Inside: letter from your new editor, Words for Friends, announcements, and reflections from students on privilege, capital punishment, eco-justice, theodicy, and fundamentalism
To the APTS Community:

Friends, our Midwinters Issue of Kairos was a HUGE success. We had a great number of pieces written by different members of our community, and I saw—not only current community members—but also alums and guests to the seminary reading and talking about Kairos. I think that bodes very well for our hopes of making Kairos into an even more integral part of our community life and a respected platform for dialogue and expression.

In an effort to promote dialogue even more, I’ve decided to dedicated each month to a specific theme, with two issues that explore whatever theme we’re focusing on. This allows space for people to write a series of pieces on an issue, for someone to write a response to something they read, and for even more diverse student voice.

So, this is the second issue dedicated to the theme, “Mosaic of Voices” in which members of our community offer their own unique perspective on an issue that matters to them. I’ve included a poem that I wrote about Lent because I want readers to know that this is also a space for creative expression of any kind. I’m proud of the contributions in this issue. The authors of these articles have expressed their struggles and convictions about issues where they may not have the majority voice. I hope you’ll offer them an open ear and heart. And then join us for Kairos Koffee Hour and talk about the ideas and points raised in this and the last issue.

March’s theme will be “Crossing the Line” and will be an exploration of the relationship between the church and those who are in the margins (whatever that means to you). If you have thoughts about such things, let me know and contribute them to our Kairos conversation! Happy reading!

Layton Williams, Editor

Meet the KAIROS THINK TANK!

These members of our community are working to make sure that Kairos is always seeking out and welcoming new and diverse voices from within our community. Talk to them (or the Kairos Editor) if you have article ideas, thoughts, or want to contribute!

KAIROS KOFFEE HOUR

Join the Kairos Staff and the Think Tank for a monthly informal conversation about topics raised in and related to the most recent issues of Kairos. Bring your questions, insights, thoughts, and any other sort of response and help us keep the conversation going.

Wednesday, February 20th
4:00 PM
Stotts Dining Hall

(Kairos Logo designed by Jo Kretzler)
# TABLE OF CONTENTS:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Editor’s Page</th>
<th>2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tentmaking</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Stephen Cottingham)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One White Girl Mouths Off</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Michele Goff)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet the New Class</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lenten Disciplines</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fundamental Grace</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Mario Ransan)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A Case for Death As Justice</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Alex Cornell)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Words For Friends</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Molly McGinnis)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ashes to Ashes</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Layton Williams)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word from the Earth</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Sarah Macias)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Preamble to a Theodicy Paper</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Nancy Hinson)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekly Calendar</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

**QA SHIRTS ON SALE!**

Tony Spears will be taking orders February 21st-28th. Students can also submit orders to queerapts@gmail.com

---

**Bible Study Opportunity!**

Students, faculty, staff and guests are invited to join the African American Student Group as we explore the General Epistles through the 2012-13 Horizons Bible Study, "God’s Households." Yes, Horizons is a publication of Presbyterian Women; however, everyone is welcome to work through 1 & 2 Peter; 1, 2, & 3 John, James, and Jude. The study guide contains nine lessons we will consider bi-weekly (every other week) on Mondays from 6 - 7 PM in McCord Room 201. Participants are encouraged to 'adopt' a lesson to share with the group. Michele Goff will lead the launch of the series on Monday, February 18th. Each gathering will open with a light meal (sandwiches, soup, or salad) at 5:30 PM. Participation is free. Anyone wishing to purchase a study guide ($10) may contact Danita Nelson at danita.nelson@student.austinseminary.edu or 512.696.9583.

---

**A PANEL ON MARRIAGE & MINISTRY**

7-9PM | Thursday | March 7
APTS | Location TBA

**PANEL**
Rev. Laura Walters & Mark Walters | Rev. San Williams & Janis Williams | Rev. Mary Wilson & Betty McDaniel

Desserts provided | Free event

**SPONSORED BY**
S.O.S. | Supporters of Seminarians

R.S.V.P. by Friday, March 1 to becabernethy@gmail.com
By now it should be no secret. The image of church is moving and changing. Ears are ringing with buzz words of “new monasticism” and the “emergent church.” And honestly, it’s about time. So often complaints are heard of people being burned by the church or not finding acceptance or even simple relevancy. The image of church most visible and recognized as quintessential promised more than it could deliver. Stuck in an era of compartmentalization, the church life only really thrived on Sunday mornings and often times in a location removed from its members’ own neighborhoods. The new trend, as we’ve seen, is for churches to run smaller, less program driven and more comprised of members living geographically closer to its location. Shedding the skin of corporate imitation, new churches have been more able to cultivate the acceptance, fulfillment and belonging that people desire. In humble, often local meetings of small groups, these church communities focus on the transformation of the individual as it turn strengthens the community itself. On the administrative side, more and more “pastors” have found that pursuing a bi-vocational career path has been a more viable option in terms of achieving the goal of being in active ministry and also following a vocational call outside of what is considered “ministry” (though the understanding of ministry has also stretched as people are recognizing the breadth of the term). I don’t bring this up for the established churches and seminaries to make a reactive response – it should always be the church’s motives to be proactive about ministry. What I do encourage is for seminarians to recognize that the field of ministry is, and really always has been, broad and wide. A traditional pastorate, though it may still be viable in some contexts, is becoming less recognized as “the standard” image of ministry. More success is being found and recognized as meaningful in ministerial pursuits that are created to fit the needs of particular communities.

Tentmaking: A New Way to Church

Stephen Cottingham is a Middler M.Div student in the PCUSA. He is from Grace Presbytery in Garland, TX.

Middler M.Div Student, Dawn Baird, and her church, Hope UMC, took to the streets in San Antonio to deliver ashes to the people on Ash Wednesday.
It may be easy to look at me and dismiss me as a white, middle-class, educated, privileged female. But don’t ignore my truth: I understand the social-economic stamp I wear that says I have a leg up in society. I am aware that I live in homogenized and subsidized seminary housing. I have been exceptionally blessed. But don’t assume what my life has been like. I always rode the bus to school. There were years in grade school when all my school clothes were hand-me-downs from I don’t know where. I knew clothes for Christmas were special. I’ve lived in low rent apartments and duplexes. My childhood friends stole things from the grocery store that their parents couldn’t afford, sometimes lip-gloss, sometimes snacks. Whenever I wanted to join in a sport or extracurricular activity, the first question asked of me was “How much does it cost?” and then “What am I going to do with your brother?” He was my job as soon as he was potty-trained. (And I see the blessing in that.) My stepmother let me know I was an inconvenience to her, a constant reminder that she was not my father’s first wife, no matter how hard she tried to pretend my mother (and we) didn’t exist. This was a disruption to their biblically ordained marital bliss; thankfully that was only on visitation weekends. My best friend in Junior High had a baby she gave up for adoption, only because her mother learned of the pregnancy too late for an abortion. I didn’t have a car until my second year in college and I paid for half of it from summer earnings. Most summers since I was sixteen I worked two jobs, lunch and dinner shifts. School was the only priority over work. My sophomore year of high school when my mom married the guy with the big paycheck and we moved into the big house, canned tuna may have become fresh meat, but he had his own bills and we lived frugally at the nice address. My stepfather and I have grown close, but it took time. My relationship choices have not always been healthy; my first husband was abusive.

Don’t gloss me over because I look like something. I can relate to not being wanted. I can relate to not having. I understand fear in environments that are supposed to be secure and safe. I have never been hungry, but

my mother made me aware that the bag of Oreo cookies this week was a “special treat”. Don’t assume you know my path was easy and breezy. I have prayed the Lord’s Prayer because I have been too lost, desperate and afraid to pray anything else. Be careful when you call me privileged. My privilege may give me unearned power, but it is my experience that gives me depth and strength to wield it. Don’t assume because I look like something, that I don’t know exactly who I am. Even if you don’t.

If we assume God is one thing, god of the privileged, static and stable, monotonous as the suburbs, than we are flattening the dynamics of the Divine Mystery. That would be a crying shame.
Meet The New Class!

Trevor Kennedy, M.Div
First United Methodist Church, Georgetown, TX

Two Words to Describe you are: contemplative, outgoing

If you had to spend the rest of you life in one place, where and why?: Georgetown, TX because of its small town Texas feel yet closeness to Austin

What makes you feel close to God?: reading and writing

Noemi Ortiz, MATS
Red River Church, Austin, TX

Three Words to Describe you are: cerebral, fashionable, gentle

If you had to spend the rest of you life in one place, where and why?: London—a vibrant and historical city

What makes you feel close to God?: nature and music

Andrew Lemlyn, M.Div
First United Methodist Church, Marble Falls, TX

Three Words to Describe you are: thoughtful, kind, polite

What makes you feel close to God?: candles, labyrinth, taize music

What’s your favorite quote?: “The bravest thing was have is hope.” - Dietrich Bonhoeffer

More new students in the next Kairos!

What Practices Are You Observing This Lent?

“I’m writing a daily scripture reflection” - Jessica Espinoza, Senior, MATS

“Not taking my laptop to bed. I covenant to actually sleep during Lent.” - Barrett Abernethy, Senior, M.Div

“I am doing LENT Challenge that one of my friend’s in ministry has set up for her youth and adults at her church, she sends a text every day...today’s challenge was to "FAST from complaining that others do not love you exactly how you want to be loved. Do something for 5 people you love...can’t wait to see what tomorrow brings!” - JoAnne Sharp, Junior, M.Div (on leave of absence)

“Daily prayer/scripture reading, weekly fasting, and donating to charities that address hunger/poverty.” - Alex Cornell, Senior, M.Div

“I am participating in the United Methodist Rethink Church’s Lent Photo-a-Day project. Each day has a word connected with it. You take a photo of something that represents that word to you, and then you share it on Facebook and Twitter. They’ll even send you daily e-mail and text reminders each day so you’ll never forget to post your photo! Here’s the link to learn all about it: http://rethinkchurch.org/article/lenten-photo-day-challenge” - Molly McGinnis, Middler, M.Div

“2013 Lenten Ecumenical Carbon Fast + exercise every day...except I am already behind on the second one. dang it!” - Sarah Macias, Middler, M.Div

“A friend of ours who has cancer is walking each day for a friend of his who has cancer and is in isolation with treatments. I’m walking too.” - Shelley Walters, Middler, M.Div

“I’m giving up meat this year (first time). So far it doesn’t seem as hard as sweets (what I usually give up). That says something disturbing about me.” - Holly Swift, Middler, M.Div

“I committed to writing daily meditations for the congregation, instead of purchasing devotional books for people. There’s something different daily on Facebook, email, Twitter, and our church web page, all complementary but different...it comes to about 1 1/2 pages of writing daily. This holds me accountable to pray with the scriptures myself...so that’s how it’s a personal spiritual practice.” - David Miron, Senior, M.Div
Soteriology is a difficult subject within all denominational backgrounds. On the left and on the right people hold differing positions as to what it means for one to be a Christian and hence there is much fighting as to who is actually a Christian and who is not. To make matters worse both parties have different agendas in mind, different people and groups they want to defend and different social economic stigmas that they feel are blessed by God or are a target of God’s wrath. There is no easy way to bring both groups together and an inter dialogue between both groups is often rare to come by which raises the question within both groups of whether the other is a Christian in the first place, as in, if the left or if the right truly follow God.

A simple definition that for the sake of this short article could be accepted for someone calling themselves a Christian is: “one who loves Christ and seeks to not only follow Christ’s teaching but also live in a lifestyle of love”.

A fundamentalist is a Christian too and sometimes they have some pretty brilliant points to bring up in conversation. Theologians like Steve Brown or Tim Keller are easily two theologians among thousands that inhabit the fundamentalist voice that, in this writer’s humble opinion, everyone should be aware of and read at some point. Sometimes the fact that someone disagrees with us in topics we are passionate about stops us from listening to them in every other topic spectrum within the church. This is something we should fight against, this want to segregate all conservative theologians as not having anything intelligent or “new” to say. Dialogue between both sides can only be achieved if both sides are aware of what the other is thinking. Not just the “common voice”, as in non-scholars, but also the brilliant theologians that make up the fundamentalist voice, those are people who are worth your time, people you should read and familiarize yourself with, for they are scholars just like you, that love God and are seeking to live a life closer to Christ just as you are.

As we study within the PCUSA and as we read the greats within our tradition we should never neglect to take the time to admire theologians who we might disagree with for there is much that we can learn from them. It is good to question your beliefs at all times, and being challenged can often bring growth with it. The point is, remember that though fundamentalists might have differing views from us that they still love Christ, and that many of them deserve to be read and respected as brilliant scholars. Just like in any other field of study, two scholars might respect one other even if they have rival opinions, hence the nature of academia. This does not only apply for theologians but also for pastors within different traditions who should be looked at and given the time of day, as brothers and not as enemies. We are all part of one family under Christ, and in the end of the day, just like us, fundamentalists love Jesus too.
You may have heard that many Christian denominations, including the PCUSA, UMC, UCC, and ELCA, all have official statements against the death penalty. Today I am telling you that these denominational bodies have all erred. The biblical witness clearly supports capital punishment as an appropriate means of administering justice to perpetrators of heinous crimes.

God herself ordains the death penalty in the covenant with Noah after the flood in Genesis: “whoever sheds the blood of a human, by a human shall that person’s blood be shed; for in his own image God made humankind.” (Gen. 9:6)

God also clearly institutes the death penalty in Exodus 21 for a number of crimes, including murder, cursing one’s parents, and kidnapping. Many opponents of the death penalty point to the Ten Commandments in the previous chapter as evidence that any type of killing (including capital punishment) is wrong. However, Exodus 20:13, which the KJV renders “Thou shalt not kill” is better translated “Thou shalt not murder. (Look it up, Hebrew scholars!)

Furthermore, nothing explicitly refutes the death penalty in the New Testament. In Romans 13, Paul directs Christians to be subject to the governing authorities, because they have been ordained by God to execute justice on God’s behalf. “If you do what is wrong, you should be afraid, for the authority does not bear the sword in vain! It is the servant of God to execute wrath on the wrongdoer.” (Romans 13:4)

Finally, Jesus himself endorsed the death penalty for criminals. In Luke’s account of the crucifixion, the criminal being crucified on one side of Jesus reminds the other that (unlike Jesus) they both were “condemned justly” and were “getting what they deserved” for their deeds. Jesus says nothing to correct them. Despite the fact that, in the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus said not a single letter should pass from the law (including what I quoted above), many people point to passages in the Sermon, such as “turn the other cheek,” to advocate against capital punishment. However, the pacifist ethics of the Sermon on the Mount apply to individuals, not governments. Jesus is illustrating how the purpose of the Mosaic law is to limit retaliatory violence in the heat of the moment by individuals – so that later, the proper authority could ensure justice was rightly administrated. This justice includes capital punishment.

I believe these points should be sufficient to demonstrate that faithful Christians ought to support the death penalty. However, if you would like to hear the story of how a Christian who used to support the death penalty came to oppose it, I invite you to attend a FREE lunch (sponsored by Corpus Christi) with Reverend Caroll Pickett on Monday, February 25 from 11:30am-1pm. Carroll Pickett (APTS class of 1957) served for years as chaplain on Texas Death Row. For more information and to RSVP, contact John Harrison at john.harrison@student.austinseminary.edu.

Finally, please consider this column an open invitation (or “challenge”) to debate. I encourage anyone who finds fault with my Christian argument supporting the death penalty to respond in a future issue of Kairos. I look forward to hearing your views.
The Word of the Day is: SILENCE

silence | 'sɪləns |
noun
• complete absence of sound: siren pierce the silence of the night |
• the avoidance of mentioning or discussing something

“Be still and know that I am God” (Psalm 46).
This is a familiar phrase in our Christian vocabulary. We find it in our liturgy and our favorite scripture passages. We engrave it on jewelry and frame it on the wall. They are comforting words. But how often do we really stop to think about them?

One of my favorite prayers for illumination is: “Through all the words, God, let it be your Word that is heard.” I think it’s a good reminder that God is present, especially in the midst of our chaotic lives. In his sermon during the opening worship service, our president, Ted preached on the passage in Mark (4) in which Jesus calms the storm while crossing the Sea of Galilee with the disciples. Ted brought our attention to the description of a dead calm, a striking image that is often overlooked in this text. We always notice the storm, but we rarely explore the silence.

There has been an onslaught of grief in our community this year. Cancer, illness, and death are taking their toll. The Sea of Austin Seminary is raging. Gale force winds of turmoil are tempting us to lose the voice of God in the noise. The tide of tragedy threatens to drown our hope. The humanity of our savior seems to resonate even more; he, too, felt the sting of despair. As we enter the season of Lent, we are evermore reminded that this is a somber time.

But let us not forget that we know the end of the story. Easter comes again each year, reminding us that we are a Resurrection people. God meets us even in the noise, but we meet ourselves in the silence. In the dead calm, we confront our fears. The stillness and the waiting and the uncertainty are terrifying, but God is there. Even amidst the chaos of our lives right now, we have been blessed with new life. And there is little in this world that is more hopeful than the restful silence of a sleeping child.

WORDS FOR FRIENDS:
A Column By Molly McGinnis

Molly is a middler, M.Div student from the Presbytery of Arkansas in the PCUSA

CONGRATULATIONS!

Soren Kyler Gray was born to Tim Gray (Middler, M.Div) and his wife Lisa on February 1st at 3:46 am. He was 8 lbs and 20.5 inches. Mom, Dad, and Baby are all doing wonderfully!
As I write this, millions of Christians all over the world have begun yet another Lenten journey. Marked by ashes we are reminded of our finitude and vulnerability; basic realities of our existence we might otherwise deny. This humbling practice clothes us in the very stuff we are made out of—humus, dust, earth, or as recently translated in the Common English Bible, “topsoil.”

the LORD God formed the human from the topsoil of the fertile land and blew life’s breath into his nostrils. The human came to life. (Gen. 2:7)

When we allow this truth to sink in slowly and really absorb itself deep into the tissue of our soul we see our community in a new way. No longer can care for our neighbor be fulfilled in the absence of caring for creation. Human beings are created in relationship with the Earth. How is it then that we do not always hear her voice when she is “groaning in labor pains (Rom. 8:21) or her mountains when they “burst into song” (Is. 55:12)?

Some are listening though. Whether the motivation is concern about climate change or the benefits of living in a sustainable community there is a delight in more fully living into the reality of our created goodness. It starts with being in better relationship with the source of life from which we came and to which we will go.

Blessings on your earthy Lenten journey.

---

Ashes to Ashes:
A Reflection on Gen. 3 for the Lenten Season

Layton Williams is a middler, M.Div student in the PCUSA. She is from Mission Presbytery in Austin, TX.

You are dust
Came the breath, like a whisper
Into my soul

Eyes opening, I beheld
A wilderness of beauty
Creatures, many, singing
In captivating discordance
And trees with arms outstretched

I found that I too had arms
Made of earth and sweat and spirit
So I followed the trees and stretched

You are dust, She said
And in Her eyes I could see
That it was good

I drank in new sights
Like the new breath that filled
My new self
And I joined in the chorus
Of that incarnate cacophony

While that whisper like a metronome
Kept our endless beat
You are dust, you are dust, you are dust
It told me

And then, a pause, a break, a silence
Something beyond my vision
Caught my eye

I felt Her,
my mother, maker, creator, life
Call me back into Her arms
You are dust, She called to me
But then, to see what I could not
I turned away

I felt Her gasp like a tear
In the fabric of my existence
And turned, but could not find Her
I called out, “Mother, Mother”
But my voice was a lonely echo
I dug my hands into the dirt and dust and soil
Trying to grip my way back to Her
But I was broken from it
Broken from her

And so all these lonely years
I have been lost
And my soul wanders
Weary and yet restless

I cannot see or hear or touch Her
But I carry a reminder
Over and over, a lost beat
In the core of my being
That drives my very life

And I follow it, desperate
Like crumbs on a trail home

When I quiet myself in the world
I can hear its steady promise
In the lonely rhythm of my heart

You are dust, it whispers
And to dust you shall return

---

WORD FROM THE EARTH:

Sarah Macias is a MDiv middler in the Baptist tradition, and serves on Corpus Christi, Interfaith Environmental Network, and is Environmental Intern for Texas Impact.
Preamble to a Theodicy Paper:

The Trouble With Trouble

Nancy Hinson is a middler, M.Div student. She is a member of the ECC from Austin, TX.

Theodicy is defined as a vindication of the divine attributes in establishing or allowing the existence of physical and moral evil. How about if instead of defending God, I begin by trying to imagine what a “perfect” world would look like. If I could envision a perfect world, then perhaps I could also imagine what God would have had to add, subtract or change in order for us to be living in present or future perfection. I sought the dictionary description for the words “perfect.” How do I get to the place where a living, loving Creator God and an imperfect world co-exist? Scratch that... who am I to sit in judgment? Why do I consider the world imperfect? I think first I’ll try to picture a more perfect world.

Starting with the definitions of perfect: 1) —not the slightest mistake. I am not going to go with that one because the implication would (again) be that God erred. 2) being entirely without fault or defect: flawless. This is a bit better, but still judgmental. 3) satisfying all requirements: accurate. This is not looking good for the budding theologian. 4) corresponding to an ideal standard or abstract concept. I can do this! 5) lacking in no essential detail. How would I know?! 6) of a musical interval: belonging to the consonances unison, fourth, fifth, and octave which retain their character when inverted and when raised or lowered by a half step become augmented or diminished. I cannot do anything with that. Finally 7) of, relating to, or constituting a verb form or verbal that expresses an action or state completed at the time of speaking or at a time spoken of. Obsolete definition: contented or satisfied. I cut from the list one definition: a fielding opportunity in baseball. Opportunity, Huh?

More perfect world: NO injustice, suffering, hunger, deceit, dishonesty, depletion of resources, natural catastrophes, war, murders, rapes, abuse of any kind. No disease, pollution, greed.

Clean air, clean water, justice, brotherhood, honesty, freedom

My list consists of imperfections created by humanity. So, to have a perfect world, God would have to probably subtract from or change humanity: eliminate humans or lobotomize every man, woman and child? Start again, Nancy, you’d make more of a mess than the mess we’re in!

Do I have the cojones to gird my loins, to even enter the fray?

So, what do I have so far? I know the end of the story and believe that I know the reason for the end; the bible tells me so, but what of the beginning? Am I not livid when anyone assumes that they know what is in my head, what I’m thinking? I don’t know why I myself do things. How am I to presume to know the mind of God?! Theology is risky business, on more than one level!!!
Contributing to Kairos:

1. Kairos is the voice of the community at Austin Seminary.

2. Kairos generally carries no advertisements for sale of goods or services by individuals. An exception is the sale of a student or professor’s library or other study aids.

3. It is not possible to make all program announcements which are submitted by individual churches. Kairos is more likely to run announcements which apply to ecumenical or interfaith groups or groups of churches.

4. No letters which attack individuals or groups will be run in Kairos. This is to be distinguished from letters which might criticize the actions of individuals or groups.

5. Kairos will publish letters to the editor that contribute to Christian conversation on the APTS campus. All letters must be signed.

6. Email submissions to the editor, Layton Williams, at layton.williams@student.austinseminary.edu. Editorial decisions are based on urgency, availability of space and editorial guidelines. Deadline is Wednesday at 5:00 pm. Submissions made after the deadline must be accompanied by a bribe.