

# ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022

SINCE 1959, SAINT PAUL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY HAS EDUCATED LEADERS WHO RENEW THE CHURCH AND TRANSFORM THE WORLD.

#### **OUR MISSION**

Centered in Christ and rooted in the Wesleyan tradition, Saint Paul School of Theology is a seminary of intentional relationships committed to the formation of people for innovative, creative ministry through rigorous academic life; the exploration of Scripture, tradition, ministry practices; and diverse, contextual experience.

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### PRESIDENT'S LETTER The Reverend Neil B. Blair '80

Dear Friends and Alumni of Saint Paul:

Many thanks to all of you for ensuring that the 2021-2022 academic year proved such a success. As you may recall from other communications, our theme for this year has been, "Tending Spiritual Roots to Bear Healing Fruits." Your gifts and prayers for Saint Paul have greatly aided the growth of healing fruits.

Saint Paul welcomed forty-five new students for the 2021-2022 academic year. New student enrollment for the Fall semester increased by 44% (34 new students), with an overall increase for the year of 73%. With the COVID-19 pandemic still in our midst, prospective students previewed the Saint Paul community and curriculum via online visits. Students joined in community worship, attended classes, and participated in online discussions with current students to discern if Saint Paul was indeed their choice for theological education. Enrollment remained strong for the Master of Divinity (MDiv) degree program with promising growth in our newly designed Master of Arts in Theological Studies (MATS) and Master of Arts in Christian Ministry (MACM) programs.

Educating tomorrow's leaders by offering oncampus, 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.

Saint Paul staff and faculty continue to contribute to the academy, church, and society. 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 stepped down from her role as Vice President of Academic Affairs and Dean at the end of the academic year but will continue as faculty. We have all enjoyed welcoming Dr. Sharon Betsworth as Jeanne's successor as our chief academic officer. Many of you know Sharon from her years of teaching as an adjunct for Saint Paul and as a full-time faculty member at Oklahoma City University. New additions to the Seminary family include Dr. Joshua Bartholomew, Assistant Professor of Ethics, Church and Society: Dr. Tiffany Nagel Monroe. Executive Director of the Oklahoma Campus; and Rabbi Michael Zedek, Rabbi-in-Residence.

The faculty of Saint Paul School of Theology maintains exacting 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. For example, Dr. Nancy Howell continues her service on the Executive Committee of the International Society for Science and Religion. Dr. Casey Sigmon received grant support from the Wabash Center for Teaching her project entitled, "Resisting the Plagiarized Pulpit: Helping Students and



the Professor to Find trust their voice through Artistic Instructional Design." Dr. Joshua Bartholomew was the guest speaker at a Kansas City event in which he presented, "Black Theology and the Black Panthers: A Conversation with Dr. Joshua Bartholomew."

In September, Saint Paul held the 2021 Harrington Lecture online featuring Dr. Eboo Patel. His lecture. "We Need to Build: Field Notes for Diverse Democracy," expanded knowledge and built skills, helping people become the kind of leaders our diverse democracy needs. In the Spring Semester, Saint Paul Evangelical Society, led by Dr. Hal Knight, hosted a forum given by Dr. Amos Yong, Professor of Theology and Mission, and Dean of the School of Mission and Theology at Fuller Theological Seminary, on "The Holy Spirit and People of other Faiths: Relational Christian Witness in the 2020s." Later in the semester, the Evangelical Society hosted a lecture featuring Dr. Joy Moore, Professor of Biblical Preaching and Vice-President for Academic Affairs and Academic Dean at Luther Seminary. And for the first time, on May 13, Saint Paul held a hybrid commencement celebration via Zoom,



allowing graduates to come together from both the Kansas and Oklahoma Campuses with attendees viewing from around the country. We honored the 2022 Distinguished Graduate Award Winner and Commencement Speaker Dr. Stan Copeland during the ceremony.

For the 2021-2022 fiscal year, Saint Paul Course of Study (COS) School educated 228 individual students, forty-nine of which were new students, with approximately 550 registrations and offering a total of fifty courses. Serving 32 Conferences, including 94 Districts, 121 Full-Time and 106 Part-Time Licensed Local Pastors comprised these registrations. Saint Paul Course of Study School welcomed new Regional Director Dr. Lucas Endicott. Dr. Endicott has been serving as Associate Director for the Office of Mission, Service, and Justice at the Missouri Annual Conference and lecturing at Central Methodist University.

Through a Board of Trustees initiative related to diversity and inclusion, the Saint Paul Board of Trustees has devoted a significant portion of the last year's meetings to church leaders with experience and expertise in creating more diverse and inclusive communities and organizations. As an example, in July 2021, Congressman Emanuel Cleaver II of Kansas City shared his perspective on the racial and social justice issues confronting our nation and the efforts he and his colleagues in the House of Representatives hope to undertake in response.

In another Board-related development, the Rev. Dr. Tex Sample concluded his service as chair of the Board of Trustees. Dr. Sample's leadership has been integral to Saint Paul's success over the last several years. I am grateful that he will continue to serve as a trustee. Saint Paul is fortunate that Dr. Amy Hogan, Dean of the School of Education and Professor at Ottawa University, brings her extensive experience in higher education as the new chair of our Board of Trustees.

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 significant investments in technology have allowed us to maintain a hybrid educational delivery model providing a safe learning environment during the continuing pandemic.

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. After significant testing, we opted to replace our distance-learning classroom technology with Neat's offerings, including technology still in development. All our classrooms began upgrades in Fall 2021 with offerings from Neat. Anything written or drawn on these new neat, bars is transmitted through Zoom to the screens in the classroom and remote Zoom participants. This content can also be saved and emailed to all participants. We implemented neat.bars 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. We are early in the lifecycle of this stimulating and groundbreaking technology. We are thrilled to partner with Neat and Zoom in revolutionizing the classroom experience.

As I hope this summary of the year suggests, Saint Paul School of Theology has been blessed by your help in tending our spiritual roots. Thanks to you, we continue to live into the call of Jesus Christ to serve our communities and the church.

Grace and Peace,

Blir

Rev. Neil B. Blair '80 President, Saint Paul School of Theology

### **ROOTED: Tending Spiritual Roots to Bear Healing Fruits**

A hallmark of Saint Paul School of Theology is teaching in that sweet space between rigorous theological thought and practical ministry. It is a seminary that prides itself on imparting a foundation of complex, critical theological thinking integrated with the tools for on-the-ground, Spirit-filled contextual ministry.



#### Dan Norwood: Balance of Mind and Heart

Proof that the seminary meets this mission is found in the persons and the ministries of its graduates. Dan Norwood, a Course of Study and Master of Divinity graduate of Saint Paul and the current pastor of Hiawatha First, is a fine example of leading from that powerful intersection.

It is not surprising that Rev. Norwood flourishes in the intersection

of the practical and the academic, as his roots are wrapped around both. Part of his pragmatic nature can be traced to the experiences he gained while visiting his grandfather's farm in Smith County, Kansas, which was four miles north of the center of the United States. "I loved visiting the farm. I learned a lot more than just about the land. My grandfather was full of wisdom." His understanding of rural communities has informed his pastoral ministry regardless of the town's size or congregation he has served. He operates with a community-minded engagement beyond the church walls, serving on local ministerial alliances, offering grief counseling in high schools, and investing time in local charities, which reflects the collaborative nature of farming.

The respect Rev. Norwood has for the practical is also extended to complex academic thought and construction. He graduated with a BA in Philosophy from Nebraska Wesleyan and an MA in Philosophy from the University of Kansas. "My studies in Philosophy lent scaffolding for my faith and for the theology examined at Saint Paul." He detailed how his family, members of the once Evangelical United Brethren (which merged with the Methodist Church to form the United Methodist Church), took in the theology of John Wesley. "Wesley's theology is a combination of simple faith with very complex thought." Rev. Norwood has followed Wesley by informing and deepening his faith with the wisdom of philosophers and theologians.

Also reminiscent of Wesley is Rev. Norwood's approach to keeping centered in his call. When asked what he has learned throughout full-time ministry, he replied: "Ministry can pull you in many directions. You can become overwhelmed. When you feel adrift, you always go back to, honing in on, what pulled you to ministry. Reconnect with that narrative and lead from there."

He also offered that he draws from lessons he learned from Saint Paul to keep him centered. Seminary was a grace-filled space where he could define his call through various lenses. "Saint Paul helped me expand my mind by the introduction to classical and modern thinkers and by connecting me to colleagues of various denominations, backgrounds, and experiences. This stretched me. Also, I found guiding lights there." He spoke specifically of Dr. Kris Kvam as one of those beacons: "She provided the framework of constructive and systematic theology while introducing me to new lenses such as feminist theology."

Furthermore, through the shared life of students and faculty, Saint Paul offered lessons in what Rev. Norwood called "inspirational connectedness" or "learning to live out your faith in community." Perhaps this lesson is what still drives Rev. Norwood to be in close connection with Saint Paul. He is a faithful alumnus – offering investments of his presence and donations. He returns to attend alumni events and seminary lectures and keeps in contact with professors and past and present students. He is adamant about providing funds for the seminary to shape future pastoral and ministry leaders, which is another act of operating within the space twixt the academic and the practical.



#### **Anny Kapundu**

Anny Kapundu, a current Saint Paul Master of Divinity student, is far from her homeland but not far from her center - the United Methodist Church. Born in a small village in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rev. Kapundu relocated with her family at the age of two to Mulungushi. This village has had a relationship with the Methodist Episcopal Church since 1912, when Bishop John M. Springer founded a mission station in the community. In 1951, The United Methodist Church founded the Mulungwishi Seminary.

which is still a robust part of the community.

When asked about her childhood, Rev. Kapundu described a trinity of roots comprised of family, church, and school. "My father was a pastor, and when I was not studying, I was involved in activities at the church. My mother was also rooted in the church teaching and gathering with women." The more examples she detailed, it became clear that her family was part of the church and the church a part of her family.

Rev. Kapundu, following her parent's example, began as a pre-teen to create and lead programs in the church. She became devoted to connecting others to Christ. It was not long before leaders and members of her community began to ask if she was called to full-time ministry. Indeed, Rev. Kapundu knew at age sixteen that the Spirit was leading her to become a pastor.

Yet, like many, Rev. Kapundu did not answer her call immediately. She went to college in Zimbabwe at Africa University and earned a sociology and religious studies degree. She returned to Congo and worked at an orphanage before seeking a master's degree in Development Studies and subsequent employment in South Africa. It was her pastor and church community in her new home that helped to reignite the pull of her call. "My pastor encouraged me back into leading ministry, and church members asked if I ever thought about becoming a pastor." Her experience with Walk of Emmaus finally pushed her to pursue ministry full time. "Walk of Emmaus made it clear that I am a pastor. It was amazing the support – letters, prayers, resources – that the community gave me."

She immediately began seeking admission into seminary. Her husband, experiencing a similar nudge from the Spirit, joined her on the path. They enrolled in Eden Theological Seminary in Missouri, where she received a Master of Theological Studies, and her husband graduated with a Master of Divinity. They believed they would be returning immediately back to Congo upon graduation; however, her husband took an appointment as an associate pastor at Grand Island Trinity UMC in Nebraska. This change in plans led Rev. Kapundu to consider ordination as an Elder in the UMC, and she applied to Saint Paul School of Theology to obtain her Master of Divinity.

When asked about Saint Paul, Rev. Kapundu could not contain her excitement. "Before I even enrolled, I felt so welcomed. Shannon Hancock [Executive Director of Admissions and Communications] was in constant communication with me and helped me every step of the way of the process. I could tell Saint Paul was going to be a great fit." Now a second-year student, Rev. Kapundu confirms that "Saint Paul is my loving, open-armed, open-minded home."

Rev. Kapundu pinpointed her Preaching class with Rev. Dr. Casey Sigmon to be what has had the most significant impact on her ministry to date. "Dr. Sigmon has taught me how to bring together what I have learned in other classes – the history and the theology, to support my sermons. She has also encouraged ideas and methods of how to involve the congregation in the sermon. I have learned how to engage people in the conversation rather than just speak to them."

Rev. Kapundu now serves as associate pastor at the same church her husband once served, Grand Island Trinity. She loves her congregation and is thankful that they are accepting of her culture. She admits that one of the biggest challenges she has in ministry is adapting to the more quiet nature of American worship. "Worship at home in the Congo involves a lot of joyful noise and dancing. It has a lot more energy and movement. We pray loudly, and we move about the sanctuary. I bring some of this energy to Trinity but try to meet the congregation where they are comfortable. Even though we worship differently, we still love and pray to the same God. That is what matters."



#### Wanda Jackson: Centering Souls

Wanda Jackson, alumna and former Worship Coordinator at Saint Paul, can pinpoint the exact class where the idea of her ministry materialized. She was in an Evangelism course taught by Dr. Douglas Powe when she began to dream about a spiritual center where people could connect with the Divine and others through creativity and art. A decade later, Jackson owns and runs Centering Souls – an artist studio and gallery with the mission of

"using art and creativity to nourish people's relationship with the Holy."

The idea for the center was spurred by an assignment where Jackson wrote about her experience with a stray cat, Dad. Dad - named because the smaller cats that accompanied him looked just like him - made himself a resident of Jackson's porch. At his arrival, Dad needed veterinarian care, but Jackson knew that if she approached him immediately, he would most likely skittishly scatter and not return. So she provided water and food faithfully until he began to engage with her willingly. Over time, with trust and Dad leading this pace, Jackson was able to get him to the vet. "I just knew that he had to trust me before I could care for him. This experience reflected what I was learning in Evangelism. Ministry happens best where trust exists and we meet people where they are. I started dreaming about creating space, filled with love, where people could explore God."

Jackson, who has always had a heart for those not familiar with church or those experiencing trauma at the hands of the church, began to wonder how to draw in people who might not seek out a more formal faith community. The answer has a bit of a zig-zagged nature that mirrors her own journey to seminary. Jackson graduated with a degree in Physics and took a job at a children's museum designing and building exhibits, which led to her next job as a Children's Director at a local church and subsequently to Saint Paul to study theology. So how does one traverse from science to art? Jackson took an Intro Pottery class as a humanity elective in college. She became enamored with the anatomy of the clay as well as the process of using the pottery wheel. Through the trip from a physics major to theologian, honing the craft of pottery was a constant pursuit.

"I found something in creating in clay. I apprenticed and explored the medium. I also loved the spiritual metaphor found in the process. When you center clay on the wheel, the clay particles need to align when forming the dome; otherwise, you will get wobble and it will eventually

collapse. This is the same with our lives. We need to be centered on God through spiritual practice. If not, the littlest thing can make our lives spin and fly apart." Over time, Jackson's sessions at the wheel have become a meditative connection with God...a spiritual discipline where she communes with the Spirit as she creates.

Her ministry is more than a concept now. Since her awakening to the idea in seminary, she has combined her love for art and the sacred and created that space she longed for where others could find inspiration and connection in creativity outside a formal, traditional faith community. It has been arduous work to see the center realized. It required dreaming and experienced setbacks. It has brought administrative and logistical tasks such as finding physical space, understanding zoning laws, interpreting insurance policies and sourcing equipment, materials, and teachers. "There were days when I felt like it might never happen, but then God opened doors. Things would begin to click into place and I kept moving along and now it is a reality."

Jackson named the space, Centering Souls (www.centeringsouls.com). She purchased a house in Parkville, Missouri, before the pandemic. The work studios are filled with a myriad of equipment for various mediums. You can use pottery, sewing, weaving, matting, and scrapbooking equipment by the hour, day, week or by membership. The center offers classes and events. The next workshop will explore colored pencils. In the near future, a yoga instructor will teach breath classes focusing on both the control and sacredness of breath. "I am excited about the yoga lessons. How you breath is integral to throwing and creating with clay. Understanding how to control your breath and how to maintain posture is a big part of shaping a vessel."

The center has a gallery where pieces are sold to help fund the space. The art is beautiful. Yet, it is not the most precious output of the endeavor. The community formed in this space is sacred. The love shared with all – no restrictions – is powerful. Some have come to the center keeping God at distance, but there is space to explore the Divine. "It is special when you connect with someone where they are at and offer love and trust. The other day, a member artist listened to me speak about God as we worked. With reflection, she offered a response: 'that's a God I could relate to.' It does not get more holy than seeing someone awaken to God and God's love."

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## SAMPLE SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Saint Paul School of Theology is pleased to announce our plans to establish the Rev. Dr. Tex and Mrs. Peggy Sample Scholarship. Thanks to a matching challenge gift in excess of \$25,000 from an anonymous donor, we have slightly more than half the amount required by board policy to establish an endowed scholarship honoring the Samples. Meeting this challenge requires that we double the matching gift to \$50,000, a goal we hope to attain by December 31, 2022. The timing for honoring them in this way seems more than appropriate given Tex's decades of service on the faculty and for his tenure as chair of the Board of Trustees. We hope that the alumni, friends of Tex and Peggy, and friends of Saint Paul will make a contribution toward this matching opportunity over and above their usual annual gifts to the Seminary. If you wish to donate to the Rev. Dr. Tex and Mrs. Peggy Sample Scholarship Fund, you may do so online by utilizing the Alumni and Donation Portal, going to our website at spst.edu/giving or by mailing a check payable to Saint Paul School of Theology to: Saint Paul School of Theology, Development Office - Group 3, P.O. Box 843740, Kansas City, MO 64184-3740. Please note that your gift is intended for the Sample Scholarship Fund.



# **#GIWINGTUESDAY**

On Tuesday, November 29, Saint Paul School of Theology, to support the seminary's mission, will once again join non-profit organizations around the world to collect donations on #GivingTuesday. Celebrated on the Tuesday following Thanksgiving, #GivingTuesday is a global day of giving fueled by the power of social media, community, and collaboration. Money raised on #GivingTuesday will go towards the scholarships that allow many students the ability to afford seminary and hopefully graduate debt-free. Help us meet our goal and follow our progress online at spst.edu/giving-tuesday



Use your smart phone camera to scan me to go to the Giving Tuesday link.

## SAVE THE DATE NOVEMBER 29, 2022



## JOIN US IN CELEBRATING SAINT PAUL DAY

On March 3, 1958, the National Methodist Theological Seminary (eventually known as Saint Paul School of Theology) was incorporated in Missouri.

In celebration of our birthday, we want all of the SPST community to show their seminary spirit by wearing their Saint Paul shirts and hats that day. In addition, we invite you to share memorable moments (stories and photos) that you've experienced at Saint Paul in the classroom, with fellow students, or during events on your social media pages – make sure to tag us and use the hashtag #saintpaulday. We'll also be having a fundraiser that day to raise \$1,958 for the annual fund.

## SAVE THE DATE: March 3, 2023

Need to add to your SPST shirt and sweatshirt collection? Scan the QR code and shop SPST.



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