

EDUCATIONAL PARTNERS OF LIVING SKIES REGIONAL COUNCIL



ST. ANDREW'S COLLEGE
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To our beloved friends in Christ: greetings from St. Andrew's College in Saskatoon!

As we journey into 2023, we are filled with gratitude for the unwavering support and encouragement of our Regional Councils. The past few years have been challenging, and we are mindful of the pain and loss that we and the world have experienced. We are also excited by the new opportunities that lie ahead, and we are humbled by the presence of the Holy Spirit in our midst at St. Andrew's College.

One of the most significant reminders we rediscovered, during the pandemic, is the importance of community. We are now sharing our building with the other two schools of the Saskatoon Theological Union, (Lutheran Theological Seminary and the College of Emmanuel & St. Chad) and we have entered into a Covenant of Commitment, which marks a profound level of cooperation between us. This renewed relationship enables us to support one another, so that each partner's unique denominational gifts contribute to our collective ability to do more than we could on our own. We hope that our ecumenical boldness will inspire faith communities in every denomination to explore creative and courageous ecumenical partnerships as well.

We are thrilled to announce that we are finalizing the development of our renewed **Master of Divinity** and **Master of Theological Studies** degree programmes. Both programmes will be available in an intensive format, and St. Andrew's students can complete the entire learning journey from their own contexts without having to relocate. Our programmes are deeply ecumenical, shared across all three schools, and involve the collaboration of faculty from different denominational traditions and theological disciplines. We look forward to welcoming our first cohort of students for these innovative programmes, beginning in the fall of this year.

We are also pleased to report that we have recommitted to offering our **Doctor of Ministry** program, and we have already received applications for the fall cohort. Additionally, we continue to enjoy hosting the **Designated Lay Ministry** programme at the College, while we await further word from General Council about its future.

There's so much happening at our College right now, but we wouldn't want to miss talking about the **Lifelong Learning Pathway** we've been developing. It has been researched and developed over the past two years, and we're currently testing it with a pilot project of eager learners. This new programme opens the great privilege of theological and spiritual reflection to a wider community of learners beyond our traditional degree programmes. Whether you're exploring Christian discipleship through leadership in your faith community or in the wider society, or seeking paths of wisdom in other spiritual traditions, our certificate programmes (*Leadership in the Faith Community*, *Leadership in the World*, and *Spiritual Exploration*) create new possibilities of study.

Our new Lifelong Learning Pathway prioritises your own learning goals and pairs you with your own educational guide. We'll help you identify educational resources and opportunities, develop a personalised learning plan, and build a portfolio of reflective work. You will progress at your own pace toward the competencies described in your chosen certificate. This unique

new programme is perfect for seasoned pastors seeking continuing education, lay leaders who want to engage in theological work to enhance their ministries and vocations, and the spiritually curious wisdom-seekers who will benefit from a flexible and supportive framework of reflection. Regardless of your previous formal education, St. Andrew's Lifelong Learning Pathway opens up a treasure-trove of theological and spiritual exploration to anyone who desires it!

As you can see, we're at a very exciting place in our history. The challenges of the past few years have unleashed our imaginations and propelled us into God's future. We believe that there are opportunities waiting for us that are greater than we could ask or imagine, and we invite you to continue to support us, pray for us, and indeed join us as we take theological education that embodies compassion, hope, and justice into a new century of faithful discipleship.

Please reach out to us if you have any questions at all, at principal.sac@saskatoontheologicalunion.ca. If you would like to know more about our academic or lifelong learning pathways, feel free to contact Shawn, the College Recruitment Officer, at shawn.sanfordbeck@saskatoontheologicalunion.ca. And we would be more than happy to receive your financial support! Contact our College Secretary at collegesecretary.sac@saskatoontheologicalunion.ca for a list of development opportunities and ways to give.

As we walk together in ministry, may the Spirit continue to bless and guide you!

On behalf of the St. Andrew's Community,
Yours in Christ,

Rev. Shawn Sanford Beck
Recruitment Officer

&

Dea. Dr. Richard Manley-Tannis
Principal

DESIGNATED LAY MINISTRY: A PROGRAM IN FLUX

With the return to in-person learning circles in October 2022, the current cohort of fourteen DLM students shared learning in the same space and time zone for the first time ever. Singing and lively conversations echoed in the halls of Laura's Lodge in the evenings while, during the day, their voices were a welcome addition to the quiet of the college's Main Lounge and library. We also discovered some of us were either taller or shorter than we seemed to be on zoom!

In October, the topics included preaching, exegesis, theological reflection, and presiding at the sacraments. The focus for March was on faith formation, Christian education, the principles of good teaching, and learning preferences. The circle included a day-long session with the Rev. Dr. Don Schweitzer on United Church history and conversations with Dr. Becca Whitla on faith formation and Christian education. In addition, the Rev. Keith Hall and the Rev. Darren Woof shared their expertise on ministry with youth and elders, respectively. From the visit of Dr. John Egger, a United Church co-worker in mission with the PROK in South Korea, the students learned about the history and changes to the denomination's engagement in international work.

Each learning circle has included opportunities to deepen understandings of anti-racism and decolonization. In March we welcomed Dr. Michael Capello, University of Regina, who spoke on the topics from a white settler researcher's perspective. We hope to partner with the Saskatoon Theological Union in fall 2023 to host the second part of the anti-racism workshop which will centre BIPOC experiences.

Volunteers are central to the success of this program. The past two learning circles have seen the well-deserved retirements of two longtime program team members, the Rev. Mary-Jo Tracy from Manitoulin Island, ON and Marc Grenon from Mystic, QC. The program team works with a small group of students, called a peer group, supporting the weekly on-line discussions of readings and videos, and then, during the in-person sessions, assists students to articulate and reflect on their learnings. As the educational philosopher John Dewey said in 1906, “We do not learn by experience. We learn by reflecting on experience.” Hence, program team volunteers such as Marc and Mary-Jo are essential for the students’ reflective learning, the core of the DLM experiential pedagogy. As we say thank you and “merci” to Mary-Jo and Marc, we welcome two new volunteers to the program team, Pastors Doreen Hewitson and Steven Loweth. Doreen and Steven are both graduates of the DLM program and serve United Church communities of faith in Eston, SK and Thunder Bay, ON, respectively. The program is richly blessed by and grateful for our volunteers!

In October 2023 GC44 will gather to decide the future of DLM ministry as it forms part of the church’s discussion on ministry leadership to meet the needs of the church in the 2020s. Since June 2022, there has been a suspension of applications for the program. Nevertheless, I continue to receive expressions of interest from potential students.

Respectfully submitted,
(the) Rev. Dr. Kathleen James-Cavan
Director, Designated Lay Ministry Program

CENTRE FOR CHRISTIAN STUDIES



A Year of Anticipation and Adjustment

Students in Living Skies Region:
Heather Mackinnon and Kristie Pilling

2022 for The Centre for Christian Studies was a year full of preparation, anticipation, and adjustment. It began with the departure of David Lappano (former program staff) and Michelle Owens (former principal). It set the stage for two search teams to look for new staff. Meanwhile, Ken Delisle served as the interim principal for most of the year until the arrival of the new principal. Through several months of internal preparation, discussion, and searching, CCS now has new Program Staff Alcris Limongi and Alan Lai; the new principal. They both started in the month of October.

Alcris Limongi came to CCS from Parkdale United Church in Ottawa, where she served as the Minister of Pastoral Care. Alan came from Vancouver, where he was the minister serving South Arm United Church in Richmond. Alcris originally came from Venezuela, and Alan, Hong Kong. Together, they bring intercultural perspectives and years of leading anti-racism and intercultural learning to the CCS community. Covenanting service for Alcris and Alan were conducted on November 23rd, at Westworth United Church in Winnipeg.

With the assemble of the new team complete, the staff spent the last few months of the year building new relationships and sharing ideas and practices. The spirit of exploration and relationship building was high. With Alan's photographic and video production skills, CCS has begun to post more updates and videos on the school's Facebook page and YouTube channel.

While the searches were going on most of the year, CCS's programs and operation continued smoothly with dedicated staff and volunteers. CCS continues to offer courses online and in-person, which included: Power and Privilege, Ages and Stages, Ministry as Community-building, Health, Pain, & Trauma. CCS Fridays is a series of free, one-hour online workshops and discussions offered mostly once a month to connect friends and the wider community. On April 3rd, during the Annual Service of Celebration, Aileen Urquhart was awarded the Companion of the Centre Award.

Financially, CCS continues to rely on the commitment of the denomination and generous donors who believe in the mission of the school. Lori Stewart, our Development Coordinator, has done a fantastic job connecting with donors and applying for grants and funding. While denomination funding is decreasing, and Endowment portfolio is not as promising as before, we are committed to working towards financial sustainability. We are thankful that many of our donors remain committed to diaconal education and bless us with extraordinary generosity in 2022. CCS is anticipating major Endowment fundraising campaign in the coming years.

There is no doubt the pandemic has challenged the school on many fronts, including programming, student enrolment, marketing, and so on. It disrupted more than just in-person gathering, but also concepts of theological education, teaching, learning, and service in the world. However, the process of rebuilding has begun.

We are blessed with collaborative, generous partners, including:

- Anglican and United Churches
- Diakonia of the United Church of Canada
- Anglican Deacons
- Diakonia of the Americas and Caribbean
- Diaconal Mentors, Field Placements, Learning Facilitators,
- Local Committee members,
- Council and Committee volunteers
- St Andrew's College
- St Stephen's College
- Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre
- Strategic Charm (social media managers)

Our Yearbook, Financial Statements, and Annual Report may be found at:
<http://ccsonline.ca/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/2022-Year-Book.pdf>

Respectfully submit,
 Alan
 Rev. Dr. Alan Lai
 Principal

ATLANTIC SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY

Annual Report to United Church of Canada Regions

Greetings and grace to you as you convene for your Regional Council meeting. May that time nourish and sustain you, as you build up the church and enjoy the goodness of *being* the church.



I am pleased to report that AST has experienced several interesting events and changes in the last year. Here are a few of them.

In the summer of 2022, and for the first time since 2019, we were able to have our summer MDiv students take their courses in person and occupy rooms at the campus residence. I had several opportunities to meet with students both as a group and individually. They were pleased to meet faculty and fellow students in person and to share worship, meals, and recreation with their colleagues.

As the Fall 2022 term began, our courses were offered remotely or in hybrid (both virtually and in-person) form. As none of our own students applied for residence, all our rooms were rented to international students from other institutions in the Halifax area. However, we maintain a policy of preferential availability for AST students. In the meantime, we are remaining true to the fundamental values and mission of AST by reaching out to those who would have to pay much more for accommodations or would be unable to study in Halifax because of a lack of rental spaces.

In other good news, the Province of Nova Scotia has provided AST with a grant of \$3M to renovate and upgrade our residence facilities, work that is long overdue. The funds will allow us to repair brickwork, install new plumbing, make wi-fi system updates, and upgrade shared kitchen and bathroom facilities.

At the May 2023 Convocation, the first cohort of students in the Diploma in Missional Leadership (DML), all of whom are affiliated with the United Church, will graduate from this new program. The next cohort of the DML will begin in early 2024. This learning opportunity will be available to persons from all denominational backgrounds as we build a new complement of ecumenical partners in mission. AST is currently in the last stages of the formal application processes to launch a Bachelor of Theology degree program. The key purpose of the Bachelor of Theology degree is to increase accessibility to higher education in theological subjects. Those who desire postsecondary education specifically in the theological disciplines but lack an undergraduate degree will benefit from this new degree. A direct-entry undergraduate degree option will assist them in their vocational and educational goals.

A key element of the Strategic Plan adopted by the AST Board in February 2022 is collaboration with Saint Mary's University (Halifax) as part of the now twenty-year old Memorandum of Understanding between our two independent institutions. In the past year, we have integrated our student information infrastructure into the Banner system at SMU. That project, funded by the Nova Scotia government through the NS Council of University Presidents, is almost complete. The initiative has provided significant benefits to our students, faculty, and staff. It has allowed AST to move from paper-based to IT-based processes for handling many things, from course registration to student records and course changes.

We will see some significant leadership changes at AST over the next several months. The Presidential Search Committee (even as this is being written) is nearing the end of its work to find a candidate to propose to the Board as AST's new President. As well, a second search committee is in the process of seeking a new Academic Dean to succeed Rev. Dr. Rob Fennell

who has served in that role since 2017. His outstanding contributions to the university have earned him a well-deserved sabbatical which will begin this summer. Finally, Rev. Dr. Linda Yates succeeds Dr. Peter Secord as Chair of AST's Board of Governors.

We would like to express deep gratitude to our partners in The United Church of Canada—the General Council, the Regional Councils, the Board of Governors of Pine Hill Divinity Hall, and the local churches, leaders, and ministers—who support AST's work in a variety of ways. Financial support from the General Council and Pine Hill Divinity Hall are critical to our capacity to function as a university focused on theological education for ordered ministry candidates and lay leaders. The local churches support AST through discernment processes for potential ministry candidates, by encouraging lay people to continue their lifelong faith learning, by calling and supervising our graduates who serve your congregations, and by your vital and deeply valued financial support. If your Community of Faith has not yet made a gift to AST this year, I ask you to consider doing so in the next month or two.

AST continues to seek to be responsive to the emerging needs of the church and society as we serve together in God's world. In this, we are grateful to be your partners.

In Christ,
Dr. Tim O'Neill
Interim President, Atlantic School of Theology

EMMANUEL COLLEGE



EMMANUEL COLLEGE
OF VICTORIA UNIVERSITY IN
THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

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Spring 2023

Dear Friends:

On behalf of Emmanuel College, I want to bring greetings to your region as you meet this spring season. I pray that your meeting goes well and that you experience God's presence and blessing in this important work of the church. **My name is HyeRan Kim-Cragg and it is my privilege to bring you greetings as Emmanuel's Principal.** I come to this role as the Timothy Eaton Memorial Church Professor of Preaching and an ordained member of the United Church of Canada. My term began July 1, 2022. I hope to see you in person in the near future and share good news of Emmanuel College with you and hear good news of this region's wonderful ministry.

Faculty Compliment and Faculty on the Road

Some good news from Emmanuel College is that **we have embarked on three new faculty searches.** One in United Church of Canada studies (tenure track) another in Spiritual Care and Practical Theology (tenure track), and the other in Buddhist Spiritual Care and Counselling (teaching stream). These searches are complete and by the time of your meeting should be announced. These faculty complements will enable us to cultivate students to become conscious and compassionate scholars and equip them to become competent and committed leaders in the United Church and beyond.

The current faculty is keen to go out into different communities of faith, promote Emmanuel and share their scholarship and wisdom. Andrew Aitchison as Admissions Counsellor and Recruitment Coordinator will be a liaison connecting faculty with communities. Please let him know if your communities want to invite our Christian, Muslim or Buddhist faculty. That would be so wonderful.

Back in Person: Buzzing with Joy and in Gratitude

Emmanuel College was back in person after two long and challenging pandemic years online. We had a heart-warming in person orientation with close to 100 new and “returning” students who had never been to the college. We held a special fall graduation celebration for those who convoked online in 2020 and 2021.

Spiritual and religious practices on Wednesday are alive and well and were offered Monday through Thursday with the leadership of Spiritual and Community Life Coordinator, Beth Ann Fisher, through the leadership of our first ever Interfaith student Spiritual Life team who is taking a year-long course “worship and ritual leadership practicum” with instructor, the Rev. Dr. David Kim-Cragg.

Hybrid Master of Divinity Program

Building on our experience of remote delivery throughout the pandemic, our Master of Divinity program has been approved by the University of Toronto to be offered in a hybrid mode of delivery. This means that up to two thirds of the degree can be done online. We are excited as we hope this will reach more prospective students outside of the Greater Toronto Area.

All Members of EM Re-Connected and Networking

One of my priorities as principal is to re-connect all members of the College as we emerge from many years apart. We are anticipating many wonderful anniversary celebrations and reunions with the UCC's 100th anniversary in 2025 and EM's 100th anniversary in 2028, so keep an eye out for our various events to celebrate these historical milestones.

Gardening Project

Another goal I am focusing on as principal is the land on which we are located. Concurring with Victoria University's strategic framework on sustainability, and commitment to right relations with Indigenous communities which is laid out in the EM strategic plan, I am seeking to create a garden with the participation of the Indigenous community and to remove the lawn grass from our courtyards. This idea has generating some excitement and we received a starting grant from the United Church Foundation's Seeds of Hope to get us started! So please stay tuned and feel free to share your ideas and spread the news. It is my hope that the courtyard where the crucified woman statue is standing will be dug up next spring!

Financial Support

Emmanuel College continues to provide significant financial support to students.

Through the John W. Billes Fund, Emmanuel continues to provide 100% of tuition coverage to all domestic students who are registered full-time in the M.Div. program and who are engaged in The United Church of Canada's candidacy pathway process. All incoming domestic full-time students are eligible for our **Entering Theological Education grant, which offers 50% tuition coverage to their first year courses.** For more information about studying at Emmanuel College and about the financial support available for all Emmanuel programs, whether one is studying full-time or part-time, please contact Andrew Aitchison, emmanuel.admissions@utoronto.ca.

Emmanuel is offering an increasing number of Continuing Education events online.

These events are offered through the Centre for Religion and Its Contexts (CRIC). This coming academic year will feature again "The Things They Didn't Teach Me in Seminary"

Seminar Series, which was developed to bridge the gap between academy and church. M.Div. students could take this series for credit, while engaging with continuing education participants who were ministers in the field. A list of upcoming offerings are found on the Emmanuel College web site at <https://www.emmanuel.utoronto.ca/the-centre-for-religion-and-its-contexts/continuing-education-events-and-courses/>. For further information about these events please contact Shawn Kazubowski-Houston: ec.events@utoronto.ca.

Please follow us on social media:

Facebook: @EmmanuelCollegeofVic
Twitter: @EmmanuelColleg2
Instagram: @emmanuelcollegetoronto
Youtube: @EmmanuelCollege1

If you have questions or are seeking further information about Emmanuel College, please be in touch with us or explore Emmanuel: <http://bit.ly/exploremmanuel>.

Yours sincerely,
Rev. Dr. HyeRan Kim-Cragg,
Principal
Timothy Eaton Memorial Church Professor of Preaching
Emmanuel College