

First Presbyterian News



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Pastor's Column

God Will Provide

As we approach our national Thanksgiving holiday — a time dedicated to expressing our gratitude toward God for all of God's abundance — what time could be better to consider our attitudes toward money and financial stewardship?

A friend of mine wrote, "...once you fully realize that God is the source of all that we have, how could the faithful not give a big 'thank you' to God? At the same time believers in Jesus Christ whisper or sing bounteous expressions of gratitude to God, the Holy Spirit urges us to share our faith, our prayers, our worship and our substance with all God's people."

And yet, in our American culture, a person's purse or wallet is often the last part of them to be converted. We may give our heart and our time unreservedly to Jesus, but we reserve the right to keep Christ from meddling with our money. In fact, money is by far the greatest idol worshipped in North America. Why? To answer that, let me share a story adapted from something written by Stanley Jewell:

The church officers had spent an hour discussing the issue. The mission project that was before them was a good one. There wasn't a member of the session who didn't

think it was a good program. But it was going to cost money that they didn't have. Oh, they knew that they'd get support from the congregation, but what if it wasn't enough?

What if the ministry failed and all the money they put into it would be lost? It wasn't possible to put off the vote until the money could be raised. They wanted to vote yes, but they were afraid and, as a result, that opportunity for ministry was lost.

Contrast that typical American attitude towards money with the passage found in 2 Corinthians 8:2. There Paul writes to the church in Corinth about their sister congregations in Macedonia. He said (in the *New English Bible* translation): "The troubles they have been through have tried them hard, yet in all this they have been so exuberantly happy that from the depths of their poverty they have shown themselves lavishly open-handed." What an incredible combination! Joy and poverty together, overflowing in a wealth of generosity!

If you somehow had the chance to ask those Macedonian Christians about their giving, I'm sure you would discover that their exuberant giving grew out of a deep sense of thanksgiving for all that God had done. *(Continued on next page)*

Yet, I get the impression that the Macedonians didn't stop to analyze their motivations, they didn't look for the reasons they were giving so generously. They just gave and gave and gave, with an attitude of joy. Why? Because they trusted that God is a loving God, whose abundant generosity would meet all their needs.

That's a message we need to hear today. Especially in connection with the way we use money. We tend to think in terms of scarcity and limits when we think about money, because we tend to function out of fear rather than faith. Fear has a way of distorting our ability to perceive the truth of our situation.

Besides distorting our perspective, fear is not a very comfortable place to live. Gordon Cosby writes: "When I reflect deeply on my life, what I really want is not to be afraid. When I am afraid, I am miserable. I play it safe. I restrict myself. I hide [my] talent in the ground. I am not deeply alive — the depths of me are not being expressed."

You see, a great deal of our consumer society is based on fear — fear that we won't have enough. If our health goes, will we have enough funds? If things don't go as we plan, can we do the things we want to? Living out of fear causes an attitude of scarcity. But faith lives in the abundance of a God who says to us, "Fear not little flock, for it is your God's good pleasure to give you the kingdom."

Biblical stewardship calls us to live in an abundance that grows out of faith. And, by the way, when the Bible refers to financial stewardship, it isn't just talking about the money we give to the church; it is referring

to all of our money — the part we keep as well as the part we give away.

Therefore, the Presbyterian church's theological statement on stewardship says: "We trust in God alone, who loves us and enriches us with abundant gifts. And so we will seek to move [...] in attitude from scarcity to abundance."

The tough part is dealing with our uncertainty about how this will happen. We have to act in faith even as we face our fears of scarcity. As a church, we need to trust that, when we act out of faith, God will provide the money. As individuals, we can overcome our fear through generous sacrificial giving. Thus Jacques Ellul wrote: "We can disarm the power of money by giving it away."

Let me give you an example of this which may be found in a true story that happened in the late 1990s when flooding took a severe toll on the impoverished sections of Cincinnati's East End. It was a low-income neighborhood in which the average person earned around \$8,000-9,000 a year.

Bertha Milliard was an 85-year-old woman living on her own in that section of town. Her home was hit with eight feet of mud in the basement and standing water about four feet high in the main floor of her one-story home. She was able to make it out of the house — but all she was able to take with her was her purse. She ended up being hospitalized because of exhaustion and stress.

Her pastor, the Rev. Dianne Steelman, came to visit Mrs. Hilliard in the hospital while volunteer work crews were busily gutting her home. She had lost everything she owned. Mrs. Hilliard and her pastor talked

about her situation and they cried and prayed together.

As the pastor was leaving, Mrs. Hilliard called her back. She reached for her purse, and said, "I almost forgot. I have something for you." She pulled out an offering envelope. "Here's my offering for March 2nd. I've been worried about not getting it to the church, but I had to leave my home so quickly. Would you mind placing it in the offering for me?"

At this, the pastor was so overwhelmed emotionally, she couldn't talk. Then Mrs. Hilliard continued, "And, pastor, my personalized offering envelopes were in the house. Could I get another set for this year?" When the power of money is disarmed — when our fear is gone — we are able to discover the abundance of God.

One woman wrote: "I used to believe that saving money guaranteed you would have more. Saving it is good — the interest is nice — but giving it away makes room for more. Please don't ask me how this works, but I've been doing it for quite a while, and I keep receiving more than I set free. Money joyfully given multiplies like a wild thing released from captivity."

When we are freed from the fear of scarcity, we are able to open our eyes to the abundance of God, a God who gives abundantly, holding nothing back. As Paul wrote in Romans, "He who did not withhold his own son but gave him up for us all, will he not with him give us everything else?"

So, as you pray over your pledge forms, I would invite you to trust in the abundance of God and make your offering a symbol of the depth of your thanksgiving to God.

Upcoming Events in November

All Saints Day

Annually November 1 is recognized as All Saints Day. As a result, that will be the day we have our yearly Service of Remembrance to honor our loved ones who have gone on from this world to a life lived in the direct presence of God.

CARP

The Christian Association of Retired Persons (CARP) group will hold their November luncheon at the New China restaurant in Savanna (112 Chicago Avenue) starting at noon. As usual, there is no agenda for this gathering other than to get together and enjoy a good meal and each other's company. If you would like to join the group for this luncheon, please let either Lori Moyer or Helen Carroll know so they can call in the total number of expected attendees to the restaurant.

United Churches

The United Churches of Galena will meet at the Galena Food Pantry beginning at 10 am on Thursday, November 5th.

Thanksgiving Dinner

Church Life will sponsor a Thanksgiving dinner after worship on Sunday, November 8th.

Christmas Hymn Sing

We will have a Christmas Hymn Sing on November 29th in honor of the first Sunday in Advent. That day is the fifth Sunday in that month, but the Lord of Love opted not to share a service that day. However, we will play host to the Galena United Methodist congregation in our building.

November Lectionary

11/1: Joshua 3:7-17

Psalm 107:1-7,33-37

1 Thessalonians 2:9-13

Matthew 23:1-12

11/8: Joshua 24:1-3a, 14-25

Psalm 78:1-7

1 Thessalonians 4:13-18

Matthew 25:1-13

11/15: Judges 4:1-7

Psalm 123

1 Thessalonians 5:1-11

Matthew 25:14-30

11/22: Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24

Psalm 100

Ephesians 1:15-23

Matthew 25:31-46

11/29: Isaiah 64:1-9

1 Corinthians 1:3-9

Mark 13:24-37

Psalm 80:1-7, 16-18

News of the Family

Since our last edition of the newsletter, the *Gazette's* "Page from the past" column had two notices relating to our church. 10 years ago (Sept. 21, 2016) volunteers from five different churches (including First Pres) and two community organizations helped with the River Bend Food Pantry's first ever mobile food pantry distribution, and 50 years ago (Sept. 23, 1976): "Five historic homes will be open to the public for the 27th annual Tour of Historic Homes [actually called the Fall Tour of Homes]. They were the Aratus Kent House 1929; a Cornish miner's house, 1840's; the Norris house, early 1850's; the Pre-Civil War Home of General Ulysses S. Grant, 1840's and the Belvedere, 1857."

Pat Halstead was listed as one of the winners of the Northwest Illinois Daily Drawing in September.

Thank you all!

After I finished Sunday school on October 18, Kathy Pearson told me that some messages had been left for me. Then she led me outside.

There I discovered a merry flock of sheep dancing around with blissful smiles on their faces. And each sheep carried one or more heartfelt messages of gratitude for Delight and me in honor of Pastor Appreciation Sunday.

I only had a few minutes before I would be expected to begin the worship service, so I didn't have time to read them then, but after church, I took them all home and read and reread each and every

one. Pardon the expression, but what a *delightful* surprise!

That was deeply touching and I can't begin to express how utterly blessed I feel to have had the opportunity to share so many joyful years with such a loving community of Christians, each of whom inspires me and who regularly challenges me to be a better person and to be a more and more faithful disciple.



Thank you letters

Dear Partners in God's Ministry,

Our prayers are with you as a new school and church season begins. May this be a time of fruitful new beginnings. I pray for God's grace and wisdom as we seek to serve with energy, intelligence, imagination and love to address these issues in our communities.

On behalf of Stewardship and Funds Development, please convey our appreciation to your mission committee, pastor, session and congregation for your gracious and faithful support.

Because World Communion Sunday will be celebrated on October 4, now is also a suitable time to ensure you have your World Communion Offering materials. Visit pcusa.org/WCO to learn more about this newly reconceived Offering that meets our long-standing commitments in new and creative ways, including a grant program designed to strengthen local mission and ministry that builds reconciliation, advances justice, supports peacemaking, nurtures global witness, and deepens ecumenical and interfaith relationships.

Thank you once again for your support, dedication and partnership in furthering God's mission around the world. You are a valued partner. As always, please let me know how I can support you in your mission and ministry efforts.

Faithfully,

Rev. Lemuel García-Arroyo

Stewardship Officer, Office of Stewardship and Funds Development

The gifts listed below were received during the month of August 2026.

- Amount: \$300.00 for a family of chickens (12)
 - Amount: \$100.00 for two shares of a garden well
 - Amount: \$150.00 for three sewing machines
 - Amount: \$125.00 for five shares in educating a child
- *****

The Mission & Stewardship Committee donated \$200 to help Kerry Hodgkin (daughter of Judy & Ray) purchase a shower stool. In response, she sent a card to use which said:

Thank you very much.

Kerry Hodgkin

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your recent gift of \$200.00 through the Presbyterian Giving Catalog. Your congregation's generosity is changing lives in the name of Jesus Christ.

God's reign is extended when hunger is alleviated, disadvantaged children are educated, young people grow in their faith, communities are safe and clean water is plentiful. All gifts in the Giving Catalog help us move closer to God's vision for our world. The needs are great, but every single gift makes a difference. Indeed, small gifts make a big impact!

We have enclosed a beautiful, fair-trade, handcrafted ornament, a small token of thanks. To share your joy of giving with others in your congregation, simply visit honorcards.pcusa.org where you can personalize and send an e-card, including having it sent on any day you choose. Prefer a paper card? The option to print or order cards is also available through the provided link.

The Presbyterian Giving Catalog has been generating excitement across the Presbyterian Church

(U.S.A.) for over 10 years because of transformative gifts like the one you just made.

Thank you for being part of this effort, which is helping even more people participate in the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.)'s witness in the world. You can help grow this movement by encouraging those in your congregation and others to visit the Giving Catalog's website — presbyteriangifts.org.

Thank you for your gift, which enables all people to know God's life-giving welcome in Jesus Christ. You are a deeply valued partner in mission.

Grateful for our service and ministry together;

Rev. Wilson Kennedy, Associate Director, Annual Giving Stewardship and Funds Development

In Memoriam

During the month that passed since our last newsletter, we have had three different members die within a nine-day stretch.

The first was Heidi Sincox, who moved from Franklin-McCoy to her parents' home in Scales Mound some years ago. She died October 10th.

Next was Delight's mother, Mary Carl, who died at the Midwest Medical Senior Living Center on October 12.

Finally, Lyle Reed died at his home on October 19.

Each of them will be dearly missed in this life, but they will have entered into the joy of living with God in the next life. So our faith tells us that our separation from them — however long or short that may be — will not be permanent.

Meanwhile, please keep each of these families in your prayers.

Voice of the Martyrs — Oman

The Sultanate of Oman is less restrictive than its neighbors on the Arabian Peninsula. There are a limited number of church buildings, and the few Omani Christians in the country usually meet covertly and carefully discuss their faith because of the risk of persecution from family, community and government.

MAJOR RELIGION

Nearly all Omanis are Muslims, including about 70 percent Ibadi Muslims, with the remainder a mix of Sunni and Shiite Muslims.

PERSECUTOR

Family members and communities pressure those who convert from Islam to Christianity, and the government intervenes if Christian converts become well known or are viewed as a source of shame in their community.



WHAT IT MEANS TO FOLLOW CHRIST IN OMAN

Leaving Islam is not a criminal act in Oman, but Christian converts can be harassed through legal challenges. There are few Omani believers and the risk of persecution is so high that Christian converts must meet in small groups and use caution in sharing their faith. Foreign Christians are permitted to meet, but

they are not allowed to meet in homes or to evangelize Omanis.

ACCESS TO BIBLES

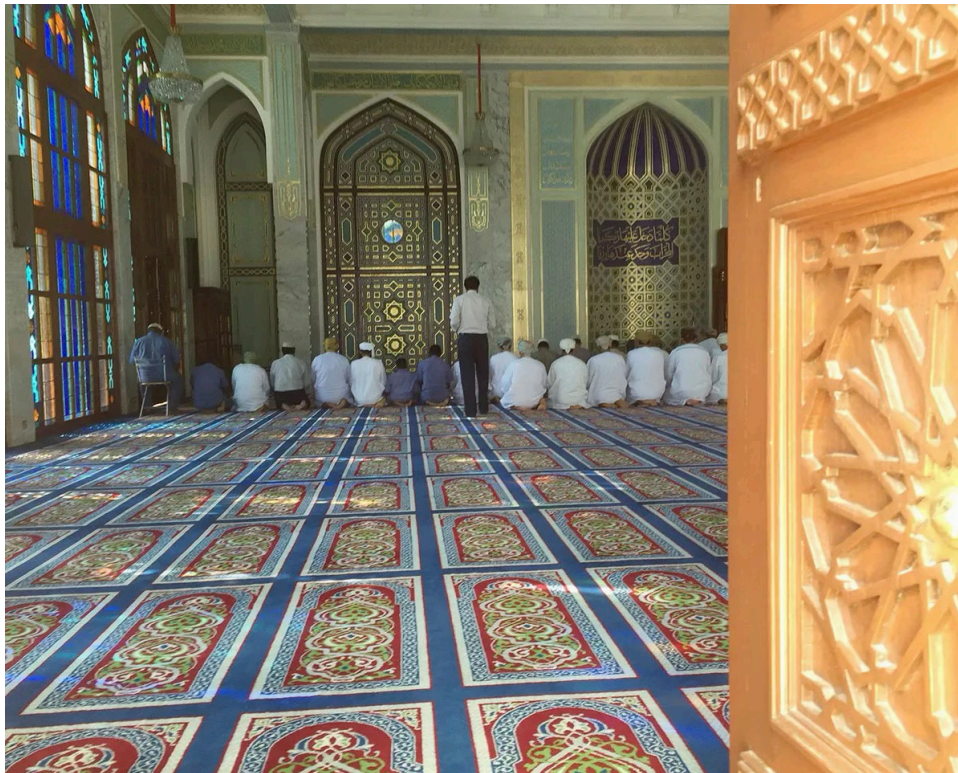
The government allows the Bible Society to sell Bibles and Christian literature to foreigners inside the country, but not to Omanis. There is only one Christian bookstore, in Oman's capital, but Omanis can easily access digital and audio Bibles online.

VOM WORK

VOM helps with the training of local believers in evangelism and discipleship.

PRAYER REQUESTS

- Pray that Omani Christians will be able to fellowship without government detection.
- Pray that Muslims seeking the truth will find it in the person of Jesus Christ.
- Pray that online and broadcast ministries will reach Omanis who have never heard the gospel.
- The government restricts the sale of Bibles to Omanis. Pray for increased access to God's Word.
- Pray that Christian expatriates in Oman will have opportunities to share the gospel with Omanis.



Thanksgiving

November, it seems to me, is the absolutely right time for those of us in this part of the world to celebrate a time of thanksgiving. The work and wondering of the spring, the summer, the fall, are over, and as the old hymn says, "All is safely gathered in" (for the most part.) Winter is upon us. It is a time that brings to mind the lines of an e. e. Cummings poem,

for all that has been, thanks
for all that will be, yes

As we gather in worship, around tables, with family and friends, in our own quiet places, apart and unto ourselves—in whatever way we enter into this time of thanksgiving—I offer this reading adapted from Howard Thurman to help us make our acts of thanksgiving:

Today we make our act of Thanksgiving. We begin with the simple things of our days: fresh air to breathe, cool water to drink, the taste of food, the protection of houses and clothes, the comforts of home. For these we make an act of Thanksgiving this day!

We bring to mind all the warmth of humankind that we have known: our mother's arms, the strength of our fathers, the playmates of our childhood, the wonderful stories brought to us from the lives of many who talked of days gone by when fairies and giants and all kinds of

magic held sway: the tears we have shed, the tears we have seen, the excitement of laughter and the twinkle in the eye with its reminder that life is good. For all these we make an act of Thanksgiving this day.

We finger one by one the messages of hope that awaited us at the crossroads: the smile of approval from those who held in their hands the reins of our security, the tightening of the grip in a single handshake when we feared the step

without whom our lives would have no meaning; the seers who saw visions and dreamed dreams; the prophets who sensed a truth greater than the mind could grasp and whose words could find fulfillment in the years which they would never see; the workers whose sweat has watered the trees, the leaves of which are for the healing of nations; the pilgrims who set their sails for lands beyond all horizons, whose courage made paths into new worlds and far-off places; the saviors whose blood was shed

with a recklessness that only a dream could inspire and God could command. For all this we make an act of Thanksgiving this day. We linger over the meaning of our own lives and the commitments to which we give the loyalty of our hearts and hands; the little purposes in which we have shared with our loves, our desires, our gifts; the restlessness which bottoms all that we do with its stark insistence that we have never done our best, we have never dared to reach the highest; the big hope that never quite deserts us, that we and our kind will study war no

more, that love and tenderness and all the inner graces of Almighty affection. will cover the life of the children of God as the waters cover the sea.

All these and more than the mind can think and heart can feel, we make as our act of Thanksgiving to you, Our God, in humbleness of mind and simplicity of heart. Amen.

Dave Lenz



before us, the whisper in our hearts when the temptation was fiercest, the crucial word said, the simple word from an open page when decisions hung in the balance. For all of these we make an act of Thanksgiving this day.

We pass before us the mainsprings of our heritage: the fruits of the labors of countless generations who lived before us,

Rosecrance Galena

Rosecrance is pleased to expand our support of the Jo Daviess County region with behavioral health treatment services. Our continuum of care for mental health and substance use disorders offers the best chance for lasting recovery for youth, young adults, adults, and their families.

We're proud of our commitment to serving people in northern Illinois with an integrated care approach that combines our expertise in addiction treatment for teens and adults with support for co-occurring mental health disorders and primary support for mental health concerns.

With a rich history of caring for youth, young adults, adults, and their families, we provide prompt, expert care to those who need us.

Last year, Rosecrance supported over 70,000 individuals through more than 70 locations across Illinois, Iowa, Wisconsin, and Rosecrance Virtual. Galena location allows individuals and their families to easily enter the Rosecrance care continuum that includes treatment at all levels, including residential, partial hospitalization, outpatient and, continuing care. Rosecrance's evidence-based family programming provides guidance and support to families as they seek to navigate the challenges of their loved ones' behavioral health challenges. Our virtual outpatient services and supportive programs also put hope within reach for clients who may prefer the additional convenience and confidentiality of this option.

Services include:

- All age mental health services
- Individual, group, and family counseling

Rosecrance Galena

life's waiting®



• Mental health and substance use disorder screenings and assessments

• Telepsychiatry
• Substance use disorder services for adults:

• DUI evaluations
• Intensive Outpatient Program (IOP)

• Continuing Care (CC)
• Individual sessions

The new Rosecrance Offices may be found at 939 Galena Square Drive, Suite B. Their phone number is 815.387.1660. Their website is rosecrance.org.

Be thankful

Be thankful that you don't already have everything you desire. If you did, what would there be to look forward to?

Be thankful when you don't know something, for it gives you the opportunity to learn.

Be thankful for the difficult times. During those times you grow. Be thankful for your limitations, because they give you opportunities for improvement. Be thankful for each new challenge, because it will build your strength and character.

Be thankful for your mistakes. They will teach you valuable lessons.

Be thankful when you're tired and weary, because it means you've made a difference.

It's easy to be thankful for the good things. A life of rich fulfillment comes to those who are also thankful for the setbacks. Gratitude can turn a negative into a positive. Find a way to be thankful for your troubles, and they can become your blessings.

Author unknown

Christianity

"If you are a Christian you do not have to believe that all the other religions are simply wrong all through. If you are an atheist you do have to believe that the main point in all the religions of the whole world is simply one huge mistake. If you are a Christian, you are free to think that all these religions, even the [weirdest] ones, contain at least some hint of the truth. When I was an atheist I had to try to persuade myself that most of the human race have always been wrong about the question that mattered the most; when I became a Christian I was able to take a more liberal view. But, of course, being a Christian does mean that where Christianity differs from other religions, Christianity is right and they are wrong. As in arithmetic — there is only one right answer to a sum, and all other answers are wrong: but some of the wrong answers are much nearer being right than others."

C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity*

Minute For Mission – October 11, 2026: Homelessness Sunday

In Isaiah, chapter 58, the Lord is calling out the ways that the people are not serving God's righteousness. He then lists ways that we should carry out God's righteousness and in verse 7 says, "Is it not to share your bread with the hungry and to provide the poor wanderer with shelter?"

We are privileged to be joining congregations all across our country to participate in "A Weekend to End Homelessness." It is sponsored by the National Faith Coalition to End Homelessness (NFCEH). This movement began with the idea of one man, Kevin Nye, of Minnesota, whose plan took three years of thinking to develop. He was joined by Aaron Horner, of California, who pushed the idea into action.

They realized that, "Homelessness is rising across this country and most communities already have systems designed to address it. What those systems often lack is the kind of broad community partnership — the trust, the reach, the moral weight — that faith communities are uniquely positioned to provide."

Most churches, synagogues, mosques and temples already care and are doing something about homelessness. Galena First Pres. has been working in co-ministry with the Dubuque Rescue Mission for many years. In fact, in a couple of days, we will be serving and providing part of the meal there, as well as giving the residents warm accessories for the coming winter. You have donated faithfully and generously as we have followed what the Lord has taught us about the privilege and responsibility that we carry, as Christians, to help

our neighbors who have no permanent place to live.

Parenthetically, it was through the Rescue Mission's summer newsletter that we learned of this new effort to help us connect to the larger systems that exist to move people into stable housing.

What are the values of this initiative?

- We affirm the dignity and inherent value of all people, unhoused and housed, as created in the image of God and called beloved.
- We acknowledge the interconnectedness of all God's people and that we find our own flourishing in the flourishing of our neighbors.
- We believe that everyone deserves a safe place to sleep, surrounded by supportive community and resources, and all the things that make us at home. And, among other things...
- We know that homelessness is solvable, and that the Church has a critical role to play in bringing everyone home, as God does for all of God's people.

Homelessness has risen in Dubuque (and, yes, we have people right here in Galena who are experiencing a lack of housing.) More people are using food and shelter services.

Some ways the Rescue Mission is helping are by offering shelter for 80 men each night; providing more than



4,000 meals each month for anyone in need of a meal; providing clothing and other material goods for those with no means to pay; and offering rehousing assistance, social services, and job development. This last goal is what the NFCEH is planning to help all congregations and their communities provide.

Following this initial weekend, they will help us to discern what comes next — whether that's an ongoing partnership, a new volunteer commitment, a giving focus, or something our congregation is uniquely positioned to offer.

Let us give thanks to the Lord, who led us to learn about this effort and pray that we will be guided to discern what might be our next step to help our neighbors in the broadest sense of the word. For, as Luke 1:37 tells us, "...with God nothing shall be impossible." Amen!

Kathy Pearson for the Mission & Stewardship Committee



Joy in Giving

Nancy and I were friends with a young Lutheran parochial school teacher and wife who were so poorly paid by the congregation that they could have qualified for food stamps in the 1970s when this incident took place.

She became pregnant for the first time. Imagine their chagrin when they learned she was pregnant with twins — there was no way they could afford two!! She carried the boys to term and gave birth to two healthy boys.

I don't remember now how we "afforded" this — and I CERTAINLY do not brag about this — I tell the story because it's true, 20+ years old, and an example of the point I'm making; I tell this in the humility of having learned (and needing always to RElearn) generosity in the spirit of Christ — but [to return to the story!]....

Nancy and I went to the bank, got two crisp new \$100 bills, and mailed them to the new family in an unmarked and disguised envelope.

It was a deeply rewarding return on that gift to watch our friends marvel, tell others [including us :-)], speculate about the givers, discuss how to use the money — and then start from the top and go through the whole happy discussion/speculation/delight again!

To this day this is a far more satisfying experience than anything (well, ALMOST anything) I can imagine we would have gotten from spending \$200 on ourselves.

Nate Castens