

***Embrace***

***Generosity***



***Metro DC Synod***

***Stewardship Resources***

## INTRODUCTION

Designed to coincide with fall's Year C Lectionary cycle, this stewardship resource was developed in 2013 by the Metropolitan Washington D.C. Synod, ELCA. With permission, the Lower Susquehanna Synod has adapted it for the 2019 Year C cycle. We hope it will give pastors and other Stewardship leaders a template of ideas to use. If you are planning a Stewardship Campaign this fall, this material might be particularly useful as it outlines a five- week suggested program beginning on September 29, 2019, though it is adaptable to any date. May this effort bless the people of your congregation with the extraordinary generosity that we first know through God in Christ.

**Special thanks to the members of the Stewardship and Mission Table of the Metro Washington DC Synod, who originally created this resource, and to the Table chairman, the Rev. Dave Sonnenberg, for giving us permission to use and adapt it.**

**Rev. Rob Blezard**  
Assistant to the Bishop  
Lower Susquehanna Synod  
rblezard@lss-elca.org

**This fall we invite you to consider using some of these resources as part of your Stewardship Campaign. Consider setting aside five weeks in which you:**

1. Have your members use a 30-day devotional called Generosity: Moving Toward Life That Is Truly Life. (see page 6)
2. Hold weekly discussions on Generosity (four weeks). Discussion guides are provided in the book. (see page 7)
3. Plan a sermon series to "Embrace Generosity" (see pages 8-12).  
Lectionary and non-Lectionary ideas presented for 9/29 - 10/20.
4. Present four Mission Moments in worship. (see page 13)
5. Have a Commitment Sunday with a time of member fellowship. (see page 14)
6. Craft a Narrative Budget. (see pages 20-23)
7. Plan a follow-up strategy for post-Commitment Sunday plus 2020 introduction. (see pages 15-16)

All we have is a gift from God — our time, our talent, and our financial resources. If we can help others discover the joy of living the generous life, we have done profound and life-changing work. As Loren Mead, educator and Episcopal priest, once said, "God is always calling us to be more than we are right now." Let's help people do that this year. Let's help **embrace generosity** so that our members, our churches, and our synod can "be more than we are right now."

## EMBRACE GENEROSITY

***“Generosity is something we want for you, not from you!”*** Pastor Andy Stanley

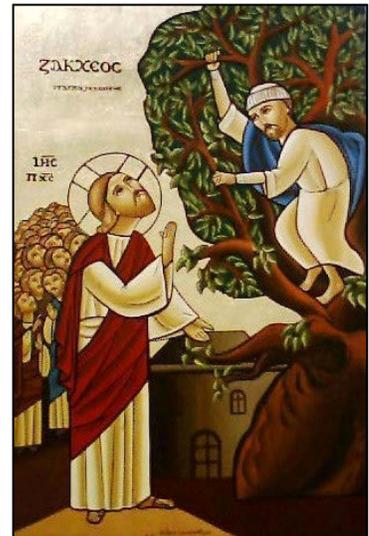
To “**embrace**” something is to:

1. Clasp or hold close, usually with great affection.
2. Eagerly accept something or someone;
3. Take up willingly or eagerly.

On November 1, 2019, the Lectionary gives us the story of Zacchaeus the Tax Collector (Luke 19:1-10). You might consider: 1) using that text on All Saints Sunday this year, 2) using it as your Stewardship Commitment Sunday text, or 3) simply be reminded of its powerful message as you lead your congregation in a Stewardship emphasis this year. Zacchaeus’ story is a story of “EMBRACING GENEROSITY.”

Many of us grew up singing Zacchaeus’ song (hint -- “Zacchaeus was a wee little man and a wee little man was he . . .”) but the emphasis was on being vertically challenged. It appealed to us as kids when everyone was so much taller. But, we missed the message’s power.

As a tax collector in the 1st Century world, Zacchaeus was viewed skeptically by others. He was considered a “taker”; one who put his interests before the needs of others, and one who lacked credibility. But, one day he meets Jesus and Jesus treats him differently. Jesus invites himself over for lunch and as my friend David Misenheimer likes to say, “Something must have happened at that lunch.” In the course of that lunch, there must have been food. There must have been conversation. But, no doubt — something happened at lunch! For after lunch, Zacchaeus is so moved by his connection to Jesus, he unleashes a pledge to give in a profound way. Rather than “take,” he is moved to give back. In gratitude Zacchaeus says, “Look, half of my possessions, Lord, I will give to the poor; and if I have defrauded anyone of anything, I will pay him back four times as much.”



And then what does Jesus say? “Today *salvation* has come to this house.” The word for *salvation* also means “healing” and “wholeness”! Zacchaeus encountered the loving embrace of Jesus and he quickly embraced the generous life.

May we do the same with the people of the Metro DC Synod this fall -- help them experience the embrace of God that they also might experience, like Zacchaeus did, the healing that comes from living a generous life.

***Pastor Dave Sonnenberg, Chair of Stewardship and Mission Table***  
***pastordave@goserve.net***

## “Embrace Generosity” Timeline



### PRE-CAMPAIGN WORK

#### Summer 2019

Church Council develops 2020 Narrative Budget.

Order copies of the devotional "Generosity."

Recruit leaders for "Generosity" discussion groups (4 weeks).

Establish date for kick off for Stewardship Campaign along with date for Commitment Sunday.

#### Approx. 6 Weeks Before Kick Off

Pastor writes newsletter article on fall series and offers encouraging words for devotion/small group discussion.

#### 3-4 Weeks Before Kick Off

First letter sent by Stewardship Chair announcing dates and times of discussion groups and information about picking up "Generosity" devotion book.

#### 2-3 Sundays Before Kick Off

Have books available in lobby for members to pick up/purchase. Have church roster available to mark off those who have "picked up a copy."

### CAMPAIGN PHASE

#### One Week Before Kick Off

Members begin doing the daily devotions in preparation for first discussion group.

#### Week 1 - Kick Off

First Sunday of Sermon Series "Embrace Generosity."

Mission Moment #1 in Worship.

Small Group Discussion Session 1.

**Week 2** Second Sunday of Sermon Series “Embrace Generosity.”  
Mission Moment #2 in Worship.  
Small Group Discussion 2.

**Week 3** Third Sunday of Sermon Series “Embrace Generosity.”  
Mission Moment #3 in Worship.  
Small Group Discussion 3.  
Second letter sent with 2020 Narrative Budget and  
2020 Ministry Year Pledge Card.

**Week 4** Fourth Sunday of Sermon Series “Embrace Generosity.”  
Mission Moment #4 in Worship.  
Small Group Discussion 4.

**Week 5** Commitment Sunday Worship.  
Commitment Sunday Fellowship.

## **POST-COMMITMENT SUNDAY**

**Between Week 5-6** Send Thank-You Letter to pledgers (suggest hand-signed by Pastor). *Continue to send thank-you letters as further pledges come in!*

**After 3 Sundays** Send a Stewardship Campaign progress letter and an invitation to pledge to those who have not yet pledged (with self-addressed, stamped envelope).

**Sunday Bulletin (for 4 weeks)** Share progress on pledging.

## ACTION ITEM #1 - PROVIDE DEVOTIONAL BOOK

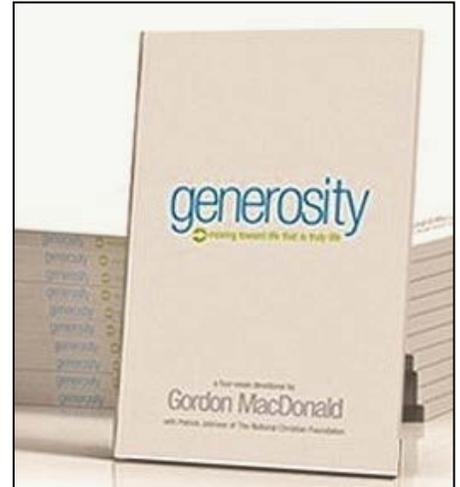
Provide every household in your church a copy of Generosity: Moving Toward Life That Is Truly Life by Gordon MacDonald. You can buy it for your members, pay a portion of the cost, or ask people for a contribution to cover the expense. Whatever you decide, make sure you get it in people's hands.

Generosity: Moving Toward Life That Is Truly Life is a 30-day devotional that includes a discussion guide for weekly group gatherings. Members are asked to read the devotions each day and then gather weekly with a group to discuss what they've been reading.

### **COST**

If you have an Amazon Kindle or a Kindle App on your mobile device, you can get the devotional for \$3.99.

Amazon also has used copies available starting at 10 cents (plus shipping).



### **HAND OUT DEVOTIONAL EARLY**

It's our suggestion that you hand out this book 1-2 weeks before you have your first discussion class! Ask people to read Week One in preparation for the first discussion group.

*"Generosity by Gordon MacDonald is a very insightful book and builds on the core understanding that 'all we have is a gift from God.' It focuses on gratitude and appreciation in a way that is exceedingly helpful. It's one of the best devotionals on giving that I've encountered. I highly recommend the book to others."*

*Pastor Dave Sonnenberg, Good Shepherd Lutheran Church Gaithersburg, MD*

## **ACTION ITEM #2 - FORM WEEKLY DISCUSSION GROUP(S)**

As you prepare to hand out the devotional, Generosity, invite people to be a part of a small group discussion. This can be your Sunday adult class topic for four weeks, a midweek option, or a small group gathering. Decide what works best for your church. Key: Make time for people to talk together on the topic of generosity.



### **HOW MANY WEEKS OF DISCUSSION?**

Four weeks.

*Note: The fourth discussion gathering should occur one week before your Commitment Sunday.*

### **RECRUIT FACILITATORS**

You will need to train several facilitators to help lead small group discussions. Hand out copies of Generosity to some key Stewardship leaders, Council members, or others who will read the entire book in advance, familiarize themselves with the material, and commit to helping with all four discussions. We suggest that you have a meeting with facilitators *after they* have read the book and become familiar with all the material. Having a question and answer time before you launch them as group leaders will allow them to own the Generosity approach.

### **DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

A discussion guide for the weekly gatherings is included in the book.

[www.Generouschurch.com/](http://www.Generouschurch.com/) also has some additional videos which are free that you can download for use.

### **OTHER BENEFITS**

In some churches, you simply don't get enough time to engage in conversation with others. An intentional small group experience can help connect people to each other in a more profound way. The first few moments of these small groups can certainly be dedicated to "catching up" or "checking in" with each other.

### **A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT TO PASTORS**

Pastors, make sure that you use the opportunities in advance to champion participation in the small group experience. Use sermons, newsletters, a temple talk, and/or announcement time to encourage maximum participation. Don't hesitate to send a personally signed note to every person in the church. Key: Use the opportunities that you have to encourage people to participate.

## **ACTION ITEM #3 - PREACH ON “EMBRACING GENEROSITY”**

Preach a sermon series that looks at Generosity from multiple angles. Below are some ideas for a non-lectionary based series and one based on lectionary texts.

### **Use Devotional Themes from “Generosity” Each Week**

As there are four weeks to the devotional, Generosity, pick one of the texts for the week and preach on that story. Then, pick a fifth Sunday Story to use as the Commitment Sunday message.

### **Example of Non-Lectionary Ideas for a Five-Week Series**

**Week 1      It All Starts with Jesus: Portrait of God’s Generosity**

Text -- John 13:1-17, 34

**Week 2      Giving Grounds Us**

Text -- I Timothy 6:6-19 & Luke 16:19-31

(Assigned on 9/29 in the Lectionary)

**Week 3      When Giving May Not Make Sense**

Text -- I Kings 17

Note: Giving is an act of faith and trust in ongoing provision.

**Week 4      The Barnabas in All of Us**

Text -- Acts 4:32-37 (Barnabas and the generosity of the Early Church)

Note: Generosity is contagious, powerful, and good evangelism.

**Week 5      Commitment Sunday:**

**The Great Length to Giving, Giving as Worship**

Text -- Matthew 2 (The Magi)

Note: We don’t often hear this Epiphany story as a Stewardship message but it’s a powerful witness of generosity and gratitude.



# Embrace Generosity: Preaching Notes on Lessons for Stewardship

Sermon Series for September 29 – October 20, 2019

The following notes contributed by Pastor John. S. Kidd of Augustana Lutheran Church, Washington, DC, offer a reading of the assigned texts that connects them to the Stewardship theme “Embrace Generosity.”



**SEPTEMBER 29**

**Amos 6:1a, 4–7**

**Psalm 146**

**1 Timothy 6:6–19**

**Luke 16:19–31**

**Notes:** From beginning to end, today’s texts challenge the preacher to live the vocation of comforting the afflicted and afflicting the comfortable.

The first Lesson begins with the word “alas.” “Alas for those who are at ease.” Alas for those who lounge comfortably in their well-furnished homes with a healthy stock portfolio, enjoying food and drink, channeling music through their ear buds that block out everything else ... and are not aggrieved by the damage to God’s people and community.

The Gospel story of the rich man and Lazarus does not get any of us off the hook. Consumed by his own consumption and tossed into Hades, the rich man pleads for forgiveness, for relief, and for the dead Lazarus to do something extreme that will get his brothers’ attention so that they can change their ways. But Abraham says, “No, you blew it” -- and they have chosen to ignore Moses and the prophets. You have had lots of chances and warnings but you pursued your parties, comforts, and profits while people round you suffered.

Timothy tells people that they need to “embrace generosity.” “As for those who in the present age are rich, command them not to be haughty ... <sup>18</sup> They are to do good, to be rich in good works, generous, and ready to share, <sup>19</sup> thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they may take hold of the life that really is life.”

The Psalmist describes how embracing generosity affects people: “<sup>5</sup> Happy are those whose help is the God of Jacob, whose hope is in the Lord their God, <sup>6</sup> who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; who keeps faith forever; <sup>7</sup> who executes justice for the oppressed; who gives food to the hungry.”

The Gospel proclaims two things: God ultimately comforts the afflicted Lazarus and all who are ignored by the comfortable ones. And God blesses those who embrace the generosity that God extends to those whom life has bent down with hunger, blindness, imprisonment, and the hardship of being widowed or orphaned.



## OCTOBER 6

**Habakkuk 1:1 - 4; 2:1 - 4**

**Psalm 37:1 - 9**

**2 Timothy 1:1-14**

**Luke 17: 5 - 10**

**Notes:** Preachers are called to plant and cultivate trust and faith in the hearts and minds of their listeners. Where last week's texts challenged listeners to find happiness by placing their hope in God whose generosity is abundant, this week's readings point to trust and faith in God as the foundation on which embracing generosity finds solid footing. But this footing is not easily gained.

As Habakkuk laments, "O Lord, how long shall I cry for help, and you will not listen? Or cry to you 'Violence!' and you will not save? Why do you make me see wrongdoing and look at trouble? Destruction and violence are before me; strife and contention arise." Based on what he and we see, wouldn't it be smart to watch, look and listen but not take any risks by putting ourselves out there? God responds with a new vision saying, "Write the vision; make it plain on tablets, so that a runner may read it." People who are constantly in a rush need large print signboards that can be read at 65 miles per hour.

Paul tries large print for Timothy: "God did not give us a spirit of cowardice, but rather a spirit of power and of love and of self-discipline." In this spirit Paul is not afraid of boldly stepping out of his comfort zone. As he explains it, "I know the one in whom I have put my trust."

The Psalmist picks up this theme:

"Trust in the Lord, and do good; so you will live in the land, and enjoy security.  
Take delight in the Lord, and he will give you the desires of your heart."

Trusting in the Lord is the foundation for embracing and doing what is good. And delighting in the Lord rolls into the realization of the desires of one's heart. But that leaves the BIG QUESTION: What is your heart's desire?

This is a question for a lifetime. In your heart of hearts, what do you want? As I have listened to shut-ins, hospital patients, fiancés, Confirmation class kids, and others, from heart after heart the answer that I repeatedly hear is to be embraced by people "whom I can trust"... "in whom I can put my faith"... "whom I can love and who will love me back"... "to whom I can give myself with confidence that I will be treasured more than I treasure myself." So, the disciples' request of the Lord makes sense: "Increase our faith."

And Jesus tells them that even the puny faith they already have can produce incredible bounty. The microscopic mustard seed can grow to the size of a mulberry tree. Faith is a multiplier ... a geometric progression. Faith is an imagination-stretcher that pushes and pulls one into visions of what can be and overshadow one's biggest and best ideas. Its dimensions are incredibly generous. Embracing even the puny seed of faith that one has in one's heart this fall takes one onto the arms of God. And God's arms stretch out with us in them to share and care for the world. When we embrace God we embrace generosity.



**OCTOBER 13**

**2 Kings 5:1–3, 7–15c**

**Psalm 111**

**2 Timothy 2:8–15**

**Luke 17:11–19**

**Notes:** Are you thankful, preacher? Do you give thanks that God somehow manages to lift you up every seventh day to go into the church, proclaim God’s word and celebrate Christ’s living presence in your life through the sacrament? Odds are that the answer is no.

The last two weeks’ texts challenged readers to find happiness by placing their hope in God and lay a foundation of trust and faith that are the solid footings we need to embrace God’s generosity. This week’s question is, "How does one respond when God embraces one with generosity?" And the answer is usually "Not well."

Those who learned their Catechism will recall how Martin Luther turned "Give us this day our daily bread" into a petition that we might receive God’s gifts with grateful hearts. It seems human nature is not predisposed toward gratitude and that thanksgiving may be countercultural in a consumer society that has elevated purchasing and consumer debt to the level of civic duties for the good of the economy. So how do you react when God’s arms generously reach out to embrace you?

In today’s Gospel, nine of ten lepers whom Jesus cured did not return to praise and thank Jesus for what he did. The one who did "prostrated himself (i.e. lay down on his belly face first in the dirt) at Jesus’ feet and thanked him." To make matters worse, he was a Samaritan whom Jews would continue to ostracize while his nine home-boy colleagues would be reintegrated into society. In short, the one who gained the least was the thankful one.

These little zingers continue with Namaan in the first Reading. This most powerful Aramean military general is a leper who, though feeling disrespected by Elisha, follows his instructions in the paltry Jordan River and is cured of his disease. Humbled but healthy, he shows up on Elisha’s doorstep ("he came and stood before him") to offer a gift of gratitude. It seems that the outsiders, the Samaritan and the Aramean, are the thankful ones and the insiders are not. The nine insiders said nothing and offered no gifts.

In this mix, in his epistle to Timothy, Paul advises that "if we are faithless, he remains faithful — for he cannot deny himself." We act in bad faith when we fail to respond to God with thanks for the generosity extended to us. But it is God’s nature to keep placing trust and faith in us. Paul points to a yet higher bench mark set by God’s generosity and a more profound depth for the thanks due to God from us. As today’s readings present God’s generosity, they push their listeners to acknowledge the extreme generosity to which God’s arms will reach out for them and the profound depths from which their "thanks be to God" should come.



**OCTOBER 20**

**Genesis 32:22 - 31**

**Psalm 121**

**2 Timothy 3:14, 4:5**

**Luke 18:1–8**

**Notes:** Preacher, when it comes to what you say to people about God's, take to heart Paul's admonition to Timothy in today's Epistle: "I solemnly urge you: Proclaim the message; be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable; convince, rebuke, and encourage, with the utmost patience in teaching." In other words, be gutsy! And tell people they need to be gutsy too!

The first lesson provides Jacob as a role model for gutsiness. Daring to take on God in a wrestling match, he proves unshakeable. Permanently disabled by a karate chop to the hip, Jacob still holds on. When God tries the "times up" trick, Jacob says, "Not yet ... not until you have given me your blessing." And God makes a concession and changes his name to Israel while saying, "You have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed." This is what happens to people whom God embraces when they embrace God in return. As Israel puts it, "I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved."

The parable of the widow's refusal to let go of her quest for justice speaks to the power of embracing and not letting go. She simply wears down the judge until he rules in her favor. Jesus then asks, "Will not God grant justice to his chosen ones who cry to him day and night? Will he delay long in helping them? I tell you, he will quickly grant justice to them."

Nonetheless, Jesus follows up with the gutsiest question of today: "When the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on earth?" Will God's people have had the guts it takes to embrace and not let go of God? Or, counting on God for unrelenting faithfulness, will they simply "let go and let God" find them wherever they are and fix them however damaged they have become?

God generously extends divinely human arms to embrace us. Jacob relentlessly embraced God and God's blessing beyond hurt and pain. How gutsy is our commitment to embracing God and God's generosity? Paul advised Timothy, "Be persistent whether the time is favorable or unfavorable."

Jacob, Paul, the widow and Timothy cannot embrace and persist in the generosity of God on our behalf. They simply show us that we can respond to God's generosity to us by gratefully wrapping our very human arms around God's divine generosity.

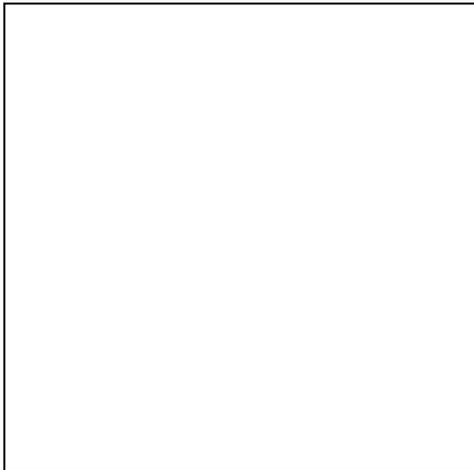
Happy are they who set all else aside and, with all their trust and faith, embrace generosity!

## ACTION ITEM #4 - MISSION MOMENTS

As part of “Embrace Generosity” congregations are encouraged to schedule three or four Mission Moments during the Stewardship Campaign to emphasize commitment. Mission Moments can be presented during worship and work particularly well preceding the offering.

### **Why do we give Mission Moments?**

We give mission moments to help people understand where their offerings are going. Sometimes people don't realize how integral their offerings are to the life of the church. It is your giving that makes the ministries of your congregation possible. Mission interpretation is all about telling stories of what God is doing through our giving. Furthermore, we give Mission Moments to thank people. We are so grateful for their generosity and we want them to know it.



### **What should a Mission Moment include?**

Though Mission Moments are flexible, try to keep them between two and three minutes so that you don't lose members' attention.

If you have a screen in your sanctuary, consider recording the Temple Talk in advance and showing it during the worship service.

The most effective Mission Moment tells a story. Choose one story (the time the soup kitchen patron brought in his own donation; the meaningful lesson a teacher learned from a Sunday School student) and focus on that. Make sure that you include *why* this story made an impression on you. It's your personal testimony that makes the story compelling. Your enthusiasm is more inspiring than statistics.

Lastly and most importantly, Mission Moments should always thank everyone for their generosity. Help people understand that these ministries would not be possible without generous gifts of time and service as well as financial support.

### **What makes an effective Mission Moment?**

Choose stories or topics that are most interesting to the speakers. If your congregation would like to lift up the story of its food pantry, ask a food pantry volunteer to share a story. You can reinforce the message of your Mission Moment in several ways: Include the same story in the Sunday bulletin; expand upon the presentations in the church newsletter; display pictures, story summaries, quotes and graphics on a bulletin board; and use mission interpretation stories on your congregation's Web site. We encourage you to vary your presentations to show how offerings support ministries at congregational, synodical and churchwide levels.

### **Public speaking has always made me nervous. Do you have any tips?**

Yes! Practice beforehand. Rehearsing will help you sound more prepared and help you identify any trouble areas. Know your time limit and stick to it. And lastly, be positive and upbeat.

## ACTION ITEM #5 - COMMITMENT SUNDAY

Designate a Commitment Sunday no later than Christ the King Sunday (November 24, 2019).

A few words of advice:

**Plan a special service** in which the preacher/worship leaders can help the church celebrate the joy of collective generosity.

**Have an intentional time in the Commitment Sunday service to fill out pledge cards.** We recommend that your Stewardship Leader, Guest Speaker, or Council President come forward and provide specific instruction before the pledge cards are handed out. People should be invited to come forward and place their cards on the altar.



Here's a possible script to use:

*"We have been focused these last several weeks on Generosity. We began the journey with the key reminder that God is the most gracious and generous giver of all. We are God's children and entrusted to represent him in this community. As God is generous to the core, we strive to do that with all that we've been given -- our time, our talent, and our finances.*

*This morning, I invite you to join me in making a commitment of your finances: To say thanks to God for your blessings and to help further God's work through the ministry of \_\_\_\_\_ Lutheran Church. When we commit to something, we are doing something very significant. We are stating that we will do something specific and carry it through.*

*I invite you today to join the people of this church in committing to growing in generosity in the coming year. I am going to ask the ushers to come forward and hand out the pledge cards. Take a moment, say a prayer, fill out your pledge card by stating what percentage of income you will give in the coming year, then bring it forward and place on the altar.*

*We bring it to the altar because our giving is an act of worship. It's an act of gratitude. It's our promise to share and live as generous followers of Jesus. We have been saved by God's grace and it's our responsibility to give back: To share this good news as God's hands and feet in this world.*

*When you're done, come and join in a time of food, fellowship, and conversation in the social hall."*

**Have a special Fellowship time.** Go the extra mile and have a special breakfast or lunch as part of the day. Have people sit at tables for conversation while they eat. As part of that time, consider showing a slide show of your ministry. As they say, "a picture is worth 1,000 words." Show photos of your congregational members serving and making a difference. If you don't have a projector and/or laptop, consider borrowing one for this occasion. If you need help making a Powerpoint presentation, just ask in an upcoming worship service. Some adult or teenager will gladly lend a hand and have all the expertise you need.

## ACTION ITEM #6 - START THANK-YOU LETTERS

**It's incredibly important that you acknowledge every pledge quickly and personally.**

A sample thank-you letter is included in this packet.

We recommend that the thank you be personally signed by the Pastor (albeit prepared by others or staff). Pastors: Use this letter to jot some other personal notes of thanksgiving, i.e. "John, I am so grateful for your ongoing help with the Property Committee. Your efforts have made a huge difference this year."



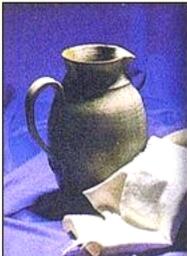
## ACTION ITEM #7 - AFTER COMMITMENT SUNDAY

**Keep sending the thank-you letters as pledges come in.**

**Post Pledge Progress** for four Sundays in bulletin and keep the message positive!

**Send a reminder letter** 15 days after Commitment Sunday to those who have not responded. No guilt. Celebrate the giving that has occurred and invite them to join in on the generous giving. Note: Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope with the pledge card so they can reply promptly to your church.

**Create an online Pledge Card** to follow up with others. You may use a tool like Survey Monkey (surveymonkey.com) and alert people they can respond with a commitment that way as well.

	<b>2014 PLEDGE RESULTS</b>	As of November 10, 2013
	So far — \$XXX,XXX from 193 households <i>Thanks for your generous support of Your Church's and God's ministries</i>	
	INCREASES:	146 households, including 29 new pledges
	SAME:	36 households
	DECREASES:	12 households
	<i>Total of \$xx,xxx in increased commitments</i>	
	<b>MAKE A PLEDGE FOR MINISTRY YEAR 2014 — it's not too late!</b>	
	1) Fill out a pledge online at <a href="http://www.yourchurch.net/stewardship">www.yourchurch.net/stewardship</a>	
	2) Additional Pledge Cards in Lobby — return completed card to church office.	
	<b>Questions to Business Manager at <a href="mailto:office@yourchurch.net">office@yourchurch.net</a> or 301-xxx-xxxx.</b>	

## ACTION ITEM #8 - CRAFT 2020 STEWARDSHIP PLAN

Below are a number of “best practices” that our Stewardship and Mission Table encourages you to implement in the coming year.

### ACTION ITEMS TO CONSIDER

-- Consider using the Augsburg Fortress Envelope Mailing Program. With this program, envelopes are conveniently mailed directly to your members' homes on a monthly, bi-monthly, quarterly, or semi-annual basis. Each member will receive an individually addressed set that includes weekly Sunday offering envelopes and any Special Fund envelopes.

-- Send Mission Letter each quarter with Giving Statement to each household.

-- Incorporate Giving education into New Member classes, and consider providing every new household with a copy of the "Generosity" devotional.

-- Preach on Financial Giving at least once per quarter in 2020.

-- Consider a class on financial education (i.e. Financial Peace).

-- Encourage electronic or online giving.

-- Create Electronic Giving Cards so e-givers can put something in offering plate.

-- Invite Alice Benson (ELCA Regional Gift Planner) to do a forum on Legacy Giving in your church.

-- Assign your Stewardship Committee/Church Council to read one of the following:

Not Your Parent's Offering Plate by Clif Christopher

Whose Offering Plate Is It? by Clif Christopher

Rich Church, Poor Church by Clif Christopher

Enough by Adam Hamilton

-- Pray for Generosity in your public prayers often.

-- Pray for the Ministry of our Synod often.

-- **Ask for help. If you'd like support, touch base with a member of the Stewardship and Mission Table.**



# RESOURCES AND SAMPLES



**In the pages that follow are samples  
that you can use/adapt  
as part of your  
“Embrace Generosity” Campaign  
with your church.**

**FIRST LETTER SAMPLE**  
**Sent 3-4 Weeks Before Kick Off to Fall Campaign**

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

To “**embrace**” something is: To clasp or hold something close, to eagerly accept something or someone; and/or take something up willingly or eagerly. One of the great hopes of any church ministry is to “unleash” disciples into the world who have embraced generosity as a core value. Generous disciples, like the early Christian church, have a profound impact and leave an incredible mark on the world. Who among us has not had our lives enriched by someone who has been a witness of extreme generosity?

This fall, to help us grow in our faith and commitment to Christ, we are participating with other congregations in the Metro DC Synod in a program called “Embrace Generosity.” As part of this program, we are asking you to read a daily devotional called Generosity: Moving Toward Life That Is Truly Life which are going to be available in the church lobby on ( \_\_\_\_ insert date). A generous donor in our church has purchased copies for every household in our church!

In addition to reading that simple daily devotional, we invite you to gather with others around God’s Word and join a discussion group for one hour, each Sunday for four weeks. The discussion groups are based on the weekly readings. Sign up at the church or by email \_\_\_\_\_. Each Sunday a member of our congregation will share a Mission Moment as to what God is doing in his or her life through the ministry of our congregation. On Sunday, November \_\_\_\_ we will celebrate Commitment Sunday here at “My Lutheran Church \_\_\_\_\_.” Together we hope to share a message of God’s abundance and our commitment to greater service and generosity to Christ and his church.

I hope you will be a part of this opportunity to pray, talk, worship and give.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor \_\_\_\_\_

**SECOND LETTER SAMPLE**  
**Sent 12-14 Days Before Commitment Sunday**

Dated

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

**November** \_\_\_\_ is our church's Commitment Sunday. This fall, I have been so pleased as many of you have been reading the 30-day devotional Generosity and then gathering on Sunday mornings for discussion. Many of you have told me how valuable those discussions have been and also how you've gotten to know others in our church home much better. We've also been blessed with several wonderful Mission Moments in worship, in which we've heard how our ministry has been changing the lives of our members in profound ways.

To prepare us for Commitment Sunday, I have included information to help you in your discernment in making your Stewardship commitment. The first item is a Narrative Budget that gives you a sense of what we do with the money that is given each and every Sunday, and the impact that it has on lives. The second is a worksheet for reflecting on your own level of giving and an invitation to grow as we seek to serve Christ in mission. Finally, I am including a copy of the 2020 Pledge Card. I invite you to prayerfully consider what percentage of your income God is calling you to give in 2020, in gratitude and appreciation for all he has done in your life.

Your generous giving will help our church move forward in profound and important ways in 2020.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor \_\_\_\_\_

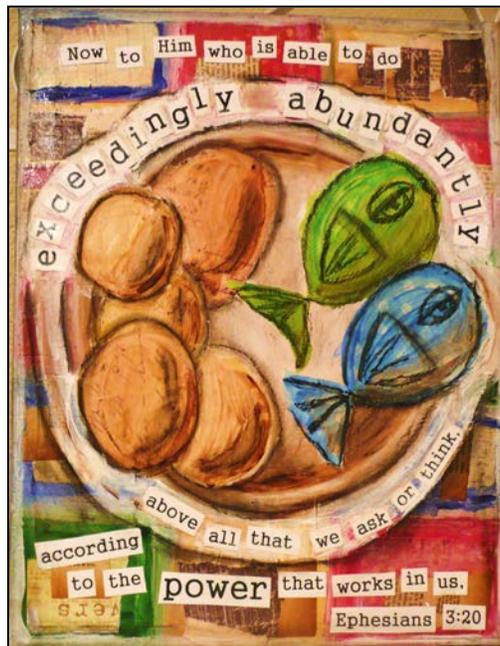
Attn: Narrative Budget  
Giving Guide Worksheet  
2020 Pledge Card

## SAMPLE NARRATIVE BUDGET OF CHURCH MINISTRY

A narrative budget of ministries is a great tool to explore the fruits of the stewardship of church disciples.

While a church's budget is focused on the amount of money necessary to keep the ministry, a Narrative Budget of Ministry instead highlights the ministries the church provides.

A sample Narrative Budget is on the pages that follow.



If you would like help crafting a Narrative for your ministry year, please contact the Stewardship and Mission Team and they can help you.

Some resources are posted on the Stewardship and Mission Page on the synod's Web site. [www.metrodcelca.org](http://www.metrodcelca.org). Go to far right tab "For Congregations" and visit the Stewardship and Mission link (near bottom). Other Narrative Budgets are there as well.

# NARRATIVE CHURCH BUDGET SAMPLE

## MY LUTHERAN CHURCH 2020 Ministry Year Narrative Budget



According to Matthew, the last words of the risen Christ to His disciples are these:

*“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Go therefore and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you; and remember, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Matthew 28: 18-20*

From the very beginning of the Christian Church, then, discipleship has been our God-given charge. Everything we do at **My Lutheran Church** \_\_\_\_ is in response to this charge. As a large church with many resources, we recognize we have a profound opportunity to bring people closer to God and each other in our day and age. We take that task very seriously.

The **Ministry Year 2020 Budget** reflects ministries and mission, new and ongoing, which help us fulfill our charge of growing as disciples and making disciples of others. Our generous giving -- our commitment of time, talent, and financial resources -- makes the fulfillment of this charge possible. Your gifts to the **Ministry Year 2020 Budget** will help us grow 21<sup>st</sup> Century disciples through the ministries and mission of the church. Your commitment to support **Our Church's** ministry is like the fuel that is needed to drive a car. Without it, you can't get very far. However, when you pledge and give faithfully, you are helping to provide the fuel that strengthens, encourages, and equips 21<sup>st</sup> Century disciples for their frontline daily ministries.

**Our hope is that you will read this with joy and enthusiasm, and you will respond by offering a pledge on Commitment Sunday, \_\_\_\_ insert date. By making a commitment to “unleash the generosity” in your own life, you will help our church move ahead in profound ways. Thanks in advance for sharing from your God-given financial resources.**

***Please Bring Your Pledge Card to Worship:  
Commitment Sunday \_\_\_\_ Insert Date***

***You're invited to join us for a celebration brunch  
in the Fellowship Hall after each worship service.  
There is no Sunday School that day,  
so that all can enjoy the time for food and fellowship.***

## MINISTRY YEAR 2020 BUDGET

To be this church in 2020, we anticipate using your gifts in the following ways to provide for the ministries, programs, and mission of this congregation. Our **Ministry Year 2020 Budget** of \$\_\_\_\_\_ is designated to support the implementation of our Master Ministry Plan for the benefit of all members of this congregation and community. The figures are projections that include the further development of all ministry areas. Amounts for each segment include allocations for professional program staff compensation, benefits, and expenses.

<b>Social Outreach and Benevolence Ministry</b>	\$____,____	____%
---	-------------	-------

*"Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me."  
(Matthew 25:40)*

*\*My Lutheran Church has had a strong commitment to social ministry throughout its history. We support numerous outreach programs in our local community; many of which directly minister to the homeless and the poorest of the poor. Organizations such as my favorite soup kitchen are but a few examples of groups we support financially and with "hands-on service." In addition, My Lutheran Church will support a second Disaster Relief Trip this Summer to Mississippi as well as our summer work camp for teenagers. Additional funds are given to our National Church and the ELCA Disaster Response Fund. In 2020, we plan to step up our giving percentage to the ELCA to 7.5% in hopes of reaching 10% in the next several years.*

<b>Worship and Music Ministry</b>	\$____,____	____%
-----------------------------------	-------------	-------

*I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go to the house of the Lord!" (Psalm 122:1)*

At the heart of our church life are those sacred times when we gather to sing, pray, hear the Word, and celebrate Communion. Our pastoral staff dedicates time each week for sermon planning and preparation. They work hard to make sure that Sunday messages are relevant and help make a connection between the Biblical texts and our daily lives. Many of our new members tell us that they chose to join our congregation because of the vibrant, enthusiastic, and high-quality music that is a regular part of our worship experience. We are blessed to have the resources to provide both Traditional and Contemporary worship each Sunday, which enables us to reach out to people who yearn to hear the Gospel but have different musical preferences. We also provide an informal worship service each Wednesday evening. Additionally, our office staff spends a considerable amount of time in the preparation and production of our weekly worship bulletin which guides the worshiper through the entire worship service.

<b>Christian Education Ministry</b>	\$____,____	____%
-------------------------------------	-------------	-------

*Train yourself in godliness, for, while physical training is of some value, godliness is valuable in every way, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. (1 Timothy 4:7-8)*

Children, youth and adults are enriched spiritually through Sunday morning and Wednesday night studies, Confirmation and First Communion classes, retreats, parenting classes, workshops, and a multitude of other opportunities. In August 2020, our Vacation Bible School week will likely reach as many as 75 youth and include more than 25 helpers. We will develop additional small-group opportunities in 2020 that focus on people learning and growing in faith together. Pastor will begin a second Adult Bible Study on Thursday evenings for Young Adults this fall.

<b>Children, Youth, and Family Ministry</b>	\$____,____	____%
---	-------------	-------

*"Let the children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of God belongs to these."  
(Mark 10:14)*

We are blessed with many young people in our church. The youth and families which make up our congregation come from many different parts of the county and thus, it is very important for us to provide

fellowship opportunities for people to gather. Fellowship and service opportunities are provided for children and youth throughout the year. Our Middle School and Senior High Youth will have several retreats, lock-ins, a week-long summer work camp, in addition to the weekly youth group.

<b>Evangelism and IT Ministry</b>	\$ __, __	__%
-----------------------------------	-----------	-----

*But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth. (Acts 1:8)*

Inviting people and intentionally making the effort to include new people is part of the Christian identity. Our evangelism efforts include advertising in the local movie theater, yellow pages, and through our Internet ministry. Our Web site is dynamic and continually supplies updated information for members and guests alike. Sermons are recorded each week and videos posted to YouTube. Our Facebook page has more than 200 participants and is continuing to grow.

<b>Parish Life Ministry</b>	\$ __, __	__%
-----------------------------	-----------	-----

*How good and pleasant it is when people live together in unity. (Psalm 133:1)*

Helping to connect people to other people in the church is incredibly important. Parish Life includes such things as our Stephen Ministry care-giving program, the Church on Wednesday (COW) program, the Sunday morning coffee and fellowship, as well as many of the emerging small group ministries. Groups such as the Women’s Book Club, the Thursday morning breakfast, Dinners for Eight and Every Single One are but a few examples of groups that have formed for fellowship and to intentionally build relationships.

<b>Property and Facilities Ministry</b>	\$ __, __	__%
---	-----------	-----

*And have them make me a sanctuary, so that I may dwell among them. (Exodus 25:8)*

It would be nice if the only thing that we needed was a tent like the Israelites in the desert. Congregations like *My Lutheran Church*, however, need equipment, resources, and a sizeable physical plant to provide a place to nurture all the ministries of the church. In addition to hosting our congregation’s ministries, our facility enables us to provide space for the *My Church’s Preschool* and many community groups. Examples of community use of our facility include Alcoholics Anonymous, Kumon Math, Kindermusik, a Korean Church, and many more.

<b>Administrative Support for Ministry</b>	\$ __, __	__%
--	-----------	-----

*Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it. And in the church God has appointed first of all apostles ... also those able to help others, those with gifts of administration. (1 Corinthians 12:27-28)*

*My Lutheran Church* is blessed with many programs and opportunities. To support these ministries and to ensure that good coordination occurs, we need to provide adequate staff, supplies, and equipment. We are blessed with good and faithful workers in the office who work diligently to ensure that our growing congregation is supported and cared for on a daily basis. Administrative support also includes the ministry of taking care of finances, our computer database, preparing the bulletins and written publications, and countless other tasks that are needed in running a growing church.

<b>TOTAL MINISTRY YEAR 2020 BUDGET</b>	\$ __, __	100%
--	-----------	------

## INVITATION POSTCARD SAMPLE

### COMMITMENT SUNDAY IS COMING!

***When?***

**Sunday, \_\_\_\_ insert date at all Worship Services.**

***What to Bring?***

Please bring your Pledge Card to the worship service you will be attending. We will have a time for a collection of these gifts and a time for blessing of these God-given resources during our worship. If you can't be there on Commitment Sunday, you may return your Pledge Card by mail or deliver it to the church at your earliest convenience.

***An Invitation to all!***

Please join us for food and fellowship in the Fellowship Hall after each worship service. There will be no Sunday School on \_\_\_\_ insert date so that all can join us for this celebration.

-----

**My Lutheran Church**

Address

City, State

Phone number

[www.mychurchwebsite.org](http://www.mychurchwebsite.org)

**Mailing Address for Member**

## GIVING GUIDE WORKSHEET

Annual Income	Weekly Income	15%	12%	Tithe10 %	8%	7%	5%	3%	1%
10,400	200.00	30.00	24.00	20.00	16.00	14.00	10.00	6.00	2.00
15,600	300.00	45.00	36.00	30.00	24.00	21.00	15.00	9.00	3.00
20,800	400.00	60.00	48.00	40.00	32.00	28.00	20.00	12.00	4.00
26,000	500.00	75.00	60.00	50.00	40.00	35.00	25.00	15.00	5.00
31,200	600.00	90.00	72.00	60.00	48.00	42.00	30.00	18.00	6.00
36,400	700.00	105.00	84.00	70.00	56.00	49.00	35.00	21.00	7.00
41,600	800.00	120.00	96.00	80.00	64.00	56.00	40.00	24.00	8.00
46,800	900.00	135.00	108.00	90.00	72.00	63.00	45.00	27.00	9.00
52,000	1000.00	150.00	120.00	100.00	80.00	70.00	50.00	30.00	10.00
65,000	1250.00	187.50	150.00	125.00	100.00	87.50	62.50	37.50	12.50
78,000	1500.00	225.00	180.00	150.00	120.00	105.00	75.00	45.00	15.00
91,000	1750.00	262.50	210.00	175.00	140.00	122.50	87.50	52.50	17.50
104,000	2000.00	300.00	240.00	200.00	160.00	140.00	100.00	60.00	20.00

***What is your percentage of giving right now?***

***Action Item: Challenge yourself to increase your giving by 1% of your weekly income, and to consider similar growth at least annually, moving toward and beyond a tithe (10%).***

## PLEDGE CARD SAMPLE

### 2020 Ministry Year Commitment Card

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone # \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_



In 2020, I will give from my God-given resources to help strengthen and further God's mission here  
**at My Lutheran Church.**

I will give \_\_\_\_\_(specify amount) **or** \_\_\_\_\_% of my income:

- \_\_\_\_\_ a weekly basis
- \_\_\_\_\_ a bi-weekly basis
- \_\_\_\_\_ a monthly basis

I would like information about Electronic Giving

- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ No

I have remembered My Lutheran Church in my Estate Plans

- \_\_\_\_\_ Yes
- \_\_\_\_\_ No

## THANK-YOU LETTER SAMPLE

DATE

Dear \_\_\_\_\_,

Thank you very much for your commitment to the ministry and mission of \_\_\_\_\_ Church. We are so grateful for your generosity and gracious pledge toward the 2020 Ministry Year. We hope to accomplish a lot this year and we are blessed by dedicated followers of Jesus like you.

If at any time during the year you need to change your commitment, just let me know.

Again, thank you so much.

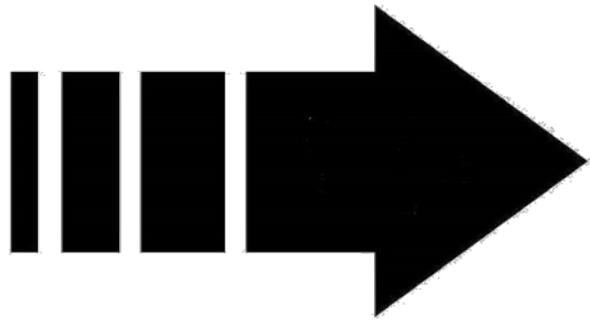
Yours in Christ,

Pastor \_\_\_\_\_

**Commitment for 2020:**

\_\_\_\_\_ %     \$\_\_\_\_\_ per week / per month / yearly

**ALL PARTS OF THIS BOOKLET MAY BE  
DUPLICATED FOR USE  
IN CONGREGATIONS OF THE  
EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA.  
GOD BLESS YOU!**



**Stewardship and Mission Table Members**

Pastor Dave Sonnenberg, Chair  
pastordave@goserve.net 301-869-1780 x101

Pastor Phil Hirsch, Director of Evangelical Mission  
phirsch@metrocelca.org 202-417-3678 x 221

Pastor John Kidd

Pastor Travis Kern

Alice Benson

Ruth Manchester

Robert Sargeant

Carolyn Sowinski

Rose Beeson

-----

Penny Risen of Good Shepherd Gaithersburg, Editor & Graphics

*Note: We want to give credit to the Metro New York Synod, which has been shepherding a synod-wide Stewardship emphasis for several years. Portions of this document are from its faithful work.*