

November 5, 2009

Greetings From President Walton....



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Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

During this month of November, when our hearts and minds are drawn to the Thanksgiving holiday, it is always appropriate that we take to heart the words of the Apostle Paul. He writes in 1 Thessalonians 5, "Give thanks in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you in Christ Jesus."

Now, I would have to humbly admit that I don't always do that. Sometimes life gets so busy, situations so difficult, that I find that my "thank-o-meter" is rather less full than it needs to be. When I begin worrying about my house not selling, the tendency is to focus on griping about it, rather than thanking God that I have a house that needs to be sold! When I begin to fret about scheduling and time tables, I sometimes neglect to thank God that, especially in this economy, I have a schedule to keep!

A dear pastor friend of mine, James Brooks, taught me, mostly by his example, that we can give thanks in all circumstances as we look for God in the midst of that circumstance. The truth is, He's there. You may have to search a little, but not because He's hiding, mostly because, due to our sin, the eyes of our hearts get clouded. The Bible tells us that if we seek Him with all our hearts, He will be found by us! He's right here with us all the time!

One of my favorite Psalms is Psalm 22. I love the way the King James Version puts verse 3: "But Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel."

Think about that. God inhabits our praise.

So in the midst of the struggles you may face, whether in ministry, or in your family life, or just in life in general, know that if we want to see God, all we need to do is begin to praise Him.

In fact, the other night I was out for a walk, listening to my iPod, reflecting on what had been a long day. It was dark, I was alone, not



Christmas Greeting from President Walton

This year's Christmas Greeting from the District Office will come in the same format as this monthly e-news. Remind your church and school staff to sign up on the link below so they can be included in our growing list of people who get this e-news.

only physically, but also mentally. I have a tremendous variety of music on my iPod, from Bing Crosby and Tommy Dorsey to the Beatles to Keith Green to Christian praise music (hey, variety is the spice of life), and I was listening to a mellow Billy Joel song, starting to feel blue, frustrated that I'm separated from my wife and family still, overwhelmed by some of the tasks before me.

The very next song was a praise song, and as I listened, and as it began to flood my ears and my heart, it also began to change my attitude. Someone has said that your attitude affects your altitude. In other words, we choose how we view life. I chose to be thankful--thankful for a nice evening to walk, thankful that despite the separation I have a great place to stay, thankful that God is in control even when life seems out of control.

So I choose to be thankful. Not just because of the holiday, but because of a God who loved me so much that He gave the life of His Son, Jesus, on the cross, just for me. Wow! How could I be anything but thankful! And you, too! This gift that you proclaim in word and deed, it's for you as well. So choose to be thankful, not just this Thanksgiving time, but all the time. Life is short, so give thanks while you can!

With that in mind, let me also say that I give thanks for you, for your support of my office, for your support of your District, for the support of your parish and ministry. With the Apostle Paul I say, "I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." And He will, and He does even know. SO rejoice and give Him thanks!

I wanted to communicate a few things to you to keep you "in the loop," and share important information:

- As you know, this coming summer the LCMS will once again be in Convention, and once again in Houston, TX. By this time all delegates should have been elected in each of our circuits. We have an opportunity to have 42 circuit delegates, one pastoral and one lay delegate from each circuit, and then an alternate for each. Among the most critical of the issues we will discuss at the convention will be

the Blue Ribbon Task Force on the Synod's Structure and Governance (BRTFSSG). Much more information will be provided to delegates in the coming months, however, they should plan now for a regional one day meeting in **Atlanta on Friday, February 5-6**. Once we have all the delegate information, we will begin arranging transportation. At this meeting, led by Synodical leaders, we will also hold our own District caucus prior to the Convention. This will be our only time prior to convention, so please encourage all delegates to make time to be with us in Atlanta.

- The Transforming Congregation Network has been refocusing us on reaching into our communities. Your District Staff worked alongside Thrivent at a Thrivent Builds Workday, helping to build some homes in the Orlando area. Let me encourage you to find ways to get involved in your local communities to proclaim the Gospel through your actions! By the way, I also will enjoy the privilege of representing you by participating in the dedication of these homes on December 5th!
- You will shortly be receiving a "pledge card" for the District budget. I know that there are a million things to do at this time of year, but let me encourage you to prayerfully consider supporting the District as we work together to further the mission and ministry of Jesus in Florida and Georgia! Our District Missions depend on the dollars sent by congregations like yours to enable us to reach more people for Jesus!
- Over the past several months we have had several inquiries and issues with congregations neglecting to remit their FICA taxes to the government. Don't forget to do this, and if you have questions regarding this, contact Don Lauher, 877-457-5556 ext. 114, or check out the Treasurers Manual online.
- Mark Brink has worked with a group of folks to prepare some guidelines on RIF's (Reduction in Force) which so many congregations have faced due to the economy. He hopes to post it in the next few months on our District Web Site. I believe it will be helpful to many folks right now and in the future.



Share this e-news with a friend!

If you know someone who might enjoy receiving the e-news from the Florida-Georgia District President, please send them your copy and invite them to join the group, by clicking on the link below:

[Email Sign-up](#)

- During this season of Thanksgiving, let me encourage you also to consider those around you who are less fortunate. There are any number of ways to get involved in your own community. Some additional possibilities for opportunities are our own Lutheran Social Service agencies who all do great work. I am blessed, and amazed at what these organizations do, and the impact they are having for the Gospel. Lutheran Services of Florida, Lutheran Social Services of Northeast Florida, Lutheran Social Services of North Florida and Lutheran Services of Georgia. You can find links for each of these on our web site.

Again, I am thankful for your partnership in the Gospel!

Peace,

Greg

Your brother in Christ,

Greg

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"The love of Christ urges us on." 2 Corinthians 5:14

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