

MEET PTS



KELSO MUSEUM ARTIFACTS BRING BIBLICAL TIMES TO LIFE

Associate Curator of the Kelso Museum of Near Eastern Archaeology Jennifer Christmas '11 has been taking the Museum on the road! Not the whole Museum, of course, but a number of its resources, including hands-on artifacts, 1930s film footage of everyday life and of excavation work conducted by Seminary participants at Tel Beit Mirsim (Israel), and a PowerPoint presentation explaining the lay of the land of the Bible, for example.

At the end of October, in fact, Jen took this “piece” of the Museum to Kerr Presbyterian Church (pastored by PTS alumna and interim director of the Metro-Urban Institute the Rev. KJ Norris '14) as part of a new program at the church. “Kerr PC has started a monthly community meal, followed by a presentation on a topic related to Christian faith and practice,” Jen explains.

“Often, people—especially those who are new to Christianity—don’t have a lot of background knowledge on where the events described in the Bible took place. So I’m privileged to have both the opportunity and the resources to enrich their understanding and help them grow in their faith right there at their local church.”

But Jen’s Museum-on-the-road work isn’t limited to church venues. This fall, she participated in International Archaeology Day at the University of Pittsburgh by hosting a display table featuring the Kelso and engaging in conversation with students, faculty, and community visitors to the event. “At Pitt, people in the classics, anthropology, religious studies, and history of art and architecture departments are widely involved in archaeology and interested in collaborating with us. They have a special appreciation for the unique resources in our collection and for the century-old history of archaeology at PTS. And community members of all ages—from children to seniors—got to know PTS through the Kelso’s representation at the event,” she adds.

Here on campus, Jen has been developing a display in Barbour Library that features a new archaeological resource: a bound manuscript by Robert C. Holland Professor Emeritus of Old Testament the Rev. Dr. Donald Gowan. “The display pairs Dr. Gowan’s work on metallurgical vocabulary in the Old Testament with the research on OT ceramic vocabulary done 70 years ago by former PTS professor Dr. James Kelso, for whom the Museum is named,” Jen notes. “In addition, we’re featuring Dr. Gowan’s first-hand account of his excavation work at Ashdod in mid-1960s alongside the first-hand account of PTS alumnus the Rev. Richard Gibson '63, who also worked at Ashdod.”

So today, the historic display and the continued opportunities to share the Museum in various off-campus venues “show some of the ways our institutional history—as well as the history of our faith!—connect with our present Christian ministry.” And speaking of the present, this year the Kelso Museum will be an official stop on the annual Highland Park Pottery Tour, taking place Dec. 14-15, 2019. “The Kelso stop will offer a unique opportunity to compare ceramic artifacts from the biblical world with the wares of modern potters—and to buy creations of the latter!” says Jen.

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Pittsburgh Theological Seminary
616 North Highland Avenue
Pittsburgh, PA 15206
Phone: 412-362-5610



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