

DUKE DIVINITY SCHOOL
2025 ANNUAL CONFERENCE REPORT

Through God's sustaining grace and faithfulness, Duke Divinity School continues to welcome students from across the nation and around the world to be trained for ministries ranging from rural church pastorates to hospital and prison chaplains to community service leaders to theological educators. In 2024, we were joined by 224 students from 41 U.S. states and the District of Columbia as well as new students who hold either primary or secondary citizenship in 11 other countries. The Master of Divinity program gained 108 new students, including 62 residential students (up from 54 the year before) and 46 in the hybrid program. The Master of Arts in Christian Practice enrolled eight new students; the Doctor of Ministry, 39 (up from 22 last year); Master of Theology, 10; Master of Theological Studies, 27; the Doctor of Theology welcomed five new students to campus. The Certificate in Theology and Health Care welcomed five residential students to campus and 21 to the hybrid program.

This has been a year of centennial celebrations for Duke University and The Duke Endowment. DDS was honored to participate in a Founders' Weekend chapel service, held in Duke Chapel, in which both United Methodist Church bishops in North Carolina (Bishop Connie Shelton and Bishop Ken Carter) participated in leading the service, along with Dean Colón-Emeric. Divinity students and alumni contributed prayers and music, and of particular note were three women in our Master of Theology program who offered prayers in Mandarin, Hindi, and Korean.

Duke Divinity School continues to invest in ways to support Methodist leadership and pastoral formation. Our D.Min. program welcomed two new cohorts, one in Traditional Leadership and one in Missional Leadership, with support from the Parish Ministry Fund and The Duke Endowment. These 39 students are strengthening their capacity for leadership, establishing new faith communities, and meeting the challenges confronting churches and communities.

Master of Divinity students in the UMC had the opportunity in the spring 2024 semester to enroll in a course designed to prepare them to be observers at the UMC General Conference. Students met weekly with DDS faculty who are ordained elders in the UMC and nearly half a dozen bishops and denominational leaders. As one student said: "It is a time when we hold fast to our convictions and identify what is unique to the United Methodist Church. What is our role, currently and in the future? It's amazing: our mission is to make disciples for Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. I am excited about my ministry journey and the future of the UMC."

Duke Divinity continues to build on our connection to Methodist churches around the world through a formal partnership with Methodist Theological University in Seoul, South Korea. This agreement, signed on Sept. 21, 2024, supports the creation of pathways for the exchange of students, faculty, and academic programming.

Two scholars joined our faculty this year: Aaron Griffith, assistant professor of American church history, and Kevin Hart, Jo Rae Wright University Distinguished Professor, with a joint appointment in the Duke University department of English. William Turner Jr., James T. and Alice Mead Cleland Professor Emeritus of the Practice of Preaching, received the Duke University Medal for Distinguished Meritorious Service, the highest honor bestowed by the university.

Duke Divinity commemorated the 50th anniversary of the Women's Center at the school with a guest preacher and celebration dinner. With a \$5 million gift from The Duke Endowment, we are strengthening our Office of Black Church Studies through recruiting a senior scholar and supporting academic, theological research. A \$1.25 million grant from Lilly Endowment Inc., part of their Nurturing Children through Worship and Prayer Initiative, will help launch a Duke Divinity program, "Let the Children Come," to study how congregations more fully and intentionally engage children in intergenerational corporate worship and prayer practices.

Duke Divinity School continues to be grateful for our ongoing participation in The United Methodist Church and partnership with this annual conference. We look forward to our ongoing work with you as we join the leading of God's Spirit in the task of preparing people for Christian ministry. To learn more about Duke Divinity School, please visit our website at www.divinity.duke.edu.

Respectfully submitted by Edgardo Colón-Emeric
Dean of Duke Divinity School