

~ ~ A Word from the President ~ ~

“Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus.” ~ Thessalonians 5:16-18 (ESV)



In this month of Thanksgiving, we sometimes think more often of what we're grateful for than at other times of the year. We might be grateful for our family, our home, our church, or our friends. As a member of United Women in Faith, we may even toss a coin at mealtime in a box labeled World Thank Offering. Sometimes we may need a calendar to tell us how much to put in that box for certain deeds (i.e., how many times have you been in church this week—add a dime for each time). But is being grateful limited to one day of the year? One month of the year? Or as Paul says in Thessalonians 5:16-18: "... give thanks in all circumstances...."

Research has shown that the mere act of being thankful can reduce stress and anxiety, improve sleep, boost the immune system, lower blood pressure, and increase happiness and well-being. Being grateful sounds like a miracle cure-all!

Some studies suggest writing down 10 things you are grateful for each day. Recently, I've read that writing down 3 things you are grateful for each day can be beneficial. I wonder if Peter had a specific number in mind when he was writing to the church in Thessalonica? Did he really mean to give thanks in all circumstances? Recently, Melissa Kirsch of the *NYTimes* had a different take on gratitude. She says she "traces some present-day gratitude back through all the causes and conditions that gave rise to it." For example, she is grateful for a deck of wisdom cards on her desk; she's grateful for her friend, Melanie, who gave them to her, how generous Melanie is, and how lucky the author is to know her. But Melissa wouldn't have known Melanie had she not taught creative writing to her in the 1990s. The author wouldn't have had that job if her friend, Alan, hadn't recommended her for it, and she goes on and on. This seems like a fun way to acknowledge the connection of gratitude to people, and it brings a smile to my face when reading about it.

So, in this month of thanksgiving and Thanksgiving, I am grateful to all of you—United Women in Faith—for all you do to turn faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children, and youth around the world.

Blessings,
Karen Saunders President, TWK Conference UWFaith

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