The Centre for Christian Studies Regional Council Report, for 2025 to the Shining Waters Regional Council

The Centre for Christian Studies is a national theological school grounded in the tradition of *diakonia*. We prepare people for ministries in the United Church of Canada and the Anglican Church of Canada, and offer lifelong learning for anyone who wants to deepen their faith-in-action

2025 Students and Programming

Central to the preparation of diaconal ministers and lay leaders are the learning circles, the vessels through which learning, growth and development occurred. In addition to the regular circles, a 2-week Learning on Purpose circle was held in Winnipeg in June 2025. The Theme circles offered in 2025 included

Ministry as Community Building,
Worship,
Grief and Loss,
Ministry as Listening,
Power and Privilege, and
Health, Pain and Trauma, as well as the three Integration Year Circles.

Learning on Purpose and all Theme circles are open to lay people, candidates for all ministry streams, and ministry personnel for Continuing Education. More information is available online about *upcoming* learning circles, for both online and in-person 6-day intensives and 6-week circles.

In Winter, 2025, we also offered a course on Intercultural Leadership for Educational Ministry, in collaboration with Emmanuel College and St. Andrews College.

Two students and one programme staff person were able to be part of the meeting of the Diakonia World Federation (DWF) in Tanzania, in July 2025, and that formed their Global Perspective Experience.

In other programming news, we continued our free, monthly, 'lunchtime' Zoom CCS Fridays on topics such as

Punching Up or Punching Down: Comedy, Politics, and Social Justice
Unbounded Stories from Palestine,
Our Daily Bread: Resisting the Central Lie of 'Diet Culture',
Decolonizing Diakonia,

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God and Money, and
Microaggressions

2025 Milestones and Celebrations

The 2025 graduates were Hyerim Park, Letitia Berger, Lisa Byer-de Wever**,** Lisa Leffler, and Lynda Dickson.

Ann Naylor was recognized as a beloved and honoured Companion of the Centre. Ann's commitment to diaconal ministry and to the Centre for Christian Studies is unquestioned, as was evidenced by the number of former students who spoke of the profound influence Ann had on their personal formation and ministry identity. Her service to the General Council Office of the United Church of Canada as staff and then as Acting General Secretary in the Division of Ministry Personnel and Education was acknowledged.

It was with a deep sense of gratitude that CCS accepted and acknowledged the retirement of Cheryl Thiessen. Cheryl served faithfully as the Office Administrator for 10 years and was also celebrated at the graduation event.

Later in the calendar year the contract period of Gwen McAllister came to an end. Gwen held the role of Interim Development Coordinator for 2 years.

The Centre welcomed two new members of staff: Robyn Cruz and Marlene Britton.
Robyn assumed the role of Finance and Administration Coordinator, having previously worked as a manager with the Manitoba Aboriginal Sports and Recreation Council. She has brought to CCS her love for administration and her deep understanding of her own roots as an Indigenous person.
Marlene assumed the role of Principal for Leadership and Development, having previously served at the General Council Office of the United Church of Canada, as the Director of the Office of Vocation.

2025 Strategic Planning and Deeper Partnerships
The recommendations in the areas of governance simplification and staffing restructuring have been put into place. New staff was hired as detailed above, and significant, deep conversations were held with potential partners in theological education. While those conversations were taking place, town hall meetings were also held with the various constituencies of CCS in order to share the progress of the conversations, as well as to garner helpful contributions and to have concerns aired.

2025 Sustainability and Partnerships
Amidst the shifting sands of theological education, funding challenges, and volatile investment markets, we continue to be sustained by generous donors, creative collaboration, dedicated and visionary volunteers, Council members, and staff, a diaconal

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imagination of what church can be in the world, and God's grace. We are thankful for the mutual partnerships with which we engage in this sacred ministry of education, spiritual care, and justice. Particularly with; Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre, St Stephen's College, St Andrew's College / Saskatoon Theological Union, associate schools in the United and Anglican Churches of Canada, and the national staff who support them, Diakonia of the United Church of Canada, Anglican Deacons Canada, Diakonia of the Americas and Caribbean (DOTAC), and all who support CCS and its students (particularly, diaconal Mentors, Field Placement organizations & communities of faith, Learning Facilitators, Local Committee members).

Curious about which CCS Diaconal Diploma and Certificate students live in your region or relate to your candidacy board?
Allison Abuloc, Angela Glasel

In addition…
The 2026 Learning on Purpose course will be held in June at Five Oaks, in Paris, Ontario. Come deepen your self-awareness as a leader in these changing times, discern your next steps in ministry or formation, learn practical tools like the Spiral model of theological reflection, and engage liberative perspectives of the bible, theologies, and social analysis. And it's fun! From puppets to Paulo Freire to prayer, music to Miriam to social movements, come learn together.

To know more…
- Subscribe to our monthly e-newsletter Common Threads: http://ccsonline.ca/blog/common-threads/
- Follow us on Facebook or Instagram to hear about happenings and upcoming events.
- For information about the program and studying with us: http://ccsonline.ca/about-ccs/
- For more details and numbers, 2025 Yearbook, 2025 Annual Report, and financial statements: http://ccsonline.ca/event/ccs-annual-general-meeting-2025/

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