



ECUT

THE ECUMENICAL CHAPLAINCY AT THE UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

CALLING OUR FRIENDS

Summer 2018/19 Volume 12

From the Chaplains



Associate Chaplain – Jae Clarke

This past year has been a trying year for the students of the University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC). The tragedies in New Zealand and Sri Lanka really hit home. Students worried about their family and friends in both countries. Many of them questioned God, asking, “How could God allow such tragedy to take place?”

The suddenness of terror and the anguish of loss has been far reaching this year in the lives of our students. These incidents underscore the importance of the work we do as chaplains. Many students expressed their relief that they had someone to listen to their concerns; to sit with them and allow them to lament; to offer words of encouragement and advice; and someone with whom they can safely pray and cry.

Your continued support, as friends of ECUT, makes it possible for students to access the support they need, when they need it. You are impacting hundreds of lives each year through your support!

World Premiere: anti-Archive launch!



In a beautiful room filled with Qu(e)rying Religion (QR) supporters and friends, ECUT held a public launch for the anti-Archive project.

The idea for an “archive” to hold the stories and experiences of QR participants from its start in 2005 came from Alisha Stranges. As a placement student with ECUT in 2015-2016, she realized that the institutional leaders of QR, Ralph Carl Wushke and Marilyn Elphick at St. Michael’s College, were retiring or had been let go. Marilyn and Ralph Carl had been working together to provide QR with space, food, funding, spiritual guidance and creative leadership. Alisha said, “*Without access to the main keepers of QR’s institutional knowledge, it seemed to me that QR’s history of programming as well as the stability of its future programming was potentially at risk of coming under erasure. So, I proposed this project as a way both to document the work that Ralph and Marilyn had made possible and to potentially build student response in future academic years.*”

As an artist, Alisha wanted to “*document the undocumentable.*” The anti-Archive is a creative and artistic way of capturing QR, recalling its energy, emotions and experiences. Over the course of three years, Alisha interviewed 20 QR participants, edited the hour-long interviews into short narratives that provide a soundtrack to visual animations, brought to life through whiteboard animation. This collection now lives online at the QR website, each serving as a witness and testimony to the QR program.

anti-Archive launch.....

Each video is a powerful testament to what QR has and continues to mean to people. Alisha reflects: *“I think that for many of QR’s participants, it’s a profoundly political act to even contemplate sitting in a circle with others to discuss faith and queerness, particularly for those of us who have been told repeatedly, and in multiple competing contexts, that our spiritual-identity and our non-normative gender and/or sexual identities cannot co-exist in harmony. What’s more, QR is an inter-faith and cross-cultural space that is designed to encourage dialogue across our differences, and it can be difficult to assess whether or not such a space will feel as welcoming as it purports to be.”*

Beyond documentation, we hope that the anti-Archive will lead future participants to QR. That by watching these videos in the comfort of their own homes, students can see and imagine themselves in these stories and spaces. If a student’s own story resonates with a story in the archive, they will be drawn to QR as a place of belonging and community on campus. We want future participants to find their welcome!

ECUT is grateful for the many donors and individuals who made this project possible! You can check out the anti-Archive here:

queryingreligion.weebly.com/anti-archive



anti-Archive project participants at the launch party, May 29, 2019



Listening stations at the anti-Archive launch party, May 29, 2019

U of T Scarborough Campus



Associate Chaplain at UTSC, Leonard Clarke Jr. (Jae)

Campus chaplaincy at UTSC is thriving and with God’s help, will continue. Highlights from this past semester include:

The 3rd Annual Inter-Faith Dinner, hosted by campus chaplains and the Department of Student Life on January 31, 2019. This year’s dinner had the biggest turnout since its inception. This is a testament to the partnership between the chaplaincy, student life, the student union, health and wellness, and the registrar’s office.

The launch of the Interfaith Sports Tournament in February 2019, in partnership with the Scarborough Student Union, the Department of Student Life, and UTSC Athletics and Recreation. The event was well attended. The premise is to bridge health and wellness with spirituality. We are hoping this event will be yet another annual event that attracts more students to engage in spiritual conversation in an environment with which they are familiar.

Looking ahead, developing a QR group at UTSC is a dream and a goal. There is a need for a queer positive religious community on campus!

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Studying on a beautiful spring day in the Knox College courtyard

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The places we go...

Jesus' ministry involved meeting people in the context of their lives – by wells and mountains, in homes and places of worship, in fields and in cities.

As I reflect on the year past, I am amazed at all the places in which our campus ministry happens. Our offices at Knox College and Emmanuel College continue to be important spaces for us to meet confidentially with students, staff and faculty. Yet we also met with students at coffee shops (on and off campus), empty classrooms, and chapel/prayer spaces. We accompanied students to doctors' offices and hospital intensive care units. We had impromptu car conversations. We joined vigils and ceremonies of remembrance in quads and on streets. We prayed with students in their residence rooms and mourned their deaths at memorial services on campus.

We found ourselves in the middle of buildings touched by tragedy. One such example is the Bahen Centre, the scene of a student suicide in February. By God's grace, the Campus Chaplains were scheduled to have an information table at the Bahen Centre that very week. As we stood by the memorial table filled with flowers and notes, we quickly became a sacred place where people could find support and pastoral conversation.

We are grateful to follow Jesus' way of meeting people in a variety of ways and places.

Jeanette Unger



Dec 6, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, honoured at U of T



Students, staff and faculty at a memorial gathering for Knox resident and Emmanuel College student, Zeppelin Canlas, who died in hospital on February 13, 2019

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