



2009 General Assembly  
National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA  
Church World Service



*Rejoice Always,  
Pray without ceasing,  
Give thanks in all circumstances...*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

### **Preparing for General Assembly #3**

(#1 was included in the July mailing, and #2 was included in the August mailing)

1. **Reserve** the dates on your calendar, noting carefully when you need to arrive.

We recommend that you attend the “Celebration & Welcome Lunch for all delegates” starting on Tuesday, November 10 at 11:30 am.

The Opening Worship begins at 1:30 pm, and Plenary at 2:45 pm on November 10.

All delegates will have dinner with their delegations on Tuesday, November 10. This is an important time to meet with your head of communion, ecumenical officer, and others in your communion’s delegation.

2. **Study around the Biblical Passage:** Read the 1 Thessalonians 5: 16-18 scripture in preparation for the General Assembly study:

*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you. (NRSV)*

Read the pericope in another translation or interpretation for a potentially different view of this passage. Notice if something different or new strikes you as you read it again in the other version. Compare your impressions between the two (or more) translations.

The I Thessalonians text speaks with exuberance of the power of the Gospel and the church’s commitment to continuing in faithfulness to it. The epistle writer is concerned not only about the church’s survival, but its strengthening and growth, and that its adherents rightfully practice the tenants of the faith. Paul speaks clearly in this epistle to express the faith’s expectations and distinctions for living out the call of Christ within the church. Paul calls for the Thessalonian believers to honor the Body of Christ in their behaviors and attitudes toward each another, as well as those outside the faith.

Near the end of the short epistle, Paul calls the church to hold in tension both the future vision which is the promise of Christ, and the present reality of life in the faith. Both present and future perspectives are necessary in influencing present behavior as well as creating a long range view that makes being thankful in all circumstances more possible.

Consider the following exercises and questions:

- Take particular notice of the three phrases in I Thessalonians 5: 16-18. How do these three thoughts interact with one another? How are they different?
- What do these phrases teach us about the nature of life and discipleship? Which of these three aspects as reflected in the theme verses is generally easier for you? Which is presently more difficult for you?
- Reflect on the circumstances of your own life, the life of your church, and the life of the ecumenical movement. What areas of these lives do you continue to consistently pray for? What areas are you particularly thankful for in your own life, the life of your church, and the ecumenical movement?

Make notes of your reflections on the I Thessalonians 5 passage and its surrounding texts; bring these notes to the General Assembly to assist you in meaningful participation in group discussion around the Bible study and the theme. Please pray for the study leader(s) as they make preparations for and presentations at this year's General Assembly.

**3. Each week pray for the General Assembly, its member communions, its delegates, and its witness in the world.**

4. **Read** all the documents in this email and on the General Assembly webpage: <http://www.nccusa.org/ga2009>.

Check out the websites of the NCCC ([www.nccusa.org](http://www.nccusa.org)) and CWS ([www.churchworldservice.org](http://www.churchworldservice.org)). Both sites offer a comprehensive look at the ministry of the Council and are updated frequently.

**5. Contact** the Ecumenical Officer of your communion regarding how your communion will handle the registration process and hotel registration. Some communions have the individual delegates register themselves. Some communions register the entire delegation together.

**6. Complete** the General Assembly registration form (included) and send the completed form with payment to the NCC. See the registration form for the 3 ways to register.

**7. Register** with the Doubletree Hotel Minneapolis Park Place by **October 18, 2009 to receive the group rate** (see Hotel/Travel Information sheet on the webpage).

**8. Make** your travel plans. Please note that the Assembly does not end until Thursday evening with the celebration of the installation of the National Council's new president, The Rev. Peg Chamberlin and the closing worship that will be held at St. Mark's Cathedral. To participate fully in the entire Assembly, plan to depart on Friday morning, November 13.