

BUILDING A CULTURE OF GENEROSITY

Over the last year, we have witnessed so much generosity around our church. Even with all the hardship, we responded with actions of love and generosity. It seems it's in these very times of hardship that we so often see what God is up to. Here are just a few of the ways in which you've shared with us how you have seen God at work through this time:

- I've always enjoyed sewing and doing needlework. Making something that will bring joy to others adds to my enjoyment. Linda suggested a new project last year and that was sewing padded hearts with a ribbon hangar that was anchored by a button. Nurses at hospitals and doctors' offices were offered these hearts with a tag offering encouragement by way of occasional text messages. I really enjoyed making the hearts—picking out the colors and patterns and coordinating ribbons and buttons. I think that I made about 450 of them! I did keep one for myself, though, and I plan to hang it on our Christmas tree to remind me of the care that nurses have provided for all of us—especially during the Covid crisis. ***Jane G.***
- Stewardship... to me.. represents a few very important things:

 1. Love for your Church
 2. Commitment to your Church
 3. Trust in your Church
 4. Faith in God

Yes...the Church (Esperanza) is a "business" and it does require our dollars to make it run. But just as important, and I learned this a long time ago, especially in our younger age with our own bills to pay and a family to raise, that our time and talents mean just as much to keep our Church alive and strong. It takes all of the above, no matter how much or little we can each give to make Esperanza our Church Home. ***Susan B.***
- The church is where I worship God and get filled up so I can go out into the world and serve! ***Beth L.***
- It was with great joy to have participated in making the Hearts for Nurses during the pandemic. Like with many outreach ministry projects, we seldom see the reactions of the recipients, but there was feedback from the Nurse Coordinator stating that the recipients had placed their quilted hearts in their lockers, attached them to their clipboards, or displayed them in their homes. Many had tears in their eyes while choosing the heart they wanted. I look upon the invitation to help making the Hearts for Nurses an honor and a blessing. It also gave me a purpose during that uncertain time to be able to bring a glimmer of hope with my 700 Hearts into the lives of our fellow brothers and sisters. ***Yvonne F.***

What a beautiful community we are part of! God is certainly active here and we look forward to how we can help keep this ministry vibrant in the coming year.

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SEEK IN PRAYER GOD'S WILL FOR YOUR GIVING

What do we tend to do when the church asks for our support?

The common tendency is to consult our spouse, our budget, our bills, our income, our tax situation, our investments, our accountant, etc., and then determine what we can afford or spare.

Instead we should as Christians seek to discover what God's will is for us in our giving. A Christian pledge can really only be made on our knees, seeking God's will in fervent prayer.

Prayer is an integral part of the Christian life. The decision on how much to give should not be made without seeking first in prayer what God would have us do and listening for the voice of God in the prayer conversation.

Giving to the church is not a financial transaction. Instead, giving to the church is a spiritual exercise undertaken only after conversation with God.



Esperanza Lutheran Church
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