

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

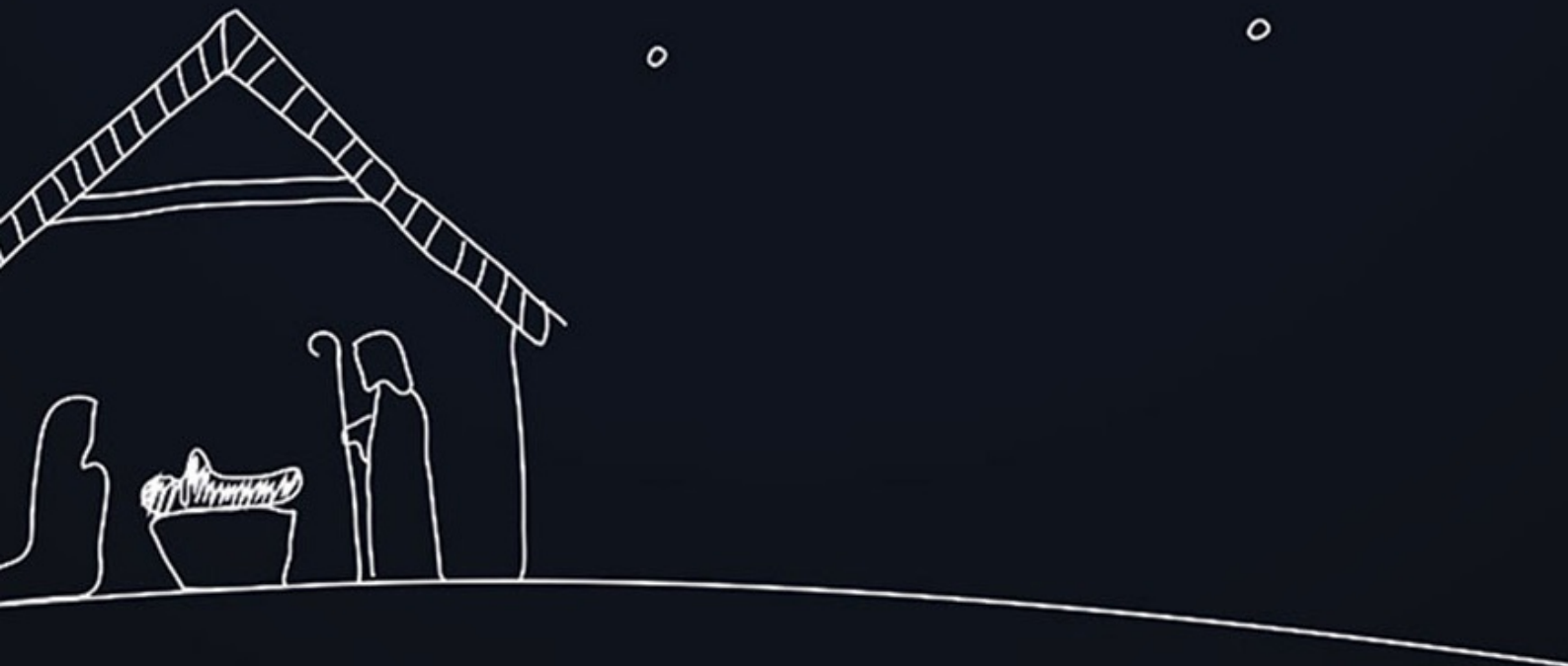


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Rooted in the Reformed tradition, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is committed to the formation of women and men for theologically reflective ministry and to scholarship in service to the global Church of Jesus Christ.

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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 11, 2020

SCRIPTURE

2 THESSALONIANS 2:13-3:5

13 But we must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters beloved by the Lord, because God chose you as the first fruits for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth. 14 For this purpose he called you through our proclamation of the good news, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. 15 So then, brothers and sisters, stand firm and hold fast to the traditions that you were taught by us, either by word of mouth or by our letter. 16 Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, 17 comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word. 3:1 Finally, brothers and sisters, pray for us, so that the word of the Lord may spread rapidly and be glorified everywhere, just as it is among you, 2 and that we may be rescued from wicked and evil people; for not all have faith. 3 But the Lord is faithful; he will strengthen you and guard you from the evil one. 4 And we have confidence in the Lord concerning you, that you are doing and will go on doing the things that we command. 5 May the Lord direct your hearts to the love of God and to the steadfastness of Christ.

DEVOTIONAL

David Peters '07

We seem to have a yearning for the familiar and the simple. In a world where political issues are complex and empathy is sometimes challenging, we seek understanding. In a world of gadgets and gizmos that only seem to make conversations more difficult, we seek familiar voices and words. In many ways, Advent calls us back to the familiar—to someone we know.

Here in Thessalonians Paul seems to be calling believers back to the familiar as well. In the chaos and constant danger surrounding the early church and the Apostle's life, Paul reminds the believers of the "steadfastness of Christ" (3:5) and exhorts them to "stand firm and hold fast to the traditions" (2:15). He calls them—and us—back to the familiar. In saying "God chose you as the first fruits of salvation" (2:13), Paul reminds them—and us—of our calling to live out a life that glorifies God. In the midst of all the problems the early church was having with constant adversity and misinterpretation of the message of the gospel, Paul takes believers back to basics – the "proclamation of the good news, so that you may obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ."

During Advent, we are asked to come out of the complexity and chaos of the world around us and get back to basics—our calling to proclaim what God has done for us. Our yearning for the familiar is fulfilled if we focus on what God has done. Our world makes sense when we focus on God's promise, not on other things that only cloud our judgment. This calling is not to ignore the challenges of our world; rather, it's a call to make sense of the world in the light of a promise God made through his Son—a promise God is still fulfilling during each moment of every day.

PRAYER

Gracious and loving God, it is hard for us to listen to you in the midst of our busy and complex world. We get mixed up and hung up on things that cause us to lose focus. We take our attention away from you. Help us to heed your calling back to the familiar—the love you showed through your Son. Still our hearts to help us focus on what is important: praising you and telling others about your love. Through Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

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