



1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31
32
33
34
35
36
37
38
39
40
41
42
43
44
45
46
47
48

Educating tomorrow's leaders by offering on-campus, online, and hybrid learning courses at a FLEXible schedule, Saint Paul School of Theology is a seminary serving a diverse community committed to the formation of people for innovative, creative ministry through rigorous academic life. Grounded in the academic study of faith and ministry, theology is practiced in a traditional classroom and in remote spaces. Our contextual curriculum features Ministry Collaboration Groups, Practicums, Spiritual Formation Retreats, and Seminars. Students learn from dedicated faculty, experienced pastors, and community leaders about best ministry practices leaving our graduates with the tools and first-hand experience necessary to meet the needs of a changing world.

We continue to implement the changes the last few years have integrated into our daily lives. Our weekly chapel service utilizes a hybrid format, where participants may join in-person or online, allowing staff and students to come together as one institution where all are invited to create a sacred atmosphere from wherever they are. In addition, Saint Paul offers weekly Spiritual Formation allowing students to engage in spiritual practices led by Rev. Jen Logsdon-Kellogg. Some practices will take us outdoors or to other sacred spaces, and others will have us connect with community leaders.

Saint Paul welcomed over 30 new students for the 2022-2023 academic year. Enrollment remained solid for the Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree program with promising growth on our Oklahoma campus. With COVID-19 restrictions lifted yet monitored, prospective students returned to in-person visits on both campuses, experiencing community meals, worship, and the newly implemented "Hammock ministry" on the Oklahoma campus. The Admissions team continues to expand travel to meet new students, including the Carolinas, Washington, D.C., and various parts of Texas.

This year we have focused on strengthening the Master of Arts in Christian Ministry by creating two specializations: Women, Society, and Church; and Social Justice and Advocacy. In each case, the student takes 22 hours of MACM required courses, and then the remaining 12 hours of the degree are comprised of courses focusing upon the specialization. The two existing specializations, Prophetic Witness and Service; and Deacon Ministries, will continue to be offered as well. The Women, Society, and Church Studies specialization is also available in the MDiv program, as is a specialization in Wesleyan Studies.

Saint Paul staff and faculty continue contributing to the academy, church, and society. This year, we welcomed Rev. Dr. Sharon Betsworth as our new Vice President for Academic Affairs and Dean and Professor of New Testament. The faculty of Saint Paul School of Theology maintains high standards of scholarship, research, publication, and engagement. Over the past year, their many activities and publications have been so numerous that space permits only sharing selected highlights.

- Rev. Dr. Sharon Betsworth co-authored a journal article with Julie Faith Parker, "'Where Have All the Young Girls Gone?': Discovering the Girls of the Bible through Childist Analysis of Exodus 2 and Mark 5–7," in *Journal of Feminist Studies in Religion* 38, no. 2 (Fall 2022).
- Dr. Casey Sigmon, Assistant Professor of Preaching and Worship and Director of Contextual Education, was the keynote speaker for the United Methodist Church Missouri Preaching Academy "Offering the Word to a Digital World." She published "Failure to Discern the Online/Hybrid Body: A Captivity of the Eucharist" for the special issue of *Currents in Theology and Mission: Eucharist and Online Worship: Toward Extended Theological Reflection*, vol. 50, no. 1 (2023) and published the chapter "Liturgical Authority and the Table in the Christian

1 Church (Disciples of Christ)" in *Liturgical Authority in Free Church Traditions*, edited by Sarah
2 Johnson and Andrew Wymer, Calvin Worship and Witness Series.

- 3 • Dr. Joshua Bartholomew, Assistant Professor of Ethics, Church, and Society, led a "Race,
4 Liberation, and Political Economics" series at Second Presbyterian. He also spoke at The
5 Open Table KC on "Race, Liberation, and Economics."
- 6 • Dr. Amy Oden, Adjunct Professor of Early Church History and Spirituality, was a guest
7 speaker at numerous events around the country this year, including at a Five Day Academy
8 for Spiritual Formation in Oklahoma, the Beyond Conference in St. Louis, and the Academy
9 for Spiritual Formation in Alabama.

10
11 In October, Saint Paul hosted a forum on "Innovative, Creative Ministry" featuring alumni Matt Austin
12 '18, Fabian Gonzalez '20, Bo Ireland '18, Matt Patrick '18, & Abby Peper '22, with each sharing their
13 personal stories of innovation in ministry. In November, Saint Paul Evangelical Society, led by Dr.
14 Israel Kamudzandu, hosted a forum given by Rev. Mike Slaughter, former lead pastor at
15 Ginghamburg Church, on "Spiritual Awakening: the here and the not yet." Later in the year, the
16 Evangelical Society hosted a lecture featuring Dr. Cheryl Bridges Johns, Visiting Professor of
17 Pentecostal Studies and Director of the Global Pentecostal House of Study at United Theological
18 Seminary. And on May 12, Saint Paul again held a hybrid commencement celebration via Zoom,
19 allowing graduates to come together from both campuses with attendees viewing from around the
20 country. During the ceremony, we honored the 2023 Distinguished Graduate Award Winner and
21 Commencement Speaker Bishop Delores J. "Dee" Williamston.

22
23 Saint Paul Board of Trustees changed leadership this year as long-time faculty and board member
24 Rev. Dr. Tex Sample concluded his term as chair of the Board. Dr. Amy Hogan, Professor of
25 Education and Dean of the School of Education at Ottawa University, has succeeded him as chair.
26 Dr. Hogan possesses a deep reservoir of experience in teaching, research, and accreditation. In
27 response to President Neil Blair's announcement that he will retire on December 31, 2023, Dr. Hogan
28 appointed a search committee composed of faculty, staff, students, and trustees charged with
29 identifying Saint Paul's next president. The search committee is currently conferring with Saint Paul's
30 constituent groups to prepare the position prospectus that will describe Saint Paul's needs and
31 aspirations to candidates.

32
33 In September 2022, Saint Paul School of Theology hosted a review team from the Higher Learning
34 Commission (HLC), one of Saint Paul's primary accreditation agencies, as part of the Seminary's
35 regular reaffirmation cycle. On November 18, 2022, the Higher Learning Commission notified Saint
36 Paul that the Commission "continued the accreditation of Saint Paul School of Theology with the next
37 Reaffirmation of Accreditation in 2028-2029." The Seminary's Board of Trustees also devoted
38 considerable time to improving its governance capacity. For example, in April 2022, trustees
39 invested a significant portion of their meeting in a facilitated Emotional Intelligence and Trust-
40 Building workshop. The workshop was led by Gail Parker, a noted management consultant who has
41 worked with clients such as KPMG, Goldman Sachs, and Disney, among many others. In October
42 2022, former executive director of the Association of Theological Schools, Dan Aleshire, offered an
43 overview of demographic and enrollment trends in the nation's seminaries, focusing on how those
44 trends affect institutions' diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. As these activities suggest, the
45 Board remains deeply committed to enhancing its capabilities to guide Saint Paul effectively and
46 knowledgeably.

47
48 We are happy to report that Saint Paul School of Theology is financially sound. We operate with a
49 balanced budget, no debt, and an endowment 9-10 times the size of our annual expenses. As
50 always, we continue to be grateful for donations from the community that provide technology,
51 scholarships, and evolving academic programs to students. As of the close of 2022, over one

1 hundred alumni and friends of Saint Paul contributed more than \$60,000 to create the Tex and
2 Peggy Sample Endowed Scholarship Fund honoring the life and work of Tex and Peggy Sample.
3 Sustainability has been our focus over the past five years, and we have achieved our goal.
4 Investments in our future bring exciting new opportunities for our students, staff, and faculty. Our
5 significant technological investments have allowed us to maintain a hybrid educational delivery
6 model providing a flexible working arrangement for our students.

7
8 We are continuing to enhance our partnership with Zoom and Neat. Late last Spring, in conjunction
9 with our Neat Board electronic whiteboards and Neat Bars, we implemented Neat's newest product,
10 their Neat Bar Pros, in our large classrooms. These new bars are designed to offer a superior video
11 and audio experience in large spaces and the ability to output to multiple large screens to enhance
12 the overall classroom experience significantly. We have rolled out additional Zoom Room Neat
13 Boards in numerous common areas to encourage ad-hoc use of the technology for breakout groups
14 and other miscellaneous meetings between our two campuses and remote students. One of the
15 best features of this technology is its ability to receive automatic real-time over-the-air features
16 upgrades. Several significant enhancements have rolled out this past year, including improved voice
17 cancellation, Zoom Room Breakout Groups, real-time Closed Captions with transcripts, and updated
18 use of AI to split each in-classroom student into their individual zoomed-in Zoom window. In addition,
19 our Neat equipment continuously monitors several environmental factors within our classrooms; air
20 quality, temperature, humidity, VOC, and CO2, as well as being able to tell if the classrooms are
21 occupied and how many individuals are in the room. We can also monitor the audio/video quality
22 and network connectivity in each of our classrooms, as well as the connection quality for all remote
23 students attending the class. We are excited about the additional enhancements that will come to
24 our classrooms from Neat and Zoom over this next year and look forward to our continued
25 partnership with Neat and Zoom on this groundbreaking technology.

26
27 Saint Paul School of Theology is blessed to be your partner in ministry and help those seeking to
28 discover more and answer the call. We are grateful for your support of our students and our
29 seminary. May we continue to live into the call of Jesus Christ to be faithful witnesses for generations
30 to come.

31
32 President Neil Blair, Saint Paul trustees, faculty, staff, alumni, and students thank you for your prayers
33 and support.

34
35 *Where Theology Meets Life*