

# BUILDING A CULTURE OF GENEROSITY



As we seek to build a capacity for generosity, one of the deep faith practices of discipleship, we continue to challenge one another as the church to open our hands in giving. Please prayerfully consider how you can grow in your own generosity.

*An idea for someone whose income has gone down in the last year:*

Everyone can grow in generosity, even if that means the overall dollars given decreases. Perhaps, if before your income decreased you were giving away 2% of your income, now with income being less, can you find a way to grow the percentage of giving to 3 or 4%. There are people in our congregation who will need to decrease the total dollars given because of loss of work or other reasons.

*Other ideas:*

1. Systematic giving leads to generosity: For most people, we can grow significantly in our giving just by making our gift on a regular basis. Sign up for automatic giving or just add an amount each week or month. Growing giving by \$1 per day equates to significant growth over the course of the year.
2. An extra gift or two during the year: A story was shared from a congregation that participated in this program last year about someone who said, "I'm not sure what the future holds for me, but for now I am doing okay, so I will double my giving in the month of April". Well, what if we all decided to double our giving one month or even two months next year?
3. Give in a tax efficient way. If you are age 70.5 or older, you are able to give directly from a traditional IRA/401k to the church and have that distribution qualify as your Required Distribution. Or, if you have an appreciated asset, you can give that to the church and avoid capital gains. Please contact the church or your tax professional for all the rules and requirements of this. Most people find they can be more generous when giving in a tax efficient manner.

You may have your own ideas for growing in generosity. As a church family, as we each grow in our generosity, it will have a tremendous overall impact.

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## HAVE FAITH AND ASSUME SUFFICIENCY NOT SCARCITY

Many fear they will not have enough to live on. This is called The Scarcity Assumption. It is human and natural, but it is not Christian.

Our faith teaches us that God will provide sufficiently for all our needs if we but trust in God's promises. And this is so even when we give away the largest portion or amount that we have ever given!

So we must have faith that a good and gracious God will continue to provide for us in the future as God has in the past. And as God has promised to do!

We are to trust God as did Abraham of old, and the Apostle Paul, and so many others throughout the pages of the Bible. These examples were written for our instruction and for our assurance. We must learn to give in faith with the assumption of sufficiency, not scarcity. God will provide for God cares for us.

This morning we hear a message about Paul and the Church of Ephesus, and how the entire community was transformed to give up on things that didn't give them true life, rather they invested their lives fully in the abundant life of Jesus. And with Jesus there's always enough.

