

Chris Murphy

Nov. 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2025

Scripture: John 6: 1-15

A Generous Jesus

Prayer...

Introduction:

Today we celebrate Generosity Sunday and All Saints Sunday. It is a time where we bring our pledge cards and commit ourselves to the mission of our church as we consider our own personal commitment to live generous lives. It is also a day to remember our loved ones who have gone to heaven this last year. We especially remember those from our church family who are part of the heritage of the mission of this church.

As I was thinking about generosity this last week, I found myself drawn to the story of the young boy who gave up his lunch for Jesus. The good news is that Jesus took that generous gift and through a miracle of love was able to feed 5,000 people.

Imagine you were that child on that day. What if Jesus was asking you for your lunch to help others? To be honest, as an adult I hope I might be naturally generous, but as boy I would have probably said. "Sorry Jesus, my mom's fish and bread are pretty tasty and I am hungry." Who knows? Maybe Jesus reassured the boy that he would get some food once he did the miracle. However it worked out, I love that this boy offered his simple gift and Jesus did a miracle. This story reminds us of the importance of children and how they are God's gifts to us. The contribution of children and youth to the church community is monumental when you think of this story and the heart of Jesus for children.

I wonder if we all can follow the example of this child and seek to be generous with our time, talent, and treasures. Today we are gathering our pledge cards with financial gifts in mind for our church. However, every gift is important.

This last week I saw the hands and feet of our church in action as many of you followed up with Lynne Patrick to see how she was doing after her fall and subsequent hip surgery. Lynne is handling things well and is very grateful for all of you as you demonstrate your generosity through kindness. I also saw Gene Dykema on Wednesday morning after his knee surgery. He is also recovering with grace and courage. When I visited Gene, we had our usual thoughtful conversation about faith and then I told him that my wife Karen will be bringing him some homemade bread in the near future. Gene reminded me that the last time Karen gave him bread, he experienced it as the bread of life that truly sustained him both spiritually and physically.

In the gospel of John Jesus calls himself the bread of life. Jesus generously produced bread in his ministry, but he also called people to see him as the bread of life who feeds us spiritually as we form a personal relationship with him.

As a church we are invited to demonstrate the generosity of Jesus through our mission together. As we take communion later this morning, we will remember that Jesus is the bread of life that sustains us with his presence of love. We are called to share the story and message of Jesus and to tangibly care for others through our generous service in Christ's name.

I wonder if we might take a moment in this sermon to ask a question. How has this church community provided generously for you or how have you noticed our church making a difference in our community or through other mission partnerships in our nation or world. What comes to mind?

(Take time to hear from people)

Thank you all for sharing. We truly are a generous community our generous Jesus is alive and well in our world.

My Examples: The Gathering Women's Ministry, Space for Grace, Men's Team, Men's Fellowship. Our amazing choir led by Pat Goodman. Our new Community Garden created with the help of Ciaran Hynes, Holly Shelton, George Fox, and many of you. Bike ministry with Jan West and Nancy Backes,

our great staff- Lish, Pat, Angela, Loraine, Liam, and our two new childcare providers- Misa and Elijah. Our mission partners: Bob and Gracie Ekblad, Maureen and Erik York, Brian and Julie, Taliilee Fiquuu, Carolyn Kurtz, and I am happy to share in 2026 we will add our friends Mark McIlraith with soma.digital and Kelly Dickson with Shalom Collective. I celebrate also the use of our Fellowship Hall by Rotary club and by the KISS AA groups. We could share more examples of generous ministry through our congregation, but I think this is a good example of what God's generous love show through Newberg First Presbyterian. We give thanks to God and we commit ourselves to further expression of God's generous love going forward.

During Fellowship time after church, I will give us all an update on the Capital Campaign goals of our church. I am also excited to share that our Session is working diligently on a Vision document that we will share with our congregation in January. Our hope is to invite you at that time to give us feedback and by our congregational meeting on January 26<sup>th</sup> we will present to you the final document, which will guide our ministry goals over the next three years. We will keep you updated on this document and on our hopes for the present and future as a congregation.

I have shared with a few people that the fall season can feel a little full for pastors as we kickoff the school year. I know the fall is full really for most people. The nice thing about November is that we are invited to settle into a season of gratitude. We are reminded that we serve a generous Jesus who knows our needs. We do not take our lives and God's love for granted. Instead we treasure the gifts of family, friends, our broader community, and our faith. Remembering the generosity of Jesus, enables us to be generous and to serve God with gratitude even when our plates feel full.

I encourage you to experience some rest and renewal, if you can during November. The fall leaves remind us that winter is approaching and we need to breathe, remember we are human, and learn that limitations are okay. I know many of us are also experiencing grief and so I encourage us to draw

near one another with kindness and love, especially those who have lost loved ones recently.

I feel like on this Sunday when we remember the former Saints of our church, I sense that they are somehow with us cheering us on. They have run the good race and they invite us to also put our trust in Jesus and live with grace, generosity, and gratitude. Remember together we can do this, thanks to our generous Jesus.

AMEN.