

PREAMBLE TO KEEPER OF THE LEARNING CIRCLE JOB DESCRIPTION

Vision narrative for Indigenous ministry development guidance

The Indigenous experience of Christian faith in 19th Century Methodist origins in Ontario blossomed when the scriptures slipped out of the colonial gaze in the Anishinaabe sermons of Peter Jones. Within a few short years churches were established in Anishinaabe, Delaware, and Haudenosaunee communities throughout Southern Ontario and lay leaders carried on the work. The Methodist Indigenous “missionaries” then spread the work West to Anishinaabe, Cree, and Oji-Cree, and Assinaboine/Nakota/Stony communities in NW Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta. Sermons, scriptures, and hymns in Indigenous languages were the flame of this movement.

Colonial scrutiny and regulation gradually snuffed out this outward Indigenous self-propagating energy as it did in colonial church work everywhere. Often non-Indigenous ministers blind to Indigenous culture did harm with a parental attitude and punitive approaches to enforcing orthodoxy and orthopraxis. This Indigenous energy did not go out completely but always fueled an Indigenous resistance that challenged colonial hegemony. Nakota Assinaboine Elder Jessie Saulteaux said, “We need our own people to work in our churches and communities.” Inherent in this assertion is We Wai Kai Elder Alberta Billy’s words, “We have our own way of doing things.”

The Wabung document that chronicles the story of the amalgamation of the Dr. Jessie Saulteaux Resource Centre and the Francis Sandy Theological Centre into the Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre envisions the future as:

*The new First Nation, Métis, and Inuit theological school is being created in the context of the United Church of Canada Apology to First Nation People and will try to **live out the commitments made in the apology**. This will mean **creating something new, moving forward out of Western models of education which have so often been used as tools for oppression and colonialism**.*

*The new school will also have **to develop its own language and terminology** appropriate to and coming out of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit contexts. **It must be about decolonizing in all aspects and must hold in balance the spiritual wisdom, values, and ways of First Nation, Métis, and Inuit peoples and of the Church**.*

Sandy-Saulteaux Spiritual Centre is an expression of The UCC apology. The door is open to the Indigenous self-determination articulated in the Calls to the Church, including Indigenous self-theologizing. SSSC ministry development is a student-centered, andragogical approach and not the parental pedagogy of the colonial approach. The Learning Circle is a place where every student is a teacher and every teacher a learner. Students are supported in and by community, by the Keepers of the Learning Circle, resource people, LC elders, and community Vision Keeper mentors.

A picture of decolonizing leadership

The purpose of this bulleted list description of decolonized leadership is in no way meant to function as a checklist or a measuring stick. If it were, we have the sneaking suspicion that not even Jesus would measure up to or meet all of its “demands.” Rather, the following list is a long history of diverse communities’ struggles to reclaim and decolonize what leadership means and looks like; it is a work in

progress. It is also a story, meant to give direction and priority to what needs to be. And lastly, it is an invitation to align our own journeys of growth and change with this story, to live into a new story. After all, as Thomas King so importantly reminds us, “The truth about stories is, that is all we are” and “if we change the stories we live by, quite possibly we change our lives.”

While many of the forms of leadership outlined below are inherent to Indigenous peoples, it’s also important to acknowledge that all of us have been impacted and shaped by a colonial world view. The dynamics generated by the indigenization of theological education may feel challenging; and when these challenges arise the first question we should all ask is, “Why?” Why is a tool that helps us to remember to always question the status quo in ways that are self-reflective and decolonial.

Decolonized Leadership is...

- Centered in Indigenous community, language, culture, and land – who fosters the flourishing of each of these
- One who has found their voice and fosters that of their community in grassroots consensus
- One whose life witnesses against indignity and oppression; a commitment to understanding where oneself fits into systems of oppression and colonialism
- One who is on a decolonial journey, acknowledging the deep impact of colonialism on themselves, the church, and their community
- Secure in themselves to address impacting personal experiences
- Facilitating the development of genius in those they lead and the communities they serve
- Gracious, compassionate examples of an inclusive spirit
- A team builder fostering a community vision
- Not a savior who does all the work of ministry; fosters collaboration and shared leadership
- Not someone busy remaking others in their image
- Comfortable with mistakes and not a punitive approach
- One who respects the Bible and courageously critiques it
- Flexible and able to function effectively in highly ambiguous situations, comfortable with both/and solutions; prioritizing people, relationships & teaching over schedules
- A cultural translator, able to communicate well with the Indigenous community and the United Church of Canada - including intercultural understandings of time, structure, and decision making
- Aims to not center themselves or the colonial way of doing things
 - an ability to communicate with people of another culture in a way that earns their respect and trust, thereby encouraging a cooperative and productive environment that is conducive to the achievement of ministry goals;
 - the capacity to adapt his/her professional skills (both technical and managerial) to fit local cultural contexts;
 - the capacity to adjust personally so that they are content and generally at ease in the host culture; and,
 - Students need to work in this manner in ministry contexts outside of their own communities also.

Medicine Wheel organization of training

In the teaching of the medicine wheel all participants pass through symbolically all of the stages of life represented in the sweat lodge – infancy/childhood, adolescence, adulthood, and elderhood. SSSC students come to us often from second, third, or fourth careers and bring much to their learning journey with us. This is why every student is a teacher. Even the elder of the lodge comes through the infant's doorway and so every teacher is a learner as well.

East – Yellow

The journey of the sweat lodge begins with entrance through the East, the infant/child door. You must humbly crawl in on your hands and knees as a child. Here we get to know the Bible and think through its meaning in our lives and communities from an Indigenous perspective. The impact of colonialism, the policy of assimilation in the Indian Residential Schools is unpacked here. How to think through the meaning of scripture in its own time and relevance to today's Indigenous context is a tool carried throughout lifelong-learning.

South – Black

Moving sun-wise in the lodge you come to the South, the direction of youth. Discerning one's way in the journey of life requires experience and reflection on leadership and the coordinated work of the church. As adolescents experiment and test so we must be courageous and not afraid of making mistakes. Surrounding students with support as puberty ceremonies and feast do describe this role for SSSC staff and that of the Indigenous church.

West – Red

Continuing around the lodge you come to the adult West door. This is where family flourishing and growth happens. On the job training, in community reflection, and ministry practice forms the ongoing vocation that fosters this learning and growth cycle. This segment of the curriculum comprises Indigenous well-being learning. Dealing with intergenerational trauma, the effects of colonization and residential schools, and foster the organic healing processes in Indigenous culture is the deep work of ministry in community.

North – White

Continuing sun-wise you come to the elder's direction of the North. Our knowledge keepers are the repositories of millennia of wisdom that helped Indigenous people live well on our Mother the Earth. Every Learning Circle has an elder or elders to be a voice of stability and grace to this ever-changing world. The many cultures of our students and elders from varying cultures help visualize the intersectional nature of our communities all across this land. Our languages come from the earth, the land has taught our elders its lessons, our elders have created our cultures and ways to make decisions. Our students are enriched with all of this wisdom conveyed in our Learning Circles.

Indigenous Methodology and Content

We are moving from an approach that attempted to force an M. Div. into our Learning Circle model that resulted in some success to the Calls to the Church that asks us to take the next step and do it our way with our content. Indigenous Testamur is in development to foster this movement from Western systematics to Indigenous centered approaches. The locus of control returning to the Indigenous community imagined in the Calls to the Church is not a threat to a struggling Western denomination but a bright light in the midst of soul-deadening forecasts of declining budgets and statistics. This is

reimagining and remaking the Indigenous church, not tinkering with colonial concerns. This is a return to the original fire and impetus of the early Methodist Anishinaabe workers, Peter Jones, Henry Bird Steinhauer, Peter Jacobs, and other lay leaders.

The Calls to the Church and Indigenous Testamur are the primary developmental tasks before SSSC. With the United Church's response to the Calls to Action of the TRC by embracing the UNDRIP as a framework for reconciliation we have affirmation to pursue this journey of development. Indigenous Testamur's learning goals will rely on conversations and SSSC board/staff/students/partners, Indigenous Communities of Faith, the National Indigenous Council, the National Indigenous Elders' Council, the Indigenous Office of Vocation, and our Indigenous Voice on the Board of Vocation to pursue this work. SSSC is "not alone" as our UCC Song of Faith declares.

HOW MINISTRY TRAINING IS OVERSEEN

Oversight of Indigenous Ministry Students - Keeper of the Learning Circle

The Keeper of the Learning Circle oversees the Indigenous Ministry Training Program. While this role has its own unique focus and set of responsibilities, its responsibilities require collaboration, flexibility, and trust to support students in all areas. Whether one is orienting new students to the candidacy pathway; connecting them to the education and support processes at SSSC (including indigenous education); visiting students in their home and ministry communities or ensuring the education brought to the Learning Circle holds practical familiarity with real world application and not abstract theorizing, it is clear that the Keeper of the Learning Circle will require a deep familiarity with Indigenous people, communities, and the lived experiences of colonial impact and identity restoration.

Integral to the Ministry Training Program and to the success of students is the *way* this role is done. Before outlining specific duties and responsibilities, it is important to mention that this role asks us to move beyond simple completion of the duties outlined in a job description. Rather, they ask us to consider *how* to live them out in a manner that aligns with a decolonial vision of Indigenous leadership and healing. For each duty and responsibility the Keepers of Learning should consider:

- *How* can this task facilitate the empowerment of students and communities?
- *How* can this task foster Indigenous leadership development?
- *How* can this task assist in a student's personal reconciliation and help them achieve the goals of Indigenous Testamur?

With an eye to these visions of decolonization, the Keeper of the Learning Circle should seek to carry out the completion of their duties with these objectives as their goals. Often the means we use are also the ends we arrive at; the way we walk informs the destination we arrive at. If you understand very deeply the experience of colonialism, and have a deep knowing about what is happening to Indigenous people at an individual and communal level, this knowing will direct toward solution-focused strategies. In Indigenous knowledges, you know something when you know it with your heart, mind, body, and spirit. This knowing/learning has to be an embodied and holistic approach to working with people. The following analogies are meant to help further explain the *way* Keepers of Learning can embody these tasks.

The Keepers of Learning as Navigators or Wayfinders

Sometimes, when Learning Circles are in session at SSSC, students will sit outside in the evenings. If you ever find yourself fortunate enough to be around when a student who is learned in the old ways is sharing their observations, you'll quickly learn that they are skilled readers of the sky. The wind, the colours, the clouds, the time of year; all inform their reading of what tomorrow may bring. Similarly, Polynesian Wayfinders were the Indigenous navigators of the ocean ten centuries before Christ. They read the sun, the measure of the stars breaking the horizon, winds shifting in speed and direction, swells moving through the canoe, currents, clouds, and waves. Should the canoe shift course, the navigator would know by taking in information from a variety of sources using a variety of skills. "The navigator must process an endless flow of data, intuitions, and insights derived from observation and the dynamic rhythms and interactions of the constantly changing world." Still, "the genius of

Polynesian wayfinding lies not in the particular but the whole, the manner in which all these different points of information come together in the mind of the Wayfinder” (Davis, 2009).

For the time being, the path to and practice of ministry remains a difficult journey through an oftentimes swampy landscape that includes the re-creation of new structures and unknown paths. A wayfinder or navigator is one who knows the landscape of these systems and can foster trust by providing guidance along pathways for each student. Someone who can read the landscape, explain options, empower a student’s self-determining decision-making abilities, help to clear unnecessary obstacles from the path, and provide supports or alternative routes when the journey becomes particularly challenging. In other words, the Keeper of Learning Pathways, as Wayfinders, require a deep awareness of how the church structures work and how students move through them to achieve the recognized National Indigenous Council Ministry recognitions as well as continue on their own healing journeys.

There is both an external landscape and an internal landscape that students are navigating; and wayfinders need to acknowledge and take in information from the dual nature of this journey. This requires flexibility for a student’s pathway, especially as the Learning Pathway itself needs to come into ever increasing awareness of and alignment with Indigenous Testamur. There is no exact way, structure or pattern to do this. We have to remain attuned to the lives, circumstances, cultural contexts and lived experiences of students and their communities amidst decolonizing journeys. We must wayfind, amidst unknown ways. Yet, there is still much that orients this wayfinding, as master navigators know that “you only know where you are by knowing precisely where you have been and how you got to where you are” (Davis, 2009). A wayfinder is adaptive, paying attention, and able to read these landscapes to bring information from a variety of sources into alignment to help navigate the way forward.

The Keeper of the Learning Circle as Guides or Shepherds

This shepherding role is perhaps best exemplified by the lives of healthy elders that regard others in a safe, guiding and caring way; offering wisdom, passion, and clear vision; people who are non-judgmental and never oppressive or overbearing toward others. Guides of this nature are *with* someone, not going before them or pushing them from behind. As SSSC staff we model for students our experience of going through the training and affirming our ministry call. Jesus said, “My sheep hear my voice,” and even in a great crowd when a shepherd calls the sheep hear and follow their trusted leader. Fostering this trust is essential. A student’s journey is in their control, and the place of trust is core to individual and communal healing. Guides and shepherds help others to find their own path, providing the space and encouragement for them to step into who they are and find their way forward.

This is especially important to name since the learning circle is situated amidst educational and church spaces that are not neutral; there are many intersecting and overlapping harms and traumas that stem from these systems and intersect with student and community well-being. By staying attuned to these realities, the Keepers of Learning can facilitate Sandy-Saulteaux’s commitment and intention to hold courageous and safe space in the midst of complex and on-going trauma and colonial harm. This means there is trauma that comes into the learning environment so we cannot promise a completely safe space or one that isn’t going to make people feel challenged. However, SSSC remains committed to an understanding of the dynamic nature of trauma and its change over time in working with people in caring ways. The circle is a space where we know trauma is present and we are able to hold it together with loving-kindness toward ourselves and others. SSSC intends and hopes to hold space for students to

do this work, and is committed to their well being by providing supports amidst trauma, allowing students to develop the gift of who they are, and by walking alongside them in ways that are responsive and attuned to student's journeys and needs; helping them articulate what their own needs for learning and healing are. The following themes are meant to help further orient the tasks of the job descriptions.

1. Demonstrating Compassionate and Informed Oversight of Student Learning & Progress

Compassionate and informed oversight recognizes that we all enter the circle from diverse places in our journey with diverse experiences, gifts, and goals. Everyone has their own answers for their lives, and part of our role as a member of the learning circle, whether student or staff, is to respectfully facilitate people in their own work. It is not thinking for others or knowing what they need without their input or attunement to their own story, journey, or gifts.

2. Enacting Strengths-Based & Student-Centred Approaches

The Keepers of Learning should promote and use solution-focused and strengths-based approaches in student learning; acknowledging what went well and providing thoughtful and constructive feedback about things students can and should work on. This is in contrast to approaches that focus on problems or challenges or that name what went bad or wrong in critical, shame-inducing, or reactionary modes. A student's learning journey should be just that: an enriching and life-giving time for learning that includes meaningful forms of constructive feedback from the many relationships in a student's pathway. Each of these play a role in helping to inform their on-going learning in supportive and relational ways. In this regard, communication is key; sometimes the processes we use to communicate and the way things are said is what is able to honour or dishonour a student's struggles, gifts, successes and their broader life journey.

Students always need to take priority over the system's requirements and this often requires careful discernment and walking alongside to help a student navigate systems and challenges on their pathway. It may also mean asserting this student-centered approach within systems, meetings, and groups of people that instead tend to center agendas, schedules or expectations and patterns. Similarly, students also need to take priority in decisions made in the learning circle. Educational leadership is about knowing when to throw the agenda away or when sticking to it becomes a form of re-asserting control. Prioritize the needs of all in the circle in order to hold space for hard discussions and hard emotions, and in the process cultivating space for people to heal and bloom into who they are.

3. Providing Trauma Informed Care & Support

Personal and intergenerational trauma has deeply affected Indigenous communities and requires skilled, knowledgeable and compassionate oversight by staff that are in their own journey of healing and can foster it in others. The Keepers of Learning must have skills and resources to deal with their own personal history and maintain the ability to work with students while facing resurfacing of trauma. The Keepers of Learning should uphold a commitment to ongoing personal and professional development and gaining new skills to further develop trauma-informed care practices. They should also display an openness to learning and centering Indigenous care practices and deepening understanding of the contexts of trauma that shape students' skills and orient their learning journeys.

4. Respecting Diverse Student Pathways and Progress

Student-centered learning is also student-directed learning. Ultimately, students are responsible for their pathway; to direct their learning toward their goals in alignment with who they are. In the

recognition that students may have different ways of needing to do things or may have already discovered diverse learning strategies in their life journeys, the student pathway can and should look very different, and “progress” can and does mean many different things for different people based on their own life experiences, gifts, and goals.

5. Motivating Student Success & Marking Milestones

There are many milestones to pass in a student’s journey in ministry training. This requires a careful and sometimes meticulous understanding and completion of requirements, and documentation of progress. Compassionate and informed oversight that is student-centred includes everything from knowing what a student brings to the learning environment; documenting completion of Learning Circles and other curricular credits; knowing and helping students meet other program requirements; adjusting supports according to student needs; and being an encouraging and positive motivating influence.

6. Being Attuned to SSSC’s Decolonizing Journey in Connection to the Indigenous Church

The roles of the Keepers of Learning are tied to the life of the broader Indigenous Church and the communities that compose this fellowship. These two roles, while they remain rooted in the SSSC Wabung Process, are now also unfolding in the wake of a UCC restructuring process that transformed a 30-year-old Indigenous grassroots liberation movement into an unfolding new structure. This is a hugely challenging development with much lamentation for the loss of what was. This is an important context to name. The current reality includes new structures recreated within and by Indigenous communities of faith, with some structures that do not exist that require time, flexibility, support, consensus driven dialogue and process toward self-determination. Staff should be attuned to these turning points and their increasing strength in the wake of the TRC, the affirmation of UNDRIP, the Calls to the Church, greater awareness of the forms of spiritual violence committed against Indigenous communities, and the reclamation and resurgence of Indigenous peoples about who they are and how they wish to do things.

This reality also names an important signpost in the relationship between the Indigenous Church and the UCC more broadly. The Indigenous church, and by extension SSSC, is not focused on enforcing colonial policy; but rather resisting it, contesting it, reshaping it, breathing new life into it; and offering this back as a gift that could spark fires of renewal and healing for all people. Further, current reality demonstrates that colonization is understood within the UCC as an idea, history, or set of events, but not as a structure that needs to actively be dismantled. Colonization is a structure and structuring. A “re-structuring” based on the needs and resources of the colonial structure but not on reconciliation or the well-being of Indigenous peoples is problematic. In the wake of the UCC restructuring, not only does the Indigenous Church have to re-create structures by and for themselves at all places, levels, and relationships; they must do so in a way that seeks to dismantle colonial structures that many in the broader church seem ignorant of; all with inadequate and tenuous resources or robust self-determination.

Indigenous self-determination requires deep listening and consultation with Indigenous communities. We seek to foster this community consensus process through our students and their communities of faith in order to get us to where we collectively need to be. Failure to do this will evoke important voices responding: “nothing about us without us.” Lastly, it is important to name that the effects of this restructuring process have been experienced uniquely by students and communities who have

encountered diverse impacts and realities from them. Both students and communities have uniquely processed these changes within varying degrees and stages of decolonizing journeys. Here we seek to continue to promote active and agency centered responses. There is no “someone” who will come and save or fix certain things; and while praying and surrendering challenges to God have certainly played an important role, we all have an active role to play in moving into different decolonial futures that are marked by care and belonging.

7. Employing a Decolonial Imagination

As staff remain attuned to these turning points in the broader Indigenous Church, they must also come alongside to imagine new ways to do things that foster these visions of consensus driven process and reclamation of Indigenous Testamur. Seeking liberation requires the “capacity to imagine something rooted in the challenges of the real world yet capable of giving birth to that which does not yet exist.” The Keepers of Learning will need to employ an imagination that stays present to these challenges while seeking to break out of “narrow, short-sighted, and structurally determined ends.” These structurally determined ends have a long history of violence; “violence is the behaviour of someone [or some system] that is incapable of imagining other solutions.” As such, we require a different imagination that focuses on solutions; a capacity to recognize turning points and possibilities in order to venture down unknown paths and create what does not yet exist; a capacity to imagine and generate constructive processes that are “rooted in the day-to-day challenges of violence and yet transcend these destructive patterns” (Lederach, 2005).

A decolonial imagination knows how to be okay with mystery; with what is unknown; with what is not controlled. It seeks out moments of possibility, and the liminal spaces where new life is generating itself. The place we need to get to collectively has many unknowns about it, these unknowns are not problematic, but rather are vital and needed; they are the organic coming together of what might yet be. It is difficult to hold space for this, especially because these unknowns may be uncomfortable, appear too messy, or out of control to minds that are used to controlling or answering everything with immediate certainty or with answers that have been conditioned by colonial systems. Cultivating decolonial imagination is an ongoing task, marked by openness and willingness to continually examine our conditioned thought process. It is a combination of knowing and doing, living by what one learns to imagine other ways of doing that lead to other ways of being. Constructing social change in the wake of and in the midst of such extreme forms of colonial violence, necessitates that we decolonize our minds; that we seek out and employ new imagination. “The soul of sustaining change requires the art of seeing and building webs; it requires the craftsmanship of a spider. We must learn to be smart and flexible about web-building” (Lederach, 2005).

KEEPER OF THE LEARNING CIRCLE DUTIES

Keeper of the Learning Circle Works Collaboratively in a Team

The Keeper of the Learning Circle will need be attuned to the flow of the program's calendar, both as Learning Circles approach and during busy times of reporting to ensure the many details and logistics are covered. The ebb and flow of this work is that there are busy times and less busy times; high levels of cooperation and communication are needed to work as a team that displays the principles of Indigenous leadership. They will need to develop an ability to troubleshoot in times of crisis and work to meet goals amidst challenges and complexities. For example, the focus will shift in preparation for busy seasons, in helping to meet reporting needs, circle logistics, and to prioritize student needs in the rhythm of the school's calendar. In this way, the Keeper of the Learning Circle sets the tone for forms of reciprocal community care of all who enter the circle. In light of this, below are the responsibilities of the Keeper of the Learning Circle:

- Budget & Finances (With support from Keeper of the Centre)
- Relationship & Community Building - Talking/Listening/Sharing Circles/Meals/Being Present
- Being a Supportive Presence to Students
- Shared access to student files and upkeep.
- Co-Writing & Sending Reports
 - Program staff are writing reports for students who they are in primary relationship with, this may change from year to year on a student's pathway.
 - Reports are/may need to be sent to Indigenous Office of Vocation, Student's Community, Student's Field Placement, National Indigenous Council.
 - Keeper of the Learning Circle will need to work with these community partners to develop a form of reporting style that works (i.e. take advantage of the opportunity to create our own report style in the wake of the structuring process).
 - This Reporting style should include a mode to receive reports back from community, field placements, Vision Keepers, IOV, NIC as feedback for students.
- Orientation/Intake/Assessment for New Students and Student's Learning Pathway
- M. Div. Course Accreditations from SSSC Circles - Communication with Emmanuel & VST - Team effort with Keeper of the Circle being primary person of communication.
- Communications with Indigenous Office of Vocation
 - The Keepers of the Learning Circle reports on both student progress and student readiness; they also both weigh in on a student's field placement site. Clear, trusting, and open communication that involves all parties will need to be established and respected.
- SSSC Ceremony of Celebration (Student-led, with support from the Business Assistant and Bookkeeper, and both Keepers)
- Staff Support for the Program Committee (A policy making body whose purpose is to oversee the development and implementation of all programming). The Program Committee approves New Student Applications & SSSC Financial Bursaries. It is concerned with 5 Key areas, some of which are more closely supported by each Keeper:
 - Policy (Policy Development, including Student Handbook & Student Policy & Procedures)
 - Curriculum (Including Input on teachers and elders for upcoming learning circles)

- Recruitment
- Outreach/New Programming, including continuing education programs
- Student Life

KEEPER OF THE LEARNING CIRCLE JOB DUTIES

At SSSC, a student's learning pathways involves another goal alongside the goal of ordination or commissioning: this is a student's personal reconciliation and healing. A student's pathway involves all of the circles of support and ministry as places to grow and develop alongside the learning circles. In the learning circle, and the circles on a student's pathway, there is always a give and take flexibility that makes room for each one's gifting and energies to have their influence; and a student's pathway should move increasingly toward Indigenous Testamur. Student learning pathways should be marked by care, discovery, celebration, and support. The building and maintaining of trust is essential for the pathway to function well. Ultimately, students must take leadership and responsibility of their learning pathway, but the Keeper of the Learning Circle can function as an extremely helpful guide and support that helps navigate complex systems, requirements, and the sometimes challenging demands of a student's holistic learning pathway and the ways this rubs with a colonial structure's systems and demands. The circle, from the staff team, to the Learning Circle, to all of the circles of support and ministry of each student is the safe place to grow and develop. In the circle there is always a give and take flexibility that makes room for each one's gifting and energies to have their influence. The building and maintaining of trust is essential for the circle to function well. The circle is where we model for students the vulnerability required to work effectively in Indigenous communities, especially in the light of harm perpetuated by a colonial blindness that does not go away in a simple apology. The difference of this reciprocal learning circle model and the mode of practical learning within a student's various circles of support is key to the circle model. Below are the primary responsibilities of the Keeper of the Learning Circle:

- Cultivating a robust understanding of the requirements and rhythms of a student's pathway.
- Orienting students and a student's circles of support to the Learning Pathway;
- Developing Resources with the IOV that clearly communicates the pathway to Ordination/Commissioning and helps students see what is expected of them and what they can expect to occur over their journey to ministry.
- Supporting relationships with Guest Students & School Partnerships (i.e St. Andrews, The Centre for Christian Studies, etc.)
- VST–SSSC M. Div. Partnership (Logistics for VST Summer School (Applications, Bursaries, Lodging)
- Communication on Student Progress with First Nations Education Authorities (Where applicable for students); including assisting students to apply for funding following admission.
- Communication with Anglican, Roman Catholic, or other denominations; Support for the building of ecumenical relationships with the centre.
- Helping with the Administrative arrangement of Student Counselling.
- Supporting conversation with IOV and SSSC students to facilitate the set-up of field placements (These are set up by the IOV).
- Advising/Meeting with Students during the Learning Circle to touch base on student progress and upcoming requirements or expectations; shepherding students through Pathway and walking alongside them in their journey between learning circles (can look many different ways)

- Approving Student Travel Expenses (With Keeper of the Centre)
- Supporting students with outstanding Journals where required in communication with Keeper of the Learning Circle; Keeping Notes on the Page Learning 12 of 13 Circle Sessions toward this goal and to keep a record for the planning of future circles.
- Planning 8 Learning Circles with Indigenization a priority
 - Finding Elders & Resource People
 - Finding Books/Resources in liason with the resource person
 - Designing the Week (syllabus & schedule) in liason with the resource person
 - Submitting Honourariums (With the Keeper of the Centre and Bookkeeper)
- Student Letter – follow up phone calls – communication to students before circles
- Student Journals - Reading journals; providing feedback
 - Working with students to create alternative assignments/ways to submit journals
- Visiting Students in Community Based Field Placements
- Vision Keeper Contact/Communication/Orientation
- Course Development
 - Providing opportunities that align with Student Learning Goals & Indigenous Testamur
- Advising/Meeting with Students during Learning Circles about Learning Goals, Weeks Learning, providing student feedback
- Alumni Group & furthering supports and pathways for connection with graduates, including planning for continuing education opportunities (in collaboration with the Keeper of the Circle).