



Morning Seminars

What's Love Got to Do With It? Toward a Beloved Community

Patrick T. Smith, PhD

Cultural shifts and political pressures surrounding social values in medicine are unsettling to many healthcare professionals. This has produced anxiety and fear in some who are unclear about how to navigate such a changing context. There is a danger that vocational excellence can be undermined if these dispositions are found amongst Christian healthcare professionals. Fear can erode a sense of solidarity and community, two characteristics important for faithful healthcare. Christian tradition has resources in the realm of the agapist ethical tradition to counteract the corrosive forces of fear. This workshop draws from Christian scriptures and the works of Paul Ramsey and Martin Luther King, Jr. in thinking about the important role of agape love in the creation and preservation of community as a corrective to fear.

Set in Stone: St. Basil and Christian Foundations of the Hospital and Healthcare

Brett McCarty, ThD

Modern hospitals and healthcare are often looked to as shining examples of secular progress. However, both hospitals and healthcare have distinctly (though not exclusively) Christian roots. This seminar will explore their Christian foundations through the particular example of the fourth century saint, Basil of Caesarea. Through St. Basil's witness, our imaginations for the possibilities of Christian faithfulness in the institutions and practices of healthcare can be renewed.

Contending Conscientiously for Good (and Faithful) Medicine

Farr Curlin, MD

In this seminar, Dr. Farr Curlin will describe the important difference between insisting on our rights to practice according to our personal values, and contending for good practices of medicine as supported by reason, tradition, and the witness of Christians over the centuries. Participants will be encouraged to adopt the latter approach, and will consider central features of good medicine, historically understood, that they can commit to and give an account for when asked to explain why they practice as they do.





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Forgiveness Instead of Perfection: Beyond Quality Metrics

Abraham Nussbaum, MD, MTS

For the past two decades, healthcare policy makers have adopted industrial models for responding to error in medicine in which clinical sites become factories where errors are reduced and perfection is sought by the pursuit of quality metrics. Christians like David Hilfiker have, in contrast, described the pursuit of perfection as “isolating and destructive.” Reflecting upon Hilfiker's famous *New England Journal of Medicine* essay where he admitted a grave error— accidentally aborting a desired pregnancy— we will take up his argument that a physician who has acted in error should confess mistakes, make amends, and seek absolution for those mistakes. In Hilfiker's essay, the hospital becomes as a kind of confessional, where physicians can abandon their pretenses to perfection. Like Hilfiker, we can learn to fail if we can be forgiven.

Whom Shall I Fear? Following Jesus Faithfully in Medical Training

Benjamin Frush, MD and Danielle Ellis, MD Candidate 2020

Medical training is often an inherently anxiety-inducing experience. Constant evaluation by superiors, an ever-present temptation to compare oneself to one's peers, and trepidation associated with learning to care for the sick conspire to create fertile ground for fear and doubt. As Christians, we must ask ourselves how the reality of the life, death, and resurrection of Christ informs both our understanding of and response to these anxieties as medical trainees. While seeking Christ can be challenging in training and even sometimes compound these anxieties, in this seminar we hope to identify faithful practices that inspire hope and offer peace in the midst of an experience of great uncertainty.





Afternoon Seminars

Learning More about the Fischer Clinic Model for Primary Care

Ben Fischer, MD, Liz Fischer, MBA, Zane Lapinskes, MD

The Fischer Clinic aims to “restore the doctor patient relationship through person to person medicine.” Dr. Fischer and his partner Dr. Lapinskes provide affordable and simplified primary care services, chronic disease management and preventive medicine. This seminar extends the conversation from the plenary “Be Not Afraid”: Creating New Spaces for Faithful Practice. Drs. Fischer and Lapsinkes, alongside Practice Manager Liz Fischer, will take a deeper dive into the creation and evolution of the Fischer clinic, sharing both insight on the values that guide their work as well as practical information about clinic operations.

Beholding the Image: Reclaiming Sacred Encounters in Metrics Based Medicine

Aaron Klink, MDiv, TBM

There is increasing pressure on clinicians to be more "efficient" (which means generate more revenue in less time) which leads organizations to prioritize "productivity" over timely presence. But Christian theology tells us, from the opening chapter of Genesis that we are "created" in God's image. In addition, the story of the Good Samaritan tells us that presence to the unplanned and unexpected other in need is an integral part of Christian discipleship. Drawing on a host of theological and philosophical resources, this seminar will explore ways that clinicians can re-frame thinking about those they treat to remain spiritually centered in a metrics based healthcare culture.

How Fear Makes a Story Interesting, and How Stories Help Us Endure Fear

Ray Barfield, MD and Jeff Polish, PhD

Many of the stories we tell involve something that frightens us – disease, injury, death, loss of control. Often the stories are also about overcoming fear, acting in the face of fear, and learning more about ourselves and the world as we face fears. This is certainly true for the stories we tell in medicine. In this seminar, Jeff, a professional storyteller, and Ray, a physician, will look closely at the relationship between stories, fear, and the practice of courage. How does fear function in a story? How do stories teach us about our own fears and why we are afraid? Can stories help us overcome fears? Can stories help us when we feel overcome by fear?”





Afternoon Seminars

From Machines to Wayfarers: A Christian Whole-Person Approach to Mental Health

Warren Kinghorn, MD, Tbd

Nearly one in five American adults lives with some form of mental illness in any given year. Psychiatry and other forms of mental health care can be helpful and even life-preserving, but all too often, psychiatry depicts mental health problems as individual problems, located in the brain, characterized by symptoms, to be ameliorated technologically. In Christian context, by contrast, the person is not a machine to be fixed but rather a wayfarer, a pilgrim, to be attended. We'll explore the difference that this practice of wayfaring makes not only for mental health care, but for health care as a whole.

Jesus Was Made Known to Them in the Breaking of the Bread: How ICU Nurses Can Encounter Their Patients as Persons

Jonathan McGee, RN, BSN, CCRN

The modern intensive care unit is increasingly mechanized, and our processes increasingly protocol driven. As the extremes of medical intervention stage new and distressing ethical quandaries, we can turn to Christian understandings of the human person and human suffering for guidance. This seminar will explore the role of nursing in preserving and asserting the humanity of patients in the modern intensive care unit. Nurses stand at the bedside, where the science of medicine meets the demands of an individual person and their family. This places a particular responsibility upon nurses to carry out their practice in the mode most proper to the human person: personal relationship. How can the Christian tradition help nurses know and express the humanity of their patients, thereby enabling them to advocate for their more ethical care?

