

Faculty Work Comprehensive List

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12-1-2015

## Advent: Clearing a Path for Christmas

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### Recommended Citation

Pollema, M. (2015). Advent: Clearing a Path for Christmas. Retrieved from [https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/faculty\\_work/393](https://digitalcollections.dordt.edu/faculty_work/393)

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## Advent: Clearing a Path for Christmas

### Abstract

"The idea of preparing the way of the LORD is a word picture that reveals to us that the real preparation for Christmas must take place in our hearts. This is the preparation that demands our focus so that we may rightfully acknowledge the deep significance of the coming of our Messiah."

Posting about dealing with distractions during Advent from *In All Things* - an online hub committed to the claim that the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ has implications for the entire world.

<http://inallthings.org/advent-clearing-a-path-for-christmas/>

### Keywords

In All Things, Advent, Christmas, Messiah, preparedness

### Disciplines

Christianity

### Comments

*In All Things* is a publication of the [Andreas Center for Reformed Scholarship and Service at Dordt College](#).

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 [all in allthings.org/advent-clearing-a-path-for-christmas/](https://allthings.org/advent-clearing-a-path-for-christmas/)

Mary Beth Pollema

This is post 3 of 4 in the series *“Advent Devotions”*

1. [Advent: The Messy Preparation](#)
2. [Preparing, Advent and Psalm 51](#)
3. Advent: Clearing a Path for Christmas
4. [Advent: Ring the Bells that Still Can Ring](#)

Every year about this time, I resolve to keep my focus on the truth of Christmas rather than to fly headlong through the weeks leading up to it only to collapse in an exhausted heap as soon as it is over. Too often I allow my response to this most significant event in human history to dissolve from being a participation in a holy day to merely getting caught up in the frenzy of a holiday. I know it’s going to be a challenge as I watch the calendar fill up—concerts, school and church events, gatherings with friends and family—all good things to be sure. Add our own preparations for the season—gift buying, decorating, baking, sending Christmas greetings—and life is assuming a frenetic pace, on top of the normal pressures of work, raising a family and managing a household.

Reflecting on the busyness of this time of year, I told a colleague recently that I felt like I wanted to “stop the rollercoaster and get off”. And in a sense, I know this is exactly how we need to prepare for Christmas—not that all the pressures and details of this season of life will cease, but that they will be put in their proper place under the rule of Christ and the path of our hearts will be cleared so that we can truly celebrate the coming of the Messiah.

So my renewed resolution for preparing for Christmas is to pray and then plan. In my quiet times of reflection, I’ve been struck by the words of John the Baptist recorded in Matthew 3:3 that say, “A voice of one calling in the desert, ‘Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.’” John is quoting Isaiah (40:3) who uses this imagery to describe how the people of the ancient Middle East would prepare for the arrival of a majestic king. The people knew that the desert landscape would pose many impediments that would hinder their king from coming to assume his throne so they did everything in their power to prepare a path by filling in holes, clearing rubble and even knocking down the hills that were in the way.

The idea of preparing the way of the LORD is a word picture that reveals to us that the real preparation for Christmas must take place in our hearts. This is the preparation that demands our focus so that we may rightfully acknowledge the deep significance of the coming of our Messiah. With our hearts well prepared, we engage in many of the other activities of the season that also point us on this path, but we need to be wary of those that distract us from attending to the internal work of the Spirit that has eternal consequences.

So with these thoughts in mind, our family is preparing for Christmas by asking these questions:

- What areas of my life are lacking that the Spirit is wanting to fill?
- What clutter or other obstacles are hindering the Messiah from claiming his rightful throne in my life?