

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

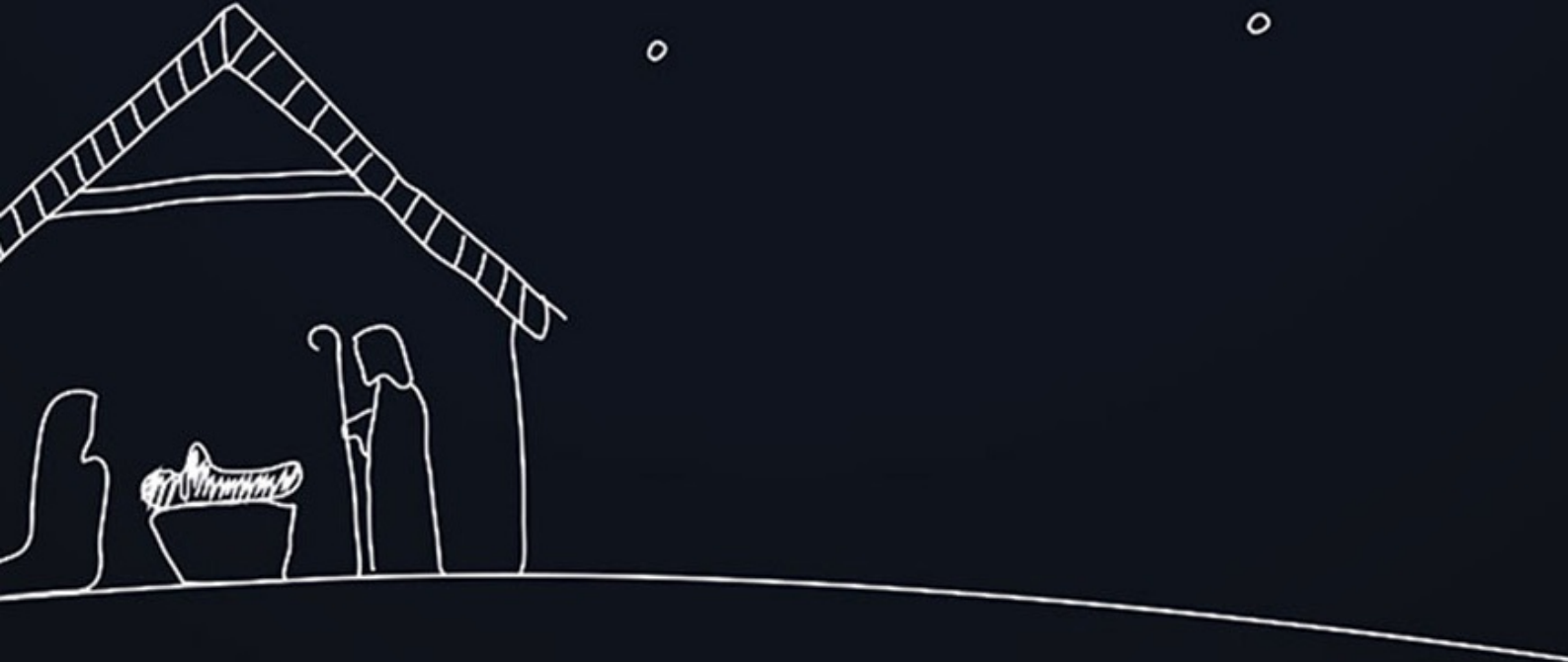


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Rooted in the Reformed tradition, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is committed to the formation of women and men for theologically reflective ministry and to scholarship in service to the global Church of Jesus Christ.

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Graduate Certificate in Urban Ministry

Spiritual Formation Certificate

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Church Planting Initiative

Continuing Education

Kelso Museum of Near Eastern Archaeology

Miller Summer Youth Institute

Metro-Urban Institute

World Mission Initiative

Zeitah Excavations

FACULTY

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EVENTS

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ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 10, 2020

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 18:1-20

1 I love you, O LORD, my strength. 2 The LORD is my rock, my fortress, and my deliverer, my God, my rock in whom I take refuge, my shield, and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold. 3 I call upon the LORD, who is worthy to be praised, so I shall be saved from my enemies. 4 The cords of death encompassed me; the torrents of perdition assailed me; 5 the cords of Sheol entangled me; the snares of death confronted me. 6 In my distress I called upon the LORD; to my God I cried for help. From his temple he heard my voice, and my cry to him reached his ears. 7 Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked, because he was angry. 8 Smoke went up from his nostrils, and devouring fire from his mouth; glowing coals flamed forth from him. 9 He bowed the heavens, and came down; thick darkness was under his feet. 10 He rode on a cherub, and flew; he came swiftly upon the wings of the wind. 11 He made darkness his covering around him, his canopy thick clouds dark with water. 12 Out of the brightness before him there broke through his clouds hailstones and coals of fire. 13 The LORD also thundered in the heavens, and the Most High uttered his voice. 14 And he sent out his arrows, and scattered them; he flashed forth lightnings, and routed them. 15 Then the channels of the sea were seen, and the foundations of the world were laid bare at your rebuke, O LORD, at the blast of the breath of your nostrils. 16 He reached down from on high, he took me; he drew me out of mighty waters. 17 He delivered me from my strong enemy, and from those who hated me; for they were too mighty for me. 18 They confronted me in the day of my calamity; but the LORD was my support. 19 He brought me out into a broad place; he delivered me, because he delighted in me. 20 The LORD rewarded me according to my righteousness; according to the cleanness of my hands he recompensed me.

DEVOTIONAL

The Rev. Mary Catherine (Kay) Day '97

The paradox of the incarnation never ceases to amaze me. The image we carry at this time of year of “God with us” is of the babe in the manger—tiny, helpless, completely dependent, as any infant is. The image of Jesus as our redeemer is of him meekly hanging on a cross in our place. These are valid images of God with us.

Yet from Psalm 18 we get a totally different image of God. The psalmist labels him a rock and fortress, a deliverer and refuge, a shield and stronghold. When he pictures God as coming to his defense he says, “Then the earth reeled and rocked; the foundations also of the mountains trembled and quaked.” The psalmist continues to describe how God saved him from his distress and delivered him from his enemies. He affirms the reason for his redemption by saying, “[H]e delivered me, because he delighted in me.” God saved him because he loved him. That is the very reason he came to us at Christmas as a baby and died on the cross for our sins.

We know the proclamation in John 3:16: “For God so loved the world . . .” It resolves any paradox we might see. All that God has done and is doing is because God loves us. God is great enough, powerful enough, resourceful enough to come to us in whatever way is needed to reach us and redeem us, because the God of the universe, the one of power and might, loves us.

PRAYER

All powerful God, we are humbled by the ways you use to express your love for us. Help us to see them with fresh eyes this Advent season. Come to us as you know we need you to. Amen.

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