

October 5, 2020

Hello Trinity Lutheran Church members, friends, and anyone visiting my channel on YouTube.

I want to talk about generosity, and how I learned it. Many of you have heard me say, “I don’t have a ha moments; I have agonizingly slow realizations.” In the matter of generosity I am no different.

The story of generosity that sticks out to me as where I learned it comes from my grandfather, but I was already an adult when this happened. I had entered graduate school after having served in my first call. My wife was a called minister. But, when you’re in graduate school you don’t have a whole lot and you’re working all the time on your school work.

We began getting small cards from my grandfather once a month with a little note but always a check in it. “Use this for whatever you need.” We hadn’t asked for the money. I don’t know if he had talked to anyone, if he had talked to my parents or anyone about our financial situation. Maybe he simply knew graduate school was a time when you weren’t particularly liquid. So, he provided help. He was generous with his money.

And, as time went on, I learned that simply was who he had been all along. We learned that his baby sister—who had been a single mom at a time when that was almost unheard of—well, he had helped her out financially with regular payments to her.

When he died, at the reading of his will, I found out that he had left money to his home congregation, he’d left money to his retirement center and the chaplain’s office there—their equivalent of Trinity’s “Pastor’s Discretionary Fund,” the money the chaplain could use to help those residents of the village who needed financial assistance. My grandfather was so generous he wanted those who survived him, his neighbors in that place, to have help if they needed it.

That’s how my grandfather was. Now, I am not at the same position that he was at that point in his life. (Give me a few decades and I will catch up with him.) But I’ve learned generosity from that, and I want to embody that in what I do, and I strive to do that.

I am surrounded by generous people, not just my grandfather: parents, family, friends, and you at Trinity. I look forward to hearing some generosity stories in the coming days from other members of Trinity (and perhaps even from you).

So, stay tuned, be on the lookout, and remember: generosity makes more generosity. It’s a wonderful thing. Even if learning it comes agonizingly slowly!

In Christ,
Pastor Tim