

DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL

Duke Divinity School can attest to the work of God’s Spirit to usher us into a season of hope and continued faithfulness to the mission and calling to serve the church, academy, and the world. In 2023, the Duke University president and provost appointed Dean Edgardo Colón-Emeric for a full five-year term. In his Opening Convocation sermon, he stated: “This year marks the 25th anniversary of my ordination in the United Methodist Church. This is the school that prepared me. Today, I give God thanks for still allowing me to serve as a minister of the gospel and I renew the vow I made when I was installed as dean. By the grace of God and en conjunto with you, I will uphold this school’s ‘commitment to God and the people of God, to the highest standards of academic excellence, and to this university.’”

In the next three years, we will celebrate a number of centennial milestones: Duke University and The Duke Endowment (2024), the 17th centennial of the Council of Nicaea (2025), and Duke Divinity School (2026). As a foretaste of those occasions to reflect and celebrate, we have had two important milestone celebrations in 2023. The Office of Black Church Studies (OBCS) commemorated its 50th anniversary, an occasion to rejoice in all that God has done through OBCS to bless our Duke Divinity community and to extend the gifts from the Black Church to the whole church. As just one example of the impact and influence of OBCS, the Rev. Dr. Cynthia Hale (D’79) received Duke University’s Distinguished Alumni Award in recognition of her outstanding contributions in ministry and service.

The Hispanic House of Studies (HHS) celebrated its quinceañera (15th anniversary), another opportunity to have our hope buoyed by God’s work in our midst. HHS was created by the Divinity School, with support from The Duke Endowment, to support the formation of ministers to Hispanic/Latinx congregations and communities in the North Carolina and Western North Carolina Annual Conferences and beyond. These efforts are not confined to a limited silo but extend throughout our academic and ministerial programs. For instance, we now offer the “Rediscovering the Heart of Methodism” course in Spanish on Divinity+, an online resource that is widely available for ministers and congregations.

This fall, we welcomed 215 entering students from 35 different states as well as new community members who hold either primary or secondary citizenship in 16 other countries including Canada, Chile, China, Finland, Germany, India, Kenya, Mexico, Nigeria, Peru, Russia, Saint Kitts and Nevis, South Korea, Sri Lanka, Syria, and Zimbabwe. The Master of Divinity program gained 104 new students, with 54 residential students and 50 in the hybrid program. The Master of Arts in Christian Practice enrolled 13 new students; the Doctor of Ministry, 22; Master of Theology, 11; Master of Theological Studies, 29; the Doctor of Theology welcomed five new students to campus, and five special students enrolled. The Certificate in Theology and Health Care welcomed 11 residential students to campus and 15 in the hybrid program. Across all degree programs at the Divinity School, 31 percent of the incoming class identified as a race or ethnicity other than white. Black students made up 21 percent of all students; Latinx students, seven percent. Fifty-four percent of students in the incoming class identify as female. There were 25 denominations represented in the M.Div. entering class, with 26 percent affiliated with the United Methodist Church. Baptists made up 10 percent of the incoming students; Anglican or Episcopal students, 10 percent; and nondenominational students, 12 percent.

1 Duke Divinity School continues to invest in pathways to support Methodist leadership and pastoral formation.
2 Divinity+ launched the Church Administration series focused on developing practical skills for church leaders.
3 More than 1,000 learners have enrolled in the first two courses, "Theology and Time Management" and
4 "Strategic Management." We inaugurated the Certificate in Chaplaincy, designed to prepare students to
5 provide spiritual care in a variety of settings such as hospitals, hospice, prisons, higher education, and the
6 military. The certificate can be earned as part of the residential M.Div., Th.M., and M.T.S. degree programs.

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8 The school has also welcomed new leaders who bring their gifts to the work of advancing the mission to
9 serve Christ and the church. Two houses have appointed new directors: the Office of Black Church Studies is
10 led by the Rev. Dr. Eric Lewis Williams (D'05), assistant professor of theology and Black Church Studies; and
11 the Anglican Episcopal House of Studies has named the Very Rev. Timothy Kimbrough (D'83), Jack and
12 Barbara Bovender Professor of the Practice of Anglican Studies. Key members who have joined our staff
13 team include Anita Lumpkin, executive director of enrollment management, and the Rev. Sarah Belles, a
14 Duke Divinity alumna and ordained elder in full connection with the Western North Carolina Annual
15 Conference, as the director of student life.

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17 Several new programs demonstrate Duke's sustained commitment to connecting with churches and ministers.
18 With gratitude to funding from the Lilly Endowment, the Divinity School has launched the Transformative
19 Preaching Lab to prepare creative, culturally competent preachers who can reach audiences in effective and
20 engaging ways. It will expand preaching training for students in the hybrid modality of the M.Div. program
21 with new courses and preaching laboratories along with new capacities to explore and engage digital tools
22 for community worship and preaching. The Transformative Preaching Lab also provides new opportunities
23 for formation in trauma-informed preaching and preaching in immigrant communities, issues that are
24 especially salient in communities across the country and around the world.

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26 The Theology, Medicine, and Culture initiative has launched the Mental Health Track for Christian mental
27 health practitioners as part of its Certificate in Theology and Health Care. This hybrid certificate program
28 offers spiritual and theological formation for mental health clinicians in a range of disciplines. The research
29 and programming from other Duke Divinity initiatives, including Theology, Medicine, and Culture; Duke
30 Initiatives in Theology and the Arts; Leadership Education at Duke Divinity; and Thriving Rural Communities,
31 continue to provide numerous opportunities to bear witness to God's creativity, compassion, and care for
32 communities and congregations.

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34 Duke Divinity School continues to be grateful for our ongoing participation in The United Methodist Church
35 and partnership with this annual conference. We look forward to our ongoing work with you as we join the
36 leading of God's Spirit in the task of preparing people for Christian ministry. To learn more about Duke
37 Divinity School, please visit our website at www.divinity.duke.edu.

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39 Edgardo Colón-Emeric
40 Dean of Duke Divinity School