



Tapestry

Summer 2023

EDUCATING LEADERS FOR JUSTICE, COMPASSION, AND TRANSFORMATION



The tiny Anglican congregation at Fairford with Cathie on the left.

Rural Ministry Needs You

While students at CCS, Cathie, Heather, and Jackie learned how to be responsive to whatever ministry requires. Thanks to your support, they are well prepared to offer ministry in a rural context.

For Cathie Clow, priest at St. Helen's Anglican Church, Fairford, rural ministry means a church with no running water, no heat in winter (unless someone comes in early to turn it on), and a tiny congregation.

Heather Sandlilands, a CCS graduate ministering in rural Manitoba, adds, "Rural Ministry is about building relationships with people who don't say a lot or have words to describe what they are feeling."

Jackie Van't Voort, another CCS graduate in southeastern Saskatchewan, says there are gifts in rural ministry. Everyone she meets knows who she is. If they have a problem, even the grocery store can be a place for pastoral care. Cathie agrees, "Ministry is wherever I am." God is there too.

Rural ministry has a wide reach and at the same time can be very close. Cathie's church is on the reserve of the Pinaymootang First Nation and the Sunday service is with whoever shows up: from town or reserve, Anglican or not, all sharing Holy Communion together.

A tragic death touches everyone in a community and is an occasion for spiritual care, even if those involved aren't from the church. Heather says, "Our role is to sit with them and hear their pain, without offering easy answers. I've learned to let people lament in silence. Or to raise their voices in anger because what is going on isn't OK. It's a 'be with' ministry."

Heather, Jackie, and Cathie learned valuable things at CCS that they use for rural ministry: whether it's reflecting theologically in a way that connects with non-church people; asking questions that

invite people to figure things out for themselves as Jesus did; or being sensitive to concerns and building relationships with indigenous people.

You prepared all three for ministry that is responsive to whatever turns up and you do that for students now.



Cathie learned about reconciliation in Learning on Purpose, thanks to you.

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DONOR PROFILE

Karen's Diaconal Roots Nurture Community

Karen Tjaden is one of CCS's generous donors. This story shows how your support of diaconal education is good preparation for community ministry.

Karen Tjaden says, "I bring to rural ministry experience in urban community ministry and a diaconal lens that pays attention to the marginalized rather than those at the center. I needed this perspective to reflect on prairie farm/settler culture."

She put this learning to use at Crossroads Pastoral Charge when people came to the church with a challenge with their housing or social assistance.

In advocating with them, Karen and the ministry team got to know people and issues that were normally hidden in their wealthy community. They also developed a network of contacts with community partners. And that led the church into antipoverty work. Although congregants might not see their service to community as diaconal, the spirit of diakonia is central to how they live out their faith.

The first impulse was to offer tangible help. But they took the more difficult road of looking at the root causes of poverty while seeking structural change. It started with a community round table where capable facilitators led 100 participants in a totally new conversation about poverty.



Karen Tjaden is pleased to support learning at CCS that prepares students for community ministry.

They formed the "Carman Wellness Connection", a community based nonprofit with many partners. Karen sees community ministry as ministry that is

refined and shaped by the needs of the community in response to God's intention.

Karen is a donor who supports diaconal formation at CCS because of the opportunities in field placements for students to meet people where they are and to learn hard lessons from their life experiences. This sets students up to understand all ministry, wherever it happens, as essentially community ministry.

A word from Alan Lai, Principal

As Principal of the Centre for Christian Studies, I often visit other places for meetings and other school functions. The latest one was a trip to Hamiota in Manitoba, a town of 1000 people with 25 Filipino families living here. I got a chance to visit my colleague Noel Sumistrado and his wife Veronica.

Not long after my arrival in the mid-afternoon, Noel and I took a quick walk around town and somehow we made our way into a Chinese restaurant that he had never visited. That's how I counted my luck on the first day of my visit: I was able to meet and talk to the owners in Cantonese, our native language. I think a lot about this visit, and the nature of ministry in rural areas. I like the quietness and simplicity. It enriches my thought of theological teaching and learning.

Writing as the Principal and on behalf of the staff, I would like to thank you for your dedicated support of the Centre of Christian Studies. Your generosity has made possible the training of passionate Christian leaders, who serve in many contexts including rural ones.



Alan Lai in quietness and simplicity.

Your Generosity Boosts “Pop-Up” Outreach

You’ve contributed to the ministry formation of current CCS students Kim Inglis and Jamie Miller. Because of you, they are learning how to respond to the needs of the community with what Kim calls “pop-up outreach”.



Your support is helping Jamie learn that the community meal is not just about food. It’s about relationship.

But most of all, ministry means working with the steadfast, year-round church members to seek ways to benefit and build up the community, inspired by Jesus who drew out the gifts of the disciples and invited Peter to “Feed my sheep”.

Jamie Miller is also a CCS student. Her concern that there wasn’t a homeless shelter or

warming center in Dryden prompted another example of “pop-up outreach”, “Maybe we could offer a community table once a week where people could come to a warm place for a meal.”

Now Jamie says they serve more than a meal. It’s become a community who knows each other’s names, where people come for the company and connection. They feel like they matter. They eat, volunteer, and support one another. Jamie says, “It’s grown into something I couldn’t imagine.”

Thank you for inspiring these kinds of rural diaconal ministry.

*Snowbirds are people who go south at Thanksgiving and return north in the spring.

Kim Inglis is a student at CCS who works half-time at the United Church in Mindemoya on Manitoulin Island. Unlike many ministry settings, where the summer is slow, in the warmer months her congregation doubles with cottagers and returning snow birds*.

Ministry in a congregation where new people come every week, and who you may not see again, is all about “pop-up outreach”. For Kim, ministry happens wherever she is and responds to the need of the moment. If she’s at her half-time job at a pet store, she can meet people and engage in deeper conversations. At community events, she absolutely says, “yes” when asked to bring greetings or say grace, so people know who she is.

Match the Pop-up Outreach with the situation that prompted it

Pop-up Outreach	Rural Ministry Situation
Vulcan Mental Health	Children without breakfast at home
Elder Abuse Group	Faith Formation for children
Cooking through the Bible	Suicides in community
Phone Tree	Seniors living alone
Zoom Bible Study	COVID Isolation
Soup Lunch and a visit in the home	Vulnerable Aging Population
Fruit and muffins in school classrooms	Bad weather, Prayer concerns

Situations shared by Susan Lauzon, CCS graduate and minister in the Prairiewinds Pastoral Charge in Alberta and Heather MacKinnon, CCS student and Pulpit Supply at Central Butte United Church in Saskatchewan

Will you help Kathy help Arlene?



That prescription cost way more than she expected! Now, Arlene’s heart is racing and she’s in a panic. How will she feed the three young grandchildren in her care? Arlene feels all alone.

Who can she go to for help? Maybe the local minister?

Kathy is a diaconal minister in the local rural church. She’s Arlene’s go-to person for in-the-moment support and wider community contacts. But she’s still a student at CCS, with a lot to learn.

With your help, Kathy will be able to listen compassionately when Arlene comes by. Your

donation is needed right now to make sure Kathy has the spiritual and theological grounding to offer Arlene care.

Tuition alone is not enough to adequately fund a deacon or diaconal minister’s formation for rural ministry at CCS. It takes a community of caring donors like you.

That is why I am writing to you today. Your gift will make sure Kathy has the skills and experience to share God’s beloved community so no one is left alone. Especially Arlene and her kids.

YES! I will help make a rural minister.

Please use my gift to help Kathy offer Arlene care.

My donation is in the amount of \$25 \$50 \$100 other _____

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