

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

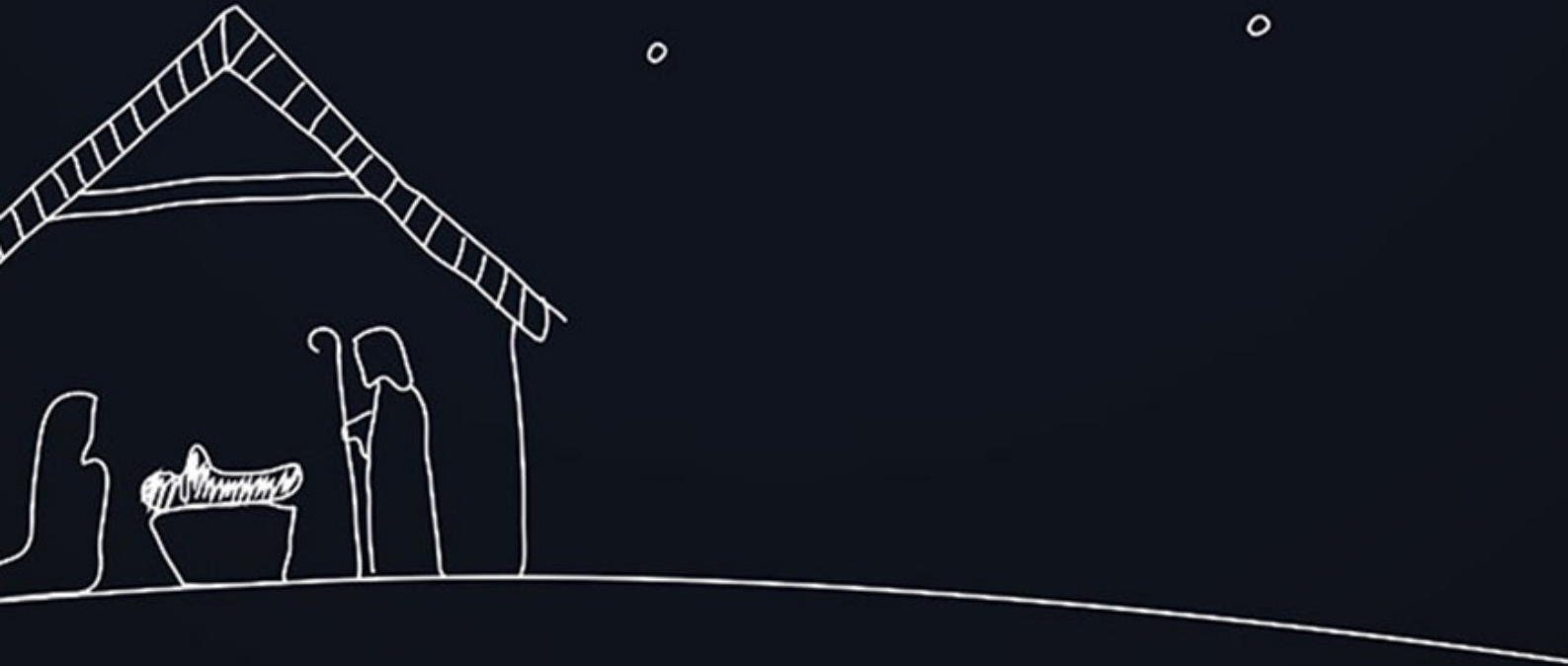


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Rooted in the Reformed tradition, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is committed to the formation of women and men for theologically reflective ministry and to scholarship in service to the global Church of Jesus Christ.

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In addition to their on-campus duties, our faculty are experts in their fields and are available to preach and teach. Learn more about their **topics of research and writing** and invite them to present at your congregation or gathering.

EVENTS

The Seminary hosts a wide range of events—many of them free!—on topics of faith including church planting, mission, vocation, spiritual formation, pastoral care and counseling, archaeology, and many more. Visit our **calendar** often for a listing of upcoming events.

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ADVENT DEVOTIONAL NOVEMBER 29, 2020

SCRIPTURE

2 PETER 3:1-10

1 This is now, beloved, the second letter I am writing to you; in them I am trying to arouse your sincere intention by reminding you 2 that you should remember the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets, and the commandment of the Lord and Savior spoken through your apostles. 3 First of all you must understand this, that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and indulging their own lusts 4 and saying, “Where is the promise of his coming? For ever since our ancestors died, all things continue as they were from the beginning of creation!” 5 They deliberately ignore this fact, that by the word of God heavens existed long ago and an earth was formed out of water and by means of water, 6 through which the world of that time was deluged with water and perished. 7 But by the same word the present heavens and earth have been reserved for fire, being kept until the day of judgment and destruction of the godless. 8 But do not ignore this one fact, beloved, that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like one day. 9 The Lord is not slow about his promise, as some think of slowness, but is patient with you, not wanting any to perish, but all to come to repentance. 10 But the day of the Lord will come like a thief, and then the heavens will pass away with a loud noise, and the elements will be dissolved with fire, and the earth and everything that is done on it will be disclosed.

DEVOTIONAL

The Rev. Brian Sandell '12

I'm a dad of three amazing kids. My kids live life to the fullest—they play hard and laugh often. They dump Legos on the floor, scatter toy cars across the ground, and get other toys out that they won't even play with. Our basement is often hit hardest by our children's playing. It takes only about 30 minutes to turn a pristine, immaculate basement into a complete mess.

Interestingly enough, sometimes it takes even less time than that to turn our own lives into a complete mess. For Adam and Eve it only took one bite. The great news from our text today is that we can turn our lives *away* from the mess of sin and into the restorative life that only Christ offers. Our text outlines how we can do so as we begin this Advent's journey.

First, remember the words spoken by the holy prophets (v. 2). The words of Scripture are life giving, transformative, and applicable for all moments of life. The writer of Hebrews describes the Word of God as alive and active, sharper than any two-edged sword and able to judge thoughts and the intentions of the heart (Heb. 4:12). God's word is something we are called to remember, internalize, and put into practice. Let's take this Advent season and be intentional about remembering the words of God and the prophetic voices of the past and present.

Second, trust that God will fulfill his promises (2 Pet. 3:3). It can be very easy to doubt God's promises when the world we live in seems to get crazier by the minute. Trust God anyway. When brokenness is all you have known for so long, it is easy to see the mess. Trust God anyway. This Advent season let us not be scoffers (as in v. 3). Instead, let us be people who unconditionally trust that the promises of God will come true.

And third, be patient as you await God's timing (v. 8). At the time of writing of this text, it was widely thought that many followers of Jesus believed his return was imminent. Here we are, 2,000 years later, still waiting. We need to be patient. I must confess that I don't do well with patience. I want things to happen *now*, but that's not how God works. God works patiently, deliberately, in his timing to bring about his glory, and to transform us into the likeness of Christ. In obedient response, we are patiently to await God's timing. If and when we do, we'll be amazed at how we experienced the promised restoration found only in Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Lord, we thank you that your promises always come true. Help us during this Advent season to be patient, to be hopeful, and to trust you unconditionally, no matter the circumstances going on in our lives. Fix our eyes and hearts on the Christ Child in the manger this Advent. Amen.

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