

# MEMPHIS THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY



Rev. Kim Moore (MDiv, '20) finished her coursework at MTS while serving in Vanderbilt Medical Center's ICU during the Covid-19 pandemic.





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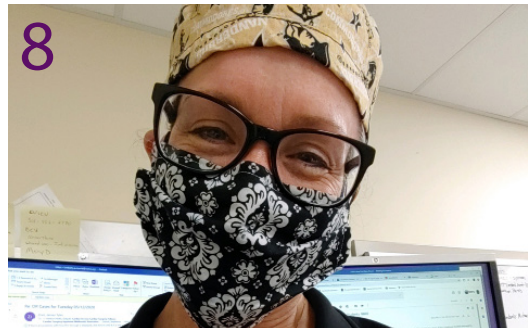
Memphis Theological Seminary  
of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church  
168 East Parkway South  
Memphis, TN 38104-4395  
901.458.8232 phone  
901.452.4051 fax  
[www.MemphisSeminary.edu](http://www.MemphisSeminary.edu)





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ON THE COVER: REV. KIM MOORE (MDIV, '20) PHOTO C/O DONN JONES  
LEFT: DR. HENRY LOGAN STARKS PARTICIPATES IN AN ORDINATION CEREMONY

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Anti-Bias Regulation, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, and the Americans with Disabilities Act.

The mission of Memphis Theological Seminary is to educate and sustain men and women for ordained and lay Christian ministry in the church and the world through shaping and inspiring lives devoted to scholarship, piety, and justice.

# a letter from the dean

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Dear MTS Community,

In life there is death, and from death God brings resurrection. We live out these central realities in our Christian faith in ways both personal and communal. Lately, following the death of my mother, I have been dwelling upon a prayer in my faith tradition from the Mass for the Dead:

In him who rose from the dead,  
our hope of resurrection dawned.  
The sadness of death gives way  
to the bright promise of immortality.  
Lord, for your faithful people, life is changed, not ended.  
When the body of our earthly dwelling lies in death  
we gain an everlasting dwelling place in heaven.

Each of us in the seminary community and in our churches and the broader society are living through a time in which death has come with more frequency. The pandemic reminds us of the power of death and of our human limitations. Members of the seminary community have lost relatives, friends, and spouses. There have also been alumni of the seminary who have died due to COVID19.

In this time, we have also encountered not only physical death, but the “death” of so many other ways in which we had lived. The campus is largely silent, with no classes, no worship in chapel, no hallway meetings and conversations, no studying in the library, no gatherings for community meals, or faculty or committee meetings. Churches have been empty or at best partially filled with social distanced worshippers. Visits with family and friends have been truncated. Isolation is more normal than gathering.

But in the face of death, our faith in the resurrection calls out to us and asks, “How will we rise from this death?” How will we live into the resurrection reality that, “life is changed, not ended.”

In the change we will continue to miss and to grieve those whom we have lost. But in our faith, we will continue to live into new life. We will remember with gratitude those whom we have lost to death. We will affirm by how we live with love and compassion that death does not have the final word. And we will find ways to live faithful to God, to our memories, and to love.

At the seminary, there are some signs of our living into a changed world. In the summer and the fall, we will have some classes in-person, but all will be hybrid, and we will continue with some classes completely online. We are planning for a reopened campus, but we are also hoping to continue to develop our digital resources in the library. We are seeking ways to improve formation for ministry and supervised ministry by more closely integrating those two dimensions of our curriculum, while also placing supervised ministry in sites where students are already doing ministry. We are continuing to explore partnerships with churches and other institutions of higher learning as they, too, are seeking new life. We will begin to make use of our newly renovated chapel to have weekly worship, both in person and online.

At Memphis Theological Seminary, in these and other ways, we are committed to living into our faith in the resurrection. We are not going back to a previous normal. We are finding ways to go forward with a renewed practice of seminary life and theological education that will serve a revitalized church, and a society in need of the good news of the Gospel. Life is truly changed; not ended.



Dr. Peter R. Gathje  
Vice President of Academic Affairs/Dean

# a letter from the president



The events of the past year have forced us to reimagine many parts of our lives. In the wake of a deadly pandemic, the Memphis Theological Seminary community has reimaged the workplace, the classroom, and the sanctuary, as we seek to stay in community with each other

despite physical distancing.

In March of 2020, we moved all of our classes online, and MTS faculty and staff began working from home. At the initial outbreak of Covid-19, we anticipated that there would be an economic impact in addition to the health crisis. As a result, our seminary reimaged how we could be better stewards of the resources God has entrusted to us. This included applying for CARES Act funding that allowed us to purchase laptops and hotspots for student use, as well as offer direct payments to our students to offset the costs incurred by the transition to online learning. We also began offering a series of free virtual classes to local churches and lay people called Sunday Morning Seminary, in an effort to support and connect people of faith in this period of isolation.

What we could not have imagined is how our donors would respond during this challenging time. We exceeded both of our matching pledges in 2020 and received \$200,000 more in December gifts than we did in December of 2019! Because of the generous support of people like you, we also finished this past fiscal year in the black. This is an amazing accomplishment at a time when we faced unrest and uncertainty from wide-ranging health, economic, and social challenges.

In the midst of deep uncertainty and constant change, I am deeply grateful for the hard work and sacrifice of our faculty and staff that made these very significant accomplishments possible, as well as for the generous support of the MTS community. Your gracious giving has helped us say to the world: while sanctuary doors have been closed, the Church has remained open, alive, and well.

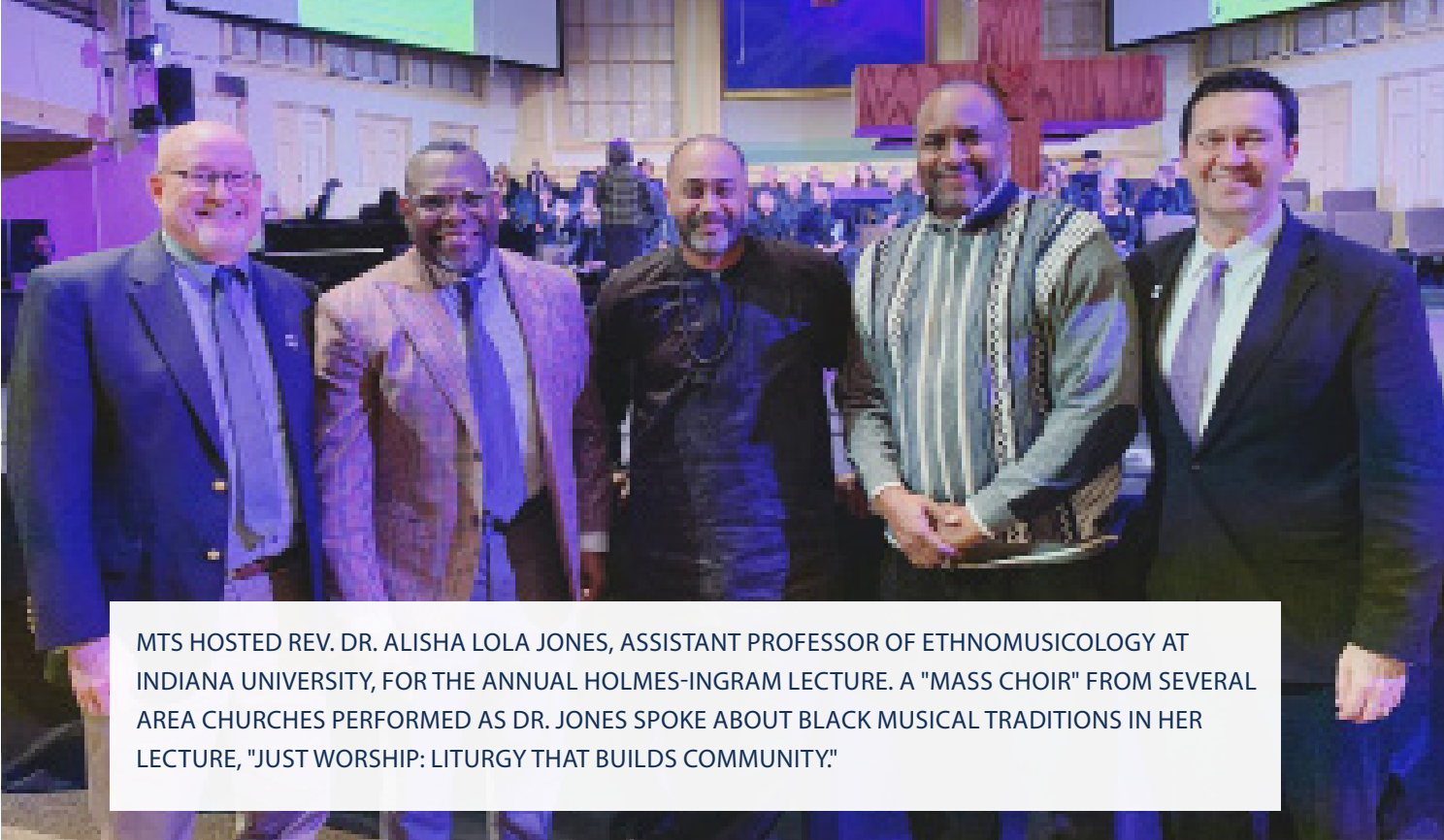
In January 2021, our accreditation was reaffirmed by SACSCOC (Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges) for ten years without any stipulations! In addition, we are approved for accreditation by ATS (Association of Theological Schools) through 2025. Both of these accrediting bodies have also approved Memphis Theological Seminary to offer distance education.

MTS introduced two new Master of Arts in Christian Ministry concentrations in Chaplain Studies and Methodist Ministry this past academic year. We are also recruiting students for new Doctor of Ministry cohorts in Womanist Preaching; Preaching as Leadership; Forming and Growing Churches in the 21st Century; and Pastoral Therapy: Faith and Health to begin this summer. We expect to offer some on-campus courses in the Fall of 2021 with proper precautions such as social distancing, masking, and regular sanitation. We will continue to supplement on-campus courses with additional online contact hours and we will offer some completely synchronous and asynchronous online classes at least through the duration of the pandemic.

While 2020 presented us with unimaginable challenges, together we will continue equipping leaders for ministry in the Church and the world in 2021 and beyond. I give praise to God for wonderful gifts of grace all along this journey.

With deepest gratitude and prayerful blessings,

Rev. Dr. Jody Hill  
President



MTS HOSTED REV. DR. ALISHA LOLA JONES, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF ETHNOMUSICOLOGY AT INDIANA UNIVERSITY, FOR THE ANNUAL HOLMES-INGRAM LECTURE. A "MASS CHOIR" FROM SEVERAL AREA CHURCHES PERFORMED AS DR. JONES SPOKE ABOUT BLACK MUSICAL TRADITIONS IN HER LECTURE, "JUST WORSHIP: LITURGY THAT BUILDS COMMUNITY!"



THE CENTER FOR FAITH AND IMAGINATION HOSTED A SERIES OF RETREATS AND FREE WEBINARS. BELOW, MTS STUDENT NATHAN DORRIS, CFI DIRECTOR MARTHA LYLE FORD, AND ABBY WEST PATES PARTICIPATE IN A PANEL AT CFI'S RETREAT ON THE ENNEAGRAM.



MRS. JEANNE VARNELL WAS AMONG THE CROWD GATHERED TO CELEBRATE THE HAMILTON AND VARNELL CHAIR IN WESLEYAN STUDIES.

# a year in review



REV. DR. HEBER BROWN OF THE BLACK CHURCH FOOD SECURITY NETWORK, AND MIA MADISON, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF MEMPHIS TILTH, SPEAK WITH DR. PETER GATHJE AS PART OF SCHOLARS WEEK.



# New Faculty Members

Welcoming Dr. Christy Woodbury-Moore and Dr. Patricia Vesely to Memphis Theological Seminary

Dr. Patricia Vesely joined the Memphis Theological Seminary faculty as Assistant Visiting Professor in Hebrew Bible, beginning with the fall semester 2020.

Dr. Vesely comes to MTS from Union Presbyterian Seminary and Virginia Commonwealth University, where she has been teaching courses in Hebrew Bible, Ethics, and Spirituality. Dr. Vesely earned her PhD from Union Presbyterian Seminary. Her dissertation has been published as *Friendship and Virtue Ethics in the Book of Job* (Cambridge University Press, 2019).

"We are delighted that Dr. Vesely is becoming part of our faculty," says Dr. Peter Gathje, Vice President of Academic Affairs/Dean, "she brings a deep love for the Hebrew Bible combined with a strong commitment to the church and to the practical implications of biblical and theological study.

"She is also an accomplished musician, serving as the music director of a Presbyterian church and as an accompanist for the Richmond Ballet. This integration of biblical and theological study with the life of the church is typical of faculty at Memphis Theological Seminary."

Prior to her first semester at MTS, Dr. Vesely said, "I am very much looking forward to joining the MTS community. The hospitality and kindness I have witnessed from the faculty, staff, and students thus far has shown this to be a truly special place. I am eager to participate in the deeper reflection of the Bible and Ethics with my students this Fall. "







Memphis Theological Seminary is proud to announce the new Assistant Professor of Spiritual Formation and Director of Supervised Ministry, Dr. Christy Woodbury-Moore.

Dr. Peter Gathje says, “We are delighted that Dr. Woodbury-Moore is joining the faculty at Memphis Theological Seminary. She brings theological depth and practical ministry experience to this key position which will integrate our formation for ministry and supervised ministry programs.”

Dr. Woodbury-Moore has served as an adjunct faculty for the Doctor of Ministry Program at MTS, as well as an adjunct faculty and program manager for the Samuel DeWitt Proctor School of Theology Doctor of Ministry program. She holds an

undergraduate degree in chemical engineering, and says that her path to seminary and theological education was not always straight or logical: “My formation encompasses a continuum of experiences that range from Corporate America to Church Leadership to Leadership in Theological Education,” Dr. Woodbury-Moore says. “It is these experiences coupled with my lived experiences that shape my thinking, decision- making and the ways I show up to do ministry in the world.”

Dr. Woodbury-Moore hails from Jackson, Mississippi, and is a new resident of Memphis after moving here from Richmond, Virginia when her husband, Dr. Michael Moore, accepted the pastoral leadership of Metropolitan Baptist Church.

“My interest is in helping the seminary student recognize the value in bringing their whole selves to the learning experience and that no experience, be it past or present, is wasted on this journey,” Dr. Woodbury-Moore says. “I can relate to the anxiety that comes with preparing to do ministry while simultaneously questioning your call altogether, all of which are significant to our formation as faith leaders.”

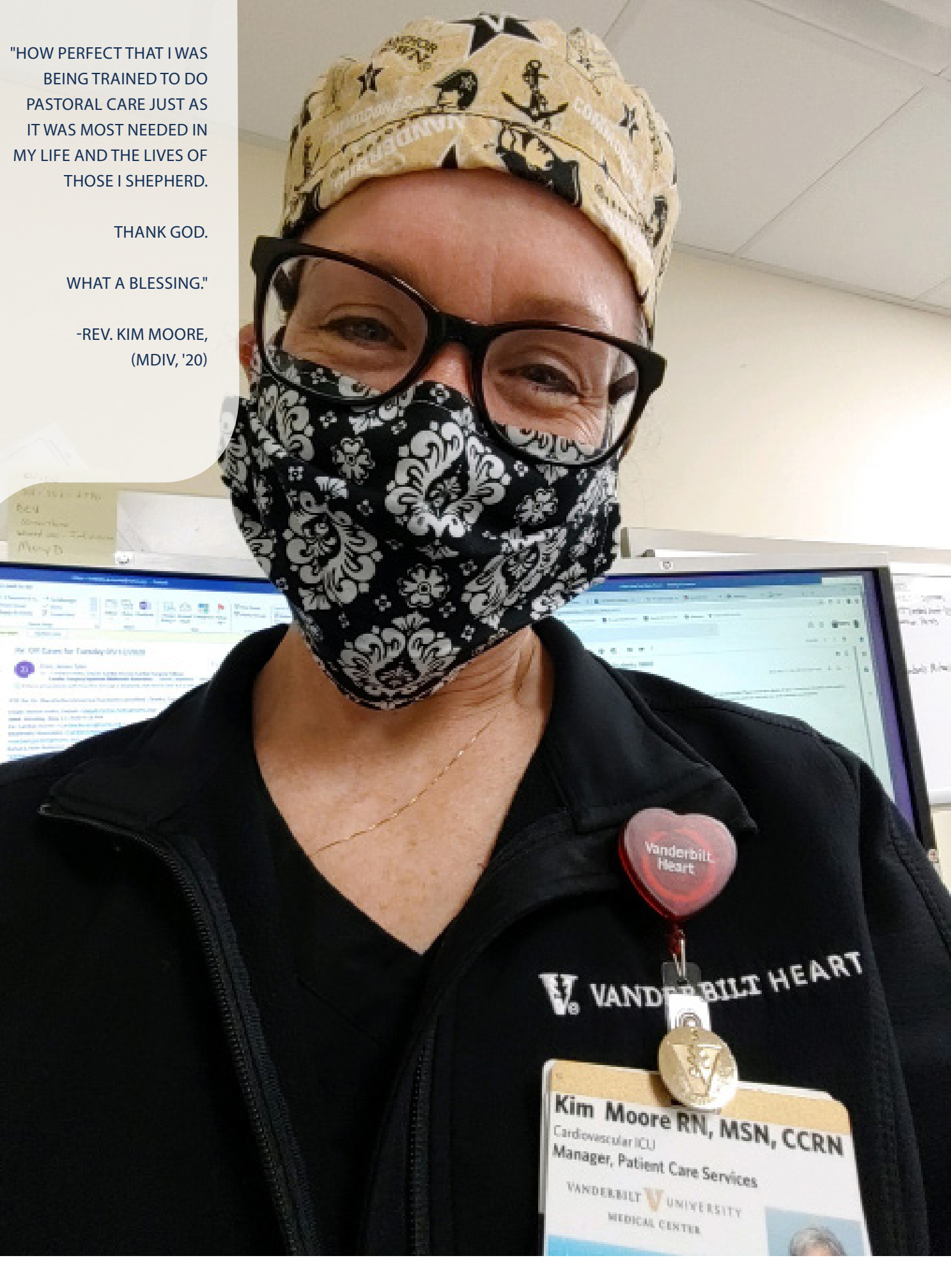
Dr. Woodbury-Moore says she is most excited about building relationships with the MTS Community. “I look forward to creating space that welcomes the ‘wrestle’ that comes along with theological education, and learning from the experiences of the students.”

"HOW PERFECT THAT I WAS BEING TRAINED TO DO PASTORAL CARE JUST AS IT WAS MOST NEEDED IN MY LIFE AND THE LIVES OF THOSE I SHEPHERD.

THANK GOD.

WHAT A BLESSING."

-REV. KIM MOORE,  
(MDIV, '20)



# On the Frontlines

Rev. Kim Moore finished her coursework at MTS while serving in Vanderbilt Medical Center's ICU during the Covid-19 pandemic

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It was once said of Eleanor Roosevelt that she was an inspiration to many because she would rather light a candle than curse the darkness. At the height of the Covid-19 pandemic, it certainly felt as though there was a cloud of darkness hanging over us all.

But we at MTS have been inspired by the faith leaders who have responded to the pandemic with the light of Christ's love.

One of those light-bearers is Rev. Kim Moore, a Cumberland Presbyterian graduate of the class of 2020.

When Moore wasn't driving to Memphis for classes at MTS, she worked as the Nurse Manager for the Cardiovascular Intensive Care Unit at Vanderbilt Medical Center in Nashville.

"The week the first Covid-19 patient was identified in Tennessee, Nashville was also struck by a devastating tornado which destroyed much of our PPE supplies," Moore says.

"Staff were scared. Patients were scared. It took courage to just keep showing up, not knowing what we would face each day."

On top of this, Moore also worried about completing all the required hours for her pastoral care practicum. She slept in her office for two weeks in order to be with the evening chaplain as many hours as possible.

Moore says many people around her were praying for the first time in a long time. "Some asked what the meaning of all this could be," she says. "I looked back over the past five and a half years at how my curriculum fell together by happenstance, as I took classes according to what my demanding work schedule would allow. How perfect that I was being trained to do pastoral care just as it was most needed in my life and the lives of those I shepherd. Thank God. What a blessing."

In dark times, it becomes clear how essential our work is. Memphis Theological Seminary prepares faith leaders to shepherd their congregations, and our graduates have been quick to respond to the needs of their church communities by shifting worship, Bible Study classes, and youth group meetings online.

Meanwhile, the churches our graduates serve continue to fill the gaps by caring for the vulnerable, distributing food and supplies, and providing spiritual shelter from the storm of this pandemic.

We don't know when the next crisis will hit our families, our businesses, our communities, or our world. So we remain committed to training and supporting faith leaders who will be equipped to respond with the light of God's love.



# Theological Education Moves Online



In addition to preparing people for ministry, Memphis Theological Seminary has always sought to be an ongoing theological resource for the church and the community. In responding to the pandemic, the seminary is creatively continuing that tradition through a variety of online opportunities for theological education for lay people and clergy.

One of the most popular of those innovations has been Sunday Morning Seminary. Starting last June, each Sunday at 9:00am, MTS has offered hour-long online classes taught by MTS faculty, administration, or outside guest lecturers. Churches and interested individuals signed up for these free classes. Some churches used the classes to replace their usual Sunday School classes that were not able to meet due to the pandemic.

Classes have covered a variety of topics, from religion and the Civil War, to biblical leadership in times of crisis. The spring 2021 lineup kicked off in February with an examination of God's Call to Creation Care and Environmental Justice.

VPAA/Dean Dr. Peter Gathje has also offered occasional virtual "Discussions with the Dean" in which authors of recent books in areas related to theological study discussed their works. Authors included Rev. Murphy Davis, Dr. Andre Johnson, Dr. Carmichael Crutchfield, and Rev. Scott Lencke.

In another innovation, the fall Ingram Lectures were moved online and offered in a creative format. Dr. William P. Brown from Columbia Theological Seminary drew upon his book, *The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder*, in his lecture, and en-

gaged in an animated online conversation with current students in the Doctor of Ministry in Land, Food, and Faith Formation.

Finally, the pandemic has also brought a change to a major fundraising and social event at Memphis Theological Seminary, the annual Dr. Henry Logan Starks Scholarship Celebration. For 34 years, the Starks event has raised funds for African American student scholarships in honor of Dr. Starks' legacy as a theologian, community leader, and activist. This year, the Henry Logan Starks Scholarship Celebration was held entirely online.

We look forward to the day when we can safely gather in person, but until then we will continue offering theological education to our larger community through these and other virtual opportunities.

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Learn more about Sunday Morning Seminary at [www.sundaymorningseminary.org](http://www.sundaymorningseminary.org)

# Online Classes Allow MTS Student to Finish Degree

Despite grief, a cancer diagnosis, and a move to Phoenix, Arizona, Blanche Bond-Hudson will be able to finish her degree thanks to new online course offerings



Blanche Bond-Hudson arrived at Memphis Theological Seminary in the fall of 2014 at the encouragement of her pastor, Rev. Donald Johnson of Oak Grove Missionary Baptist Church, where Hudson had served as a Sunday School teacher, Vacation Bible School teacher, and on occasions facilitated Bible Study and prayer.

“I knew early in my life that I had a call to do more than just teach,” Hudson says, “but also a call to minister to others in a variety of capacities. So, when I came to MTS, I immediately felt a part of a great community of people that loved me and that shared a common interest. And they were trying to learn more so that they could further their ministry and do the work of building the kingdom of God.

I loved my classes, all my professors, and I took as many classes as I could throughout the summer, throughout the fall.”

Then, in 2015, Hudson's husband was diagnosed with colon cancer and died six weeks later. Hudson says her MTS family helped her stay in school. “Even when I was deeply in sorrow in classes and had to leave, my peers understood what was going on with me,” Hudson says, “So I couldn't have been in a better place during my time of grief.”

In 2017, the company Hudson worked for offered her a position in Phoenix, Arizona. Hudson needed a change, so she accepted the position in digital marketing and uprooted her life. But the following year, Hudson was diagnosed with breast cancer.

“I'm still trying to regain my strength and adjust to my new normal,” Hudson says, “But at the same time I wanted to find a way to finish my degree program at MTS.”

In the spring of 2020, as MTS responded to the pandemic and shifted all classes online, Hudson saw a way forward.

“When I found out that MTS was offering online courses, I could not have been more thrilled because I felt like I

had left so much undone. I really am thrilled that I am now going to be able to finish my degree.”

Hudson says she must tip her hat to Dr. Peter Gathje: “When I reached out to him, he said, ‘We will make a way for this to happen.’”

In addition to the ways online learning makes it possible for long-distance students to be a part of the MTS community, Hudson points out that in-person classes would not be feasible for many students living with a chronic illness.

“This is allowing me, even though I am still taking chemotherapy, to still be able to be in a classroom setting with my peers and be able to still do my work,” Hudson says, “Whereas if I had to physically try to make it to the building, it probably wouldn't be possible.”

Hudson says, “However my journey is right now, God has put me on this journey, and I'm proud of who I am in this journey. And I'm proud of the way that I'm representing God in this journey.”

# The Hamilton and Varnell Chair in Wesleyan Studies

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On Friday, November 22nd, 2019, MTS celebrated the Hamilton and Varnell Chair in Wesleyan Studies, the first fully-endowed chair in Memphis Theological Seminary's history.

This endowment was made possible by generous lead gifts from Mrs. Barbara Hamilton and the late Dr. Ralph Hamilton, as well as the late Mrs. Jeanne Varnell and the late Mr. Henry Varnell. The endowment ensures the ongoing work of the Methodist House of Studies and the future of Wesleyan Theological formation at MTS.

The Hamiltons and Varnells have been great friends to the Seminary. In her remarks, Rev. Emily Matheny (M.Div., '91) said that the Varnells "were particularly drawn to the legacy of MTS as a catalyst for racial justice, and the development of faithful leadership across all denominations and faith expressions."

MTS has been a leader in the formation of ordained and lay leaders in the Wesleyan/Methodist tradition for the MidSouth and beyond since the 1970s.

In 2014, the Seminary launched a new initiative called the Methodist House of Studies which focuses on providing curricular offerings

and special events in the field of Wesleyan Studies for Methodist students and the community. Special guests at the celebration included Mrs. Varnell, Bishop Bill McAlilly of the Nashville Episcopal Area of the United Methodist Church, and Dr. Deborah Smith, the District Superintendent of the Metro District.

Bishop McAlilly said the endowment would allow MTS to continue to support a generation of leaders "who can speak prophetically into a troubled time."

The Hamilton and Varnell Chair in Wesleyan Studies will be held by Dr. Michael Turner, Associate Professor of the History of Christianity and the Director of the Methodist House of Studies. Turner said, "The endowment of this chair is an important signal to the entire Methodist family that Memphis Theological Seminary intends to continue its longstanding commitment to shaping Methodist students for ministry no matter what the future might hold for The United Methodist Church."

Rev. Fekecia Gunn, the Director of Enrollment Services at MTS, said, "The establishment of this chair, along with the one who sits in it, shares the intentionality of investment in the lives of pan-

Methodist ministers and their congregations, to be effective in both theology and practice."

In February of 2021, the Memphis Theological Seminary community grieved the passing of Mrs. Jeanne Varnell.

MTS President Dr. Jody Hill says, "Mrs. Jeanne Varnell was an embodiment of the Christian faith with her commitment to humility, generosity, and diversity. Her legacy predates my time here at MTS and will live on through the Hamilton and Varnell Chair in Wesleyan Studies. We are truly blessed to be one of the fortunate recipients of her love and grace."



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The Hamilton and Varnell Chair in Wesleyan Studies ensures the ongoing work of the Methodist House of Studies and the future of Wesleyan theological formation at MTS. For more information, please email [methodisthouse@memphisseminary.edu](mailto:methodisthouse@memphisseminary.edu) or visit [methodisthouse.org](http://methodisthouse.org)



# Rev. Billy Vaughan Retires

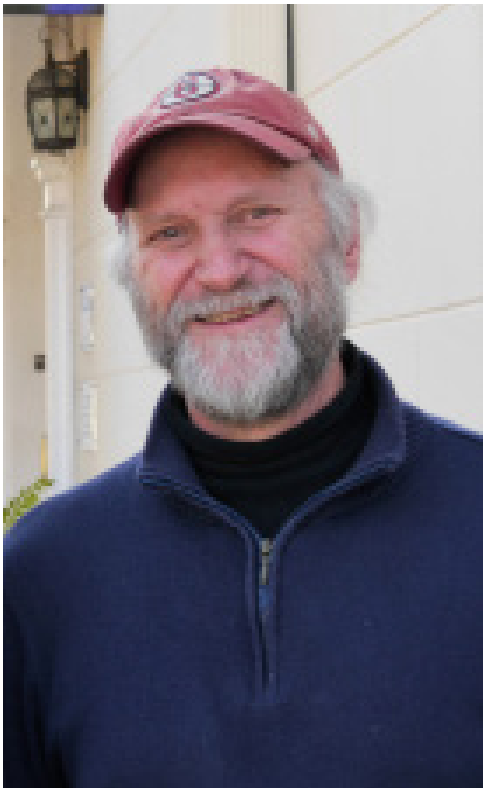


Rev. Billy Vaughan has retired from MTS after thirteen years as director of the Formation for Ministry program, and eight years as a full faculty member.

Dr. Lee Ramsey says, "Billy Vaughan has implemented a vision for practicing Christian formation that has shaped an entire generation of MTS students, faculty, and staff. Grounded in both Wesleyan and Reformed traditions, and influenced by many years of partnership with the School of Servant Leadership, founded by Gordon Cosby and Elizabeth O'Connor in Washington, D.C, Billy established a curriculum for our students centered on the biblical witness that prayer and peace-making, worship and justice should never be separated in the Christian life. Billy's Formation for Ministry classes will stay with our students long after they graduate from MTS, and the practices developed within those classes may very well sustain our students for a lifetime of Christian ministry."

Martha Lyle Ford, who co-directed the Center for Faith and Imagination along with Rev. Vaughan, said, "The work of the Center for Faith and Imagination is a result of Billy's vision, commitment, and determination. "Billy's life embodies the work CFI is called to do - helping faith leaders thrive in ministry as persons, pastors, and prophets. His positive impact on the Center for Faith and Imagination, Memphis Theological Seminary, and countless students and ministers is immeasurable. We offer prayers of gratitude and blessings for his ministry among us."

All of us at Memphis Theological Seminary are grateful for Billy's vision, passion, and commitment to the formation of a generation of prophetic faith leaders of MTS.



# Dr. Walter Spears

## ON CHAPLAINCY AT ST. JUDE CHILDREN'S RESEARCH HOSPITAL

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Dr. Walter Spears entered the ministry in 1988. Two years later, he enrolled at Morehouse College as a psychology major. He was beginning a long process of discerning his call.

“When I was licensed in the Baptist church,” Dr. Spears says, “I only knew of pastoring or serving as an associate as being opportunities in ministry.” But, Spears adds, he always felt comfortable providing hospital visits. During his time in ministry, he grew increasingly interested in medicine.

“With much prayer and reflection, seminary and chaplaincy became my opportunity to serve in the clinical setting,” Spears says.

In August of 1994, Spears became a student at Memphis Theological Seminary. Spears completed a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) residency within the Methodist LeBonheur system, and received board certification from the Association of Professional Chaplains.

“I graduated in 1997 and in 2000, I took on my first roll as a board-certified staff chaplain at what was then the Regional Medical Center. Before leaving that post, I provided leadership for Pastoral Care, Volunteer Services, and Guest Services. In 2007, I was offered the opportunity to serve as staff chaplain at St. Jude Children’s Research Hospital.”

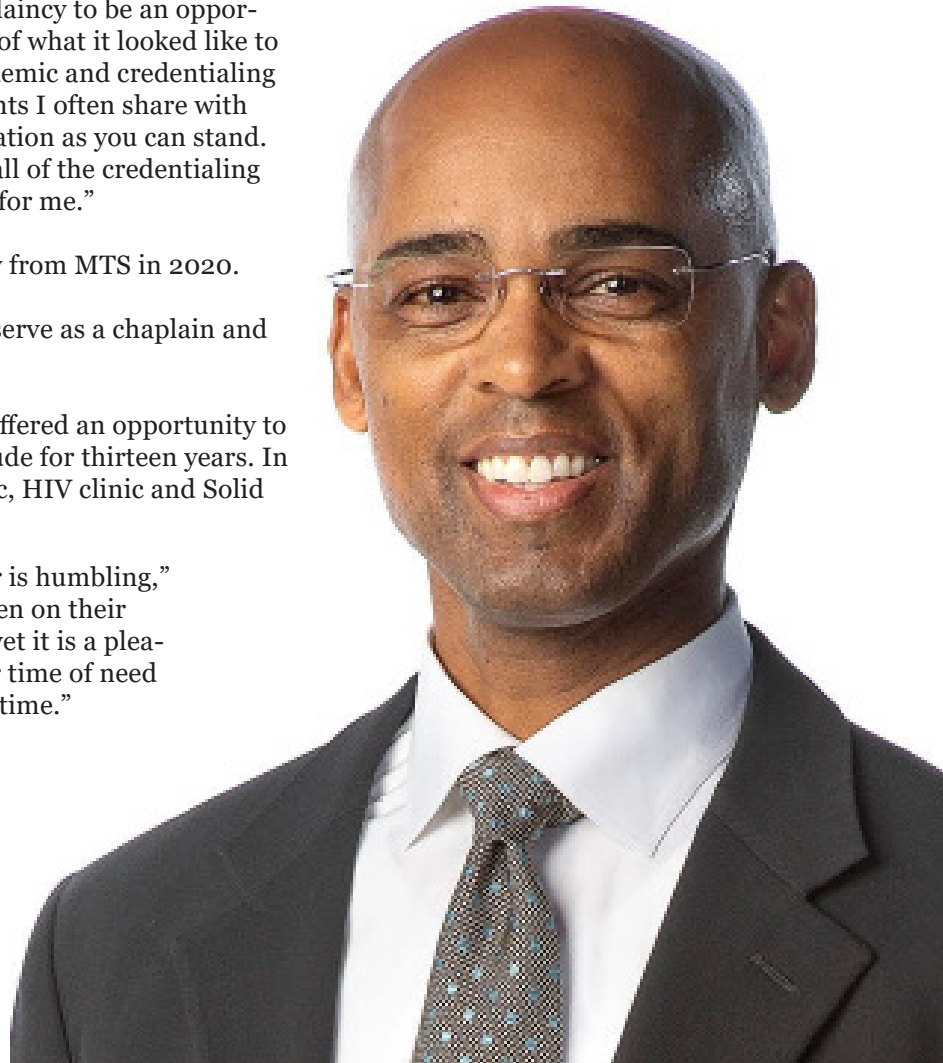
“Early in my ministry, I did not know chaplaincy to be an opportunity for me. I did not have any examples of what it looked like to be a chaplain, nor did I appreciate the academic and credentialing requirements. One of the significant thoughts I often share with students of all types is to get as much education as you can stand. Likewise, I always encourage students get all of the credentialing required. Both of these have opened doors for me.”

Spears graduated with a Doctor of Ministry from MTS in 2020.

“MTS afforded me all I needed in order to serve as a chaplain and help others toward chaplaincy.”

“After serving at the trauma center, I was offered an opportunity to return to bedside care. I have been at St. Jude for thirteen years. In that time, I have served the Leukemia clinic, HIV clinic and Solid Tumor clinic.”

“Providing care in a pediatric cancer center is humbling,” Spears says. “It makes me sad to see children on their journey with a catastrophic diagnosis and yet it is a pleasure to provide a spiritual presence in their time of need and get to know patients and families over time.”



# Dr. Todd Richardson

## ON ART, THEOLOGY, AND PROXIMITY AT CROSTOWN ARTS

When Todd Richardson first stood in front of the dilapidated Sears Crosstown building and considered shaping its future, the 1.5 million-square-foot building had been abandoned since 1993. Many in Memphis considered the building an eyesore, destined for demolition. But Richardson saw potential.

Richardson, then an art professor at the University of Memphis, and Christopher Minor, a video artist, worked with consultants to conduct a feasibility study into the building's renovation. The verdict: the building could be saved, but not without buy-in from a large and diverse pool of stakeholders. Within three years, eight local organizations had agreed to lease more than 40,000 square feet of the building.

Richardson and Minor went on to co-found Crosstown Arts, with two goals: to create a vision for the building's redevelopment, and to cultivate creative community in Memphis.

To some, Richardson's vision for Sears Crosstown might have seemed like a pipe dream. But to Richardson, it was something more like faith.

Before Richardson completed his PhD in Art History in the Netherlands, or his Master of Arts in the History of Art and Religion from Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, California, Richardson graduated from Memphis Theological Seminary in 2000, with a Master of Arts in Religion.

"My time at MTS really impacted my level of empathy, so that I could put myself in other people's shoes in a way that I hadn't before," Richardson says, "There were some really hard conversations that we were able to have because we were at the seminary and in Memphis, and that's a pretty unique thing. When I moved to Berkeley, California, they weren't having those conversations."

"At Crosstown, we talk about proximity a lot. The whole goal is—if we're better together, then it's gotta be everybody who's better together, and not just a select few. If you take just Church Health, Methodist, and ALSAC, that accounts for about 1,000 of the employees that work at Crosstown, and then there are 55,000 patients at Church Health that are treated here every year. Then you have NexAir, which is the largest privately-owned gas distribution company in the Southeast, and their executive offices are right next door to Church Health."

"People are coming and going, with different backgrounds, different demographics, different incomes, and that can lead to some social friction—at Crosstown Arts we call it 'creative tension'—but that's the whole point of being in a kind of lab. Crosstown Concourse is a big experiment, and if you're not creating some tension, then you're not learning, and you're not innovating or trying to think about things from a new perspective."

"So we think about Crosstown Concourse as being a microcosm of the city—it's not perfect, and we fail every day—but in terms of the 3,000 people who are coming and going every day, we hope for it to be a microcosm of the city such that things can be tested here, whether it's financial literacy or issues related to transportation or health, and if it's successful here, then it might be successful on a larger scale."





# The Baird-Buck Endowment

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As the only theological seminary of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church, it is important that Memphis Theological Seminary supports the work of the denomination. With the leadership of Dr. Clinton Buck, Professor Emeritus of Educational Ministry at MTS, the Baird-Buck endowment will fund the Baird-Buck Chair of Cumberland Presbyterian Studies and supports the work of the Cumberland Presbyterian House of Studies.

The purpose of this endowment is to strengthen the Cumberland Presbyterian Church by establishing an endowed professorship with a primary focus of teaching Cumberland Presbyterian history, theology, church administration, educational ministry, and the practice of ministry that is particular to the Cumberland Presbyterian Church. The goal is to raise \$1.5 million to fully fund this endowed chair.

The Cumberland Presbyterian House of Studies ensures ongoing practical connection of Memphis Theological Seminary's Cumberland Presbyterian students with their denominational heritage and helps form these students for ministry within that identity.

## Goals of the Cumberland Presbyterian House of Studies:

- Build relational bridges with Cumberland Presbyterians
- Celebrate Cumberland Presbyterian History and Theology
- Ensure course offerings supportive of Cumberland Presbyterian ministry
- Offer a Certificate in Cumberland Presbyterian Studies

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- Establish an endowed faculty chair devoted to teaching Cumberland Presbyterian history, theology, church administration and the practice of ministry
- Strengthen the formation of Cumberland Presbyterian students preparing for ministry
- Provide for enduring creative ministry in response to the changing needs of the Cumberland Presbyterian Church and the broader community

# Celebrating the Class of 1970

Rev. Dr. George Estes (MDiv, '70) reflects on the 50th anniversary of his graduating class

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June 7th, 2020, marked the fiftieth anniversary of the 1970 graduating class of Memphis Theological Seminary. Rev. Dr. George Estes (MDiv, '70) offers his reflection:

The commencement service was held that Sunday at 8 p.m. in the sanctuary of the former Highland Heights Cumberland Presbyterian Church in Memphis. Dr. Ewell K. Reagin was the preacher for the occasion, and President W.T. Ingram, Jr., presided in the service. Dean Thomas H. Campbell presented the nine persons who were granted the Masters of Divinity degree, three of whom were upgrading their previously earned Bachelor of Divinity degrees.

The Seminary was still relatively new to Memphis, having moved from McKenzie, Tennessee, in the summer of 1964. The faculty comprised the renowned “Magnificent Seven” who shepherded the move from the Bethel College campus to the new setting in Memphis, plus Richard W. Wells, a Presbyterian Church (USA) minister who was the first full-time non-Cumberland Presbyterian instructor. While remaining focused on preparation for pastoral ministry, the scope of the Seminary’s curriculum was extended to accommodate the growing fields of specialized ministry

and scholarship. The student body was enriched in those years with the involvement of area African American pastoral leaders like Henry L. Starks and James Lawson. Already there were signs of a budding racial/ethnic, gender and denominational diversity in the student body and faculty that was to grow significantly in coming years.

This class’s Seminary experience was marked by dramatic social change. The Civil Rights movement, the escalation of the Vietnam War and resulting campus protests, Woodstock, the hippie movement, the sexual revolution, riots and unrest – all were part of the national landscape in those turbulent times. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. was assassinated in Memphis in the spring of 1968, a tragedy that is still keenly felt today among those who were in Seminary at the time. And in June of that same year, Senator Robert Kennedy was assassinated during a campaign appearance in Los Angeles. The Seminary itself was transitioning from a small town environment to an urban ministry, from a predominantly denominational school to an ecumenical outreach. Churches were caught in the waves of change, of course, so that when the graduates embarked on their professional careers in 1970, church life was quite different than it had been only a decade or so before.

Their ministry reflected the variety of the changing church and world: church pastor, military and hospital chaplain, counselor, educator, Seminary dean, librarian, and denominational staff. Their MTS experience shaped a dedication to quality worship and biblical preaching, a heightened awareness of social justice concerns, a work ethic and professionalism modeled by their professors.

The class of 1970: William J. Corbin, George Russell Estes, William Maynard Fountain, Jr., Kenneth Carl Nordvall, Homer Wallace Renner, Carroll Ray Richards, David Roy Smith, Melvin D. Stott, Jr., Armond Dalfrise Taylor, Robert Stanley Wood.

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## HELP RECRUIT A STUDENT TO MTS:

- Encourage your pastor to lift up MTS in prayer, sermons, and church newsletters.
- Bring your Sunday School or Bible Study class on a field trip to MTS to help people learn about our work.
- Connect us to potential students. If you or your pastor can personally accompany a potential student on a tour, it will mean a great deal more.
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# SUNDAY MORNING SEMINARY

In response to the pandemic, we've been challenged to look at ministry in new and innovative ways. Congregations have learned that worship doesn't always occur within the four walls of a sanctuary, and that faith development can be aided by technology.

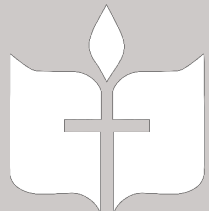
Seeing the need for quality educational opportunities, and in an effort to share our gifts with local congregations, Memphis Theological Seminary is offering courses on a variety of topics in a program called Sunday Morning Seminary.

Drawing from our expertise in areas such as biblical studies, church history, Christian ethics, and church ministry, our professors and guest instructors educate, engage, and enlighten participants through lecture and discussion.

All Sunday Morning Seminary courses are held virtually on the Zoom webinar platform on Sundays from 9:00 am-10:00 am central time, and utilize Zoom's Q&A and Chat features for discussion.

Sunday Morning Seminary offers the flexibility to be viewed at home or at church, whether alone or as a class. If your church's ministry takes place at 9:00 am on Sunday, all courses are recorded and made available by the following Tuesday at the Sunday Morning Seminary web page.

These virtual classes are offered at no cost. Join us! You can watch videos of past classes and register to join future classes at [www.sundaymorningseminary.org](http://www.sundaymorningseminary.org)



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