

HISTORY AND GOALS OF THE MTS DEGREE PROGRAM

One of the primary goals of St. Stephen's College MTS Degree Program is to provide a flexible yet structured course of study for the adult learner to explore theological concepts and constructs. The program is designed to enhance the discernment of the reality that there exist many paths to truth, theological world-views, and spiritual interpretations.

Originally a Certificate in Theological Studies (CTh), the first program was established to provide lay persons with a means to explore theological concepts beyond basic church teachings and traditions. The CTh did not require a pre-requisite degree. However, it was not an academic degree and therefore could not be applied to advanced theological degree programs.

As time progressed, congregations and volunteers in the church and community were seeking to stretch their understanding of Deity and to engage in theological reflection. The examination of the intersection of faith and practice – the ethics of right leadership, the justice of inclusion, the respect of personhood specially women and minorities, the interdependence of any community, and the enrichment for life and ministry – strengthens and transforms individuals, church, society and the world. Armed with this belief as well as the knowledge that lay persons were searching for an academic theological degree program, the Master of Theological Studies Program (MTS) was developed for St. Stephen's College.

While continuing the values of adult education and exploration within the realm of theology and ministries in many denominational and faith traditions, the MTS Degree Program is an entry point in the collaborative community of theological studies. Developed within the context of collegiality, the program includes academic rigor and practical application of theological constructs explored in foundational classes such as scripture, ethics, church history, and spirituality. Whether choosing the Thesis or Integrative Study route, students are presented with the opportunity to develop their ability to critically analyze that which is presented within an ethos of support and friendship. This exploration of transformative learning within an interfaith environment assists learners in connecting faith questions and everyday living.

Upon completion, graduates of the MTS Program have found success in teaching, chaplaincy, congregational work, ministry, and many other diverse careers. Our students are an active part of society and its many faith communities. St. Stephen's College takes great pride in the creative theological leaders who have graced our Master of Theological Studies Program.