

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 4

Psalm 86, I Thessalonians 3:6–13

Here we are in the time of waiting. Some of us are waiting for a phone call, a promotion, for someone to notice us, or perhaps just waiting for a break. We wait regularly. But the waiting that comes with Advent is different than waiting for the light to turn green; it's an intense longing.

Paul speaks to us about this longing in his letter to the Thessalonians. He writes in verse 6, "... you long to see us, just as we also long to see you." And again, in verse 10, "Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again ...". Paul has a passionate desire to be reunited with his congregation.

I know this longing that Paul refers to. My mother lost her battle with cancer four years ago. Although I know that she is in heaven, her perfect home, I long to see her again. Sometimes in my dreams my mother appears, and for a time, I am tricked into believing that she is with me. When I realize it's just a dream, the aching to see her returns again.

The word for longing that Paul uses here is the same word he uses to describe our longing as Christians to be at home in heaven. That is what we wait for as we celebrate Advent. When we re-visit the story of Jesus' birth, we re-live all the wonder of the story—the pregnant virgin, the obedient husband, the awe-struck shepherds and the multitude of angels. This is exciting and reminds us of what we are waiting for: To see Jesus return, not as a helpless baby, but in his full glory as the King of Kings. Let us pray as Paul prayed for his congregation in Thessalonica: "May he strengthen your hearts so that you will be blameless and holy in the presence of our God and Father when our Lord Jesus comes with all his holy ones." (1 Thessalonians 3:13)

Fill VanderWoude—Fill lives in Middleton and is passionate about theatre; both watching it and being a part of it. She loves the ocean and thinks that any time spent at the beach is time spent well.