

Leaving

KAIROS

The Voice of Austin Presbyterian Theological Seminary Students

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AUSTIN PRESBYTERIAN
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Inside: poetry, event
cancellations, reflections,
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.



Dear Graduates - Allison Angell, Junior MDiv.

When Sheth sent me the list of the graduates I realized, with the exception of the MAYM graduates, I have had a class with every one of you. No wonder I'm feeling a bit sad and extra sentimental these days!

Whenever people ask me why I love seminary so much, I always answer, "because of the PEOPLE!" The staff, faculty and my fellow students at APTS have deeply enriched my life. Thank you for sharing your stories with me, for helping me make meaningful connections, for teaching me new things, and for including me in the community. I will miss you so much!

May God richly bless you in your future ministries.



Love Cards - Kallie Pitcock, Senior MDiv.

Hi! It's me, Kallie. I've got cookies and a calling card, it's pretty. Please remember my name. Notice me. Be my friend.

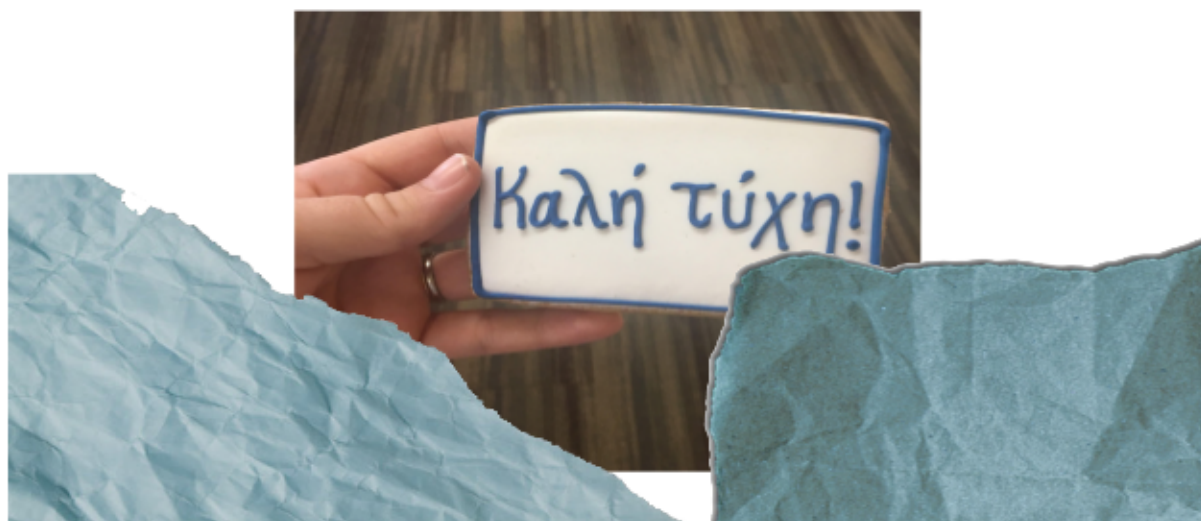
Many of you met me this way at orientation. As a bee pollinates flowers, I begged to be useful and desired. Deep down all this helpfulness is... a cry for love. I want to be loved. I want to be loved by you - my seminary community - because deep down I want to be loved by God.

Nothing in the world can knock all the breath from my lungs and spring tears to my eyes as much as those brief and sharp revelations of God's love - for me. Then, it unfolds like a blooming flower, captured in time lapse, and I watch it's full bloom.

In Turkey I had my soul shaken, and suddenly I saw with clarity, in the crowds of humans moving to and fro, speaking unfamiliar languages and wearing unfamiliar clothes, each and every one unknown to me was fully known and fully loved by God. It seemed to me their faces were glowing in Blessed Love.

That's true for you too, my friend. I bow to the image of God you bear. I have been loved by you, mentored and shaped. To the faculty and staff, y'all are more than I could have asked for or dreamed - in the depth of your wisdom and the honor of your care and concern, you remain, as we students shuffle through, forever marked by your love of us.

None of us want to say see you later this way - here we are. So, so long, farewell - may peace and grace be with you and the love of God remain ever present.



A generation goes, a generation comes,
but the earth remains forever.

Ecclesiastes 1:4

The sun rises against its will
would choose the comfortable quilt of
darkness
over ineluctable morning.
The earth turns.

Obvious things, mentioned for
the obviousness of things, the tiresome
rote
of days. Yet beneath, something different.
Something new.

Swelling, pulsing, throbbing like
unsatisfied longing, hangover from a
future held politely to the lips
but not drunk.

Something is passing away—
disease, an order, a way of life, a dream—
We will all survive this, we are told.
Some, not all.

José Ameal survived
the Spanish Flu. Nineteen eighteen. He
was four.
From his bed he peeked through drawn
curtains
looked outside

to watch the souls passing by—
“so many dead”— on the streets of Lueca
in north Spain. Did he wonder if his
turn would come?

He lived to be imprisoned
by Franco, bury his wife in 'fifty-one,
marry another and live fifty
more good years.

Something is passing away.
We peek through drawn curtains at the
procession
of souls. We wonder if today our
turn will come.

Tomorrow the sun will rise
reluctant, as though choosing its darkling
quilt
over inevitable morning.
The earth turns.

One Inspiration, Two Creations - Brendan McLean, Senior MDiv.

One Inspiration:

138 - Sappho (trans. Anne Carson)
stand to face me beloved
and open out the grace of your eyes

Two Creations:

Even Here There Are Romans

Is there not a tree
That I am climbing
Knowing that I'm not

My father was who

Get line and follow
Tracing your circles
No diversions from
Perfections of who
You cannot become

I am no project
Too damn tall to be
Newborn not yet there

Grabbing the ill rope

Pulling up to see
Birds new in forming
Animals I am

To a Singular You

Where's a place to go
To enjoy but mask
Hornblowers not heard
So I can say small
Ways of how I breathe

This home where we are
Swimming in the creek
For our unknown dance
Like dragonflies float
In a cloudy making
Modern mess to crops
Growing greatest fear

Tiny beautiful
Leaves falling into
The Christmas ham snuck
Away for us to
Share the solitude

Music comes harshly
To me while waiting
For sadness to make
Birds of my broken
Appearance to show
Freedom from follow

Show me the laundry
Listing the lovely
Cultivations you
Have made to blossom
Nuts of forgetting

Love me enough to
Grant me in fortress
Silent invasion

Never Say Goodbye - Karen Sprouse, Senior MDiv.

When I first read the request for submissions for this "Leaving" edition of Kairos, the first thing that popped up in my mind was my high school senior song, Never Say Goodbye, sung by Bon Jovi and written by Richard Sambora and Jon Bon Jovi. Yes, it may be an older song for some, but with a few tweaks I think I've got it up to modern times. I would like to express my apologies in advance for any diehard Bon Jovi fans, and to Dr. Hooker, Kimbol Soques and other poetic friends. Please accept this poem in the spirit for which it was transformed for the graduating class of 2020.

As I sit in this holy room / the semester is about to end
I pass my time with prayer / and this Bible's my only friend
Remember when we got margs / out at Trudy's after dark
Remember when we lost our minds / and you baptized that baby doll in Worship time
Remember how we used to talk - the SAV office was worth the walk -
What's exegeting? and all these meetings? / together, forever
Never say goodbye, never say goodbye / you and me we JUST MADE friends
and how will we beat the Episcopalians!? / never say goodbye, never say goodbye
Holdin' on, we got to try / holdin' on with social media means we never say goodbye

Remember days of Hebrew school / alef bet and Rabbi's cool
With a confession and some polity / we memorized New Testament and history
Remember at queer prom that night / we got down, alright, alright, alright!
But Chelsea May played the closing song and we knew the fun wasn't going to last for long
As I hold these moments in my heart it grows / memories of fun, I know!
Who's got those crazy photos? / and Brendan was Prince! Oh whoa!
Together, forever / never say goodbye, never say goodbye
You and me my seminary friends / knowing this would all eventually end
Never say goodbye, never say goodbye
Holdin' on, we got to try / holdin' on with social media means we never say goodbye
Theology we used to talk / about who said what
And the ethics of it all / together, forever

Then the quarantine begins, will it ever end? / you and me my seminary friends
We know not how this time will end, but never say goodbye, never say goodbye
Holdin' on, we got to try holdin' on to never say goodbye

It is bittersweet that I say goodbye to many of the people with whom I started this journey. I am thankful for our learning together, growing together, and just being together. I wish you the best in your endeavors. But instead of saying goodbye, how about "I'll see ya later on Facebook or Instagram or...or...or.."

Nine Months - Shai Shai Ronolo, MATS Global
Partner

Yesterday, every corner was familiar,
Today, I woke up in a land as a stranger.
Money is in dollars, words are in English,
But when I ordered tacos, I was asked in Spanish.

The first main struggle was sleeping,
Your evening is my country's morning.
On the first week, I was a zombie in class
But I can't skip one, I need to pass.

I celebrated my birthday in Austin,
Spent my Christmas in Rockport.
Welcomed the New Year in Tilden,
How can nine months be so short!

Fall was filled with adjustments,
Winter froze my system every night.
Spring got me stuck in my apartment,
Summer, please don't cancel my flight!

I never thought I could be this friendly,
My facebook friends went aplenty.
From three hundred to three hundred sixty,
We'd still remain connected distantly.

Nothing dramatic, I just want to be honest.
I hate farewells, it's the saddest.
Nine months is about to end; the timing's not the
best,
So I'll beautifully carve your names in my chest.

Please post random selfies to remind me of your
faces,
I will read every caption with your voices in my
head.
I will treasure the laughter that time traces,
I will miss y'all bigtime, that being said.

To APTS faculty and staff, stay healthy!
Please look forward to my ordination patiently.
I want you to witness it, even virtually
Because you are already part of who and what
I'm gonna be.

To those who will graduate with me,
I wish you the best in your chosen ministry.
Put God first in everything you do,
My love and heartfelt prayers for you.

Make the most of your stay,
To those who will still be here.
Worry less about the future,
For in God's time it'll all be clear.

The minute I set my foot on the plane,
Know that you will all be in my thoughts.
But I'll quickly turn my back,
So my tears won't get caught.

I was welcomed with hugs so tight,
I am leaving without my friends in sight.
Such a weird, unfortunate dynamic,
Well, I'd blame it on the pandemic.

Nine months definitely flew so fast
My heart is filled with memories that'll last.
I am leaving but I won't say 'Goodbye.'
I'll see y'all again soon, so please don't cry.



untitled - Joe Lundy, Middler MDiv.

I have an innate distaste for goodbyes
why call attention to something so common in
our lives?
why pay attention to an end
knowing it will always happen again?
Hellos I love, and currently miss,
though that phrase likely dates this.
I am glad to call many here friends,
even though for some, their time ere soon ends
though I can't currently see you, I suppose that I,
should get over myself and say goodbye.

the back page - sheth larue, Senior MDiv.

Back in August 2019, I laid out the year's themes for Kairos and chose "Leaving" as the final issue. For some reason the story of Paul saying goodbye to the Ephesian elders came to mind and this was my choice as the scriptural basis of this issue: "There was much weeping among them all; they embraced Paul and kissed him, grieving especially because of what he had said, that they would not see him again" (Acts 20:37-38, NRSV).

Here in the latter part of the book of Acts, Paul is on a farewell tour of sorts, passing through Asia on his way to Jerusalem where he knows "imprisonment and persecutions are waiting" (Acts 20:23). He makes stops in Philippi, Troas, Assos, Mitylene, Chios, Samos - Paul pushes himself in hopes of getting to Jerusalem by Pentecost - and he speeds past his beloved Ephesus. Still desiring to speak with the Ephesians once more, he sends word for them to meet him in Miletus, which they did, and his discourse to them is found in Acts 20. It is here that Paul says, "And now I know that none of you...will ever see my face again" (v. 25).

Obviously Paul's words brought tears to the eyes of those in attendance, and, as I read this passage and as I think about each of you, it brings tears to my eyes. This passage is incredibly fitting and I hate that, because of the coronavirus, I cannot say with any certainty that I will see any of your faces again.

When the world was as it once was, we would have shared a meal together in Stotts or at Halal Bros. or Kerbey Lane. We would have shared memories of time spent at the Local or the Crown and Anchor or crawling Rainey Street. We would have reminisced about our time in Galveston, on the Hill, singing terrible karaoke, and the one-too-many jello shots. We would have debated about who was the best professor, about who was the worst professor, and about who we would want to take to our home churches. We would have thanked the other for caring in our moments of loss, moments of immaturity, moments of irresponsibility, moments of fear and danger. We would have laughed at the times we got too drunk, or too overworked, or too worried about grades. We would have embraced one last time, tears in our eyes, whispering words into ears. When the world was as it once was, we would have seen one another's faces one last time. And now, we must part in this manner: at a distance without embrace.

My beloved friends: thank you. Thank you for making my time in seminary memorable, meaningful, and worthwhile. Thank you for loving me unconditionally. Thank you for telling me the truth of who I am in spite of who I say I am. Thank you for caring for me and allowing me to care for you. Thank you for being the body of Christ for me. I will always have for you,

much love. sheth.

2020 Calendar

FOR UP TO DATE INFORMATION ABOUT EVENTS PLEASE REFER TO
COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS OR YOUR SEMINARY EMAIL.

NEW INFORMATION IS DISTRIBUTED EVERY DAY BY SEMINARY STAFF.
PLEASE DEFER TO THEIR COMMUNICATIONS ABOUT SEMINARY ACTIVITIES.

As the editor of Kairos, I'd like to take some time and space to say thanks. Thanks for contributing your heart-felt poems, stories, lessons, and words. Thanks for baring your soul to the community - I hope that you will continue to do this because your words have power, your words have meaning, your words have importance - don't ever forget that!

Special thanks to:

Will Luedecke for pushing me to take on this job - you were right that I could do it,
and I thank you for encouraging me

Sarah Gaventa for allowing me the opportunity to take on this work and giving me
free-reign (and trusting me to do what's best)

Reba Balint for her hard work and dedication to making Kairos presentable and
beautiful. Thanks for taking the design/formatting burden off my shoulders!

Jonathan Freeman, who has contributed a poem to nearly every issue of which I have
been a part. Thanks for your consistent generosity to this community and for sharing
your talents with us.

You, the reader, for giving your peers your time and attention as they have shared
their life with you. Please continue to read Kairos in the future, and continue to
submit when you feel called!

Chelsea May Law, for the hours of complaining you have had to endure about Kairos
the past two years. I owe you a dinner

♡ sheth