

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 Ministry

Graduate Certificate in Missional Leadership

Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies

Graduate Certificate in Urban Ministry

Spiritual Formation Certificate

SPECIAL PROGRAMS

Church Planting Initiative

Continuing Education

Kelso Museum of Near Eastern Archaeology

Miller Summer Youth Institute

Metro-Urban Institute

World Mission Initiative

Zeitah Excavations

FACULTY

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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Sign-up to receive the Seminary's newsletters: Seminary News (monthly), Church Planting Initiative (monthly), Continuing Education (monthly), World Mission Initiative (monthly), Metro-Urban Institute (quarterly), and Kelso Museum. Alums, there's also one for you!

ADVENT DEVOTIONAL DECEMBER 15, 2019

SCRIPTURE

JOHN 5:30-47

30 “I can do nothing on my own. As I hear, I judge; and my judgment is just, because I seek to do not my own will but the will of him who sent me. 31 If I testify about myself, my testimony is not true. 32 There is another who testifies on my behalf, and I know that his testimony to me is true. 33 You sent messengers to John, and he testified to the truth. 34 Not that I accept such human testimony, but I say these things so that you may be saved. 35 He was a burning and shining lamp, and you were willing to rejoice for a while in his light. 36 But I have a testimony greater than John’s. The works that the Father has given me to complete, the very works that I am doing, testify on my behalf that the Father has sent me. 37 And the Father who sent me has himself testified on my behalf. You have never heard his voice or seen his form, 38 and you do not have his word abiding in you, because you do not believe him whom he has sent. 39 You search the scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life; and it is they that testify on my behalf. 40 Yet you refuse to come to me to have life. 41 I do not accept glory from human beings. 42 But I know that you do not have the love of God in you. 43 I have come in my Father’s name, and you do not accept me; if another comes in his own name, you will accept him. 44 How can you believe when you accept glory from one another and do not seek the glory that comes from the one who alone is God? 45 Do not think that I will accuse you before the Father; your accuser is Moses, on whom you have set your hope. 46 If you believed Moses, you would believe me, for he wrote about me. 47 But if you do not believe what he wrote, how will you believe what I say?”

DEVOTIONAL

The Rev. Dr. Donald J. Dawson

At least in recent history, presidents of the U.S.A., in order to establish their own agendas, claim that they have authority by virtue of their office to take certain actions. The courts are regularly asked to rule whether or not they actually have such authority on the basis of the law of our nation, the Constitution.

This way is so very different from Jesus’. He never argued for authority for himself. In fact, he said that if he had to assert his own authority, he should not be trusted. To those who challenged his authority to judge life and death, he simply pointed to two gauges of authority. First, what do his actions show, as declared in the testimony of those who can be trusted as messengers of truth? Here Jesus was referring to what John the Baptist said about him and to the testimony of people such as the paralytic whom he healed. Second, what is the testimony of the “constitution,” in other words for Jesus’ audience, the Law of Moses?

We should always be cautious of those who come beating their own drums and claiming power and truth for themselves. Power is given only by the Lord God Almighty, who has entrusted it to the only Son as both Savior and Judge. In Jesus only is eternal life.

PRAYER

Ruler of the universe, thank you for sending your Son as the Arbitrator of all things. Bring all people to bow before him as the Giver of mercy and the only One in whom salvation can be found. In the name of our Savior, Jesus, amen.

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