

# LENT DEVOTIONAL 2019



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# ABOUT PITTSBURGH THEOLOGICAL SEMINARY

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

## BECOME A STUDENT

**Master's**

**Doctor of Ministry**

**Non-Degree**

## CERTIFICATE PROGRAMS

**Graduate Certificate in Church Planting and Revitalization**

**Graduate Certificate in Ministry**

**Graduate Certificate in Missional Leadership**

**Graduate Certificate in Theological Studies**

**Graduate Certificate in Urban Ministry**

**Spiritual Formation Certificate**

## SPECIAL PROGRAMS

**Church Planting Initiative**

**Continuing Education**

**Kelso Museum of Near Eastern Archaeology**

**Miller Summer Youth Institute**

**Metro-Urban Institute**

**World Mission Initiative**

**Zeitah Excavations**

## FACULTY

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## EVENTS

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# LENT DEVOTIONAL APRIL 19, 2019

## SCRIPTURE

### JOHN 13:36-38

36 Simon Peter said to him, "Lord, where are you going?" Jesus answered, "Where I am going, you cannot follow me now; but you will follow afterward." 37 Peter said to him, "Lord, why can I not follow you now? I will lay down my life for you." 38 Jesus answered, "Will you lay down your life for me? Very truly, I tell you, before the cock crows, you will have denied me three times."

## DEVOTIONAL

**The Rev. Dr. John Welch '02, Vice President for Student Services and Community Engagement and Dean of Students, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary / Minister of Music, Bidwell Street United Presbyterian Church, Pittsburgh, Pa.**

In reflecting on our Christian journey, is it possible to ask whether or not our zeal has created a falsehood that to the eyes of the uninformed and unsaved could easily be interpreted as hypocritical? Is it possible that the words of our mouths and the mediations of our hearts are out of sync and not in proper alignment? As with the Pharisees, whom Jesus chided with the words, "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaks" (Matt. 12:34 et al.), can it be that we suffer from a spiritual form of heart arrhythmia? The words of a famous hymn state, "I have decided to follow Jesus, no turning back, no turning back." With fervor and excitement we sing these words without knowing to what extent our faith will be tested.

In John 13:37, Peter unknowingly tells Jesus a modest falsehood, "a fib," because his heart is suffering from a form of spiritual "AFib" (atrial fibrillation), which happens when the heart is in an unhealthy rhythm. A spiritually unhealthy rhythm of the heart can lead to spoken intentions that are shallow and short on follow-through. Peter was affected by this condition and Jesus diagnosed it. Peter's heart was moving too quickly and was therefore out of step. While Peter, in his zeal and affection, wasn't aware that his faith had not yet been tested and his heart was still unhealthy, Jesus knew what was coming. He warned Peter that his heart would undergo a shock when he'd soon deny the Lord three times.

So also we, in our haste to want to say and do the right things in the company of others, may find ourselves out of step because our fleshly desires put our hearts out of rhythm.

## PRAYER

Most Holy God, You, who established truth, diagnosed the sinful condition of the world in eternity past and even now—You are able to diagnose the sinful condition of our hearts. Search us and know our hearts, try us and know our anxieties, and when we are apt to fall short of the holiness you require, lead us in the way everlasting. In the name of Jesus, Your Son and our Savior, amen.

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