

Dear friends,

There is a story of an old woman who is hiking and finds a stone of great value. Shortly after finding it, a hungry man comes to her, begging for a bite of food. She agrees and opens her bag to share her food. The beggar sees the stone and asks for it instead. The old woman freely gives it away. A few days later, the man returns with the stone. He tells the woman that even though he could sell it and provide for himself for a month, he wanted something else, something more valuable. He wanted what she had on the inside. He wanted what would allow her to give of herself without hesitation.

I often wonder what causes us to give freely. In our lives, where even in relationships and faith communities it can feel as if there is score keeping, it can be difficult to be truly generous - to give freely, without counting the cost, without expecting anything in return. The woman in the story seems to possess the gift, the secret of true generosity. Maybe she knew the mystery of God's grace, the secret of God's abundance, the promise that with God all things are possible.

The spirit that recognizes grace cannot but be generous in return. The spirit that recognizes abundance cannot but share and give. The spirit that recognizes God's vast possibilities cannot but embrace the impossible. Generosity is a spiritual practice. Generosity is as big a gift to the giver as it is to the receiver. It is what enables us to participate in ebb and flow of life, as well as in the ministry of the church.

On November 20, Gratitude Sunday, we give thanks for the gifts of the past and the gifts of the future. We give thanks to God for these gifts and we share what we are grateful for. We celebrate both generosity and gratitude with a Community Thanksgiving Lunch, inviting all who worship and all who are hungry to join in a Thanksgiving Lunch.

In peace,

Pastor Lynn