

# SAINT PAUL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY



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 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.

At the core of our mission at Saint Paul is the formation of people for innovative, creative ministry through rigorous academic life. In 2024, we are launching two exciting new programs to revitalize current pastors and preachers and prepare seminary students for music ministry. First, with the help of Lilly Endowment's Compelling Preaching grant and the leadership of Dr. Casey Sigmon, Assistant Professor of Preaching and Worship and Director of Contextual Education and Pause/Play Center for Preachers, Saint Paul School of Theology is creating a Center that addresses the risk of losing heart and prophetic imagination as a preacher in this divided world. The Pause/Play Center for Preachers' mission is in its name: to hold space for busy preachers to pause and play their way into a renewal of their vocation as preachers of the Good News. Second, for Fall 2024, as part of our Master of Arts in Christian Ministry (MACM) degree program, we will launch a first-of-its-kind specialization in Modern Worship Music. Saint Paul will partner with The United Methodist Church of the Resurrection and their COR Worship Collective to prepare students to write, produce, and perform modern worship music. Students will integrate a worship leaders' skills with their study of theology, the bible, history, and worship in a diverse, inclusive, and spiritually enriching environment. Lastly, we recently completed the (Theo)Logic Studio on our Oklahoma Campus. The Studio serves as a dedicated space for creating, recording, and editing digital media resources tailored to the ministries of students, staff, faculty, and alums, encompassing content development ranging from podcasts and video resources to digital graphics.

We continue to invite Saint Paul students, alums, and friends to join us in a hybrid format, where participants may join in-person or online, allowing everyone to come together as one institution from wherever they are. Saint Paul offers weekly chapel services throughout the academic year featuring students, alums, faculty, and local leaders. In addition, weekly Spiritual Formation allows attendees to engage in spiritual practices led by new Oklahoma Chapel Coordinator Rev. Alanna Ireland '23. Some practices take us outdoors or to other sacred spaces and others have us connect with community leaders.

For the 2023-2024 academic year, we brought 41 new, faithful theologians from across the world to our learning community. International students from South Korea, Belgium, and Mexico added to the global learning environment on both campuses and online. Twenty-seven percent of incoming students identified as a race or ethnicity other than white, and 53 percent identified as female.

Saint Paul staff and faculty continue contributing to the academy, church, and society. The faculty of Saint Paul School of Theology maintains high standards of scholarship, research, publication, and

1 engagement. Over the past year, their many activities and publications have been so numerous that space  
2 permits only sharing selected highlights:

- 3 • Dr. Israel Kamudzandu, Lindsey P. Pherigo Associate Professor of New Testament Studies and  
4 Biblical Interpretation published *Translation as Incarnation: The Bible in the Twenty-First Century*  
5 *Global South* and was the featured guest speaker of our January forum.
- 6 • Dr. Joshua Bartholomew, Assistant Professor of Ethics, Church, and Society, published *Black*  
7 *Theology and The Black Panthers*
- 8 • Dr. Elaine Robinson, Professor of Methodist Studies, and Christian Theology, published *Leading with*  
9 *Love: Spiritual Disciplines For Practical Leadership*
- 10 • Rabbi Michael Zedek, Rabbi-in-Residence, published *Taking Miracles Seriously: A Journey to*  
11 *Everyday Spirituality* and hosted a forum with Dr. Jeanne Hoeft, Associate Professor of Pastoral  
12 Theology and Pastoral Care, and Franklin and Louise Cole Associate Professor in Town and Country  
13 Ministries, on The War in Israel and Traumatized Communities
- 14 • Dr. Mike Graves, Professor Emeritus of William K. McElvaney of Preaching and Worship, published  
15 *Jesus' Vision for Your One Wild and Precious Life (on Things Like Poverty, Hunger, Polarization,*  
16 *Inclusion, and More)*

17  
18 The 2023-2024 Fiscal Year brought a change in leadership to the Seminary. Rev. Neil Blair '80 retired as  
19 President on December 31, 2023, and President Jay Simmons, formerly Vice President of Institutional  
20 Advancement, took the helm at the start of 2024. In addition, Saint Paul Board of Trustees' Chair Dr. Amy  
21 Hogan stepped down as Board Chair, with Ms. Sharon Cleaver assuming the position until the end of June  
22 2024. Our current strategic plan is set to conclude within the coming year. Consequently, the Board of  
23 Trustees formed a task force several months ago to prepare the next iteration of our strategic plan. Members  
24 of the Seminary's Executive Leadership Team are now working with faculty and staff to refine the draft  
25 scripted by the task force. These efforts will continue over the next few months until we have a document  
26 ready for review by the Board of Trustees. While we are still too early in this effort to comment on any  
27 specific initiatives, the plan ultimately endorsed by the Board will guide all our efforts for the next several  
28 years. Therefore, this effort is critical in defining how we ensure that Saint Paul remains a vital and vigorous  
29 Seminary committed to preparing our students for creative and innovative ministry.

30  
31 For the 2023-2024 fiscal year, Saint Paul Course of Study (COS) School educated 250 individual students,  
32 including 79 new students, with approximately 600 registrations and offering 46 classes. Serving 31  
33 Conferences, 89 Districts, 116 Full Time and 126 Part-Time Licensed Local Pastors comprised these  
34 registrations. Seventy percent of these students take more than one course. To help offset student costs,  
35 twenty percent of all students received aid from their conference or church. COS School continues to attract  
36 a diverse student body. One hundred eighty-eight students ranged in age from 30 to 65, and 62 students  
37 ranged in age from 66 to 82. Students self-identified across four racial/ethnic groups. Fifty-two percent were  
38 male, and forty-eight percent were female. Many COS School students serve more than one church, many  
39 rural, with a few dozen students serving three or more churches. We helped 23 students finish the 20-course  
40 program this year, issuing them certificates of completion. With approval from GBHEM, the school has  
41 continued its course offerings in both asynchronous and synchronous online formats. Utilizing this online  
42 format, we reached students in 28 states. We continue to offer online registration completed by the student  
43 with the ability to access their student account through Populi as used by our Seminary students. COS also  
44 uses the same learning platform, Moodle, as our Seminary students. By implementing the Course of Study

1 School into Populi, these students share the same benefits as the Seminary, allowing them to participate in  
2 the Saint Paul experience. They have full access to the Seminary library on campus and online, with several  
3 required readings accessible as an eBook. We have invited COS School students to join our Saint Paul  
4 School of Theology Weekly Chapel Services and Spiritual Formation gatherings and other Saint Paul events.

5  
6 Saint Paul is a financially healthy Seminary. We operate with a balanced budget, no debt, and an  
7 endowment that is 9-10 times the size of our annual expenses. Sustainability has been our focus over the past  
8 six years, and we have achieved our goal. Investments in our future bring exciting new opportunities for our  
9 students, staff, and faculty. As always, we continue to be grateful for donations from the community that  
10 provide technology, scholarships, and evolving academic programs to students. Our significant  
11 technological investments have allowed us to maintain a hybrid educational delivery model, providing a  
12 flexible working arrangement for our students.

13  
14 We are continuing to enhance our partnership with Zoom and Neat. We now have Neat Bars & Neat Boards  
15 in all our classrooms. In addition, during this last year, we implemented a Neat Board in Harris Chapel on  
16 our Oklahoma Campus. We also have Neat Boards in multiple common areas to encourage ad-hoc use of  
17 the technology for breakout groups and other miscellaneous meetings between our two campuses and our  
18 remote students. One of the best features of this technology is its ability to receive automatic real-time over-  
19 the-air feature upgrades. Zoom & Neat continues enhancing our learning environment by rolling out new  
20 enhancements, including enhanced whiteboarding, noise cancellation, and AI features. Our Neat equipment  
21 continuously monitors several environmental factors within our classrooms: air quality, temperature,  
22 humidity, VOC, and CO2, as well as being able to tell if the classrooms are occupied and how many  
23 individuals are in the room. We can also monitor the audio/video quality and network connectivity in each  
24 of our classrooms, as well as the connection quality for all remote students attending the class. We are  
25 excited about the additional enhancements that will come to our classrooms from Neat and Zoom over this  
26 next year.

27  
28 Saint Paul School of Theology is blessed to be your partner in ministry and help those seeking to discover  
29 more and answer the call. Your advocacy for the Seminary and generous financial support have been vital  
30 in realizing our accomplishments. Many thanks for the innumerable ways you have helped Saint Paul. Your  
31 prayers and actions on behalf of the Seminary are a blessing to all of us.

32  
33 Jay K. Simmons, President  
34 spst.edu

*Where Theology Meets Life*