



St. Peter's Lutheran Church

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November 2, 2025

Dear friends in Christ:

Recently I heard from a colleague of mine about a teenager who asked her a question during youth group. “Why do you always tell us about how important it is to share?” the girl asked, rolling her eyes with a hint of impatience. “Sharing is all you ever talk about. Why? Everyone knows that stuff. Everyone already knows how to share.”

My colleague stopped her short. “OK, next time you go to school, pay attention and listen to what the other kids say about sharing. Watch what your friends do when they have something they might share. Come back and tell me what you notice.”

A few weeks later, the teen came to my colleague after church with a wide-eyed look. “Oh my gosh. My friends are so selfish! They won't share with anyone and they just want to keep everything for themselves. I can't believe it!”

As you can see, we often assume that everyone knows how to share. Not true! Sharing and generosity don't just happen; these values need to be actively taught and learned. Ever since the time of Jesus, the church has made it a priority to teach and embody certain key values that are different from the world around us. Who taught you how to share and be generous? Where did you see an example? How can we teach these values today?

One way to learn generosity is by paying attention to creation. When bees discover a good source of pollen, they don't keep that knowledge to themselves. They know that it will take all of them, working together, to gather that pollen to help sustain the whole hive, so they share their knowledge and do their part. And the bees are onto something – when gardens are overflowing with tomatoes and zucchini, more than we can use on our own, we don't hang onto them until they rot. When you find something really good, you want to share it as soon as possible!

Our spiritual traditions teach us that the best way to show gratitude for God's gifts is to share them. For example, faithful Jewish families often bake challah bread for the Sabbath meal on Friday evening. It is difficult to find a challah recipe that yields only one loaf of bread, because the assumption is that you are going to make enough to share. Sharing is also a foundational value of the early Christian church, as we read in Acts 4:32-33: “**Now**

the whole group of those who believed were of one heart and soul...everything they owned was held in common. With great power the apostles gave their testimony to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and great grace was upon them all."

The early church lived differently from the world around them, and we are called to do the same. When we live out of a place of generosity, it fosters true connection and relationship. Sharing a gift honors the simple beauty of the gift itself; more than that, sharing honors God the giver most of all.

Our stewardship theme this year at St. Peter's is **Simple Gifts: Bees, Bread and Blessings**. We will be hearing from three guest speakers in worship this month about what "simple gifts" they have received in their lives, and how they have been moved to practice generosity. You are invited to prayerfully consider how you might share your gifts with St. Peter's, to help sustain us as a faith community that lives differently from the world.



Enclosed in this envelope is a 2026 giving card and privacy envelope. Once you make a plan for the coming year, please take a moment to complete the card, keep the stub for your records, and return the card to St. Peter's or directly to Paula Bishop, our financial secretary. You can place it in the offering plate or in Paula's box anytime, but it is most helpful if she receives it by **Sunday, November 23**. Can't find your card? You can email the information directly to Paula at pbishop2344@icloud.com or complete the card on our website at stpetersverona.org (under "Giving" at the top, click on "Stewardship").

Please rest assured that Paula will be the only one to see your information, and that you can change your giving plan at any time during the year if your situation changes. We understand that in life, unpredictable things happen sometimes!

Let me be frank. You aren't *required* to share your plan with us. God isn't giving out any brownie points for this. But creating a giving plan helps you share in a planned, reliable, sustainable way for your own budget, without shame or guilt. **Sharing your plan with us helps us to make our own plan as a congregation, and helps us use your gifts wisely.**

Thank you, St. Peter's, for all the ways you live generous lives, and the way you model generosity to others by sharing your gifts. Together we are a powerful witness to the world that there is more to life than possessions. In fact, what makes us truly alive is the connection we have with each other: God's love, flowing through us all.

Together in Christ,
Pastor Katie Yahns