

18th Annual Archaeology Discovery Weekend

*People & Places of
the New Testament World*

NOV 14-15, 2026

In-person: La Sierra University

Online: lasierra.edu/cnea

Image: Caiaphas Ossuary, The Israel Museum (Dawn Acevedo)



CENTER FOR
NEAR EASTERN
ARCHAEOLOGY

LA SIERRA UNIVERSITY

EVENT PROGRAM

2026 Archaeology Discovery Weekend

PRESENTERS (alphabetically listed)



Dr. Bruce Chilton, Bard College

Dr. Bruce Chilton is the Bernard Iddings Bell Professor of Philosophy and Religion at Bard College. A scholar of early Christianity and Judaism, Ph.D. Cambridge (St John's College), he wrote the first commentary on the Aramaic version of Isaiah (*The Isaiah Targum*), as well as academic studies that analyze the New Testament in its Judaic context (including *Rabbi Jesus*; *Rabbi Paul*; *Mary Magdalene*; *The Herods*; and *Aramaic Jesus*). Chilton has taught at the Universities of Cambridge, Sheffield, and Münster as well as Yale University and Bard College.

Dr. Jodi Magness, UNC-Chapel Hill

Dr. Jodi Magness is the Kenan Distinguished Professor for Teaching Excellence in Early Judaism in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and recipient of the 2025 Archaeological Institute of America's Martha and Artemis Joukowsky Distinguished Service Award. Magness' research includes special emphasis on pottery, synagogues, Jerusalem, Qumran, the Dead Sea Scrolls, and the Roman army in the East. She has authored numerous books and articles, including her 2011 book, *Stone and Dung, Oil and Spit: Jewish Daily Life in the Time of Jesus*.

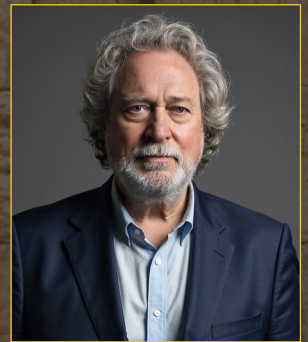


Dr. Steve Notley, Pillar College

Dr. R. Steven Notley, Ph.D. Hebrew University, is the Dean of Religious Studies at Pillar College in Newark, New Jersey and was the Distinguished Professor of New Testament and Christian Origins at Nyack College (NYC, 2001-2023). He is widely published, including his monumental work with Anson Rainey on the biblical atlas, *The Sacred Bridge: Carta's Atlas of the Biblical World* (Carta 2005). Since 2016, he has served as the Academic Director of the El Araj Excavation Project, identified at Bethsaida, the first-century lost city of the Apostles.

Dr. James Tabor, UNC-Charlotte

Dr. James Tabor, recently retired, was Professor in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte for 33 years and now holds the position of Distinguished Fellow at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Having earned his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago, he has combined work on ancient texts with archaeological research and has published over 50 professional articles and nine academic volumes; his latest book is *The Lost Mary: Rediscovering the Mother of Jesus*.



2026 Archaeology Discovery Weekend PROGRAM

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 13

10:00 AM-4:00 PM (PST) — MOSAIC WORKSHOP with Instructors from the Madaba Institute for Mosaic Art and Restoration (MIMAR) in Madaba, Jordan — *High School and older; \$25/person*

SATURDAY, NOVEMBER 14

3:00-6:00 PM (PST) — Illustrated Presentations w/ Q&A @ Zapara School of Business

WELCOME to La Sierra University and Archaeology Discovery Weekend 3:00-3:05
La Sierra University President, Christon Arthur

WELCOME to CNEA and the 18th Annual Archaeology Discovery Weekend 3:05-3:10
Center for Near Eastern Archaeology Director, Kent Bramlett

PRESENTATIONS

Douglas Clark, Presiding

Geography of the Gospels 3:10-3:50
Steve Notley

Paul and the Politics of Sacrifice 3:50-4:30
Bruce Chilton

BREAK for refreshments 4:30-4:45

The Ossuaries and Burials of Jesus and James 4:45-5:45
Jodi Magness

PANEL DISCUSSION on Saturday Presentations 5:45-6:00
Presenters; Larry Geraty, Presiding

SPECIAL RECEPTION: *The New Testament World... In Jordan* — ZSB Atrium 6:00-7:30
(Including meet-and-greet with guests from Madaba, Jordan)

SUNDAY, NOVEMBER 15

1:00-4:00 PM (PST) — Illustrated Presentations w/ Q&A @ Zapara School of Business

WELCOME 1:00-1:10
La Sierra University Provost, Leslie Martin

PRESENTATIONS

Kent Bramlett, Presiding

Finding the City of the Apostles 1:10-1:50
Steve Notley

The Lost Mary: Rediscovering the Mother of Jesus 1:50-2:30
James Tabor

BREAK for refreshments 2:30-2:45

Mary Magdalene and the Defilement of Tiberias 2:45-3:25
Bruce Chilton

PANEL DISCUSSION on Sunday Presentations 3:25-4:00
Presenters; Larry Geraty, Presiding

ALSO ON SUNDAY @ CNEA

Kids' Adventures in Archaeology Program @ ZSB & CNEA	1:00-4:00 PM
Bedouin Tent with refreshments & Jordanian meet-and-greet	4:00-6:00 PM
Hands-on lab activities (including making mosaics) & exhibits	4:00-6:00 PM



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CNEA ACTIVITIES – 2026-2027

SPECIAL THANKS TO:

- CNEA Founding Members and Supporters
- La Sierra University President, Christon Arthur, and Provost, Leslie Martin
- La Sierra University Director of Public Relations, Darla Martin Tucker
- All Presenters, Respondents, and Specialists contributing to Archaeology Discovery Weekend
- Sponsor of the 2026 Archaeology Discovery Weekend: Versacare Foundation
- Co-sponsors of the 2026 Archaeology Discovery Weekend (see listing below)
- Event Coordinators: Douglas Clark, Raúl Zanatta, Dawn Acevedo, Lovelyn Razzouk, Carolyn Waldron, Suha Huffaker
- Additional CNEA staff, students, and volunteers
- Kids' Activities coordinator: Kaitlyn Satelmayer
- Event IT Providers and Support Team: Kevin Speyer and the campus IT Department
- La Sierra University Philanthropy, Marketing, Physical Plant, Custodial, and Security departments
- Special guest participants and other support from Madaba, Jordan
- All attendees who joined us in-person or online to be part of this year's conference!

- Giving Day event (online): 9 December 2026
- Winter Archaeology Lecture (hybrid): 10 February 2027
- Homecoming Archaeology Lecture (hybrid): 17 April 2027
- Archaeology Discovery Weekend (hybrid): 13-14 November 2027
- Bachelor of Arts in Archaeology
- Archaeology undergraduate minor
- Master of Arts in Near Eastern Archaeology
- Balu'a Regional Archaeological Project (BRAP)
- Madaba Plains Project – Tall al-'Umayri (MPP-U)
- Madaba Regional Archaeological Museum Project (MRAMP)

The Lawrence T. Geraty & Douglas R. Clark
Center for Near Eastern Archaeology

at La Sierra University

Director: Kent Bramlett, PhD

951 785-2632 (CNEA)

archaeology@lasierra.edu

<https://lasierra.edu/archaeology>

SUPPORT CNEA

- Donate online or mail a check for CNEA to:
4500 Riverwalk Pkwy.
Riverside, CA 92505
- Invite others to our events
- Volunteer in the CNEA labs
- Follow us on social media:



Background images: *Caliph's Ossuary* (D. Acevedo), *Western Wall* (Adobe Stock), *Pilate Inscription* (D. Acevedo), *Masada Aerial Image* (Adobe Stock)



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