Dear friend in Christ,

Whenever we talk about generosity, we often say that it is the practice of giving. But giving is not the only practice of generosity. In the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA), we understand that gratitude is also a key part of generosity. Gratitude involves expressing thanks and appreciation for the gifts of others. It is an essential social emotion that can benefit the lives of people who practice gratitude.

In the Bible, gratitude is described as a source of questions for conversation. The two are commonly linked, possibly because giving thanks and being generous are naturally understood as appropriate responses to God’s abundant blessings. The power of giving thanks is something we can learn from ancient Egyptian law. Historically, philosophers have suggested that gratitude is one of the most important human values. Gratitude, according to Aristotle, is the habit of thinking about the good in life and acting on it with thankfulness.

Gratitude is essential to our identity as beings who can live in right relationship with others. It is a quality of being thankful; that readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness. The quality of being thankful; that readiness to show appreciation for and to return kindness.

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The book "Grateful" is an excellent resource for personal contemplation or group discussions. Watch "Gratitude, at its deepest and perhaps most transformative level, is not warm feelings about your possessions, but gratefulness that makes us happy." Or, said another way, being grateful is a perspective we can cultivate that helps us see that God is good and our lives are blessed, as opposed to a quid pro quo acknowledgment after the fact.

Who would have thought that something as honorable as gratitude could have a history of shame, ridicule, and disdain? In Egyptian law, people were expected to return taxes to Pharaoh and Caesar or be ingrates deserving punishment. And, in the systems of ancient Egypt and Rome, where debt (a debt) against gratitude for life’s many tailwinds, of compulsion and duty (reciprocity to discharge obligations). Your relationship with God is not a debt. But gratitude is an essential emotional life force that ignites compassion, inspiring us to share our blessings with others. Mission Interpreters in congregations tell gratitude stories from both the giver's and receiver's perspective. They tell stories filled with joy in the opportunity to give to others. Mission Interpreters in congregations tell gratitude stories from both the giver's and receiver's perspective. They tell stories filled with joy in the opportunity to give to others.

It is true that gratitude can be a powerful tool for personal and communal transformation. Faithfully,

[Signature]

Project Coordinator

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EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN CHURCH IN AMERICA

We are a church that is energized by lively engagement in our faith and life. Thank you for doing more than just the expected with your gifts of time, money, and talent. Together, we bring the grace of God to a hurting and often bewildered world. We are a church that is energized by lively engagement in our faith and life. Thank you for doing more than just the expected with your gifts of time, money, and talent. Together, we bring the grace of God to a hurting and often bewildered world.

Grateful: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks

In this issue of stewardNet, you will be introduced to some of the major findings of the ELCA's Generosity Project. This qualitative and quantitative research project has been 10 years in the making and, when you have a chance to look over all the data, you’ll see that it’s been worth the wait.

The Generosity Project connects generations and equips households as centers for the faith practice of generosity. Resources include an outline for an introductory workshop, five sessions of a small group curriculum, a webinar on the project findings, and an article exploring the topic of gratitude in a comprehensive and insightful way. She looks at distinctions between gratitude and other related concepts, such as appreciation and satisfaction. Bass contrasts gratitude that is driven by a sense of obligation with genuine gratitude that is emotionally rich and rooted in a deep sense of connection. She draws on research from psychology, neuroscience, and philosophy to illustrate how gratitude is not just a feeling or an attitude, but a practice that can have profound consequences for our well-being and our relationships with others.

The book "Grateful: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks" offers practical and inspiring strategies for cultivating gratitude in our personal lives and in our congregations. It is a resource for individuals and congregations seeking to increase their capacity for generosity and to deepen their commitment to stewardship.

Please consider subscribing to stewardNet, the newsletter of the ELCA Stewardship Program. It is available online at elca.org/stewardshipweekly. You can also follow us on Facebook at ELCA Stewardship, or read our related article "Grateful: The Transformative Power of Giving Thanks," which explores the topic of gratitude in a comprehensive and insightful way.