



St. Andrew's College
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Dear friends of the Northern Spirit Regional Council,

I am sorry that we will be unable to gather in community this year. I pray you and yours are well during these strange days. As well, please know that the college is here to offer you support and care, whether in your communities of faith, vocationally and in other ways that might be helpful during these times of isolation and concern.

I am writing to you today as we begin to enter that pause between harvest and the fallow-time. As I sit here, with the cursor waiting, the word paradox keeps repeating itself in my musings. If ever that tension, when two things exist in tension, was most apparent it is indeed in the place in the midst of harvest's abundance and deep winter's prairie slumber. This might even be a reflection of our journey as an Easter people.

For four months, up until summer's arrival, the community of staff, faculty and most tenants worked remotely. During our time away from the college's hallways and staircases, its proud stone and blessed sanctuary, the world has changed. It has changed for all of us. It seems to me that this Gospel thing, this Good News to which we are committed, speaks with a clarity to a hurting world that I do not recall in my lifetime.

We have all been touched by the pandemic. Whether that is life disrupted, illness experienced, and, in too many cases, suffering and death, we are all affected, and the world is moving on. From leadership that advocates for basic universal income to those who would sow fear and distrust, the full range of that which we are capable is on full display.

In these strange days, the college continues its work. In its unfolding mission, to prepare people for leadership through the lens of justice, I would like to highlight two places in which I have seen hope that demonstrates most clearly the ongoing relevance of this unfolding experiment called St. Andrew's College.

When the pandemic arrived, as each day seemed to bring further confusion, data overload, and questions of how to ensure all might be safe, the staff and faculty continued to respond in such a manner that illustrates the nimbleness of the college. As the pandemic arrived and the subsequent closure of the college and University of Saskatchewan occurred, the faculty were able to be up in running remotely in less than two days. Though not easy, the commitment to ensuring that learning continued was only balanced by the staff's care of our tenants and residents.

With over 60% of our residents hailing from far away, the staff have challenged me and held us all appropriately accountable to ensuring that the college roles as a *home away from home* was not only maintained, but improved. From maintaining a cleaning regiment that ensures a safe environment, to working with the university, it has been clear that St. Andrew's is a community that takes all of its relationships – tenants, faculty, residents, students and staff – as the embodiment of a body in which we are all connected.

The second highlight is connected with our denominational pastoral and liturgical response to the reality that our worshipping communities have been shuttered and quickly reopened. In such



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places as my Facebook feed, twitter page and on Instagram, the college's students and alum have responded in vibrant ways that within a few short weeks connects faith communities beyond traditional boundaries and offers pastoral care through such tools that range from the phone to instant and direct messaging. This emboldened ministry, literally being born in the midst of a pandemic, has many lessons for the college.

Let me just highlight one of those teachings in the short time we have left in this year's conversation. As students and alum begin to engage in the relational medium of the digital, the college has some thinking to do. We will need to begin to take seriously how we bring the best of our leadership training in the brick and mortar of life into this new space. How we offer pastoral care, nurture theological reflection and critical thinking in these new places of ministry will require careful consideration. Where do learnings and assignments, practice and ministry meet in place like Instagram and TikTok? What does it mean to bring the Good News into these places that connect with worship, which may no longer be bound to just Sundays at 10:00 and where pews are replaced with YouTube chat boxes?

These are the very challenges in which this institution called St. Andrew's has been engaged since 1912. The world has changed, and it will again. With your ongoing trust and support, friends, I am indeed hopeful that the places where death and resurrection always meet, whether in the digital or in-person, St. Andrew's will continue to prepare people for Christian leadership who help the lost find safety, the hurting healing and the mourning solace.

In Christ,

Dea. Dr. Richard Manley-Tannis
Principal
St. Andrew's College



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