



Extravagant  
**GENEROSITY**  
The Heart of Giving

WEEKLY DEVOTIONAL ... WEEK 4, NOVEMBER 2, 2011

Dear Lakewood Family,

Last Sunday I shared my vision for the coming year for our church family. Let me share them with you again in this email ... *this is what my heart sees*:

- ◆ That LPC might be a place where love abounds and is expressed in the way we love each other, accept each other, forgive each other, help every member who might be in need.
- ◆ That LPC continue to provide for our church family meaningful worship, the highest quality programs and dinners on Wednesday nights, opportunities for growth both spiritually and as persons, and be a place where we can openly express the questions of our faith and know that we won't be looked down upon.
- ◆ That LPC's love might truly extend beyond our walls, not only in the way we love through the Sulzbacher Center, the Bag Ladies, UCOM, the CROP Walk, the Bloodmobile, ICARE, the Sanctuary on 8<sup>th</sup> Street, the support we give to our Troops overseas, Undie Sunday, and the Souper Bowl of Caring ... but in outreach to the community right here around us ... by extending invitations to special concerts, VBS for all the children in our area, programs aimed at helping single mothers and those out of work, continuing to open our Preschool to assist those who can't afford the first class kind of head start that our school provides (Gail has opened the door to this already through scholarships to two families in our zip code this year.).
- ◆ That LPC might truly be a hospital for the sick in soul, a beacon of light in an ever darkening world, a place where ALL feel welcomed regardless of their past, their present ... and that we might help them become all that God wants them to be in their future.
- ◆ That LPC continue to develop leaders who recognize God's call in their lives ... leaders who care for those in our congregation and move out into the community, where they work and play, allowing the Christ-light to shine in EVERYTHING they do and for EVERYONE they meet.

Those are the things my heart sees ... will they come to fruition?

Over the last few weeks we have considered what we love and value in our church, who has made a difference in our spiritual lives, and our best hopes and dreams for the next year. This Sunday we will *each* make a critical decision about *how* we will express and grow in our *generosity*.

You should have received your Estimate of Giving flyer through e-mail or snail-mail last week. Extras will be in your bulletin this Sunday in case you have not received them. *Please be in prayer* and *seek God's direction* for your *expression of generosity* toward the *life and vision of God's ministry* through LPC. Be sure to bring your Estimate of Giving with you Sunday so that *together* we might dedicate our gifts for the continued work of God through the life of our church family.

With love,

Terry

## DELIGHT

“Tell those rich in this world’s wealth to quit being so full of themselves and so obsessed with money, which is here today and gone tomorrow. Tell them to go after God . . . to be rich in helping others, to be extravagantly generous. If they do that, they’ll build a treasury that will last, gaining life that is truly life.” 1 Timothy 6: 17-19 The Message



People who practice EXTRAVAGANT GENEROSITY give with unexpected liberality, they make giving a first priority, and they plan their giving with great energy and passion. They go the second mile. They do not give from a “what remains” mentality, but from a “what comes first” priority. Giving seriously becomes a personal spiritual discipline, a way of serving God, and a means of helping the church fulfill its God-appointed mission. Focused conviction and intention causes them to give in a more pronounced way, without fear and with greater trust. Giving changes their lives.

*Extravagant* describes the giving that is extraordinary, over-the-top, and propelled by great passion. *Extravagant* is the generosity seen in those who appreciate the beauty of giving, the awe and joy of making a difference for the purposes of Christ. EXTRAVAGANT GENEROSITY is giving to God as God has given to us.

People who practice EXTRAVAGANT GENEROSITY shift things around so that they can do more. Their generosity opens them to projects they never dreamed God would involve them in. They are conscientious and intentional. Generosity is their calling. They want to make a difference for Christ. *They care.*

They grow in the grace of giving. They learn. They take small steps until generosity becomes natural. They deepen their understanding of giving through prayer and Scripture, and they foster generosity in others. They give more now than in the past, and will give more in the future than they do today.

They push their congregations to become more generous. They advocate outward-focused ministry. They do not give in order to control the church but to support it. They excel in giving. They love to give. They are motivated by a desire to make a difference rather than by guilt, fear, desire for recognition, or to manipulate others. They give with humility. Yet, they draw others toward generosity and toward God through their example.

People who practice EXTRAVAGANT GENEROSITY teach their children and grandchildren to give, mentoring them on how to earn honestly, save carefully, spend prudently, and give lavishly.

They live with a sense of gratitude. They like receiving money, find pleasure in its responsible use, and experience joy in giving it to God’s purposes. They do not become too attached, and are not stopped, deceived, slowed, misled, or detoured in their following of Christ by the possession of money. They delight in Jesus’ way, the way of true life.

- ♦ How do you delight in the good you do through your giving?
- ♦ Do you give more now than in the past, and do you expect to give more in the future than you do today? How are you learning to give?



**Lakewood Presbyterian Church**

*Thinking with Christ's mind • Loving with Christ's heart • Serving with Christ's hands*