



EMMANUEL COLLEGE
OF VICTORIA UNIVERSITY IN
THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

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Dear Friends,

I pray for God's blessings on your regional meeting and bring greetings from Emmanuel College. As the end of my term as Principal approaches, I write to share some exciting developments at the College.

The COVID-19 pandemic has handed us the unexpected opportunity to dive head-first into online teaching and learning. We are currently discerning a distance model for the Master of Divinity (MDiv) program, which may interest candidates in your region, for whom moving to Toronto would have been an obstacle. Students starting the program this fall can expect access to online courses, with opportunities for community and spiritual life both online and in person. Our John W. Billes Grant affords 100% tuition support for United Church of Canada members enrolled full-time in the MDiv and engaged with the candidacy pathway process. We also offer ample bursary support, which has been bolstered during the pandemic by Annual Fund gifts from generous alumni donors.

Emmanuel College recruits and educates leaders to be attuned to the changing context and mission of the church in Canada. We have broadened ways that courses, continuing education, and community life implement the calls to action delineated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. With the appointment of Jonathan Hamilton-Diabo as Special Advisor on Indigenous Issues and teaching-stream Assistant Professor of Theology, the College now offers courses on Indigenous theological worldviews; Indigenous ways of relating to faith, church, and the community; and the legacy of residential schools. We have also increased the presence of Indigenous Elders in ceremonies and as guest lecturers. New Canadian faculty have joined us, with expertise in postcolonial and decolonial theories and practices. As a result, we have instituted an innovative curricular requirement in Coloniality and Power for all basic degree students. Our pluralistic context and our multireligious Master of Pastoral Studies program also enhance the MDiv. Students become more deeply rooted in their own religious and spiritual traditions as a result of engaging one another across difference. Each of these distinctive emphases prepares our UCC candidates for contemporary ministries.

Our continuing education partnerships with the United Church emphasize leadership in diverse settings. We are currently co-sponsoring a multi-year

Innovative Ministry project with the Toronto United Church Council. In early March, General Secretary Michael Blair delivered our Gandier Lecture, addressing the current reality of anti-black racism, the church's historic complicity with practices of exclusion, and the UCC's commitment to transformative discipleship as the beloved community. This summer, our Centre for Religion and Its Contexts will gather a preaching symposium, and we will also host the second annual Christian Left Conference with Trinity St. Paul's UCC, EDGE, and other sponsors. Please consider joining us at these events, online and free of charge. Future initiatives will integrate the training of candidates for ministry with workshop opportunities for ministers, including a series of workshops that draw on the College's strengths in mental health education.

Our faculty contribute theologically to the United Church of Canada. We are thinking through emergent theological issues that matter to congregations and their ministers. Recent publications include Pamela McCarroll's volume, *Christian Theology after Christendom: Engaging the Thought of Douglas John Hall*; and *Postcolonial Preaching: Creating a Ripple Effect* by Timothy Eaton Memorial Church Professor of Preaching, HyeRan Kim-Cragg. Our faculty and students continue to join your congregations as guest preachers via Zoom.

Looking back over my three years as Principal, I have been grateful to participate in each of these facets of our engagement with the United Church of Canada. I look forward to new ways of connecting after June 30, under the leadership of our soon-to-be-announced Interim Principal. On a personal note, I look forward to continuing my journey as a member of the Emmanuel College faculty and as a person in ministry in the Admission process with the UCC.

This concludes my report to you as Principal, but it is not "goodbye."

Yours in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michelle Voss Roberts". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rev. Dr. Michelle Voss Roberts
Principal and Professor of Theology