Called to thoughtful, engaged and generous Christian faith
At VST we are called to form thoughtful, engaged and generous disciples of Jesus Christ for service to the church and the world. Theological education combines the love of scholarship, courage to take up the issues of our time and readiness to collaborate with our local and global neighbours for the good of God’s world.

Together with First Nations communities and other faith traditions, we engage issues of truth, justice and spiritual growth.

To go deep in Christian faith is to go wide with our neighbours for the sake of the world that God so loves. At VST we cultivate a community where hospitality, generosity and imagination infuse our common life. The root of this generosity is our baptismal identity in Christ who calls us to love our neighbours unconditionally without fear, to learn from our neighbours without anxiety, and to act with and for our neighbours with integrity.

Richard Topping, Principal, VST

Vancouver School of Theology has always been courageous in shaping leaders for the church who address the pressing questions of the times in which we live. Enticed by a vision of the world that God is bringing towards us, students grow discontent with current arrangements, envision better possible worlds and learn to embody more humane ways of living. Theological education stokes imagination and shapes character with alternate, life-giving, practical resources enriched by holy scripture, faith and tradition.

Imagine with us the impact in the church and the world that you can make possible through your support of the transforming ministry of theological education at VST.

VST is on a new trajectory and we invite you into the circle of planning and implementing our future.

Cover: Architect Christine Lintott’s concept drawing for VST’s new home.
An Invitation to be known at VST... now and into the future

Your engagement with VST and making the School part of your gift planning will ensure that VST can always be engaged for the love of God and the world.

Planning your giving is about taking advantage of gift options today and being deliberate in how you want your affairs handled after you are deceased. At death the government deems you to have sold everything and assesses taxes payable. Today you can arrange your affairs to direct funds otherwise payable as taxes to one or more charitable organizations that support what has meaning in your life. Having a specific plan in place, you will be able to meet your own personal giving objectives, fulfill your obligations to those you love, and minimize taxes.

This booklet sets out a range of financial and legal vehicles you may want to consider using to facilitate your planning. We recommend you review your personal situation with professional legal and financial advisors to determine the most appropriate gifting options for you. The VST Development Office can provide more detailed information about any item in this booklet.

Planning how your treasure will be distributed is one of the most essential conversations you will have and your Will the most important ‘letter’ you ever write. May you discover it as an enjoyable endeavour with considerable blessings.

Gifts of Cash

A cash donation is one of the most common charitable gifts for those who would like to make a donation from their available income. You will receive a charitable tax receipt to claim a tax credit in the year of the gift and carry any unused credit amount forward for up to five years. We will work with you to determine where and how your cash gift will be used at VST. You have no future obligation or commitment and your gift will go to work immediately in the support of the life and vitality of VST.

If you are planning a cash donation using the sale proceeds of shares of publicly traded securities (stocks, bonds, mutual funds, T-Bills, etc.), please note that there may be significant tax advantages in donating the securities themselves rather than cashing out to cover the gift you wish to make.

Questions that may help you think about the blessings and assets you are holding...

- What is my dream or vision for the world I live in?
- What would I like to achieve, or leave behind, as my legacy?
- Which organization(s) can I work with to implement my vision?
- What would this vision most likely cost?
- How important is it to me to see my dream realized in my lifetime?
- Given my assets, what is the best way to structure my gift(s) to make this happen?
- Where may I obtain impartial and thoughtful advice regarding my options?
Gifts of Shares of Publicly Traded Securities

The transfer of stocks and share certificates directly from your investment portfolio to VST may be one of the most tax-efficient ways to support the School. When you cash out shares and securities you must declare and pay taxes on any capital gains that have been achieved. When you transfer the actual shares or securities, you do not have to claim or pay tax on the gains, but you will receive a charitable tax receipt for the full present value of your gift.

The VST Development Office can provide the instruction forms required to effect a transfer of shares and securities.

How Can I Structure My Gift to Support VST?

Your gift to VST can be unrestricted – allowing us to direct it where support is most needed at the time of the gift – or designated to address your preferred area of interest.

With instructions from you, the funds from your gift can either be spent outright on current projects and operations, invested and held for future use, or endowed in a permanent capital fund with the income earned available well into the future.

We invite you to contact us to discuss these or other areas through which you can achieve your charitable goals:

- Enhancing the Future of Theological Education
- Student Bursaries, Awards & Scholarships
- Christian Leadership Formation
- Inter-religious Studies
- Indigenous Studies
- Scholars in Residence
- Principal’s Fund
Gifts by Will

A cash gift may not be the best solution for those who have assets but limited income, yet desire to leave a lasting legacy or provide guidance as to how their gift will be used. If this is your situation, you may wish to consider a charitable bequest, a gift of cash or property made through your Will. A charitable bequest allows you to know you will be supporting organizations like VST while providing for your own financial needs during your lifetime.

Adding a Codicil to an existing Will is an easy way to include a charitable bequest.

If your charitable giving by Will is likely to generate more charitable tax credits than your estate requires to offset taxes, you should consider beginning to make the donations during your lifetime. This way you have many more options to direct whatever wealth you have created away from the tax department to those organizations that will give voice and reality to your dreams, visions and sense of social responsibility.

Today, preparing a Will is as much a legal document to instruct your executor on the distribution of your assets to beneficiaries as it is a tax preparation document on how taxes that become payable at your death should be handled.

The VST Development Office can provide you with suggested clauses and wording for designation of gifts to the School.

Endowed Faculty Chairs/Programs

While VST’s operational budget provides basic faculty salaries, permanently endowed faculty chairs support the chair holder’s teaching and research efforts, which may include travel, assistance for graduate students and other necessary costs. In 2012, VST’s first endowed chair was established — The Butler Chair in Homiletics and Biblical Interpretation — to ensure that quality preparation for preaching will always be available to our students.

Endowed Programs will enable the School to attract exceptional sessional lecturers and outstanding leaders to become part of the teaching fabric of VST for shorter periods of time. Indigenous Studies, Inter-religious Studies, and Christian Leadership Formation are among a full range of programs that will be significantly enhanced through endowment.
Life Insurance Policies

If you are interested in making a large donation at a relatively small cost, establishing a life insurance policy is an option to consider. A life insurance policy typically avoids or reduces estate taxes and is a giving vehicle that can be used in a number of different strategic ways:

- You can name VST as owner and beneficiary of a life insurance policy, and VST will issue you a tax receipt for the premiums you pay to the insurance company for the premiums paid to keep the policy valid.

- You can transfer ownership of an existing policy to VST. We will issue a tax receipt for the fair market value of the policy as determined by a qualified valuator.

- If you would like to retain ownership of the life insurance policy, you can name VST as the beneficiary of the policy. VST will receive the death benefit proceeds and issue a tax receipt to your estate for the full amount of the insurance proceeds.

- If you choose to gift an asset (real estate, investment portfolio, etc.) during your lifetime, you could use the cash savings on taxes payable resulting from the charitable tax credit to purchase a life insurance policy that at your death will replace the value of the asset in your estate with the cash available for distribution to your beneficiaries.

Obviously using insurance vehicles requires the engagement of an insurance professional. There also may be tax implications that should be considered. These strategies should only be undertaken with the assistance of qualified professionals to ensure the desired outcome.
Charitable Gift Annuity or Charitable Insured Annuity

With a charitable gift annuity, a portion of your contribution is used to purchase an annuity for you, while the remainder goes directly to VST. With this option, you receive guaranteed, regular payments for the rest of your life that are largely tax-free, reducing your taxes and increasing your current after-tax income by using a donation receipt from VST for the value of your gift. VST is able to put your gift to work immediately in the area of your choosing.

With a charitable gift insured annuity, a portion of your annuity income is used to fund an insurance policy for which VST is named owner and beneficiary, providing for a significant future gift to VST. You receive guaranteed, regular payments for the rest of your life that are largely tax-free. The premiums paid on the insurance policy are tax creditable to you and will increase your after-tax income now and in the future, as long as the premiums are paid.
If you are considering gifting your retirement savings to VST, or seeking to offset taxes that will become payable, your Registered Retirement Savings Plan (RRSP), Registered Retirement Income Fund (RRIF) and/or Tax Free Savings Accounts (TFSA) may be donated directly to VST as an Inter Vivos (during your lifetime) gift or through a beneficiary designation on the account.

You may also bequeath your RRSP, RRIF or TFSA to VST through your Will. In all cases a charitable tax receipt will be issued for the full value of the account at the time of its transfer to VST.

You should consult professional advisors on the current tax rules applicable to these funds prior to making any final decisions.
“There have been few moments in Christianity’s history when more was at stake than at this moment. There have been few moments in Christianity’s history when we have needed a thinking faith, a theologically reflective faith, a generous and critical, imaginative and deeply engaged faith more than we do today.”

Michael Jenkins
The Church Transforming