



Encountering Community: Generosity 2026

Normandale Evangelical Lutheran Church

Beloved People of Normandale Lutheran Church,

I give thanks to God for you. Thank you for your faithfulness and generosity now and over the last 75 years! As I've begun my call as Lead Pastor, I've discovered the vibrant life of this congregation. Ministry is flourishing both within and beyond our walls. Our building serves as a faithful home for community life, and so many of you give your time and energy to make this possible. Normandale is alive with life and passion.

There is no doubt that God is at work among us. I've been amazed at all the ways in which I've encountered the movement of God since beginning this call. Encountering God is at the heart of faithful generosity.

In Luke 19, Jesus comes to the sycamore tree Zacchaeus had climbed. Though Zacchaeus had wealth, he was isolated and unseen. Yet his curiosity about this roaming rabbi led to a moment of grace. Jesus sees Zacchaeus—and his deep need—and offers an invitation to relationship: "Hurry and come down, for I must stay at your house today."

Zacchaeus is transformed by this invitation. Once Jesus meets his deepest need—to be seen, known, and loved—Zacchaeus' relationship to his possessions changes. No longer clinging to what he has, his heart opens to justice, generosity, and joy.

As we enter this season of generosity, I invite you to lean into curiosity and reflect on your own encounters with Jesus and how they shape your giving. What has Jesus given you that opens you to justice, generosity, and joy?

As we reflect on God's gifts and mercies, church leadership is discerning how best to support the ministry entrusted to us. And we do so trusting that Jesus sees, invites, and joins us in this work.

The gifts you give in support of our Annual Budget provide much of the funding for our core ministries. Each year our Annual Fund supports **Church Staffing, Worship and Music, Hospitality, Administration and Facility Care**, and **Mission and Outreach**. As we move away from fee-based models of funding for the **Children, Youth and Family Ministry**, our Annual Fund will be the primary source for funding these ministries, too.

Normandale is a generous congregation. You give in many ways: your time, your talents, and your resources. Nearly 400 households support our Annual Fund, and the average household gives \$4,100 to it annually. Thank you!

While our Annual Fund giving remains strong this year, one important source of funding will conclude in 2025. For the past three years, COVID-era Employee Retention Credits have helped support our church budget. As those funds come to an end, we will need to grow our generosity to sustain our current level of ministry and meet the needs before us.

Trusting in Jesus' provision, and transformed through his presence, I trust that we can meet this challenge together.

Through Jesus, God is opening our hearts to justice, generosity, and joy. And I invite you to join me in increasing your giving to Normandale in 2026.

If you're already giving—no matter the amount—even a small increase can make a big difference, especially when we do it together. Consider raising your Annual Fund giving by just 1% or 2% of your income or 5%–10% of your previous year's giving. If you haven't started giving yet, I encourage you to begin, even with a modest monthly amount. Every gift matters and contributes to the life and mission we share.

Soon, Normandale's leaders will begin financial planning for 2026. Your plans for giving in the coming year help us plan faithfully and wisely. That's why we've included an Annual Fund pledge card with this letter. You may return your card during Sunday worship, by mail, in person at the church office, or online at www.normluth.org/give. We'll celebrate the conclusion of our Generosity Pledges with an in-gathering on **Thanksgiving Sunday, November 23**.

Additionally, we've included a lovely **devotional/spiritual practice** written by Pastor Rebecca to encourage you to continue thinking about your generosity through the story of Zacchaeus. I invite you to use it.

Again, I am grateful: grateful to God who gives all we need, grateful to you for your faithfulness and generosity, and grateful for the opportunity to serve as a pastor among you.

Normandale, I whole-heartedly believe Jesus has come to our house. Jesus is at work here, and we encounter him in this place. How might this encounter open our hearts to justice and generosity in the year ahead?

Peace in Christ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Adam P. White'.

Adam P. White
Lead Pastor

