

STUDENT JOURNAL - AND EDITOR - PROMOTE CHRISTIAN DIALOGUE

Formerly a high-school science teacher in Philadelphia, KJ Norris-Wilke '14 headed west across the state to follow her call to seminary. If the awards in homiletics she received as a student and upon graduating in June are any indication, she made the right move! Not only does KJ excel in preaching, though—she also excels in scholarship, as evidenced in the just-published issue of the *Pittsburgh Theological Journal*, for which she served as editor-in-chief.



KJ came to PTS prompted by a desire to “serve the Lord wherever God decides to put me.” She became familiar with the Seminary as a participant in the **Miller Summer Youth Institute**. “I was particularly excited about PTS’s **joint degree law program** with Duquesne University, the Seminary’s reputation for excellence in academics, and its wonderful work with archaeological research,” she says. “PTS had everything I could ask for, so it was the only place I applied.”

Maintaining her interest in science, as a Seminary student she volunteered on **The Zeitah Excavations** and worked in the **Kelso Museum of Near Eastern Archaeology**. She also traveled to Senegal with the **World Mission Initiative** and served as president of the Peace & Justice Fellowship.

During her second year, KJ worked on the *Journal* as a general editor under the then-student Anthony Hita '13 (now filling the Stahlstown [Pa.] United Methodist Charge). “I loved reading the work of my peers, the faculty, and graduates,” she recalls. “They are truly doing outstanding work, and I wanted to continue to showcase that work for the benefit of our extended PTS community”—a goal which led her to serve as editor-in-chief for this year’s issue.

“That role was the capstone to my theological studies,” KJ notes. “It afforded me the opportunity to think about topics I did not get a chance to address while in classes, to use leadership skills I developed at PTS to guide the team of editors, and to encourage theologians young and ‘seasoned’ to be in ongoing Christian dialogue.” The Rev. Dr. John Burgess, James Henry Snowden Professor of Systematic Theology, served as faculty advisor for the issue, which includes a selection of articles from the more than 40 submissions. “I pray that each person who reads the *Journal* will find support for continuing to be a Christian of faith that seeks understanding,” KJ comments.

As a recent PTS graduate, KJ is now working at Valley View Presbyterian Church as “minister to Freedom Camp” during the summer sabbatical of the church’s pastor, fellow PTS alum the Rev. Chad Collins '05. In her role, KJ helps lead morning prayer, teaches Bible classes, and helps pastor the more than 40 young people who attend the camp’s five-week, all-day program. In addition, she’s using her homiletical skills as a frequent preacher at Valley View, as well as other churches in the area.

KJ wants to keep studying, writing, and traveling, and she describes her “dream job” as pastoring an urban church with a congregation that is “mixed in every way: racially, ethnically, educationally, generationally, and more.” As evidenced in her leadership of the Peace & Justice Fellowship as a Seminary student, she also maintains a desire to partner spiritually with people who are incarcerated and those who are emerging from incarceration—“because the Lord’s mercies are new every morning, and sometimes it seems that we, the church, forget that fact.”

Also serving on the editorial board this year were Danielle Graham '14, Shana Hutchings '14, Brian Lays, Craig Meek '14, Bradley Rito, and Bonnie Taylor '14. **Read this year's issue of the Journal online.**

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