



CENTRE FOR CHRISTIAN STUDIES

Imagine Church Differently



Annual Report 2020

IMAGINE EVERYTHING DIFFERENTLY

By the time we convened over Zoom from kitchen tables and living rooms for the annual general meeting last March, gatherings and workplaces were closed in the first shutdown of the COVID-19 pandemic. It seemed extraordinary to think that we might not worship in pews at Easter, might not gather chairs together to sit in the April learning circles. We wondered if we would be learning in person by the fall circles. We expected we would *at least* be celebrating graduation in-person by 2021.

For all our practice to *Imagine Church Differently* – 2020 was a year in which we all had to stretch and imagine *everything* differently: church, theological education, worship, work,

family gatherings, pastoral care, funerals and grieving.

By the summer we were challenged to imagine what dismantling white supremacy and anti-Black racism would look like in our communities, in our policing, in our churches, and in our curriculum. At CCS we committed to closely examining our assigned reading lists, looking for over-representation of white authors and racist gaps in our theological canon.

By the fall, we were more comfortable in our online patterns. Our learning circles gathered online and students found creative ways to work in field placements and fulfill their Global Perspectives Experience. We discovered

a resilience to in-community learning, grounded in the connections of mentoring, field education and diaconal communities.

By the end of the year, we were celebrating vaccine news, and still uncertain what a 'new normal' might look like. Throughout the year, as we responded, adapted and innovated, our praxis habits of action and reflection helped us stay grounded while we stretched with new vision.

2020 was a year in which we saw the vital need for our mission to educate leaders for justice, compassion and transformation.

- Michelle Owens, principal

COVID-19 forced schools across the country and beyond to quickly transition to online formats and virtual gatherings.

By the end of February 2020 CCS was already making contingency plans, and by March the decision was made, with some consultation with students,

to move from meeting physically in a circle of chairs in Winnipeg to meeting virtually as a grid of windows on Zoom.

But we remained committed to the spirit and pedagogy of a learning circle in our online formats.

CCS was able to continue

offering all of its scheduled programs, and even created new programs and events in 2020. This was possible because we had already begun applying our pedagogical model and values to online courses in 2018 and 2019. We were already in the process of learning how online

CIRCLES and GRIDS

David Lappano

education can remain experiential, contextual, and rigorous, with goal setting, team leadership, and reflective feedback.

During the pandemic we moved the following learning circles online that were originally intended for in-person gatherings:

Oppression & Resistance, Ages & Stages, Ministry as Listening, Eco-Justice, and Integration circles 1 and 3. This spring we will run *Living Scripture, Grief & Loss, and the Integration* circle online.

Marcie and Lori converted the Anglican program, *Ministering by Word and Example*, into a multi-week,

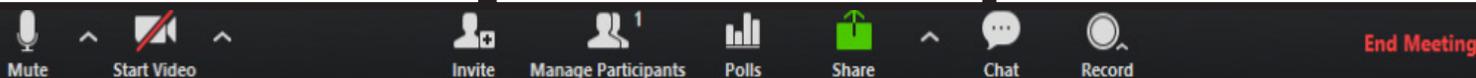
Mondays and Saturdays, online program.

Staff, students, mentors, and learning facilitators have continued field orientations, mid-year reviews and final reviews with recently developed online formats. Field placements themselves also adapted. Students and field sites creatively and

intentionally found ways to continue learning and leading online. CCS students at virtual field sites helped churches transition to online worship, spiritual care, and crisis response.

In terms of new programing, CCS Fridays relaunched online. In the past these public discussions were only

available to folks within driving distance of the Centre. Now, via Zoom, anybody anywhere can join the events. We have hosted events on Apocalyptic Christmas, Queer Bible Interpretation, how to facilitate an online AGM, how to get the most out of Zoom meetings, and the Pandemic of Racism.



Anne Manikel was chosen to be the 2020 recipient of the Companion of the Centre Award. Because there was no Annual Service of Celebration in 2020, the honouring of Anne as a Companion was deferred to 2021.

Anne is a graduate of the Western Field Based Program for Diaconal Ministry who has served various United Church congregations in Manitoba and Vancouver Island. Her leadership style is described by those who nominated her as "collaborative, inspirational, strong and courageous, compassionate, encouraging and sensitive to those with whom she works ...and brings joy to it all."

Check out the CCS website for more information about the 2021 Annual Service of Celebration.



FINANCIAL PICTURE

When the pandemic arrived in March, it felt like everything changed in the time it takes to make a pot of tea. Certainly by the time you finished the pot, there would be new government restrictions to make sense of, grant program eligibility to decipher, or an announcement of new cases. We were worried at the beginning of the pandemic, with no idea of what to expect for financial impact on the school. We also received news that the United Church was decreasing funding to its theological schools.

Thanks to the generosity of our donors, we finished the year in a much stronger position than we imagined. We have also benefited from being eligible to receive government grants and wage subsidies to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. Unlike schools who relied on income from international students studying in Canada, or revenue from bricks and mortar property, we found that our small and nimble program was able to weather the storm with minimal disruption.

Going forward from 2020, we already see our investment portfolio recovering. We are hopeful that the commitment shown by donors will continue into 2021, as education that imagines church differently is needed now more than ever.

Expenses

Bursaries \$49,302

Program* \$267,280

Operating* \$317,902

Other** \$34,092

Total Expenses
\$668,576

* includes wages

** includes investment fees



Income

Bequests, Bursaries,
Other income \$81,951

Program* \$114,785

Operating** \$116,767

Donations \$192,632

Investment Income
\$102,432

Wage Subsidies
(COVID-19 government
support) \$73,755

Total Income
\$682,322

* includes tuition

** includes United Church
operating grant

BURSARIES

Bursaries supporting studies at the Centre for Christian Studies are distributed on the basis of financial need. As an educational community seeking justice, bursary support is an important way to facilitate access to theological education. While grants, tuition, and donations to our operating and endowment funds allow us to offer transformative education, bursary support makes theological education attainable for individual students. Every year when the Bursary Working Group meets to review applications and disburse funds, we are grateful for the legacy of individual donors and the ongoing United Church Candidate Aid that reduces barriers to imagining church differently.

In 2020 twelve students received bursaries, ranging from \$1000 - \$7000
Total Bursaries awarded in 2020: **\$49,302**

2020 DIACONAL MINISTRY GRADS



- **Christina Crawford** is in ministry at Forest United Church in Forest, ON
- **Joe Kadi** lives out a ministry of education at the University of Calgary, AB
- **Lorrie Lowes** is in ministry at Bells Corner United Church in Ottawa, ON
- **Barb McGill** is in ministry at First Grantham United Church in St. Catharines, ON
- **Kim McNaughton** is in ministry at Robson Valley Shared Ministry in McBride and Valemount, BC
- **Karen Orlandi** is in ministry at Silver Spire United Church in St. Catharines, ON

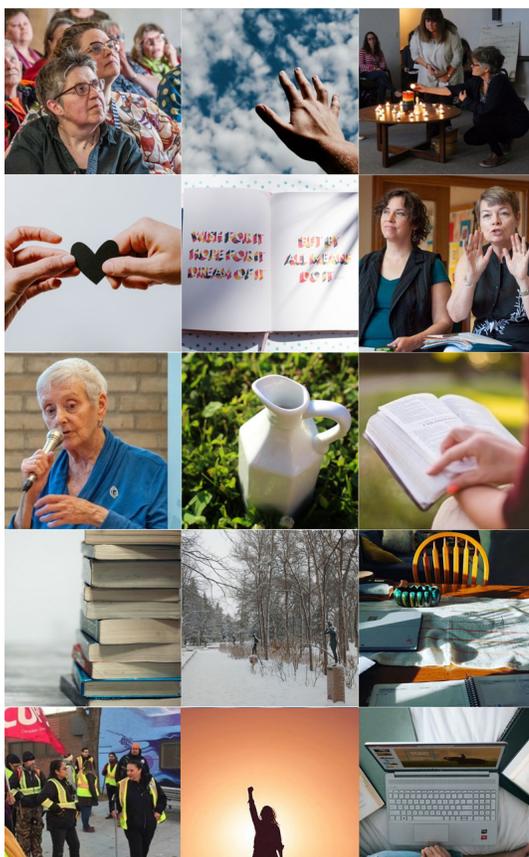
THANK YOU

Our cup overflowed with your generosity this year. Right after the COVID-19 shutdown began, CCS launched a matching gift campaign. Gifts burst forth amounting to \$36,436 (including the matches). In a year when it was necessary to redesign ALL of our circles to be online, you made it possible

At the end of the year, hearing about financial losses for CCS, you, once again responded with a flood that made up the shortfall and doubled the gifts received in 2019.

You can feel good about that! You are giving to a place you love. You are fighting injustices and making the world a better place. Your personal story of faith and giving is resulting in abundance.

Thank you.



"I was energized by the in-depth learning and conversations, and appreciative of the careful planning and thoughtful leadership of CCS staff."

- Continuing Studies student

"Anyone considering a life of service in faith would do well to seriously consider this as a home base for that journey."

- CCS Diaconal student



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