



# KAIROS

arrival

December 2021  
Issue 352

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



"Arrival"  
Kairos December 2021

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"Pizza Night"  
By Evie Barnard  
Daughter of Nancy Barnard





"Here Now"  
By Bis Thornton





"Arrival"

Waiting and waiting and then the bundle of joy  
arrives with blessings upon blessings!  
Maternity belly paints over the years.

By Frank Vasquez.

9 months

By Julia Burkley

were you there when Mary met Gabriel  
when she consented to be a  
surrogate  
consented to be demeaned  
by a society who only  
privileged pregnancy  
under contract

were you there when Mary was pregnant  
when her hormones were  
wonky when her boobs  
swelled  
when her clothes didn't fit  
when she could only eat bread  
because nothing else would settle

were you there when Mary labored  
when she was forced to walk to  
bethlehem through contractions  
when she leaned against the  
donkey to brace herself  
through the labor pain  
a refugee

were you there when Mary was turned  
away from a bed  
forced to labor outside  
like an animal  
her cries in harmony with  
bleats and baas  
screaming

were you there when Mary gave birth  
when the midwives caught  
the baby covered  
in blood the men  
absent  
the women were the first to see  
jesus

were you there when we  
erased the embodiedness of  
this sacred pregnancy





Welcome home, Rylan!

Hello Everyone,

As some may know or have heard, my son Rylan was Born July 4th of this year, and he was born 3 months early weighing 1.8lbs and 12in., and now he is 7.6lbs and 19in. today. So he has been in the NICU for 4 months now but I wanted to inform everyone that my son is finally coming home today, Sunday, November 14th, 2021!!!!

My wife and I would like to give a huge thank you to the school and the community for all of your prayers and support. We also want to thank Ash Brown for setting up Meal Train for us. Thank you Crystal Brigman for support. Words can't fully express how helpful it was for everyone taking time out to help us during this time. It's truly been a blessing and warms my heart to witness all the love that has been shown for my family.

It has been a very long journey and it's not over yet, because that chapter has close an now a new one has begun. Just as much as you all were praying for us, we were praying for you all as well, and still praying. Thank you so very much!!!!

May God Bless And Keep You,  
Ryan Reed



"Arrival Arts"  
By Sopphey Vance





## Arrival

By Taline Manassian

For my fortieth birthday, I gifted myself a trip to Africa to climb Mt. Kilimanjaro. I know that sounds exotic, but, at the time, it felt like a life-saving measure. I had just been dumped, and my ex was on to someone new. I did not love my work. I felt distant from my immediate family, and I did not care much for my life at that point. I felt like I needed to do something grand – something I would not have done had we stayed together. My ex did not care for Africa or camping, so I thought Kilimanjaro was a fine choice.

There were nine of us on the climb: a father and son, a Canadian couple, two cousins and their friend, and two single women. Before we started the climb, the people who had signed up together had to make decisions about what they would do if one of them had to turn back for any reason. If someone got altitude sickness or broke a leg, would that person return with just a guide, or would that person's family or friends travel back down the mountain with them? Since I was alone, I did not have to make that decision. One point for being solo.

We carried very little up the mountain. The climb company gave me a bright yellow duffle bag in which I had to pack no more than 30 pounds of stuff. That stuff included clothes, toiletries, my journal, camping supplies, food, and anything else that did not fit in my backpack. A porter would carry my big duffle up the mountain, and, at the end of each day, I would arrive to the campsite to find my tent set up and my duffle inside it, ready for me. The tents were technically large enough for two people, but I had paid an extra fee to have a tent to myself. Nothing about sharing a tent with a stranger appealed to me at that stage in my life. So each night, I zipped myself up into my tent, put my duffle where the other person might have been, and slept peacefully. Each night, I wondered how the more-than-six-feet-tall father and son were cramming themselves into one tent with their two duffle bags, and I felt slightly guilty about the spaciousness of my own tent. But not really. Another point for being solo.

Each day, I had only to think about getting myself and my backpack up the mountain. We moved slowly given the altitude. I put one foot in front of the other and often focused on the feet of the person ahead of me, particularly where I felt unsure of my footing. A couple of times, the climb was treacherous. The guides would help us across or up, as appropriate, and, but for the expectation of the group that we would continue, I might have turned back a time or two. Leaping from this ledge to that one was not something I had considered when I booked the trip. Neither was the possibility of losing my footing and tumbling down the mountain to my death. In those frightening moments, I felt grateful to have only myself to worry about. Another point for being solo.

It took five days, but we made it to the top. All nine of us summited, though the group of three had to take the quick photo and then hurry back down the mountain because one of the cousins was suffering from altitude sickness to a frightening degree. After they turned back, I stood at the summit, reveling in the success of the moment. For months, I had wondered whether I would make it to the top, and how I would feel along the way. I was there, and I felt great. I had arrived.



But as I stood on that mountain, I realized that I had arrived at the summit carrying all the sadness and pain that I had felt at the base before we started the trip and even all the anger that I had felt back home when I had booked the adventure. Yes, I had done something grand, but I was the same person at the top of the highest point in Africa as I had been in my home in Dripping Springs, Texas. I think I had had this idea that I would go to Africa and climb the mountain and leave behind all that I did not want to carry with me. But when I got to the summit, there I was, still holding every bit of it. I had arrived, but my work was not done. I had to face myself and all the things that had prompted me to book the trip to begin with.

The six of us who were able to linger a bit at the summit slowly made our way down a short way and spent the night on a glacier. That night, I shared a tent with the only other solo traveler because the guides wanted us to be with someone in case we had difficulty breathing or felt the effects of the severe cold. I was fine. I slept hard that night. When I woke up the next morning, I learned that my tent-mate had not been fine. While I was sleeping, two guides had entered our two-person tent to administer oxygen for her, and I somehow had managed to sleep through the entire ordeal. Thankfully, she was okay. But I clearly had not done my job in looking out for her. Minus three points for being a terrible tent-mate.

I loved that trip. I was proud of myself for doing something I had never imagined doing. I was proud of myself for doing what I had to do for myself to make turning forty and being alone bearable. Looking back, I am proud of myself for being brave enough to start up the mountain, being braver still to continue up, and being bravest yet to return home to face all that was still in me. Sometimes arriving is not all that. For me, it took arriving to realize that climbing a mountain in Africa was not the answer. It was just a step along the way.



"Advent Trinity"  
By Langley Hoyt



*Kairos'* theme for February will be: Beloved Community

Please send submissions to [kairos@student.austinseminary.edu](mailto:kairos@student.austinseminary.edu) by January 15th for your work to be included in our upcoming publication. Submissions can be as closely or loosely related to the theme as you would like.

Students, faculty, staff, family, and other community members are all welcome to submit art, poetry, and writing to *Kairos*.

Langley Hoyt, a Junior MDiv student at APTS, is the editor of *Kairos*. Please reach out to her at [kairos@student.austinseminary.edu](mailto:kairos@student.austinseminary.edu) with any questions or comments!

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