

# MENTORING MISSIONAL LEADERS

A Program of the Leadership Centre at The Presbyterian College, Montreal

## *The Need*

At the Presbyterian College, we believe that if we are to provide the kind of leaders the church of today and tomorrow needs, the present system of theological education must change. The 21<sup>st</sup> century church needs leaders who are skilled at leading healthy change, but we recognize that congregational leadership cannot be learned in three years at seminary; there simply is not enough time. It is only when graduates move into their first congregations that the real questions of leadership emerge, meaning that new pastors are left on their own just at the time when they most need help.

## *The Program to Meet the Need*

In 2012, the Presbyterian College launched a mentoring program to stay connected with graduates in their early years of ministry. Together, graduates explore common questions, gain new leadership skills, and encourage each other. Participants work in small groups in monthly videoconferences with an experienced mentor, and each year, for five years following graduation, they attend a week-long in-person seminar at the College, to reconnect with one another and with the program leaders.

While support and encouragement are important to this initiative, the program does more. It helps ministers engage their congregations in change and renewal that re-forms an old model of ministry into one which leads to fruitful work in a world that often considers the church irrelevant. The program helps ministers lead their congregations to adopt an outward, missional focus.

## *Program Principles:*

- Leadership is not primarily taught, but shared.
- Leadership development is crucial to the church's mission. If we desire to grow healthy congregations, we must begin with healthy leaders.
- The benchmark for seminaries needs to change from "What makes a good graduate?" to "What makes a healthy congregation?"
- Seminaries themselves need to learn from new graduates (reverse mentoring).
- A solo minister is often less effective than a team ministry. Mentoring can create team ministries, even if people are ministering in different locations.
- Leadership makes a difference - good leaders cast the vision that helps people dance in step with the Holy Spirit.

## *How You Can Help*

Over five years, participants will be supported and encouraged in their own spiritual walk with God and in their ministries.

A gift of \$2,500 supports a minister in the mentoring program for a full-year, providing the resources to participate in monthly group videoconferencing sessions, and the yearly retreat at the College. A gift of \$12,500 supports a minister for the full five years of the program. All gifts may be pledged over a period of up to five years.

Our goal is to provide bursaries for 20 ministers each year for the next five years by raising \$250,000.





## *One Story* - Reverend Denise Allen-Macartney

**Reverend Denise Allen-Macartney is a Class of 2009 Presbyterian College graduate. She is the Minister of Gloucester Presbyterian Church in Ottawa. This is her story.**

*As a new grad accepting my call to a congregation, I was elated and terrified. It felt like jumping off a high diving board into deep, turbulent water. The College mentorship group has helped me learn to swim, and to enjoy steady progress over a long distance.*

*It's one thing to sit through a Session meeting as the student minister. But it's another thing to lead a Session: to motivate folks to listen for, and follow, the Holy Spirit's lead; to wrestle with challenging questions; to help shape the mission of a congregation; to build bridges into the neighbourhood.*

*My mentorship group includes pastors from British Columbia, Ontario, and Quebec. Each month, seven of us connect with our mentor for a 2-hour videoconference. We talk about whatever's on our minds: hope, fear, frustration, or joy. We laugh and trade great ideas. Together we read a leadership book and discuss how to implement what we read. We pray for each other.*

*We've asked each other questions like: How do I hear the Holy Spirit's voice? How do I help our session catch God's passion to connect with neighbours? How do I introduce needed change in ways the congregation will embrace? In the wake of tragedy, how can I best come alongside a devastated parishioner? How do I juggle life in the congregation, plus Presbytery demands, and my family—yet keep my head above water?*

*This group has become my peer community—people I'll email or phone for advice. I look forward to shared meals, worship, and conversation in-person during our annual conference.*

*Gloucester Church is stronger because of the behind-the-scenes influence of this mentorship group. Fuelled by my peers' and mentor's practical insights, our Session has implemented healthy leadership approaches, seamlessly navigated changes in worship style, and made an about-face in outlook—as we launch a major initiative to bless our neighbours.*

*You can learn theology from a book. But leadership? That you learn by splashing around in the deep end. I thank God for the swimming partners in my mentorship group. And for people whose generous gifts make this program possible.*

### **The Broader Impact**

Participants in the Mentoring Missional Leaders Program are part of the Presbyterian College's Leadership Centre whose mission is to develop, train and nurture transformational leaders. The Centre provides programs for people of all faiths, young and old, who aspire to make a positive and profound difference in our world in the name of Christ.



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