

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL

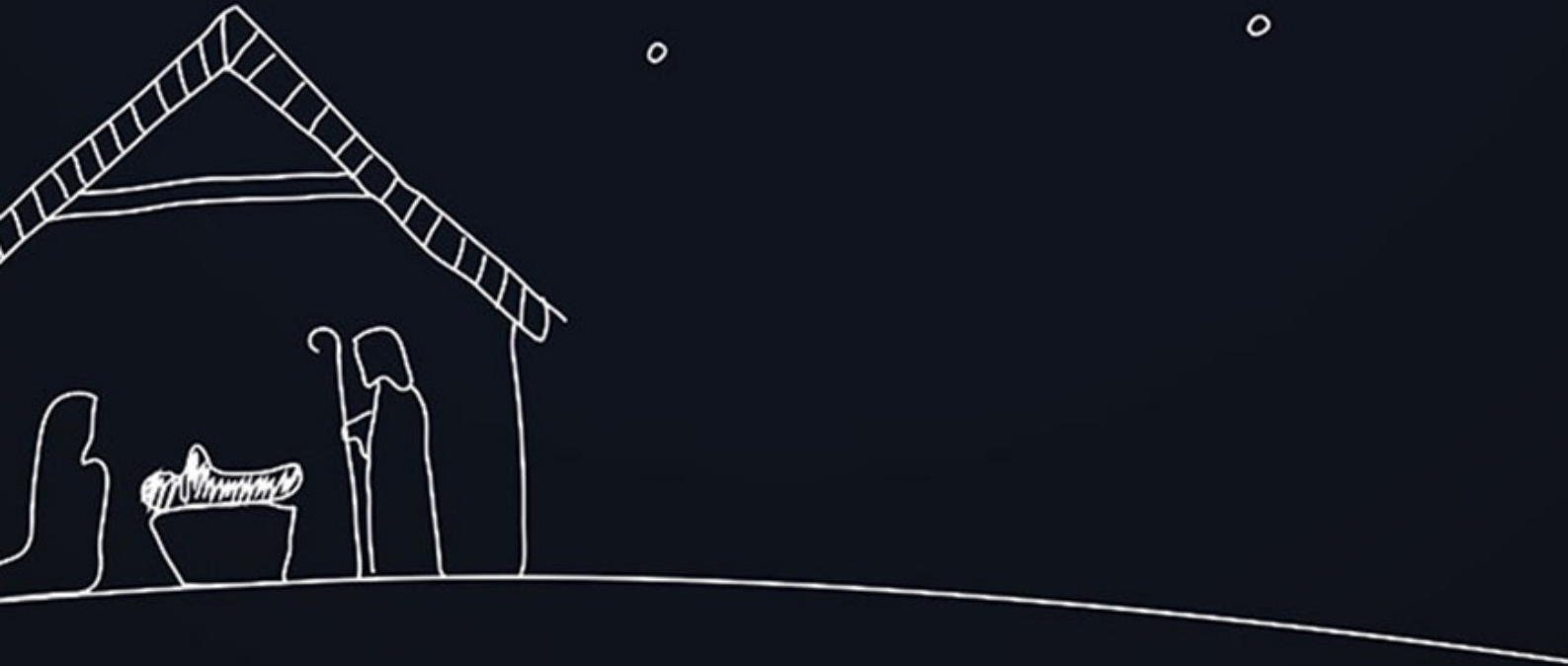


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Rooted in the Reformed tradition, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is committed to the formation of women and men for theologically reflective ministry and to scholarship in service to the global Church of Jesus Christ.

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World Mission Initiative

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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 DECEMBER 13, 2020

SCRIPTURE

JOHN 3:22-30

22 After this Jesus and his disciples went into the Judean countryside, and he spent some time there with them and baptized. 23 John also was baptizing at Aenon near Salim because water was abundant there; and people kept coming and were being baptized 24 —John, of course, had not yet been thrown into prison. 25 Now a discussion about purification arose between John's disciples and a Jew. 26 They came to John and said to him, "Rabbi, the one who was with you across the Jordan, to whom you testified, here he is baptizing, and all are going to him." 27 John answered, "No one can receive anything except what has been given from heaven. 28 You yourselves are my witnesses that I said, 'I am not the Messiah, but I have been sent ahead of him.' 29 He who has the bride is the bridegroom. The friend of the bride-groom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly at the bridegroom's voice. For this reason my joy has been fulfilled. 30 He must increase, but I must decrease."

DEVOTIONAL

The Rev. Dr. James Graham '66

Life has its ups and downs—personally, politically, globally. By the time you read this Advent reflection, written much earlier, you may have been called to a new, highly regarded position (or not); we may have elected new political leadership (or not); the coronavirus of 2020 may have been successfully dealt with (or not).

Advent means "coming." Something is always coming, but what comes is not always what we want or are looking for. Israel's anticipated messiah was one who would be a "King of glory," a "Lord of hosts," mighty, powerful, exalted! But what came was a powerless baby, born in a barn of poor parents, who later would enter Jerusalem's gates not riding in a chariot as a conquering king but as a lowly servant "sitting on a donkey's colt!" He came, he said, not to be served, but to serve. That is what true leadership, at any level, looks like.

Advent gives us the opportunity to get our priorities straight: to exalt the one who came with great humility to be our Lord; to humble ourselves to positions of servanthood; and to call on the powerful of this world to do the same.

John the Baptist got it right. When told that people were flocking to someone else, he told them, "He must increase, but I must decrease."

PRAYER

Humbling God, humble us. Lord of all, continue to serve us and save us from ourselves—from a sense of importance and pride; from failure to recognize who and whose we are; and from too often letting ourselves slip into thinking, "It's all about me." Show us how to get out of the way of your coming among us once more, that we may show forth in the way we serve that it really is all about you.

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Pittsburgh, PA 15206
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