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AUSTIN PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

ISSUE 343

Inside: poetry, reflections, events, and more!

Editor

Sheth LaRue, Senior MDiv.

Sheth was born at a young age and has been introverted and underconfident for most of his life (except for a brief period from August 18 to August 23, 1997). Avid fan of pie and Led Zeppelin. The most famous person he ever met is a tie between Barry Lopez and Rich Karlis, neither of which are very famous. He wants humanity to be nicer, kinder, and more loving. And to laugh more. Fears spiders.





Designer Reba Balint, Middler MDiv.

Reba is an AYAVA Alum and still trying to figure out this whole vocational thing. She loves denim jackets and music she wasn't yet alive to originally listen to. She believes in sharing cheerfulness whenever possible. Has deep respect/fears for bees.

KAIROS SUBMISSION GUIDELINES

Kairos is the voice of the students at Austin Seminary and will publish content that contributes to the faith conversation on the APTS campus. Students, partners of students, on-campus family members, faculty and staff are welcomed to contribute submissions. Remember that we are a Beloved Community this does not mean that you can't express a negative opinion, but it does mean that you should express it in a loving and just way. Content which attacks individuals or groups will not be run in Kairos - this is to be distinguished from content which might criticize the actions of individuals or groups.

While we are tolerant of many things, we will not tolerate:

- Openly hostile language, especially when directed at God, the Bible, the Church, other faiths, APTS, or any member of the Seminary
- · Slurs against any person or group;
- Racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, anti-religious, or bigoted language of any kind;
- · Language that contains slander or defamation;
- Excessive foul language (if you have a good reason for using said language, please speak with us first and we may need to also speak with the Dean of Students);
- · Lewd or inappropriate pictures

If you submit something that violates these guidelines or community guidelines we will talk with you about it first, yet we reserve the right to censor your piece or to reject it altogether. When submitting, please identify yourselfby including your name and date of graduation and/or your position in the Seminary. No anonymous work will be published.

While Kairos generally carries no advertisements for sale of goods or services by individuals, exceptions may be made for the sale of a student or professor's library or other study aids. It is not possible to make all program announcements which are submitted, but Kairos will do its best to include them if provided in a reasonable time frame.

Please send submissions to: sheth.larue@student.austinseminary.edu a valentine / 20170200 - Kimbol Soques, Middler MDiv.

I've built a shrine
—light candles daily—
place words on the altar

I would gladly take cymbal-kiss metal's sour clang crashing trash can lids

anything more than this sound one hand, flapping tongue's silent tapping lips locked in the face of love

why only these pin-drop echoes? wrong words? wrong house? wrong time

for a love neither human nor angel nor senseless...







Sponsored by the LatinX Student Group and the African American Diaspora Student Group of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary.





INTERSECTIONS OF POWER

MARCH 6-7, 2020 AUSTIN PRESBYTERIAN THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY















FOR MORE INFORMATION HESED@AUSTINSEMINARY.EDU

HESED

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TINYURL.COM/HESED2020



Next Month's Issue: March. "Mental Health"

Our emotional, psychological, and social well-being; affects how we think, feel, and act; it determines how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.

- How does the Church react to mental health issues, and are these responses helpful or hurtful?
- What have been your experiences at the intersection of faith and mental health?
- How do we balance the science and the Spirit, the facts and the Faith?
- How do we as faith leaders address mental health issues in our communities?

Submissions due March 1 and should be 500 words or less, emailed to sheth.larue@student.austinseminary.edu

The AADSG Cordially Invites You to Attend Fear+Less Dialogues Thursday, February 27, 2020 McCord - Room 203

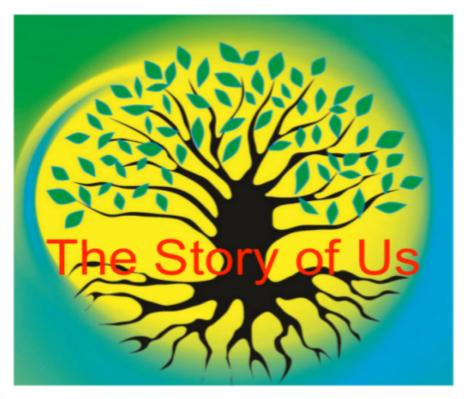
Use the link below to RSVP for the event.

https://docs.google.com/forms/d/

1xld_5m57W2p3e439DuivH2LbtpYLitJ7C5QMo2Bjd90/edit?usp=sharing

Schedule of Activities

5:30	Light Appetizers
6:00	Historical Perspective Presentation by
	Reverend Dr. G. V. Clark
6:45	Setting Expectations for the Conversation
7:05	Break
7:15	Fear+Less Conversations in McCord Room
	201, 202, 203, 204, SAV Conference
	Room
8.20	Closina Remarks & Benediction



A Celebration of Healing & Reconciliation Sponsored by the African and African American Diaspora Student Group

Event Happening throughout the month of February

- All the month of February Art Exhibit entitled "The Church in Black: Creatively Envisioning Faith From a Cultural Context" - 2nd Floor McCord
- February 10 Movie Screening of "I Am Not Your Negro" by James Baldwin - 6:00 PM - McCord 204
- February 17 Movie Screening of "Roots" 6:00 PM McCord 204
- February 18 MLK Service 11:10 AM Chapel
- February 25 Koinonia with Art Exhibit Artists Robert "Bob" R. Jones & Wardell Picquest 12:00 PM Stotts Refectory
- February 27 AADSG Student Worship 11:30 AM Chapel
- February 27 AADSG Soul Food Tasting 12:00 PM Stotts
- February 27 Fearless Dialogue

Borders and the Church - James Martin, Junior MDiv.

Whether you arrive from the north or the south, the communities of Douglas, Arizona and Agua Prieta, Sonora can seem far and isolated from the rest of the United States and Mexico. But, year after year thousands and thousands of people come to this border for different reasons, and encounter a place that gives people a wide range of treatment from extortion, to suffering and death, to opportunity, empowerment and belonging. For myself, it was certainly the latter, as a community adopted and cared for me as their beloved brother, even though we did not share much in common in terms of culture, nationality, ethnicity or socioeconomic status.

When I first moved to the communities of Douglas and Agua Prieta, I felt an odd mixture of emotions ranging from excitement to fear as I encountered a place that was both foreign and familiar. My anxieties and fears about living in a Mexican border community as a white U.S. gringo or foreign outsider were largely eased as I was embraced with open arms by an eclectic group of people who I now call my siblings, best friends and community. I later realized that for the local people who work with the greater church in Douglas and Agua Prieta, it is their way of life to welcome strangers like me into the communities they call home.

It is perhaps difficult to find a group of people that are more connected across great differences and barriers than the people who form this ecumenical community of Douglas and Agua Prieta. They can be rich or poor, Catholic or Protestant, immigrants or snow birds, young or old and they come both from el Sur (Mexico and Central America) and el

Norte (U.S. and Canada). There are many things that divide people on the border, but what I didn't know before I arrived to Douglas and Agua Prieta is that there is also a place, community and God that connects them. They are a people who live to be united by the border, and not separated by it. And while most do not attend the same service or mass on Sunday mornings, they form a different type of church the rest of the week. It's the church that meets to remember migrants who have died, the church that works to establish more fair trade, the church that meets to celebrate each other, the church that teaches each other to grow gardens and sew clothes and the church that still provides humanitarian aid to migrants even when threatened by organized crime and sectors of the government.

It was this church that I encountered on the border as a young adult, and it was this diverse group of people who became my siblings and inspiration for hope in a place that has only become more violent and militarized over the past five years. In seminary, I am confronted with a lot of unknowns and questions about church and Christianity in the 21st century. But when I return to Douglas and Agua Prieta I am reminded of a church and Christ that is less about how we divide ourselves and more about how we are siblings that cross divisions and barriers to be in community with each other. The sense of belonging that I felt this Christmas when I gathered with my siblings along the border wall to remember that Jesus Christ was also an immigrant, is the living Christ that connects my faith to the difficult realities of our world today. It gives me a sense of hope that walls do come down because there have been borders and walls inside of me that came down from the love of this beloved community.

As much as I appreciate how this community nurtured and shaped me into a young adult that is passionate about the church and the living Christ today, the U.S./Mexico border and the church does not treat all people with such love and care. My privileges as a white male citizen of the United States obscured the invisible walls and suffering of the borderlands, and I lived my first 3 years in Agua Prieta comfortably far from the harsh realities of my siblings. However, the deep bonds of fellowship and friendship with my siblings began to transform me. As I experienced second-hand the suffering and violence from white supremacy, organized crime, xenophobia and sexism with my siblings, their realities became more apparent and intimately connected to me. This is the true power of the church on the border because it brings very different people together to be deeply united by fellowship with God. And whenever I visit Douglas and Agua Prieta I say that I am going to visit people like family, because I shared some of the most beautiful and painful experiences of life with them.

I came to realize that our most harmful borders are the ones that have no physical walls, but intrinsic ways of functioning in society that segregate people through classism, racism, sexism and white supremacy. They are the borders that keep people within the invisible cages of power structures, so that they can never realize their great potential as children made in the image of God. I awakened to the reality that my own siblings suffered from borders that benefited me, and that if I truly loved my siblings, I needed to be on their side both personally and politically. My church family in Douglas and Agua Prieta will always remind me that church is not a place to be comfortable, but a place where borders are crossed because my beloved siblings come from many countries, ethnicities, races and socio-economic backgrounds. But if church only reinforces the walls and structures of unequal social systems, then we have compromised on the message of Jesus Christ, to see people as beloved children of God and our siblings in Christ.



Lessons - Jonathan Freeman, Middler MDiv.

The first thing I learned
Was to love, so I'd be happy
The first thing I loved
Was Bonnie, from Pre-K
The first thing I left behind
Was the firm and certain knowledge of cooties

The second thing I learned
Was that the Kindergarten room assignment gods hold no regard for the rosy romances of Pre-K
The second thing I loved
Was Jessica, from Kindergarten
The second thing I left behind
Was the thought of Bonnie



the back page - Sheth LaRue, Senior MDiv.

One of the best conversations I've been a part of in seminary was a group of students sharing about our relationships that didn't last: divorces, abruptly-ended engagements, and forced-but-failed marriages. While the stories were heavy and full of heartache, they were surrounded by an abundance of joy and hope: heartache because no one plans on ending a relationship after investing in one; joy because those involved were able to recognize a bad relationship; hope because they knew it wasn't the end but an opportunity to begin again.

We tend to avoid a number of discussions in life because they're just too difficult to talk about, or we discuss them in hushed-tones - 'whisper subjects' - that we refuse to speak of in normal tones because of shame and superstition:

"He has (volume drops) *cancer* (volume raises) and it doesn't look good"

"She (volume drops) *lost her baby* (volume raises) and won't be coming in this week"

Many people think the shame is in the subject matter itself - divorce, fetal demise, terminal disease - but I say the shame is in not discussing the subject. It's a shame that we refuse to discuss these subjects (and so many others) and choose to sweep them under the table. It's a shame that so many people live in shame because they've never been able to talk about their experiences. It's a shame that we pursue so much good in life that we overlook (dare I say deny) the bad in life.

That night around that table as we talked, we met one another on a spiritual level - we have rarely had opportunities to share these stories with other people. As we laid out our stories - some fresh, some ancient - each of us was able to find points of shared experience and points of realization; we were able to see a bit of ourselves in others and the veil of shame began to lift as we understood we weren't alone, we weren't the first, we weren't failures.

I'd like to encourage us as a community to dive deeper into our stories and find moments when we can share them with one another. And I'd like to encourage us all to know that there is no shame in our stories - they are a part of who we are and have been pivotal in bringing us to this moment. May we have courage to share our stories and grace to receive them from others.

much love, sheth.

[&]quot;They're (volume drops) *getting a divorce* (volume raises) so don't invite them."

2020 Calendar

FEB. 17	"Roots" movie screening	6 pm, McCord 204
FEB. 18	Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemorative Worship Service - Rev. Dr. Alice Ridgill, preaching	11:10 am, Shelton Chapel
FEB. 20	Morning Prayer Service	11:10 am, Shelton Chapel
FEB. 20 - 22	MAYM Intensive Weekend	
FEB. 25	Chapel Service - Rev. Dr. Timothy Lincoln, preaching Koinonia - A Discussion with Robert "Bob" R. Jones and Wardell Picquest	11:10 am, Shelton Chapel 12:00 pm, Stotts
FEB. 26	Ash Wednesday Service - Rev. Dr. Jen Lord, preaching	11:10 am, Shelton Chapel
FEB. 27	AADSG Worship Service - Jackie Freeman senior sermon	11:30 am, Shelton Chapel
FEB. 28	"Understanding Jesus Means Understanding Judaism" - Dr. Amy-Jill Levine	11:00 am, McMillan 210
FEB. 29	Leap Day!	
MARCH 3	Chapel Service - Rev. Dr. Carolyn Helsel, preaching	11:10 am, Shelton Chapel
MARCH 6	Hesed Lectures: "Intersections of Power" - Dr. Kay Higuera Smith	
MARCH 10	Chapel Service - Rev. Sarah Gaventa, preaching	11:10 am, Shelton Chapel

