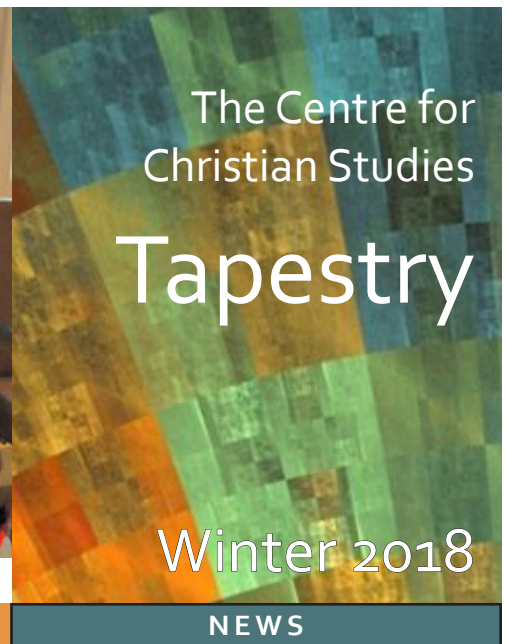




Tony Snow, Lorrie Lowes and classmate Karlene Kimber, listening and learning.

EDUCATING LEADERS FOR JUSTICE, COMPASSION, AND TRANSFORMATION



Importance of packing up - Listening and learning

At the Centre for Christian Studies we learn not only from books and experts but also from each other.

This was true for me during our "Ministry as Listening" Circle in October when one of my most profound learnings came from fellow student Tony Snow.

As a First Nations person, Tony is grounded in the rich tradition of story-telling that is so important to his culture. He talked about the healing process that happens when people are invited to tell their stories, which is why story-telling is an integral part of the work of the Truth and Reconciliation process. He stressed the importance of "packing up" the story after it has been told, not leaving it out there raw and exposed. This, he explained, is why the presence of elders during this process is so vital.

This brought back a memory for me of a day in Circle that we shared last year with students from the Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre. I remembered the ceremonial unpacking of the "bundle" by the

Bundle Keeper as we gathered and then the careful repacking of that bundle as we closed our Circle that afternoon.

So much of what we do in Spiritual and Pastoral Care involves listening – listening to stories that unearth the pain and worry of those we care for. I was impressed by the way our First Nations brothers and sisters have incorporated rituals that make this storytelling safe. And it was then that I truly understood the importance of prayer in my pastoral visits. A prayer to open the sacred space between the story-teller and the listener, and perhaps most importantly, a prayer to "bundle" the story up again, to cover the raw places and to send that person back into the world, whole and safe.

I am truly thankful every day for the learning opportunities I have as a student of the Centre for Christian Studies. It is certainly a place where we learn from the best in the field and a place where we learn from the wisdom of everyone in the room.

~ Lorrie Lowes is a second year student



CCS friends gathered at Woodsworth House for an AGM.

You're invited to gather with us CCS Annual Meeting

All students, alumni, volunteers, donors, and friends of CCS are invited to join us for our Annual General Meeting.

March 8, 2018, 6 p.m. CST

Those in Winnipeg can join in person at 60 Maryland Street. Those outside of Winnipeg can join through the wonders of modern technology. Contact Cheryl at 1-866-780-8887 or office@ccsonline.ca for AGM contact information.

Watch for the Annual Report at ccsonline.ca

Learning on Purpose focusses purpose

We recently spoke to four students who might be considered atypical for CCS, about their experience taking CCS's signature leadership program, Learning on Purpose. Two are ordained ministers in the United Church and two are lay ministers in the Anglican Church. As an added point of interest, they are two couples. All of them live in Winnipeg, Manitoba.

Min Goo Kang is the minister at Fort Garry United Church. Ha Na Park is the minister at Immanuel United Church. Stacy Stanley Young is a self-employed book-keeper and volunteer treasurer at St. Paul's Anglican Fort Garry. Evan Young works for the city of Winnipeg and is a liturgical lay leader at St. Paul's. Min Goo and Stacy attended the LoP in August 2016. Ha Na and Evan attended in August 2017.

CCS - What drew you to CCS and Learning on Purpose?

Min Goo - I wanted to learn about myself and my leadership style. When we are in ministry we just focus on what we are doing. I needed a time of reflection about myself and my ministry. And I wanted to learn in community. Before LoP I took Loss and Lamentation in the Pastoral Care year and had a good experience. I don't mind being challenged and don't mind challenging others in the same circle. The LoP was more intense.

Stacy - Tim Sale (a CCS council member) said to me "You need to

take this class." At the time I wasn't ready for it. Then I got laid off and had the time and we worked out the money.

Those two weeks were a perfect blend of people, facilitators and



Ha Na and Min Goo

timing in my life. It was the most soul changing experience I have ever had. I had decided if I was going to do this, I was going to be vulnerable. I came home and said to Evan, "You've got to take this class!"

Evan - I had taken the Ministry by Word and Example course. I thought, this was kind of cool. These people weren't completely nuts. When you are a white male and you are considering approaching a school that has an active and out there liberal feminist agenda, you wonder how would that be. Would I be the white male that has

to be fixed? Or welcomed and engaged?

Everyone was willing to listen and be with where I was coming from. Both the students and the staff. The tone was very welcoming. At the same time, it was the first time I had done masters level work in 25 years. It was rigorous and engaging.

CCS - What was a particular learning or aha moment?

Ha Na - In this learning process in community, the staff interventions are minimalized. It gives freedom to the learning community to sort out their needs amongst themselves. Each student will have to find their own need. It creates meaningful learning.

For example I was the only one foreign born or a person of colour. Even learning at CCS is not immune to white privilege. I needed to find how I would create the space that would work for me to be more fully myself to learn in this community.

Stacy - One day we talked about the different types of theologies. I'm sure there was a dozen named but the only one I heard was disability theology. It unlocked the door



Stacy and Evan

that there are other things out there. This was close to my heart. I have a

Continued on page 3

Learning on Purpose cont'd from page 2

brother who is severely affected by disability and a son who is as well. It opened up a different world. Just blew my mind. I realized that the words could say something different. That I could come away from the subject matter and find acceptance.

CCS - If somebody asked you "why would I take Learning on Purpose?" what would you tell them?

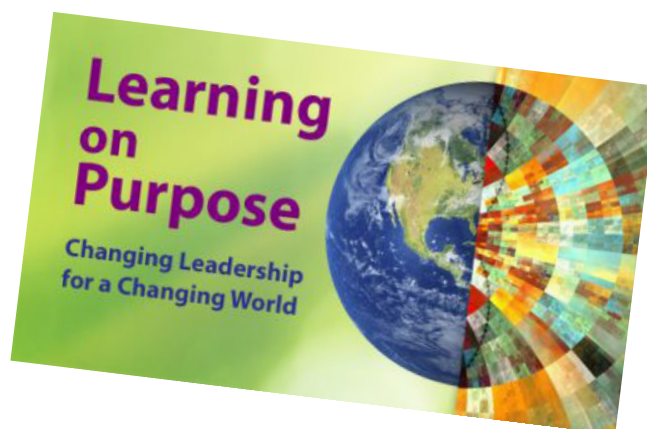
Min Goo - Most of us who are ministers are lonely. We need support, we need community, we need a safe place where we can be ourselves. We need to know how to trust each other and trust God. These are basic things that we all need but especially those of us who are in ministry. It is soul work. It's a hard thing but also an honourable thing. If we experience that kind of environment, I think in our ministry we will be better equipped.



Learning on Purpose 2016

Ha na - The whole atmosphere of learning is affirmative. How the school shapes your learning and how the staff looks at you and supports you and treats every student with compassion. Every aspect of CCS is focussed on

Continued on page 4



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Spreading the CCS "Yes!"

Every circle has its learnings, some external, some internal, some both. Some learnings dawn like a vibrant sunrise, while others seep their way into our consciousness. Such a one is the impact of the CCS 'yes'. While religion is often seen as something which divides, at learning circles the CCS 'yes' is inclusive; we no longer have to pick only one thing, one viewpoint, one answer. It's not "either-or." It's "yes-and."

A real learning came for me when I imagined taking my CCS 'yes' out into the world. One of my congregations lives on the fringes

where the first casualty to poverty is choice. Choices begin to narrow



Karen Orlandi with Freddy Boyd at the Start Me Up Niagara Outreach Centre

with housing, but don't end there. What choice does a partner have in

an abusive relationship? What choice does a non-binary gender person have on government forms? What choice does an addict have for work? What choice do we have when we can only eat at Out of the Cold?

Privilege brings choices. Marginalization severely reduces them. When I stand at the sandwich counter at the outreach centre, and ask the next person in line, "Would you like meat or would you like cheese?" the answer should be, "Yes!" It's our call to give back the seeming luxury of choice.

~Karen Orlandi is a second year student

Learning on Purpose *cont'd from page 3*

affirming and growing each participant. I would like to recommend this to my friends who come from other cultures, like Korea. They will get what ministries in Canada would ask them to do. In their local congregations they would ask people to come to find safe and affirming space. This is the place where you can try the creativity that is alive in anybody.

Evan - It was a good survey of other things that CCS does. Janet's exploration of theology was an hour and a half and I felt "Give me more!"

LoP stands on its own. You can comfortably take it without intent to go on. I've told some people that it is a leadership program. This would be interesting to somebody if they wanted to go into leadership in some other area, for example somebody in a social service industry. We did presentation skills, we did speaking.

I was very happy for the opportunity. It was enriching.

Stacy - I would say that it would be challenging. Not only from that academic point of view, but a challenge to what you are thinking and what you believe. Every so often as I listen to the gospel reading, I find myself thinking "did it really happen that way?" This gave me permission to question what I was thinking and how I understood it. It takes you

deeper and you have a deeper faith. Although it was a theological class, I would say for anybody whose desire is to help anybody else in either a religious or spiritual way, it gave insight. Even if someone was afraid of church. It was two weeks and it will change your life.

The interviews have been edited and adapted for space and clarity. To see the full interviews go to ccsonline.ca/2018/01/learning-on-purpose-interview/

PASSAGES

We remember grads (CCS, AWTC and UCTS) and friends who have recently passed away.

Gladys Kirk (AWTC 1947)
Lillian Mudd (UCTS 1950)
M. Frances Evans (AWTC 1958)
Irene West (AWTC 1947)
Muriel Bamford (UCTS 1946)
Nancy McFall (AWTC)
Linda Murray (friend of CCS)

FOR MORE INFORMATION

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