

*Kairos: The Voice of Austin Presbyterian
Theological Seminary Students*

identity

Issue 350 – December 2020

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WILD WOMAN

BY EMILY GRACE CLARK

I once was a wild woman of fire
I once was a quivering dove
I once took every prayer I've ever prayed
And it all prophesied me into love.

I once was without a home
For years no place to call my own
Now I clean my sheets and I make my bed
What remains? God knows.

I once was a wandering drunk
I once was a siren, I once was a mighty rock
I once jumped from a summit so high
The result of the fall made it difficult to talk

I took a hit so hard it left me disabled
I prayed so hard it rendered God
I begged so long I was given a daughter
Who could speak of this road?

I once said yes to God
I once walked away from the endeavor
I once buried my head in the sand
I once held onto the promise forever

And what will come of it all
What am I now, and when is it over?
What if no eye beholds
What if I never find cover?

I set my face like flint
I cast three anchors and I wait till dawn
I hold onto the covenant like it's written in my soul
And march on. March on. March on.

DEAR BELOVED COMMUNITY,

BY CHRYSTAL BRIGMAN

As we continue to press our way through these uncertain and troubling times, I am reminded of 1 Peter 5:10 (NASB). The scripture states that after we “have suffered for a little while”, God will “perfect, confirm, strengthen and establish you”. I don’t know about you, but I am looking forward to being perfected, confirmed, strengthened, and established. The problem that I faced as I read the text again is knowing how long is “a little while”? We have been dealing with COVID since March. That is a total of nine months. Nine months is long enough for a child to be conceived and born. I am sure any mother would agree that nine months is enough suffering to birth a child. In these nine months, we have transitioned from Spring to Summer, to Fall, and we are now approaching Winter. Before you know it, it will be Spring again. Would the change of the seasons count as “a little while”?

I began my search by going to the beginning of chapter 5. I found guidance on what to do and what not to do with the flock that will be given unto me. There is also instruction on being humble and not prideful. Verses 7-10 hit home for me and I pray they will have the same effect for you as well. We are to cast all our anxiety on God because He cares for us. What does it mean to cast our anxieties? When we cast our anxieties, we are throwing or flinging our emotions contributed from the various events of 2020 such as social injustices, the election, COVID, not being able to gather with loved ones and friends, missing special occasions and holidays, online learning

for ourselves and our little ones, online worship services, wearing a mask everywhere we go, the onset of depression and feeling alone, financial hardships, and the list goes on. Friends, isn’t it wonderful to know that even in these times, we do not have to carry this burden?! We can, instead, cast these feelings on God through prayer and meditation.

During times like this, our mental health can become weaker. The devil seizes these opportunities to tempt us out of God’s will and purpose. This is where verses 8 -9 come in. We are warned that the devil is like a lion looking for someone to devour. We are to resist the devil, and up our faith because our brothers and sisters in Christ are experiencing the exact same thing all over the world. We are not alone in our suffering. We can lean on one another for “a little while”. Isn’t this also great news?!

While I still do not know how long is “a little while” I am encouraged to know that whatever we are feeling, we can give it to God. We can also reach out to our beloved community for support because we are experiencing the same sufferings. It is my prayer that we hold on to these scriptures and each other for “a little while”.

IDENTITY

BY ANN GRAHAM

On a summer's day at the lake, a couple splashes water.
An arc of bright droplets flies from their joined hands, into the blue sky.
Each drop falls back, into the water it came from. Laughter rings.

Laughter rings! And in the sunny mid-day,
Splashing children play, each one a special jewel.
Each one flies off to an individual arc.

What happens to couplehood, bonded like a diamond over infinite time,
when one-half of that matched pair slips into not knowing?
Drop by drop, identity falls back into the water it came from.

No one can see the water that evaporates.
One day, you will be the water that was.
But kindness endures, soaring on its own shining arc.

image from Pixabay.com



DEAR BELOVED COMMUNITY,

BY JESSE HINDS

We are in the season of Advent: a time of waiting and preparation. Christians have been waiting for Jesus' return for almost 2,000 years. The first Christians thought Jesus would return in their lifetime, and yet, we are still waiting.

I remember waiting for my father as a kid. My parents divorced when I was young, and my father would pick me up on the weekends. On Friday evenings or Saturday mornings, I would sit at the end of the sidewalk and wait. On the sidewalk, it was as if I was between two worlds. I was at my mom's house, but anticipating the weekend ahead at dad's house.

I grew up before everyone had cell phones, so calling or texting when you were close wasn't a thing. As such, I waited with eager anticipation for the joy of when dad would pick me up. My eyes would scan the street, waiting to catch a glimpse of his big ol' Lincoln gliding toward me.

Friends, in this season, waiting is hard. Joy and anticipation are scarce commodities these days. We sit at our desks in our apartments and homes, waiting for life to return to normal (whatever that is). Thankfully, we have received promising news. Three vaccines appear to be highly effective and promise to help end the pandemic. We don't know when, but hopefully, sometime next year, we will be able to gather in classes, celebrate with our churches, and gather with our extended families and neighbors around a table.

For us Seniors, normal won't come soon enough to enjoy all the things we loved about our first years here. That said, I am thankful for our time together, in-person and online. I am amazed at your intelligence, compassion, and vision. This world is a better place because of each of you.

Middlers, you know what life was like before the pandemic as part of a beloved community. I smile in the hope that you will experience that joy again your senior year. I am thankful that you are the bridge between what was and what will be.

Juniors, y'all are my heroes. You have had to fight for community and start your seminary journey during a challenging season. I thank God for the wonderful impact you are having on this community now and for your impact in the future. With y'all, the best is yet to come.

We do not know the hour or the day that "normal" life will resume. Instead, our task is to stay alert and remain vigilant. We have to continue to take measures to protect our fellow students, faculty, staff, and families. We are between two worlds. There is the pandemic and the hope of a safer tomorrow.

And there is the hope of Advent. The kingdom of God is a present reality and a future hope. We currently reside between what was and what is to come. As I sit and scan the horizon of what will be, I am thankful that this season of waiting is spent with each of you. May God bless and keep this beloved community.

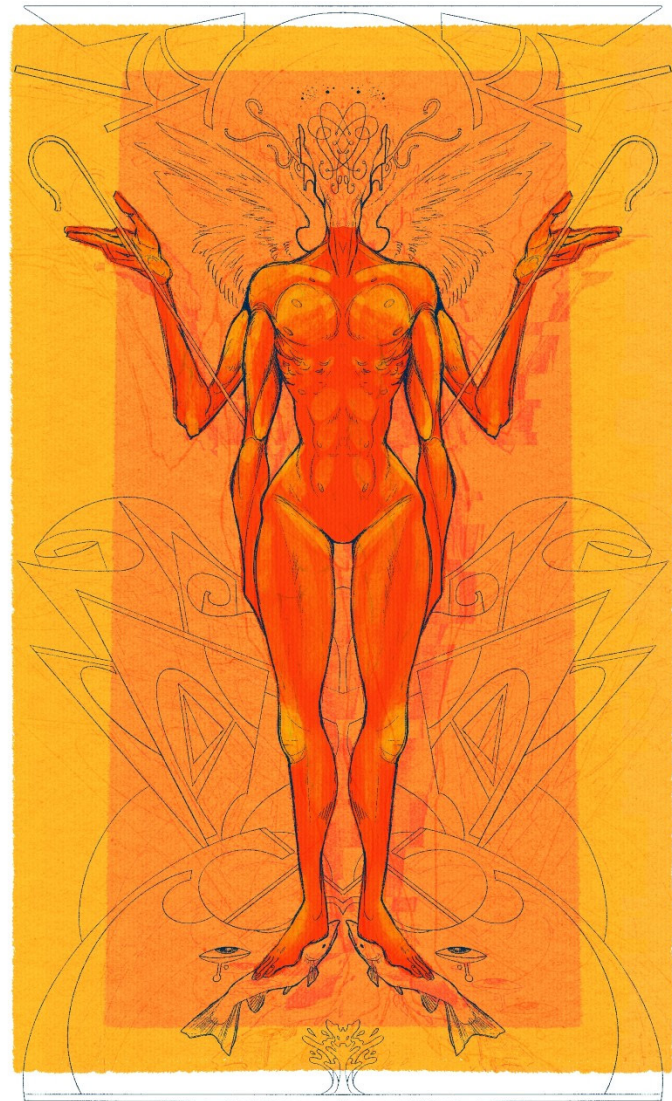
ANGEL RAPHAEL

BY BIS THORNTON



ADVENT CANDLE

BY BIS THORNTON



WHO DO YOU SAY THAT I AM?

BY SOPPHEY VANCE



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

BY SOPPHEY VANCE

Dearest beloved community,

Hope this issue of *Kairos* finds you well. I asked for your contributions on the theme of Identity. And, wow did the spirit take everyone for a wild ride!

I'm so encouraged and hopeful for the hearts God brings together in this community. The end of the semester is rough for everyone. Everything starts ramping up in terms of liturgical holidays and the end of the year catches up to you.

The hardest thing about the end of the year for me is the completion of assignments, in particular with this issue of *Kairos*. Ever have that moment when you do not want something to end? That's how I feel about this theme.

Identity, the ability to be yourself and an organism in the stratosphere of an environment. A lot of times I have seen the individual stand against the proverbial wave, and sometimes that individual feels hurt and crushed afterward. However, there is always an interaction. There is a transfer of energy, emotion, and divine in the interaction.

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KAIROS
EVENTS

ISSUE 350 RELEASE PARTY

DECEMBER 10, 2020

ISSUE 351 SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE

DECEMBER 28, 2020

ISSUE 351 RELEASE PARTY

JANUARY 9, 2021

ISSUE 352 SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE

JANUARY 28, 2021

ISSUE 352 RELEASE PARTY

FEBRUARY 11, 2021

ISSUE 353 SUBMISSIONS DEADLINE

FEBRUARY 28, 2021

ISSUE 353 RELEASE PARTY

MARCH 11, 2021

*Check out Community Announcements for current
information about Austin Seminary events!*