




# AST NEWS FALL 2019

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## President's Message

By AST President, Rev. Canon Neale Bennet

Fall term is fully underway with classes up and running, and what an exciting time it is on campus! For the first time in our history we have students in our Summer Distance Master of Divinity program in every province of Canada. Other programs and courses have strong enrollments as well, with over sixty-five students in one course alone. We have launched a new leadership learning initiative, welcomed new members of the community, renovated faculty offices, and are continuing to ramp up our continuing education offerings. There is a lot to celebrate and I hope you'll enjoy reading what lies ahead.

## Need a Refresher?

Ready for a refresher? Graduates of AST degree programs are welcome to take another course anytime or to audit most courses. No new application needed! Many online and hybrid courses are available for you to take from the comfort of your home or study.

For a list of courses available in 2019-20, visit our website: [astheology.ns.ca](https://astheology.ns.ca)

## AST invites you!

Take part in a Continuing Education program this year. For more information, visit the AST website: [astheology.ns.ca/con-ed](https://astheology.ns.ca/con-ed)

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# New Records for the Summer Distance MDiv Program

Over the six weeks of our summer term, we welcomed more than 35 students from Newfoundland to Vancouver Island and as far south as Massachusetts. With the largest incoming class in the program, we now have students living or serving in every province in Canada. The program, originally designed to meet the needs of the United Church of Canada, is now adaptable for students in any denomination.

With a residence to provide on-campus housing, our summer distance students have the opportunity to experience the joys and challenges of truly living in community. It is such a joy to have 30 or more students, staff and faculty in chapel each morning.

To learn more contact The Rev. Dr. Susan MacAlpine-Gillis at [smacalpinegillis@astheology.ns.ca](mailto:smacalpinegillis@astheology.ns.ca).



Caitlin Mackenzie, Brantford Ontario  
Student, Summer Distance MDiv

# Thank you to The Diocese of NS and PEI

In 2017, AST became one of five successful bidders in the Clean Foundation and NS Department of Energy’s “Solar for Community Buildings” project, allowing us to generate up to 50 kilowatts of solar electricity annually and sell electricity back to the utility through a Power Purchase Agreement. The Power Purchase Agreement will generate \$14,000 annually to support programming.

The Diocese of Nova Scotia and PEI donated \$150,000 to AST to purchase and install solar panels on the roof of the Library. AST has a campus renewal plan that places greening the campus as a top priority. We’ve implemented a comprehensive campus recycling and waste management program improving campus efficiency and reducing the carbon footprint of AST.

AST is grateful to be part of such an exciting project to help reduce our province’s carbon footprint. We would like to thank the Diocese of Nova Scotia and PEI for their contribution to this project.



Ron Cutler (Archbishop of Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, Metropolitan of the Ecclesiastical Province of Canada), Neale Bennet (President of AST), David Griffiths (Past chair, AST Board of Governors).

# Important Dates

Mark your calendars!

Nicholson Lectures  
Open House  
Advent Service  
Gala Dinner  
Convocation

November 13 & 14, 2019  
November 27, 2019  
December 5, 2019  
May 8, 2020  
May 9, 2020

For the full list of events please visit: [astheology.ns.ca/home/events-calendar/index.html](http://astheology.ns.ca/home/events-calendar/index.html)



LEFT TO RIGHT:  
Neale Bennet, President AST  
Ryan Stapells for Robert Stapells, 2019 Award Recipient (posthumously)  
The Honourable Mayann Francis  
Imam Abdallah Yousri, 2019 Award Recipient

# THE HONOURABLE MAYANN FRANCIS FAITH IN ACTION 2019 AWARD RECIPIENTS

Atlantic School of Theology congratulates the 2019 award recipients: Imam Abdallah Yousri and Robert Stapells (posthumously).

The Award honours exceptional community outreach that is recognized as having provided significant benefit to the wider community. The award is given to individuals whose honoured work is driven by their religious commitment to the faith tradition to which they belong.

For more details please visit  
[astheology.ns.ca/home/faith-in-action.html](http://astheology.ns.ca/home/faith-in-action.html)







## A Trip to the Holy Land

By The Rev. Dr. Susan MacAlpine-Gillis

I had never heard Israel referred to as the 5th Gospel until Sister Joan Campbell referred to it in chapel the week before I left on my trip to Israel/Palestine in January 2017. St Jerome was correct – physically walking the streets of Jerusalem, being in a boat on the Sea of Galilee, standing on the side of the Mount of the Beatitudes, roaming the ruins of Caesarea, and looking at the ancient stones from a 1st century synagogue in Magdala bring those ancient and well-known stories of Scripture alive in a way I never thought possible.

Lesley Hamilton, a United Church Minister and AST grad was my roommate and we joined 17 others on a pilgrimage organized by Christian Journeys. We arrived in Tel Aviv, a very modern city and over 8 full days of sightseeing we peeled back the layers of history and stepped into Scripture in a way I had not imagined. It is hard to explain the feeling that comes with standing in front of Abraham's Gate constructed more than 4000 years ago or observing the religious ritual at the Western Wall. It is a journey I wish I had taken early on in my years of ministry.

When I returned, I approached Sister Joan Campbell about doing a course together that would include a Holy Land Journey and she agreed. Students and alum are invited to join us, either registered in the course for credit or as Con Ed participants, and travel to the Holy Land from February 13 - 24, 2020.

Visit our website for more information: [www.asttheology.ns.ca](http://www.asttheology.ns.ca)

## Bursaries and Scholarships

By Academic Dean, The Rev. Dr. Rob Fennell

Atlantic School of Theology provides approximately \$160,000 annually in need-based bursaries and merit-based scholarships. This is in addition to student aid provided by denominations and congregations that support their candidates directly. All graduate program students are eligible to apply for financial support from AST. Scholarships are normally awarded in the spring, concurrent with initial admission to programs, on the basis of prior academic achievement. Bursaries are awarded in the fall, on the basis of financial need. Many generations of donors and friends of AST have made this crucial support to students possible. Such gifts enable theological students and ministry candidates to flourish, pay their bills, and carry a smaller student debt load. For more information or to donate to our scholarships or bursaries, please contact [advancement@asttheology.ns.ca](mailto:advancement@asttheology.ns.ca)



In May 2019, 15 friends, alumni/ae, and students of AST joined our Academic Dean, Rev. Rob Fennell, on a pilgrimage to sites of ecumenical significance in Switzerland and France, including visits to the World Council of Churches, the Taizé Community, and Chartres Cathedral. It was an amazing experience!

## Faculty Publications

Congratulations to several AST faculty and adjunct faculty who have recently published new books!

*Faith Forward Volume 3: Launching a Revolution through Ministry with Children, Youth and Families*, by Rev. Dr. Dave Csinos

*Living Traditions: Half a Millennium of Re-Forming Christianity*, by Rev. Dr. Kimber McNabb (with Rev. Dr. Rob Fennell and chapters by Rev. Dr. Andrew O'Neill, Rev. Dr. Martin Rumscheidt, and Jesse Smith)

*Speaking Church: A New Vision for the Sub/Urban Congregation* (Wipf&Stock, 2018) by Rev. Dr. Ross Bartlett

*Qualitative Research in Theological Education: Pedagogy in Practice*, by Rev. Dr. Susan Willhauck (with Mary Clark Moschella and chapters by Rev. Dr. Dave Csinos and Rev. Dr. Jody Clarke)

*The Rule of Faith and Biblical Interpretation: Reform, Resistance, and Renewal*, by Rev. Dr. Rob Fennell

*The Theology of The United Church of Canada*, Rev. Dr. Rob Fennell (with Don Schweitzer and Michael Bourgeois and a chapter by Adrian Jacobs)

Dr. Susan Willhauck is the editor of a new book entitled, *Female Child Soldiers, Gender Violence and Feminist Theologies*, now available from Palgrave MacMillan publishing.

## Volunteer at AST

AST is seeking volunteer Halifax-area ministers and priests to provide one-to-one support for a few AST students. As a mentor, you would assist one student with thinking through the adjustment into theological studies, with research and writing skills, or with other areas relating to study. Interested? Please send a message to the Rev. Rob Fennell, Academic Dean, at [rfennell@asttheology.ns.ca](mailto:rfennell@asttheology.ns.ca)

The AST Library is seeking enthusiastic and organized individuals who are interested in volunteering their time to support library staff and services. If interested, please contact Emily Cooke at [ecooke@asttheology.ns.ca](mailto:ecooke@asttheology.ns.ca)



## MA Program for Alumni

Did you know?

- If you have your MDiv, your MA is only 8 credits
- Focus on your area of interest ; Pastoral Care, Ethics, Systematics, Other
- No second language requirement for Course Only Option
- Complete the MA fully or partially online

For more information, contact Dr. David Deane or The Rev. Dr. Susan MacAlpine-Gillis. We would love to welcome you back to AST as an MA student!



Carissa Rodriguez, Worcester Massachusetts Student, Summer Distance MDiv



Theodore Efthimiadis, Halifax Nova Scotia Student, MA Program



Damber Khadka, Winnipeg Manitoba Student, Summer Distance MDiv

## Information Technology Investment

AST is investing in Information Technology this year by implementing a multi-year plan to enhance our ability to serve our students wherever they may be when taking a class. The Wi-Fi infrastructure and Ethernet wiring will be upgraded across the campus this fall. We are also investing in hiring a part-time IT/AV Technician to provide faculty with in-class IT technical support for distance and hybrid courses online, as well as provide IT/AV training, resources, and support to faculty and staff. AST will also implement a comprehensive plan to ensure our cybersecurity. For more information, contact Shawn West, Director of Finance and Administration.

## Leadership Programming

AST is dedicated to developing effective, creative, morally courageous leaders who are able to rise to the global challenges we face – inspired leaders with the vision and audacity to build a better world.

Honouring and drawing upon AST’s experience in developing faithful and effective leaders, we are excited to present a new and transformative expression of our mission, offering leadership development programs to learners from all walks of life who are interested in a learning experience that engages mind, heart, spirit and body. For those who see leadership as a vocation – in whatever context – we will offer the opportunity to develop the capacity and skills to move people from common cause to common vision to common action.

Sherie Hodds, our new Director, Leadership Learning Initiative, is working to develop leadership programming that will launch in early 2020.

More information and details will be available in the next few weeks. If you would like to connect with Sherie, please contact her at [shodds@astheology.ns.ca](mailto:shodds@astheology.ns.ca).

## New Faces On Campus



Shawn West  
Director of Finance and Administration

A seasoned and effective senior leader and accountant, Shawn has experience in municipal government, with corporations, in the university sector, and with a faith-based organization. He has a great deal of experience in managing the finance, information technology, audit, human resources, operational, and facilities functions for organizations large and small.



Sherie Hodds  
Director of the Leadership Learning Initiative

Sherie Hodds is a certified professional coach (Coaches Training Institute, and the International Coaching Federation) with leadership experience in the private and public sectors. As the founder and president of Plum Group, Sherie has consulted with diverse organizations, teams and individuals. An active community leader, Sherie has volunteered with organizations such as Habitat for Humanity and the Nova Scotia Nature Trust.

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[www.astheology.ns.ca](http://www.astheology.ns.ca)

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