

EDUCATING LEADERS FOR JUSTICE, COMPASSION, AND TRANSFORMATION

You are helping Kristie learn ministry at the time of death

Your gifts help provide the support of a trained learning facilitator and local committee, plus staff oversight for a CCS student in an 8-month field placement. You give them a chance to learn by doing, and then reflect on the doing, and then do differently based on that reflection. This year, Kristie Pilling's field placement was in a funeral home.

It was Kristie's discomfort with the handling of the funerals of two people close to her that prompted her to approach the directors of the funeral home in her town of Watrous, SK about doing a field placement there. She wanted to learn how to treat the deceased with dignity and honour their memories in a way that respected who they had been and what they meant to their families.

When she made her proposal to the two owners, they were excited to share what they knew and open to learning from Kristie about diaconal ministry. A list of topics was drawn up to explore in their regular supervisory meetings. Among others, they talked about terrible deaths,



Kristie is learning how to honour those who have died, while also caring for the living.

introduced the other side of funerals (before and after the service), and family dynamics. For their last session, they invited Kristie's family to join a conversation about what ministry with those who've died is about.

When there was a family needing a minister, Kristie would prepare and lead the service. In all, she did seven funerals. Her supervisor at the funeral home provided tips for conducting herself in the service, e.g. walking in and out, waiting for family to be seated before going to the pulpit, and they debriefed after each funeral about what went well, what she could do differently, and offered feedback.

Kristie enjoyed listening to the family's stories about the person

who died and often wished she'd known the person better. She learned that meetings to prepare the service were important for pastoral care, but also to build rapport with the family, and create trust. She discovered that honour, respect, and dignity were vital for the person who'd died, as a beloved child of God.

What surprised Kristie was that, though it was a business, the funeral directors knew so much about offering pastoral care. They were so used to the emotions that come up and were able to pass on tools to help Kristie. She observed, "You can learn about grief and loss in a course but until you are in the midst of it you don't really get it." This field placement helped her get it.

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You are a partner in the Ministry Journey

Ministers in training often embark on a journey filled with uncertainty, much like the disciples whom Jesus sent out without provisions. They step into a world where the needs are great, the challenges numerous, and the resources seemingly scarce. In such moments, donors play a crucial role, not just as financial supporters, but as partners in the ministry journey.

As a donor, you provide more than just financial assistance; you offer a tangible expression of support, encouragement, and belief in the minister's calling. Your contributions represent a shared commitment to the ministry's vision and a recognition of the potential impact it can have. This support enables ministers in training to focus on their studies without the burden of financial worries.

In addition, you serve as a reminder of God's provision and faithfulness. Just as Jesus assured his disciples that they would be provided for, a donor becomes an instrument through which God's provision is made visible. Your generosity becomes a demonstration of the belief that God is indeed the ultimate provider and sustainer of the ministry.

At heart, you are more than just a financial supporter; you are partners in the journey, providing not just resources, but also encouragement, affirmation, and a tangible reminder of God's faithfulness. Your role is vital in enabling ministers in training to navigate the uncertainties with trust and dependence on the One who sends and provides.

*Sadekie Lyttle-Forbes,
Central Council Co-Chair.*



Donor Story

We received the following letter from Minnedosa United Church, which demonstrates their faithful support of CCS. They make theological education possible! Maybe it's an idea your church could try.

Greetings,

On February 25th our Community of Faith held a fundraising lunch to benefit the three prairie theological schools: Centre for Christian Studies, Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre, and St Andrew's College.

In total, our congregation donated \$605.00 that day. Divided by three, that allows us to send a contribution of \$202.00 to each school.

Please know that our community appreciates the dedicated efforts of all involved at your learning facility!

Sincerely,
Michelle Gunderson
Office Administrator

You have accompanied these Graduates

The five CCS graduates this spring share some of their learning journeys and where they are off to next. Your love, prayers, and financial support provided a space for their growth and ministry practice while at CCS.

Kendra Mitchell-Foster was a mosquito biologist specializing in tropical vector-borne diseases of poverty when she felt her call to ministry. While at CCS, Kendra's deepest learning was the central importance of relationship in diakonia, and that peace-building is about nourishing community.

Kendra will be continuing her work as a campus minister at the University of Northern British Columbia working at the Interfaith Spiritual Care Centre, and as the Regional Minister for Justice in



The Integration Year students, clockwise from the top, Dan, Rob, Sue, Alicia, and Kendra, are ready to engage fully in diaconal ministry, thanks to your support.

the Pacific Mountain Region.

It is Linda Ervin's fault that **Dan Leaver** learned diaconal ministry. They had offices in the same church in Red Deer and developed a good friendship. She encouraged him to consider diaconal ministry. He spent a long time at CCS, at times struggling and unsure of himself, but knew he needed to remain. He says "I have been a student for so long I am now on my fourth Principal." This is a sign of his perseverance and call.

At CCS, Dan realized that pastoral care is a cornerstone of ministry; he approaches education, preaching, small groups, funerals, the sacraments, all with a pastoral sense. After commissioning Dan will be serving in solo congregational ministry in a rural community in Ontario (beside a lake!).

Previously, **Susan Toller** worked on the environmental assessment of large resource development projects across Canada, where she learned more about Indigenous people and felt drawn towards exploring reconciliation and spirituality. Sue felt a call to use her heart more than her head.

From her time at CCS, Susan remembers ceremonies led by Indigenous elders at the Sandy Saulteaux Spiritual Centre. She also appreciated the opportunity to show solidarity with the Wet'suwet'en in northern British Columbia during a two-week work camp for her GPE.

After commissioning, she is happy to continue serving as Minister of Christian Development and Pastoral Care at Glebe-St. James United Church in Ottawa. And she hopes to keep working on reconciliation projects.

Alicia Wall's early ministry experience was working with children, youth, and young families, involvement in regional faith formation and youth events, and doing a Diploma in Youth Ministry at Atlantic School of Theology. Alicia learned about CCS from Laura Hunter, a diaconal minister who has been a wonderful mentor to her.

She started in 2020, so she has many memories of time spent on zoom with fellow students and the amazing staff. One significant learning is that, while everyone's journey is unique to their life and ministry experience, sharing the journey as co-learners is very important.

Alicia will continue in solo congregational ministry at Saint David's United Church in Rothesay, New Brunswick. She is excited to see what the future holds for her and her ministry.

After service in criminal justice and teaching, the illness and death of a spouse refocused **Robert Murdock** towards understanding his place in Creation.

After becoming a Licensed Lay Worship Leader Rob quickly discovered that God was calling him to greater involvement with faith and community through diakonia. When he read the CCS Student Kit, he knew that he had found a home; however, he didn't know how far he had to go, emotionally, academically, and spiritually. Otherwise, he might have been frightened away!

Rob's significant areas of learning while at CCS were in understanding of power and privilege, and the need for the humility "to labour and not seek reward". For him, diaconal ministry is about service above all--"We 'work' for God and our communities, never the other way around."

Rob has received a call into congregational ministry-something he thought he would never do! It is clearly a gift from the Holy Spirit.

Lauri can't do it without you

As Lauri looks ahead to her final year at CCS, she can't help but feel a mixture of excitement and anticipation. This last leg of her journey will be crucial in shaping her into the minister she aspires to be. Yet, she also feels a tinge of apprehension. Without the continued support of generous donors like you, Lauri knows that the road ahead will be fraught with challenges.

You see, gifts from donors like you fund the Integration Year at CCS, a year that is essential for students like Lauri to fully immerse themselves in their calling and prepare for ministry. Without this support, resources will be limited, staff will be stretched thin, and the quality of education that CCS provides will be compromised.

You can help.



Your contributions, whether big or small, can make a world of difference in her journey. With your support, Lauri can continue to pursue her calling with confidence, knowing that she has the backing of a caring and generous community behind her.

So please, consider making a donation today and join Lauri in her mission to make a positive impact on the world through ministry. You can ensure that Lauri, and other students like her, have the resources they need to thrive and succeed.

Yes! I will help Lauri pursue her calling

Please use my gift to fund the Integration Year at CCS.

- \$50 for preparing readings
- \$100 for two hours of planning
- \$150 for a half day in the Learning Circle
- \$200 for two days rental of meeting space
- \$300 for a whole day in the Learning Circle
- \$_____ to help as much as I can

Name: _____

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