

S.^TJAMES'

Institute



2021

Life is complex.

Being Christian does not change that. If anything, the paradoxes of the grave-to-sky faith drive us to think more deeply about meaning, ethics, and truth. Jesus' followers were known to say, "This teaching is difficult!" (John 6:60).

The St James' Institute faces the hard questions of life and faith.

No quick fixes, no strawmen.

St James' Institute's 2021 programme addresses a range of difficult topics: dementia, gender and identity, dogma in a post-truth world, mission in the aftermath of colonialism, the politicisation of religious symbols, Muslim–Christian relations, death denial, etcetera. In taking on these issues, the Institute is intentional about addressing the relation between religion and society in its complexity.

But we not only face difficult questions, we face one another. We ask hard questions strengthened by our shared humanity. We laugh together. We doubt together. We believe together. We are surprised by wisdom's multiplicity. In a community of adult learners, the tension between our sameness and our difference is an invitation to grow.

As the Institute's new Director, my aim is to produce a programme which brings reasoned faith into conversation with broader cultural issues. This two-way engagement is a key focus of our strategic direction. Jesus' pedagogy is both "spirit and life" (John 6:63).

I invite you to learn with us.

Dr Aaron Ghiloni

Director, St James' Institute

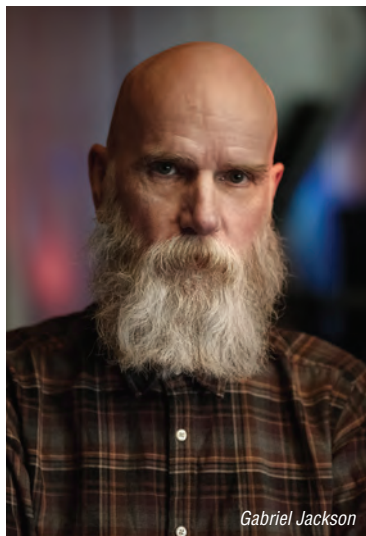


*The St James' Institute addresses questions of faith,
religion, and spirituality in the public square.
Our vision is be more informed, more articulate,
and more confident about faith.*

Orchestral Masses: Twenty Minute Talks

Two orchestral masses are planned for 2021: Michael Haydn's short and inspiring *Missa Sancti Gabrielis* and Gabriel Jackson's *Mass of St James'*. Before these masses are performed by The Choir and Orchestra of St James', come along to learn more about the music.

In the first Talk, Dr **Robert Forgács** will discuss the historical and visual context for Haydn's work. In the second Talk, composer **Gabriel Jackson** will discuss the inspiration behind this large-scale piece which was commissioned in celebration of St James' Church's bicentennial. Jackson will be interviewed by **Warren Trevelyan-Jones**, Head of Music at St James' Church and Chorus Master of the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra.



Sunday, 31 January & TBC • 9:00am-9:45am • St James' Hall • \$15

Gospel of Mark Intensive

This event is co-sponsored with Trinity College Theological School.

Like the other New Testament Gospels, the Gospel of Mark presents its own unique portrait of Jesus. As the earliest Gospel, Mark tells his story of Jesus at a quick, urgent, and exciting pace in ways that the other Gospels do not. Mark tells a story of Jesus that is, arguably, the most interesting and most readily accessible of the four canonical Gospels. Spend a week immersed in a Gospel narrative that tells the story of Jesus with urgency, suddenness, and excitement.

The lecturer is Rev'd Canon Dr **Robert Derrenbacker**, Dean of the Theological School and an authority on the Gospels.

Participants may audit this class or earn credit through the University of Divinity. Costs of enrolment are not included in an Institute annual subscription.

Register with tcts@trinity.edu.au.



TRINITY COLLEGE
THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL

Mon-Fri, 8-12 February • 9:00am-4:30pm • St James' Hall

What's the Purpose of a Creed in a Pluralistic World?

The Apostles' Creed was in circulation as early as the second century. The Nicene Creed was adopted in 325. The Chalcedonian Definition was accepted in 451. Do these ancient statements of belief still have a useful function in 2021? Is dogma relevant for modern faith?

These complex questions will be addressed by Associate Professor **Ben Myers**, author of *The Apostles' Creed: A Guide to the Ancient Catechism*. This is the book we will be reading for our Lent Studies, so this lecture is an ideal opportunity to meet the author!

In addition to his expertise in early Christian literature, Dr Myers has written on Anglican theology including *Christ the Stranger: The Theology of Rowan Williams*.



Sunday, 21 February • 2:00pm-4:00pm • St James' Hall • \$25

Lent Studies

The Apostles' Creed: A Guide to the Ancient Catechism by Ben Myers

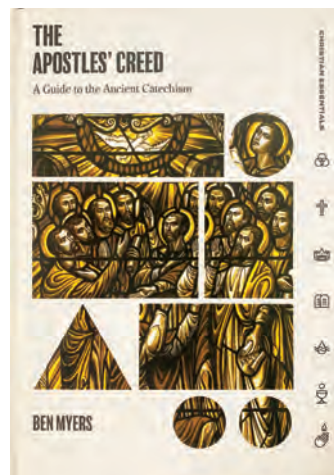
You recite it. But do you understand it?

The Apostles' Creed has united Christians from different times, places, and traditions. It proclaims eternal truths for life today. We believe them, we recite them, but do we build our lives on them?

This meditative book originated out of a series of homilies given in Sydney and was shortlisted for the Australian Christian Book of the Year award in 2019.

Although the Creed is familiar to many Christians, this book enables the reader to recite it with fresh understanding. Myers' book offers many topics for discussion including gender, the fatherhood of God, the virginal conception, Jesus' descent into hell, and the Trinity.

Copies are available for \$25 from the Parish Shop.



Five week series from 22 February • Various times and locations

The Robin Sharwood Lecture in Church Law

*Presented in conjunction with Trinity College,
University of Melbourne.*

“Will the Ties that Bind Break Under the Strain? The Future for the Constitution of the Anglican Church of Australia.”

This topic is relevant in light of the current issues facing the Anglican Church after the Commonwealth legislative reforms permitting same sex marriage and the recent Appellate Tribunal decisions in regard to the blessing of marriages, including same sex marriages, and clergy discipline. The lecture will not be limited to these issues, but they will be used to highlight the broader issues with the current Constitution and explore what the future could be for the Constitution and the Anglican Church of Australia.

The fourth Robin Sharwood Lecture will be delivered by the Honourable Justice **Debra Mullins** AO. Justice Mullins was appointed a judge of the Supreme Court of Queensland in 2000. Justice Mullins is the Chair of the Church Law Commission of the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Australia.

Register at trybooking.com/BNMDU.

Wednesday, 17 March • 7:15pm-9:00pm • St James' Church • Free



In Conversation: Preparing for Holy Week & Easter

*Prepare for the joys, agonies,
and triumphs of Holy Week and Easter.*

Each year the Parish of St James' invites a Holy Week Preacher who journeys with the congregation from Palm Sunday to Easter Day. This informal interview with Associate Professor **Michael Horsburgh** AM is opportunity to learn about his faith journey, as well as to deepen your understanding of the religious themes woven through these important services.

The interview will be conducted by the Rector, The Rev'd **Andrew Sempell**, and will include a time for questions.



Palm Sunday, 28 March • 12:00pm-1:30pm • St James' Hall • Free

Pastoral & Spiritual Issues in Dementia Care

Nearly half a million Australians live with dementia of various types. Symptoms include withdrawal, confusion, and various forms of loss including personality change. How can we nurture the spiritual life of people living with this condition? How can we communicate the love of God when previous ways of talking and sharing are diminished?

This workshop introduces tools for providing spiritual care for people living with dementia. While many aged care educational resources exist, this bespoke seminar uniquely focusses on pastoral care and ethical decision making. Informed by a Christian theological view of the dignity of each person, this practical session will offer “good news” for carers, pastoral workers, and faith communities.

The sessions will be interactive, and participants will be provided with copies of slides. A break for lunch will be taken.

Associate Professor **Rosalie Hudson** is a registered nurse with additional graduate qualifications in gerontology and theology. She has expertise in aged and palliative care with over a decade of experience as director of nursing of a 50-bed nursing home. Dr Hudson is the author of four books including *Palliative Care and Aged Care: A Guide to Practice* and *Living, Dying, Caring: Life and Death in a Nursing Home*.



Rosalie Hudson

Tuesday, 20 April • 10:00am-2:00pm • St James' Hall • \$60

St James' Church Tour

Writing on the Wall: Memorials at St James', King Street.

As Sydney's oldest church building, St James' has an important place in Australia's architectural heritage. The walls of the church are lined with historic memorials. These plaques tell stories of sacrifice, courage, loss, and inspiring faith. Some also use uncomfortable language, reflecting the colonial worldview of the Church's founders.

In this interactive tour, Associate Professor **Michael Horsburgh** AM will explain the history behind the memorials. Participants will have the opportunity to inspect the memorials firsthand and ask questions.

This event is part of St James' Bicentenary celebrations.

Michael Horsburgh taught at the University of Sydney until 1999. He was awarded the Doctor of Theology *honoris causa* by the Sydney College of Divinity in 2005 and his research interests include Australian religious history.

Sunday, 9 May • 12:00pm-1:30pm • St James' Church • \$25



A Muslim's View of the Gospel & A Christian's View of the Qur'an

*This event is co-sponsored with the
Islamic Sciences and Research
Academy Australia.*

Muslims and Christians have a lot in common. They worship one God. They regard Jesus as a divinely-sent prophet and the Messiah. They esteem Mary. Prayer and justice-seeking are core practices of both faiths. But they also have differences, including their scriptures. While the Qur'an and Bible have some similar stories, these stories are interpreted in different ways by Christians and Muslims.

Are religious differences a roadblock to learning from one another's holy books?

This interreligious session begins in friendship. Based on their years of personal conversations about Muslim–Christian relations, **Mehmet Ozalp** and **Aaron Ghiloni** will candidly explore the possibility of whether Christians can appreciate the Qur'an and Muslims the New Testament.

Associate Professor Mehmet Ozalp is an Islamic theologian and founding director of the Centre for Islamic Studies and Civilisation. Dr Aaron Ghiloni is the director of the St James' Institute and author of *Islam as Education: Pedagogies of Pilgrimage, Prophecy, and Jihad*. Both are experienced leaders of interreligious dialogues and members of the Centre for Public and Contextual Theology.



Mehmet Ozalp



Sunday, 6 June • 2:00pm–4:00pm • St James' Hall • \$25

Book Discussion Group

The Reckless Way of Love: Notes on Following Jesus by Dorothy Day

Dorothy Day was a pacifist, activist, journalist, and community builder. She devoted her life to serving Christ by serving the poor. Her book *The Reckless Way of Love: Notes on Following Jesus* offers hard-earned wisdom and practical advice gained through decades of seeking to know Jesus and to follow his example and teachings in her own life. The edition of the book we will be using received a Gold Medal at the 2018 Illumination Awards.



Our book for discussion this year focusses on the personal dimension of Day's life. Where did she receive strength to stay true to her God-given calling despite her own doubts and inadequacies and the demands of an activist life? What was the unquenchable wellspring of her deep faith and her love for humanity?

This online group will be led by **Carolyn Lawes**.

Copies are available for \$10 from the Parish Shop.

Thursdays, 27 May, 24 June, 29 July, 26 August & 23 September • 7:30pm

St James' Day Talk

The Melanesian Mission: 19th Century Lessons for the 21st Century.

The Anglican mission on Norfolk Island provides lessons – positive and negative – for Christian communities. The Island has been called a “dark paradise” and nineteenth century missionary work on the Island reveals both the possibilities and dangers of westernising in the name of Christ.



The Melanesian Mission on Norfolk Island has historic connections to St James' Church and to Anglicanism in Sydney. The annual St James' Day Talk will draw connections between this nineteenth century mission and the present-day mission of the church. In particular, the talk will reflect on the necessity of contextualising the gospel and the pitfalls of colonial attitudes.

Professor **Raymond Nobbs** is the author of a trilogy on Norfolk Island including *Norfolk Island and Its Third Settlement*. He was Foundation Dean at the Sydney College of Divinity.

A response will be given by The Rev'd Dr **John Deane**, Executive Director of the Anglican Board of Mission.

Sunday, 25 July • 2:00pm-3:30pm • St James' Hall • Free

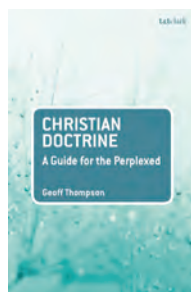
Gender & the Dynamics of Christian Doctrine: What's Ordered About the Natural order?

Debates about sexuality are divisive in the Western church. Affirmative views of homosexuality and nonbinary gender identity are often based on gospel motifs of inclusiveness and emancipation. Conservative views are often based on a “clear” or “plain” reading of Scripture. This presentation proposes a third way: Christian doctrine.

Allowing the doctrine of creation to be informed by the witness of Job and Ecclesiastes, theologian **Geoff Thompson**



Geoff Thompson



will propose a theological account of the human person that is not limited by the “ordering” of human creatures into the binary of male and female and the normativity of heterosexuality. Thompson’s approach is based on an understanding of the dynamic nature of the relationship between Scripture and doctrine.

The Rev’d Associate Professor Geoff Thompson is the author of *Christian Doctrine: A Guide for the Perplexed*. He is a regular contributor to media discussions of religion, including commentary on the Israel Folau controversy.

Sunday, 15 August • 2:00pm-4:00pm • St James’ Hall • \$25

Politicising the Bible

When did the Bible become a political prop?

Since the multi-award winning *The Bible in Australia* was published in 2018, a lot has happened. In this presentation, **Meredith Lake** reflects on the overt use of Christian symbolism in recent Australian (and American and Chinese) politics. Lake explains how and why the Good Book came to be weaponised, co-opted, and sensationalised in contemporary affairs.

Dr Meredith Lake is the host of Soul Search (ABC Radio) and an Honorary Associate of the Department of History at Sydney University.



Meredith Lake

Sunday, 29 August • 2:00pm-4:00pm • St James’ Hall • \$25

St James' Retreat

The theme for St James' 2021 Retreat is "Attentiveness to God: Insights from Evelyn Underhill." Drawing upon Underhill's retreat talks and prayers, we will be lead on a journey of attending more fully to God.

Dr **Robyn Wrigley-Carr** has led spiritual retreats in Australia and the UK over the past few years. Her PhD in theology is from the University of St Andrews, Scotland. Robyn's books include *Evelyn Underhill's Prayer Book* (editor, 2018) and *The Spiritual Formation of Evelyn Underhill* (2020). She is currently completing a book of Advent meditations, also drawing on the writings of Evelyn Underhill, to be published later this year.



Singers from **The Choir of St James'** will lead us in singing, and The Rev'd **John Stewart** will be attending chaplain.

10-12 September • St Mary's Towers • \$245

Cost includes accommodation and meals.

Retreat cost is not included in the annual subscription package.

What's in a Name?

The Virtue of Adopting a "Christian" Name in Early Church History.

Early Christians adopted new names to signify their conversion and to idealise particular virtues. New names were also chosen to make ideological points, in defiance of classical gods and political powers. While adoption of new names by males is well known, less known is how Christian females changed their names.

Based on original research of Greek and Egyptian papyrus, a leading classicist explains how Christianity emerged within Jewish and Greco-Roman worlds in quite personal ways.

Emeritus Professor **Alanna Nobbs AM** is the President of the Society for the Study of Early Christianity.



Alanna Nobbs

Saturday, 9 October • 3:00pm-4:30pm • St James' Hall • \$25

Ageing, Mortality & Spiritual Existence Today

Ageing has surprising implications for spiritual life. However, with rapid increases in life expectancy, death denial often impairs our ability to understand what it means to be a human. In this reflection on the theological dimension of ageing, Professor **Stephen Pickard** explores the importance of retaining a sense of human mortality and what it means to bear the image of God throughout the lifespan. He will discuss the pastoral implications of this affirmation and the importance of an understanding of personhood that transcends the biomedical paradigm.

The Rt Rev'd Professor Stephen Pickard is the Executive Director of the Australian Centre for Christianity and Culture and an Assistant Bishop in the Diocese of Canberra and Goulburn.



Stephen Pickard

Sunday, 14 November • 2:00pm-4:00pm • St James' Hall • \$25

Advent Quiet Day

Our annual quiet day of prayer and reflection before the busy season of Advent and Christmas preparations.

Join us for this opportunity to refresh spiritually at the beginning of the new church year.

*Stand up and raise your heads;
your redemption is drawing near.*

Luke 21:28

Saturday, 27 November

10:00am-3:00pm

St John the Evangelist Church,

Birchgrove • \$40

Cost includes morning tea, lunch, and afternoon tea.



Advent Studies

Being Christian by Rowan Williams

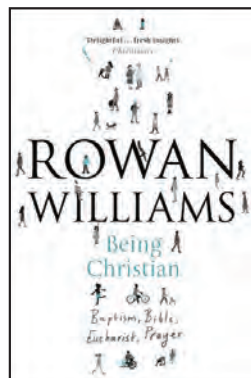
A fresh look at Christian essentials by one of the world's greatest living theologians.

In this simple, beautifully written book Rowan Williams explores four essential components of the Christian life: baptism, Bible, Eucharist, and prayer. Despite huge differences in Christian thinking and practice both today and in past centuries, he says, these four basic elements have remained constant and indispensable for the majority of those who call themselves Christians.

In accessible, pastoral terms Williams discusses the meaning and practice of baptism, the Bible, the Eucharist, and prayer, inviting readers to really think through the Christian faith and how to live it out.

Reflective discussion questions at the end of each chapter help groups dig deeper and apply Williams's insights to their own lives.

Copies are available for \$15 from the Parish Shop.



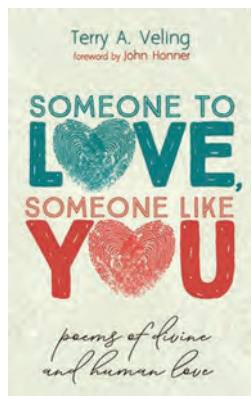
Four week series from 29 November • Various times and locations

Poetry is Essential to the Human Spirit

Poetry is whispering, rustling through life. Poetry unsettles convention, inviting us to re-imagine daily routines. Poetry helps us survive tragedy, creating new meanings amidst suffering. Poetry is shouting, imagining more to life.

In this seminar, theologian-poet **Terry Veling** describes how poetry is a way of noticing and responding to divine surprises in everyday life. Drawing on the Kabbalah, as well as Catholic theology, philosophy, and the prophetic voices of modern poets, Veling invites us to wonder afresh at our world. His talk – “Poetry is Essential to the Human Spirit” – will be interwoven with readings of his own poetry.

Dr Terry Veling is the author of *Someone to Love, Someone like You: Poems of Human and Divine Love* and *Spiral-Bound Poetry* as well as works of theology. He is a Senior Lecturer at Australian Catholic University and was a Golda Meir Fellow at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. Veling is a leader in the field of theopoetics.



Saturday, 11 December • 3:00pm-4:30pm • St James' Hall • \$25

A Natural Theologian

*Is it any wonder that
a theologian
would love birds
and books
and people
and stars.*

Enlightenment

1:00am


2:00am

3:00am

*The dog barks
The moon shines
The floorboards creak*

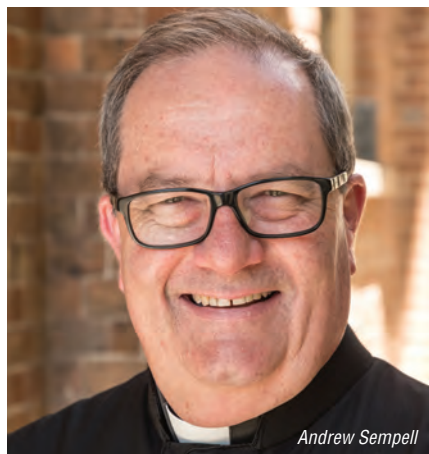
*Restlessness
Insomnia
Wakefulness*

*Everything is dark
The whole world is asleep
Yet there is always one who is awake.*



A basic theological and philosophical question is, “What is the meaning of life?”

Of course, the answers are many and varied, depending upon culture, history, geography, and society.



Andrew Sempell

In a globalised world we have become more aware of this diversity and the competing demands that arise from religious pluralism on the one hand and the impact of conflicting political activism by religious groups on the other. It can be both confusing and challenging to try working out what is true and reasonable when so much of what is presented as faith and belief either makes no sense or is permeated with judgementalism, exceptionalism, and a desire for control.

At St James' Church we try to grapple with the questions of life in an honest and open way that is respectful of a broad and thoughtful approach to the Christian faith and for the common good. To do this, we encourage people to have enquiring minds that are willing to explore and engage with a diversity of theological ideas, spiritual practices, and ways in which we choose to live together.

The St James' Institute activities seek to help answer the questions of life's meaning and purpose by developing knowledge, skills and attitudes that help in the understanding of how to live the Christian faith in our own times.

I welcome the Institute's new Director, Dr Aaron Ghiloni, and commend the 2021 programme to you.

The Rev'd Andrew Sempell

Rector, St James' King Street

As Sydney's oldest church, St James' is a place of soul-stirring worship, challenging preaching, and fine music. We are a progressive community that welcomes all people regardless of age, race, sexual orientation, or religion. We also acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we worship — the Gadigal people of the Eora Nation.

Other Events *in* 2021

Same Sex Relationships & Church Conflict
Autumn 2021

NAIDOC: Heal Country!
Winter 2021

Is Church Unity Possible?
The Witness of William Temple
Spring 2021

Pluralism and Mission:
An Interreligious Perspective
Summer 2021-2022

These seminars are anticipated;
further details to follow.

2021 St James' Institute Subscriptions

\$180 Adults

\$160 Concession

(Centrelink pensioners and fulltime students)

An annual subscription includes:

- Priority admission to all annual activities
(except Intensive and Retreat)
- A free copy of *The Apostles' Creed: A Guide to the Ancient Catechism*
by Ben Myers (limited offer)
- Priority seating at selected St James' Music concerts

Subscribe at sjks.org.au/subscribe

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Same Sex Relationships & Church Conflict

National Webinar
with Yale theologian Joyce Mercer
Thursday 27 May, 10:00am AEST | \$20

Disagreement over same sex marriage is dividing many churches. In this webinar, feminist theologian Prof Joyce Ann Mercer will share insights from her on-the-ground research with Anglican, Lutheran, and Presbyterian congregations. **How can faith communities live with difference?**

stjamesinstitute.org.au

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Responding *to the needs of our society*



Religion & Vaccine Hesitancy

Dr Tom Aechtner
Tuesday 14 September, 11am
Webinar | \$20

Vaccine Distrust and Religious Belief in Australia

This webinar with a leading vaccine hesitancy researcher will explore the relation between religious affiliation and vaccine distrust. Do certain sociological characteristics or psychological tendencies correlate with anti-vaccination views? Does a low level of trust in vaccines correspond to religious intolerance? This seminar will focus on data gathered from the Australian context.

stjamesinstitute.org.au

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Extra Events in 2021



Pastoring in a Pandemic

How does disruption cause us to rethink ministry?

Erin Johnston, PhD & Jennifer Headley, MSW
Duke Clergy Health Initiative

Tuesday 5 October, 10:00am AEDT

Webinar | Free with registration

stjamesinstitute.org.au

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Responding to the needs of our society

Is Church Unity Possible?

The Witness of William Temple

Sunday 31 October
2:00pm-3:30pm | \$25
St James' Hall and Online



The Rev'd Dr Ed Loane
Warden of St Paul's College
within the University of Sydney

stjamesinstitute.org.au

Image: rasikabendre (Canva)

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