

## **Advent Devotional December 6, 2018**

### **Scripture**

1 Thessalonians 3:1-13

<sup>1</sup>Therefore when we could bear it no longer, we decided to be left alone in Athens; <sup>2</sup>and we sent Timothy, our brother and co-worker for God in proclaiming the gospel of Christ, to strengthen and encourage you for the sake of your faith, <sup>3</sup>so that no one would be shaken by these persecutions. Indeed, you yourselves know that this is what we are destined for. <sup>4</sup>In fact, when we were with you, we told you beforehand that we were to suffer persecution; so it turned out, as you know. <sup>5</sup>For this reason, when I could bear it no longer, I sent to find out about your faith; I was afraid that somehow the tempter had tempted you and that our labor had been in vain. <sup>6</sup>But Timothy has just now come to us from you, and has brought us the good news of your faith and love. He has told us also that you always remember us kindly and long to see us—just as we long to see you. <sup>7</sup>For this reason, brothers and sisters, during all our distress and persecution we have been encouraged about you through your faith. <sup>8</sup>For we now live, if you continue to stand firm in the Lord. <sup>9</sup>How can we thank God enough for you in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you? <sup>10</sup>Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you face to face and restore whatever is lacking in your faith. <sup>11</sup>Now may our God and Father himself and our Lord Jesus direct our way to you. <sup>12</sup>And may the Lord make you increase and abound in love for one another and for all, just as we abound in love for you. <sup>13</sup>And may he so strengthen your hearts in holiness that you may be blameless before our God and Father at the coming of our Lord Jesus with all his saints.

### **Devotional**

#### **Lori Liller Arnold, Coordinator, Office of Continuing Education**

Imagine a day when the sky is gray (easy to do in a Pittsburgh winter), it's chilly, and you are feeling downhearted about things happening in your life. Everyone has a day like this occasionally—a day when it seems that nothing is going well. Then . . . you get a text message, an email, or perhaps *even* a letter with wonderful news! Immediately your heart is lightened, your face is smiling, and you may do a little dance because of the happiness flooding your body. Paul describes such a feeling after Timothy's return with news that the church in Thessalonica was remaining faithful. Paul writes about being encouraged in the midst of his persecutions and, furthermore, states that he "now live(s)" because of the Thessalonians' steadfastness. This happiness is the same kind of joy we can carry in our hearts today because we already know the Good News and we don't need to wait for the arrival of a text, email, or letter. Thanks be to God!

### **Prayer**

Dear Creator, thank you for the abundant joy we can feel in the midst of our daily trials. Help us to remember that standing firm in the Lord is a source of life now and forevermore. In your name we pray. Amen.