



Meet our Board of Trustees



The Revd Jonathan Croucher is Vicar at Christ Church Gipsy Hill in London, and Area Dean of Lambeth South in the Diocese of Southwark. He has been on the Board of Trustees for St Augustine's College of Theology since 2013, and is the current Chair.

My career began in the law, and I became partner specialising in employment law in the City law firm which I joined after graduating from University.

I'd been exploring my call to ordained ministry since I was 18, though, and in 2000 went into the formal discernment process, with the intention of going into non-stipendiary ministry, as I had a strong sense of vocation for ministry in the secular world.

I joined St Augustine's (or SEITE, as it was then) in 2001, and well remember our first lecture on '9/11' as we were still coming to terms with what had happened in the US that day. Following ordination in 2004, I carried on working in the City, becoming Chief Operating Officer of Taylor Wessing in 2007.

I'd thought all the way through that I would have a dual role, perhaps working part-time in my secular job and serving in a parish, but as my COO role continued to grow, by 2010 it became clearer to me that God was calling me into full-time parish ministry and, giving thanks for 19 years in the legal profession, I made that transition in the parish in Blackheath where I had been serving as an NSM.

In 2011, I had a call from the Principal of SEITE Jeremy Worthen who was keen to bring some more commercial experience on to the trustee team as he prepared to leave for pastures new. So I joined Council of SEITE with a seat on the Board of Management.

One of my first roles was to recruit Jeremy's replacement and I will always seek to take the credit for appointing Alan Gregory, the current Principal! As we developed the proposal to move to West Malling we also restructured and streamlined the governance of the College, with a smaller team of Trustees, which I chair, supported by a Council of Reference made up of senior representatives of our key diocesan stakeholders. At the same time we relaunched the College as 'St Augustine's College of Theology'.

As Trustees, I hope we make a significant, if largely unseen, contribution to the life of the College, providing structure oversight and guidance. A good number of the Council of Reference are also well engaged in helping to shape life here.



Alan Gregory has been Principal of St Augustine's College of Theology since 2014.

Among contemporary clergy, including those who've recently graduated from St Augustine's, I am statistically unusual in that, since I was ordained at 23, I've never had a 'real' job outside the Church.

I've always been involved in some way in the business of theological education, whether I was working in a parish, studying for a Ph.D, or teaching in residential or non-residential colleges. After finishing my curacy in the Guildford Diocese, I taught Christian Doctrine at the late and too little lamented Salisbury and Wells Theological College before heading off to the USA for the next 25 years.

There, I took up a research fellowship at Emory University and worked in an Atlanta parish as assistant rector and, later, as interim rector in Athens, Georgia. In 1995, Suzy and I, with three children, a dog, two cats, and a parrot, moved to Texas where I spent 15 years as Professor of Church History and Historical Theology at the Seminary of the South West in Austin, where I also served as Academic Dean. Returning to the UK in 2011, I worked for three years in a parish in Northumberland and as Continuing Ministerial Development officer for the Newcastle Diocese.

St Augustine's College of Theology (or SEITE, as it then was) appointed me as Principal in 2014. This was and remains a great joy. About a month after I started, I attended my first residential week in Canterbury. At the end of each day, the staff talked over what had happened and I realised that I had never met college tutors so observant and so concerned about individual students and their formation. I've tried to live up to that level of commitment, because, in my experience, it's rare.

The Principal's role combines institutional leadership, administration, pastoral care, and teaching, and the job is only possible because of the shared efforts of the staff as a whole. As Principal, I have considerable responsibility for external relations, working with dioceses, the board and stakeholders. In recent years, there has been a quantum leap in the need for marketing and presenting a public face that catches the imagination and shows students how they will receive a quality education as well as personal formation in whatever pathway they've chosen.



Andrew Strawson is a retired Health and Safety professional, who has been on the on the Board of Trustees for St Augustine's College of Theology since 2013 as Company Secretary.

In 2013, through the Southwark Reader Network, I saw an advertisement for Company Secretary for St Augustine's (or SEITE, as it then was).

I rang for a chat, and the next thing I knew I'd been elected. My strengths as an administrator, and knowledge of charity law Charity meant that it was quite a natural role for me.

As company secretary, my basic role is to ensure we are operating legally, participating in decision-making and keeping an overview to ensure the decisions we make are appropriate. I was very involved with rewriting the articles of association for the charitable company following the move and rebrand from SEITE to St Augustine's College of Theology in 2015.

I'm not an education expert, particularly, though I have been involved in it through providing course training during my health and safety career. But I have had an interest in theological education for a long time. I believe it's important that not only clergy, but also lay people, are given the support and training they need to fulfil their roles better. So once I found more about St Augustine's I was very attracted to it.

I've long thought that people should get out of their comfort zone when training, so I think the mix of people who study there is one of the College's strengths. In fact, I'd like to see more students from other denominations studying there, to further strengthen and enhance the broad diversity that our students value so much. They benefit so much from experiencing other ways of expressing faith than their own church tradition.

Being non-residential, too, is important. In our modern world, that style of training is very much what the church needs.

I think it would be very interesting to further explore other roles where St Augustine's could provide theological input, for example training for leaders of youth and other church groups, and those involved in pastoral roles within the community. The theological aspect of that training would be so valuable.



Daphne Clifton is an Executive Coach, Associate Speaker for the London Institute for Contemporary Christianity and former student of St Augustine's, ordained in 2017. She has been on the Board of Trustees for St Augustine's College of Theology since 2019.

I'm an Executive Coach, with over 25 years' experience in media, sales and marketing. I bring that experience to many high achievers in the private and public sector clients to help them reach, and exceed, their goals. I love coaching, and I like to say that I love my clients to success.

I'm also an Associate Speaker at LICC where I specialise in Evangelism in the workplace. My seminars focus on giving people the confidence to speak about their faith, share it and keep their faith going during the working week; and are designed to encourage, motivate and inspire the Church community to support each other in whatever environment they operate.

During my three year period as non-stipendiary curate at a local church in Lee, I have been blessed to enjoy a powerful mix of work and an active faith which permeates all aspects of my life. In all my work, I aim to be God-centred, encouraging people into lifelong freedom, wholeheartedness and confidence.

As a recent former student, I've been in a position to experience for myself how St Augustine's has changed and grown in recent years. My main role as Trustee is to use my professional and personal experience to help guide and shape how we plan and communicate change, in order to keep the College true to its mission, vision and values.



The Revd John Irwin is a former student of St Augustine's, ordained Deacon in 2019. He joined us as Trustee and Treasurer in 2019, and we asked him to tell us a bit about himself.

I was ordained Deacon in 2019 after studying at St Augustine's, and I am currently Assistant Curate at St Michael and All Angels London Fields. I am self-supporting but, like most curates, I lead and assist with services, share responsibility for pastoral care, work with our youth and children's team and help the vicar with the responsibilities of parish management.

In my secular role, I am the Finance Director of the Royal Foundation of St Katharine and have had a long career in investment and wealth management. I'm delighted to be able to use my technical experience to assist with the financial management of St Augustine's.

I began my career in finance having graduated in Accounting from the University of Westminster, and qualified as a Chartered Accountant with KPMG in 1992. I was Finance Director for the World Council of Churches, based in Geneva for two years and have held a number of board level appointments in smaller financial services companies since.

I am the newest member of the board at St Augustine's and I am still finding my feet. The finances themselves are not terribly complicated although balancing the books is a much more difficult task that occupies a lot of time with the board and the college management. The College is blessed to have Becky Young looking after the accounting and her input into the discussions is invaluable.

John Moss has been on the on the Board of Trustees for St Augustine's College of Theology since 2015.

I am a lifelong member of the Church of England, and my faith has underpinned my life from the beginning. My family were practising Anglicans, and my uncle was a vicar in Gloucestershire for most of his career, and I was blessed with godparents who were serious Christian people. As a boy, I was an altar server, and became church organist for a couple of years before university.

Most of my life has been spent in Christian foundation educational institutions, from my Church of England primary school to Canterbury Christ Church University, where I retired as Dean of the Faculty of Education in 2018.

After an English degree and PhD at the University of Oxford, I did a PGCE and taught at a Roman Catholic school in Oxford. Whilst I was there, the school amalgamated with a Church of England school for a while, so I lived through the interesting process of working out how we could bring two faith communities together, and, in particular, what that meant for teaching RE.

That interfaith connection is a big part of my life, as my wife is Roman Catholic, so we've had the challenge of living as an interfaith family, and are members of the Association of Interfaith Families.

Before taking up a post which spanned the English and Education departments at Canterbury Christ Church University, another church foundation institution, I taught at a Catholic school

in Hove, which was an interesting experience in religious terms. The Head was a very liberal catholic, and there was a strong sense of a vibrant RC community with creative ideas.

I first joined the Board as the University's link with the College, as they were at the time going through the transition from SEITE to St Augustine's. At the same time, the contract for ordination training was moving from a group of universities to Durham.

I came in as trustee at the end of that process and was looking for ways to find a continued link between Christ Church and St Augustine's. One of the things we experience in the school side of church education is a difficulty in finding school leaders who have a clear understanding of what a church school is. I knew the DDE in Canterbury, and was involved in early work in setting up the Church of England Federation for Educational Leadership.

When I retired from the University, I was asked to continue as trustee in my own right, and I'm able to bring my HE experience to bear – spending time observing teaching, meeting students, and working with tutors on HE teaching practice. I'm also trustee with oversight of safeguarding and risk register.



The Revd Canon Rebecca Swyer is Director for Apostolic Life in the Diocese of Chichester. She has been on the Board of Trustees for St Augustine's College of Theology, since 2010.

I was ordained in 1991, and am a Deacon. Some of my work has been in a Parish, but I've also spent a lot of my working life in education, including working in a university before taking up a post initially as Ministry Development Officer in the Diocese of Chichester, but now as Director for Apostolic Life.

Apostolic Life is a term we use frequently in the diocese, but it's not always in common usage elsewhere. Whereas discipleship is perhaps more focussed on an individual's faith development, apostolic life is a very mission- centred term about sending people out to engage in God's mission. Our diocesan strapline is; 'to know, love and follow Jesus', taken from the Prayer of St. Richard of Chichester and which encapsulates what apostolic living means.

The department for Apostolic Life, which I head up, aims to encourage, enable and equip individuals and parishes to engage effectively with mission and ministry. My job encompasses what in many dioceses would be called the role of Director of Ministry and Mission.

We run a lay discipleship course in the diocese, alongside other ways of helping individuals live out their baptismal calling. We're responsible for calling out vocations to lay and ordained ministry and to the Religious life. Our team oversees training for different lay ministries, shaped by the needs of mission.

We oversee those training for ordained ministry and curacy training (IME2), the Ministerial Development Review (MDR) process and lifelong ongoing training and development for

clergy. Because of that we have to be very alert to the steady pace of change going on in the wider church, and what's going on in the world.

We're also responsible for working with children and youth, nurturing from a young age, as well as wellbeing for clergy and their families. Ordination is something you can never wholly prepare for until it happens. Everything changes, and it often isn't easy. People can put clergy (and their families) on a pedestal, and expect perfection. Sometimes clergy put this pressure on themselves and believe that they are falling short. We offer the reinforcement that they are also normal human beings and provide services like confidential counselling and wellbeing training. It's something we developed before most dioceses.

Education and formation are my key areas, so as well as being on the Board of Trustees, I chair the Board of Studies, so I have input into shaping the curriculum, as well as working with student feedback about their modules and teaching.

I provide support and guidance, acting as a 'critical friend' when it comes to the development of the college as a place for formation. All the many things I'm involved in come into play, as my diocesan role means I'm very alert to the changing needs of mission and ministry and informs and encourages imaginative new projects and change.

I can look at discernment from the perspective of what the church needs and how St Augustine's should be forming and shaping students for Christian living.