

BEGINNING A CULTURE OF GENEROSITY

Some of you may remember that in my first career I was a fundraiser. My favorite part of that work was sitting across the kitchen table with people who told me their stories and shared what was important to them. That's one of the skills that has transferred well to being a congregation pastor.

Several times since I first became an ELCA Lutheran in 1999, my family and I have been the recipients of congregations' generosity.

The first time was when Emma was in third grade, and participating in the children's choir, and all the children were invited to go to Lutheridge for Music Week. The congregation chose to pay the week's tuition for camp if the family paid the registration fee. Emma became a regular at Music Week, attending for the rest of her school years.

Another time I was the recipient of others' generosity was when I was a candidate for Ministry of Word and Sacrament, and the synod candidacy committee notified me that every semester the synod would send a grant to my seminary to cover a portion of my tuition. Their gift affirmed my call and made them partners in ministry with our family, as I pursued my degree.

Both Emma and Casey have benefited from generosity in congregations, too. In 2012, Casey attended the ELCA Youth Gathering in New Orleans because the congregation committed funds to help the youth group participate, and Emma was able to go in 2015 and 2018 because her congregation in Winston-Salem invested in the youth group's participation, too.

One of the most humbling and memorable gifts I ever received was when I was on internship. It was 2013 and we still owned a house near Winston-Salem where we had lived for two years. We found out the roof needed to be replaced before it could be sold. My internship congregation made a gift to us to replace the roof so that we would be able to sell the property and be available for call. A year later you called me to Ascension.

My generosity story is the story of how others' gifts have impacted my family, helping us realize the gifts God has given us for mission and ministry. They are also the reason I give and continue to increase my giving, striving toward a full tithe.

In Christ, Pastor Christina Auch

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