

# Critical Theories and Liturgical Studies

**Convener:** Layla A. Karst (layla.karst@lmu.edu) is Assistant Professor of Theological Studies at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles, California.

**Members in Attendance:** Kimberly Belcher, Stephanie Budway, Bryan Cones, Benjamin Durheim, Sarah Johnson, Layla Karst, Geoffrey Moore, Gabriel Pivarnik, Rebecca Spurrier, Kristine Suna-Koro, David Turnbloom

**Visitors:** Julia Canonico, Hansol Goo, Seyeom Kim, Benita Lim, Maren Marchesini, Tom McLean, Audrey Seah, Chris de Silva, Erik Sorensen, Marileen Steyn

**Description of Work:** This year, seminar members offered papers around the theme: “whether and how worship forms us.” In pursuing this topic, our seminar presentations focused our attention on questions of liturgical rupture, failure, and schism to consider the ways that worship both forms and malforms participants, communities, and theologies. Kristine Suna-Koro interrogated the “theological, liturgical, and ethical lacunae of worshipping on un-decolonized land,” especially with regard to penitential rites that purport to name, heal, and right historical wrongs. Tom McLean highlighted the internal tensions and divisions within Christian denominations that are provoked by ecumenical liturgies and explored their implications for ecumenical relations. Rebecca Spurrier’s essay reflected on liturgical experiments that attempted to “hold together and navigate multiple, ambiguous, and sometimes competing narratives,” showing the formative value of both liturgical successes and liturgical failures. Finally, Layla Karst explored the ways that clergy sexual violence has malformed our liturgical symbols and actions, transforming them into ritual experiences of trauma rather than grace. All four papers are slated for publication.

In addition, the seminar also discussed two excellent selections from recent doctoral dissertations. Hansol Goo’s paper constructed the theological concept of a “migrant sacramentality” by drawing on the memories, practices, and experiences of Korean American Catholics. Using ethnographic portraiture, Marileen Steyn illuminated and analyzed the ritual responses to the loss of a minister in three South African Dutch Reformed churches.

## Papers and Presentations:

- Hansol Goo: “Selections from “Migrant God: Absence, Anamnesis, and Migrant Sacramentality for Korean American Catholics.” Respondent: David Turnbloom

- Layla Karst: “Broken Bodies, Broken Symbols: Liturgical Ripples of Clergy Sexual Abuse.”
- Tom McLean: “Anglicans in Rome: Rites of Ecumenical Reconciliation and the Ordination of Women.”
- Rebecca Spurrier: “‘The Disabled God Is God with Us’: Experiments in Liturgical Formation.” Respondent: Audrey Seah
- Marileen Steyn: “Death, Conflict and Scandal: A Practical Theology Study of the Role of Rituals in Congregations Following the Loss of a Minister.” Respondent: Sarah Johnson
- Kristine Suna-Koro: “Interrogating Penitential Rites: Whose Healing? Whose Rupture?” Respondent: Benjamin Durheim

**Other Work and Plans for the Future:** Next year, the seminar will invite papers on two themes: (1) liturgy and trauma/trauma-informed liturgies, and (2) liturgy and consumerism. In addition to our regular practice of reading and discussing seminar papers, we may also explore additional formats like “lightening talks,” where seminar participants offer 10-minute presentations followed by 20-minute discussions.