



## The Centre for Christian Studies Regional Council Report, for 2024

*If the only constant in life is change, then we are certainly alive to it.  
God being our witness, 2024 was an eventful year for CCS.*

### **2024 Students and Programming**

Spring '24, in Winnipeg, we celebrated the graduation of five students – Kendra Mitchell-Foster, Dan Leaver, Rob Murdock, Susan Toller, and Alicia Walls – spanning five Regions from northern BC to southern New Brunswick. We also celebrated Rev. Marlene Britton as a beloved and honoured Companion of the Centre, welcoming her Canadian and Caribbean wisdom about diaconal ministry, education, and social change. In June '24, we held a successful 2-week Learning on Purpose (LoP) circle on the west island of Montreal, and in August offered a 2-week online UCC Admissions Orientation circle across twelve time zones, for ministers in the process of transferring from other denominations. September saw the largest intake of new students in several years, with a diverse cross-section of ages, genders, neurodiversity, identities, and experiences. We also took the '24-'25 Integration year students 'on the road'; to celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Diakonia of the United Church of Canada (DUCC) at their National Gathering in Drumheller AB, after which we held the Integration-I learning circle in an alumna's Community of Faith there. Theme circles offered in 2024 included; Power and Privilege, Ages and Stages, Oppression and Resistance, Relationships, Eco-Justice, and Culture and Identity, in addition to the three Integration year circles.

Learning on Purpose and all Theme circles are open to lay people, candidates for all ministry streams, and ministry personnel for Continuing Education. For more information about [upcoming learning circles](#), online or in-person 6-day intensives, Bursaries are available.

### ***Curious about which CCS Diaconal Diploma and Certificate students live in your region or relate to your candidacy board?***

\*\*\*\*\* Jamie Miller, Hyerim Park (grad '25), Cassandra Golondrina (Anglican),  
Miriam Stobbe-Weibe \*\*\*\*\*

And you could be one of them! *The 2025 Learning on Purpose will be held in June in Winnipeg, at less than half the usual price!* Come deepen your self-awareness as a leader in these changing times, discern your next steps in ministry or formation, learn practical tools like the Spiral model of theological reflection, and engage liberative perspectives of the bible, theologies, and social analysis. And it's fun! From puppets to Paulo Freire to prayer, music to Miriam to social movements, come learn together.

In other programming news, we continued our free, monthly, 'lunchtime' Zoom CCS Fridays on topics such as Shifting Funeral Practices, the Indigenous-Racialized Youth Scholars

*Respectfully submitted by Marcie Gibson, Interim Principal, April 2025.*

Program, Art as Spiritual Practice, An Ecology of Faith Formation, AI and Pastoral Care, Harmonious Spaces, and Christianity in a Crisis-shaped World.

### **2024 Staffing News**

With mixed emotions of sorrow and gratitude, we celebrated Lori Stewart's retirement in June as the Development Coordinator of 10 years, and wished Principal Alan Lai a sacred return to pastoral ministry in the lower mainland of BC. As CCS was in the final stages of a strategic planning process that included staff restructuring, Central Council opted to address these vacancies with interim positions. CCS hired .4-time Program Staff member Marcie Gibson to also serve as .6-time Interim Principal for one year, and hired Winnipeg Anglican graduate Gwen McAllister as half-time Interim Development Coordinator for one year.

### **2024 Strategic Planning**

The end of the year wrapped up the research and writing phases and began implementation. The plan makes recommendations in the areas of governance simplification, staffing restructuring, increased promotion and recruitment, financial planning, and pursuing deeper partnerships for diversification, collaboration, and accreditation. 2025 will regretfully see Cheryl Thiessen's retirement, expanded Program Staff roles, and a [hiring process](#) for two new fulltime, permanent staff, a Finance and Administration Coordinator and a Principal for Leadership and Development. Stay tuned!

### **2024 Sustainability and Partnerships**

Amidst the shifting sands of theological education, funding challenges, and volatile investment markets, we continue to be sustained by generous donors, creative collaboration, dedicated and visionary volunteers, Council members, and staff, a diaconal imagination of what church can be in the world, and God's grace. We are thankful for the mutual partnerships with which we engage in this sacred ministry of education, spiritual care, and justice. Particularly with; Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre, St Stephen's College, St Andrew's College / Saskatoon Theological Union, associate schools in the United and Anglican Churches of Canada, and the national staff who support them, Diakonia of the United Church of Canada, Anglican Deacons Canada, Diakonia of the Americas and Caribbean (DOTAC), and all who support CCS and its students (particularly, diaconal Mentors, Field Placement organizations & communities of faith, Learning Facilitators, Local Committee members).

### **To know more...**

- Subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter Common Threads: <http://ccsonline.ca/blog/common-threads/>
- Follow us on Facebook or Instagram to hear about happenings and upcoming events.
- For information about the program and studying with us: <http://ccsonline.ca/about-ccs/>
- For more details and numbers, 2024 Yearbook, 2024 Annual Report, and financial statements: <http://ccsonline.ca/event/ccs-annual-general-meeting-2025/>

*Respectfully submitted by Marcie Gibson, Interim Principal, April 2025.*