



They are to do good. To be rich in good works, generous and ready to share, thus storing up for themselves the treasure of a good foundation for the future, so that they can take hold of the life that really is life.
1 Timothy 6: 18-19

Dear friends,

From the church's very first day, the concepts of living simply, generosity, and stewardship were present and intertwined. When the Spirit fell on Pentecost, those young Christians immediately started sharing what they had with each other, and with others in need. Like those first Christians, generosity naturally happens in our lives when we are born again and realize that we are to love our neighbors as we love ourselves. Thriving in God's kingdom means sharing – acting together as a well-functioning, well-oiled body, with each person doing his or her best to help the body thrive.

Our theme during the third week of our month of stewardship emphasizes is **Acting Together**. Read the scripture from 1 Timothy above and you can't deny that the church implies community. That's what **koinonia** is all about – Christian fellowship or communion with God and our fellow Christians. Faith communities are meant to be holy, covenantal fellowships of believers, whose purpose is to encourage and enable each other to live as faithful disciples of Christ.

Generosity and love are complementary gifts from God. Love cannot be forced or legislated, but must be provoked by a love of our neighbor. Jesus was not afraid to reach out and touch the poor and marginalized. He invites us to tear down the walls that separate us from the suffering in the world today, and to be what our world needs – a loving presence, willing to put self aside, and acting harmoniously with **LOVE**.

In North America, living simply and living in community have become increasingly countercultural. We receive constant messages to be financially and socially independent. If, as Christians, we want to live simply, we need to surround ourselves with a community of good mentors, teachers, and examples. Biblical accounts of generosity include communities as well as individuals. Like a living fire, we can benefit from the stirring of coals in community to keep our generosity alive and strong against the cultural messages we receive. (From the writings of Shane Claiborne)

As you worship this week, think about how you and New Covenant can live more simply, and more generously. How is God calling you and us to reach out to our community with loving generosity?

May God bless and keep you,
from your Partner in Ministry,

Carol