

THEOLOGICAL SCHOOLS and EDUCATIONAL CENTRES

ATLANTIC SCHOOL of THEOLOGY
www.astheology.ns.ca



Academic year 2019-20 has been a year unlike any other. Atlantic School of Theology posted a banner enrollment, with 183 students. This is our highest enrollment in many, many years. And of course we finished the year with a pandemic, scrambling to shift all courses to the online environment, and ensuring that those who have worked so hard to graduate would be able to receive their degrees and diplomas, even without an in-person Convocation. With considerable faith, resourcefulness, and inspiration, our students, staff, and faculty rallied. It has been stressful, but we have done it together. We are so grateful to our church partners – you! – for your faithful support.

We have students from every Canadian province and a few in the USA as well. Our expanding Summer Distance MDiv program allows students to “earn while they learn,” serving in a local church part-time and studying part-time over five years. Interest in the Master of Arts (Theology and Religious Studies) program is growing, especially among ministers who already have the MDiv degree.

In the past year, our Continuing Education offerings have also expanded, including on-campus and online offerings. An innovative Preaching Masterclass, workshops on Eldercare and Parish Nursing, an online program on Feminist Spirituality, an on-campus program on Indigenous Spirituality, and a drumming and song circle were among the many opportunities for lifelong learning for lay and clergy folks. Several of our for-credit graduate courses are also open to Continuing Education participants.

As the academic year draws to a close, we are saying a fond and grateful farewell to Dr. Joan Campbell, CSM, who has taught at AST since 2005. We will miss her dedication, scholarship, good humour, and excellent teaching. Sister Joan is returning to PEI to live.

Looking ahead, our popular Summer term will be fully online in 2020, and planning is underway for the fall. AST will face a significant shortfall in revenues (due to the closure of our residence for at least one term, among other financial pressures), but we will weather the storm.

AST exists to serve our churches and our society. Please let us know how we can serve you. Inquiries about programs of study and about Pine Hill Divinity Hall’s generous financial support for students are always welcome.

Respectfully submitted,
Rev. Dr. Rob Fennell
Academic Dean

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CENTRE FOR CHRISTIAN STUDIES



Hold fast to what is good, love one another with mutual affection (Romans 12:9-10)

Paul's words to the community in Rome speak boldly to our 2019-2020 school year at the Centre for Christian Studies. We adopted a new strategic plan; holding fast to our mission of educating for diaconal ministry, with an expansive vision of *diakonia* for everyone – diaconal education needs to be broadly accessible: not only people in formation to become diaconal ministers, but also to lay folks and working clergy for continuing education and spiritual development.

Last fall our learning circles gathered in Winnipeg for the fall Integrating Year circle (our graduating class), and for themes centred on Spiritual Practices and Storytelling. Our online learning circle focused on Power and Privilege started in January, and then as the pandemic hit in North America, we realized that the rest of the spring learning circles would need to be online as well. Our learning community, staff and students together, showed immense adaptability shifting to an online format for the spring learning circle intensives.

Through networks like the Prairie to Pine weekly clergy gatherings, we started to hear the pressing pastoral needs emerging during the pandemic, and in April offered a series of workshops including Zoom Tips, Crisis Pastoral Care, Pastoral Care Uses of the Spiral and Trauma Informed Pastoral Care. Each workshop gathered 75 – 100 participants, a testament to the importance of adaptive approaches to pastoral care education, grounded in up to date practice, theory and theology.

Unable to hold our annual banquet, we made a donation towards feeding our local Winnipeg community through 1 Just City, and held an online tea party instead – celebrating with over 70 guests! We commend the 2020 graduating class of Diaconal Ministries Diploma: Christina Crawford, Joe Kadi, Lorrie Lowes, Barb McGill, Kim McNaughton and Karen Orlandi. We also celebrated Alison Brooks-Stark's completion of a certificate in Spiritual Care and Anne Manikel who is the 2020 Companion of the Centre.

With restrictions continuing on travel and gatherings, we cancelled our summer Learning on Purpose course, instead offering a shorter orientation in late August to new students. Our fall circles, Integrating Year, Ministry as Listening and Eco-Justice, will be again gathering online; and we are grateful for the generosity of donors, who supported our innovation into online learning before pandemic times. We are offering the Word and Example learning circle online this fall; which focusing on Anglican Deacon formation. We are finding that online learning widens accessibility to learning circles, especially for folks who are interested in taking a week-long circle as a stand alone continuing education opportunity.

God continues to call us all to diaconal ministry – whether we are laity or clergy, ordained or diaconal. Our baptism into the body of Christ requires that we care for one another, deepening our faith, responding pastorally to the needs around us and seeking justice. We are grateful for all of you who join us in the ministry of diaconal education: through participation in field placements, as learning facilitators and mentors, through donations and by serving on our council and committees. We are grateful for each discerning conversation that includes the question “Have you considered the possibility that you are being called to diaconal ministry?”

We continue to hold fast to what is good, grateful for the mutual affection found in community, encouraged by generations before us and sustained in our mission of educating leaders for justice, compassion and transformation.

Respectfully submitted,
Michelle Owens
Principal, Centre for Christian Studies

SANDY-SAULTEAUX SPIRITUAL CENTRE



Greetings to you all from the Twilight Zone of the Covid-19 worldwide pandemic reality! Now that I have your attention, Aniin Boozhoo from the territory of the Stone Fort Treaty (Treaty Number One) here along the Brokenhead River, Beausejour, MB. What a different world we are living in than the one in 2019. We have adjusted our way of working together and educating students and have moved online to Zoom like so much of the world. We have been forced to shut down our retreat operations during the best year for this business in our history here. This pandemic has brought out the best in creativity and put a huge financial challenge before us too. Our Indigenous ancestors have survived devastating pandemics in the past and we at Sandy- Saulteaux Spiritual Centre will too!

When Manitoba shut down in the middle of March, we realized we took the right approach when earlier we cancelled our Learning Circles the last week of March and first week of April. This also meant we had to cancel the graduation ceremony for our five graduates: Murray Pruden from Smoky Lake, AB; John Snow Jr. from Morley, AB; Elenor Thompson from Oxford House, MB; Bruce Kakakaway from White Bear, SK; and Sam Ross from Cross Lake, MB. We were set to recognize Honored Elders Mary Courtenay (former Keeper of the Learning Circle) and Jacob Keno from Garden Hill, MB.

We have transitioned our face-to-face learning circles to online Zoom sessions and continue our Indigenous ministry training program. We never considered this type of education because of the proven success of our thiiy-six Learning Circle experience. Other schools already had experience and platforms to deliver their education this was but we at SSSC had to create ours out of whole cloth. We did it and learned along the way as our ancestors did. In order to do our connecting and educating work through Zoom we did an upgrade to our internet capability by installing a 70-foot signal tower and all the ethemet and Wi-Fi equipment necessary.

Since Wi-Fi access in many of our First Nation and Northern student communities is limited we are making arrangements for the continuation of their training by correspondence. We are assessing student technology needs and will be upgrading their equipment as well.

We hoped to have an outdoor event that brought Indigenous and Settler folk together on the land but just for two days instead of a whole week but we cancelled at the last minute due to the latest spike of infections in Manitoba. We put all our remote learning lessons together and in just a couple of days put together a free one day Zoom Mamawe Ota Askihk event and our participants were veily happy how it went. We've learned a few things!

In response to our 2019 Program Review we hired Diane Meredith as Second Keeper of the Learning Circle who began her work with us May 1, 2020. She worked from her home in Toronto, ON and was finally able to move to Manitoba August 12th. After quarantining for fourteen days she has been able to work out of her office here at the Centre. Due to the Restaii Manitoba guidelines we have reconfigured our current office allocations and reassigned our library and common rooms in our lodges as offices and installed internet and phone services there.

All these changes have cost us dearly and we are so thankful for the prayers and ongoing support of Prairie to Pine Region and the whole United Church of Canada. We are at the leading edge of change in the Indigenous church and are excited about what the future holds as we move forward. I know you share our optimism because you show that with your prayers and finances sent our way. We know our success is yours as well and continually pray for your flourishing!

Sincerely,



*Adrian Jacobs, Keeper of the Learning Circle For:
Susie McPherson Derendy, Keeper of the Learning Circle
Diane Meredith, Second Keeper of the Learning Circle*



ST. ANDREW'S COLLEGE



Dear friends of the Prairie to Pine Regional Council,

I am sorry that we will be unable to gather in community this year. I pray you and yours are well during these strange days. As well, please know that the college is here to offer you support and care, whether in your communities of faith, vocationally and in other ways that might be helpful during these times of isolation and concern.

I am writing to you today as our journey into Easter's Holy Days begins. As I sit here, with the cursor waiting, the word paradox keeps repeating itself in my musings. If ever that tension, when two things exist and yet seem incompatible, was most apparent it is indeed in the place where death and resurrection continually meet.

For three weeks now, I have been working from home. Away from the college's hallways and staircases, its proud stone and blessed sanctuary, the world has changed. It has changed for all of us. It seems to me that this Gospel thing, this Good News to which we are committed, speaks with a clarity to a hurting world that I do not recall in my lifetime.

We have all been touched by the pandemic. Whether that is life disrupted, illness experienced, and, in too many cases, suffering and death, we are all affected, and the world is moving on. From leadership that advocates for basic universal income to those who would sow fear and distrust, the full range of that which we are capable is on full display.

In these strange days, the college continues its work. In its unfolding mission, to prepare people for leadership through the lens of justice, I would like to highlight two places in which I have seen hope that demonstrates most clearly the ongoing relevance of this unfolding experiment called St. Andrew's College.

While the pandemic arrived, as each day seemed to bring further confusion, data overload, and questions of how to ensure all might be safe, the staff and faculty responded in such a manner that illustrated the nimbleness of the college. While our partners at the University of Saskatchewan mandated moving to offering all courses remotely within a week, the faculty were able to be up in running in less than two days. Though not easy, the commitment to ensuring that learning continued was only balanced by the staff's care of our tenants and residents.

With over 60% of our residents hailing from away, the staff have challenged me and held us all appropriately accountable to ensuring that the college roles as a *home away from home* was not only maintained, but improved. From maintain a cleaning regiment that ensures a safe environment to working with the university, it has been clear that St. Andrew's is a community that takes all of its relationships – tenants, faculty, residents, students and staff – as the embodiment of a body in which we are all connected.

The second highlight is connected with our denominational pastoral and liturgical response to the reality that our worshipping communities have been shuttered and quickly reopened. In such places as my Facebook feed, twitter page and on Instagram, the college's students and alum have responded in vibrant ways that within a few short weeks connects faith communities beyond traditional boundaries and offers pastoral care through such tools that range from the phone to instant and direct messaging. This emboldened ministry, literally being born in the midst of a pandemic, has many lessons for the college.

Let me just highlight one of those teachings in the short time we have left in this year's conversation. As students and alum begin to engage in the relational medium of the digital, the college has some thinking to do. We will need to begin to take seriously how we bring the best of our leadership training in the brick and mortar of life into this new space. How we offer pastoral care, nurture theological reflection and critical thinking in these new places of ministry will require careful consideration. Where do learnings and assignments, practice and ministry meet in place like Instagram and TikTok? What does it mean to bring the Good News into these places that connect with worship, which may no longer be bound to just Sundays at 10:00 and where pews are replaced with YouTube chat boxes?

These are the very challenges in which this institution called St. Andrew's has been engaged since 1912. The world has changed, and it will again. With your ongoing trust and support, friends, I am indeed hopeful that the places where death and resurrection always meet, whether in the digital or in-person, St. Andrew's will continue to prepare people for Christian leadership who help the lost find safety, the hurting healing and the mourning solace.

In Christ,

Dea. Dr. Richard Manley-Tannis
Principal
St. Andrew's College