***Pastor’s Pieces for November***

*"Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing."*

- *1 Thessalonians 5:22*

Paul wrote to the church at Thessalonica at a time when that congregation was facing many challenges. As the capital of the province and a bustling seaport city, the new believers were surrounded by a mostly pagan culture. In addition, they had faced changes in leadership that may have been unsettling, having sent Paul off, welcomed Timothy back and then lost him again. Mostly converts from paganism (plus a few believing Jews), they probably felt a little shaky in their new-found faith. Paul wrote to encourage them in their trials, to give instruction in godly living, to urge some not to neglect daily work, and to give assurance regarding the future of believers who die before the return of Christ.

Living in the northern hemisphere, at this time of year change is all around us. The summer flowers are mostly gone; the fall harvest is coming to a climax; the changing tree colors yields to the next change: their fall (thus the name of this season. I have always enjoyed the cooler autumn weather and especially the way God uses His paintbrush so lavishly in our clime!

Change can be hard for any of us. At First English, there have been changes that have challenged us as we await a new full-time pastor. We pray that God is preparing a special person to serve us, as well as preparing us to welcome him or her into our fellowship. I am so grateful that so many of you have expressed appreciation for my gifts and presence among you. "Thank you" just doesn't seem strong enough for me to convey my feelings. I am also deeply moved by your encouragement of one another in the various ministries of FELC. We are surrounded, as was the church at Thessalonica, by a mostly pagan culture. Many times, we may be tempted to lose heart or to agree with the cultural voices rather than oppose them. As God gives us strength, let us not lose trust in God's love, care, plan, and provision. Let's act out our faith with kindness, generosity, joy, patience, and above all, love for one another. In this way, those looking on will see there is something special about "those people at First English Lutheran".

Serving with joy,

*Pastor Lisa+*

Pastor Lisa Peterson