

SAINT PAUL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Rev. Neil Blair, President, spst.edu

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 of The United Methodist Church committed to the formation of people for innovative, creative ministry. Grounded in the academic study of faith and ministry, theology is practiced in a traditional classroom and a contextual curriculum.

As the global pandemic continues to bring challenges to our daily lives, Saint Paul School of Theology began the 2021-2022 academic year, again offering students an option to attend courses via Zoom or on-campus while maintaining safety protocols. Our weekly chapel service continues to be available online, allowing staff and students to come together as one institution where all are invited to create a sacred atmosphere wherever they are.

This year, we have had many faculty and staff changes. After many years of tremendous service to students and the Seminary, Dr. James Brandt and Dr. Hal Knight announced retirement plans effective at the end of the 2021-2022 academic year. In addition, Dr. Jeanne Hoeft will step down from her role as vice president of Academic Affairs and dean at the end of the academic year but will continue as faculty. New additions to Saint Paul include Dr. Joshua Bartholomew, assistant professor of Ethics, Church and Society; Dr. Tiffany Nagel Monroe, executive director of the Oklahoma Campus; Dr. Lucas Endicott, COS School regional director; and Rabbi Michael Zedek, rabbi-in-residence.

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 the sharing of selected highlights:

- Dr. Nancy Howell, professor of Theology and Philosophy of Religion and Oubri A. Poppele Professor of Health and Welfare Ministries, was re-elected to a second term on the executive committee of the International Society for Science and Religion
- Dr. Casey Sigmon, assistant professor of Preaching and Worship and director of Contextual Education, was invited to be a writer for Lent Another Way, an e-course, with The Plural Guild and The Many
- Dr. Joshua Bartholomew, assistant professor of Ethics, Church and Society, was the guest speaker at a Kansas City event, Black Theology and the Black Panthers: A Conversation with Dr. Joshua Bartholomew.

Saint Paul welcomed 45 new students for the 2021-2022 academic year. New student enrollment for the fall semester increased by 44 percent (34 new students), with an overall increase for the year of 73 percent. Enrollment remained strong for the Master of Divinity (M.Div.) program with promising growth in our newly designed Master of Arts in Theological Studies (MATS) and Master of Arts in Christian Ministry (MACM) programs. Saint Paul Course of Study School educated 228 individual students, 49 of which were new students, with approximately 550 registrations and offering a total of 50 courses. Serving 32 conferences, 121 full-time and 106 part-time licensed local pastors comprised these registrations.

As we have happily reported in years past, Saint Paul is financially sound and operates with a balanced budget. These last years' changes have established a solid financial foundation for years of sustainability. As always, we continue to be grateful for donations from the community that provide technology, scholarships, and evolving academic programs to students.

Our aim has always been to utilize technology as a conduit to bring faculty and students together regardless of whether they are on-campus or joining remotely through Zoom. All our classrooms began upgrades in fall 2021 with offerings from neat. Each smaller classroom added a 65-inch neat.board, a self-contained screen that functions as a full Zoom room, as well as an electronic whiteboard. We implemented neat.bar in other classrooms that connect to our classrooms' existing screens. We are currently implementing neat.bar pros, just released at the end of 2021, in each of our large classrooms. At Saint Paul School of Theology, we have always tried to be pioneers with distance-learning technologies.

Saint Paul School of Theology is blessed to be your partner in ministry and help those seeking to discover more and answer the call. May we continue to live into the call of Jesus Christ to be faithful witnesses for healing in these unsettled times and for generations to come.