each season tells of another stage in the cycle,
and it is said that life, too, fades and everything comes to an end.*

I wonder... I do not see shadows on the horizon.

I see the beauty of the Sun rising and setting.

*I see flowers in bloom and their slow descent into winter's rest,
sheltered from the cold to rise again in spring, bringing new color,
soaring to new heights.*

Oh, what treasures will they share after winter's long rest?

Summer is fading, and a new season is coming, bringing its own demands and its own way of being.

One season moves into another, and it is not the end,

*For hope rises again and again,
with each falling leaf, each bird that flies to a warmer place,
each face that proclaims its age, in the lines that appear and the treasures that unfold,
from a life of seasons and untold stories.*

*It is not the end –
for a new season comes.*

I guess I am feeling a little reflective. The changing of the seasons seems to do that to me. In my morning prayers, I try to spend some time in quiet just listening to God, but lately there's been a nagging feeling of nostalgia, as though something is leaving. I guess that something is the beauty that I see when I visit another shut-in or work in my flower gardens. Maybe it's that sense that summer will take that beauty away, and nothing will fill the void...

Each season brings its own beauty. Each season of our lives brings new discoveries, new wisdom, new stories of life's mystery. As summer comes to an end, I pray that you spend time recovering, reconnecting, remembering, and returning to the One who restores your soul during each changing season.

FACULTY FOR 2009 FALL SESSION



Brooks Heck

Brooks Heck -
Teaching 111

D.Min., United
Theological Seminary;
Elder, West Ohio
Conference; 111 – The
Pastor as Interpreter of
the Bible.



Vergel Lattimore

Vergel Lattimore -
Teaching 113

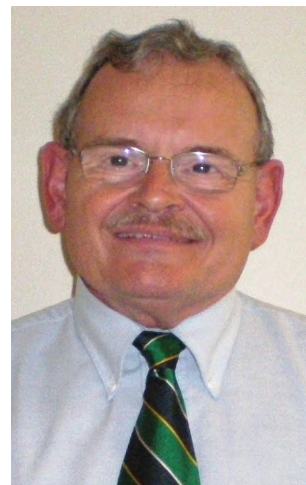
M.Div., Duke
University Divinity School;
Ph.D., Northwestern
University; 113 – Pastoral
Care for Spiritual
Formation.



Randy Litchfield

Randy Litchfield -
Teaching 213

Master of Religious
Education, Anderson
University School of
Theology; Ph.D.,
Claremont;
213 – Formation for
Discipleship.



Tom Snyder

Tom Snyder -
Teaching 214

ThM., Boston School of
Theology; Elder, East
Ohio (Retired)
214 – Practice of
Preaching.



Emma Justes

Emma Justes -
Teaching 314

Ph.D., Princeton Theo-
logical Seminary; Profes-
sor of Pastoral Care and
Counseling,
314 – Pastoral Care and
Counseling.



Stan Ling

Stan Ling
Teaching 514

M.Div. Wesley
Theological Seminary;
Elder, West Ohio; 514 –
Theology and the Practice
of Ministry.

SUMMER INTENSIVE 2009



Above: 2009 memorial wreath for Jessica Spillman. Right: Course of Study students walk through their door of signs on their way to Communion.



Above: Laying on of hands of COS graduates. Right: COS Director, Rev. Diane Turner-Sharazz surveys the crosses made by students during spiritual enrichment.



These and more photos of 2009 Summer Intensive at <http://www.courseofstudyschoolofohio.com/photos/>

Words Words Words

From Margaret VanSickle, Writing Coach



A FEW (OR MORE) WORDS TO THE WISE....

“Have something to say, and say it as clearly as you can” are helpful words from nineteenth century British author Matthew Arnold—words that apply to 21st century COSSO student writers!

I have stated in workshop sessions that one major difficulty in writing is that there is no single right or wrong way to express a concept on paper. The combination of individual comprehension of material read with the unique background of each author and the infinite number of objectives which a writer may be trying to achieve results in an unending number of alternatives in composition.

As a writing coach, I think that students frequently become more concerned with meeting the length requirements of an assignment rather than focusing on what they could say about the material on which they are discussing.

The importance of clarity in writing cannot be understated. To apply critical thinking skills to writing requires a careful reading (frequently with re-reading of some or all the materials) and an accurate understanding of the resources on which the paper is to be based. The books which your instructors choose for the COS classes should provide you with new ideas (whether you agree with them or not!) and new suggestions for “real-life” experiences and problems which many pastors face in following God’s call on their lives. Always remember to read carefully.

Preaching and writing have many goals in common (educating the audience, providing relevant and accurate information, etc.); but the “style” differs. Because most COS students have weekly practice in sermon preparation, they are usually more comfortable in creating “preaching” resources. However, the persuasive aspect of preaching differs from the explanatory purpose of writing. This often results in a paper that reads like a sermon—that’s not what an instructor is looking for!



Do you mean what you say and say what you mean?

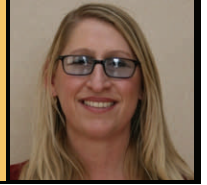
**The 2009-2010
Course of Study
Handbook**
is now online
at:
<http://www.courseofstudyschoolofohio.com/handbook.pdf>
Please
give special
attention to the
updated attendance,
cancellation, and
withdrawal policies

When you think you have completed a written assignment for a course, be sure that you understand what the instructor has asked you do to; be critical (not in a negative way, but in a logical agreement or disagreement) of what you have read, and identify concepts from the materials that were new, potentially helpful to your ministry, or “A-HA” moments to you.

Happy writing!

Student Life

From Robin Wells, COSSO Assistant



Dear Friends,

I can hardly believe that I will have been working for the Course of Study School of Ohio for an entire year when January rolls around. Also, I am starting my second year at MTSO as a student in the M.Div. program. These first few weeks of the 2009 fall semester have been a time of continual personal reflection on where I have been in the last year, and I have also been attentive to the direction in which God is leading me as I continue my education in Ohio.

My home church in California began to worry about me this summer when they had not heard from me in a while. I had been in the habit of sending them a letter each month to report on my progress. But when summer came, I was busier than ever with Course of Study and my correspondence with them had lapsed. What a blessing to have them reach out to me by email and ask if all was well!

I immediately returned the email and I found myself writing so much about the ways in which God has blessed me since I had last written. I told them that I have learned so much about Course of Study and how it is such a joy to work with local pastors who are truly called by God to serve their local churches. I told them how wonderful my summer UM Polity class with Tom Snyder was and of my excitement for the classes I would be taking in the fall semester.

Though I have been greatly blessed, I must admit, it is not easy being a seminary student. I have to imagine that being a UM Local Licensed Pastor while taking classes at Course of Study is no cakewalk either. As a student, I find myself doing many different things during the day and evening. I work, I study, I play, I worship, and I pray. But sometimes it is difficult to find the right balance of what I am doing. It is often even more difficult to find time to complete what is yet to be done. It is easy to see how a simple discipline of writing a monthly note can easily fall through the cracks.

But when life seems the most busy and distractions are high, I have noticed that God finds a way to say, "Stop. Listen. Be still and know that I am." Even in the midst of doing homework and the deadline of a paper looms overhead, I find that taking a bit of time to put the book or writing aside to listen to God's voice informs my knowledge more than straining for the perfect words to impress my professor.

One of the things I have learned in my systematic theology class is that there is more than one way to think of Eternity and the Kingdom of God. I have learned that the theologian, Wolfhart Pannenberg, has described the Kingdom of God as a having a proleptic or an "already / not yet" quality. It is the tension between the time we think of as the present and the time we think of as the future. With this, we can rest assured that in the fullness of all things, we will know that the Kingdom of God was always the Kingdom of God.

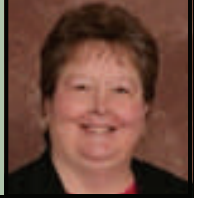
Though I may find myself in the midst of studying God's word, what a wonderful thing to know that I can always stop in the midst of God's time to be informed beyond what has been revealed to me thus far. And what a blessing to put into words what God has shown to be good and true!

May you be blessed at every point on your theological journey at Course of Study and in your church!

Robin

Views from the Coordinator

By Karen Gee



Greetings to all COS Students:

I have been the COS Coordinator for almost four months and what a blessing this opportunity has been for me!! I have been at MTSO for 7 years and I was Administrative Assistant to the Academic Programs. When I was asked if I would be interested in becoming the Course of Study Coordinator my immediate answer was “Yes”. There was some restructuring of responsibilities at MTSO and I am now working with the Course of Study Program, Field Education Program and Doctor of Ministry Program. These three programs mirror each other in many ways, and I am so grateful to have this opportunity. I have met many of you during the Summer, Summer Intensive and Fall Terms, and I look forward to meeting the rest of the students during upcoming terms.

I wanted to remind everyone of some of the COS requirements that I, in fact, have discovered the last several months.

Registration:

- Please check the COS website, under Schedule, to see if the class you are planning to register for is full. Please pay close attention to the registration deadline.
 - Please note that there are two separate registration forms on our website; one form is for taking classes at MTSO and the other form is for taking classes at UTS.
 - It’s a good idea to register early as some of the classes fill up quickly, as well as campus housing. I guess there is some truth to the old saying, “The early bird gets the worm!”
 - Registration forms must have all three signatures, and the registration fee of \$30.00 per course must accompany your registration form. If we receive your registration form without the signatures and/or without the registration fee(s), the form will be returned to the student. The registration fee is non-transferable and non-refundable.
- If you would like to have campus housing, please mark your registration form and send a separate housing deposit check for \$40.00 with your registration form. MTSO has students who occupy the dorm rooms on a regular basis, so housing on campus can be somewhat limited, depending upon the time of year. Housing on campus is on a first-come, first-served basis. If you have registered for housing, and find that you will no longer need the housing, please let us know; we normally have a waiting list for campus housing for COS students.

See *Grades* on Pg. 8



New Dates
for
FALL 2010
Sept.. 17—18
&
Oct. 15—16

Course of Study Summer Intensive choir makes a joyful noise unto the Lord with Sue Davidson on handbells Right: Allen Hill as soloist and Margaret VanSickle at piano.



Grades: ***Grades continued from Pg. 7***

COS Instructors have 30 days from the last COS class to submit their grades to our office. We have to process the grades, then copies are sent to the students and to the GBHEM in Nashville, TN. With 2009 Summer and Summer Intensive classes being held back-to-back, it has taken us a little longer to process the grades this year. Our office will continue to improve in processing the grades timely, because we know this information and our responses to your questions are very important.

Transcripts

If you would like a copy of your Official Transcript, please contact Lynn Daye at the GBHEM in Nashville, and she will send one to you. Her e-mail address is LDaye@GBHEM.org.

I want to thank everyone for their warm welcome to the COS program – it has been a joy to meet all of you. And thank you for your patience as I master the program and follow through with your requests.

God's Blessings,

Karen Gee