

## November 4, 2024 – Social Justice and the Rise of the Church in the 1<sup>st</sup> to 5<sup>th</sup> century.



This presentation will explore the rise of Christianity in Roman Asia Minor (modern Western Turkey) from the original missionary activity of St. Paul to the development of the Christian Roman Empire. Specifically, we will discover how this history unfolded by examining the archaeological remains of several Roman urban centers where many of the earliest Christian communities developed and thrived. The presentation will focus on excavations at Ephesus, Pergamon, Sardis, Aphrodisias, and Smyrna, where many of our most ancient Christian finds were discovered. We also will discuss some of the most recent finds from the Summer 2024 excavations season at these sites. Through an analysis of graffiti, inscriptions, art, and monuments we will gain insights into the lived environments and experiences of these communities, and the social and economic challenges early Christians faced. These archaeological remains also demonstrate the competitive interactions between different religious traditions, resulting in complex competition and even cooperation, resulting in new forms of religious expression. Ultimately, our discussion will demonstrate the ways that early Christianity's focus on social progress and ethics enabled the movement to expand and gain followers, paving the way for the establishment of the Church as the dominant religious and political organization of the western world.

### Dr. Nate DesRosiers



Nate DesRosiers is a perennial favorite here at Saint Susanna Adult Formation. He is Associate Professor in Religious Studies at Stonehill College in Easton, where he teaches courses in Classics, New Testament, and Early Christianity, and Visiting Professor at Brown University. He received a Master's degree from Harvard University in 1998 and a Ph.D. from Brown University in 2007.