

# 50th Anniversary of the Formation of AST



In 2021, we celebrated the 50th anniversary of the formation of the Atlantic School of Theology. We are grateful to all our faculty, staff, students, alumni, partners, and friends supporting our University for all these years and celebrating together with our success and achievements.

We look back on 50 years at AST with gratitude for God’s faithfulness in a time in which a great ecumenical vision was cast and achieved. We also look forward to the “next 50” and beyond, with that same gratitude, trust, and excitement about where God will lead us next, in joyful service to the world.

In March 1971, Articles of Agreement were designed to create one ecumenical theological school – the first time in Canada that three denominations had come together for such an institution. Do you want to know more about our history? Please access <https://www.astheology.ns.ca/home/about/ast-history.html>.



**The Rev. Canon  
Fred Krieger  
Former Faculty**

I took part in the negotiations of 1970–1971 that led to the founding of Atlantic School of Theology, became a member of its faculty in 1971, and retired in 2001. It is gratifying to know that fifty years later the School continues to fulfil in different times and ways its original mission, and to be invited to offer a brief comment on its founding and direction. The bold vision of the lay and clerical members of the founding committees was given definition and direction by the consultant who helped us

negotiate terms for the formation of one school serving three denominations: “The fact of plurality can be affirmed in a manner that supports rather than violates the principle of unity.” The School was to be denominational, interdenominational, and ecumenical. This was reflected and embodied in the governance, administration, faculty, student body, curriculum, and common life of the School. The curriculum came to be interdisciplinary, combining both lectures and small discussion groups, and team-taught by faculty representing the denominations. Formation directors and denominational classes focused on the particular needs of the founding partners. The common life and worship of the School was characterized by respect for and honest dealing with differences. Nowhere was this true more than in common worship. There the mixed denominational nature of

the school was apparent, as both challenge and promise. In the 1980s, the community sought ways in which all members of the School could share in Eucharists offered from time to time in community worship. Papers were written, discussions ensued. A proposal was sent to representatives of the founding denominations that invited them to consider the School—as a permanent, stable ecumenical community—an interim ecclesial community in which Eucharist could be shared on an occasional basis. This did not gain the approval of all the founding partners, but marked a high point, in my opinion, in the School’s effort to move from interdenominational cooperation on a path to the unity of all in one place. Now different challenges and opportunities face the School but its vision of unity, I trust, endures.



**The Rev. Dr.  
Susan Slater  
Former Faculty**

When I joined the faculty in 1990, the School was not quite 20 years old and was a very distinctive place to serve. We taught (and learned) in teams, planned and led prayer in teams, committed in, yes, ecumenically and otherwise representative teams. Lunch was a free-range but also communal thing. AST still is pretty distinctive!

A faculty colleague once commented that they had always considered AST an experiment and that—after almost thirty years—they still did. I think the charism of

the School has been expressed in a gift of responsiveness to the promptings/proddings of the Spirit over time: to be in some sense at-home in the wind or water—with its lifts and its sometimes-shocking descents. Is AST not still an experiment? I trust that it is.

My dearest wish for AST would be that you all continue to follow the movement of water and wind through horizons now approaching: do sail on. With gratitude and thanks, Susan

NL SP 2022



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

**Thanks for your support!** Please make cheques payable to Atlantic School of Theology. AST’s Charitable Tax Number: BN 13040 0617-RR0001.

# 50th Anniversary of the Formation of AST *Cont'd*



The Rev.  
Margaret Sagar  
AST MDiv 1985  
Former Chair, AST  
Board of Governors

I began my M.Div studies at AST part time in 1977, not many years after its inauguration. I was a more “mature” student than the majority of predominantly young white males but when I returned full time in 1983 that was no longer so! The demographic of AST students has been through many fluctuations since then and today is wondrously more diverse. I lapped up my classes with great enthusiasm: studies with Professors J. Hibbitts, F. Krieger, M. Rumscheidt, G. MacDermid, T. Maybee, E. Schuller, J. Kirby, R. Stokoe, R. Hatton, B. O’Neill - a variety from all of AST’s collaborating denominations. In the first decade, the Eucharist was joyfully

celebrated every Friday by the entire community according to the rite of each of the founding denominations in turn. Sadly in 1983 that changed: the RC community was no longer allowed to participate. The decision was made that we would therefore have Eucharistic worship only in our own denominations. A huge set back, I believe, in ecumenism. Since graduation I have frequently participated in ministry and friendship with AST graduates or students of differing denominations. Although I was an Anglican student, and ordained in the diocese, in 1990 I transferred to the United Church of Canada. It was a gift to find myself among former AST colleagues.

The curriculum and ethos of AST has appropriately continually evolved to keep pace with changing times of society and culture. Its steadfast adherence to its original intent to be a unique ecumenical school is a tribute to its founders and to those who have followed as presidents, faculty, staff and students. The School

plays an important role since the world needs Christian cooperation to meet the complex challenges that humankind and Earth face in this century. Leaders who are theologically educated, biblically literate, deeply spiritual, and aware of contemporary issues are essential. Our deep roots in the Gospel, living the Way of Love will inspire others to recognize that Love is indeed the heart of the mystery of the universe made known to us in the incarnation of Love in Jesus Christ.

I was chair of the Board at the time of the fortieth anniversary when we were able to hold a wonderful service of thanksgiving at All Saints Cathedral and the first of our gala dinners. Sadly no gatherings are possible while this pandemic continues. Nevertheless, I for one thank God for AST and its role in my journey; I pray that the next fifty years will be as vibrant as the first. Blessings to all who faithfully serve this School in any capacity at this time and to all alumni/ae scattered around Canada and the world.



Terry Slaunwhite  
Facilities Manager

I was blessed to start working at AST in the year 1984. I started by working in the kitchen for Beaver foods and moved to a maintenance position in 1986. During those years, I have seen a lot of upgrades made to the property. In 1993 construction was completed on our

new Library as space was in need for increasing book volumes also, at that time, the boiler plant was upgraded, and gas/oil combination boilers were installed. AST generously offered to put me through a Power engineering degree because one was needed due to the increase in boiler plant horsepower. There have been many more upgrades to other facilities and equipment over the years. For example, all lighting on campus was upgraded to L.E.D. lighting in 2018, and there has been a solar array installed on the library building in 2019—an effort to become more sustainable and decrease our carbon footprint. In the future, we are planning on installing another solar

array on the chapel building to further increase our sustainability. We have tried to keep the original look to the school as possible, even having the front residence doors custom made to resemble the original doors. AST is constantly going through changes, even adding Hybrid classrooms and moving all offices to the Library and other buildings on campus to accommodate more room in our residence building to be able to meet demands for increased revenue. As a longtime staff member of AST, I am honoured to have worked at the school for so many years and look forward to the future working with such wonderful people in administration, staff and faculty.

# www.asttheology.ns.ca

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