

Perspectives

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SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES ON DEATH AND DYING: AN INTER-RELIGIOUS CONFERENCE

VST's Inter-Religious Studies Program brings together leading experts to share knowledge and spiritual practices that transcends cultural boundaries...

Also inside this issue of Perspectives...



Student profiles
Samuel Grottenberg, Jackie Graham, and Young Tae Choi



Principal's 2018 Report



Indigenous Studies Program Update

and more!



Perspectives

SPRING/SUMMER 2018

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INDIGENOUS STUDIES PROGRAM

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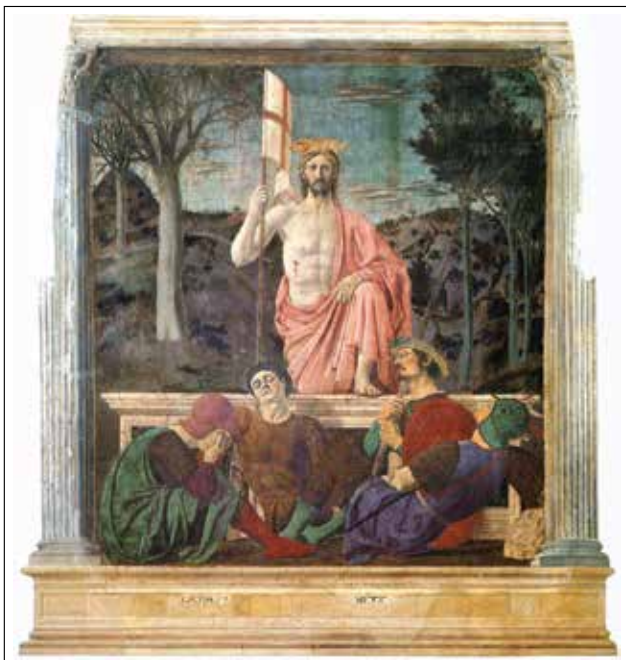
PRINCIPAL'S MESSAGE

From VST's Principal, Richard Topping

A friend of VST called me, she got my number from our recent fund-raising campaign for student support. She wanted to know: 'How much is tuition at your school for a full-time student?' The answer is approximately \$8000.00. A half-time student pays half of that: \$4000.00 in tuition per year. Costs for books and incidental student fees can amount to \$2,000.00 a year. "You should tell us that in your letter." I agreed that I should do that. I told her I would include it in the next edition of *Perspectives*.

It is important to know that bursary support is available for students who demonstrate financial need and scholarships are awarded to students of academic achievement and promise for ministry. VST also has an inventory of work opportunities for students, in our chapel, in our library and in support of various aspects of our operations. Students are active in raising their own support to an amazing degree. Numbers of them report that because of bursary and scholarship support, as well as employment at the school, they were able to come to VST.

However, we do want our students to be free as possible to concentrate on their studies. The more support we can give them the more time they have to excel in study and in the seminal extra-curricular activities of the school. Theological education is almost always a once-in-a-life-time opportunity to concentrate on study in life-shaping way. Further opportunities for professional development will certainly happen, VST provides them and we encourage life-time learning; but focussed and cumulative learning for ministry is usually unique to the seminary experience. And we want to make the most of it.



I'm glad to report that when I got a phone call inquiring 'How much tuition is for a full-time student?' I also received a donation in that same amount. Such generosity helps us keep our promise to educate and form thoughtful, engaged and generous Christian leaders. With such support students can fully participate in the seminary experience of preparation for ministry in the church and for the world. I invite you to help us keep our promise through your support of our students for service to our churches and communities.

In this season of Easter, I wanted to share a postcard painting a friend sent me around Easter time. It is called *Resurrection* and it is by the 15th century Italian artist, **Piero della Francesca**.

In it the risen Christ stands, his side pierced; the mark of a cruciform overcoming. On the left of the picture mature trees are dead, there is no foliage and the ground is rough. On the right, there is new growth, the leaves burst green and lush; the rough places are smooth. It is a new creation. The new life of Jesus brings new life to this world.

And just so we know the power set loose in the world through the resurrection of Jesus, Roman guards crumble to the ground: "the guards tremble and become like dead men," says Matthew. Not only does the world rumble and shake; not only has God broken the grip of death on the world, the power of certain kinds of might is undone. A new reality is birthed. New certainties begin to take hold in the world that God so loves. It is a triumph, but not triumphalism. For it is the beginning of the victory of the power of love over the love of power!

Happy Eastertide!

Richard Topping (604-822-9808)

SPIRITUAL PERSPECTIVES ON DEATH AND DYING: AN INTER-RELIGIOUS CONFERENCE

Submitted by Shannon Lythgoe

When asked how the theme of the upcoming **Spiritual Perspectives on Death and Dying** conference came about, Inter-Religious Studies Program Director Laura Duhan Kaplan says, “current events.” Recent legislation regarding medical assistance in dying has sparked broad conversation on societal values around death. These conversations, Laura says, have led to a shift in values. In the past, many people avoided thinking or speaking about death. Today, these same people realize that, in certain circumstances, death can be welcomed and embraced.

As a pastoral caregiver, Laura has accompanied many adults through illness and death. Almost everyone, she says, who experiences a terminal illness comes to accept the inevitability of dying. They begin to prepare for it in a way they might not have, had they been healthy. Often, they draw only on their own inner resources. No one taught them the rich cultural knowledge about death and dying, available from a variety of traditions. This conference takes a small step towards sharing that knowledge.

Laura’s personal connection with the issue is profound. When Laura was an infant, her four-year-old brother passed away. Her parents—products of the times and their cultural influences—chose not to tell her and her younger brother about their sibling. So, they grew up in a family torn apart by a secret, unacknowledged grief. The children adapted to being the comforters of their grieving parents. But Laura wishes they had known their parents were sad and angry about Freddy’s death, so they could have had greater compassion and understanding towards them. Eventually, Laura and her brother pieced the facts together and approached their parents, and they grieved as a family. On reflection, Laura understands that her parents didn’t have the cultural toolkit or pastoral support to help them process their own experience and support their other children.

North Americans, says Laura, have both gained and lost from the medicalization of death. We have gained facilities where people can receive expert care during their final months. Often, this care is better than home care. But we have lost the opportunity to support our relatives and friends as they die. Because we rarely see or participate in the dying process, we’ve lost the role models we can learn from. Fortunately, we are starting to remember why it’s healthy for people to help care for their dying loved ones.

Why organize an inter-religious conference to discuss spiritual implications of the dying process? Laura says that



From left to right: panelists Laura Duhan Kaplan, Philip Murray, Adam Rubin, Arun Chatterjee, Sally Thorne, and Ashley Moyse

different religious cultures have emphasized different aspects of care in the dying process. We can all learn from the resources developed by these traditions. For example, **Hindu** and **Buddhist** traditions excel in teaching non-attachment and equanimity in the process of dying. **Christianity** instills hope in eternity and an afterlife. **Jewish** traditions provide outstanding support for grieving family and friends. Helpful intersections can occur when people from different traditions get together to talk and learn from one another.

The keynote speaker for the conference is **Dr. David Kuhl**. David, a physician working in palliative care, was trained to maintain a clinical distance from his patients. Over time, he realized that holding himself separate from his dying patients was artificial. As a human being, he had so much in common with them.



Keynote speaker, Dr. David Kuhl

He began to listen and engage with his patients at a more profound level. He shared some of his learnings in his well-known book *What Dying People Want: Practical Wisdom for the End of Life*. David has since branched out professionally in several directions. His current work supports families of people who are dying. When someone is part of a family system, their dying process includes the whole unit—adults, teens, and children. David’s presentation,

cont. on next page

We Die Alone, and Yet We Don't, will be an interactive conversation with Laura and the audience. David's keynote presentation is the one conference event that is free and open to the public. (All other events are open only to those who registered for the entire conference.)

The conference begins with a panel discussion of spiritual perspectives on medical assistance in dying. Panelists include **Philip Murray**, a Christian VST graduate who works in spiritual care; **Arun Chatterjee**, a Hindu VST graduate who works in spiritual care; **Dr. Sally Thorne**, a Jewish Professor of Nursing at UBC; **Dr. Ashley Moyses**, a VST Research Associate and Christian medical ethicist; and **Rabbi Adam Rubin**, a pastoral care giver and scholar of Jewish law. Panelists will offer medical, theological, and patient-centred perspectives.

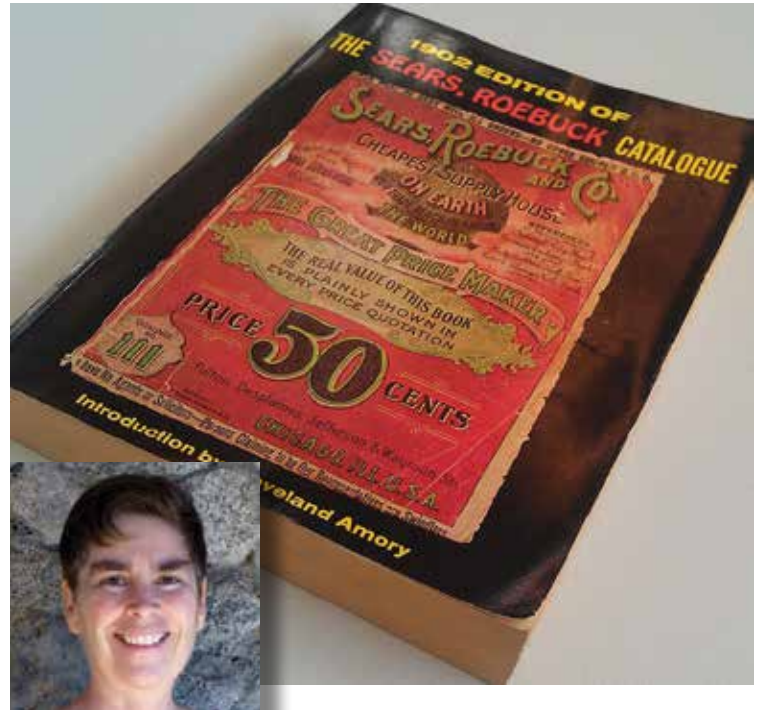
Shorter presentations by scholars from the extended VST community are also on the program. VST faculty, research associates, alumni, graduate students and community colleagues will speak. These scholars represent Christian, Indigenous, Jewish, Hindu, Buddhist, and Islamic traditions. Their talks examine many aspects of dying, including spiritual preparation, grieving, and to social representations of death. A session exploring music for passing and grieving is also planned.

The conference closes with a workshop on *Departure Directions*. **Michelle Pante** and **Rena Lazar**, founders of **Willow: Inspired End of Life Planning**, will help participants examine how they wish to prepare for their own deaths and funerals.

Registered conference participants will have an opportunity to share communal lunches and connect with each other. Some might consider registering with a close friend, to share and process this profound conversation together. Please note that the conference facilities—both the VST building and Epiphany Chapel—are fully accessible.

Because we rarely see or participate in the dying process, we've lost the role models we can learn from. Fortunately, we are starting to remember why it's healthy for people to help care for their dying loved ones.

A Moment's Respite...



Submitted by Kathleen Cabral, 2018 VST graduate

I work at the **BC Women's & Children's Hospital** as a Spiritual Health Practitioner. One day I visited a young boy who was very ill. I asked his mother what might help her son's stay in the hospital. Mom mentioned that her son loves the **Sears** catalogue and has a collection at home. I thought that if the boy had something that reminded him of home, he might be temporarily distracted from pain, boredom, discomfort, homesickness and so on. And this, of course, eases Mom's suffering. I then wondered where in heck I might find a catalogue since I knew the Sears stores had just closed. I remembered that my parents used to have Sears catalogues around the house. So, I called my parents in Calgary and asked my Dad if they still had catalogues. Dad wasn't sure but mom looked around and found the only one they had left. My dad couriered it to Vancouver and I received it within a few days.

My dad, always a big softie for kids (Mom too), also enclosed three catalogues from **Hammacher Schlemmer**. This company is 166 years old and offers novelty products like underwater sports cars that sell for, say, a mere two million dollars. The child lives in a remote community so you can just imagine his delight when he saw such marvellous things. As a side note, the catalogues also provided some stress relief for other members of the healthcare team on a busy day. The really astonishing part of this story is that the boy was missing one catalogue for his home collection: a 2013 edition. Guess which one my parents sent? Yes, that very one.

Update: Kathleen Cabral informs us that the young boy in question recovered fully, and has gone home to resume a healthy life!

VST'S ASHLEY MOYSE PREPARES FOR A NEW ROLE ACROSS THE POND...

Photo courtesy Sonali Nathwani



Ashley will continue to study the Christian moral tradition, which cultivates resources and grounds embodied practices for the mending of our late modern constructed and commoditized world.

Submitted by Shannon Lythgoe and Ashley Moyses

Ashley Moyses was born and raised in **Estevan**—a coal mining and oil town in the southeast corner of **Saskatchewan**. His Dad was an elementary school teacher and Principal, and his Mom was a nurse. Ashley grew up in the Free Methodist church, but has transitioned through a few others churches along the journey, finding rest and ecclesial formation in both Anglican and Mennonite congregations. He confesses he didn't give much thought to theology as he was growing up, but upon high school graduation he ended up going to **Messiah College**—a Brethren in Christ Church affiliated college—in what was then called Grantham, Pennsylvania, now absorbed into Mechanicsburg. Taking a liberal arts course load, Ashley was required to take courses in theology and religious studies, where he started to develop an interest in the more activist, political side of the Anabaptist movement. It was this interest which started Ashley thinking about ethical problems. By then Ashley had moved into the field of science, ultimately ending up with his Master's degree in Physiology, focussing on cancer symptoms management. Ashley was struck by the fact that the patients who were involved in his research projects and related work at the **University of Northern Colorado** and a private clinic in Denver were asking the deeper questions about the meaning of life and death, for which he felt ill equipped to answer, rather than the mechanics of physiology. And so, combined with his burgeoning interest in such questions, his studies started to focus on theology, ethics, and medicine.

Ashley then started to investigate job opportunities where he could both pursue teaching opportunities in the sciences and begin formal theological education. This led to a move to **Trinity Western University** in the Fraser Valley, where he taught physiology and studied at the seminary, learning much under the supervision of **Professor Archie Spencer**. At the same time, he supplemented his studies with courses taken through **Loyola University Chicago** and the **Neiswanger Institute for Bioethics and Health Policy**. His thesis was an exploration of the intersection between theology and bio-ethics.

Bio-ethics is field of study that emerged in the 60's-70's in response to dilemmas arising from the biosciences and the practice of medicine that were the result of new technologies. Ashley related examples of two landmark cases that contributed to the development of bio-ethics. The first concerned the issue faced by researchers regarding who should participate in a 1962 research study that involved chronic haemodialysis, which gathered an external committee whose duty it was to select those who would enter the program of study. How do people make decisions about who will or won't be admitted into a study, and how does one justify those decisions and actions over others? Another example provided by Ashley had to do with the traditional definition of death, which was reconsidered and redefined in 1968 after the conclusions of an ad hoc committee report on irreversible coma. Brain death became the operative definition, in part, as a response to the mushrooming field of transplantation. It was out of such works that the field of bio-ethics emerged. Bio-ethics made inroads into academia in the 1980's as certain schools of thought were forged and decision-making paradigms proved effective.

From Trinity Western University, Ashley then moved to the **University of Fraser Valley** where he taught in health sciences. During that time he took a leave to pursue his Doctorate in Theological Ethics at the **University of Newcastle** in Australia. Ashley went to Australia primarily to work with **John McDowell**, a creative **Karl Barth** scholar and an expert in ethics, politics, and the theology of hope.

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Ashley was there for two years, finishing his third year here at the **Vancouver School of Theology** as a Research Affiliate in 2013. He continued to teach at UFV until the end of 2016, when he was appointed to the **John Templeton Foundation Post-Doctoral Fellowship in Theology and Science** at **Regent College**. Meanwhile, Ashley stayed on at VST as a Research Associate and sessional instructor of Christian ethics.

Clearly not one to sit still, Ashley was recently named the **McDonald Post-Doctoral Fellow in Christian Ethics and Public Life** at **Christ Church, Oxford**. He will take up this position at the beginning of October (visas permitting!). His research and professional activities will most likely remain in the field of medical humanities research—dealing with questions about human health and ethics that emerge within the context of the modern medical milieu. The Centre at Christ Church College that Ashley will be attached to is directed by **Nigel Bigger**, who is considered to be a leading Christian ethicist. Ashley's position is a five year

appointment—the third post-doctoral fellow to take up this primarily research position—but he will also have the opportunity to help direct the Centre and undertake some teaching responsibilities and research supervision. He was particularly attracted to the position by the **Oxford Character Project** (see oxfordcharacter.org), and he's eager to explore character and virtue ethics in relationship to medical ethics.

Having lived in the Lower Mainland for a number of years, Ashley and his wife **Aime Nadeau** would like to move back to the Vancouver area at some point in the future. An exciting development in their family life was the adoption of a baby boy from Lesotho in August of 2017, which provides another reason to return as there's a community of children from Lesotho in Vancouver. In the meantime, Aime, currently a teacher in the **Blaine School District**, is looking forward to being an at-home parent to **Theo** while exploring various volunteer opportunities in Oxford.

Ashley himself looks forward to being able to either walk or bike to work in Oxford—a nice change from the rush-hour car culture of the Lower Mainland!



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- Life Insurance
- Gifts of Residual Interest
- Charitable Gift Annuities
- Charitable Remainder Trusts

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Submitted by Rev. Ryan Slifka, Class of 2013

Lead Pastor, St. George's United Church, Courtenay, BC

Since the birth of our third baby in September my limited reading time has become even more limited. This doesn't mean I'm not able to read at all—just that I need to be even more discerning about what I spend time on! Looking back at my most recent bookshelf content, there's a consistent thread of returning to core values and/or principles.

The first is non-fiction: *The Once and Future Liberal: After Identity Politics* by Mark Lilla, Professor of Humanities at Columbia University. Lilla (a liberal/progressive himself) argues that in adopting a politics centered exclusively on identity, the American left has unwittingly helped foster a more antagonistic political climate. Interestingly, he compares the rhetoric to American Puritanism—with its focus on sin, guilt, repentance, and moral purity, with American conservatives thought of as sinners in need of redemptive education. The intentions and goals have been right (inclusion of, and justice for minority and marginal groups), he argues. Yet, the rhetoric has made it almost impossible for the left, especially the Democratic Party to build bridges with people who don't share their political views because it leads with guilt and first requires an ideological conversion. And the most unfortunate result is that they can't win the elections necessary to actually implement

the policies that would most benefit the marginalized because of the emphasis on difference rather than appealing to commonality and the better angels of our nature.

The second is theological and practical: *Preaching the Big Questions: Doctrine's Not Dusty* by John H. Young and Catherine Faith McLean. There are few books on preaching written specifically for a United Church audience, and even fewer on doctrine! Yet Young and McLean bring both together, showing that doctrine is not only alive and well in the United Church, they show just how powerful and necessary the core, historic convictions of the Christian Church are for contemporary preaching. A helpful theological and practical reminder for a church that many proudly proclaim is “non-creedal.”

Finally, what I'm in the middle of reading right now is Thomas Merton's seminal autobiography *The Seven Storey Mountain*. While Merton's attitude is somewhat dismissive of other faith traditions (including Christian ones)—I chalk that up to the zealotry of his recent conversion. Regardless, his book is a very personal testimony about the power of our deep traditions to give us vitality and meaning in the face of the spiritually reductive quality of the modern age. His insights sound contemporary, and are all the more remarkable for having been written seventy years ago at the height of Christendom.



VST Student Lydia Ruenzel receives scholarship from University Hill United Church

In 2015, the University Hill United Church congregation established the University Hill Scholarship in Pastoral Excellence in honor of The Rev. Dr. Edwin Searcy. The \$2500.00 scholarship is awarded to a UCC student enrolled at VST for their final year of study who shows demonstrated promise for outstanding pastoral and preaching ministry, and the work of Christian formation, both in the congregational setting. This year the recipient was Lydia Ruenzel, pictured here with The Rev. Ed Searcy and current U. Hill congregational minister, The Rev. Aaron Miller.

Congratulations, Lydia!

A PARISH PASTOR

VST's Jason Byassee reflects on the ministry of Rev. Dr. David Widdicombe

“Preaching should be more atheistic than Dawkins. It has to ask every week, ‘Why should I believe?’”



Submitted by Jason Byassee, VST
Butler Chair in Homiletics

When I asked **Harry Maier** about his longtime friend **David Widdicombe**, he said “Ask how he got himself thrown out of **Lloyd Gaston’s** class!”

“I accused Gaston of being a Troelschian social liberal,” Widdicombe said, shaking his head

at the arrogance of youth. “I asked him to give a lecture on his historical methodology. He did. I raised my hand first. And he pointed to the door.”

It didn't hurt Widdicombe's academic or pastoral career too badly. He went on to do D.Phil. work at **Oxford** under **Rowan Williams**, the future archbishop of Canterbury. I learned of Widdicombe's work from a volume called *Preaching Radical & Orthodox*, where Widdicombe's fantastic Easter sermon anchors a volume in which **John Milbank**, **Catherine Pickstock**, and **Stanley Hauerwas** also appear. Widdicombe is Rector at **St. Margaret's Anglican Church** in Winnipeg, MB. He shared with me some of his observations from decades in ministry.

One, he said, hire interns. St. Margaret's draws on a number of students from universities and colleges in the surrounding region. Some of these are called into ministry. Put them to work: “Turn the parish over to them and let them run it.” This is a benefit not only to the rector, but also the people: “They're better preachers than me.”

Widdicombe inherited a low church evangelical parish, but left it “as high as it gets.” This transformation was born of an observation: folks will sit in their own church pews and pay handsomely to hear secular choirs perform church music. “But secular choirs can't do it right, because they can't fall to their knees in response.” So he invited choir members to start doing serious chorale music, up to three or four times a year, directed by his wife and music director **Ruth Widdicombe**. “They can sing in Russian now,” he gushes.

Widdicombe's preaching is deeply learned without being self-important. “Preaching should be more atheistic than Dawkins. It has to ask every week, ‘Why should I believe?’” The preacher can only expect a divine rescue late in the week. “You've got to lead them to conversion, not with **Mother Teresa**, but with someone unlikely, unbelievable,” he said.

And you have to shield the agony of preparation from your hearers. “If you're on the roof, you don't need to produce the ladder,” he said.

Widdicombe has enjoyed a rich intellectual life as a parish pastor. He arrives at our lunch with a volume by **Hannah Arendt**, who, he says, once wrote a sympathetic essay about **W. H. Auden's** conversion. He teaches his interns to challenge their hearers intellectually. Longtime church folks “have been there longer than you, they know more, so you can challenge them. In fact, they expect you to, so do the work to preach up to their level.” Rather than attend conferences, Widdicombe has had a habit of flying luminaries to where he serves—**Oliver O' Donovan**, **Stanley Hauerwas**, **Margaret Visser**, **Thomas Lynch**, **Matthew Crawford**, **Joseph Mangina**, **Ephraim Radner**, **Marilynne Robinson**, **George Sumner** and **Fleming Rutledge** have visited St. Margaret's. Not that he only listens to “orthodox” voices. He lauds a certain **A.M. Hunter**, a Scottish Presbyterian, who studied with **Bultmann**. “He knew all the historicist stuff, but then also knew you have to say something constructive.”

So David Widdicombe has done, from VST to far beyond.

Thomas Berger Keynote Speaker at Chancellor's Dinner, September 26, 2018, University Golf Club



Thomas Berger, QC OC OBC, was the leader of the **British Columbia New Democratic Party** for most of 1969, prior to Dave Barrett. Justice Berger may be best known for his work as the Royal Commissioner of the **Mackenzie Valley Pipeline Inquiry** which released its findings in 1977. Berger was elected, at the age of 29, to the **House of Commons** in the 1962 election, and elected to the **Legislative Assembly of British Columbia** in 1966. Appointed to the **Supreme Court of British Columbia** in 1972, he served on the bench until

1983. Berger focused extensively on ensuring that industrial development on Aboriginal people's land resulted in benefits to those indigenous people. In 1981, Berger wrote an open letter to the *Globe and Mail* newspaper asserting that the rights of Aboriginal Canadians and women needed to be included in any proposed charter. Berger's expertise and reputation for thorough and independent assessment were immediately seen as an asset for indigenous communities. In 1995, Thomas Berger was appointed Special Counsel to the **Attorney General of BC** to inquire into allegations of sexual abuse at the **Jericho Hill School for the Deaf** in British Columbia. Berger was appointed chair of the **Vancouver Election Commission** in 2003, and in 2005 as Conciliator to resolve the impasse of the **Government of Canada**, **Government of Nunavut** and **Nunavut Tunngavik Incorporated** in reaching a common way forward for the *Nunavut Land Claims Implementation Contract*.

FREE SUMMER PUBLIC LECTURES



VST is pleased to present its annual Summer Public Lecture series. These talks are open to the general public and are free, so we encourage you to join us and bring all your friends! Look forward to meeting you there...



Tuesday July 10th
with *Philip Clayton*

PROPHETIC PRESENCE IN A WORLD OF FLUX: WALKING WITH THE RADICAL JESUS

We feel on our shoulders, and in our hearts, the weight of a planet in crisis. While some of our theologies may not have stood up to the test, the radical Jesus of the gospels seems to grow increasingly relevant. Why, and in what ways? What would this ancient/future prophet say to a world in flux?

7pm • St. Andrew's-
Wesley United Church,
1022 Nelson Street, Vancouver



Thursday July 12th
Merton Lecture
with *Jim Forest*

THOMAS MERTON: ONE FOOT IN THE WILDERNESS, ONE FOOT IN THE WORLD

Thomas Merton was a Trappist monk living in solitude, without phone, radio or television, and at the same time, through his writings, correspondence and visitors, a man deeply engaged in the world and its troubles, from racism to war. His books, best-sellers in many languages, continue to be widely read and discussed.

6pm reception • VST atrium
7pm lecture • Epiphany
Chapel, 6030 Chancellor
Drive on the UBC Campus,
Vancouver



Monday July 16th
with *Bishop Will Willimon,*

AFTER CHURCH HISTORY: CAN CANADIAN CHRISTIANS EVANGELIZE?

Considering the church's sins in mission and evangelism (the residential schools, the connection between imperialism and mission, etc.), should today's Christians evangelize and be in mission? A post-colonial, post-imperialist, unapologetic apology for Christian witness today.

7pm • St. Mary's Kerrisdale
Anglican Church,
2490 W 37th Avenue,
Vancouver





First Sauder Business Course Cohorts Graduate...

The 2017-2018 academic year has seen the first of our VST students (and faculty!) taking a **UBC Sauder Business School** course through the innovative VST/Sauder collaboration. This program has been developed to help students develop leadership and financial management skills that will translate into their chosen field of ministry. Pictured above are Principal **Richard Topping**, VST Director of Field Education **Brenda Fawkes**, and VST students **Carolyn Rogers**, **Murray Pruden** and **Roberto DeSandoli**. Of these, both Richard and Murray have completed the course, as well as VST student **Alisha Fung** (not pictured). These three will receive their Certificates of Completion at the VST Convocation ceremony in May. Congratulations and well done!

VANCOUVER SCHOOL OF THEOLOGY ANNOUNCES RECIPIENTS OF 2018 DOCTOR OF DIVINITY, HONORIS CAUSA: DR. MARIE WILSON AND THE REV. JAMES SCOTT

Vancouver School of Theology is pleased to announce the recipients of VST's 2018 Doctor of Divinity, Honoris Causa, **Dr. Marie Wilson** and **The Rev. James Scott**. Both Rev. Scott and Dr. Wilson have played a significant role in the recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada.



DR. MARIE WILSON

Journalist and Commissioner to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

Dr. Wilson is an award-winning journalist and broadcaster, civic and community activist, senior executive manager, university lecturer, and member of the **United Church of Canada**. She served as one of three Commissioners to the **Truth and Reconciliation**

Commission of Canada, and recently completed terms as Professor of Practice at **McGill University**, and Mentor at the **Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation**. As a journalist, Marie Wilson's reports tackled complex issues including the Quebec sovereignty referendum and national unity debates, the national Constitutional talks of the 1980's, the settlement of historic Aboriginal rights agreements, the state of health in First Nations and Inuit communities, Papal visits, and the centennial celebrations of the Riel Rebellion. As a Regional Director for the **CBC** she launched the first daily television news service for Northern Canada. As a TRC Commissioner, Dr. Wilson played a central role in launching Canada's ongoing efforts in reconciliation. Dr. Wilson has received honorary degrees from five other institutions in various regions of the country. Other prestigious recognitions include the **Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee** medal, the **Meritorious Service Cross** and the **Order of Canada**.



THE REV. JAMES SCOTT

General Council Officer for Residential Schools

Raised in Toronto, The Rev. James Scott was ordained by the **United Church of Canada** in 1976 and served in pastoral ministry in Saskatchewan until 1980 when his focus turned towards social justice, peacemaking and conflict resolution. Among his commitments

and achievements, Rev. Scott coordinated the national campaign to prevent the return of the death penalty in 1985-87, was the founding Coordinator of the **Collaborative Justice Project** in Ottawa, and served to guide the United Church of Canada in living out its **Apologies to Indigenous Canadians**, including representing the Church in negotiations for the **Indian Residential School Settlement Agreement** in 2006, and the implementation of the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada** from 2008-2015. Rev. Scott was the recipient of an Honorary Doctorate from **United Theological College** in Montreal in 2017. Retiring in December 2015, Rev. Scott continues his commitment to restorative and Indigenous justice through public speaking and volunteerism.

These appointments recognize and affirm VST's long-standing partnership with Indigenous communities through its **Indigenous Studies Program**.



STAFF PROFILE

Getting to know Luis Eduardo Hurtado...

Submitted by Shannon Lythgoe

Folks who come to visit VST often comment on the sparkling clean environment that we enjoy here, and that is a reflection of the fastidious and thorough job that our fantastic maintenance staff do on a daily basis! An integral part of that team is **Luis Eduardo Hurtado**, who arrives at each day around noon and stays until the evening hours.

Born and raised in **Cali City, Colombia**, the third largest city in Colombia, and the world capital of salsa dancing, Eduardo is a keen salsa dancer himself. He was one of six siblings—two boys and four girls, and although raised in poverty, Eduardo recounts his childhood as being a happy and beautiful time. His father was particularly keen on ensuring that his children received a good education in order to better their circumstances, and as a result, upon graduating from high school, and after travelling for two years in the States, Eduardo went on to study architecture for five years and then another year to complete his thesis. His particular field was architectural drawing; apartment buildings, houses, and university campuses. Part of his motivation for furthering his education was to travel, so after he completed his education he worked for another couple of years in Cali City with the **National Bank of Paris** and some travel agencies with an eye to moving abroad. At that point, his sister was already living in Vancouver, so Eduardo applied for a Canadian Visa, which came through in 1982.

When he arrived in Vancouver Eduardo wanted to started working immediately, but as a Spanish speaker, the language barrier prevented him from finding work in his chosen field. He applied and was immediately hired by **Modern Cleaning Services**. He worked at the **Jack Bell Research Centre** at Vancouver General Hospital, as well as VST and a number of other locations, and started working at VST full time in 2007 when former **Principal Wendy Fletcher** hired him to stay on as a VST employee. On May 1st, 2018, Eduardo has been working at VST for twenty-five years, first as a contract cleaner and then as full-time staff.

Eduardo has only been back to Colombia two times, the last time in 1985. In 1986 he brought his mother to **Expo 86**, and this

remains one of his best memories, along with the happy memories of his childhood. As the elder sibling, Eduardo keeps in close touch with his brother and sisters on an almost daily basis, and regularly provides financial assistance to his family back home. He misses his home and family in Colombia, but returning to work there is not possible, as the situation is not favourable for finding a job at his age. But he plans to go back in his retirement, after doing a little more travelling—hopefully in Europe to see the architecture in places like Spain and Italy!

Eduardo extends his gratitude to the people who have supported him to continue contributing at VST, for instance, **Rev. William (Bud) Philips, Kenneth McQueen, Wendy Fletcher** and **Richard Topping**, as well as faculty members & staff—past and present—and the students whose smiles and kind approach make him joyful.

VST BOARD UPDATES

VST welcomes two new Board members, **Bishop Melissa Skelton** and **The Rev. Jessica Schaap**!



BISHOP MELISSA SKELTON

Elected on November 30th, 2013, **Bishop Melissa Skelton** was Consecrated and Installed as the 9th Bishop of the **Anglican Church of Canada's Diocese of New Westminster** in Vancouver, British Columbia on St. David's Day, March 1st, 2014. She is the first female diocesan bishop in the Diocese of New Westminister.

Bishop Skelton was born in the United States and educated at the **University of Georgia, The University of Chicago**, and at the **Protestant Episcopal Seminary**, Alexandria, Virginia. She was ordained a priest in **The Episcopal Church** in 1993.

Bishop Skelton has worked at **Proctor and Gamble** as Brand Manager, at **The General Theological Seminary** as the Vice President for Administration, and at **Tom's of Maine** as Vice President for Brand and Systems Development. She was Rector of **St. Paul's Seattle**, a parish with a deeply reverent worship life that tripled in size over the nine years she was its priest and leader.



REVEREND JESSICA SCHAAP

Jessica Schaap is an alumni of VST (M.Div.) and was ordained in the **Anglican Church of Canada** in 2008. Most recently she served as Rector at **St. Paul's** in Vancouver's West End and previously as assistant priest at **St. James** in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside. She is a keen supporter and student of congregational

development and of how to foster and cultivate the imagination for religious leadership. She is a "**Fresh Start**" facilitator—a program for clergy transition into new charges, a **Provincial Synod** council member for BC and Yukon, and was a co-organizer for a conference on preaching co-sponsored by the **Diocese of New Westminister** and **VST** in September 2017. Prior to ordination she worked for seven years in communications for the digital media industry in BC. She has an M.A. in Communications from **McGill University** and a B.A. in English from the **University of British Columbia**.

The Vancouver School of Theology

INNOVATORS, ENTREPRENEURS AND STEWARDS IN CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION



Photo courtesy of Artisan Photography

Submitted by Tom Berekoff

Many assume that like most Canadian institutions of higher learning, **Vancouver School of Theology** draws upon governmental support. In truth, VST is unique in that it relies exclusively on tuition fees, investment earnings, entrepreneurial efforts, and the generosity of individuals, foundations, businesses, local churches and denominations to enable its work.

It is through the generous expressions by many that the VST education experience is more accessible and affordable, and that its program offerings are highly responsive to the changing needs of today's church. Donor support, through regular giving, support of major projects and new initiatives, and by way of legacy commitments represents over 20% of VST's annual budget.

Integral to its work, VST is committed to being extraordinary stewards of the resources entrusted to it. Much of this support is directed towards providing student awards by way of scholarships or bursaries. In this manner, VST is able to attract promising students, including those whose financial obligations would otherwise pose a barrier.

Additional support is provided to equip VST with Christian thought leaders who make up its faculty, many of whom are actively engaged in research which is asking the big questions about the church today.

As VST becomes even more of a national and international presence, coupled with the use of teaching and learning advances, it is strategically investing in its technologies and facilities to provide an optimal experience for its students as it expands its reach.

Implementing new programs, as reflected by the Indigenous and Inter-religious studies program, the Leadership Studio and its collaboration with the **UBC Sauder School of Business**, requires investment. All of these programs support VST's core mission to lead and provide for the needs of the church.

Today, the Vancouver School of Theology, along with its partnering agency—the **Vancouver School of Theology Foundation**—has entered an era where it can be a leader in Christian higher education, with its students, alumni, faculty, staff, and volunteers all contributing to the school's vision to educate and form thoughtful, engaged and generous Christian leaders for the church and in their communities of influence.

Central to VST are its relationships with the **United Church of Canada**, the **Anglican Church of Canada** and the **Presbyterian Church in Canada**. As VST's program offerings matter to the church ecumenically, VST is also attracting students and new relationships from an even broader spectrum. Its willingness to be inclusive while also being particular is a character strength which makes VST evermore relevant.

This important work is only possible because of faithful and steadfast support, prayers and encouragement.

The board, leadership, faculty, staff, volunteers, students and alumni of VST chooses to celebrate how support flows through it, rather than bemoaning where support does not come.

There is much work ahead for VST as it strives to do even more to meet the needs of the church.

Towards this aspiration, relationship building is the cherished call to action. Led by its Principal, VST welcomes engagement of stakeholders far and near who appreciate the courageous nature of the school's programs. In response, VST also strives to respond to such generosity such generosity with gratitude, proving that investments made in it are worthwhile in it are worthwhile, enduring and produce present and eternal value.

Tom Berekoff, M.A., CFRE
Director of Advancement & Strategic Advisor
tberekoff@vst.edu
604.822.9809

Dr. Richard Topping is the Principal of VST and he invites you into a conversation to hear more of the work at VST, and to explore how you might engage anew or again.

The Vancouver School of Theology is a registered Canadian charity.

The Vancouver School of Theology Foundation is a registered charity in Canada and the United States.

STUDENT PROFILE: JACKIE GRAHAM



Photo courtesy of
Krista Blankley

Submitted by Shannon Lythgoe

Jackie Graham, newly enrolled in the M.Div. program by distance education, grew up in North Vancouver and Vernon. At best her spiritual upbringing was sporadic—she recounts stories shared by her Nana of her being a squiggly child sitting on the front sanctuary steps at **St. Christopher's Anglican Church** in West Vancouver, and also recalls her Nana taking her to Sunday School at the United Church in Edgemont Village in North Vancouver.

With a passion for environmental studies, after high school graduation Jackie moved to Prince George to attend the **University of Northern BC**. Over the course of her education she took a Political Science course, which changed the track of her studies, and she obtained her BA in Political Science. As a student, Jackie was very involved on campus with student government and event planning. When asked whether she started to get any glimmers of her future direction into theology, she recounts that she particularly enjoyed her courses in philosophy during her studies and sees God at work during that time, as her favourite philosophers were **St. Aquinas** and **St. Augustine**.

After graduating, Jackie worked for a time at UNBC in academic advising, and then interned with the legislature in Victoria. Returning to Prince George, Jackie worked again at UNBC

in student recruitment, and then for local MLA **Shirley Bond** as her Constituency Assistant. During her return to Prince George she met her husband, **Jay**, and together they occasionally attended church. As their life unfolded and their family expanded with the arrival of two children, questions began to surface regarding spiritual issues, particularly of the kind of core values associated with raising children.

Jackie's husband got a job working for **UBC Okanagan (Kelowna)** in Enrollment Services. This meant a move to the Okanagan, in particular to Vernon. Although they were excited for the change, the move there turned out to be both heart-wrenching and pivotal, as they were leaving their close community of Prince George. As a result, they came to Vernon in a bit of a fog and feeling at a loss. Jackie identifies this time as a key rupture that brought on a whole slew of spiritual questioning and community-seeking.

It was then that Jackie met someone who would become a dear friend during their children's swim lessons. Her friend was Mormon, and Jackie took the opportunity to pepper her with questions related to spiritual issues. Jackie feels strongly that God was working through her friend to bring her to a place of fully accepting God. The final piece of the puzzle fell into place with the birth of Jackie's third child, at which point she felt as if she had had an epiphany, brought on by her gratitude for the birth of her child. At that point, Jackie and her family started to attend church regularly with intentionality. They found **All Saints Anglican Church**, which Jackie relates as feeling like coming home. Since then they've attended every Sunday for four years. Jackie shares she left a different person after that first Sunday she attended services at All Saints.

All Saints is a vibrant church with innovative liturgy; it encompasses both traditional, choral, and contemporary services. Jackie feels that it was when she first started attending All Saints that she actually heard a sermon for the first time in her life that stuck with her. Up to that point, Jackie felt that church was foreign, alien and scary.

Through her attendance at All Saints, the questions exploded. Anglican liturgy has four lectionary readings on a Sunday; Jackie devoured these and wanted to know more so she began to attend Bible Study. In spite of the steep learning curve, her hunger for learning simply increased. All Saints has a questioning and educational ethos, so lots of courses were available to Jackie, and she joined as many as she could. When they had first arrived at All Saints, there were very few families. Jackie and her family came with 3 kids and shortly thereafter the church started to reactivate the Sunday School. Jackie's family was part of that renewal. Her activities at the church snowballed into a variety of leadership roles, including church council, family events and activities.

Throughout her 20s and 30s, in the background there had always been an interest in the Bible, but every attempt to read it was met with frustration as the language felt incomprehensible to her. After the move to Vernon, a quiet but persistent question began to surface: pick up and read! Jackie remembers reading the very same sentiment in her Hebrew Bible textbook this past Fall, where St. Augustine was quoted as expressing the same thought. Jackie shares that reading the quote was a moment of affirmation. Jackie's attendance in Bible Study continued to fill her with questions and she finally approached her priest for a more guided Bible Study. It was during an evening while reading Exodus that Jackie shares that the Bible came alive and began to consume her. At that point, her priest raised the question of a call to ministry, and encouraged further theological study.

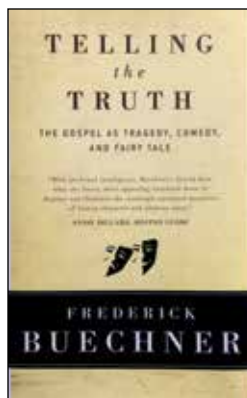
Jackie had begun to question her local clergy about where they got their degrees and discovered connections to VST. Jackie's husband often travels to UBC for work purposes, and on one trip Jackie and her kids came along. She thought it would be interesting to check out VST while waiting for her husband to finish with his meetings, so Jackie arrived with her 3 squirrely kids on a rainy day. Jackie was directed to **Margaret Trim** in the Admissions office, and Jackie fondly recalls Margaret suggesting they chat outside by the playground. She had no idea that VST offered a comprehensive distance education program and wasn't optimistic that she was going to find something that would fit her busy family life, but Margaret filled her in on all the details while the two stood in the rain as the kids played. That was two years ago. Jackie subsequently took the **Thomas Merton Intensive** during VST summer school and found the whole ethos of the school a great fit. Again, she shares a feeling of coming home. She applied for the M.Div. program the following year and started her formal theological training in September 2017.

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Jackie loves the distance education program and truly feels like a VST student even though she remains in Vernon. She's impressed by how hard the school and professors work to provide the best educational experience possible for distance ed students. In addition, she identifies phone conversations with **Dean Pat Dutcher-Walls** as an example of the degree to which VST works at supporting the distance education students. Jackie has been pleasantly surprised at how much she feels part of the VST community even from a distance. She loves the ecumenical, multi-faith nature of the classes, and is very appreciative of the exposure to different denominational backgrounds. In particular, she's enjoying her theology courses and Hebrew Bible class. Jackie feels like she is an example of seminary education for the 21st century, and values how this model of education affords her the opportunity for study she would not otherwise have had. Jackie jokes about taking books out of the 'Topping library'. Richard is always lending out his books. It's another example of VST's support for distance students; research is very challenging from a distance in a small community. As well, faculty work so hard to be inclusive of the distance students and have adapted their pedagogy for distance learning.

Jackie is currently in the church discernment process for postulancy, and God willing, she is hoping to go into ministry full time once she graduates. She's not entirely certain what the future holds and understands that it will largely depend on the needs of the church in her diocese. While hopeful to stay in her area, Jackie is open to seeing where God will lead her in the future!



FUN FACT

*Best-selling author, John Irving, dedicated his book **A Prayer for Owen Meany**, to **Frederick Buechner**. Irving was a student of Buechner's, and considered him a mentor.*

FREDERICK BUECHNER CENTRE CONTRIBUTES TWO \$1000 AWARDS TO VST

Frederick Buechner Prize for Excellence in Writing

VST is grateful to the **Frederick Buechner Centre** for its recent contribution to the school's scholarship program. The **Buechner Prizes** will be given to outstanding Master of Divinity graduates. They are intended to help bring the words, ideas and works of Frederick Buechner to a new generation of clergy, with a particular emphasis on enhancing preaching and writing. Recipients will be chosen by the Faculty and the awards will be made at Convocation.

Frederick Buechner is an award-winning author of more than thirty works of fiction and nonfiction, including the **New York Times** bestseller *A Long Day's Dying*, the Pulitzer Prize-nominated *Godric*, *Wishful Thinking*, *Telling Secrets*, *The Eyes of the Heart*, *The Alphabet of Grace*, and *The Storm*. He has been honoured by the **American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters**.

UPCOMING EVENTS AT VST

Save the Date! for these exciting opportunities for learning coming up at VST in the near future. More information on our website at www.vst.edu — visit our Events page

2018 SOMERVILLE LECTURE "HOPE AND THE ENVIRONMENT"



September 20, 2018 • 7 pm
Epiphany Chapel

Featuring keynote speaker **Leah Kostamo**, Co-Founder of **A Rocha Canada**, a Christian environmental organization working to show God's love

for all Creation. She currently serves as the Spiritual Care Coordinator at A Rocha's **Brooksdale Environmental Centre**. Drawing on her experience of living and working at Brooksdale, in her lecture Ms. Kostamo will consider the role of Christian hope as a way to live well on a suffering planet.

SPECIAL LECTURE & WORKSHOP



October 3-5, 2018 at
Regent College and VST

Featuring keynote speaker **Sarah Coakley**, Norris-Hulse Professor of Divinity, Fellow, Murray Edwards College, Cambridge University

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

MAY 2018

Vision: The Vancouver School of Theology is called to educate and form thoughtful, engaged and generous Christian leaders.

Mission: An education at VST invites:

1. Faithful discernment of the demands of Christian service.
2. Rigorous engagement with Christian tradition and contemporary learning.
3. Hospitable and respectful collaboration with Indigenous spiritualities and other cultures and faith traditions for the good of all creation.

Commitments: As a community of faith, we commit to:

1. Theological education (theological, biblical, pastoral, ethical, historical, Indigenous and inter-religious studies) and formation for the flourishing of God's people.
2. Inspiring lives of discerning Christian discipleship within and outside this community.
3. Respect for the dignity of every person.
4. Learning and scholarship undertaken with diligence and openness.
5. Encouraging prophetic speech and just action for the love and welfare of creation.

Goals:

1. Formation for Leadership: Increase our commitment to educating and forming ministry-bound students for transformative leadership, while continuing to support existing research-oriented programmes.
2. Excellence in Teaching: Inspire excellence in teaching and learning for God's people, and share that learning in multiple venues.
3. Strengthened Church Relationships: Cultivate our relationships with denominations that currently support us and continue ecumenical expansion, locally and internationally.
4. Enhancing IT: Increase our capacity to use information technologies for teaching, and research and programmatic outreach with diverse external publics.
5. Strengthened Community Relationships: Build the VST reputation and nurture a greater community of relationships, e.g., with Indigenous peoples, other religious traditions, UBC, neighbourhood theological colleges.

THOUGHTFUL, ENGAGED AND GENEROUS CHRISTIAN LEADERS

Our calling is to educate and form thoughtful, engaged and generous Christian leaders for the church and the world. Our graduates are thoughtful people, reflective about how to interact with the large issues of our time out of the deep resources of faith. We don't rush to thin relevance, but linger with scripture, tradition, scholarship and conversation with Indigenous neighbours and people of other faith traditions. Our students are engaged, willing to get involved in the world, not just wait for the next one. Our theological ethos is designed to nurture practitioners who are making a difference for God and the gospel. We are convinced that the Risen Christ is always already involved in the world (we're missional); we discern that movement and go with the flow of grace wherever we find it – and it is surprising where it is found. Our graduates are generous people, able to find friends with whom to collaborate for the love of God and the good of the world. We go deep with God in Christ and so wide with the world God loves.

VST is at a pivotal moment in its history, with the opportunity to look forward with great anticipation and profound sense of responsibility in our future service of the church. To this end, the following represents VST's strategic plan which gives focus to our all that we do:

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6. 'First Choice' for Students: Strengthen our recruitment of 'first-choice' applicants from Canada, the Pacific North West and draw students from diverse backgrounds.
7. Strengthened Financial Stewardship: Create long-term financial strength, stability and confidence in the school with responsible stewardship.
8. 'First Choice' for Faculty: Enhance full-time faculty through deliberate recruitment and retention, to complement our current faculty.
9. A Unifying Vision: Sustain and develop a staff, faculty and board who enthusiastically support the vision and mission of the school.



FACULTY UPDATES



Ms. Shari Coltart, appointed Vice-Principal, at the Principal's recommendation, by the Board of VST.



Rabbi Dr. Laura Duhan-Kaplan, Director of Inter-religious Studies and Professor of Jewish Studies contract renewed.



The Rev. Dr. Jason Byassee, Butler Professor of Homiletics and Biblical Interpretation contract renewed, and change in rank from Associate to Full Professor.



The Rev. Dr. Pat Dutcher-Walls, contract renewed as Dean.

VST BOARD/FOUNDATION/EMPLOYEES



The Board of VST is chaired by **Mr. Michael Francis**. This year we appointed **Mr. Iain Black**, President and CEO of the Vancouver Board of Trade, as Chancellor of the School. We are grateful to **Dr. Heather Clarke** for her faithful and effective service as Chancellor over 4 years, for her service on the board of VST for 9 years, and on the VST Foundation board, including as the initial Chair, for four years. **Ms. Helen**

Anderson has taken over the coordination and administration of student awards at VST. **Mr. Tom Berekoff** joined VST in January of 2018 as our Director of Advancement, replacing **Mr. David McMillan** who retired after five years of service.



Mr. Iain Black



Mr. Tom Berekoff



Ms. Helen Anderson

PARTNERSHIPS

The **Vancouver School of Theology** is currently partnering with **Huron College** at the **University of Western Ontario**, an Anglican Theological College, to educate United Church candidates who live around London. Our online program allows students to do the full program without moving.

We have a partnership with the **Sauder School of Business** at the **University of British Columbia** where our students acquire intelligence in the areas of finance, coaching and mentoring, administrative excellence and strategic thinking. Students do four two-day workshops in these areas and obtain a certificate from Sauder at our graduation. This partnership is a direct response to input from our church partners about the kind of leaders they need. This year VST will have its first 3 graduates from this program (**Principal Richard Topping**, and VST students **Alisha Fung** and **Murray Pruden**). VST won a \$47,000.00 (US) innovation grant from the **Association of Theological Schools** for this initiative and became part of a circle of innovators in which new initiatives in theological education are shared.

We are also working toward an agreement with **Durham University**, UK, which we hope will enable us to offer a British Research Ph.D. in Theology at VST in the next year.

The Principal's recent trip to the Philippines included a stop at **St. Andrew's Episcopal Seminary** in Manila and at **Silliman Divinity School** in Dumaguete. Opportunities for partnerships and exchanges with these schools and VST are being investigated. We have already set up and carried out a professorial exchange and have crafted Memos of Understanding.

St. Mark's, a Roman Catholic School on the campus of UBC, rents space in the VST building and we share a virtual online library to resource our distance students.

Vancouver School of Theology will host the **World Communion of Reformed Churches-Anglican International Dialogue on Communion** at the end of August 2018. We are grateful to the **Anglican, Presbyterian** and **United Churches** as well as **St. Andrew's Hall** for their shared support of this important event.

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GRANTS, FINANCES AND FOUNDATION

Vancouver School of Theology has balanced its budget for three years in a row. This has been made possible through the astute management of assets by the Foundation Board of the School, intense fund-raising efforts, and prudent management.

Vancouver School of Theology is also being diligent not to balance our budget on the back of deferred maintenance and efforts to build a reserve are underway.

Every financial gift matters to VST. Several recent financial gifts have helped to distinguish the work of VST. The most significant were \$47,000.00 (US) from the **Association of Theological Schools** and \$60,000.00 over two years from a **private donor** to support our Sauder program; \$175,000.00 over two years to fund the **Chancellors' Scholars**, full funding to pay tuition for two students in their final year who show great promise and; \$400,000.00 from the **Luce Foundation** to support the **Teaching House that Moves Around**. This last award helps us take theological education to Indigenous communities in Canada and the US using Indigenous instructors and methods and is one way in which we are following up on the recommendations from the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission**. **Prof. Ray Aldred**, Cree, directs our **Indigenous Studies Program**. Not all our programs are fully-funded. We gratefully invest significant efforts in fund-raising and stewardship to support programs crucial to the formation of our students.

This year at graduation we have two new awards. The **Frederick Buechner Center** funds two one thousand-dollar awards—one for excellence in preaching and one in excellence in writing. They also send us enough copies of one of Buechner's books for all our incoming students. These awards help to recognize excellence in our student body and we are glad for new awards.



Rev. Ray Aldred



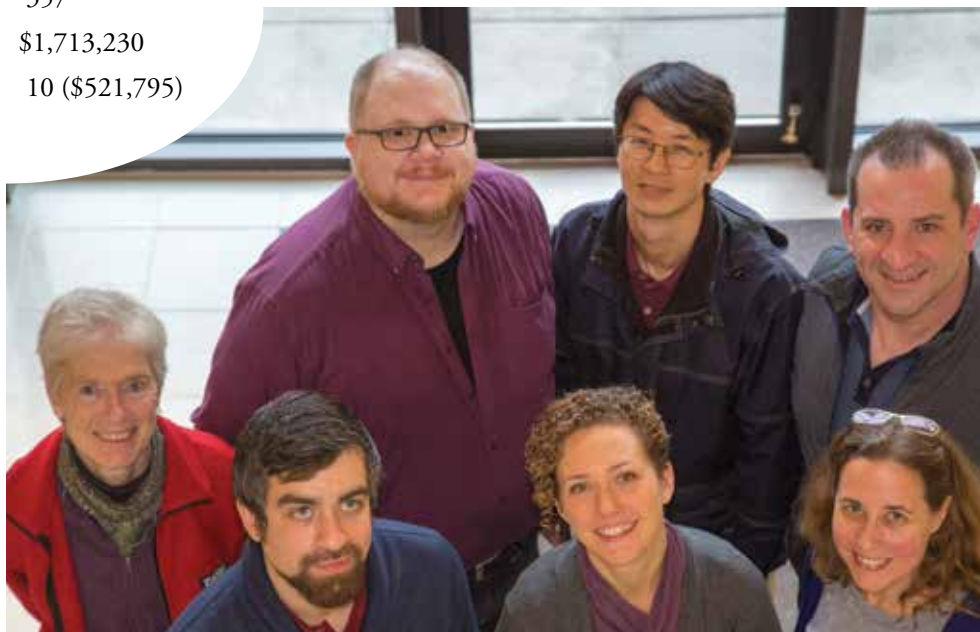
Rev. Julie Lees (far left, front row) with participants of the recent Explorers Weekend

ACADEMIC ENROLLMENT

The fall 2017 head count at VST was **116** and increased in the spring 2018 semester to **129**. The number of course registrations in the fall of 2017 was **236**, a decline of 2% from the fall of 2016. The number of full-time equivalent students in the fall of 2017 was **58** and it increased to **61** in the spring of 2018. The **United Church of Canada** has the largest cohort of students at the school (**42**), the **Anglican Church of Canada** the second largest (**33**) and the **Presbyterians** the third (**21**). We have significant numbers from the **United Church of Christ, US (11)**. We have students from **11** denominations. We have **10** students from other faith traditions enrolled. VST has engaged the **Rev. Julie Lees** as our Recruitment Officer and our efforts are ramping up. We use an online recruitment service which draws in international students. VST has also initiated **Explorers Weekend**, assisting students with travel and accommodation to the school to test their call.

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	2015	2016	2017
Total # donors:	405	388	357
Total donations:	\$1,672,844	\$1,513,883	\$1,713,230
Total # grants:	6 (\$48,900)	9 (\$162,074)	10 (\$521,795)



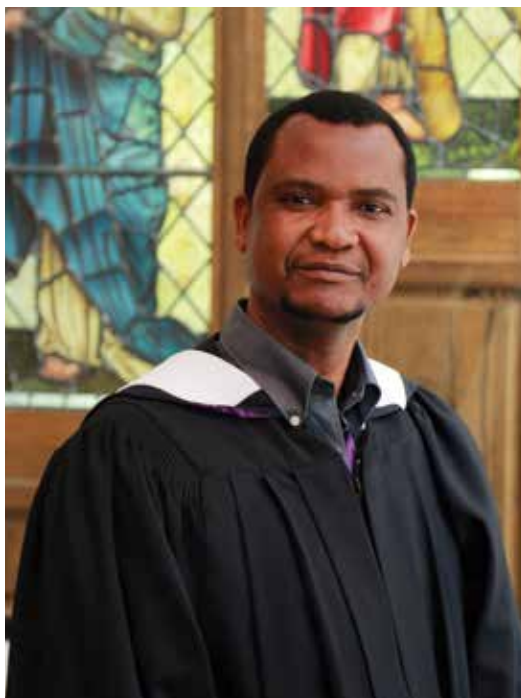
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Applications for the academic year 2018-2019 are the highest volume in ten years. **Theology Sunday**, when 49 staff, students and Faculty lead in services in the Lower Mainland, Vancouver Island, across BC and Alberta, also provides broad exposure to the school and its programs. We are deeply grateful to the churches who welcome this program aimed at recruitment to theological education.

VST ACADEMY

The **Vancouver School of Theology** goes 'on the road' twice a year. Following on the success of our January 2016 mini-MDiv at **Hillhurst United** in Calgary, we have been invited by groups of churches in BC, Alberta, Hawaii and Washington State to bring our program to clusters of churches. Over the course of a few months, a series of professors travel off-site to support the congregational work of Christian education. There is a Friday evening lecture, a Saturday workshop and sometimes a sermon on Sunday morning. Professors accept these assignments as part of their teaching load. Bible, theology, art and faith, spiritual formation, church history and missional theology are included in the offerings. Our faculty has developed an inventory of these mini-courses so that congregations can select the offerings most pertinent to their context. Our goal is to cover costs of travel and accommodation. Recruitment of students to our programs at the school is an outcome of these off-site courses.

We recently held academies in Bellingham and Victoria.



SPECIAL LECTURES/SUMMER SCHOOL

Vancouver School of Theology has hosted formative continuing education events all of which resource the churches. In the fall of 2017, we welcomed **Prof. Will Willimon** for our **Somerville Lecture** and school retreat. He spoke on the topic of *The Continuing Conversion of the Church*. In February of 2018, we welcomed **Prof. Janet Soskice** of **Cambridge University**, our **G. Peter Kaye Lecturer**, who spoke on theme of the mercy of God. This lecture was cohosted with **St. Mark's Roman Catholic College**. Vancouver School of Theology holds a **Summer School** program July 9-20. Instruction in biblical studies, theology and pastoral practice are core elements in the program. This year two courses on preaching will be taught—by the **Rev. Matt Miofsky**, *Preaching for Growth: A Progressive Approach*, and by **Bishop Melissa Skelton**, on *Loosening the Tongue: The Practice of Preaching Without Notes*. We are committed to training for youth and children's ministry and as part of our move to a certificate program welcome **Dave Csinos** with a course entitled *Re-Imagining Ministry with Youth and Children*. Visit www.vst.edu/vst-summer-school/summer-school-2018 for more details.

CONVOCATION 2018

On **May 7**, we conferred degrees, certificates and diplomas on **25** students at convocation at **Shaughnessy Heights United Church**. We awarded two honorary doctorates—on **Dr. Marie Wilson**, Journalist and Commissioner of the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission**, and **The Rev. Dr. James Scott**, United Church Officer for the implementation of the **Truth and Reconciliation Commission**. In May 2017, we conferred an honorary doctorate in absentia on **Archbishop Desmond Tutu**. The degree and hood were hand-delivered in South Africa by board member **Meredith Hannen**. Our convocation speaker for May 7, 2018 is **Dr. David Wilkinson**, Principal of **St. John's College, Durham University, UK**. He will conduct a workshop on May 8 entitled *Hawking, Darwin and Artificial Intelligence: Communicating Jesus in a Scientific World*. Professor Wilkinson is both a scientist, an expert in star formation, and a theologian. It should be a wonderful day together funded by the **Hugh and Helen Mogensen Fund**.

Thank you to our individual donors, churches across Canada, the **United Church of Canada**, the **Anglican Church of Canada**, and the **Presbyterian Church in Canada** for your support and prayers. We offer our prayers for you and for courage to perform the work God has given you to do. We cherish our partnership with you in this work together.

Respectfully submitted,

The Rev Dr. Richard Topping

Principal, Vancouver School of Theology

STUDENT PROFILE: SAMUEL GROTTENBERG

Submitted by Shannon Lythgoe

Samuel Grottenberg was born and mostly raised in Calgary, but also lived in Kamloops where his dad was a United Church minister. Growing up in the church, a major turning point in his teenage years was when he experienced an audible call to ministry from God during a high school Bible study group at the age of 16.

Being a pastor's kid, Sam acknowledges that he didn't necessarily see the ministry as his life's goal. But over a period of time that vision became clearer to him, and the following summer, when he was between Grades 10 and 11, he applied to play piano for a local United Church congregation. The interview / audition bombed, but the minister called him the next day with an intriguing question: what did Sam think about taking on a role in youth ministry? Sam responded that he was only 16, but in the process, he shared the experience of his call with the pastor. During the conversation, that minister sensed that God was allowing him a glimpse of Sam's potential, and the church hired him in spite of his age.

Sam started his first ministry role by forming a youth group, which included two members who were actually older than he was! Sam was thrust into youth ministry without a clue about what he was doing, however, over the course of next four years, he witnessed God do some amazing things in the lives of teenagers through that church. Starting with a Sunday Bible study class, the youth ministry expanded into a Friday night outreach into the community.

Sam started his first ministry role by forming a youth group, which included two members who were actually older than he was!

Sam finished his high school diploma at an accelerated pace and went directly to **Rocky Mountain College**, majoring first in Biblical Studies and then switching to a Youth Ministry major. He continued to work at the church while he was in college. In the last year of his B.A. program, the opportunity arose to take up a position at another church—**Centre Street Church (CSC)** in Calgary, which is part of the **Evangelical Missionary Church of Canada (EMCC)**. CSC is a multi-campus megachurch with many pastoral staff. Sam was the High School Pastor at the Central Campus from 2011 to 2013 and became a Licenced Minister with the EMCC in 2012.

In the following year, he felt the call to move on and took on a role at **Dalhousie Community Church** as the Youth and Young Adults Pastor, retaining his licence through the EMCC. On his first day at Dalhousie, the lead pastor told him he was leaving in six months to plant another church. Sam's job quickly became more than his original role, as the ministry team underwent an eight-month transition period without a lead pastor. This experience provided Sam with the insight that perhaps there was life beyond youth ministry, and he began to foresee a different direction in his

vocation. After the church found a new lead pastor, Sam decided to resign and focus on his graduate studies (he began studying via distance education at **Regent College** in 2013). In 2015, he moved to BC with his wife (whom he has known since kindergarten and married at the age of 19!) and newborn daughter to take up full-time studies. Their second daughter was born while they were living in Vancouver. This was Sam's first experience of dedicating his time to just studying, rather than also working at the same time. Originally enrolled in the Spiritual Theology concentration at Regent, during the first semester he decided to concentrate in New Testament studies in the Master of Arts in Theological Studies program. Sam was pretty worn out from congregational ministry by that point, and was on the verge of burn-out, but he embarked on his studies with an open heart. The two years at Regent College helped to clarify his vocation as encompassing both pastoral ministry and biblical scholarship. He also discovered that his theological journey was leading him back to the **United Church of Canada**. With that in mind, Sam started to look at the Diploma in Denominational Studies that VST offers, and initiated conversations with **Professor Janet Gear** (VST's Director of United Church Denominational Formation), and **Dean Pat Dutcher-Walls**. Together they came up with a plan for the supplemental coursework that Sam would need to complete in order to be ordained in the United Church. He then interviewed with the UCC's **BC Conference** in January of 2017 and was named a candidate for ordination.

Sam's experience of VST has been—in his own words—brilliant. He's found it fascinating to approach the theological disciplines from a new perspective, and to be able to experience the richness of the diversity between denominations and faith traditions. At VST, he's been able to read authors he hadn't read before. His experience of VST and Regent is that they both encompass a wide spectrum of perspectives—they just include different ranges in the spectrum. He's been encouraged to realize that each institution is committed to approaching scripture and hearing God's voice in different but faithful ways. He has definitely felt the beauty of that diversity. Sam was initially a bit nervous about coming to VST and being labelled "an evangelical," but has been made to feel very welcome here. This has served to affirm his return to the United Church, as he's found great fellowship through both classmates and faculty at VST.

Sam recently completed his thesis for Regent College and will also graduate from VST this May. He is currently serving as the Associate Pastor at **Southwood United Church** in Calgary and is waiting to hear about a supervised ministry appointment sometime in the next few months. Once he is ordained, he feels that further post-graduate studies are in his future, but he's committed to remaining in pastoral ministry as well, knowing that having a dual vocation is where his heart is, and where he can best serve Christ's church.





VST Sunday 2018

From the left: Philip Francis (Diploma in Theological Studies student), Rev. Hilde Seal, (Minister of Adult Faith, Pastoral Care and Outreach), Rev. Sophia Ducey (Minister of Children, Family, Youth and Young Adults and Communications), Murray Pruden (Master of Divinity student), and Irene Griffiths (Diploma in Theological Studies student)

Submitted by Philip Francis, Murray Pruden and Irene Griffiths

Every year, on a winter Sunday, VST sends a number of students, faculty and staff out to partnering churches. The purpose is two-fold: to worship with the communities that are connected with the school, and to highlight some of the latest news and scholarship of VST.

This year forty-eight churches from Comox to Calgary welcomed VST folks into their Sunday worship. And this year a caravan trio took a journey.

Current students **Irene Griffiths**, **Philip Francis** and **Murray Pruden** carpooled to the **United Churches of Langley** and shared in their two worship services preaching, praying and learning together. They drove through heavy rain and poor visibility but by the time they reached Langley, perhaps symbolically, the clouds lifted and the sun shone through (but no sign of a rainbow!). Starbucks coffee and Google Maps were faithful companions.

“Having VST students join the leadership for worship added a welcome spiritual dimension that pointed to hope and new possibilities”, says **Rev. Hilde Seal**, Minister of Adult Faith, Pastoral Care and Outreach.

For the students, it was a “wonderful learning experience”, said Philip. “As we headed eastwards over the Port Mann bridge I think we were all experiencing a few butterflies”. This would be Philip’s first sermon as a full-time VST student, after a change of career last year. Any concerns disappeared in the warm welcome received at both services. At the first service, Philip preached on a passage from the 1st letter to the Corinthians and was able to share a few insights from **Dr. Harry Maier’s** course on **Paul**.

“It was such an affirming experience,” said Philip. “The congregation was so friendly and asked me to stay for coffee afterwards to meet and chat. I was able to tell them about VST programs and how I have found the past year to be a truly transforming experience.”

We went on to our second service at the United Churches of Langley and again were greeted and introduced warmly. Having led the Prayers of the People at the first service, Irene quickly switched roles and led the Children’s Time at the second service.

The Children’s Time topic was ***Names for God***, which had been the theme for the past several weeks at the United Churches of Langley. Fortunately, Irene had attended the **G. Peter Kaye** lecture on February 2nd in which this very topic was addressed by **Dr. Janet Soskice**, a visiting professor from Cambridge, and so was able to draw on Dr. Soskice’s words of wisdom. Irene then accompanied **Sophia Ducey**, Minister of Children, Families, Youth, Young Adults and Communications, to work with the younger children downstairs, where they continued to explore ways of naming God. “This was such a great experience,” said Irene. “I felt really welcomed by Sophia and Hilde, the adults in the congregation and the children.” It’s always inspiring to visit another church, and not only see how things are done there, but have the privilege of participating.”

Murray preached the sermon at the second service, drawing on passages from John’s Gospel. His sermon, titled ***The Seven Grandfather Teachings*** drew on the wisdom of Murray’s people, the Cree from **Goodfish Lake, Alberta**. Murray adds, “We need to bridge our knowledge and teachings as a people on this Earth Mother we live on, we all act as helpers to one another. After our service many people of the congregation had great reflections and thanked me for giving them more to focus on, in their lives. That’s the beauty of life, we keep learning and loving at every age. That’s what keeps us humble, one of the seven Grandfather teachings.” Philip led the Prayers while Irene was meeting with the children.

We were all invited to join the congregation for lunch afterwards and we discovered that soup and sandwiches taste even better after a morning of preaching, praying and sharing with the good people of Langley! An additional bonus was that we were able to stay for Hilde’s workshop, ***Dementia; Spirituality and Wholeness***. She is an acknowledged expert in this field and we all learned a lot.

Thank you to all involved. We will always remember VST Sunday 2018 with a warm glow and are already looking forward to our next caravan trip!

VST 2018 GRAD PROFILES

ANDREW DEVANBU

Master of Theology

Andrew Devanbu came to VST from India with his wife and two children, where he is an ordained minister in the Methodist Church. VST has not only imparted knowledge but also has empowered Andrew to be a faithful follower of Christ. His Master's thesis is entitled *The Geography of Mercantile Accumulation under Imperial Rome and its Crisis in John's Apocalypse: A Spatio-Economic Reading of Revelation 18*. Andrew's next step is to embark on a PhD program and pursue his research.



CHANNAH (ANITA)

FONSECA-QUEZADA

Master of Theology

Channah (Anita) Fonseca-Quezada came to VST with an MA in Religion and a B.A. in Communications from the U.S. She was deeply shaped by her time at VST through the friendships she made and the mentorship from her professors. Her Th.M thesis was entitled *Trauma and Dignity in Lamentations 1*. Channah is now finishing the first year of her Ph.D in Religious Studies at McMaster University in Ontario.



COLBY GAUDET

Master of Arts in Indigenous and Inter-Religious Studies

Colby Gaudet arrived at VST with a BA in creative writing and a background in holistic health and wellness. A highlight of Colby's time at VST has been learning about the Other and interreligious perspectives. After graduation Colby has plans to continue with a Ph.D in religious studies at Concordia University.



COLIN BROWN

Master of Divinity

Colin Brown is a Master Seaman in Her Majesty's Royal Canadian Navy. At VST he has found real pleasure in field studies centered on pastoral care, but New Testament Studies became his unexpected and secret love. The highlight to his time at VST was his Major Exegetical paper on *The Mustard Seed*. After his Supervised Ministry Experience with the United Church of Canada, Colin will go on to Military chaplaincy in the Royal Canadian Navy.



CHRISTINA EMILY JARRET

Master of Arts in Theological Studies

Christina Emily Jarrett came to VST with a deep curiosity about theology, and interest in ministry, though not entirely certain where it would take her. In the end she discovered a love of adult faith formation, and her academic pursuit of the intersection of religion and video games, particularly in secular gaming communities. She resides in Sooke, BC, and brings her theological education to her work at the Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation.



ELIANA SHIN

Master of Theology

Eliana Shin came to VST with both an M.Div and a Th.M from Korea. At VST, Eliana experienced many valuable things, the most precious of which was the warm hospitality of VST staff and faculty. Her Th.M thesis was *A Study on the Necessity of Communal Lament for Biblical Preaching in the Korean Context, Based on Lamentations 5:1-22*. Eliana plans to continue studying the theology of lament and how it might contribute to the world.



IN LEE

Master of Arts in Public and Pastoral Leadership

In Lee recognizes the Triune God as leading him to VST. He feels blessed by God through his learning while at VST, and the many ways he saw Jesus in the students, staff and faculty. In will be admitted as an ordained minister of the United Church of Canada in June of this year.



INGRID BROWN

Master of Divinity

Ingrid Brown came to VST with a background in theatre. Grateful for the spiritual formation, leadership training, and theological education she found at VST, Ingrid feels well equipped to enter ministry in the 21st century church. She is currently serving at St. George's United in Courtenay and will continue after graduation.



JUANITA CLARK

Certificate in Theological Studies

Juanita Clark came to VST as a life-long Anglican with a deep calling to the Diaconate. She entered into Seminary at VST, with great enthusiasm, while transitioning from a 37 year career with Indigenous Affairs. Juanita completes her Internship in May, followed by ordination as a Deacon, God willing.



KATE FISHER

Diploma in Indigenous and Inter-Religious Studies

Kate Fisher has attended the Vancouver School of Theology part time since January 2013. She has really enjoyed her time at VST and hopes to pursue further studies with the school. She would like to thank the facility, staff and her fellow students for all their support and wisdom.



KATHLEEN CABRAL

Master of Arts in Public and Pastoral Leadership

Kathleen Cabral has a background in holistic nutrition, teaching and pharmacy. She experienced many highlights from attending VST but she particularly cherishes the many connections made with so many caring, supportive and generous people. Kathleen plans to continue her chaplaincy work in the hospital and prison systems.



LINDA LIANG

Certificate in Theological Studies

Linda Liang is the coordinator of Intercultural Ministry in West Point Grey United Church. VST's Certificate program has helped her continue to grow on her faith journey. Linda will continue to study as an auditor in VST and continue her service in West Point Grey United Church.



LISA WAITES

Diploma in Denominational Studies

Lisa Waites is an accomplished composer, liturgist, and worship leader, coming to VST after earning an M.A. in Theology and a doctorate in Christian Worship Studies. Lisa will continue to serve the people of her current pastoral charge, St. Andrew's United Church in Bow Island, Alberta, after her ordination this spring. She dreams of teaching graduate worship and liturgical studies in the future.



MARIA JANE HIGHWAY

Master of Divinity

Maria Jane Highway is a proud mother, grandmother, great grandmother, daughter, sister, and widow of Rev. Douglas Highway. She enjoyed meeting other students and participating in Summer School and the Indigenous Studies Program. She plans to continue her ministry in her home community of Opaskwayak Cree Nation in northern Manitoba.



LIZ (MARY ELIZABETH) HAMEL

Master of Divinity

Before Liz Hamel began her studies at VST she felt like a fish out of water. At VST she found an ocean to swim in. She is grateful for how her studies have opened her mind and heart to old truths and new possibilities. Liz was ordained a deacon in the Anglican church in June 2014, and ordained a priest in June 2016.



PHILIP FRANCIS

Diploma in Denominational Studies

Philip Francis left a career in the investment industry last year to enrol as a full-time student in the Diploma Program. He says he's had to learn how to read all over again! The highlight has been the privilege of studying among such incredibly talented students. As for the future? Only God knows.



ROBERTO DESANDOLI

Master of Divinity

Roberto DeSandoli moved from Lethbridge to Vancouver to begin his studies at VST in 2013. Since then, he has pursued summer ministries in Fort St. John, Dawson Creek, and Salmon Arm. He currently serves the community of Grace Presbyterian Church in Calgary and looks forward to a career of ordained missional ministry in the Presbyterian Church in Canada.



ROBIN MURRAY

Master of Divinity

Having lived from Guam to St. John's and many points in between, a distance student lifestyle came naturally to Robin Murray. Her highlights at VST have been watching our distance program blossom into a world-class learning model and being awarded the 2017 Chancellor's Scholarship. She hopes to stay in ministry BC's Kootenay region.



SAMUEL GROTTENBERG

Diploma in Denominational Studies

Samuel Grottenberg came to VST with a B.A. in Leadership and a nearly-completed M.A. in Theological Studies. A highlight of his experience has been engaging in imaginative dialogue about the Church. Sam plans to continue on the path towards ordination in The United Church and to eventually pursue doctoral studies.



SANG PIL (PHIL) BAE

Master of Arts in Theological Studies

Sang Pil (Phil) Bae came to VST as a medical doctor and a member of a medical mission organization. His encounter with theology and people at VST made him realize God's concern with the marginalized. As a leader in a mission organization and church in Korea, he hopes to reform the Korean church and advocate for the outcast.



STEPHEN HARPER

Diploma in Denominational Studies

Stephen Harper came to VST with a Doctorate from Golden Gate Seminary, which focuses on envisioning creative ways to connect people with God in the 21st century. He has loved his time furthering his education at VST. Stephen has received a call to serve at Symons Valley United Church in Calgary.

SUSAN MATHERS

Diploma in Theological Studies

Susan Mather came to VST from a career in teaching. While at VST she developed a passion for offering a spiritually grounded pastoral presence to vulnerable populations, particularly the poor and elderly. Susan has returned to her home in Ontario with hopes of volunteering in this capacity.



**VST'S BOARD CHAIR
MICHAEL FRANCIS
RECEIVES HONORARY
DOCTORATE FROM SIMON
FRASER UNIVERSITY**

Congratulations go out to VST's Board Chair, **Mr. Michael Francis**, on the announcement of his Honorary Degree from **Simon Fraser University!** VST has been fortunate to have Michael Francis as Chairman of our Board since January of 2015, and has flourished under his steady and faithful guidance.

Michael Francis, a chartered accountant, innovator and leader has devoted much of his life to community engagement. A chair emeritus of SFU's Board of Governors, he has made immense contributions to business, education and the arts in B.C. and Canada.



INDIGENOUS STUDIES PROGRAM UPDATE

INDIGENOUS SUMMER SCHOOL

Submitted by Ray Aldred

The 33rd **Indigenous Studies Program Summer School** (previously known as Native Ministries Consortium Summer School) will take place from **July 16-27**.

Summer School is an opportunity to come away and renew and draw strength for the journey. The original intention of the summer school was to be a place where Indigenous people from a variety of different contexts could come together. In this place it was safe to talk about the struggles, the success, and most of all, share life together for a couple of weeks. The Indigenous Studies Program office developed out of this coming together, and is charged with overseeing this summer school. Our mission could be put as, we train people to minister in the Indigenous Church and community.

All of our courses are chosen to hold together Indigenous identity and Christian faith. This flows out of a process Indigenous people have been doing in Canada and the United States, and probably other places as well, for hundreds of years. **The Truth and Reconciliation Commission** put into words what Indigenous people have been saying for a long time and VST has been responding to this desire for the past three decades. The strength of our program is the commitment to respond to the Indigenous Church and to try and create space where Indigenous people can be who they were created to be, but at the same time transform VST.

To contact the Indigenous Studies Program, please email Catalina Parra at isp@vst.edu

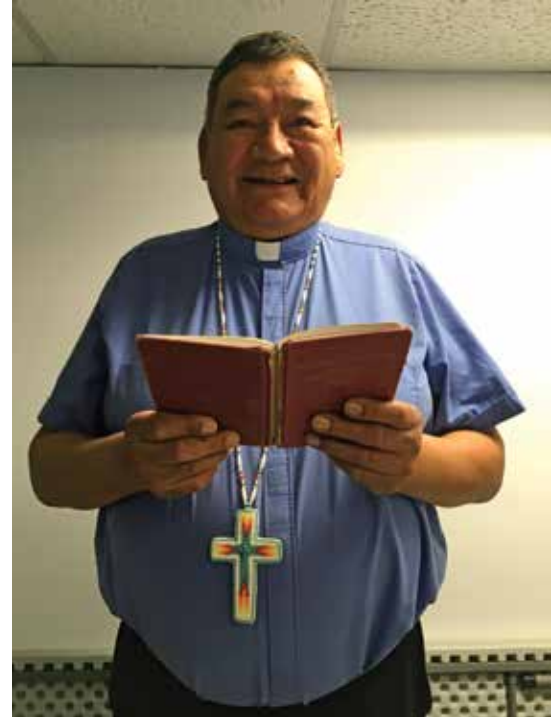
TEACHING HOUSE THAT MOVES AROUND

Submitted by Ray Aldred

It was out of the idea of **Summer School** that the **Teaching House That Moves Around** was developed. Whereas Summer School is a place for individuals to come together, The Teaching House that Moves Around is a place where the whole community can be involved. The first Teaching House took place in February 2018 in Hawaii at the **Central Union Church** of Honolulu where students took Christology for M.Div credit. Participants read bibliography, cultivated experiential learning by interaction—talk story—, sharing Christology from their specific Indigenous contexts. Although we come from different walks of life, many stories coincide, reminding us that we all belong to the *aina* (land in native Hawaiian), we are all *ohana* (people—family), who—in togetherness—bring the transformational peace and hope of God’s intent. We were blessed to have **Kahu Scott Furukawa**, graduate of our program, current pastor at **Waialua Church**, tutoring and leading the group along with **Elder Kahu Grant Lee** and **Kahu Neal McPherson**. We were also honored to have Hawaii Conference minister, **Gabriel Chavez** and her husband, auditing the training session.

In mid March 2018, the Teaching House moved to Montreal Lake, Saskatchewan. On the territory of the **Montreal Lake Cree Nation** at their holistic healing lodge, we came together to talk about ministry in the midst of trauma. It was a partnership between the **Indigenous Anglican Church**, under the guidance of **Bishop Adam Halkett** that enable us to come together. Having the event on Cree territory brought the land into the teaching event. Holding the event at the healing lodge and having the staff give presentations showed the strength that exists in Indigenous communities. As we met together we developed strength to keep going on the journey of holding together Christian faith and Indigenous identity.

Indigenous Studies Summer School and the **Teaching House That Moves Around** are transforming our world by creating space to be who we were created to be.



Rev. Wilfred Sanderson

Teaching House That Moves Around at Montreal Lake, Saskatchewan



STUDENT PROFILE: YOUNG TAE CHOI

Submitted by Shannon Lythgoe

Born in Busan, South Korea in 1981, **Young Tae Choi** grew up in a faithful Christian family, attending Sunday school in the **Korean Presbyterian Church**. His parents were business people in China and in addition to their work there, they supported the house church ministry movement in China, which was and remains an underground church. Young Tae's father was an elder in a local Korean immigrant church in China and his home church in Busan. Since he retired from his eldership last year, he is now an ordained minister serving seniors who live alone in the countryside around Busan.

After high school, Young Tae studied in visual arts and documentary film in Seoul at the **Korean National University of Art**. While there, he gathered Christian students to worship and study theology and the arts together. He felt challenged by the secular courses he was taking. First year Christian students had not given much thought to postmodern teaching and its relationship to Christianity. He discovered that there wasn't much space to talk about theology and the Christian faith in the church. He witnessed two groups amongst his student peers; one group who went on to give up their artistic gifts to go into the seminary, and another group who compromised their faith with the secular ideas. Young Tae questioned why God gives us artistic gifts—for the church or the world? How do you integrate faith as an artist in contemporary culture? In addition to his leadership role with the college study group (called **Shalom Art**), Young Tae studied theology on his own and joined a seminary run by those who were thinking about these issues. That experience as a student leader, and other professional experiences as a working artist ultimately led him to study theology and the arts.

But before that occurred, Young Tae began to teach high school and university students in visual art and film studies. He did that for four years and worked on a variety of independent and major feature films for Korean film industry. His brother—also a professional filmmaker and designer—lives in New York, and the two of them collaborated on a film there. Young Tae also went to Mongolia to film a documentary about the celebration of the political relationship between Mongolia and South Korea, and even had the opportunity to travel throughout Mongolia.

Retaining his love of the arts, Young Tae is interested in combining art, ministry and theology.



Young Tae didn't have any plans at that point to study theology, but he was very passionate and had an abiding interest in the intersection between the arts and faith. He didn't want to make just 'Christian' art that only Christians would enjoy but wanted to make art that would communicate with general public. He feels strongly that the Christian faith has the power to transform not only the church but the world and strove to make his art form relevant in addressing societal and cultural issues. In his teaching career he thought constantly about how important it was to have theological knowledge in order to impart moral responsibility, and how to frame that in the context of his teaching and professional career. Following these stirrings and questions, Young Tae finally decided to study theology, and subsequently was accepted into **Trinity Western University** to study in the Christian World View Master's Program.

But Young Tae never made it to TWU. Just before leaving for Canada, he was working on an eight million-dollar feature film set in Korea. An accident occurred when a gun went off close to his face, and a fragment of gunshot was embedded in his eye. The cornea of his right eye was completely torn, and he was blinded by the injury. He was immediately transported to a large hospital and received surgery, but was told that without a corneal transplant he would never see out of the eye again. And then a miracle occurred—one his doctors said they'd never seen before—and his sight was restored naturally after having spent a month in hospital, and he didn't need the transplant after all.

In spite of his injury, Young Tae felt at peace as he felt the accident was a sign that it was time to leave the film industry. However, it meant that he couldn't go to TWU right away, and in the meantime, he had an opportunity to chat with his mentor, who mentioned **Regent College**. Researching Regent College, Young Tae found some interesting courses were being offered there in faith and the arts, and subsequently changed his direction towards Regent.

Young Tae came to Vancouver in 2011 to study Theology and the Arts and was enrolled in the program for 3 years. During the summer of 2014 when he was taking his last course, his older brother called from New York to say that his mother was in hospital with stomach cancer, and could he go home to Korea to be with his mother, as his brother couldn't travel because his artist visa was being renewed. This news

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came as a complete surprise to Young Tae, as he had been unaware that his mother was ill. Young Tae's parents hadn't wanted to worry him, so they hadn't mentioned the illness. Young Tae dropped the course and went home to be with his mother, staying for 6 weeks unexpectedly. During this time, he had ample opportunity to talk with his mother, who told him that when she was being operated on, she had a vision that her cancer was not about her, but about him. She asked him, "Why don't you extend your studies into an M.Div. to care for Christian artists in pastoral ways?"

Young Tae was tired to the point of exhaustion by studying in English and resisted his mother's suggestion, but as the two of them were very close and he respected her advice, her suggestion gave him pause to pray. He came back to Vancouver still undecided; he didn't want to study anymore as he was so tired of the misunderstandings and miscommunications brought on by the language and cultural differences.

And then one day Young Tae had a dream. The dream consisted of 3 chapters; the first one of war—soldiers killing each other horribly with guns and swords, and the second chapter portrayed the church he attended as a young child. In his dream he was in the main sanctuary and saw a circle of elders who were conversing amongst themselves and towards some kind of grey statue in the middle of the circle. Young Tae felt that this meant there was something very wrong with the church. In the third and final chapter of his dream, Young Tae was at a country retreat, and saw a diverse group of ages and ethnicities holding hands worshipping together. Young Tae saw the Devil in the corner of the ceiling, so Young Tae grabbed the Devil and flew him out of the community and cast him away, returning to the community after this deed. One of the members of the circle, an Indian pastor named **Joshua**, came to Young Tae and said to him, "You think you don't need the church and that the church is useless, and that's why you want to do something outside

of it." "I think so," Young Tae replied. "Then," Joshua said, "there is hope because the church exists."

Young Tae woke up trembling, and he prayed about whether this was a word from God. He wrote the dream down in his journal, and in the process found clarity. The first chapter of his dream was about the fallen world as it exists now, the second chapter of the dream depicted a corrupted church, and the third chapter was an indictment that his calling was to do something inside the church. Combined with his mother's vision and subsequent questioning of his educational direction, Young Tae experienced a paradigm shift in his life.

Young Tae went to see his advisor at Regent College to change his program from a MATS to an M.Div. and discovered that he could transfer all of his courses. And yet in spite of all these signs and his follow-up actions, Young Tae still wasn't convinced that he was going into full-time ministry.

One of the required courses to fulfill his course requirements was to work for a local church for a year. Young Tae found himself as a youth pastor in the **Vancouver Korean Presbyterian Church**. The first three months were very difficult and reinforced his reluctance to go into the ministry. But Young Tae relates that God changed his disposition, and he ended up serving that church for 3 years. An additional 3 years beyond that was needed to complete his M.Div. and Young Tae graduated last year from Regent College. Because he had served the **Presbyterian Church in Canada** and feels his calling is to Presbyterian ministry, Young Tae then came to **VST** to do the Diploma in PCC Denominational Studies. Young Tae relates that he has been afraid of being a church leader because he knows the danger of power and authority, and witnessed some ministers who had become corrupt. But a turning point happened when he found a discernment manual on the PCC website, prayed and finally was convinced of his calling. Starting his Denominational Diploma in 2016, he is now fully committed towards a vocation as a minister.

Young Tae married a Korean Canadian woman in September 2017, **Jenny Han**, after a whirlwind romance. Having passed his ordination interviews with the Presbyterian Church in Canada, his plans include looking for a vacancy in the PCC once he graduates this summer. Retaining his love of the arts, Young Tae is interested in combining art, ministry and theology. He wants to plant an artisan church and serve artists to use and see art in biblical ways. He feels that artists need someone who understands their struggles. He's excited and nervous, but ultimately hopeful that God's strength and plan will be disclosed through his witness.

Thomas Merton's Advice for Peacemakers

Merton Society Retreat, July 12-14, 2018

with Jim Forest

Thomas Merton has been a source of inspiration, wisdom and sound advice for countless people, from Pope Francis to the Dalai Lama. Peacemaking was a major concern for him. Jim Forest draws on his visits and intense correspondence with Merton during the last seven years of the monk's life. The letter—to Forest, Dorothy Day, Dan Berrigan and others—remain helpful and timely, all the more so given the nerve-racking period in which we now are living.

Jim Forest's life carried him from the U.S. Navy to the Catholic Worker movement, from being a newspaper reporter to becoming a widely-read author, from teaching posts to prison cells, from western Christianity to the undivided church. His many books include biographies of Dorothy Day, Thomas Merton and Daniel Berrigan.

For more info & to register visit
www.vst.edu/summer-school



VST takes a moment to reflect on the lives of those in our community who have passed away in recent months. We give thanks for their faithful servanthood, and their support of, and involvement with VST over the years...

MURIEL RUTH BAMFORD

1919–2017. Muriel Bamford was born to The Rev. Albert and Annie (Gaunt) Bamford and spent her early years in various small communities in northern Ontario, where her father served as a Methodist minister. She attended the Wellesley School of Nursing in Toronto and worked as an industrial nurse in a munitions factory during WWII. After graduation from the United Church Training School, Muriel travelled to India in 1947 to nurse in a hospital run by the United Church of Canada. She worked in India until 1975, eventually heading a school of nursing which prepared nurses to provide health care all over India. During furloughs to Canada she enjoyed visiting her family and advancing her studies in nursing. She ended her nursing career in Vancouver, working at the University Purdy Pavilion until 1983. In retirement, Muriel continued as an active member of Canadian Memorial United and served on the Auxiliary of the Vancouver School of Theology. She is remembered for her strong Christian faith and her tireless service of others.



LOIS JEAN CARSON BOYCE

November 24, 1918–February 27, 2018. Lois Boyce was a WWII Royal Canadian Air Force veteran Women's Division. For 60 years, Lois was a volunteer and activist representing the United Church of Canada, traveling the world addressing environmental, social and senior issues. She co-founded Canada's first environmental group, The Richmond Anti-Pollution Association and helped start the cable TV show Pressure Point, one of the longest running community shows in Canadian TV history. She received numerous awards, one being The Queen's Golden Jubilee Medal presented by the Governor General of Canada. A proud member of Clan Sinclair, she loved Scottish country dancing, gardening, travel and was a determined Scrabble player. Lois was a student of the former Chalmers Institute at VST.



ELIZABETH LAURA BUTLER

The Rev. E. Laura Butler passed peacefully to heaven on May 23, 2017, at home and surrounded by friends, as was her wish. "Miss B" lived a remarkable life, filled with her faith and love for others. She was never too busy for anybody in need, and she fostered a love for God in many people throughout her years of ministry at Metropolitan United Church, in her work with youth, and with her passion and support of Camp Pringle at Shawnigan Lake. In 2013, Rev. Laura Butler, along with her late brother, the Rev. Ralph Butler and his wife Wanda Butler, endowed VST with \$3.3 million dollars to establish the Reverend John Ralph Butler and **Elisabeth Letitia Baker Butler Chair of Homiletics and Biblical Interpretation**. The Chair, currently occupied by the Rev. Dr. Jason Byassee, was established to honour the life and work of Laura and Ralph Butler's parents, John and Elisabeth Butler, who carried out their ministry in British Columbia and in Washington State, primarily in the Methodist Church in the United States.

VST is grateful for the life and ministry of Rev. Laura Butler, and her generous support of theological education

GIN S DOOLITTLE

February 24, 1947–October 1, 2017. Born to Ann and Ridley Doolittle in Hamilton Ontario. Gins was an active member of the Business and Arts Communities in Vancouver, a faithful parishioner of Christ Church Cathedral, and an active volunteer at VST for many years. Her welcoming smile, kindness and generosity will be missed by her many friends, especially her fellow parishioners in the Healing Touch Ministry at the Cathedral.



DONALD EDWARD GRAYSTON

August 31, 1939–October 23, 2017. An Anglican priest, The Rev. Donald Grayston worked in many different ministries, a teacher of Religious Studies at Simon Fraser University, an activist in the interests of justice and peace, and a longtime student of the life and work of Thomas Merton. He was past president of the Thomas Merton Society of Canada and the International Thomas Merton Society. He collaborated with VST to deliver the Thomas Merton Annual Retreat and Lecture that happens annually at VST during Summer School.



DOREEN GIESBRECHT

April 5, 1947–September 2, 2017. Doreen Giesbrecht is survived by her sisters Carol Unger, Janice Gledhill and their families. Doreen received her MATS from VST in 2011.



HANNA KASSIS

April 5th 1932 - April 3rd 2018. Dr. Hanna Kassis was born in Gaza, Palestine. He earned his B.A. at the American University of Beirut, and his PhD at Harvard University. In 1964 he began a 33-year teaching career at UBC in

the Department of Religious Studies. He was revered by students and colleagues for his warmth, inspiring teaching and profound knowledge. He had a particular passion for connecting people of different faiths and backgrounds. As a Palestinian Christian, Dr. Kassis attended Christ Church Cathedral, and lectured at VST on a number of occasions.



RANDY ROY REYNOSO

August 12, 1962–September 3, 2017. The Rev. Randy Reynoso was born in Honolulu and raised in Pearl City on the island of Oahu, Hawaii. Randy worked in the hospitality and service industry 20 years before beginning his theological education. Randy started attending church at Central Union Church in 1998. Randy was very impressed to see the youth conducting the Sunrise Easter Service. He knew then that this was where he should be. Randy got involved with the youth, teaching Sunday school then managing the youth program. He also served at United Church of Christ on Judd St. as the Youth Coordinator. At the same time Randy started work at Kapolei High School as an Educational Assistant working with Special needs students. During all this time Randy knew he wanted to serve God and so his years in school was successful at Whitworth College and then at VST. Randy received his Installation and Ordination in May 2015 at Ewa Community Church. Randy was the first Hawaii-born person to enroll at VST in the NMP Program.



WILHELMINA (TONI) SARAI-CLARK

The Rev. Toni Sarai-Clark was a regular participant, as student and faculty, at NMC Summer School. Sarai-Clark was a member of the Lakota Tribe in South Dakota. Toni received her post-secondary education at the University of Wisconsin at Madison, where she graduated with a Ph.D. in Dance and Anthropology. Sarai-Clark came to Washington State University and taught dance movement from 1965–1992 and has remained active on the campus and in the community. She was a Professor Emeritus at WSU in Dance / Culture and Movement, and Diversity Educator for Human Relations and Resources. Sarai-Clark was named 2004 Woman of the Year at Washington State University. She was the first woman of color to become a tenured full professor at WSU. Sarai-Clark was an ordained deacon in the Episcopal Church, and had volunteered for the Koinonia House as Episcopal campus minister for WSU, where her ministry focused on multiculturalism and diversity. She was an active member of St. James Episcopal Church in Pullman. Toni had been a Civil Rights Activist for many years.

WILLIAM MACFARLANE WALKER

July 14, 1918–December 12, 2017. William Walker was born and educated in Vancouver. He graduated from the University of BC in Applied Science (Electrical Engineering), and did post graduate studies in nuclear physics, and in business administration. Bill began his career in 1946 as a member of BC Electric's industrial sales staff and ended it in 1986 as BC Hydro's Vice President, Engineering

and Chief Engineer. From 1954–1958 he was on loan to the newly formed Nuclear Power Branch of Atomic Energy of Canada Limited. He was a member and later a director of the Atomic Energy Control Board. Bill was an elder of Fairview Presbyterian Church, clerk of Session for 60 years, Young People's Advisor, member of the Theological Committee of General Assembly, and chairman of St. Andrew's Hall Board for many years. In 2006, VST awarded him an Honourary Doctor of Divinity for his interest in and active participation in theological education.



PAULINE WEBB

1927–2017. A longtime associate of VST, and leader of the world church, Pauline Webb died in April 2017 in London, UK, after a long decline in health. Pauline was a visiting lecturer at VST for a semester in the 1980's, and amongst many books, co-authored a volume on the hymnody of Charles Wesley, completing the work left unfinished at her sudden death by Elizabeth Hart, the VST librarian. Pauline belonged to the generation of great leaders like Phillip Potter and Desmond Tutu, who were both her good friends. She helped launch the Programme to Combat Racism for the World Council of Churches. She was also central in the movement for the ordination of women.



JAMES ERNEST WHITE

January 29, 1945–June 20, 2017. Jim was a proud member of the Heiltsuk Nation. Jim bravely battled cancer for 5 years. Jim's parents were Gertie and Johnny White. He leaves behind his wife Ruby White, two sons Mark and Gregory, and brother, Mark White. Jim also leaves behind many family members in Bella Bella and around B.C. He was a father to many nieces, nephews, extended family members and friends of his sons. Jim was a faithful member of the United Church of Canada, and was also a part of the Native Ministries Council. His important contribution as an Elder will be missed—whose sharp insight, cheerful presence and gentleness helped to embark on difficult conversations and arrive to harmonious understandings. As well, his clear discernment, generous words, funny jokes, and of course his timely presence during the Summer BBQs where he used to grill delicious salmon for all of us—will also be missed!



DOUGLAS E. WILLIAMS

October 9, 1938–December 19, 2017. The Rev. Canon Douglas E. Williams was educated at the University of California, Los Angeles in Philosophy, Cuddesdon Theological College, Oxfordshire, UK, General Theological Seminary, New York City, and most recently with a degree in Classics (Latin) and Medieval Studies from the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC in November of 2017. As an Anglican/Episcopal priest, Douglas served in the Diocese of Los Angeles, Diocese of California, and Diocese of El Camino Real, retiring as Canon Precentor of Trinity Cathedral, San José, CA, before retiring to Vancouver in 2000. In the Diocese of New Westminster he served as honorary assistant in the parishes of Christ Church Cathedral, St. James', and St. Anselm's.

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cont. on next page

Updated!

VST SUMMER SCHOOL 2018

July 9–20, 2018

WEEK 1 MORNINGS: JULY 9-13 (9:00am – 12:00pm)

- *Re-imagining Ministry with Children and Youth with Dave Csinos*
- *Prophetic Presence: What's God and the Church's Role During a Time of Profound Change? with Philip Clayton*
- *Ecclesiastes on Living and Dying with Mari Jørstad*

WEEK 1 AFTERNOONS : JULY 9-13 (2:00pm – 5:00pm)

- *NEW! Is God Cross?: Theologies of Atonement with Jason Byassee and Richard Topping*
- *Loosening the Tongue: The Practice of Preaching without Notes with Melissa Skelton*

WEEKEND: JULY 12-14 (Thursday 6pm – Saturday 4:30pm)

- *Thomas Merton's Advice for Peacemakers with Jim Forest*

WEEK 2 MORNINGS: JULY 16-20 (9:00am – 12:00pm)

- *Worldwide Christianity Today with Bob Paul*
- *Zechariah's Dreams of the Apocalypse with Laura Duhan Kaplan*

WEEK 2 AFTERNOONS: JULY 16-20 (2:00pm – 5:00pm)

- *Preaching for Growth: A Progressive Approach with Matt Miofsky*
- *Speaking of Faith: A Jewish-Christian Dialogue With the Ineffable with Terry Neiman*

For more information and registration, visit our website at www.vst.edu/summer-school

Please note that due to medical circumstances, Professor Stanley Hauerwas is unable to teach his course this summer. Professor Hauerwas promises to do his best to return to Vancouver to teach for us at a future date!