

## Creating a Culture of Thanksgiving in Your Congregation



## Thank

- I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love towards all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers.  
–Ephesians 1:15-16
- I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now.  
-Philippians 1:3-5

## Thank

- Thanking builds up the person who is thanked,
- builds up the person who thanks, and
- builds up the body of Christ

Thank You

## Thank

- General ways of thanking
  - With reports of giving – a three paragraph letter from you
    - One great ministry event in the past quarter
    - Thanks for making this and more possible
    - One thing that is coming up in the next quarter that you are especially anticipating
  - In worship – Thanksgiving Moment
  - In newsletter – Have staff and council members do this – tie to mission

## Thank

- Specific ways of thanking
  - Pastor intentionally thanks before/after worship
  - Pastor writes five thank you letters per week
  - Congregational thankers(s)

## Thank

- Lessons from Luther Seminary (and many other non-profits)
  - How Luther Seminary thanks donors
  - How much of this is transferable?
  - What are the possibilities of giver targeted thanking?
  - What are the dangers of giver targeted thanking?

## Develop a plan for thanking

1. Discover what you are doing now
2. Ask yourselves what you would like to do
  - Staff
  - Elected leaders
  - A focus group or two
3. Develop a plan
  - Keep it simple
  - Start small

## Tell

People need and deserve to know how their giving is making a difference in the world.

(...and you can bet that if they don't know how their giving to your congregation is making a difference, they will be tempted to move their giving to someplace where they know how their giving is making a difference)

## Tell

- The need to tell something many times using different media before the message is heard
- The knowledge gap between leaders and others
- Tell as you thank
- Tie your telling to your mission
- “Because of you...”
- “Look what you’ve done now...”

## Telling the local story

- To repeat myself – don't assume too much knowledge
- Temple Talks (short, sweet and well-rehearsed) are effective for this task
  - Invite leaders from ministry areas
  - Can you invite ministry recipients to speak?
- Connect telling, serving and giving
- This might be the best place to engage younger members

## Telling the story of designated giving

- Use the web and available print resources to gather material
- Guest speakers/preachers (Again, can you invite ministry recipients to speak)
- Mission trips?

Telling the story of synod and churchwide



**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

## Discussion

What thanking and telling ideas have worked well for you to create a culture of thanksgiving in congregations you have served?