

Tuesday, December 2nd, 2014

The Rev. Dr. Leanna K. Fuller, Assistant Professor of Pastoral Care at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

Scripture

Psalm 146

- ¹ Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD, O my soul!
- ² I will praise the LORD as long as I live;
I will sing praises to my God all my life long.
- ³ Do not put your trust in princes,
in mortals, in whom there is no help.
- ⁴ When their breath departs, they return to the earth;
on that very day their plans perish.
- ⁵ Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob,
whose hope is in the LORD their God,
- ⁶ who made heaven and earth,
the sea, and all that is in them;
who keeps faith forever;
- ⁷ who executes justice for the oppressed;
who gives food to the hungry.
The LORD sets the prisoners free;
- ⁸ the LORD opens the eyes of the blind.
The LORD lifts up those who are bowed down;
the LORD loves the righteous.
- ⁹ The LORD watches over the strangers;
he upholds the orphan and the widow,
but the way of the wicked he brings to ruin.
- ¹⁰ The LORD will reign forever,
your God, O Zion, for all generations.
Praise the LORD!

Devotional

Although the psalms are read all throughout the church year, Psalm 146 takes on special significance when we read it during Advent. I am particularly struck by the language of verse 3: “Do not put your trust in princes, in mortals, in whom there is no help.” The princes and mortals of the world tell us that right now, we should be striving to accumulate more things and to show

our love through material gifts. They tell us that Advent is nothing more than a set of shopping days.

But we know better: Advent is about preparing to welcome the birth of God's son into our lives. And Psalm 146 reminds us of just what Christ's coming calls us to do: to join God in the work of seeking justice for the oppressed, feeding the hungry, setting the prisoners free, and upholding the orphan and widow. These are the things to which we're called to commit ourselves. This Advent season, as we consider what our priorities should be, let us look not to the princes and mortals in our midst, but to God and to the kingdom God is bringing into being all around us.

Prayer

Gracious God, during this season when the world overwhelms us with demands, remind us of what our true priorities should be. Help us to keep our eyes on you, and to focus our energies on bringing about justice and peace, which are signs of your kingdom here on earth. Amen.