

## ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 10, 2013

The Rev. Laura Strauss '09, Pastor, Clinton United Presbyterian Church, Clinton, Pa.

### SCRIPTURE

#### MATTHEW 22:34-40

34 When the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together, 35 and one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. 36 "Teacher, which commandment in the law is the greatest?" 37 He said to him, "'You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.' 38 This is the greatest and first commandment. 39 and a second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' 40 On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets."

### DEVOTIONAL

The greatest commandment and the commandment which compliments it function best in unity. Perhaps, we are tempted to believe that it is easy to love God. We study God's Word, gather for worship, and pray. However, we deceive ourselves when we believe that this alone demonstrates love. The love that our Lord requires found in the devotions listed above, and in the way we love those God has placed along our path. The frustrations of life lived in the midst of fallen humanity tempts the Christian to hide in the solace of God's embrace. Yet, the call upon the believer is to love God through moving from God's embrace into the messy confines of our called communities. This is more than Bible study, worship, and prayer. But with the Spirit at work in our devotions, we learn to love the difficult as a means to love God.

### PRAYER

Loving God, you have called us to love a world that is often challenging in our eyes. Soften our hearts toward your people that we may love them as you, in your mercy, have loved us. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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



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