



CCS A Community Profile

A national Canadian theological school, the Centre for Christian Studies (CCS) equips leaders for Diaconal Ministry in the Anglican and United Churches of Canada. CCS is located in Winnipeg, Manitoba. We learn respectfully, as guests on Treaty 1 land, home of the Anishinaabeg, Cree, Oji-Cree, Dakota and Dene Peoples who have taught on and learned from this land since time immemorial. Manitoba is also the homeland of the Métis Nation. The electricity powering our spaces arrives from generating stations on rivers in Treaty areas 1, 3, and 5. Terms of the Northern Flood Agreement with five Indigenous communities in northern Manitoba remain unfulfilled.

The Centre for Christian Studies' pedagogy revolves around the values of learning in community and learning for the purpose of building and nurturing communities. Therefore CCS also works hard to be an institution of strong communities: it fosters a strong collaborative and equal staff community, student communities, national and international diaconal communities, an broad volunteer and mentor community, an engaged alumni and donor community, theological schools community, and relationships with wider civic communities.

Diaconal education trains and supports leaders to work with all who have been pushed to the margins of society as a result of unjust economic, social, sexual, spiritual and ecological systems and institutions. Diaconal Ministry, with a focus on Social Justice, Education, and Pastoral Care, engages in ministry that seeks transformation for wholeness in communities and congregations.

The inclusive and integrated learning of Diakonia engages students as co-learners and co-teachers, supporting each person's individuality and wholeness. CCS uses anti-racism curricula that affirms diverse genders and supports intersectional analysis that is contextual, theologically challenging and expansive, and that works to dismantle colonization, white supremacy, oppression, and challenge hierarchy.

Students learn in a sacred community, guided by a model of action and reflection, prioritizing communication, authentic feedback, and the development of wisdom and discernment as we live out a theology of justice. Students have opportunities to engage in the wider sacred community of Diakonia. The Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre (SSSC) offers education for Diaconal Ministry to Indigenous students of Turtle Island. SSSC and CCS are the only two Canadian theological schools to offer formal education for Diaconal Ministry and, as such, share students and resource staff for specific events and learning circles. The Association of Anglican Deacons in Canada and the Diakonia of the United Church of Canada are part of the wider Diaconal community through the

Diakonia World Federation and its regional body, the Diakonia of the Americas and the Caribbean (DOTAC).

CCS is committed to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's Calls to Action as well as the Final Report of the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. These calls for justice are lived out by the CCS community through understanding, supporting and enacting the principles that undergird reconciliation, as well as affirming and engaging the anti-racist work of our sponsoring denominations and partnership organizations.

From this same perspective, CCS also provides shorter theological programs for those seeking understanding towards justice, new skills for their life in faith, and for ministers and leaders seeking continuing education. Examples are the two-week intensive leadership development module "Learning on Purpose" ("LOP") taking place both in Winnipeg and in locations across the country, learning circles on topics such as "Right Relations", "Power and Privilege", and "Grief and Loss", CCS Friday events addressing current issues concerns, and the Anglican Deacon Circle "Ministering by Word and Example".

Awareness of systemic oppression and the vision towards justice are reflected in the non-traditional educational model of the Learning Circle. In the Fall and Spring, students gather (usually at CCS but sometimes elsewhere) to learn in community for an intensive period. It involves rigorous internal academics with extensive readings and assignments that seek to engage the student as an entire person. As a result, CCS students frequently remark on the powerful transformation they experience as they go through their training; similarly, CCS staff note how much they learn from the skills and wisdom the students contribute to the learning process. Online options are also offered in conjunction with in person Learning Circles. Readings, podcasts, art, music and activities are constantly reviewed and updated to ensure anti-racist, decolonial and anti-oppressive resources.

The experiential learning, internal courses and assignments the students receive at CCS are complemented by a number of required external university courses, connecting the students with traditional models of learning as well as other students who are not in a diaconal program.

After completing the required Social Justice, Education and Pastoral/Spiritual Care Learning Circles, students enter the final Integrating Year. In this year, students have the opportunity to incorporate their learnings, both in theory and practice, and in faith and action. A key part of the Integration Year is a two-week "Global Perspectives" experience and ongoing project in which students engage in contexts and cultures that are unfamiliar to them, in Canada or outside of Canada, and with cultures that vary in significant ways. The focus of the experience is based in relationship, learning

from and with others, and ongoing integration of the experience as it connects to contextual analysis in their own local community and society.

As with everything students are expected to do, CCS staff are deeply involved in preparing for and debriefing from this integrative and transformative experience. CCS recognizes the need for students to understand their own marginalized and privileged contexts and to challenge and support students to be resourced. Throughout the program, all students have and learn how to build a network of support with mentors, learning facilitators and local committees.

"Learning in community" is a powerful experience for students and staff alike, forming solid common ground and enduring bonds. After graduation, students can stay connected to CCS in many ways - as committee volunteer, central council member, learning circle chaplain, donor, or as a resource person. Graduates become mentors for new students and carry a passion for transformational theological education that continually seeks to engage the entire person and to eliminate injustice in all its forms.