

For Immediate Release: March 12, 2021

LARGEST CONVOCATION FOR SCHOOL'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY TO INCLUDE FOUR HONORARY DOCTORATE RECIPIENTS

VANCOUVER, BC, March 12, 2021. The Vancouver School of Theology has confirmed its Convocation Ceremonies will be conducted virtually this year in keeping with directives related to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Convocation ceremony will be held on May 11 at 7:00 pm featuring the graduating classes of both 2020 and 2021, with over 60 individuals completing their academic programs. The graduation ceremony will feature the largest number of students convocating from VST programs on one occasion. This year's ceremony will be among the highlights for VST as it celebrates 50 years of leadership and innovation in theological education.

VST will also publicly recognize its 2020 and 2021 honorary doctoral degree recipients: **Professor Santa Ono** (UBC President and Vice-Chancellor), **Rabbi Marcia Prager** (Director and Dean of ALEPH Ordination



Professor Santa Ono



Rabbi Marcia Prager



Rev. Douglas Goodwin



Mr. Rupert Lang

Programs, a non-denominational Jewish Seminary in Philadelphia, PA), **Reverend Douglas Goodwin** (Past Executive Minister, Pacific Mountain Region, United Church of Canada), and **Mr. Rupert Lang** (Internationally Renowned Conductor/Composer and Director of Music and Organist at Christ Church Cathedral, Vancouver). Honorary Doctor of Divinity (D.D.) degrees are granted to individuals who exemplify the values of VST, and who have made significant contributions through the integration of theology and practice of ministry in one or more of: theological scholarship, ecumenical dialogue, the life and ministry of the Christian community, and interdisciplinary scholarship involving theology with other fields.

VST will also feature its 2020 and 2021 recipients of the Principal's prestigious **T.E.G. (Thoughtful Engaged Generous) Award**. As the 2020 recipient, **The Venerable (Archdeacon) Clara Plamondon** (Archdeacon of Cowichan/Malaspina) serves as Incumbent of the parish of St. Paul Anglican Church in Nanaimo. **Rev. Curtis Bablitz** (Brant Hill Presbyterian Church in Burlington, Ontario) is the 2021 recipient. The T.E.G. Award was established in 2019 by VST to recognize leading practitioners in Christian ministry.



The Venerable
Clara Plamondon



Rev. Curtis Bablitz

There will also be 12 graduates who will be awarded the **Certificate in Leadership Excellence** from the UBC Sauder Executive Education program.

The graduation ceremony on May 11 will feature keynote speaker **The Reverend Professor Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger**, Ph.D. Hunsinger's address, entitled "Manna in the Wilderness" will come from John 6:24-35. Dr. van Deusen Hunsinger will also present at an online public workshop on May 12 (10 am – 12 noon) on the topic of "Keeping an Open Heart in Troubled Times". The Reverend Professor Deborah van Deusen Hunsinger, Ph.D., an ordained minister in the PCUSA, is a Spiritual Director at Princeton Theological Seminary, and Professor of Pastoral Theology Emerita. Originally trained as a pastoral counselor, Deborah taught courses in pastoral theology and pastoral care at Princeton Seminary for 25 years.



The Rev. Professor
Deborah van Deusen
Hunsinger

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About VST

VST's core mandate is to educate and form thoughtful, engaged and generous Christian leaders for the church in the 21st century. Among theological schools, VST is viewed as a change agent and an innovator for the church. As an affiliated college of the University of British Columbia, VST is now ranked in the top 50 schools globally and in the top 10 of most improved theological schools. In 2020 VST was identified by *In Trust* Magazine as instituting bold transformative change for the renewal of theological education. VST is accredited by the Government of British Columbia, and in North America by ATS (Association of Theological Schools).

The Vancouver School of Theology welcomes students from many Christian communions, other faith traditions and Indigenous communities, while celebrating its core relationships with the Anglican Church of Canada, Presbyterian Church in Canada, and United Church of Canada. The Indigenous Studies Program at VST is central to the school's identity and commitments. The Vancouver School of Theology celebrates its 50th Anniversary this year as a leader in theological education.

The Vancouver School of Theology acknowledges that the land on which they are located is the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) People.

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