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ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 14, 2024

Weekly theme: Peace

SCRIPTURE

PSALM 90

- 1 Lord, you have been our dwelling place
in all generations.
- 2 Before the mountains were brought forth,
or ever you had formed the earth and the world,
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.
- 3 You turn us back to dust,
and say, "Turn back, you mortals."
- 4 For a thousand years in your sight
are like yesterday when it is past,
or like a watch in the night.

5 You sweep them away; they are like a dream,
like grass that is renewed in the morning;
6 in the morning it flourishes and is renewed;
in the evening it fades and withers.
7 For we are consumed by your anger;
by your wrath we are overwhelmed.
8 You have set our iniquities before you,
our secret sins in the light of your countenance.
9 For all our days pass away under your wrath;
our years come to an end like a sigh.
10 The days of our life are seventy years,
or perhaps eighty, if we are strong;
even then their span is only toil and trouble;
they are soon gone, and we fly away.
11 Who considers the power of your anger?
Your wrath is as great as the fear that is due you.
12 So teach us to count our days
that we may gain a wise heart.
13 Turn, O LORD! How long?
Have compassion on your servants!
14 Satisfy us in the morning with your steadfast love,
so that we may rejoice and be glad all our days.
15 Make us glad as many days as you have afflicted us,
and as many years as we have seen evil.
16 Let your work be manifest to your servants,
and your glorious power to their children.
17 Let the favor of the Lord our God be upon us,
and prosper for us the work of our hands —
O prosper the work of our hands!

DEVOTION

The Rev. Dr. Martha Murchison '09

Advent means coming. Its focus is on a long-held and long-expected hope that has not lost its light. The difficulty is that we not only wait for that light in our very dark world but that we wait during the darkest and longest days of winter. Time can seem unending on those days which begin slowly and end early. The dark nights can be stifling. We wait and hope for the promises we've read about in scripture—deserts breaking into bloom, swords beaten into plows, food and housing for everyone—we wait and hope for the promises to come, but it is dark outside. It is difficult to imagine that anything might change. How can we find a light for our wee bit of hope?

The psalmist gently broadens our vision beyond the dark December sky. He calls us to look back over the entirety of history to trace the hand of God upon our story. Before the mountains were—God was. Before the mess that is part of our world—the wars, the hatred, the degradation of the planet—God was. God was before it all. God has been dwelling with humanity through the arc of history, and God will be with us “from everlasting to everlasting.”

It is in the memory of that presence that we can find light for our hope. It is by the story of what has been that we can envision what can be. It is in a tale that is larger than each of us but that is written about each of us that we can find a way to make those promises a reality. It is in the waiting and in the dark that we can imagine the ways toward peace and the steps toward life. It is then that we can join in the prayer: Come, Lord Jesus, come.

PRAYER

Remind us, dear Lord, of your presence throughout history. Remind us that you have been with us and will be with us and offer us a new direction. Open our eyes to see beyond the worries of our present moment. Help us find light in the darkness. Lead us to share our light so that others might find light also. Amen.

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



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