

# ADVENT DEVOTIONAL



ADVENT PROGRAM

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# ABOUT PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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 Theological Studies**

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**Spiritual Formation Certificate**

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**Church Planting Initiative**

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**Kelso Museum of Near Eastern Archaeology**

**Miller Summer Youth Institute**

**Metro-Urban Institute**

**World Mission Initiative**

**Zeitah Excavations**

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# ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 3, 2019

## SCRIPTURE

### PSALM 85

1 LORD, you were favorable to your land;  
you restored the fortunes of Jacob.

2 You forgave the iniquity of your people;  
you pardoned all their sin.

3 You withdrew all your wrath;  
you turned from your hot anger.

4 Restore us again, O God of our salvation,  
and put away your indignation toward us.

5 Will you be angry with us forever?  
Will you prolong your anger to all generations?

6 Will you not revive us again,  
so that your people may rejoice in you?

7 Show us your steadfast love, O LORD,  
and grant us your salvation.

8 Let me hear what God the LORD will speak,  
for he will speak peace to his people,  
to his faithful, to those who turn to him in their hearts.

9 Surely his salvation is at hand for those who fear him,  
that his glory may dwell in our land.

10 Steadfast love and faithfulness will meet;  
righteousness and peace will kiss each other.

11 Faithfulness will spring up from the ground,  
and righteousness will look down from the sky.

12 The LORD will give what is good,  
and our land will yield its increase.

13 Righteousness will go before him,  
and will make a path for his steps.

## DEVOTIONAL

**The Rev. Dr. A. Gary Angleberger**

Psalm 85 begins where many hymns and prayers begin: the psalmist lists the many favors God has bestowed on his people. We, in our own prayers, can easily identify with the psalmist's gratitude. The writer speaks of God's favor in the granting of the home-land and the establishment of a people who have been blessed in spite of their shortcomings and failures. This God is a forgiving God, so the psalmist acknowledges the many times in the past when God has forgiven his people—and is still willing to grant forgiveness. In the light of God's many past mercies, the psalmist pleads that the people of his day will hear the story of their failures and turn to their loving, forgiving God.

I wonder whether, in the midst of the political debating of our day, anyone can “lift our eyes” to where we, as a people, have come from—when we have failed and been unfair to the “poor and the stranger in our midst”—yet remind us that the call is greater than our failures. The call is to follow humbly in the path of “the Peace-maker” and trust that serving the needs of our neighbors and striving for justice may be a better path to peace than building walls and greater arsenals. Is this a vain hope? Advent begins with a hope—that if God comes among us, we will see and understand and follow. Today, will we allow the hope of Advent to be a vain hope?

## PRAYER

We wait for your coming, O Lord, when “our salvation is at hand,” when “You speak peace to your people,” when “steadfast love and faithfulness will meet” and “righteousness and peace will kiss each other.” Instruct us through your Son, our Lord, Jesus Christ, how to wait—not passively, not with resignation—but to wait claiming the power of your word of hope in our Lord, and to live abundantly in his Name. Amen.

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Pittsburgh Theological Seminary  
616 North Highland Avenue  
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