

GAMMON THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

Gammon Theological Seminary is one of thirteen accredited theological institutions of The United Methodist Church. Gammon is the only historically African American theological school related to the United Methodist Church.

Gammon is in its 126th year of operation. The Methodist Episcopal Church founded Gammon Theological Seminary in 1883. Bishop Gilbert Haven and the officers of the Freedmen's Aid Society had purchased nearly 500 acres of high land in the southern suburbs of Atlanta, Georgia. Gammon initially began as a Department of Theology at Clark University through the efforts of Bishop Henry White Warren and the gift of \$20,000 for endowment from the Rev. Elijah H. Gammon, superannuated Methodist minister of the Rock River (Illinois) Conference. The enthusiasm of these two men led to the construction of Gammon Hall. The Rev. Wilbur Patterson Thirkield was elected dean, and Gammon School of Theology was officially opened on October 3, 1883.

April 1887, the official connection between Gammon and Clark was dissolved. The seminary was granted a charter on March 24, 1888, and the name was officially changed December 28 of that year to Gammon Theological School. The Rev. Thirkield served as the first president.

Gammon is the United Methodist member of the consortium of theological schools known across the world as The Interdenominational Theological Center located in Atlanta, Georgia. We offer a broad curriculum in the scholar-minister tradition and also offer a holistic educational experience that continues to stress scholarship and service. Students prepare for administration and leadership, counseling, teaching and preaching and a range of other spiritual and secular roles, with a blend of scholarship in the classroom and practical experience in the community.

The interdisciplinary curriculum integrates theological studies with preparation for the ministry, merging theory with practice to equip the student for scholarship in the academy, service in the parish, and leadership in the community. Degree programs offered are Master of Divinity; Master of Arts in Christian Education; Master of Arts in Church Music; Doctor of Ministry; Doctor of Ministry with a Specialty In Pastoral Counseling; and Doctor of Theology in Pastoral Counseling. Dual Degrees are offered in Christian Education and Master of Divinity; Church Music and Master of Divinity; and Christian Education and Church Music.

Our range of innovative special programs provide research and learning opportunities for students and faculty, while serving society as a whole. Some of the programs are: (1) The Institute of Church Administration and Management (ICAM) supplement theological education with leadership training and administrative skills development, addressing topics such as entrepreneurial concepts, time management, organizational development, and policy formulation. (2) Black Women in Church and Society Program establishes networks among African American church women locally and nationwide through an institute, a research and resource center and seminars. (3) The Religious Heritage of the African World initiative conducts research and advocacy activities, gathers data, and examines issues related to the religious heritage of people of African descent around the Globe. (4) Faith and The City is one module of a collaborative relationship among local Seminaries that addresses civic and community interest by engaging the public theologians, local church leadership and their congregations in active pursuit of a spirit of mutual community and shared responsibility with its specific emphases on environmental justice and wholistic health. (5) The Womanist Scholars Program recognizes and promotes the scholarly activities of academicians who Black Women, religion and spirituality. This program enables womanist scholars to pursue a research project of their own design. Scholars are engaged in teaching, lectureships, and consultation on issues affecting Black women and religion and Black women and spirituality. This program invites two Black female scholars annually to be in residence, teach a course in the scholar's research area and develop publishable contributions to womanist works. (6) The Youth Hope Builders Academy seeks to provide high school youth an opportunity to explore their present and future lives theologically and discover ways in which their lives can contribute to a hope bearing church and society. During the program an intensive four week summer residential academy is held. A second component of the Academy is year round forums, including the Annual Youth and Family Convocation, for young people and their families, and church and community leaders focus on current issues of youth and resources for problem solving. (7) The Urban Theological Institute is an exciting initiative designed to address the need to develop effective religious and public leaders for urban transformation. The vision is to become a major partner with local churches, neighborhoods, and faith based organizations in the war against urban blight. (8) The Student, Local Church and Agency Internship Program functions with an opportunity for partnerships with organizations, local churches, social action and advocacy agencies, which helps prepare students and fosters a vision of excellence in ministry in general, and pastoral ministry in particular. This program seeks to accomplish its nurturing and mentoring goals through the development and utilization of strategic partners. (9) The Conference on Ministry, which is held during the Spring of each year is an opportunity for persons who feel they have been called to ministry to come and visit our campus and explore their call to ministry as they visit classrooms, engage students who are currently matriculating at the seminary and dialogue with the Financial Aid/Scholarship officers as well as the President of the seminary. This three day program stimulates and helps prospective students to clarify their call to ministry and also helps them to consider the seminary that will best help them to achieve their goals for preparing for ministry. (10) The Thirkield-Jones Lecture Series were established by alumni, family and friends for Bishop Wilbur P. Thirkield and Bishop Robert E. Jones. Each person had an individual lectureship, "Thirkield's Lectureship was on Preaching and Social Services, and Interracial Goodwill." Jones family, alumni and friends established the "Alumni Lectureship". The two lectureships were combined in 1947. The Thirkield-Jones Lecture Series are held annually during Gammon's Founders' Day celebration in October.

Gammon has been known as “The School of the Prophets” and has trained many Bishops, District Superintendents, Annual Conference Staff Executives, General Agency Administrators, College Presidents, Preachers, Teachers, Christian Educators, Pastoral Counselors, Military, Hospital, and Children’s Home Chaplains, Wesley Foundation Directors, Campus Ministers, Ministers of Music, Church Administrators, Religious Journalists and Authors, Biblical Scholars, and Social Activists the last 126 years. Our graduates hold the promise of hundreds of local church ministries around the world in Africa, Asia, and India and our gifts and graces will continue to honor our historic mission and embrace its promising future. To learn more about Gammon, please visit our website at www.gammonseminary.org.

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