



## *Lenten Devotional*

We hope you'll follow along daily, be deepened in your faith through the words of your brothers and sisters in Christ, and prepare your heart to celebrate at Easter the new life he made possible for all.

In addition to this printed copy, you can also experience the devotionals in the following ways:

- » **Read and listen online.** Visit [www.pts.edu/devotional](http://www.pts.edu/devotional).
- » **Receive daily e-mails.** Go to [www.pts.edu/e-mail](http://www.pts.edu/e-mail), click "Devotionals."
- » **Follow along on Facebook, Google+, and Twitter.**
- » **Download our free Android or Apple app.** Visit the store and search for "Devotions - Advent & Lent."



## WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 10, 2016

*The Rev. Greg Steible '14, Pastor, First Presbyterian Church, Rushville, Ind.*

### SCRIPTURE

#### Psalm 51:1-17

1 Have mercy on me, O God,  
according to your steadfast love;  
according to your abundant mercy  
blot out my transgressions.  
2 Wash me thoroughly from my iniquity,  
and cleanse me from my sin.  
3 For I know my transgressions,  
and my sin is ever before me.  
4 Against you, you alone, have I sinned,  
and done what is evil in your sight,  
so that you are justified in your sentence  
and blameless when you pass judgment.  
5 Indeed, I was born guilty,  
a sinner when my mother conceived me.  
6 You desire truth in the inward being;  
therefore teach me wisdom in my secret heart.  
7 Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean;  
wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.  
8 Let me hear joy and gladness;  
let the bones that you have crushed rejoice.  
9 Hide your face from my sins,  
and blot out all my iniquities.  
10 Create in me a clean heart, O God,  
and put a new and right spirit within me.  
11 Do not cast me away from your presence,  
and do not take your holy spirit from me.  
12 Restore to me the joy of your salvation,  
and sustain in me a willing spirit.  
13 Then I will teach transgressors your ways,  
and sinners will return to you.  
14 Deliver me from bloodshed, O God,  
O God of my salvation,  
and my tongue will sing aloud of your deliverance.  
15 O Lord, open my lips,  
and my mouth will declare your praise.  
16 For you have no delight in sacrifice;  
if I were to give a burnt-offering, you would not be pleased.  
17 The sacrifice acceptable to God is a broken spirit;  
a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.

### DEVOTIONAL

Could there be a more perfect prayer for the beginning of Lent? After all, what is this season for other than to remember our transgressions, acknowledge our sin, and ask for a clean heart?

It's an odd season in which we find ourselves: a season of self-denial and repentance. At times this season can be daunting in scope and overwhelmingly humbling. We know that in Christ we have already been forgiven of our sin and yet we still live in a broken world as broken people. We know that we have been brought into this world by God and that we will leave this world by God, all the while failing every day. Even so, we are loved by God.

May we all acknowledge our own sin and the sin of our society. May we understand and witness the brokenness of this world. May we also recognize the goodness of Jesus Christ and the blessing of love and forgiveness as we look forward down this long path to Holy Week.

### PRAYER

Have mercy on me, O God, according to your steadfast love. Be with me this season; give me strength and wisdom as I strive to serve you. Give me humility and create in me a clean heart, O God, through Christ our Lord. Amen.

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 2016

*The Rev. Anita Stuart-Steva '04/'13, pastor at Middle Creek Presbyterian Church, Winnebago, Ill.*

### SCRIPTURE

#### Psalm 27

1 The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
whom shall I fear?  
The LORD is the stronghold of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid?  
2 When evildoers assail me  
to devour my flesh —  
my adversaries and foes —  
they shall stumble and fall.  
3 Though an army encamp against me,  
my heart shall not fear;  
though war rise up against me,  
yet I will be confident.  
4 One thing I asked of the LORD,  
that will I seek after:  
to live in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life,  
to behold the beauty of the LORD,  
and to inquire in his temple.  
5 For he will hide me in his shelter  
in the day of trouble;  
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;  
he will set me high on a rock.



## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 12, 2016

*The Rev. Ben Beres '10, Pastor, Huntsville Presbyterian Church, Huntsville, Ohio*

### SCRIPTURE

#### Ezekiel 18:1-4, 25-32

1 The word of the LORD came to me: 2 What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, "The parents have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge"? 3 As I live, says the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel. 4 Know that all lives are mine; the life of the parent as well as the life of the child is mine: it is only the person who sins that shall die.

25 Yet you say, "The way of the Lord is unfair." Hear now, O house of Israel: Is my way unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair? 26 When the righteous turn away from their righteousness and commit iniquity, they shall die for it; for the iniquity that they have committed they shall die. 27 Again, when the wicked turn away from the wickedness they have committed and do what is lawful and right, they shall save their life. 28 Because they considered and turned away from all the transgressions that they had committed, they shall surely live; they shall not die. 29 Yet the house of Israel says, "The way of the Lord is unfair." O house of Israel, are my ways unfair? Is it not your ways that are unfair?

30 Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, all of you according to your ways, says the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions; otherwise iniquity will be your ruin. 31 Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed against me, and get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? 32 For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, says the Lord GOD. Turn, then, and live.

### DEVOTIONAL

"Setting teeth on edge" is an old phrase, but its meaning is clear. Perhaps you too have had your teeth set on edge by some distasteful drink or fetid foodstuff. But imagine if you bore tortured taste buds because of another's putrid palate. Someone else samples the forbidden fruits, but you bear the consequences. Surely you would name such a system unjust.

The Israelite children do the same by leveling their accusation against the Lord. While the truth of their proverb lies in the communal nature of sin (for no sin is without corporate consequence), the ultimate price tag to wickedness, the wage, as Paul calls it, is death, and under the Old Covenant, "the one who sins is the one who dies." This is "eye-for-an-eye" in action.

6 Now my head is lifted up  
above my enemies all around me,  
and I will offer in his tent  
sacrifices with shouts of joy;  
I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

7 Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud,  
be gracious to me and answer me!

8 "Come," my heart says, "seek his face!"  
Your face, LORD, do I seek.  
9 Do not hide your face from me.

Do not turn your servant away in anger,  
you who have been my help.  
Do not cast me off, do not forsake me,  
O God of my salvation!  
10 If my father and mother forsake me,  
the LORD will take me up.

11 Teach me your way, O LORD,  
and lead me on a level path  
because of my enemies.  
12 Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries,  
for false witnesses have risen against me,  
and they are breathing out violence.

13 I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD  
in the land of the living.  
14 Wait for the LORD;  
be strong, and let your heart take courage;  
wait for the LORD!

### DEVOTIONAL

As we live our lives, we go through rough patches: illness, depression, joblessness, family difficulties.... Some of these patches are brief and others encompass an entire season of our lives. Like the psalmist in Psalm 27 we can feel attacked from all sides by these adversaries. The psalmist reminds himself that his light, his protection, his strength, and his courage come from the Lord. Our God lifts us above our circumstances.

Even though we are under attack we are able to face it knowing that God is with us. We can sing songs of joy in the midst of the sorrow; we can shout praises in the midst of the silence; we can hold our heads high in the midst of being bowed down. As we look into the face of our Lord we are able to look away from our troubles and see the goodness of God's provision for us. Listen to your heart saying "seek God's face!" and know that you are never alone.

### PRAYER

O Lord, your face do I seek. Teach me your way and lead me on a level path that I may see your goodness. I wait for you. Amen.

Thank our God that it doesn't end there! Though it's clear that injustice is found in the hands of us sinners, the Lord allows us to repent, to consider the compounded folly of our ways, and to turn away from them. In echo of David, the Prophet pleads for us to take on a new heart and a new spirit. The ones we wield will only wipe us out.

## PRAYER

Holy One, we are grateful for a season of self-reflection. Help us discover the distaste deep in our souls for the sin in our lives and in our communities. May we purge our lives of our unjust inclinations, and in your Cross and Empty Tomb, may we find hope to live. Amen.

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 13, 2016

*The Rev. Karen Baughman '06, Library Technical Processor, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

## SCRIPTURE

### John 17:20-26

20 "I ask not only on behalf of these, but also on behalf of those who will believe in me through their word, 21 that they may all be one. As you, Father, are in me and I am in you, may they also be in us, so that the world may believe that you have sent me. 22 The glory that you have given me I have given them, so that they may be one, as we are one, 23 I in them and you in me, that they may become completely one, so that the world may know that you have sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me. 24 Father, I desire that those also, whom you have given me, may be with me where I am, to see my glory, which you have given me because you loved me before the foundation of the world.

25 "Righteous Father, the world does not know you, but I know you; and these know that you have sent me. 26 I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them."

## DEVOTIONAL

The time has come. Change is in the air. Jesus has shared his last meal on earth with his disciples and given them his final instructions and reassurances. Jesus will soon lay his burden down and go to the cross.

Before leaving the safety of the upper room, Jesus begins to pray. He prays for his disciples, but more amazingly, he prays for us who will believe in Jesus in the days, years, and centuries to come.

All of us will know change in our lives. For some of us, it will be as monumental as the disciples knew in the death and resurrection of their Teacher and Lord. For others, it will be small changes throughout our lives. Even our churches and our seminary will know change. Throughout all the changes we will know as individuals and as groups, Jesus prayed for us. He prayed for our unity. He prayed that we will know we are loved by God. He prayed we will live in such a way so that the world may know God.

Amazing! Jesus knew we would need God's love and help through it all.

## PRAYER

Loving God, thank you for loving us before we were even born. Thank you for sending your Son to show us your love and how we should live. Be with us through all the changes in our lives. Help us always to reflect your face in all that we do and say and think. In your Son's name we pray. Amen.

## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 14, 2016

*The Rev. Marsha Parrish '12, Spiritual/Bereavement Coordinator, Jameson Hospice in New Castle, Pa., and Pastor, Oak Grove and Mt. Hermon Presbyterian Churches, New Castle, Pa.*

## SCRIPTURE

### Romans 10:8b-13

8b "The word is near you, on your lips and in your heart" (that is, the word of faith that we proclaim); 9 because if you confess with your lips that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For one believes with the heart and so is justified, and one confesses with the mouth and so is saved. 11 The scripture says, "No one who believes in him will be put to shame." 12 For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek; the same Lord is Lord of all and is generous to all who call on him. 13 For, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

## DEVOTIONAL

Today is Valentine's Day, a time when the main focus is on matters of the heart.

In Romans 10:8b-13, we find the word "heart" mentioned three times. The directed heart, in verses 6-7, reminds us that righteousness is by faith in Christ alone. We cannot save ourselves. Verse 8 names the word-filled heart and teaches us that faith in Christ is not unattainable but readily accessible. The believing heart is illustrated in verses 9-11. Saving faith takes inward belief and outward confession. To confess from the mouth and believe in the heart are not two separate

steps to salvation; they must be united. We need a heart of faith because the place of faith is the heart.

Our heart has been created with a truly amazing capability, the capability to believe, and most wonderfully, to believe in God. It is in the heart that faith springs up, dwells, and works. God speaks to our hearts because our heart is not only the center of our physical and psychological life; it is also the center of our spiritual life.

## PRAYER

Lord, in every moment of every day, may our hearts be open to the leading of your Holy Spirit. Amen.

## MONDAY, FEBRUARY 15, 2016

*The Rev. Robin Craig '10, Serving in the Presbytery of the Western Reserve*

## SCRIPTURE

### Genesis 37:1-11

1 Jacob settled in the land where his father had lived as an alien, the land of Canaan. 2 This is the story of the family of Jacob.

Joseph, being seventeen years old, was shepherding the flock with his brothers; he was a helper to the sons of Bilhah and Zilpah, his father's wives; and Joseph brought a bad report of them to their father. 3 Now Israel loved Joseph more than any other of his children, because he was the son of his old age; and he had made him a long robe with sleeves. 4 But when his brothers saw that their father loved him more than all his brothers, they hated him, and could not speak peaceably to him.

5 Once Joseph had a dream, and when he told it to his brothers, they hated him even more. 6 He said to them, "Listen to this dream that I dreamed. 7 There we were, binding sheaves in the field. Suddenly my sheaf rose and stood upright; then your sheaves gathered around it, and bowed down to my sheaf." 8 His brothers said to him, "Are you indeed to reign over us? Are you indeed to have dominion over us?" So they hated him even more because of his dreams and his words.

9 He had another dream, and told it to his brothers, saying, "Look, I have had another dream: the sun, the moon, and eleven stars were bowing down to me." 10 But when he told it to his father and to his brothers, his father rebuked him, and said to him, "What kind of dream is this that you have had? Shall we indeed come, I and your mother and your brothers, and bow to the ground before you?" 11 So his brothers were jealous of him, but his father kept the matter in mind.

## DEVOTIONAL

It's almost impossible to read this passage without hearing the score from *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat*. But once you shake the music from your mind and get past the reality that the coat is not technicolored, nor any particular color at all, but merely "a long robe with sleeves," you can think anew about what it represents.

Designed to delight and to conceal and to protect, that coat instead arouses envy, exposes innocence, and threatens danger. Joseph, coat on his shoulders, can't resist telling his brothers about the dreams portraying a destiny for him which far outshines their own. He has no inkling that his coat and his dreams will ignite jealousy and propel him into circumstances which threaten his security and even his existence.

As we plunge into our Lenten pilgrimage, we might remember Joseph's journey, from favored son to slave to prisoner to gifted advisor to triumphant rescuer of his people. When we first set out, wearing beautiful coats and dreaming about our own ideas of success, challenges which threaten to overwhelm us may await. And yet, God is preparing us with precisely the gifts needed to fulfill dreams and serve others in ways and circumstances we are not yet capable of imagining.

## PRAYER

Gracious God, as we move into the Lenten season, we know that surprises may lie in store for us. Guide us, we pray, through even the harshest of circumstances, so that we might discover the ways in which you call us to serve your people. Amen.

## TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 16, 2016

*The Rev. Ryan Pixton '10, Associate Pastor for Children and Youth, Fox Valley Presbyterian Church, Geneva, Ill.*

## SCRIPTURE

### Mark 1:14-28

14 Now after John was arrested, Jesus came to Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God has come near; repent, and believe in the good news."

16 As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. 17 And Jesus said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fish for people." 18 And immediately they left their nets and followed him. 19 As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. 20 Immediately he called them;

and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men, and followed him.

21 They went to Capernaum; and when the sabbath came, he entered the synagogue and taught. 22 They were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them as one having authority, and not as the scribes. 23 Just then there was in their synagogue a man with an unclean spirit, 24 and he cried out, "What have you to do with us, Jesus of Nazareth? Have you come to destroy us? I know who you are, the Holy One of God." 25 But Jesus rebuked him, saying, "Be silent, and come out of him!" 26 And the unclean spirit, convulsing him and crying with a loud voice, came out of him. 27 They were all amazed, and they kept on asking one another, "What is this? A new teaching—with authority! He commands even the unclean spirits, and they obey him." 28 At once his fame began to spread throughout the surrounding region of Galilee.

## DEVOTIONAL

I love the Common English Bible translation of verse 15. It says, "Now is the time! Here comes God's Kingdom! Change your hearts and lives, and trust this good news." As we go through Lent it should be a time of preparation for what comes at Easter. We should have the urgency that is evident in verse 15. Now is the time. Not in five minutes or whenever it's convenient for us, but now. Our excitement at the ushering of God's Kingdom into the here and now changes our hearts and lives as we trust this good news.

We should continually ask, "What is God doing in my life and in the lives of those around me? Where and how is God acting?" When we get the answer to the question, we need to respond with the same urgency and excitement that we read about in verse 15. God has great things in store for us. But it takes willingness to keep our eyes open, drop our nets, and follow God even when strange things happen.

## PRAYER

Faithful God, thank you for your faithfulness to me when I have been unfaithful, doing things I should not do and leaving undone things I should do. Prepare my heart and mind during this season of Lent, so that I am ready for your arrival to earth. Help me not only to pray "Come Lord Jesus," but also to be ready to follow you when you show up and want to use me to build your Kingdom here on earth as it is in heaven. In Jesus Christ's name, Amen.

## WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 17, 2016

*The Rev. Keith McIlwain '00, Pastor, Slippery Rock United Methodist Church, Slippery Rock, Pa.*

## SCRIPTURE

### Genesis 37:25-35

25 Then they sat down to eat; and looking up they saw a caravan of Ishmaelites coming from Gilead, with their camels carrying gum, balm, and resin, on their way to carry it down to Egypt. 26 Then Judah said to his brothers, "What profit is it if we kill our brother and conceal his blood? 27 Come, let us sell him to the Ishmaelites, and not lay our hands on him, for he is our brother, our own flesh." And his brothers agreed. 28 When some Midianite traders passed by, they drew Joseph up, lifting him out of the pit, and sold him to the Ishmaelites for twenty pieces of silver. And they took Joseph to Egypt.

29 When Reuben returned to the pit and saw that Joseph was not in the pit, he tore his clothes. 30 He returned to his brothers, and said, "The boy is gone; and I, where can I turn?" 31 Then they took Joseph's robe, slaughtered a goat, and dipped the robe in the blood. 32 They had the long robe with sleeves taken to their father, and they said, "This we have found; see now whether it is your son's robe or not." 33 He recognized it, and said, "It is my son's robe! A wild animal has devoured him; Joseph is without doubt torn to pieces." 34 Then Jacob tore his garments, and put sackcloth on his loins, and mourned for his son many days. 35 All his sons and all his daughters sought to comfort him; but he refused to be comforted, and said, "No, I shall go down to Sheol to my son, mourning." Thus his father bewailed him. 36 Meanwhile the Midianites had sold him in Egypt to Potiphar, one of Pharaoh's officials, the captain of the guard.

## DEVOTIONAL

Long centuries have passed since the sons of Jacob sold Joseph into slavery. It seems to us an act of the highest cruelty to sell one's own brother into slavery and almost certain death to remove an annoyance or even to eliminate a rival. Knowing that ultimately God uses Joseph's misery to save Israel helps to lessen our shock, to be sure, but perhaps in this season of penitent reflection we should not be too quick to move on from this moment.

What must have been the dark clouds of sin and alienation in the hearts of the sons of Jacob that killing or selling their brother seemed at all acceptable? How far can envy

or ambition drive a person? How deep into selfishness and shadow must one crawl to find this act in any way tolerable?

Lest we condemn Judah and his brothers too quickly, we ought to ask ourselves if indeed we have ever "sold out" a brother or sister for convenience, comfort, or profit. Have we ever avoided the cries of the hurting or the lost because it seems far easier to focus on another project or ministry, even a worthwhile one? Have we ever ignored the demands of

faithful discipleship because obedience is difficult in a culture which doesn't know the Holy One of Israel . . . and, in so doing, "sold out" Jesus himself?

The act of Judah and his brothers is barbaric and easy to denounce. Perhaps a more fruitful response would be to ponder prayerfully how we as disciples and as the Body of Christ have acted similarly when faced with challenging moments of decision.

## PRAYER

Eternal God, who finds a way for the broken even in the midst of chaos, forgive us where we have failed to seek obedience, and, by the Spirit's power, grant us your strength and a deep desire for faithfulness, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 18, 2016

*Ellen Little, Library Circulation Supervisor, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

## SCRIPTURE

### Psalm 27

1 The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
whom shall I fear?  
The LORD is the stronghold of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When evildoers assail me  
to devour my flesh —  
my adversaries and foes —  
they shall stumble and fall.

3 Though an army encamp against me,  
my heart shall not fear;  
though war rise up against me,  
yet I will be confident.

4 One thing I asked of the LORD,  
that will I seek after:  
to live in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life,

to behold the beauty of the LORD,  
and to inquire in his temple.

5 For he will hide me in his shelter  
in the day of trouble;  
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;  
he will set me high on a rock.

6 Now my head is lifted up  
above my enemies all around me,  
and I will offer in his tent  
sacrifices with shouts of joy;  
I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

7 Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud,  
be gracious to me and answer me!

8 "Come," my heart says, "seek his face!"  
Your face, LORD, do I seek.  
9 Do not hide your face from me.

Do not turn your servant away in anger,  
you who have been my help.  
Do not cast me off, do not forsake me,  
O God of my salvation!  
10 If my father and mother forsake me,  
the LORD will take me up.

11 Teach me your way, O LORD,  
and lead me on a level path  
because of my enemies.  
12 Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries,  
for false witnesses have risen against me,  
and they are breathing out violence.

13 I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD  
in the land of the living.  
14 Wait for the LORD;  
be strong, and let your heart take courage;  
wait for the LORD!

## DEVOTIONAL

The world seems to be full of things we could or do fear, from seemingly minor things (such as spiders, the dark, or snakes) to the overwhelming things (such as the loss of a loved one, terrorism, cancer, or death). And yet this Psalm says that we need not be afraid, because the Lord is our refuge. Verse 3 says that the Psalmist is confident in his God even when war is waged against him.

How are we to develop this confidence? At times when life seems to be more than we can handle, how can we trust that God will be with us? Read verse 14 again. We are to wait for the Lord. Spend time this Lenten season developing your relationship with our Lord so that you know His voice and can learn to wait for Him. Wait, for He died and rose and will come again. Wait, for He (and He alone) will bring you peace. Wait.

## PRAYER

Dear Lord, thank you for loving us more than we can ever imagine. Help us to know You better, to trust You more, to live with the confidence that You are always with us even to



the end of the age. May we bring You glory in all that we do and say in this most holy season. Amen.

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2016

*Hallie Isadore, Admissions Office Manager, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

### SCRIPTURE

#### Psalm 22

1 My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?  
Why are you so far from helping me, from the words of my groaning?

2 O my God, I cry by day, but you do not answer; and by night, but find no rest.

3 Yet you are holy,  
enthroned on the praises of Israel.

4 In you our ancestors trusted;  
they trusted, and you delivered them.

5 To you they cried, and were saved; in you they trusted, and were not put to shame.

6 But I am a worm, and not human;  
scorned by others, and despised by the people.

7 All who see me mock at me;  
they make mouths at me, they shake their heads;

8 "Commit your cause to the LORD; let him deliver—  
let him rescue the one in whom he delights!"

9 Yet it was you who took me from the womb;  
you kept me safe on my mother's breast.

10 On you I was cast from my birth,  
and since my mother bore me you have been my God.

11 Do not be far from me,  
for trouble is near and there is no one to help.

12 Many bulls encircle me,  
strong bulls of Bashan surround me;  
13 they open wide their mouths at me,  
like a ravening and roaring lion.

14 I am poured out like water,  
and all my bones are out of joint;  
my heart is like wax;  
it is melted within my breast;  
15 my mouth is dried up like a potsherd,

and my tongue sticks to my jaws;  
you lay me in the dust of death.

16 For dogs are all around me;  
a company of evildoers encircles me.  
My hands and feet have shriveled;

17 I can count all my bones.

They stare and gloat over me;

18 they divide my clothes among themselves,  
and for my clothing they cast lots.

19 But you, O LORD, do not be far away!

O my help, come quickly to my aid!

20 Deliver my soul from the sword,  
life from the power of the dog!

21 Save me from the mouth of the lion!

From the horns of the wild oxen you have rescued me.

22 I will tell of your name to my brothers and sisters;  
in the midst of the congregation I will praise you:

23 You who fear the LORD, praise him!

All you offspring of Jacob, glorify him;

stand in awe of him, all you offspring of Israel!

24 For he did not despise or abhor  
the affliction of the afflicted;

he did not hide his face from me,

but heard when I cried to him.

25 From you comes my praise in the great congregation;  
my vows I will pay before those who fear him.

26 The poor shall eat and be satisfied;

those who seek him shall praise the LORD.

May your hearts live forever!

27 All the ends of the earth shall remember  
and turn to the LORD;  
and all the families of the nations  
shall worship before him.

28 For dominion belongs to the LORD,  
and he rules over the nations.

29 To him, indeed, shall all who sleep in the earth bow down;  
before him shall bow all who go down to the dust,  
and I shall live for him.

30 Posterity will serve him;

future generations will be told about the Lord,

31 and proclaim his deliverance to a people yet unborn,  
saying that he has done it.

### DEVOTIONAL

In reading Psalm 22, we are reminded that from the beginning of our time on this earth, God has pursued, cared for, and treasured His creation. As David reflects in verse 9, we are brought into this world as part of God's beloved. From the beginning of our time on this earth, we are participating



in this story (verse 10), even though sometimes in life it may feel like all hope is lost, as David points out (verses 12-18). But God is near, and our strength comes from Him (verse 19). God listens to us (verse 24) and gives us the strength to be renewed.

During the season of Lent, we celebrate Jesus' resurrection—his life-giving, renewing resurrection. It is because of this gift that all of creation can go on to sing God's praise (verses 25-31). During this season of reflection, prayer, and self-examination, may we live into that story even when we do not know what is going on.

## PRAYER

O God of all hope, may we be thankful for this life, however brief it is. Help us to live in a way that speaks to the truth that you have pursued and treasured us since the beginning of time. Teach us to draw near to you, to live lives that sing your praise both verbally and through action in caring for those with whom we have the privilege of sharing this life. Thank you Lord Jesus for your freeing, life-giving, finished work on the cross. Amen.

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 2016

*Brad Rito '15, Serving with Young Adult Volunteers, New Orleans, La.*

## SCRIPTURE

### Psalm 143

1 Hear my prayer, O LORD;  
give ear to my supplications in your faithfulness;  
answer me in your righteousness.

2 Do not enter into judgment with your servant,  
for no one living is righteous before you.

3 For the enemy has pursued me,  
crushing my life to the ground,  
making me sit in darkness like those long dead.

4 Therefore my spirit faints within me;  
my heart within me is appalled.

5 I remember the days of old,  
I think about all your deeds,  
I meditate on the works of your hands.

6 I stretch out my hands to you;  
my soul thirsts for you like a parched land.

7 Answer me quickly, O LORD;  
my spirit fails.

Do not hide your face from me,  
or I shall be like those who go down to the Pit.

8 Let me hear of your steadfast love in the morning,

for in you I put my trust.  
Teach me the way I should go,  
for to you I lift up my soul.

9 Save me, O LORD, from my enemies;  
I have fled to you for refuge.

10 Teach me to do your will,  
for you are my God.

Let your good spirit lead me  
on a level path.

11 For your name's sake, O LORD, preserve my life.

In your righteousness bring me out of trouble.

12 In your steadfast love cut off my enemies,  
and destroy all my adversaries,  
for I am your servant.

## DEVOTIONAL

"I don't want to bother God with something so menial." This is a thought many of us have had when we hit a rough patch on the path God has set before us. We wonder whether or not asking God for help is appropriate, whether or not God would even answer our cries.

But it is in these moments that one must remember that Jesus, the greatest person ever to live, the Son of the Most High, cried out from the cross, "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?" In much the same way, we all experience trouble, hardship, feelings of loneliness or abandonment—however you want to put it. If Jesus cried out in such times, why do we question the power such cries can have in our lives? We are humans, perfectly and wonderfully made in God's image, but imperfect by nature. If we were perfect, we wouldn't face these adversities. We as God's children must therefore always remember that our loving Father is ever-present in our lives, by our sides, walking the path with us, and knows our pains and our need for God in our lives. We are never forsaken, and nothing is inappropriate to lift up to God.

## PRAYER

Almighty God, we thank you for your ceaseless presence at our side and for your unwavering love as expressed through your Son, Jesus Christ. We must admit though, Lord, that we are not always the quickest to turn to you in our times of need. We think some things are too menial or insignificant for someone as great as you to deal with. Help us never to question your power or your involvement in even the most minute affairs of this world. You hear our prayers, and you most graciously answer them, more than we could ever earn on our own. We thank you and pray all of this in your name, Father, through your Son, Jesus Christ, and by the power of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 21, 2016

*Britney Vokish, Senior M.Div. Student at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

### SCRIPTURE

#### Psalm 27

1 The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
whom shall I fear?  
The LORD is the stronghold of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When evildoers assail me  
to devour my flesh —  
my adversaries and foes —  
they shall stumble and fall.

3 Though an army encamp against me,  
my heart shall not fear;  
though war rise up against me,  
yet I will be confident.

4 One thing I asked of the LORD,  
that will I seek after:  
to live in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life,  
to behold the beauty of the LORD,  
and to inquire in his temple.

5 For he will hide me in his shelter  
in the day of trouble;  
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;  
he will set me high on a rock.

6 Now my head is lifted up  
above my enemies all around me,  
and I will offer in his tent  
sacrifices with shouts of joy;  
I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

7 Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud,  
be gracious to me and answer me!

8 "Come," my heart says, "seek his face!"  
Your face, LORD, do I seek.

9 Do not hide your face from me.

Do not turn your servant away in anger,  
you who have been my help.  
Do not cast me off, do not forsake me,  
O God of my salvation!

10 If my father and mother forsake me,  
the LORD will take me up.

11 Teach me your way, O LORD,  
and lead me on a level path  
because of my enemies.

12 Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries,  
for false witnesses have risen against me,  
and they are breathing out violence.

13 I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD  
in the land of the living.

14 Wait for the LORD;  
be strong, and let your heart take courage;  
wait for the LORD!

### DEVOTIONAL

The Lord is righteous, merciful, strong, and a very present help in time of trouble. So, why do we still fear?

Fear is a very real thing to all of us. For some of us those fears are small—public speaking or spiders, for example. For others, fear consumes our whole day—a health concern that became a very real and debilitating disease, or the fear of losing a child too soon because of an addiction he or she cannot overcome. But the Psalmist in Psalm 27 reminds us that fear is only the result of not putting our full trust in the One who created everything. We fear when we put our faith solely in ourselves. We are reminded that the Lord is in control. In this sometimes uncertain, violent, and anxious world, still be confident in this: The Lord who created you and calls you has already made a pathway to salvation for you.

Fully trusting is hard to do, so sometime today, as you are praying, write down all of your fears and speak them to the Lord.

### PRAYER

Merciful God, you are my light and my salvation. You are the stronghold of my life. So I come before you now and lift up to you every fear and anxiety I have. I need your help. Trouble surrounds me, but I am confident in you, God, because you have given your Son to us as a hope and a sign of our salvation. Amen.

## MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22, 2016

*Keith Sandell, Senior M.Div. Student at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

### SCRIPTURE

#### Mark 3:7-19a

7 Jesus departed with his disciples to the sea, and a great multitude from Galilee followed him; 8 hearing all that he

was doing, they came to him in great numbers from Judea, Jerusalem, Idumea, beyond the Jordan, and the region around Tyre and Sidon. 9 He told his disciples to have a boat ready for him because of the crowd, so that they would not crush him; 10 for he had cured many, so that all who had diseases pressed upon him to touch him. 11 Whenever the unclean spirits saw him, they fell down before him and shouted, "You are the Son of God!" 12 But he sternly ordered them not to make him known.

13 He went up the mountain and called to him those whom he wanted, and they came to him. 14 And he appointed twelve, whom he also named apostles, to be with him, and to be sent out to proclaim the message, 15 and to have authority to cast out demons. 16 So he appointed the twelve: Simon (to whom he gave the name Peter); 17 James son of Zebedee and John the brother of James (to whom he gave the name Boanerges, that is, Sons of Thunder); 18 and Andrew, and Philip, and Bartholomew, and Matthew, and Thomas, and James son of Alphaeus, and Thaddaeus, and Simon the Cananaean, 19 and Judas Iscariot, who betrayed him.

## DEVOTIONAL

I'm sure at some point the disciples wondered why they were following Jesus. They encountered uncomfortable situations, such as rubbing shoulders with outsiders, living life on the road away from family and friends, facing opposition from the religious elite, and having their master turned over to the cross. The disciples probably thought to themselves during these times, Why did I agree to this life? I imagine they were sustained during these times by returning to Jesus' call to them as described in Mark 3. Remembering Jesus' call reminded them why they agreed.

Perhaps now in this dreary season you might wonder about your ministry. Perhaps the hard times of ministry have made you question why you agreed to a life of ministry. Or perhaps the mundane seasons of session meetings and capital campaigns have left you wondering whether this is the life for you. It is during these times when we must remember Jesus' call to us. The life of ministry is not always filled with miracles and Easter—sometimes it's filled with February and finals. But in returning to our call, we can gain renewed purpose even in the cold and dreary times.

## PRAYER

Lord and Sustainer, we thank you that you are a God who hears our prayers. We thank you that you are a God who has spoken into our lives with purpose and peace. We ask, Lord, that during the difficult times in ministry you remind us of our call. In Christ's name we pray, Amen.

## TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 23, 2016

*Christian Brooks, Middler M.Div. Student at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

## SCRIPTURE

### 1 Corinthians 5:1-8

1 It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not found even among pagans; for a man is living with his father's wife. 2 And you are arrogant! Should you not rather have mourned, so that he who has done this would have been removed from among you?

3 For though absent in body, I am present in spirit; and as if present I have already pronounced judgment 4 in the name of the Lord Jesus on the man who has done such a thing. When you are assembled, and my spirit is present with the power of our Lord Jesus, 5 you are to hand this man over to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.

6 Your boasting is not a good thing. Do you not know that a little yeast leavens the whole batch of dough? 7 Clean out the old yeast so that you may be a new batch, as you really are unleavened. For our paschal lamb, Christ, has been sacrificed. 8 Therefore, let us celebrate the festival, not with the old yeast, the yeast of malice and evil, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth.

## DEVOTIONAL

This time of fasting is a time to examine ourselves. Much like the Corinthians, as we go through life we pick up habits and desires that are not pleasing to God. Satan is crafty. He tries many ways to capture our attention and cause us to sin. Sometimes we do not realize that we are giving in to his advances. So during this time of fasting, examine your life. Observe any areas where you have allowed sin to enter, and submit those areas to God. For just as a little leaven spreads and causes dough to rise, so does a little sin spread and cause the believer to fall. During this Lenten season, set aside the distracting things that have been capturing your attention and seek God.

## PRAYER

Lord, I ask you to forgive me for the sin that I have committed. Reveal to me anything in my life that is not pleasing to you. Help me to submit those areas of my life to you. Give me the strength to resist the advances of Satan and overcome temptation. I am overjoyed for the redemption that I have because of the risen Savior. Lord, I thank you for the grace and mercy that you pour out on me every day. God, help me to be more like you. Amen.

## WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 24, 2016

*Connie Tappy, Senior Writer, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

### SCRIPTURE

#### Psalm 147:1-11

1 Praise the Lord!  
How good it is to sing praises to our God;  
for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.  
2 The Lord builds up Jerusalem;  
he gathers the outcasts of Israel.  
3 He heals the brokenhearted,  
and binds up their wounds.  
4 He determines the number of the stars;  
he gives to all of them their names.  
5 Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;  
his understanding is beyond measure.  
6 The Lord lifts up the downtrodden;  
he casts the wicked to the ground.  
7 Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving;  
make melody to our God on the lyre.  
8 He covers the heavens with clouds,  
prepares rain for the earth,  
makes grass grow on the hills.  
9 He gives to the animals their food,  
and to the young ravens when they cry.  
10 His delight is not in the strength of the horse,  
nor his pleasure in the speed of a runner;  
11 but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him,  
in those who hope in his steadfast love.

### DEVOTIONAL

Reverence for the Lord. Expectant trust in God's love. These qualities, not self-sufficient strength, are what make a person pleasing to God, says the Psalmist (vv. 10-11). They are qualities that take God seriously. They exhibit true humility. They demonstrate dependence on the Lord and recognition of God's unwavering character. And yet . . .

In Mark's parable of the sower (4:1-20), Jesus himself makes it clear that a response of obedience to God's love is a necessary component of authentic discipleship. Insufficient is the mere hearing of the gospel—even the hearing of it joyfully. Only by soaking it in, growing deep roots, weeding out distractions, and growing up in the gospel can we become abundant fruit-bearers of it.

And who produces this growth, this fruit—the “strength of the horse” or the “legs of a man” (Ps. 147:10)? No! “Neither he who plants nor he who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth” (1 Cor. 3:7).

Reverence for the Lord. Expectant trust in God's love. These are the qualities that make a person pleasing to God—and productive for God's work in the world.

### PRAYER

O Lord God in heaven and here present with us, please grant that in the midst of each moment we would humble ourselves to kneel before your supremacy, lean on your loving kindness, and respond with joyful obedience to your faithfulness toward those who love you—for the sake of your matchless Name. Amen.

## THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2016

*The Rev. Dr. James Durlesser, Lecturer in Biblical Languages, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

### SCRIPTURE

#### Psalm 126

1 When the LORD restored the fortunes of Zion,  
we were like those who dream.  
2 Then our mouth was filled with laughter,  
and our tongue with shouts of joy;  
then it was said among the nations,  
“The LORD has done great things for them.”  
3 The LORD has done great things for us,  
and we rejoiced.  
4 Restore our fortunes, O LORD,  
like the watercourses in the Negeb.  
5 May those who sow in tears  
reap with shouts of joy.  
6 Those who go out weeping,  
bearing the seed for sowing,  
shall come home with shouts of joy,  
carrying their sheaves.

### DEVOTIONAL

Psalm 126 is one of the Psalms of Ascents (Psalms 120 through 134). It is often thought that the Psalms of Ascents were sung by the Israelites as they were on pilgrimage to Jerusalem, as they were “going up,” as they were “ascending,” the hill of Zion to worship at the Temple.

The season of Lent is a pilgrimage, a spiritual journey to Jerusalem, a journey to the Cross of Christ. Psalm 126 invites us to think about joy during our Lenten pilgrimage. Verses 1-3 speak of the joy that the people of God have because of what God has already done. Verses 4-6 anticipate the joy that the people of God will have because of what God will do in the future.

On our Lenten journey, we rejoice when we think about what God has already done for us. And we look forward to the ways in which God is going to continue to work in our lives. We see the darkness of Good Friday. But beyond Good Friday is Easter, when the tears of mourning of which the Psalmist speaks will become a harvest of joy.



## PRAYER

LORD, we rejoice in the great things you have done for us. And we rejoice when we think about all the things that you are going to do for us in the future. Be with us during these solemn days of Lenten pilgrimage. May our tears of mourning become a harvest of joy. Amen.

## FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 26, 2016

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

## SCRIPTURE

### Mark 4:35-41

35 On that day, when evening had come, he said to them, "Let us go across to the other side." 36 And leaving the crowd behind, they took him with them in the boat, just as he was. Other boats were with him. 37 A great windstorm arose, and the waves beat into the boat, so that the boat was already being swamped. 38 But he was in the stern, asleep on the cushion; and they woke him up and said to him, "Teacher, do you not care that we are perishing?" 39 He woke up and rebuked the wind, and said to the sea, "Peace! Be still!" Then the wind ceased, and there was a dead calm. 40 He said to them, "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" 41 And they were filled with great awe and said to one another, "Who then is this, that even the wind and the sea obey him?"

## DEVOTIONAL

As Christians, we affirm that we can learn about the nature of God by looking at the life and ministry of Jesus. In today's reading, Jesus' words and actions make powerful claims about who God is. First, we learn that while the waves swamped the boat, Jesus slept. The disciples think this means that Jesus doesn't care about them. Instead, Jesus shows us that God brings peace and rest even in the midst of the world's chaos. Our God is a firm foundation; God is our refuge and strength (Ps. 46).

Then, when Jesus perceives his disciples' distress, he commands the wind and the waves, "Peace! Be still!" From this we learn that our God brings comfort; when we cry out to God, God will be present with us. Yet our God is also a God of challenge, as we see from Jesus' response after the storm has calmed: "Why are you afraid? Have you still no faith?" While God comforts us, God does not wish us to remain mired in despair. Instead, God calls us forth from our anxiety and fear, inviting us to trust God completely, no matter what storms may rage around us.

## PRAYER

Gracious God, in this season of Lent, help us to learn to listen for your voice in the midst of the storm. Even when it seems to us that you are sleeping, or that you are indifferent to our plight, remind us that you are always near, ready to calm the chaos that swirls around and within us. Most of all, give us the strength and courage to respond when we hear you calling us beyond our fears to follow wherever you may lead. Amen.

## SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2016

*Anne Malone, Registrar, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

## SCRIPTURE

### Psalms 31

1 In you, O LORD, I seek refuge;  
do not let me ever be put to shame;  
in your righteousness deliver me.  
2 Incline your ear to me;  
rescue me speedily.  
Be a rock of refuge for me,  
a strong fortress to save me.  
3 You are indeed my rock and my fortress;  
for your name's sake lead me and guide me,  
4 take me out of the net that is hidden for me,  
for you are my refuge.  
5 Into your hand I commit my spirit;  
you have redeemed me, O LORD, faithful God.  
6 You hate those who pay regard to worthless idols,  
but I trust in the LORD.  
7 I will exult and rejoice in your steadfast love,  
because you have seen my affliction;  
you have taken heed of my adversities,  
8 and have not delivered me into the hand of the enemy;  
you have set my feet in a broad place.  
9 Be gracious to me, O LORD, for I am in distress;  
my eye wastes away from grief,  
my soul and body also.  
10 For my life is spent with sorrow,  
and my years with sighing;  
my strength fails because of my misery,  
and my bones waste away.  
11 I am the scorn of all my adversaries,  
a horror to my neighbors,  
an object of dread to my acquaintances;  
those who see me in the street flee from me.  
12 I have passed out of mind like one who is dead;  
I have become like a broken vessel.  
13 For I hear the whispering of many—  
terror all around!—  
as they scheme together against me,  
as they plot to take my life.

14 But I trust in you, O LORD;  
I say, "You are my God."  
15 My times are in your hand;  
deliver me from the hand of my enemies and persecutors.  
16 Let your face shine upon your servant;  
save me in your steadfast love.  
17 Do not let me be put to shame, O LORD,  
for I call on you;  
let the wicked be put to shame;  
let them go dumbfounded to Sheol.  
18 Let the lying lips be stilled  
that speak insolently against the righteous  
with pride and contempt.  
19 O how abundant is your goodness  
that you have laid up for those who fear you,  
and accomplished for those who take refuge in you,  
in the sight of everyone!  
20 In the shelter of your presence you hide them  
from human plots;  
you hold them safe under your shelter  
from contentious tongues.  
21 Blessed be the LORD,  
for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me  
when I was beset as a city under siege.  
22 I had said in my alarm,  
"I am driven far from your sight."  
But you heard my supplications  
when I cried out to you for help.  
23 Love the LORD, all you his saints.  
The LORD preserves the faithful,  
but abundantly repays the one who acts haughtily.  
24 Be strong, and let your heart take courage,  
all you who wait for the LORD.

## DEVOTIONAL

I have a small pocket Bible that I keep in my desk drawer in my office. I like to mark verses or passages that are significant to me. While I was reading this Psalm and deciding which lectionary reading I would focus on for this devotional, I noticed that verses 9 and 21 are aligned next to each other in their respective columns. I drew a box around each verse and an arrow across from one verse to the other looking something like this:

9 Be gracious to me, O LORD for I am in distress	→	21 Blessed be the LORD, for he has wondrously shown his steadfast love to me ...
---	---	---

I don't recall why I marked these verses as such, but as I reflect on them now, I am struck by how descriptive they are of how I journey through the Lenten season. I begin in a place of "distress," because I have fallen short yet again when it comes to maintaining spiritual disciplines, and then journey toward blessing the Lord for his steadfast love and faithfulness as I strive to deepen my relationship with God.

For me, the Lenten season is not so much a time to "give up" something, but instead to refocus and establish consistency again in places where I have gone off track. In this passage in my Bible, I also have a box drawn around the final verse of the Psalm: Be strong, and let your heart take courage, all you who wait for the LORD. This is my encouragement during the rest of the year—to take courage when I'm distressed about falling short again.

## PRAYER

Almighty God, help us all to be strong and take courage as we examine our lives during this Lenten season to see how we may draw into a closer and deeper relationship with you. Amen.

## SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 28, 2016

*Nancy Hammond, Administrative Assistant to the Vice President for Advancement, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

## SCRIPTURE

### Psalm 84

1 How lovely is your dwelling place,  
O LORD of hosts!  
2 My soul longs, indeed it faints  
for the courts of the LORD;  
my heart and my flesh sing for joy  
to the living God.  
3 Even the sparrow finds a home,  
and the swallow a nest for herself,  
where she may lay her young,  
at your altars, O LORD of hosts,  
my King and my God.  
4 Happy are those who live in your house,  
ever singing your praise.  
5 Happy are those whose strength is in you,  
in whose heart are the highways to Zion.  
6 As they go through the valley of Baca  
they make it a place of springs;  
the early rain also covers it with pools.  
7 They go from strength to strength;  
the God of gods will be seen in Zion.  
8 O LORD God of hosts, hear my prayer;  
give ear, O God of Jacob!  
9 Behold our shield, O God;  
look on the face of your anointed.  
10 For a day in your courts is better  
than a thousand elsewhere.  
I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God  
than live in the tents of wickedness.  
11 For the LORD God is a sun and shield;  
he bestows favor and honor.  
No good thing does the LORD withhold

from those who walk uprightly.  
12 O LORD of hosts,  
happy is everyone who trusts in you.

## DEVOTIONAL

I am reminded today of a friend's story about sitting in a parking lot waiting for an extraordinarily crucial business meeting to begin. Darting around the shrubbery separating the lot from the cars on Main Street, a grey squirrel passed his car window with a huge acorn in its mouth, actively hunting for a place to bury its treasure.

It found the perfect place and dug a huge hole as its underground safe. Then it carefully dragged new dirt over the place, rearranged the soil, patted it down, eyed its work, made a few adjustments, and scampered away for another nugget.

It dawned on my friend that this squirrel ritual of finding, burying, hiding, covering, patting, and evaluating had been going on for thousands of years . . . an unbroken history of squirrel work in the Lord God's creation. Suddenly my friend's vital work for the day didn't seem all that important.

The author of Psalm 84, verse 3, had exactly the same experience some 3,000 years ago, as he watched swallows and sparrows flit in and out of a man-made altar wherein they no doubt nested. He too longed to lay down his burden and place himself in the hands of a loving Lord God.

Whether sparrows or swallows or squirrels . . . or each of us in this hectic world . . . *Happy are those this Lenten Season who live in the Lord's house, ever singing Your praise.*

## PRAYER

God of hosts, even in this time of Lent our hearts and flesh sing for joy to you, the living God. Amen.

## MONDAY, FEBRUARY 29, 2016

*Alina Kanaski, Senior M.Div. Student at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

## SCRIPTURE

### Genesis 44:18-34

18 Then Judah stepped up to him and said, "O my lord, let your servant please speak a word in my lord's ears, and do not be angry with your servant; for you are like Pharaoh himself. 19 My lord asked his servants, saying, 'Have you a father or a brother?' 20 And we said to my lord, 'We have a father, an old man, and a young brother, the child of his old age. His brother is dead; he alone is left of his mother's

children, and his father loves him.' 21 Then you said to your servants, 'Bring him down to me, so that I may set my eyes on him.' 22 We said to my lord, 'The boy cannot leave his father, for if he should leave his father, his father would die.' 23 Then you said to your servants, 'Unless your youngest brother comes down with you, you shall see my face no more.' 24 When we went back to your servant my father we told him the words of my lord. 25 And when our father said, 'Go again, buy us a little food,' 26 we said, 'We cannot go down. Only if our youngest brother goes with us, will we go down; for we cannot see the man's face unless our youngest brother is with us.' 27 Then your servant my father said to us, 'You know that my wife bore me two sons; 28 one left me, and I said, Surely he has been torn to pieces; and I have never seen him since. 29 If you take this one also from me, and harm comes to him, you will bring down my gray hairs in sorrow to Sheol.' 30 Now therefore, when I come to your servant my father and the boy is not with us, then, as his life is bound up in the boy's life, 31 when he sees that the boy is not with us, he will die; and your servants will bring down the gray hairs of your servant our father with sorrow to Sheol. 32 For your servant became surety for the boy to my father, saying, 'If I do not bring him back to you, then I will bear the blame in the sight of my father all my life.' 33 Now therefore, please let your servant remain as a slave to my lord in place of the boy; and let the boy go back with his brothers. 34 For how can I go back to my father if the boy is not with me? I fear to see the suffering that would come upon my father."

## DEVOTIONAL

This passage is from the middle of a story, one that is about Joseph but also about so many others. Take Judah, the speaker here: he was one of Joseph's older brothers—a son of Leah and the brother who suggested selling Joseph into slavery.

Yet here he is, offering himself as Joseph's slave to save his younger brother Benjamin from the same fate. Benjamin is Rachel's other son, so beloved by their father that Jacob didn't want to let Benjamin go to Egypt. He's not too different from Joseph, but still Judah offers his life in exchange for Benjamin's. Joseph isn't the only one who's changed as this story has unfolded.

Judah has offered himself as a surety for his brother Benjamin. Judah is responsible for Benjamin in their father's eyes.

As I read this passage, I remember another Son—a "son" of Judah and one who also offered Himself for another. He also took on the responsibility for not just one, but for many, by giving His life in order to save them. He offered Himself not into slavery but into death. There is no sordid history behind Jesus' sacrifice—not on God's end. Yet there is the same love, the same desperate desire to save. God's love, enacted in and through Jesus, is powerful, proven, and acted out through His life, His death, and His resurrection. As we sit in this period

of waiting, of remembering the pain and the darkness, let us also remember God's love, which Jesus enacted and which is the source of our hope.

## PRAYER

God, thank You for Your love, made visible and physical in Jesus Christ. Help us to see its echoes all around us, whether in the Bible, in the people around us, or in the small moments of life. In Your name we pray, Amen.

## TUESDAY, MARCH 1, 2016

*Katie Galicic, Middler M.A. Student and Church Planting Certificate Candidate at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

## SCRIPTURE

### Psalm 25

1 To you, O LORD, I lift up my soul.  
2 O my God, in you I trust;  
do not let me be put to shame;  
do not let my enemies exult over me.  
3 Do not let those who wait for you be put to shame;  
let them be ashamed who are wantonly treacherous.  
4 Make me to know your ways, O LORD;  
teach me your paths.  
5 Lead me in your truth, and teach me,  
for you are the God of my salvation;  
for you I wait all day long.  
6 Be mindful of your mercy, O LORD, and of your steadfast love,  
for they have been from of old.  
7 Do not remember the sins of my youth or my transgressions;  
according to your steadfast love remember me,  
for your goodness' sake, O LORD!  
8 Good and upright is the LORD;  
therefore he instructs sinners in the way.  
9 He leads the humble in what is right,  
and teaches the humble his way.  
10 All the paths of the LORD are steadfast love and faithfulness,  
for those who keep his covenant and his decrees.  
11 For your name's sake, O LORD,  
pardon my guilt, for it is great.  
12 Who are they that fear the LORD?  
He will teach them the way that they should choose.  
13 They will abide in prosperity,  
and their children shall possess the land.  
14 The friendship of the LORD is for those who fear him,  
and he makes his covenant known to them.  
15 My eyes are ever toward the LORD,  
for he will pluck my feet out of the net.

16 Turn to me and be gracious to me,  
for I am lonely and afflicted.  
17 Relieve the troubles of my heart,  
and bring me out of my distress.  
18 Consider my affliction and my trouble,  
and forgive all my sins.  
19 Consider how many are my foes,  
and with what violent hatred they hate me.  
20 O guard my life, and deliver me;  
do not let me be put to shame, for I take refuge in you.  
21 May integrity and uprightness preserve me,  
for I wait for you.  
22 Redeem Israel, O God,  
out of all its troubles.

## DEVOTIONAL

At the end of the day, when watching the evening news or checking the notifications on my phone, I have often found myself feeling great loss in the pain and suffering so readily displayed in our "news" outlets. I see updates about political candidates demeaning and criticizing people of different cultures and heritages, I read sharp judgment and hate exchanged between those in disagreement with each other, and I hear about growing violence and countless lives lost. My soul aches. I feel lonely and afflicted as the growing distress of the world weighs down my heart. All I can taste and feel is the salty brine and harsh rub of sin. I imagine the despair that many of Jesus' followers must have felt in the hours and days following his death, all hope lost. My hope lost.

I look to the Psalms and am reminded to lift my soul to the Lord and put my trust in God. I can rest in the comfort of the Lord's steadfast love for me and find new hope, my old sin and pain washed away.

## PRAYER

Holy God, through desolate deserts, turbulent seas, and stormy nights you have comforted your people. In the midst of persecution, violence, and sin your steadfast love has sustained us. You have washed away our sins through the sacrifice of your son. Lord, be with us in our pain and sorrow, and teach us your paths. We lift up our souls to you in trust and thanksgiving. Amen.



## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 2, 2016

*The Rev. Charissa Clark Howe '14, Th.M. Student at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary and Pastor, Liberty Presbyterian Church, Liberty, Pa.*

### SCRIPTURE

#### Psalm 147:1-11

1 Praise the LORD!  
For it is good to sing praises to our God;  
for it is pleasant, and a song of praise is fitting.  
2 The LORD builds up Jerusalem;  
he gathers the outcasts of Israel.  
3 He heals the brokenhearted  
and binds up their wounds.  
4 He determines the number of the stars;  
he gives to all of them their names.  
5 Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;  
his understanding is beyond measure.  
6 The LORD lifts up the humble;  
he casts the wicked to the ground.  
7 Sing to the LORD with thanksgiving;  
make melody to our God on the lyre!  
8 He covers the heavens with clouds;  
he prepares rain for the earth;  
he makes grass grow on the hills.  
9 He gives to the beasts their food,  
and to the young ravens that cry.  
10 His delight is not in the strength of the horse,  
nor his pleasure in the legs of a man,  
11 but the LORD takes pleasure in those who fear him,  
in those who hope in his steadfast love.

### DEVOTIONAL

It is easy in this passage to focus only on the great hope that Lent is a season in which we reflect on our need for Jesus. For 40 days, we give up things like Facebook and chocolate. Some of the more hardcore Lent-fasters might give up meat or coffee. It is a somber time, in which we tend to focus on our brokenness and our despair without Jesus. But in Lent there is a hope to be found—a hope that we are remiss to forget if we focus only inwardly on what we've gotten wrong.

This Psalm, like many Psalms, offers us a look at both sides of the coin—both the desperation and the hope. There are outcasts—and God gathers them up. We are brokenhearted—but God binds our broken hearts. The humble are lifted up. And God is given pleasure by our hope.

As we continue to enter deeper into this season, let us remember that when we fall down, God lifts us up. When we are hopeless, God gives us hope. Even though we walk

through the dark passage of the Lenten season, we walk toward The Great Light—Jesus Christ.

### PRAYER

God, remind us not only of our need for you in our despair, but also of the great hope that is offered to us. Help us to allow your light to shine into the darkest corners of our lives. Bind up our broken hearts. Give us hope in the hopeless times. Take pleasure in the hope we find in your steadfast love. Amen.

## THURSDAY, MARCH 3, 2016

*The Rev. Anthony Rivera, Associate Director of Recruiting and Admissions, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

### SCRIPTURE

#### Psalm 27

1 The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
whom shall I fear?  
The LORD is the stronghold of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid?  
2 When evildoers assail me  
to devour my flesh —  
my adversaries and foes —  
they shall stumble and fall.  
3 Though an army encamp against me,  
my heart shall not fear;  
though war rise up against me,  
yet I will be confident.  
4 One thing I asked of the LORD,  
that will I seek after:  
to live in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life,  
to behold the beauty of the LORD,  
and to inquire in his temple.  
5 For he will hide me in his shelter  
in the day of trouble;  
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;  
he will set me high on a rock.  
6 Now my head is lifted up  
above my enemies all around me,  
and I will offer in his tent  
sacrifices with shouts of joy;  
I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

7 Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud,  
be gracious to me and answer me!

8 "Come," my heart says, "seek his face!"  
Your face, LORD, do I seek.

9 Do not hide your face from me.

Do not turn your servant away in anger,  
you who have been my help.

Do not cast me off, do not forsake me,  
O God of my salvation!

10 If my father and mother forsake me,  
the LORD will take me up.

11 Teach me your way, O LORD,  
and lead me on a level path  
because of my enemies.

12 Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries,  
for false witnesses have risen against me,  
and they are breathing out violence.

13 I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD  
in the land of the living.

14 Wait for the LORD;  
be strong, and let your heart take courage;  
wait for the LORD!

## DEVOTIONAL

Lent is a season of letting go of those things that can easily cling so closely which, if left unchecked, can hinder one's walk with God. For some, it is a season to make resolutions: to pray a little more, to read the Bible with attentiveness, and to attend church a bit more often, with a hope of making things right and, hopefully, gaining the favor of God.

David did not work that hard. On the contrary, he expressed a longing that goes beyond resolutions and promises; he longed to live in the house of the Lord all the days of his life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in his temple. This longing comes from a heart yearning to be close to God, not based on David's own merits but on the merits of God's favor and grace toward him.

The fascinating aspect of David's request is a desire to see the beauty of the Lord. His longing for the overshadowing presence of God's holiness makes all the difference in the world for him. It cuts through the motions and brings him to a genuine relationship with and worship of the God he seeks.

## PRAYER

Triune God, throughout this season of Lent, stir my heart to desire and seek you as I let go of the things that hinder my walk with you. May your overshadowing presence come upon and transform me as I live in communion with you. This I pray. Amen.

## FRIDAY, MARCH 4, 2016

*Jillian Jones, Junior M.Div. Student at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

## SCRIPTURE

### Psalm 130

1 Out of the depths I cry to you, Lord;

2 Lord, hear my voice.

Let your ears be attentive  
to my cry for mercy.

3 If you, Lord, kept a record of sins,  
Lord, who could stand?

4 But with you there is forgiveness,  
so that we can, with reverence, serve you.

5 I wait for the Lord, my whole being waits,  
and in his word I put my hope.

6 I wait for the Lord  
more than watchmen wait for the morning,  
more than watchmen wait for the morning.

7 Israel, put your hope in the Lord,  
for with the Lord is unfailing love  
and with him is full redemption.

8 He himself will redeem Israel  
from all their sins.

## DEVOTIONAL

You cry, you beg, and you scream trying to make God hear you.

It's all in vain; He already does. He listens when you whisper. He listens when you don't say a word. He listens when your heart breaks or when you can't make a sound or even form a coherent thought.

He listens, He hears, He knows. He knows every thought, feeling, and sin. There is no hiding or covering up. We are all naked before Him. Yet he doesn't have a long list in his back pocket of all we've done wrong and all the ways we've messed up. If He did, we'd all be done for. Instead, He forgives us our wrongs, teaches us what we can learn from our mistakes, and comforts us when it's all too much.

So instead of crying, begging, and screaming for attention, breathe and wait. Inhale, exhale, and wait at his feet.

## PRAYER

Abba, thank you for being my Immanuel, my God with me. You're with me through the good and the bad. Thank you for being my El Roi, my God who sees me. You see me when I bring you glory and when I bring you disgrace and love me the same. Lord, teach me to wait in your presence. Amen.

## SATURDAY, MARCH 5, 2016

*Alyson Pope, Head of Library Public Services, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

### SCRIPTURE

#### Mark 7:1-23

1 Now when the Pharisees and some of the scribes who had come from Jerusalem gathered around him, 2 they noticed that some of his disciples were eating with defiled hands, that is, without washing them. 3 (For the Pharisees, and all the Jews, do not eat unless they thoroughly wash their hands, thus observing the tradition of the elders; 4 and they do not eat anything from the market unless they wash it; and there are also many other traditions that they observe, the washing of cups, pots, and bronze kettles.) 5 So the Pharisees and the scribes asked him, "Why do your disciples not live according to the tradition of the elders, but eat with defiled hands?" 6 He said to them, "Isaiah prophesied rightly about you hypocrites, as it is written, 'This people honors me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me; 7 in vain do they worship me, teaching human precepts as doctrines.' 8 You abandon the commandment of God and hold to human tradition."

9 Then he said to them, "You have a fine way of rejecting the commandment of God in order to keep your tradition! 10 For Moses said, 'Honor your father and your mother'; and, 'Whoever speaks evil of father or mother must surely die.' 11 But you say that if anyone tells father or mother, 'Whatever support you might have had from me is Corban' (that is, an offering to God)—12 then you no longer permit doing anything for a father or mother, 13 thus making void the word of God through your tradition that you have handed on. And you do many things like this."

14 Then he called the crowd again and said to them, "Listen to me, all of you, and understand: 15 there is nothing outside a person that by going in can defile, but the things that come out are what defile."

17 When he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about the parable. 18 He said to them, "Then do you also fail to understand? Do you not see that whatever goes into a person from outside cannot defile, 19 since it enters, not the heart but the stomach, and goes out into the sewer?" (Thus he declared all foods clean.) 20 And he said, "It is what comes out of a person that defiles. 21 For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come: fornication, theft, murder, 22 adultery, avarice, wickedness, deceit, licentiousness, envy, slander, pride, folly. 23 All these evil things come from within, and they defile a person."

### DEVOTIONAL

During both the Advent and Lenten holiday seasons, my family revels in seemingly innumerable traditions. That has played a large part in my enjoyment of the holidays, as the familiarity of ritual and tradition is, to me, calming and soothing, a welcome reminder of familial intimacy and shared history. As much as we may rejoice in those traditions, however, it is a mistake to confuse them with holiness.

"For it is from within, from the human heart, that evil intentions come." Putting too much focus on old, comfortable external practices can blur the line between that which is understandably precious, and that which is truly sacred, and in its worst iteration, it can breed an attitude of "otherness" much like the disciples encountered from the Pharisees. Take joy in traditions, but not at the expense of spiritual introspection, while remembering that they can neither defile nor purify. All human hearts are flawed, and it is through Christ alone that we find redemption.

### PRAYER

Gracious God, help us always to remember to keep our hearts close to you in preparation for your kingdom—and be bold enough to step outside of our traditional comfort zones. Let our spiritual growth be surrendered to you, Lord, as we relinquish our need to control and find that which truly calms and soothes. Amen.

## SUNDAY, MARCH 6, 2016

*The Rev. Alan Olson '14, Pastor, First United Presbyterian Church, Houston, Pa.*

### SCRIPTURE

#### 2 Corinthians 5:16-21

16 From now on, therefore, we regard no one from a human point of view; even though we once knew Christ from a human point of view, we know him no longer in that way. 17 So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! 18 All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ, and has given us the ministry of reconciliation; 19 that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting the message of reconciliation to us. 20 So we are ambassadors for Christ, since God is making his appeal through us; we entreat you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. 21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.

## DEVOTIONAL

Have you ever described someone as “a good person?” What does that even mean? I suppose it means you approve of that other person, but it doesn’t give much information. Perhaps she’s kind. Or maybe he’s helpful. Those are useful adjectives—I can see acts of kindness. A better question might be, “Are you in Christ?” Certainly, as Christians, we believe that we are in Christ.

In this passage, the Apostle Paul tells us that if we are in Christ, then it is our duty to see other people, not in a human way, but as God sees us. The truth is, it’s much easier to see people in flawed, human ways: good or bad, pretty or ugly. The problem with seeing others in human ways is that we are called to the ministry of reconciliation.

Paul instructs us that we are called to be reconciled with one another, just as Christ has reconciled us to God. But our own perceptions get in the way. We hold on to our opinions, our anger, our pain and hurt, and in doing so, we continue to see things in human ways. In this season of self-examination, let us look at all of the human ways that we are holding on to—the things that we must cast off before we can be reconciled to one another.

## PRAYER

Gracious God, pour your Holy Spirit upon us, so that we may see all your children as you see us. Help us to reconcile with one another. Equip us for this work; help us to let go of our anger and our hurt, our pride and our selfishness, our fear and our arrogance. Help us to know others as we are known by you and love others as we are loved by you. Make us instruments of your peace and reconciliation. Thanks be to God. Amen!

## MONDAY, MARCH 7, 2016

*Rebecca DePoe, Senior M.Div. Student at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

## SCRIPTURE

### Psalm 121

1 I lift up my eyes to the hills—  
from where will my help come?  
2 My help comes from the LORD,  
who made heaven and earth.  
3 He will not let your foot be moved;  
he who keeps you will not slumber.  
4 He who keeps Israel  
will neither slumber nor sleep.  
5 The LORD is your keeper;  
the LORD is your shade at your right hand.

6 The sun shall not strike you by day,  
nor the moon by night.  
7 The LORD will keep you from all evil;  
he will keep your life.  
8 The LORD will keep  
your going out and your coming in  
from this time on and for evermore.

## DEVOTIONAL

For me, Lent is often a season of anxiety, because Lent is often a time of discernment. Especially for those of us in ministry, Lent is usually the time where we discern whether God is calling us to stay in our current ministerial context, or if we might serve God more faithfully elsewhere. And this discernment produces anxiety because our decisions do not affect only us. They affect our families, our friends, and our communities of faith.

What I love about Psalm 121 is the Psalmist’s proclamation that God will protect us. “The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life. The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.” God’s protection is not just good news for today, but also good news forevermore! As we enter into this time of discernment, the Psalmist reminds us that we need not be anxious, because God promises to protect us. The assurance of God’s protection gives us the freedom to follow God’s call wherever it leads us without the crippling anxiety that often surrounds major life changes.

## PRAYER

God we rejoice in your assurance of protection. We pray that you would give us the courage to follow your call wherever it may lead, each and every day. We ask this in Jesus’ name. Amen.

## TUESDAY, MARCH 8, 2016

*The Rev. Jennifer Haddox '06, Associate Director, World Mission Initiative, 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,



## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 9, 2016

*Joshua Morden, Network Technician, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

### SCRIPTURE

#### Psalm 27

1 The LORD is my light and my salvation;  
whom shall I fear?  
The LORD is the stronghold of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When evildoers assail me  
to devour my flesh —  
my adversaries and foes —  
they shall stumble and fall.

3 Though an army encamp against me,  
my heart shall not fear;  
though war rise up against me,  
yet I will be confident.

4 One thing I asked of the LORD,  
that will I seek after:  
to live in the house of the LORD  
all the days of my life,  
to behold the beauty of the LORD,  
and to inquire in his temple.

5 For he will hide me in his shelter  
in the day of trouble;  
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;  
he will set me high on a rock.

6 Now my head is lifted up  
above my enemies all around me,  
and I will offer in his tent  
sacrifices with shouts of joy;  
I will sing and make melody to the LORD.

7 Hear, O LORD, when I cry aloud,  
be gracious to me and answer me!

8 “Come,” my heart says, “seek his face!”  
Your face, LORD, do I seek.

9 Do not hide your face from me.

Do not turn your servant away in anger,  
you who have been my help.  
Do not cast me off, do not forsake me,  
O God of my salvation!

10 If my father and mother forsake me,  
the LORD will take me up.

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

As our dear friend, Jannie Swart, was often heard saying, “God is up to something in the world!” He, along with this Psalmist, was confident to proclaim it. Read again the saving acts of the Lord proclaimed in this Psalm—he keeps faith, executes justice for the oppressed, gives food to the hungry, sets prisoners free, opens blind eyes, lifts up the lowly, loves the righteous, watches over strangers, and upholds orphans and widows. This is what God is up to!

As I worship with these words, I see these actions in the life of Jesus, who indeed set people free, fed the hungry, opened blind eyes, and lifted up the lowly. And I also see in these words a call to Christ’s body to live into these saving acts of our Lord.

If we want to draw near to the Lord, then we must come near to the oppressed, the hungry, the prisoner, the blind, the lowly, the stranger, the orphans and widows. In doing what can be seemingly risky things, like welcoming refugees, parenting foster children, or working on behalf of the homeless or those in prison, we declare our trust in a God who has faithfully acted in these ways for generations. In doing so, we proclaim, “The LORD will reign forever!”

### PRAYER

I praise you, O Lord, for your saving love at work in the world. Give me eyes to see what you are up to in the world around me, and a heart that is ready to trust you by coming alongside you in that work. Amen.

11 Teach me your way, O LORD,  
and lead me on a level path  
because of my enemies.

12 Do not give me up to the will of my adversaries,  
for false witnesses have risen against me,  
and they are breathing out violence.

13 I believe that I shall see the goodness of the LORD  
in the land of the living.

14 Wait for the LORD;  
be strong, and let your heart take courage;  
wait for the LORD!

## DEVOTIONAL

All of us experience times where we must wait on God to provide for a need. Today's reading from Psalm 27 encourages us to "be strong, and let [our] heart take courage" as we wait for God's timing and provision. How do we obtain the strength to wait? We do so by first fixing our eyes on Him.

David says in verse 4 that he desires only to "live in the house of the LORD all the days of my life." When we focus on God, He will give us peace. Second, we must seek the Lord's will in our affairs and be willing to obey however He directs us. Verse 11 says, "Teach me your way, O LORD, and lead me on a level path because of my enemies." God will give us clear direction when we seek Him. Finally, we must have confidence that God will provide. Verse 13 asserts, "I believe that I will see the goodness of the LORD in the land of the living." Waiting is never easy, but God uses these times in our lives to draw us closer to Him and teach us to trust Him to supply our needs.

## PRAYER

Lord Jesus, I know that You love me, and I have assurance that "if I ask anything according to Your will, You hear me" (1 Jn 5:14). Therefore, I place all my needs, desires, and concerns into Your hands and ask that You graciously provide for me and let Your will be accomplished in my life. Give me the strength and courage to wait for Your timing and provision and to trust that You will only do what is best for me. I ask this in Your name, Amen.

## THURSDAY, MARCH 10, 2016

*Dave Keys, Website and Database Administrator, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

## SCRIPTURE

### Mark 8:27-9:1

27 Jesus went on with his disciples to the villages of Caesarea Philippi; and on the way he asked his disciples, "Who do people say that I am?" 28 And they answered him, "John

the Baptist; and others, Elijah; and still others, one of the prophets." 29 He asked them, "But who do you say that I am?" Peter answered him, "You are the Messiah." 30 And he sternly ordered them not to tell anyone about him.

31 Then he began to teach them that the Son of Man must undergo great suffering, and be rejected by the elders, the chief priests, and the scribes, and be killed, and after three days rise again. 32 He said all this quite openly. And Peter took him aside and began to rebuke him. 33 But turning and looking at his disciples, he rebuked Peter and said, "Get behind me, Satan! For you are setting your mind not on divine things but on human things."

34 He called the crowd with his disciples, and said to them, "If any want to become my followers, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35 For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. 36 For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life? 37 Indeed, what can they give in return for their life? 38 Those who are ashamed of me and of my words in this adulterous and sinful generation, of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." 9:1 And he said to them, "Truly I tell you, there are some standing here who will not taste death until they see that the kingdom of God has come with power."

## DEVOTIONAL

Who is Jesus? Great Prophet, Preacher, Teacher. That is who the people of the villages of Caesarea Philippi say Jesus is. Theologically speaking, "That is just the tip of the iceberg."

Jesus picked this exact moment to announce his true divine self. Through Peter's great faith we discover that Jesus is the anointed one, the Christ, the Messiah. Peter is the first disciple to come to this astonishing realization.

Then Jesus discloses to his disciples that he must endure extreme suffering, humiliation, and torture leading to his death. Peter's faith waivers as he takes Jesus aside to question this shocking declaration. Jesus is angered at Peter and makes it perfectly clear that the disciples are not to dwell on human suffering but on the divine way. He will die human and then rise again three days later in order to win our salvation by defeating sin and death. The Son of the Living God.

"Take up the cross and follow me." To do this, we must deny ourselves and commit fully to Jesus. This is the only way to stand in the glory of the Father and enter his Kingdom.

There is only one answer to the question, "Who am I?" And that is, "You are my Christ!"

## PRAYER

Gracious God, help us to overcome our great unbelief.  
Let the Holy Spirit fill us with the faith of Peter as he  
proclaimed Jesus the Messiah.  
Make us holy.  
Make us people who pray.  
Make us people who believe.  
Make us like Jesus.  
Amen.

## FRIDAY, MARCH 11, 2016

*Rebecca Dix '15, Th.M. Student at Pittsburgh Theological  
Seminary*

## SCRIPTURE

### Exodus 2:1-22

1 Now a man from the house of Levi went and married a  
Levite woman. 2 The woman conceived and bore a son; and  
when she saw that he was a fine baby, she hid him three  
months. 3 When she could hide him no longer she got a  
papyrus basket for him, and plastered it with bitumen and  
pitch; she put the child in it and placed it among the reeds on  
the bank of the river. 4 His sister stood at a distance, to see  
what would happen to him.

5 The daughter of Pharaoh came down to bathe at the river,  
while her attendants walked beside the river. She saw the  
basket among the reeds and sent her maid to bring it. 6  
When she opened it, she saw the child. He was crying, and  
she took pity on him, "This must be one of the Hebrews'  
children," she said. 7 Then his sister said to Pharaoh's  
daughter, "Shall I go and get you a nurse from the Hebrew  
women to nurse the child for you?" 8 Pharaoh's daughter  
said to her, "Yes." So the girl went and called the child's  
mother. 9 Pharaoh's daughter said to her, "Take this child  
and nurse it for me, and I will give you your wages." So the  
woman took the child and nursed it. 10 When the child grew  
up, she brought him to Pharaoh's daughter, and she took him  
as her son. She named him Moses, "because," she said, "I  
drew him out of the water."

11 One day, after Moses had grown up, he went out to  
his people and saw their forced labor. He saw an Egyptian  
beating a Hebrew, one of his kinsfolk. 12 He looked this way  
and that, and seeing no one he killed the Egyptian and hid  
him in the sand. 13 When he went out the next day, he saw  
two Hebrews fighting; and he said to the one who was in  
the wrong, "Why do you strike your fellow Hebrew?" 14 He  
answered, "Who made you a ruler and judge over us? Do  
you mean to kill me as you killed the Egyptian?" Then Moses  
was afraid and thought, "Surely the thing is known." 15  
When Pharaoh heard of it, he sought to kill Moses.

But Moses fled from Pharaoh. He settled in the land of  
Midian, and sat down by a well. 16 The priest of Midian had  
seven daughters. They came to draw water, and filled the  
troughs to water their father's flock. 17 But some shepherds  
came and drove them away. Moses got up and came to their  
defense and watered their flock. 18 When they returned to  
their father Reuel, he said, "How is it that you have come  
back so soon today?" 19 They said, "An Egyptian helped  
us against the shepherds; he even drew water for us and  
watered the flock." 20 He said to his daughters, "Where is  
he? Why did you leave the man? Invite him to break bread."  
21 Moses agreed to stay with the man, and he gave Moses  
his daughter Zipporah in marriage. 22 She bore a son, and  
he named him Gershom; for he said, "I have been an alien  
residing in a foreign land."

## DEVOTIONAL

My parents' home is situated on a flood plain. Nestled neatly  
beside the West Fork River, cradled in a shallow valley, almost  
yearly the flood waters would come, invade our home,  
ravage the roads and newly sown fields, damaging buildings,  
equipment, and occasionally the lives of our animals. Our  
parents would try their best to keep us from swimming in  
it, because flood currents are strong and dangerous and the  
waters carried chemicals from fertilizers and pesticides, not  
to mention bull snakes and other unsavory critters. So it is no  
stretch of my imagination for water to represent death.

Yet in the midst of drowning in the death of sin, Jesus, like  
the Pharaoh's daughter, draws us out of the water. Jesus  
reaches out his pierced hands and pulls us into life.

## PRAYER

I will praise you, My God, for you have not forsaken me. I will  
praise you because you came and bore my sin on the cross.  
You have lifted me out of the dark waters into your life and  
light. Amen.

## SATURDAY, MARCH 12, 2016

*Rebecca Dix '15, Th.M. Student at Pittsburgh Theological  
Seminary*

## SCRIPTURE

### Exodus 2:23-3:15

23 After a long time the king of Egypt died. The Israelites  
groaned under their slavery, and cried out. Out of the  
slavery their cry for help rose up to God. 24 God heard their  
groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham,  
Isaac, and Jacob. 25 God looked upon the Israelites, and God  
took notice of them.

3:1 Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. 2 There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. 3 Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." 4 When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." 5 Then he said, "Come no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." 6 He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God.

7 Then the LORD said, "I have observed the misery of my people who are in Egypt; I have heard their cry on account of their taskmasters. Indeed, I know their sufferings, 8 and I have come down to deliver them from the Egyptians, and to bring them up out of that land to a good and broad land, a land flowing with milk and honey, to the country of the Canaanites, the Hittites, the Amorites, the Perizzites, the Hivites, and the Jebusites. 9 The cry of the Israelites has now come to me; I have also seen how the Egyptians oppress them. 10 So come, I will send you to Pharaoh to bring my people, the Israelites, out of Egypt." 11 But Moses said to God, "Who am I that I should go to Pharaoh, and bring the Israelites out of Egypt?" 12 He said, "I will be with you; and this shall be the sign for you that it is I who sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God on this mountain."

13 But Moses said to God, "If I come to the Israelites and say to them, 'The God of your ancestors has sent me to you,' and they ask me, 'What is his name?' what shall I say to them?" 14 God said to Moses, "I AM WHO I AM." He said further, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'I AM has sent me to you.'" 15 God also said to Moses, "Thus you shall say to the Israelites, 'The LORD, the God of your ancestors, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob, has sent me to you': This is my name forever, and this my title for all generations."

## DEVOTIONAL

How to be remembered: A step by step guide.

First, learn your own name. Let the syllables carve your name's existence on your tongue. Begin slowly pressing ink or pencil to paper in awkward strokes and slashes. Practice over and over till it is legible to more people than just you yourself. Write your name on everything—every assignment, every paper, every note, every book. "Graffiti" it on walls and empty spaces to ensure that when people encounter the particular item upon which your name has been scrawled, they 1) know the object is yours, and 2) that you exist.

Second, introduce yourself to all. Have a firm handshake and look them directly in the eye. Take a chance and be someone's friend. Or, better yet, fall in love. Make yourself a home and build a family.

Third, build great big things. Melt and mold steel and wield it into edifices that pierce the sky and make people stare up, mouths gapping open and minds overcome by its daunting magnificence. Scheme, plot, plan—harvest all the money you are able to, and conquer every land. Place statues of your likeness on the borders with your hand extending outward in the unspoken promise of where you have yet to go.

Fourth, plan for someone else to write your name for the last time on a slab of granite. Make sure they understand that your full name is to be used. Request the letters to be large and clear.

And fifth and finally, understand that metal rusts, stone erodes, and memory fades—and so will your name. Understand that the sandcastle towers of your achievements will crumble. Understand that there will be dark days in which you are utterly invisible. And understand and trust that the God of Sarah, Rebekah, Hagar, Tamar, and Rachel has remembered you, has heard your cry in the desert, and will bring you into a land flowing with milk and honey.

## PRAYER

Almighty God, you saw us before our seeing could even be. Grant us the strength and wisdom to trust not in our own achievements and accomplishments but in your steadfast love and faithfulness, as perfectly revealed in Jesus the Messiah, in whose holy name we pray, Amen.

## SUNDAY, MARCH 13, 2016

*The Rev. Chad Bogdewic, '10/'13, Pastor, Wurtemberg United Methodist Church, Ellwood City, Pa.*

## SCRIPTURE

### John 12:1-8

1 Six days before the Passover Jesus came to Bethany, the home of Lazarus, whom he had raised from the dead. 2 There they gave a dinner for him. Martha served, and Lazarus was one of those at the table with him. 3 Mary took a pound of costly perfume made of pure nard, anointed Jesus' feet, and wiped them with her hair. The house was filled with the fragrance of the perfume. 4 But Judas Iscariot, one of his disciples (the one who was about to betray him), said, 5 "Why was this perfume not sold for three hundred denarii and the money given to the poor?" 6 (He said this not because he cared about the poor, but because he was a thief;



he kept the common purse and used to steal what was put into it.) 7 Jesus said, "Leave her alone. She bought it so that she might keep it for the day of my burial. 8 You always have the poor with you, but you do not always have me."

## DEVOTIONAL

I remember that when I was a child I looked forward to my birthday and Christmas every year. I looked forward to receiving gifts; it was a way for people to show their love for me, and it made me feel special. I think there is something about receiving and giving gifts that makes us feel special and loved. I now watch with glee as my kids open their gifts for their birthdays and Christmas.

In the Gospel reading, Mary, the sister of Martha, gives Jesus an extravagant gift, a jar of costly perfume that she used to anoint Jesus' feet. As the scheming Judas watches, Jesus explains the use of the perfume: anointing him for burial. In this small exchange we are reminded of what is to come, the death and burial of our Lord, Jesus Christ. As we prepare for the sacred memory of the death of our Lord, His resurrection, and through that our salvation, let us give to God our gift of devotion. Let us come to our Lord, much like Mary, and offer ourselves to the One who offered Himself to us.

## PRAYER

Lord, allow us to be like Mary, devoting ourselves to you in heart, soul, and might. Give us the strength to love you more, to be the people you have called us to be. Amen.

## MONDAY, MARCH 14, 2016

*Jessica Kelecava '13*

## SCRIPTURE

### Mark 9:30-41

30 They went on from there and passed through Galilee. He did not want anyone to know it; 31 for he was teaching his disciples, saying to them, "The Son of Man is to be betrayed into human hands, and they will kill him, and three days after being killed, he will rise again." 32 But they did not understand what he was saying and were afraid to ask him.

33 Then they came to Capernaum; and when he was in the house he asked them, "What were you arguing about on the way?" 34 But they were silent, for on the way they had argued with one another who was the greatest. 35 He sat down, called the twelve, and said to them, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all." 36 Then he took a little child and put it among them; and taking it in his arms, he said to them, 37 "Whoever welcomes one such

child in my name welcomes me, and whoever welcomes me welcomes not me but the one who sent me."

38 John said to him, "Teacher, we saw someone casting out demons in your name, and we tried to stop him, because he was not following us." 39 But Jesus said, "Do not stop him; for no one who does a deed of power in my name will be able soon afterward to speak evil of me. 40 Whoever is not against us is for us. 41 For truly I tell you, whoever gives you a cup of water to drink because you bear the name of Christ will by no means lose the reward."

## DEVOTIONAL

Do we ever notice how patiently Jesus teaches, enlightens, and corrects his disciples? He has had the chance to tell them once more what will come of him. The disciples are still bothered and shocked by this revelation. So they distract themselves with bragging rights of the greatest in saying, "Well, I'm the best at this important thing—surely I'm more important than you," and back and forth they go along the road. And Jesus stops and challenges them once more and says, "Whoever wants to be first must be last of all and servant of all" (Mk 9:35).

Are we not the same as the disciples? How quickly do we forget or misunderstand the sacrifice Jesus made for us? In our own struggles we turn to ways of bettering ourselves and doing our best. We become the best at something and find the right to brag to others about it. Jesus is showing the disciples not just to serve for themselves or selflessly, but to remember him. The disciples were only beginning to understand the miracle of Jesus himself as the Son of God. And every day and through every pain in life and every puff of pride or burst of anger, we can try to remember how Jesus serves us through his sacrifice to bring us life. Jesus is the greatest of all. May we strive to be like him, but in all blessings and good things may we recognize him.

## PRAYER

Dear Lord, as we walk through the wilderness of life and reflect on how you did the same, may we remember your humble service to us. May we remember the ultimate sacrifice you willingly gave so that we in turn may show your greatness and life to all. Amen.

## TUESDAY, MARCH 15, 2016

Jake Horner '15

### SCRIPTURE

#### Psalm 34

1 I will bless the LORD at all times;  
his praise shall continually be in my mouth.  
2 My soul makes its boast in the LORD;  
let the humble hear and be glad.  
3 O magnify the LORD with me,  
and let us exalt his name together.  
4 I sought the LORD, and he answered me,  
and delivered me from all my fears.  
5 Look to him, and be radiant;  
so your faces shall never be ashamed.  
6 This poor soul cried, and was heard by the LORD,  
and was saved from every trouble.  
7 The angel of the LORD encamps  
around those who fear him, and delivers them.  
8 O taste and see that the LORD is good;  
happy are those who take refuge in him.  
9 O fear the LORD, you his holy ones,  
for those who fear him have no want.  
10 The young lions suffer want and hunger,  
but those who seek the LORD lack no good thing.  
11 Come, O children, listen to me;  
I will teach you the fear of the LORD.  
12 Which of you desires life,  
and covets many days to enjoy good?  
13 Keep your tongue from evil,  
and your lips from speaking deceit.  
14 Depart from evil, and do good;  
seek peace, and pursue it.  
15 The eyes of the LORD are on the righteous,  
and his ears are open to their cry.  
16 The face of the LORD is against evildoers,  
to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.  
17 When the righteous cry for help, the LORD hears,  
and rescues them from all their troubles.  
18 The LORD is near to the brokenhearted,  
and saves the crushed in spirit.  
19 Many are the afflictions of the righteous,  
but the LORD rescues them from them all.  
20 He keeps all their bones;  
not one of them will be broken.  
21 Evil brings death to the wicked,  
and those who hate the righteous will be condemned.  
22 The LORD redeems the life of his servants;  
none of those who take refuge in him will be condemned.

### DEVOTIONAL

Today's lectionary passages take on the theme of affliction. The Gospel passage tells us that "everyone will be salted with

fire." And Psalm 34 states that "Many are the afflictions of the righteous, but the LORD delivers him out of them all."

The Christ was prophesied to be a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief. Jesus is a righteous man—THE righteous man in fact—and he was salted with fire and endured affliction. But the LORD did not deliver him out of them, but rather delivered him up to be crucified. The truth is, Jesus is the only human being whom God has treated unjustly. We get what we deserve, that is, death, for our failure as children of God. Jesus did not. As a Son who kept covenant in his Father's house, he deserved life.

Yet because he tasted death on our behalf, affliction has been turned on its head. What was once the fruit of sinners living in a cosmos subjected to futility is now, in the hands of the risen Christ, a sharpened scalpel shaving the rottenness of unrighteousness away from our lives.

### PRAYER

Lord Jesus, when there is affliction in my life, give me grace to endure patiently and trust in your purpose to bring about righteousness. Amen.

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 2016

Heather Runser '14, Director of Christian Education and Youth, Grace United Methodist Church, Coshocton, Ohio

### SCRIPTURE

#### Psalm 147:1-11

11 Praise the Lord!  
How good it is to sing praises to our God;  
for he is gracious, and a song of praise is fitting.  
2 The Lord builds up Jerusalem;  
he gathers the outcasts of Israel.  
3 He heals the brokenhearted,  
and binds up their wounds.  
4 He determines the number of the stars;  
he gives to all of them their names.  
5 Great is our Lord, and abundant in power;  
his understanding is beyond measure.  
6 The Lord lifts up the downtrodden;  
he casts the wicked to the ground.  
7 Sing to the Lord with thanksgiving;  
make melody to our God on the lyre.  
8 He covers the heavens with clouds,  
prepares rain for the earth,  
makes grass grow on the hills.  
9 He gives to the animals their food,  
and to the young ravens when they cry.  
10 His delight is not in the strength of the horse,  
nor his pleasure in the speed of a runner;

17 but the Lord takes pleasure in those who fear him, in those who hope in his steadfast love.

## DEVOTIONAL

Praise the Lord.

But how can I praise the Lord when I'm surrounded by darkness? How can I praise the Lord when there is violence and war and all sorts of injustice? How can I praise the Lord in the midst of the storm that I find myself in?

Praise the Lord.

Not a suggestion, but a command. It is so easy to lament, and even easier to complain, because life is hard and cruel sometimes. No one understands this better than the Lord himself, who bore the darkness of sin and cried out in agony.

Praise the Lord.

How can we not praise Him for all He has done, and for all He has given? As we journey closer to the cross, let us not forget that after the darkness comes the brightest dawn of an empty tomb. No matter how dark this life can be, we can trust that the victory over the darkness is won.

Praise the Lord!

## PRAYER

Lord over darkness and Lord of light, it is easy to look around us and wonder at the state of the world. It is so easy to worry about the future and our place in it. Thank you that the simplest thing we can do is put our trust in you, the One who holds our past, our present, and all the years to come. Amen.

## THURSDAY, MARCH 17, 2016

*The Rev. Dr. Scott Hagley, Assistant Professor of Missiology, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

## SCRIPTURE

### Mark 10:17-31

17 As he was setting out on a journey, a man ran up and knelt before him, and asked him, "Good Teacher, what must I do to inherit eternal life?" 18 Jesus said to him, "Why do you call me good? No one is good but God alone. 19 You know the commandments: 'You shall not murder; You shall not commit adultery; You shall not steal; You shall not bear false witness; You shall not defraud; Honor your father and mother.'" 20 He said to him, "Teacher, I have kept all these since my youth." 21 Jesus, looking at him, loved him and said, "You lack one thing; go, sell what you own, and

give the money to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; then come, follow me." 22 When he heard this, he was shocked and went away grieving, for he had many possessions.

23 Then Jesus looked around and said to his disciples, "How hard it will be for those who have wealth to enter the kingdom of God!" 24 And the disciples were perplexed at these words. But Jesus said to them again, "Children, how hard it is to enter the kingdom of God! 25 It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for someone who is rich to enter the kingdom of God." 26 They were greatly astounded and said to one another, "Then who can be saved?" 27 Jesus looked at them and said, "For mortals it is impossible, but not for God; for God all things are possible."

28 Peter began to say to him, "Look, we have left everything and followed you." 29 Jesus said, "Truly I tell you, there is no one who has left house or brothers or sisters or mother or father or children or fields, for my sake and for the sake of the good news, 30 who will not receive a hundredfold now in this age—houses, brothers and sisters, mothers and children, and fields with persecutions—and in the age to come eternal life. 31 But many who are first will be last, and the last will be first."

## DEVOTIONAL

"What must I do to inherit eternal life?" The question comes from a man bowing before Jesus, still heaving to catch his breath. The wealthy man catches Jesus just before his journey to Jerusalem. Jesus' short response leaves the man in grief and the disciples perplexed. If a man with such wealth, intentionality, and moral certitude cannot be saved, then who can?

We find ourselves asking the same question today. Saturated with middle-class anxieties, we wonder whether Jesus really meant for the man to sell all he has, or what it means to leave family for the sake of God's call. But Jesus' response to the disciples rebukes their (and our) concerns. The wealthy man will not achieve God's salvation; neither will we. The point is not where God draws the line for acceptable sacrifice, but rather the proximity and mobility of the disciple in relationship to the living Lord. Jesus asks: "will you go with me even to places of suffering, poverty, death?" The man's wealth and the disciples' family offer ready excuses to answer Jesus with a well-meaning "not yet."

Verse 32 shows a small band of disciples walking behind Jesus in amazement and fear. Mark seems to suggest *that* this is eternal life; even better, this is the way of eternal life. Lent is about turning and returning to this way in repentance and belief. Let us find ourselves on the road and in our neighborhood *with* Jesus, wherever he may be heading.

## PRAYER

(Ps 27:1-5)

1 The Lord is my light and my salvation;  
whom shall I fear?

The Lord is the stronghold of my life;  
of whom shall I be afraid?

2 When evildoers assail me  
to devour my flesh—  
my adversaries and foes—  
they shall stumble and fall.

3 Though an army encamp against me,  
my heart shall not fear;  
though war rise up against me,  
yet I will be confident.

4 One thing I asked of the Lord,  
that will I seek after:

to live in the house of the Lord  
all the days of my life,  
to behold the beauty of the Lord,  
and to inquire in his temple.

5 For he will hide me in his shelter  
in the day of trouble;  
he will conceal me under the cover of his tent;  
he will set me high on a rock. Amen.

## FRIDAY, MARCH 18, 2016

*Rebecca Dix '15, Th.M. Student at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

## SCRIPTURE

### 2 Corinthians 4:1-12

1 Therefore, since it is by God's mercy that we are engaged in this ministry, we do not lose heart. 2 We have renounced the shameful things that one hides; we refuse to practice cunning or to falsify God's word; but by the open statement of the truth we commend ourselves to the conscience of everyone in the sight of God. 3 And even if our gospel is veiled, it is veiled to those who are perishing. 4 In their case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelievers, to keep them from seeing the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God. 5 For we do not proclaim ourselves; we proclaim Jesus Christ as Lord and ourselves as your slaves for Jesus' sake. 6 For it is the God who said, "Let light shine out of darkness," who has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ.

7 But we have this treasure in clay jars, so that it may be made clear that this extraordinary power belongs to God and does not come from us. 8 We are afflicted in every way, but not crushed; perplexed, but not driven to despair; 9 persecuted, but not forsaken; struck down, but not

destroyed; 10 always carrying in the body the death of Jesus, so that the life of Jesus may also be made visible in our bodies. 11 For while we live, we are always being given up to death for Jesus' sake, so that the life of Jesus may be made visible in our mortal flesh. 12 So death is at work in us, but life in you.

## DEVOTIONAL

"This little light of mine . . ."

That shines even when the world is dark, even amidst the slow decay of the earth, crumbling under the weight of our sinfulness, all the spilled blood and shed tears.

"I'm going to let it shine . . .,"

Even when all seems lost and hope is a simple whisper of yesterday.

"This little light of mine . . ."

May seem small and fragile, flickering anxiously against all the forces that try with all their might to snuff it out.

"I'm going to let it shine . . .,"

For this very light, small but burning bright, is given to me from the Light of the world, the Light to all nations, the great Healer and Redeemer.

"Oh, this little light of mine . . ."

Is the promise that God has been with us, is with us, and will be coming again—that our stories are woven together, no longer to be forsaken or destroyed, left unraveling, but to be remembered.

"I'm going to let it shine . . .,"

For Jesus Christ has made a claim on me—and has made a claim on you. So I will carry my little light as a witness to that amazing and steadfast love.

"Let it shine. Let it shine. Let it shine."

## PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, may the light of your glory, truth and love, which remains bright and present in our darkness and in our blindness, be unveiled to and in us, the Church your Bride. Amen.



## SATURDAY, MARCH 19, 2016

*The Rev. Ellen Dawson '09, Interim Campus Minister, Marshall University, Huntington, W.Va.*

### SCRIPTURE

#### Mark 10:46-52

46 They came to Jericho. As he and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. 47 When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, "Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" 48 Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, "Son of David, have mercy on me!" 49 Jesus stood still and said, "Call him here." And they called the blind man, saying to him, "Take heart; get up, he is calling you." 50 So throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. 51 Then Jesus said to him, "What do you want me to do for you?" The blind man said to him, "My teacher, let me see again." 52 Jesus said to him, "Go; your faith has made you well." Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

### DEVOTIONAL

*". . . When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'"*

When reading the story of Bartimaeus, we often focus on his actual healing from being blind. But instead, I encourage us to notice the first thing Bartimaeus says: He asks for mercy—and he continues to ask for mercy despite the reprimands from the crowd.

Now that took faith.

Perhaps we too can ask for mercy today and let this be an expression of our own faith. Praying the Jesus Prayer is one way to do just that. Take a moment now to pray the Jesus Prayer aloud or in silence several times.

*Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner.*

Jesus says to Bartimaeus, "Your faith has healed you." May this prayer for Christ's mercy bring healing today.

### PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, may the mercy you have washed us in bring us the healing for which our brokenness so desperately hungers and thirsts. Amen.

## SUNDAY, MARCH 20, 2016

*The Rev. Sarah Sedgwick '10, Pastor, First United Presbyterian Church of DuBois, Pa.*

### SCRIPTURE

#### Philippians 2:5-11

5 Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus,  
6 who, though he was in the form of God,  
did not regard equality with God  
as something to be exploited,  
7 but emptied himself,  
taking the form of a slave,  
being born in human likeness.  
And being found in human form,  
8 he humbled himself  
and became obedient to the point of death—  
even death on a cross.  
9 Therefore God also highly exalted him  
and gave him the name  
that is above every name,  
10 so that at the name of Jesus  
every knee should bend,  
in heaven and on earth and under the earth,  
11 and every tongue should confess  
that Jesus Christ is Lord,  
to the glory of God the Father.

### DEVOTIONAL

"Let the same mind be in you that was in Christ Jesus." The Apostle Paul sets a pretty high standard for the Philippians and us in this passage of his letter. Most of us try very hard to be like Jesus, but we fail miserably! I think of the number of times I've woken up determined to be more like Jesus throughout the day but usually find I've failed before lunch. Do you ever feel that sort of failure?

I want to be like Jesus; I try to be like Jesus; but the reality is I will never be Jesus. It doesn't mean I don't try to live the characteristics Jesus modeled in his life on earth. It doesn't mean that I don't try to love the least of these or have compassion toward those who grieve, or offer grace to those in need of forgiveness. I try very hard to be the hands and feet of Jesus Christ in my life, but I remember to extend grace to myself when I mess up.

And then I give thanks to God for the beautiful gift of his Son, Jesus Christ, who was born Emmanuel, God-with-us, and as Paul reminds us was "obedient to death, even death on a cross." Paul helps to remind us that during this Lenten season we should turn to gratitude for eternal life given to us through the death of Jesus Christ. We thank God and proclaim, "Jesus Christ is Lord!" And remember that tomorrow is a new day to be more like Jesus.

## PRAYER

Dear God, we give you thanks this day that in the life, death, and resurrection of your Son, Jesus Christ, we have received eternal life. Help us to be more like Jesus in our daily lives, but remind us to extend the same grace to ourselves that you give to us when we fail. In the name of your Son, we pray, Amen.

## MONDAY, MARCH 21, 2016

*Kimberly Gates Merrell '07, Director, Metro-Urban Institute, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

## SCRIPTURE

### Psalm 36:5-11

5 Your steadfast love, O Lord, extends to the heavens,  
your faithfulness to the clouds.  
6 Your righteousness is like the mighty mountains,  
your judgments are like the great deep;  
you save humans and animals alike, O Lord.  
7 How precious is your steadfast love, O God!  
All people may take refuge in the shadow of your wings.  
8 They feast on the abundance of your house,  
and you give them drink from the river of your delights.  
9 For with you is the fountain of life;  
in your light we see light.  
10 O continue your steadfast love to those who know you,  
and your salvation to the upright of heart!  
11 Do not let the foot of the arrogant tread on me,  
or the hand of the wicked drive me away.

## DEVOTIONAL

I will never forget my first night sleeping in the bush in northern Uganda. I was a five hour drive away from the nearest electrical grid. The stars appeared so close; it seemed I could reach out and touch them. In contrast, city dwellers are known for being at a disadvantage when it comes to stargazing. The lights within the city obscure one's ability to see fully the stars within the night sky.

These contrasts are not the case with God; verse 9 in our passage states that within God's light we see light. The exposure to God's brilliance actually sensitizes us to recognize light around us all the more. It gives us hope in tragedy, food in famine, clean water in drought, unfailing love when abandoned, and refuge in times of despair.

In this world where we live and are destined to die, our God is a fountain of life. And when we put our hands out to touch the stars, God's love reaches the heavens, God's faithfulness to the skies. We need not be discouraged, for we are people of the Light.

## PRAYER

Lord, there are those who would delight to see us fall. There are circumstances which seem way beyond our reach. But you, oh Lord, have surpassed them all. We can rest in knowing that you take care of your people. As we enter the light of your presence, renew our minds so that we may see light in all around us. Amen.

## TUESDAY, MARCH 22, 2016

*Alina Kanaski, Senior M.Div. Student at Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

## SCRIPTURE

### Isaiah 49:1-7

1 Listen to me, O coastlands,  
pay attention, you peoples from far away!  
The LORD called me before I was born,  
while I was in my mother's womb he named me.  
2 He made my mouth like a sharp sword,  
in the shadow of his hand he hid me;  
he made me a polished arrow,  
in his quiver he hid me away.  
3 And he said to me, "You are my servant,  
Israel, in whom I will be glorified."  
4 But I said, "I have labored in vain,  
I have spent my strength for nothing and vanity;  
yet surely my cause is with the LORD,  
and my reward with my God."  
5 And now the LORD says,  
who formed me in the womb to be his servant,  
to bring Jacob back to him,  
and that Israel might be gathered to him,  
for I am honored in the sight of the LORD,  
and my God has become my strength—  
6 he says,  
"It is too light a thing that you should be my servant  
to raise up the tribes of Jacob  
and to restore the survivors of Israel;  
I will give you as a light to the nations,  
that my salvation may reach to the end of the earth."  
7 Thus says the LORD,  
the Redeemer of Israel and his Holy One,  
to one deeply despised, abhorred by the nations,  
the slave of rulers,  
"Kings shall see and stand up,  
princes, and they shall prostrate themselves,  
because of the LORD, who is faithful,  
the Holy One of Israel, who has chosen you."

## DEVOTIONAL

Here the Servant of the Lord speaks, recalling his service: his call to servanthood (vv. 1-3); his service in Israel (vv.4-5); his call to minister not just to Israel but also to all the nations (v. 6); and, finally, his promised glorification (v. 7).

It's not clear who the Servant was intended to be, for he is never named, but Christians saw Jesus in the Servant—for who else was called to suffer but ultimately be glorified, and who else was called to be “a light to the nations”?

Even in the darkest moments, when our work is “in vain” and “for nothing,” when we are “deeply despised,” when we suffer and are discouraged, let us remember that Jesus went through the same. Let us take comfort from His presence and solidarity in those times. Let us remember, as the Lord reminds the Servant here, God is our strength. For Jesus died, but He also rose again. Jesus suffered, but God worked through that suffering to bring about the salvation of the world. Hallelujah!

## PRAYER

God, we thank You for Your light, shining in the darkness of even the darkest night. You sit with us in that darkness, even when we cannot see Your light. Give us faith in Your strength rather than our own. Amen.

## WEDNESDAY, MARCH 23, 2016

Katharine Yates, Administrative Assistant, Metro-Urban Institute and World Mission Initiative, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary

## SCRIPTURE

### Isaiah 50:4-9a

4 The Lord GOD has given me  
the tongue of a teacher,  
that I may know how to sustain  
the weary with a word.  
Morning by morning he awakens—  
awakens my ear  
to listen as those who are taught.  
5 The Lord GOD has opened my ear,  
and I was not rebellious,  
I did not turn backward.  
6 I gave my back to those who struck me,  
and my cheeks to those who pulled out the beard;  
I did not hide my face  
from insult and spitting.  
7 The Lord GOD helps me;  
therefore I have not been disgraced;  
therefore I have set my face like flint,  
and I know that I shall not be put to shame;

8 he who vindicates me is near.  
Who will contend with me?  
Let us stand up together.  
Who are my adversaries?  
Let them confront me.  
9 It is the Lord GOD who helps me;  
who will declare me guilty?

## DEVOTIONAL

This passage of Scripture speaks of God's great power, available to all who call on His name, and also of the struggles His people inevitably face in this world. It is a word of power and a word of warning.

As we reflect on the meaning of Lent and look forward to the remembrance of Christ's death and resurrection, we are reminded that even Jesus, God Himself, did not shrink from suffering. Who are we to think that our lives will be free of hardship? And yet we know that we are equipped with the power of God—our vindication and worth does not come from any human, or anything within ourselves, but from God.

This doesn't mean we're free to do whatever we want. We are reminded in other parts of Scripture of the damage we do to others and ourselves through our sins; we are called to throw off the things that entangle us and to live for God, joyously allowing God to transform us into who we are really meant to be.

## PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on us. Forgive us that we do not always see You, or ourselves, clearly, but look through our own perspectives of sin and self-advancement. Give us pure hearts to love You and serve You in power, knowing that nothing can take away the love You have freely offered to us through Your sacrifice. Waken our ears and quiet our spirits, so that we might listen to You in all that we do. Amen.

## THURSDAY, MARCH 24, 2016

*The Rev. Dr. Don Dawson, Director, World Mission Initiative, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

## SCRIPTURE

### John 13:1-17, 31b-35

1 Now before the festival of the Passover, Jesus knew that his hour had come to depart from this world and go to the Father. Having loved his own who were in the world, he loved them to the end. 2 The devil had already put it into the heart of Judas son of Simon Iscariot to betray him. And during supper 3 Jesus, knowing that the Father had given all

things into his hands, and that he had come from God and was going to God, 4 got up from the table, took off his outer robe, and tied a towel around himself. 5 Then he poured water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet and to wipe them with the towel that was tied around him. 6 He came to Simon Peter, who said to him, "Lord, are you going to wash my feet?" 7 Jesus answered, "You do not know now what I am doing, but later you will understand." 8 Peter said to him, "You will never wash my feet." Jesus answered, "Unless I wash you, you have no share with me." 9 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, not my feet only but also my hands and my head!" 10 Jesus said to him, "One who has bathed does not need to wash, except for the feet, but is entirely clean. And you are clean, though not all of you." 11 For he knew who was to betray him; for this reason he said, "Not all of you are clean."

12 After he had washed their feet, had put on his robe, and had returned to the table, he said to them, "Do you know what I have done to you? 13 You call me Teacher and Lord—and you are right, for that is what I am. 14 So if I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also ought to wash one another's feet. 15 For I have set you an example, that you also should do as I have done to you. 16 Very truly, I tell you, servants are not greater than their master, nor are messengers greater than the one who sent them. 17 If you know these things, you are blessed if you do them.

31 When he had gone out, Jesus said, "Now the Son of Man has been glorified, and God has been glorified in him. 32 If God has been glorified in him, God will also glorify him in himself and will glorify him at once. 33 Little children, I am with you only a little longer. You will look for me; and as I said to the Jews so now I say to you, 'Where I am going, you cannot come.' 34 I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another. 35 By this everyone will know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another."

## DEVOTIONAL

"How can I repay the Lord for all his goodness to me?" the Psalmist asked in Psalm 116 after a near-death experience. *We can't!* It is all a gift through God's unmerited grace.

Is there anything we can do? Psalm 116:13 says, "I will lift up the cup of salvation and call on the name of the Lord." Today, many of us will literally lift up the cup of eternal salvation as we participate in the Lord's Supper (Eucharist = "Thanksgiving"). Proclaiming our thanks to God by our worship and sacramental remembrance is the essential response we can make: "for as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes."

When Jesus initiated the "Thanksgiving," he began by washing the feet of the disciples and telling them that "servants are not greater than the one who sent them." Jesus made plain that their "Thanksgiving" extended from the intimacy of worship to the living of each day in humble service of those around them. He concluded, "just as I have loved you, you should love one another." By our worship, serving, and proclaiming, we offer thanks to God, whom we can never repay.

## PRAYER

All praise and thanks to you, Almighty God, for you have created us, redeemed us, and continue to provide for us. As an act of worship and devotion, we offer our witness to the saving love of Jesus. Help us to speak the good news boldly and serve others humbly, so that in all we do, we honor you. Amen.

## FRIDAY, MARCH 25, 2016

*Tom Pappalardo, Vice President for Advancement, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

## SCRIPTURE

### Hebrews 10:16-25

16 "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the Lord: I will put my laws in their hearts, and I will write them on their minds,"

17 he also adds,

"I will remember their sins and their lawless deeds no more."

18 Where there is forgiveness of these, there is no longer any offering for sin.

19 Therefore, my friends, since we have confidence to enter the sanctuary by the blood of Jesus, 20 by the new and living way that he opened for us through the curtain (that is, through his flesh), 21 and since we have a great priest over the house of God, 22 let us approach with a true heart in full assurance of faith, with our hearts sprinkled clean from an evil conscience and our bodies washed with pure water. 23 Let us hold fast to the confession of our hope without wavering, for he who has promised is faithful. 24 And let us consider how to provoke one another to love and good deeds, 25 not neglecting to meet together, as is the habit of some, but encouraging one another, and all the more as you see the Day approaching.



## DEVOTIONAL

Those pesky software updates you must load on to your phone, laptop, or desktop computer provide you with the latest features of a particular application and help to ensure that your private information is secure. In a similar way, God promises us His own update for our hearts and minds. He imprints His laws on them when we come to Him in repentance seeking forgiveness and holiness.

Through Jesus, our repentance assures us forgiveness. He was the final offering for our sin, and He is the great high priest, who gives us hope each day and the promise that our hearts and minds are being purified through the work of the Holy Spirit in our lives. Be encouraged today by others who are following Jesus, and be encouraged today by the risen Christ, who walks with you.

## PRAYER

Dear Lord Jesus. Thank you for your sacrifice so that my sins are forgiven. Renew my heart and my mind so that I might live my life in obedience to your laws and as a blessing to those I encounter today. Amen.

## SATURDAY, MARCH 26, 2016

*The Rev. Christopher Brown '08, Co-pastor, The Upper Room, Pittsburgh Pa., and Coordinator, Church Planting Initiative, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

## SCRIPTURE

### Lamentations 3:37-58

37 Who can command and have it done, if the Lord has not ordained it? 38 Is it not from the mouth of the Most High that good and bad come? 39 Why should any who draw breath complain about the punishment of their sins?

40 Let us test and examine our ways, and return to the LORD. 41 Let us lift up our hearts as well as our hands to God in heaven. 42 We have transgressed and rebelled, and you have not forgiven.

43 You have wrapped yourself with anger and pursued us, killing without pity; 44 you have wrapped yourself with a cloud so that no prayer can pass through. 45 You have made us filth and rubbish among the peoples.

46 All our enemies have opened their mouths against us; 47 panic and pitfall have come upon us, devastation and destruction. 48 My eyes flow with rivers of tears because of the destruction of my people.

49 My eyes will flow without ceasing, without respite, 50 until the LORD from heaven looks down and sees. 51 My

eyes cause me grief at the fate of all the young women in my city.

52 Those who were my enemies without cause have hunted me like a bird; 53 they flung me alive into a pit and hurled stones on me; 54 water closed over my head; I said, "I am lost."

55 I called on your name, O LORD, from the depths of the pit; 56 you heard my plea, "Do not close your ear to my cry for help, but give me relief!" 57 You came near when I called on you; you said, "Do not fear!"

58 You have taken up my cause, O Lord, you have redeemed my life.

## DEVOTIONAL

"Who can command and have it done, if the Lord has not ordained it?" The destruction described in Lamentations is horrific. Even more horrific is the thought that our God is responsible for such desolation and destruction . . . until we read these words through the lens of Holy Saturday.

Read the passage again. Imagine Jesus gasping its words. On the cross, Jesus experienced the terror and pain, the mocking and shame, the judgment and the despair described here. He bore our sins in his body, suffering both as a consequence of our sin, and in solidarity with all who suffer the effects of sin.

And so he grieves: "My eyes flow with rivers of tears because of the destruction of my people." And so he was cast down to the realm of the dead: "My enemies without cause have hunted me like a bird; they flung me alive into a pit." And so from that place of death—like Jonah in the belly of the fish—he offers a call for salvation: "I called on your name, O LORD, from the depths of the pit."

## PRAYER

God in heaven, our Father, we thank you that our Lord Jesus Christ knows the full depths of our suffering. Thank you that you heard his voice when he called from the pit. Raise us up with Him, that we may say with Christ, "You have taken up my cause, O Lord, you have redeemed my life." Amen.

## SUNDAY, MARCH 27, 2016

*The Rev. Dr. Catherine Brall, Director of Field Education,  
Pittsburgh Theological Seminary*

### SCRIPTURE

#### Luke 24:1-12

1 But on the first day of the week, at early dawn, they came to the tomb, taking the spices that they had prepared. 2 They found the stone rolled away from the tomb, 3 but when they went in, they did not find the body. 4 While they were perplexed about this, suddenly two men in dazzling clothes stood beside them. 5 The women were terrified and bowed their faces to the ground, but the men said to them, "Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen. 6 Remember how he told you, while he was still in Galilee, 7 that the Son of Man must be handed over to sinners, and be crucified, and on the third day rise again." 8 Then they remembered his words, 9 and returning from the tomb, they told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. 10 Now it was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them who told this to the apostles. 11 But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them. 12 But Peter got up and ran to the tomb; stooping and looking in, he saw the linen cloths by themselves; then he went home, amazed at what had happened.

### DEVOTIONAL

The women in Luke's account of the resurrection start out so well. They begin at daybreak to do everything that they know to do—as they've been taught by their culture and traditions—to honor, mourn, and properly care for the body of their friend and Rabbi, Jesus. The first surprise comes when they find the gravestone has been unexpectedly rolled away. Undeterred, they bravely enter the tomb to proceed with their work. The lack of a body leaves them perplexed and perhaps wondering what to do next. It is only when the two angels suddenly appear to explain what's really going on that the women become terrified.

Our carefully prepared and well intentioned plans are no match for the radical disconnect that we, too, can encounter in our attempts faithfully to follow our Risen Lord Jesus. Resurrected living challenges us in our own moments of terror to listen as these women did, to seek for God's perspective and meaning in the midst of circumstances we didn't anticipate and can't understand. Resurrected living invites us to remember the promises our God has made to us in the Word. Finally, resurrected living calls us to bear testimony and share what we have seen, experienced and learned.

### PRAYER

Thank you, Jesus, for the glory of your Resurrection and the amazing ways you continue to work in and through your people even in these present times. Help us, Lord, to put away terror and to seek past blindness when things don't go according to our plans and we are left perplexed about how to do the work we believe you have called us to do. Grant us, Risen Lord, to see, know, and trust the truth of Your Resurrection and the power and wisdom provided through Your Holy Spirit for each and every day of our lives. Amen.

---

*The scripture quotations contained in the lectionary readings are from the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible, copyright 1989, by the Division of Christian Education of the National Council of Churches of Christ in the U.S.A.*

## PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

in whatever you do, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary can help you live your faith in life. We're all called to serve Christ. PTS can prepare you to serve as a pastor, counselor, church planter, educator, chaplain, community leader, or in other contexts. Not interested in a ministry degree program? Explore your vocation through the Seminary's certificate and non-degree programs and glorify God in whatever you do.

### ABOUT THE SEMINARY

Founded in 1794, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary is a graduate theological school of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.). Rooted in the Reformed tradition, the 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.

### DEGREE PROGRAMS

- Master of Divinity
- Master of Divinity with joint degrees in law (Duquesne University), social work (University of Pittsburgh), and public policy (Carnegie Mellon University)
- Master of Divinity with emphasis in church planting
- Master of Divinity, Master of Arts, or Master of Arts in Theology and Ministry with a graduate certificate in urban ministry
- Master of Arts
- Master of Arts in Theology and Ministry
- Master of Arts in Theological Studies
- Master of Sacred Theology
- Doctor of Ministry with seven focus areas: Urban Change, Missional Leadership, Parish, Reformed, Eastern Christian, Science and Theology, and Reformed Christian Spirituality

### CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

- Graduate Certificate in Urban Ministry
- Certificate in Spiritual Formation

### SPECIAL PROGRAMS

**Church Planting Initiative** Forms and supports Christian leaders in creating new Christian communities

**Continuing Education** Provides the theologically interested public with opportunities to explore faith and vocation through free lectures, special events, and professional development

**Kelso Museum of Near Eastern Archaeology** Offers free tours and open hours to view displays from the more than 7,000-artifact collection, as well as several lectures by world experts annually

**Metro-Urban Institute** Combines the theory and practice of collaborative community ministry in a program of urban theological education

**Miller Summer Youth Institute** Encourages high-school scholars to think theologically and explore ministry as a vocation

**World Mission Initiative** Develops mission vision, nurtures missionary vocations, and cultivates missional congregations through cross-cultural experiences

**The Zeitah Excavations** Explores biblical history through the archaeological field project at Tel Zayit, Israel, which has yielded the oldest (10<sup>th</sup> century BCE) reliably dated inscription of the linear Hebrew alphabet

### RESOURCES

**Barbour Library** More than 300,000 volumes, several online databases, and 800 periodical subscriptions, making it the largest stand-alone theological library east of the Mississippi [www.pts.edu/barbour-library](http://www.pts.edu/barbour-library)

**Faculty and Program Directors** Available to preach and teach on a variety of topics [www.pts.edu/experts](http://www.pts.edu/experts)

**Mission Consultations** Available to help congregations plan a mission trip or become more missionally engaged—personally or through downloadable resources [www.pts.edu/wmi](http://www.pts.edu/wmi)

**Lectures and Events** Open to the public on topics of faith [www.pts.edu/calendar](http://www.pts.edu/calendar)

**Videos** Recorded lectures by distinguished guests [www.youtube.com/pghseminary](http://www.youtube.com/pghseminary)

### Miller Summer Youth Institute Satellite Programs

Committed to resourcing churches in youth ministry, including bringing the resources of PTS to your youth group [www.pts.edu/syi](http://www.pts.edu/syi)

To learn more about the Seminary and its degree programs, resources, and how to support theological education with your donation, contact

Pittsburgh Theological Seminary  
616 N. Highland Ave.  
Pittsburgh, PA 15206  
412-362-5610  
1-800-451-4194 Admissions  
412-924-1378 Donations  
[www.pts.edu](http://www.pts.edu)

