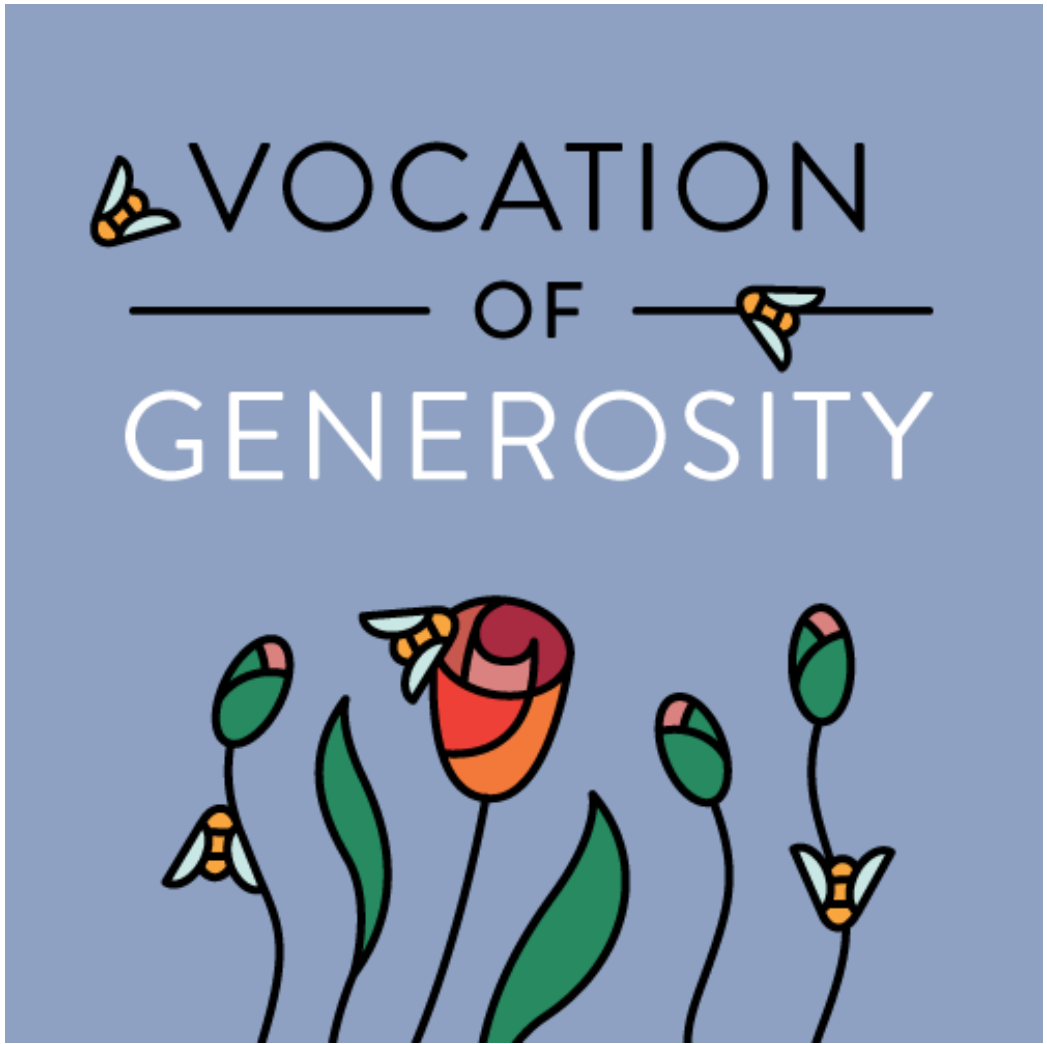


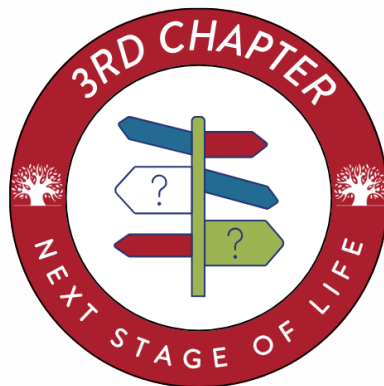
# VOCA**TION** — OF — GENERO**SITY**



## VOCA**TION** OF GENERO**SITY**

WESTWOOD LUTHERAN CHURCH

2025



# VOCATION OF GENEROSITY



## Before 1<sup>st</sup> Gathering!

Pick up the (free) copy of the book “Infectious Generosity” at the office counter...and please read the Introduction and Chap. 5 prior to Session 1. (maybe 20 min.)

So glad you’ve joined in here! Our hope this month, in worship and these small groups, is to help us all continue to connect the use of our resources (time, talent and financial resources) with our being Jesus’ hands and feet in our world.

We’ll use this “curriculum”, the Scripture texts from the previous Sunday (so it’d be helpful to listen to the sermon online if you can’t be in worship), and Chris Anderson’s book Infectious Generosity.

Please print out this curriculum (or pick up a copy at the church office if you can’t print) as you’ll be doing some writing on the hard copy...and bring the “Infectious Generosity” book to each of the sessions!

NOTE that there will be brief readings from the book each week that is either background information for your discussion or will be directly used in discussion.

Have fun together and enjoy sharing your faith, life and thoughts with each other!

+Pastor Tania

## Session 1 - (week following Sunday, Feb. 2<sup>nd</sup>)

# “The Connection between your story and generosity”

### Opening:

Share your name and why you decided to be a part of this group, i.e. what interested you...the relationship-building, the topic, the book, other?!

Then, go to page xx in the Introduction of the book, and re-read the 2<sup>nd</sup>-3<sup>rd</sup> paragraphs about having a “generous mindset”. Then, go around again and complete this sentence: The most generous person I know/knew is \_\_\_\_\_ and they’ve inspired me because they \_\_\_\_\_!

### Opening Prayer and Scripture Discussion:

Facilitator, please begin with a short prayer.

Have a participant read Intro and another read **Deuteronomy 26:1-11** (text from last Sunday)

INTRO TO TEXT: Once the people are living “in the land flowing with milk and honey” that God gave them, they give a thank offering, their “first fruits”, and when they offer that, they are to **recite their story** of all that God has done for them, **to connect their story of what God has done with the gifts they give.**

As the scripture is read, notice the instructions for the ritual of tithing the first fruits. One might expect the focus to be mostly on how and how much to give. While that’s present, note that over half of the text is the reciting of God’s activity for the people of Israel.

TEXT: “When you have come into the land that the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance to possess, and you possess it, and settle in it, <sup>2</sup>you shall take some of the first of all the fruit of the ground, which you harvest from the land that the Lord your God is giving you, and you shall put it in a basket and go to the place that the Lord your God will choose as a dwelling for his name. <sup>3</sup>You shall go to the priest who is in office at that time, and say to him, “Today I declare to the Lord your God that I have come into the land that the Lord swore to our ancestors to give us.” <sup>4</sup>When the priest takes the basket from your hand and sets it down before the altar of the Lord your God, <sup>5</sup>you shall make this response before the Lord your God: “A wandering Aramean was my ancestor; he went down into Egypt and lived there as an alien, few in number, and there he became a great nation, mighty and populous. <sup>6</sup>When the Egyptians treated us harshly and afflicted us, by imposing hard labor on us, <sup>7</sup>we cried to the Lord, the God of our ancestors; the Lord heard our voice and saw our affliction, our toil, and our oppression. <sup>8</sup>The Lord brought us out of Egypt with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm, with a terrifying display of power, and with signs and wonders; <sup>9</sup>and he brought us into this place and gave us this land, a land flowing with milk and honey. <sup>10</sup>So now I bring the first of the fruit of the ground that you, O Lord, have given me.”

*You shall set it down before the Lord your God and bow down before the Lord your God. <sup>11</sup>Then you shall celebrate with all the bounty that the Lord your God has given to you and to your house; and share your bounty with the aliens (immigrants), orphans, widows, so that all may eat their fill within your towns.*

YOUR TURN! So, what is YOUR story?

In Deuteronomy, the story of what God had done was verses 5-10, so you also get that much space (it was 3 sentences) to 'recite' below a few highlights of God's actions in YOUR life story.

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GO AROUND AND SIMPLY READ WHAT YOU WROTE TO THE GROUP.

Then, the text says (vs. 10-11), "So...". So now what? Deuteronomy goes on and tells us to: a) thank God, b) celebrate!, and then c) give to the immigrants, orphans, widows, so no one would be hungry. How do YOU 'thank', then 'celebrate' what you've received? ... because we already know that giving is a response, and maybe thanking and celebrating is "harder" actually, or less common?

### Discussion:

Do you think God has built generosity into our DNA? Or does it need to be taught and learned, modeled and inspired? Or all of that?

The church, at least in the past, has encouraged people to give "because God first gave to us", i.e. we've been blessed....so sometimes we feel guilty if we give of our time or money because it just plain "feels good", in other words, I get as much or more out of it than the person/place on the receiving end. OR, we give out of duty/obligation, or even for recognition.

Read pages 28-30 in "Infectious Generosity" out loud, going around on p.29 and each person reading one example.

Anything surprise you here? This whole book is based on Anderson's feeling that anything that helps others is a generous act, and we shouldn't worry about specific motivation or intent behind it. Do you agree with that?

DIVIDE INTO 3's so everyone has a chance to talk. If you have a spouse in the group, go into different small groups.

To get to know each other's stories a bit more, and think about what your own history is around generosity and giving, share:

- In your upbringing, what was your experience with money, i.e. was it even talked about? Did money play a negative (stressful) or positive (creative) role in your family system? How did these factors influence your current view of financial generosity?
- With the blue pigs in worship and with our children/youth here, we talk about money using **Sharing, Saving & Spending** as the 3 ways we can make choices with our financial resources. Which of those 3 was the 'main thing' you heard from your parents? If you have children, did you do the same as your parents, or which of those do you think your children would say you emphasized with them and why? OR, if you don't have kids, what might your extended family or close friends say is the area you most emphasize or do, and why?

### Close:

Pray together the Prayer of Good Courage OR if one person is willing to offer a prayer, great!  
Please note the 'homework' request below before you leave...helpful if you can do before the next gathering.

### Take-Home Assignment:

Read (or skim if needed) Chapter 6, that talks about 6 different ways we can be generous in our lives! Our country is so polarized, and we are often not good listeners to people who think differently than we do. Even at home, my mindset is not always 'generous' :) So, think about, or even jot down, what might a generous mindset look like...in others? ...and what might it concretely look like in you?!

## Session 2 - (week following Sunday, Feb. 9)

# “Christ lives IN ME!”

### Opening:

In your ‘homework’ reading, Chapter 6, Anderson reminds us that some of “the most awe-inspiring and effective examples of generosity are gifts of time and energy, talent and love, customized to a specific need.”

Open your books and name together again the ‘6 ways’ he lists of being generous.

Go around and a) share your name again, b) share ONE of these two things:

- One of the 6 ways of being generous that I relate to, i.e. feel like I often do, is....  
OR
- One that intrigued you, that you hadn’t thought about as a way of being generous.

Comment on why you answered with the one you did.

### Opening Prayer and Scripture Discussion:

1. Facilitator, please begin with a short prayer.
2. Have a participant read Intro and **Galatians 2:19-20** (text from last Sunday)

INTRO to text: Paul, around 50 yrs after Jesus’ death, is re-teaching the people of Galatia that they/we are freed FROM the law (that the Jews tried to keep so faithfully) and FOR being a blessing to our neighbors.

*“For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live to God. I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me. And the life I now live in the flesh, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”*

### Discussion:

These are powerful words, but what impact do they really have for who you are in the real world, e.g. if Christ is living in me, what does that actually mean and look like?

As we’ve talked about “Grace and Vocation” at Westwood for a decade now, we mean 2 things:

1. First, by the grace of God, in baptism we’ve been made a beloved Child of God, sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross. In other words, we’ve been given an identity as one of God’s precious children.

2. And we've been given this identity SO THAT we can be God's hands and feet wherever we are out there! This means that our time, energies, skills, passions and financial resources are all a part of what we can use to actually BE Jesus' hands and feet....and to impact this hurting world right here, right now!

What do these 2 theological confessions suggest to you at this time in your life and perhaps even at this time in our country/world?

After seeing how big and broad the concept of GENEROSITY is/can be from our reading this week, we know that it may be easier or simpler to think about "extending hospitality" than it is to actually address our financial resources. So, we want you to take 5-ish minutes for a little exercise to jot down below the main buckets/categories you currently have in your household finance picture. (If you're here with a partner, do this on your own and compare later.) Then, assign your best guess on what percent of your budget that is. You won't be sharing any specifics in conversation unless you choose to.

THEN GET INTO 3's (not with your partner) and talk about how your buckets or percentages may have shifted in recent years, and how you foresee any shifting in coming years as your life situation changes or as you make different choices?

Take a couple minutes on your own to look through the sheet (below here, following this week's curriculum) on "**Philanthropic Trends by Generational Cohort**". (At Westwood, we've been realizing the fairly big differences in giving and how people are motivated to give in the different age groups.)

Either back in your 3's OR as a full group...

- What information did you find notable? Did anything surprise you?
- What do you make of the Giving Changes from 2016-2022?
- Do you relate to your own cohort in terms of your top choices for giving?
- How about the graph on Worship Attendance?!

## Close:

NOTE!!! Please **READ NOW** the 'homework' request below before you leave (3<sup>rd</sup> one down that starts "Write down 1 or 2 ideas...") and make sure everyone leaves with that in mind. The assigned reading from Chapter 12 will help set that up.

Pray together the Prayer of Good Courage OR if one person is willing to offer a prayer, great!

**Take-Home Assignment:** (It's maybe 30 min. this week between the 3 items below.)

+ If you have a spouse with you in your group, compare your household financial buckets, percentages and thoughts with each other! :)

Jump to Chapter 12 and start on p.180 at the bottom ("The key is for...") and read to the end of the chapter about "The Audacious Project"! What a hopeful story...reminds me of our experience in starting Rise Early Learning Center!

Write down 1 or 2 ideas (just brainstorm and don't think "I/We couldn't do that!") of things you and/or this small group could do that would be audacious...with your combined money, time, energies, skills! Have fun imagining what might be possible!

One of the pilot groups for this study (they were 40-somethings), chose to put \$1,000 per household in a shared pot (!) and are talking to Pastor Sarah about a project around Environmental Sustainability, which is one of Westwood's Core Values. They spent quite a bit of time imagining a variety of things they could do, had all kinds of fun and wild ideas, but landed on this as something that "fit" for them at this time because that particular group had the finances more than the time at this point with 2 jobs and kids. I say, "Wow!". Your group may or may not choose to take action on an idea, but the point here is to stretch our 'faith-full imaginations' a bit as we think about how we could be generous with our time or money or both!

**NOTE** that you can find on our website (under Partnership/Local Partnerships/Volunteer Opportunities) here: <https://www.westwood.church/local-partnerships> the new brochure that tells about 11 of our local partners and how to connect with them to have impact! This is one possible starting place!

Finally, look at the "Giving Typology" 2 pages here, [found in next week's \(Wk. 3\) curriculum](#), and do the 2 min. exercise that places you in one of the 4 quadrants. We'll look at this at the next gathering.



# Philanthropic Trends by Generational Cohort - from a 2022 USA Special Report

## Basic Generational Cohorts

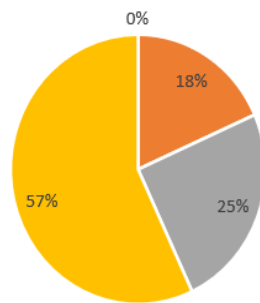
Generation	Years born	Age range in 2024	Population in Millions
Gen Z	1997-2012	18-26 years old	69.31
Millennials	1981-1996	27-42 years old	72.7
Gen X	1965-1980	43-58 years old	65.35
Baby Boomer	1945-1964	59-79	70.09
Silent Generation	1928-1944	80 and older	16.47

## Generational Giving Changes 2016-2022

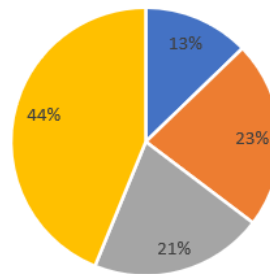
Generation	2016	2022	Change by \$	Change by %
Gen Z		\$747		
Millennials	\$942	\$1,323	\$381	Up 40%
Gen X	\$1,265	\$1,220	-\$45	Down 4%
Boomers	\$2,921	\$2,568	-\$353	Down 12%

## Changes in Giving by total dollar as a percentage of total given

2016 Giving by Generation



2022 Giving by Generation



■ Gen Z ■ Millennials ■ Gen X ■ Boomers      ■ Gen Z ■ Millennials ■ Gen X ■ Boomers

## Top three types of charities supported by generation

Generation	Top Charity	Second Charity	Third Charity
Gen Z	Places of Worship	U.S. Health/Medical	Environmental
Millennial	Places of Worship	Faith-Based Orgs	Nonprofit Hospitals
Gen X	Places of Worship	Faith-Based Orgs	U.S. Health/Medical
Boomers	Places of Worship	Education	Faith-Based Orgs

## Some Narrative and Questions

While much is made of generational differences, it is interesting to note that the top area of giving for each of the generational cohorts continues to be places of worship. Faith-Based organizations are also receiving a growing share of each cohort's generosity. These types of faith-based charities often include food shelves, or other local direct social services like housing or vocational assistance. Health and health care have moved into primary giving categories for all generational cohorts except the boomers. These types of health and medical

## PHILANTHROPIC TRENDS BY GENERATIONAL COHORT

DATA DERIVED FROM – GIVING USA SPECIAL REPORT: 2022 GIVING BY GENERATION AND QGIVE GENERATIONAL REPORT 2020

charities include research and other procedures that are not always offered by hospitals and so could include women’s reproductive care, children’s and adult disease research.

Not noted in the above data is the change in the ways that each age cohort “research” their charities of choice. Boomers tend to seek “hard data” through non-profits 990 tax returns, charitable rating guides like the charities review council, annual reports and audited financial statements. Gen X tends to use more online tools to research their charities of choice, preferring non-profits websites or other online data. Millennials and Gen Z tends to connect to non-profits through their friends and social media. For Millennials and Gen Z a reference from a friend regarding a charity is much more important than the “hard data” that is primary for boomers.

### A few notable takeaways

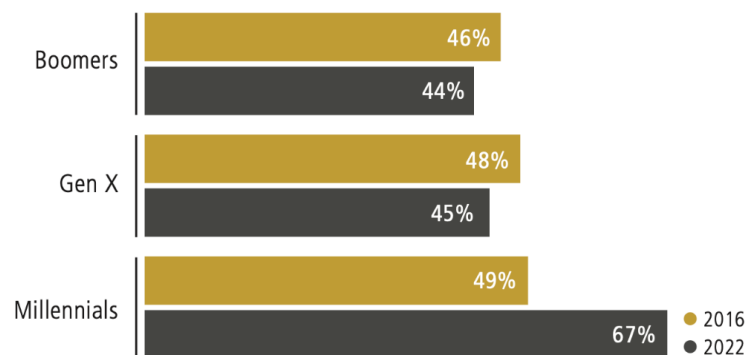
1. The leading edge of Gen Z is now able to make significant financial contributions.
2. Millennials who in popular culture have often been accused of being quite self-centered, have surpassed Gen X in average giving per donor, having increased their giving by 40%.
3. Millennials and Gen Z are the only generations to increase their giving from 2016.
4. While they are still on average the largest contributors, Boomers’ contributions declined by 12% from 2016 to 2022. Notable since they are instigating the largest transfer of wealth in US history.
5. While all giving to places of worship is declining (and the rate of decline is increasing) it is still the number one choice of each generation for their giving.
6. Giving to places of worship is in decline, however, giving to faith-based non-profits is increasing.

### Some questions

1. What surprised you most about the above data?
2. Do you relate to your own cohort in terms of your top choices for giving and ways of research?

### One final data point - Since 2016 Millennials are the only generation with increased worship attendance

Since 2016, Millennials are the only generation to have increased attendance at worship services.



Percentage of donors who say they attend church at least a few times per month (2022 includes both virtual and in-person).

## Session 3 - (week following Sunday, Feb. 16)

# “Our World & Our Faith”

### Opening:

Read just the INTRO to the scripture text below, as we'll be thinking a bit today about the worldview difference between what we see in or are taught by society when it comes to generosity, and what the Gospel of Jesus teaches us.

It's a little challenging sometimes to find hopeful, gracious, generous things on the news or even around us in our daily lives, but let's try! :) Name one thing you saw, heard or read this week that was “generous” in some way!...and say your name again, if needed in your group.

### Opening Prayer and Scripture Discussion:

Facilitator, please begin with a short prayer.

Have a participant read Intro and **I Corinthians 1:18, 26-31** (text from last Sunday)

INTRO to text: I Corinthians is primarily about love...’love’ meaning mutuality, equality, the sharing of all things between people. Paul is speaking to a divided audience, with a worldview that divides by status, wealth, power (sound vaguely familiar?!)...and he replaces that with “the foolishness of God”, which is the cross (suffering, no status, no control) and godly love for each other.

*<sup>18</sup>For the message about the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power God.*

*<sup>26</sup>Consider your own call, brothers and sisters:<sup>[a]</sup> not many of you were wise by human standards,<sup>[b]</sup> not many were powerful, not many were of noble birth. <sup>27</sup>But God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise; God chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong; <sup>28</sup>God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to reduce to nothing things that are, <sup>29</sup>so that no one<sup>[c]</sup> might boast in the presence of God. <sup>30</sup>He is the source of your life in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, <sup>31</sup>in order that, as it is written, “Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord.”*

## Discussion:

When we say “worldview”, we mean where you anchor yourself, your values, and how you reconcile society/culture and what you believe as a Christian. In our political climate, these last months have been particularly challenging for many. That said.....

Name a word or two that you think of when you think of the cross...

What does Paul mean by the cross being “foolish”?

What are some other “foolish” (unexpected, small, humble, surprising, painful (?)... ) things God uses to show us what’s important? How does the world around us show/tell us what’s important?

How do we faithfully live in “the gap” between those 2 worldviews?

Get into 3’s....and share with each other your idea/s for an “audacious project”! Discuss WHY your idea is important to you. What impact would it have? What would you need to do to make your idea actually happen? What stands in the way of you trying to do this? (Seriously!)

All over the world something called “Giving Circles” are springing up...not necessarily faith-based groups...but people who have some time, skills or money to give together to a shared cause. What if we at Westwood helped each other develop and grow a “generous mindset” with our time, talent, creativity, connection, and basic kindness?! How are we already doing that? How does or might that kind of activity help shape our worldview and keep a creative and positive focus? All of these things can create chain reactions and be infectious!

Back in large group: Anything to share with the whole group that was energizing/exciting to you that you 3 talked about? Anything you want to have more conversation about, think further about, take action on?!!!

Look at the next 2 pages in this week’s material on “A Giving Typology: Who Gives and Why”.

Together or in smaller groups, share:

- What was your Giving Type? Any surprises there?...or anything that you can reflect on about your own giving from this information?
- Seeing the different motivations we have for giving, what could Westwood do to appeal to and reach people in some other ways?

## A GIVING TYPOLOGY FROM Patricia Snell Herzog – Who Gives and Why

### How do you approach your charitable contributions?

One way to reflect on your financial generosity is to think about how you make decisions about your charitable giving. Do you give spontaneously when you feel moved to share? Do you plan or budget the amount you will give and then make decisions as you go. Or do you set out to make specific gifts to specific charities in specific amounts? Each of these approaches has some benefits and some potential drawbacks. It is up to you to decide what is the best approach for you and your family.

To give you some perspective on how your approach might coincide with other families approaches to giving, below are two questions to answer. The two-question survey is taken from Patricia Snell Herzog's national survey in which she sought to answer the question, how do people approach charitable giving. After completing the two question survey, you can locate your giving type in the chart below and review your giving type against Dr. Herzog's definitions and national survey results.

### The Survey – Choose one answer for both questions A and B

- A. When it comes to voluntary financial giving do you..
- Follow systems or routines
  - Give more spontaneously or situationally
  - I do not give money away
- B. Have you ever
- Made a conscious decision to give more money away. Or has...
  - Financial giving just happened.
  - I do not give money for charitable, religious, or other causes.

Record your responses in the following way: for example, if in response to question A you choose response b. your response will be recorded as Ab. In question B if you choose response a. record your response as Ba. In this example your complete response will be (Ab+Ba) a selective giver in the chart below.

### My answers

Question A \_\_\_

Question B \_\_\_

Total response A\_\_\_ + B\_\_\_ (My giving type)

### The Quadrants\*

Impulsive (Ab+Bb)	Selective (Ab+Ba)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Are spontaneous or situational in their giving, which just happens.</li> <li>✓ About 42% of donors are Impulsive Givers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Make a conscious decision to give.</li> <li>✓ Yet also give spontaneously.</li> <li>✓ About 17% of all donors</li> </ul>
Habitual (Aa+Bb)	Planned (Aa+Ba)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Follow systems or routines of giving.</li> <li>✓ Yet also just happen to give.</li> <li>✓ About 6% of all donors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>✓ Follow systems or routines of giving.</li> <li>✓ Make conscious decisions to give more money away.</li> <li>✓ About 16% of all donors</li> </ul>

\***Not listed in Quadrants** – Atypical givers self-identified as a non-giver for one question but did select a giver approach for the second. About 19% of donors are Atypical Givers. (Ac+Ba or Bb; Bc+Aa or Ab)

**A GIVER TYPOLOGY FROM PATRICA SNELL HERZOG - AMERICAN GENEROSITY: WHO GIVES AND WHY**

The quadrant graphic below gives a bit more information about the intentions associated with each giver type. For example, someone who is an impulsive giver who gives spontaneously or situationally without much, if any planning. The impulsive giver, for example may be more motivated to give by an inspirational emotional appeal more so than a planned giver who decides how much to give and where to give specifically each year.

**Some notes from Patricia Snell Herzog**

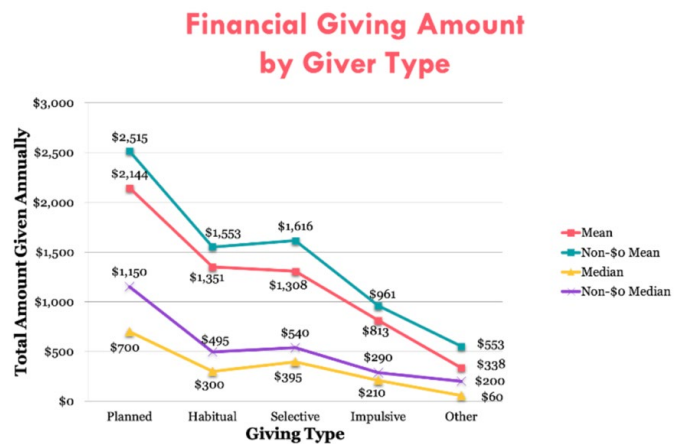


Source: Herzog, Patricia Snell and Heather E. Price. 2016. American Generosity: Who Gives and Why. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

“Planned Givers are likely to have college degrees coupled with some religious attendance. Habitual Givers are likely to have high religiosity with lower income levels (these are the tithers). Selective are likely to have a college degree with infrequent religious attendance, and Impulsive a high income with low religiosity. Lastly, the implications are that Planned are most likely to desire an annual report, Habitual an infrequent reminder, Selective an explanation of the cause importance, and Impulsive a captivating and emotional appeal.”

Reflect on how well your self-identified giving type does or does not fit for you.

The chart to the right is also taken from Dr. Herzog’s work and provides some insight into giving amounts by giver types. Dr. Herzog writes: “if you were to throw a proverbial stone in the U.S. you would be most likely to hit an Impulsive Giver. Second, since the largest donor type is impulsive, national averages best represent what is happening with this approach. Third, the figure [to the right] shows that average giving amounts stepwise by giver types. Planned and Habitual are the most likely to be givers in any given year. Planned and Selective are the most likely to give in greater amounts.”



Source: Herzog, Patricia Snell and Heather E. Price. 2016. American Generosity: Who Gives and Why. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.

**Some final questions for reflection.**

- What was the important thing you learned after reading this information?
- What surprised you the most about Herzog’s four (or five) giver types?
- How might this information help inform your future financial generosity?

## Close:

Have someone read this meditation from Steve Charleston's book, "Spirit Wheel: Meditations from an Indigenous Elder". Charleston is also an Episcopal Bishop and has taught at Luther Seminary.

### Common Cause

The more things in this world seem to slide out of control  
The more we need every person, of every faith and every tradition  
To stand together to hold the center of love.

Now is not the time for us to hang our heads in despair  
But rather to raise our expectation  
Of what a united community can do when it has the will to do it.  
Across all lines of imagined division, Against all odds of reaction  
We extend our hands and hearts, to every person around our Mother Earth  
Who will join in the struggle....for peace, reconciliation, and justice.  
Faith is not a sign of our difference, but a clear call to our common cause.

## Take-Home Assignment:

Chapters 13 & 14 and the Epilogue are all interesting and important reading, in my opinion.

...but if your time is short, here's what I suggest: Please start at the bottom of p. 200 (The Incredible World of Maximum Philanthropy) and read the few pages to the end of that chapter,

Also read the 7 questions Anderson suggests we ask ourselves on p. 209 (knowing these are 'goals'), and then finish with The Kindness Pandemic, following that on p. 212.

## Session 4 - (week following Sunday, Feb. 23rd)

# “Where your treasure is, there is your heart”

### Opening:

These past 4 weeks, you've done some reading, had some conversation, hopefully reflected a bit on your own vocation of generosity! On the small card your facilitator will give you, write 1-2 things that struck you that will stick with you, i.e. something that's inspired you, challenged you, or maybe something you'll try, change, reflect further on. Take a few minutes to do this, and then please share with the group. (Your facilitator will pass these cards on to the pastors as feedback, if that's OK!)

### Opening Prayer and Scripture Discussion:

Facilitator, please begin with a short prayer.

Have someone read Intro and **Matthew 6:19-21** (text from last Sunday)

INTRO TO TEXT: This is part of The Sermon on the Mount, Jesus' teachings on various matters.

#### TEXT

<sup>19</sup>“Do not store up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust consume and where thieves break in and steal; <sup>20</sup>but store up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust consumes and where thieves do not break in and steal. <sup>21</sup>For where your treasure is, there your heart will be also.

(In The Message translation, verse 21 says this: “It’s obvious, isn’t it? The place where your treasure is, is the place you will most want to be, and end up being!”)

### Discussion:

Right after these verses above (in Matthew 6) it says, “No one can serve two masters.” By “treasure”, this text doesn't mean just money, as we often hear it... but rather it's talking about our whole way of thinking here on earth, our earthly 'worldview' as we talked about last week, versus God's 'worldview'. Which way of life will we choose?

Share in 2's: So how would you define “treasure” for yourself...be honest as to what values and things are most important to you... as for me it's a lot of different things!



In this world we are told to be good enough, do enough, earn enough...but those are NOT God's expectations of us. So, what does God expect from you?

Back in the full group: Chapter 13 in "Infectious Generosity" talks about the Jewish and Christian tradition of tithing (sharing 10% of our income) and the Islamic tradition of zakat (2.5% of income annually). Lutherans now give only 1-2% of their income (it's gone down annually).

Early in my years at Westwood, based on average income in our community, I figured out how much money our congregation would have if we all tithed....it was around \$10 million annually at that time! (Our current budget is \$1.6 million plus the giving for Westwood Appeals and special causes.)

Like the list on pages 201-203, let your imagination run wild for a few minutes...what could WE do???

+and note that what we already ARE doing is pretty amazing! :)

What would it look like to "tithe" your TIME or SKILLS each week, if you took 10% of your available hours? How many hours would that be for you? What would you want to do/or do you do?

**3<sup>rd</sup> Chapter Challenge:** (Please simply read this paragraph....any comments?)

I have a book entitled "The Final Tithe" that a member of my home church wrote. (I have copies as does our church Library.) As an Estate Attorney, the author invites his clients to consider giving 10% of their estate to their faith community or another charity. He was amazed at how many people a) were NOT planning on that, and b) how many said 'YES!' after he suggested it!

You and I are a part of a generation of people who are passing on the greatest amount of money in history. I will tell you that Bob and I are updating our own estate plan as we re-think some areas where we want to have greater impact, for the sake of our grandchildren and all future generations. And this is my invitation to you to take a look at yours! Does it match your values of where your "treasure" is (family, but also church, charities local or global, etc.)?

I LOVE talking about the impact you and I, and our church, can have on this world we love and are deeply concerned about. (That was me opening my door!) Let's BE INFECTIOUS and see what we can do together!!!

### Close:

Go around and each read a paragraph of the Epilogue (p.216) ...it's a great 2 minute ending!

Pray together the Prayer of Good Courage.

THANK YOU for participating in this Vocation of Generosity month! Hope it has been a fruitful and fun time for your group!