

**Saint Paul School of Theology, Course of Study School - Summer Course of Study School
Update as of 4/3/20**

Dear Saint Paul Summer 2020 Course of Study School Prospective/Incoming/ Returning Students and Faculty,

Following a video/Zoom Conference meeting on Monday, March 30, 2020, that included all COS Regional School Directors and GBHEM administrators and staff, I want to share with you the following decisions made regarding Summer COS.

GBHEM recommended that Regional COS Schools (Saint Paul School of Theology – COS) not hold residential (on Campus) courses in July. We have already changed course of study course formats this 2020 Spring due to COVID -19. Now, to ensure the safety of everyone, Saint Paul COS will provide its 2020 Summer COS courses online. I will be in communication with you and as well our UMC Conference BOM.

GBHEM has granted Regional Schools permission to reformat Summer COS courses so they are completely Online, with some courses totally asynchronous and others with both asynchronous and synchronous portions. This is a one-time accommodation for this Summer only. GBHEM has directed that students may need to take only one online course per session because of the amount of time required to adequately do an online course.

Because of the nature of the following courses, GBHEM does not allow Regional Schools to offer them completely Online because they require a face to face interaction component, and so we will offer these in Fall 2020 in a hybrid/weekend format. The courses are as follows:

- ❖ COS 223 – Worship and Sacraments
- ❖ COS 323 – Pastoral Care
- ❖ COS 424 – Ethics
- ❖ COS 324 – Preaching

Having this adjustment brings some questions around course completion and COS graduation. However, students have a whole year to take these courses either at a COS Satellite/hybrid weekend school, or hybrid Winter COS, or in the Summer at a regional course of study school, and be able to fulfill their UMC Annual COS Requirements for full-time local licensed pastors to complete all courses. Therefore, your BOM will be able to work with all COS students, and I advise you to consult your UMC Conference BOM. GBHEM will be in communication with all UMC Conference Boards of Ordained Ministry, recommending that they adjust the requirements for both full and part-time local licensed pastors who are enrolled in and starting course of study. Please check with your BOM because they have the authority to decide on some of the matters not dealt with the course of study schools.

The update courses / course schedule will be posted on Saint Paul School of Theology COS web site, www.spst.edu/cos, by the end of next week, 4/10, and also emailed to all UMC Conference BOM and to students. As you have been following media outlets, there are is a great amount of uncertainty as to when we will be allowed to gather in larger groups. That said, we will not have COS Graduation this Summer, July 16, 2020, but will be communicating with UMC Conferences and you all on the right dates to have an actual ceremony.

As a result of moving to online courses students should NOT reserve Hotel rooms this 2020 summer, and if you have already reserved a Hotel room, please call and cancel your reservation. The goal for our plan is to make sure we keep our students moving in their pursuit of theological education, and at the same time being mindful of wellbeing, safety, and responsibility to the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

Jennifer Smith, Saint Paul COS Registrar and Administrator, will be able to help you if you have questions on COS registration: Jennifer.smith@spst.edu, and you can send questions and emails to: IsraelK@spst.edu. We will be pleased to work and assist you as we adjust to this uncertain season of COVID -19. Please wait until the week of April 13 to ask any questions regarding what is in this letter update, as we do not have any other information regarding the classes, dates, times, etc, just yet, nor do we know what Fall classes and locations may look like. We will have classes, just be patient in the planning.

Please be assured that Saint Paul School of Theology Regional Course of Study is here to provide, educate and support the UMC with well grounded, missional, spiritual, theological, Christian, evangelical and pastoral leaders for the emerging 21st century Local Church. The COS faculty and staff at Saint Paul School of Theology, GBHEM, and supporting UMC Conferences are working to provide best practices and offering courses in ways that are safe to all in these seasons of challenge, loss, sickness, death, anxiety, and uncertainty.

As always, I pray for our students, faculty, Church and the Global World that in times like these we focus our eyes on God, the Father, Son and the Holy Spirit, to sustain and guide us in providing pastoral leadership to God's Mission.

May God's Grace, peace, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.



Rev. Israel Kamudzandu
Regional COS Director - Saint Paul School of Theology