

For Immediate Release: July 7, 2025

CORK LECTURE 2025: THE HOLY SPIRIT AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE | THE REV. DR. ROB FENNEL

FRIDAY, AUGUST 8 – SATURDAY, AUGUST 9, 2025

VANCOUVER, BC. July 7 2025. The Vancouver School of Theology and St. Andrew's Hall are pleased to announce that the Rev. Dr. Rob Fennell of the Atlantic School of Theology will be the keynote speaker for the 2025 Cork Lecture and Workshop.

Rob's keynote lecture will explore the presence and power of the Holy Spirit as God's dynamic, transformative life at work in the world. This timely and timeless theme will resonate with those preparing for leadership in the church, lay leaders, and all those seeking a deeper encounter with the Spirit in both personal and communal life.

The Rev. Dr. Rob Fennell is Associate Professor of Historical and Systematic Theology at the Atlantic School of Theology in Halifax, Nova Scotia, and an ordained minister in the United Church of Canada. Since joining AST in 2006, he has served in a variety of leadership roles, including Academic Dean (2017–2023) and Acting President (2022–2023). He holds a ThD from the University of Toronto and an MLitt in New Testament from the University of St. Andrews.



Rob's teaching and research explore the intersections of hermeneutics, the Holy Spirit, pilgrimage, evangelism, congregational vitality, and devotional writings from figures such as C.S. Lewis and Dietrich Bonhoeffer. He is the founding director of Camino Nova Scotia, AST's social enterprise-based summer pilgrimage program. His recent publications include *Camino Close to Home: How to Plan and Thrive on Local Pilgrimages* (Norvalis, 2023) and *Turning Ourselves Inside Out: Thriving Christian Communities* (with Russell Daye, Fortress, 2021). Rob is also the recipient of the United Church of Canada Foundation's **McGeachy Senior Scholarship (2022–2024)** for his research on the Holy Spirit across Christian traditions.

The Cork Lecture and Workshop focuses on congregational vitality and is jointly sponsored by VST and St. Andrew's Hall in honour of Mardee Cork, a generous supporter of theological education.

Free public lecture Friday August 8, 7:00 PM | Workshop Saturday August 9, 9:30 AM – 12:30 PM

The Holy Spirit and The Christian Life

Who is the Holy Spirit—and how can the Spirit be known? And what difference does that make in our lives and world events? From a vague “something” to a real “Someone,” Rob will guide participants into a deeper understanding of the Spirit as the living, active presence of God. In Saturday's workshop, participants will explore how the Holy Spirit—God's own self—lives at the beating heart of spirituality. Through guided conversation and reflective practice, we will consider the Spirit's movement within our personal lives and the life of the church. Come with an open mind and heart to dive into the Spirit's embrace.

Both the public lecture (free) and the workshop (\$10—includes lunch) require registration. Please register here: <https://events.humanitix.com/the-holy-spirit-and-the-christian-life>

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About St. Andrew's Hall

St. Andrew's Hall is an associate of VST and is affiliated with the Presbyterian Church in Canada. St. Andrew's Hall is also a home for students at UBC and affiliated theological colleges where the success and flourishing of each person matters.

About VST

VST's core mandate is to educate and form thoughtful, engaged, and generous Christian leaders for the church in the 21st century. VST is a leading theological school, viewed as a change agent and innovator for the church.

VST is an affiliated college of the University of British Columbia ranked in the top 100 schools globally and in the top 10 of most improved theological schools. VST has been recognized by *In Trust Magazine* for its realizing transformational change as it renews theological education. A recipient of a prestigious Pathways for Tomorrow grant from the Lilly Endowment, VST is redefining the critical role of theological field education in preparing clergy. VST is accredited by the Government of British Columbia, and in North America by ATS (Association of Theological Schools).

The Vancouver School of Theology celebrates its foundational relationships with the Anglican Church of Canada, the United Church of Canada, and the Presbyterian Church in Canada. VST also welcomes students from many Christian communions, other faith traditions, and Indigenous communities. The Indigenous Studies Program at VST is central to the school's identity and commitments.

The Vancouver School of Theology celebrated its 50th Anniversary in 2021. VST, through its predecessor schools, has been teaching theology in Vancouver since 1893.

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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