

## **BOARD OF GOVERNORS OF THE PRESBYTERIAN COLLEGE, MONTREAL**

To the Venerable, the 148th General Assembly:

This report shares details of the life and mission of The Presbyterian College, Montreal. Particularly for those commissioners (and those in the wider church) who may not be too familiar with the college, we start out again by sharing these key details:

- The college was founded by The Presbyterian Church in Canada in 1865.
- The college has a degree-granting charter from the then Province of Canada as of 1865.
- We are immediately adjacent to McGill University on University Street in Montreal.
- We partner with the McGill University, the Montreal School of Theology and the Institut de Théologie pour la Francophonie in offering our degree programs.
- The Montreal School of Theology, of which the college is a constituent member, is accredited by the Association of Theological Schools and is the only accredited institution offering theology degrees in Quebec.
- Our students come from Presbyterian, Pentecostal, Baptist, Non-denominational and other traditions.
- Our students come from Canada, Cameroon, Nepal, Syria, Taiwan, USA and other contexts.
- We have degree programs in both English and French.
- The Leadership Centre of the college offers significant programming for pastoral and lay leaders.

In and through all of this, we are a community of friendship, scholarship and worship that finds its life and purpose in relation to the risen Jesus. He is at the centre of our community and our intention as a college is to form students who know Jesus personally, who serve him creatively and who will build others up in the mission of Jesus for the world.

### **FACULTY AND STAFF**

The college has a small but dynamic and dedicated team of faculty and staff. Faculty of the college include the Rev. Dr. Roland De Vries (Principal), the Rev. Dr. Karen Petersen (Professor of Pastoral Leadership), the Rev. Dr. Lucille Marr (Chaplain), Adjunct Professor Gerbern Oegema (Professor of Biblical Studies, McGill University) and Dr. Glenn Smith (Director of the Master of Theological Studies program). We are ably served in the library by the Library Coordinator, Edythe Arnott. The Administrative Coordinator is Ms. Linda Boutros, the Building Superintendent is Mr. Mario Elvé and the Dean of Students is the Rev. Prudence Neba. In 2022, we established a new position of Communications Coordinator and Ms. Katherine Hudak serves in that role. The instructor in Presbyterian Polity for 2023 was the Rev. James Hurd of the Presbytery of Ottawa. Core faculty in our program include, among others, the following from McGill University and the Montreal School of Theology.

Professor Douglas Farrow, Professor of Theology and Ethics, McGill University  
 Professor Garth Green, Professor of the Philosophy of Religion, McGill University  
 Professor Ian Henderson, Associate Professor of New Testament Studies, McGill University  
 Professor Patricia Kirkpatrick, Associate Professor of Old Testament Studies, McGill University  
 Professor W.J. Torrance Kirby, Professor of Ecclesiastical History, McGill University  
 Professor Heidi Wendt, Associate Professor of Religions, Greco-Roman World, McGill University  
 Principal Jesse Zink, Principal, Instructor in Missional Theology, Montreal Dio  
 Dr. Alyson Huntly, Director of United Church Studies, Montreal Dio  
 The Rev. Dr. Marc Potvin, Director of Field Education, Montreal School of Theology  
 Dr. Glenn Smith, Professor of Practical Theology, Institute de Théologie pour la Francophonie

### **Reappointment of Professor Karen Petersen**

In 2021, the Board of Governors of The Presbyterian College initiated a search for a Professor of Pastoral Leadership (a new title given to the position of Director of Pastoral Studies). In the summer of that year, the Rev. Dr. Karen Petersen was appointed to the position on a unanimous vote by the board. Karen completed her Master of Divinity degree at Princeton Theological Seminary and her Ph.D. in Leadership Studies at Gonzaga University, with a focus on Reformed Theology in dialogue with the Roman Catholic theological and philosophical tradition.

On the basis of its engagement with Dr. Petersen, the search committee in 2021 particularly highlighted her commitment to the Reformed Tradition, her commitment to teaching, her personal spirituality and insight, her ecumenical commitment and experience and her commitment to the wellbeing of the church. The board is very grateful to report that these dimensions of Karen's person and gifting have been fully expressed over the past three years of

her service to the college. She has contributed to our life and to our students and our community in many significant ways.

Over the past three years, Dr. Petersen has been actively engaged in and committed to ecumenical dialogue at the grassroots level and has extended this with work in Montreal. She has done this through teaching and collaboration with local congregations of various denominations. Karen is also an active member of the Reformed-Roman Catholic Ecumenical dialogue in the United States, where she serves on appointment by the Presbyterian Church (USA). In January 2024, Dr. Petersen also gave the De Margerie Ecumenical Lectures in Regina and Saskatoon. Her book entitled *Grassroots Ecumenism: The Way of Local Christian Reunion* (New City Press) was published in 2022.

Within the context of our theological consortium (McGill University, Montreal School of Theology, The Presbyterian College), Dr. Petersen teaches in the area of Reformed theology, reformation thought, congregational leadership and in areas related to spirituality and education. She has also taught within our online programming oriented toward lay people and congregational study groups. Dr. Petersen also teaches now in the Master of Theological Studies (French-language) program of the college. Feedback in relation to her teaching has been consistently positive, with students affirming her grasp of the subject matter, her capacity to communicate it clearly, her interest in their integration of theological knowledge with life and ministry and her personal attentiveness and care as a teacher.

Dr. Petersen also serves as Director of the Learning Effectiveness Assessment Program of the Montreal School of Theology and coordinates the programmatic learning assessment process for the M.T.S. program. She does so more than ably and with a view to the improvement of our academic programs. Colleagues in the Montreal School of Theology and at The Presbyterian College are unanimous in affirming her diligent work, her attentiveness to colleagues and her orientation toward our shared flourishing in theological education.

In 2023, Dr. Petersen applied for reception as a minister of The Presbyterian Church in Canada, with the support of the Presbytery of Montreal. That application was approved by the Committee on Education and Reception, with the requirement that she successfully complete examinations in Presbyterian History and Polity. At the writing of this report she is completing the Polity requirement and we expect that the history requirement (given a very busy schedule) will be completed in the early fall.

The Board of Governors of The Presbyterian College, Montreal, is very grateful to bring a recommendation for reappointment of the Rev. Dr. Karen Petersen for a five-year term as Professor of Pastoral Leadership. This recommendation follows closely the past practice of the college with previous Directors of Pastoral Leadership (the former title of this position). In those cases, similarly, the initial three-year appointment was followed by a five-year reappointment. In bringing this recommendation we also acknowledge that the college is subject to the scale of minimum professorial stipends that was approved by the General Assembly in 2019.

(The Board of Governors of the college understands that the start-date of the proposed five-year term will be from July 15, 2024, but that its continuance remains conditional upon Dr. Petersen fulfilling, in a timely way, the conditions indicated by the Committee on Education and Reception.)

**Recommendation PCO-001**      adopted/defeated/amended

That the Rev. Dr. Karen Petersen be appointed as Professor of Pastoral Leadership, for a five-year term, subject to her successful completion of examinations in History and Polity, following the salary scale of Associate Professor as established by the General Assembly.

**Sabbatical for Principal De Vries**

The Board of Governors has approved a six-month sabbatical for Principal De Vries. He began as Director of Pastoral Studies in 2015 and, as of Summer 2024, has served at the college for nine years in total. The sabbatical will be for the period of July 1 through December 31, 2024 and will include an appropriate combination of research, spiritual reflection and rest.

**DEVELOPMENTS IN THE MONTREAL SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY**

The Montreal School of Theology (MST) was established in 1914 as the Joint Board of Theological Colleges Affiliated with McGill University. Over its lifetime it has been variously configured but over the past several decades the Montreal School of Theology has been the name of the collaboration between The Presbyterian College, the United Theological College (UTC) and the Montreal Diocesan Theological College (Montreal Dio). As we reported to the

General Assembly previously, the Montreal Diocesan Theological College and the United Theological College have reached an agreement by which a United Church studies program has been established within Montreal Dio. UTC has ceased to exist as a legal entity and has signed a release indicating its full withdrawal from MST. As a result, the two remaining colleges have been working toward a new Memorandum of Agreement between the colleges within the Montreal School of Theology and MST has been working toward new bylaws that reflect the new reality. We expect the new memorandum and bylaws to be in place by fall 2024.

### **ONGOING FUNDING FROM LILLY ENDOWMENT INCORPORATED**

In 2022, we reported that MST had received a five-year, \$1 million (USD) grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. MST is one of more than 80 schools (10 in Canada) that have been awarded such a grant under the Pathways for Tomorrow initiative of the Lilly Endowment. Through this funding, we continue to operate programs focused on identifying, equipping and supporting pastoral leaders. The Mentoring Program of The Presbyterian College is one of the core areas (“supporting ministers”) and continues to expand as an ecumenical venture that includes mentoring groups with Anglican (and soon United Church) participation.

### **STUDENT BODY AND ACADEMIC PROGRAMS**

The Presbyterian College currently has 37 students registered in all programs. These programs include the core English-language programs offered collaboratively with McGill University and MST (Bachelor of Theology, Master of Divinity and Master of Sacred Theology) and French-language programs offered with the Institut de Théologie pour la Francophonie (Master of Theological Studies in Practical Theology). A previous pilot project/partnership with Laval University ended as of June 2023 but our partnership with Institut de Théologie pour la Francophonie has continued, with 22 students enrolled in the program. We are grateful for the opportunity to embody and provide instruction in the Reformed Tradition for this diverse community of students. We will have our second cohort of graduates from the program in 2024.

Each year the practical theology program (the French-language program) hosts a colloquium at which students in the final year of the program share their research. There is also a presentation on questions related to pastoral or practical theology. In 2023 we were thrilled to have Prof. Charles Taylor as the guest lecturer (Taylor is well known and well regarded Canadian philosopher who has written extensively on secularism). This year, in May, the colloquium will host a presentation by Rapha Quebec on a study project addressing domestic violence in the Province of Quebec and the responses of churches and pastoral leaders to domestic violence.

Together with MST, in January 2024, The Presbyterian College led an intercultural learning experience in Matanzas, Cuba, with our institutional partner, the Seminario Evangélico de Teología. We also welcomed external participants on this rich study tour, with 4 additional external participants from The Presbyterian Church in Canada. We hope that this study tour will be offered again next year and hope that additional members of the denomination will be able to join us.

### **LEADERSHIP CENTRE**

We are grateful to mark the one-year anniversary of the hiring of the current Director of Programs for our Leadership Centre, Adrian Langdon. The Leadership Centre has continued to focus on (i) its mentoring program, (ii) faith and work programming, including the creation of a curriculum for use in congregations and (iii) online studies to support lay people and congregational study groups across the country (the two most recent studies have been on the subjects of faith and work and wisdom literature of the Bible). We also recently hosted a webinar in which we introduced participants to a new resource for worship services – providing prayers, litanies, children’s stories, sermon ideas and other resources related to faith and work (enough to for a four-week series of worship services/sermons on this theme).

Among other things, it is worth highlighting a conference to be hosted in spring 2024 (May 21–23, a repeat of the previous years) which is an opportunity for encouragement and equipping for pastoral leaders. Our two main speakers will be Carmen Joy Imes (Professor of Hebrew Bible, Biola University), Tim Keener (Director of Christian Direction, Montreal) and other guests will provide support and creative opportunities for attendees.

Under the auspices of the Leadership Centre, as previously report to the General Assembly, the college has also launched a podcast entitled *Jesus in Montreal*, which explores the life, ministry and faith of followers of the risen Jesus here in our city. The two most recent episodes of this season, released as of the writing of this report, are with Tevik Karatop (originally from Turkey, a theology graduate from the Montreal Diocesan Theological College now

working with Jesuit Refugee Services) and Frédérica Petit-Homme, a vocalist, music educator and host of Choral Concert on CBC Radio. We expect a further episode this season with Patti Pierce-Miller, Senior Pastor of Evangel Church, Montreal.

## **FACILITIES**

The current facility of The Presbyterian College was built in 1962. Over the past four years, the Board of Governors has begun to take steps to address deferred maintenance that has accumulated over the past 25 years. In 2023, we signed contracts for the replacement of a significant number of windows in the library, classrooms and residence of the college, as part of our ongoing effort to address deferred maintenance. We have nearly finished an update of the second-floor common room of the college and will report next year on the finalization of that project and its naming.

## **BEQUEST AND FINANCES**

Together with Knox College and St. Andrew's Hall, the Presbyterian College gives thanks for the life and legacy of Dr. Donald McLean (1926–2022) and his wife Mrs. Joyce McLean (1927–2018). Donald and Joyce attended Fairview Church, Vancouver for many years, and Donald served as an elder in that congregation. He served as a Professor of Medical Microbiology at UBC and Joyce was a nurse for many years at the Vancouver Children's Hospital. Together they were committed to the support of theological education and, in 2023, each of the colleges of The Presbyterian Church in Canada received a significant bequest from the estate of Dr. McLean. The colleges give thanks for Dr. and Mrs. McLean's generosity and for their lifelong devotion to Jesus Christ.

The fiscal year of The Presbyterian College follows the calendar year. The audited financial statements have not yet been finalized as of the writing of this report, though the auditor has begun his work (Mr. Peter Marini of Brooks Di Santo). When completed, we expect these statements to reflect the improved global and financial situation in 2023, with significant gains in our investment portfolio. Our operating deficit was consistent with that of previous years and the board continues to work proactively to ensure that our operating position is as strong as possible.

Marilyn Scott  
Convener

Roland De Vries  
Principal