

### **"THANKFUL"**

"I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you" (Philippians 1:3-4).

I can easily echo the Apostle Paul's words when I think about the people in Royal Palm Christian Church. I give thanks! As I've told the congregation before, once while I was away I heard some ministers complaining about one thing after another in the churches they serve. Time after time I responded, "It's not like that in our church. We have a great congregation."

It is rare to find such a marvelously diverse group of faith-filled people. For years I heard the line: "Sunday morning is the most segregated time of the week." Not around here! What draws us together is not skin deep. It is heart deep! We are one in Christ. We are attached at the heart by faith.

I thank God for the joy we share. Sure, we all have times when we are sad, disappointed or discouraged. But those are not the dominant feelings around here. Joy is what stands out. Many of you have heard me say, "We don't have any grumpy people around here." There might be a cranky moment or two here and there, but not much. Joy radiates from worship to committee meetings to fellowship gatherings to Bible studies.

I am thankful for the open and accepting ways found among the members of Royal Palm Christian Church. The controlling impulse is to open our arms to others. We are not guarded, cautious or suspicious. Instead we are truly "an embracing church." We don't smother people but we welcome them with graciousness and appreciation.

I thank God for the willingness of members of the church to serve. Sure, everyone does not serve equally. But there are people who give of themselves generously and without hesitation. The Fall Fiesta we have each year is possible only because of the willingness of our members and our Preschool staff to serve God and others. I am grateful.

Yes, we still have needs. I am conscious of the job needs and monetary needs of some of our members. I'm certainly aware of the financial needs of the church as we struggle to pay for the necessary expenses of doing ministry. Nevertheless, I am abundantly thankful for all of you and the good work we share for the glory of God.