

LESSONS ON GENEROSITY by Rosella Shishido

There's a Nigerian proverb that goes: "It is the heart that does the giving; the fingers only let go." So clever, and so true. It's the heart behind the giving that truly matters.

With our church's focus on generosity these last couple of years, I've become more curious about the kind of generosity the Bible teaches. The more I read and prayed, the more I realized there's still much to learn. And so I'd like to share with you a few insights that I hope to grow in my own life. If you know these already, then consider these next three minutes a refresh!

1) A better understanding of "if you sow generously, you'll reap generously" (2 Corinthians 9:6)

It's easy to associate this verse with getting back money for the money we give away. But if we are to consider the metaphor the apostle Paul used here of sowing and reaping, he's referring to a farmer planting seeds. When the farmer plants seeds, he's not expecting to get seeds back, is he? He's expecting fruit to result from the seed.

Yes, the blessing from what we give may be money back in return, but the bigger blessing will come in a much better form. In this case, being generous with what we have will result in us having changed lives. We become better people who reflect the character of God, and people who bear the fruit of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

2) Trust is required. Both ways.

I've learned and have heard many times that being generous is a result of trusting God as our provider. We give even when we may not have much because we trust that God will meet our needs and not abandon us.

But God requires us to be trustworthy as well. Everything

belongs to Him; we are just the overseers, the stewards. Can I be trusted to care for, nurture, and develop the people, the material things, the environment, the opportunities, and the talents and skills that God has entrusted to me?

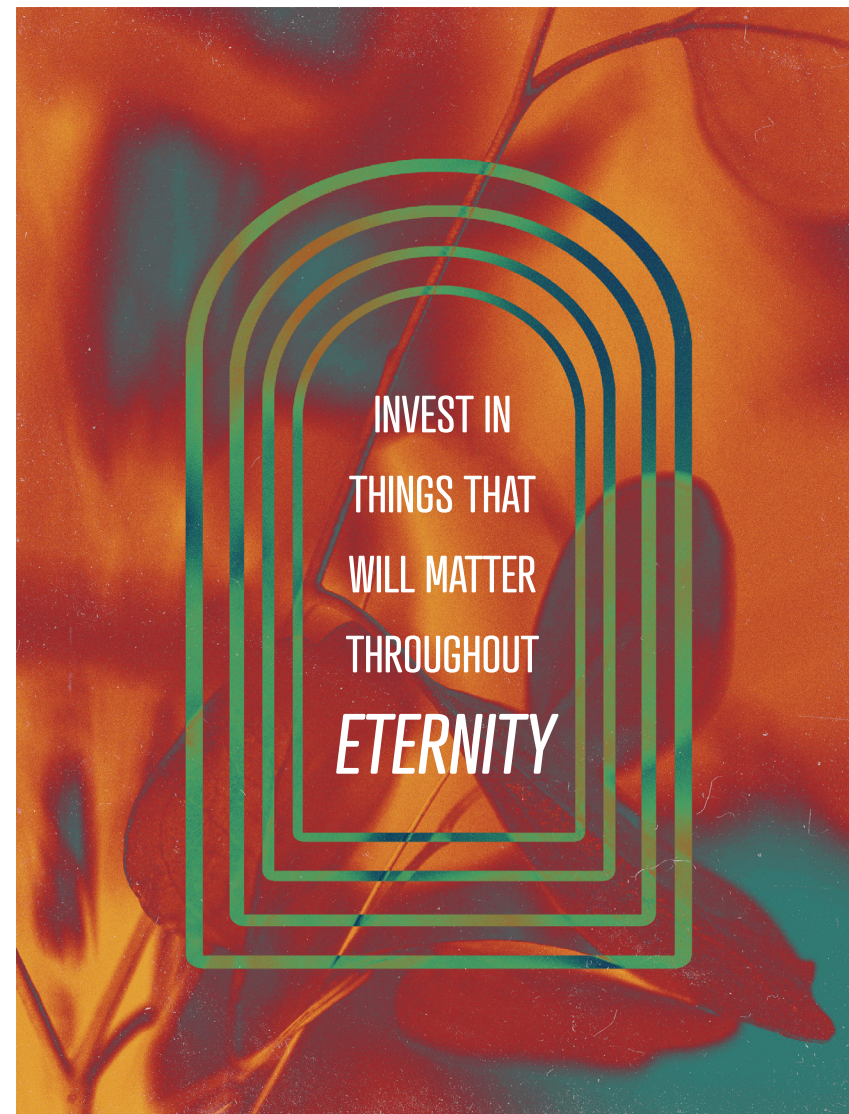
3) Investing in the work of the church is a way of affirming that only Jesus can bring the hope our world needs.

I learned this from Tim Shaw's "The Generous Hero" sermon, where he mentioned the sacrificial giving Barnabas made in Acts 4:32-37. To quote Pastor Tim:

"Only Jesus, working in and through His church, was going to bring the ultimate hope Barnabas' world needed. That's the conclusion he came to. That's why he sold property and brought the proceeds to

be used by the church. He wanted to be a part of bringing God's Kingdom from heaven to earth."

Generosity is definitely more than just what we give—whether it's time, money, or material things. It's about **being giving**, being willing and ready to give to others for their benefit and, as a result, to bring honor to the Lord.



QUARTERLY UPDATE

FIRST PREZ HONOLULU | www.raisethe sails.org | SEPTEMBER 2021

DEAR FIRST PREZ 'OHANA,

Your generosity toward God's work here at First Prez has been a tremendous source of encouragement! Thank you so much! Your financial gifts continue to impact our church ministries and operations.

In spite of the pandemic, our ministries are still flourishing.

Just a few highlights:

- We continue to see more and more new people coming to our worship services.
- We make our campus available for events that support the community. In July we hosted a Professional Development Day for teachers in STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math). Teachers came for the day to learn about Ko'olau and use the site to brainstorm place-based science programming. We allowed them the use of Honey's dining area and gave them a tour of our campus.
- New ministries are being born. We are launching a new Gen X group. We hope to create this new singles ministries that will influence our state, our country, and even the world.

Enjoy reading about what your giving has made possible, and you'll see how in the following pages.

Take care! Keep safe! And keep raising the sails of your heart!



Pastor Dan
Pastor Dan Chun



FUNDS ALL OUR WORSHIP SERVICES IN-PERSON AND ONLINE

WORSHIP SERVICES

8AM

AND

10AM

ONLINE

fpchawaii.online.church

IN-PERSON REGISTER WEEKLY AT

fpchawaii.org/regathering

RAISE THE SAILS (RTS) GOAL UPDATES
Dec 1, 2019 to August 31, 2021

TOTAL PROJECTED RTS INCOME DEC 2019-2021:

\$12,418,569

PROJECTED RTS INCOME
AS OF AUG 31, 2021:

\$9,903,699

ACTUAL RTS INCOME
AS OF AUG 31, 2021:

\$9,231,544

★ ★ ★ ★ ★
**93% RECEIVED FROM
PROJECTED AMOUNT
AS OF AUG 31**

All income to First Prez Honolulu from Dec 2019 to Dec 2021 count toward the Raise the Sails goal. Thanks for being a part of it!



KO'OLAU PROPERTY UPDATES

Lockdown or no lockdown, we continue to do campus improvements with safety in mind. We are grateful to volunteers who set aside big chunks of time to help in recent projects like installing new laminate flooring in our children's ministry area, and filling potholes in our driveway and parking lot. God blesses us through generous volunteers! Mahalo!



WAYS TO GIVE

- 1 ONLINE** through the website: fpchawaii.org/give or raisethesails.org/give where you can make a one-time gift or set up recurring gifts.
- 2 IN-PERSON:** in the offering boxes at in-person worship services
- 3 TEXT-TO-GIVE:** Text "FPCHI" to 77977
- 4 FIRST PREZ APP:** Choose the GIVE button on the app (available in the Apple App Store or Google Play—search up "First Presbyterian Honolulu")
- 5 MAIL** your check to the church. We can also send you pre-addressed, stamped envelopes that you can use to send in your gift. Call the church office at (808) 532-1111 to request those envelopes.



QUESTIONS REGARDING YOUR GIVING OR HOW TO SET UP RECURRING GIFTS?

Contact Debbie (bookkeeper):
dentact@hawaii.rr.com
(808) 836-9995

RAISETHESAILS.ORG

Hakuhia UPDATE

First Prez Honolulu is excited to partner with Smart Trees Pacific by offering the Citizen Forester Program that will benefit Hakuhia, our ministry to steward our Ko'olau property. Volunteers have been training on Zoom and in person to develop forestry skills needed to collect a tree inventory of our property now that we have access to all 246 acres.

The purpose of collecting a tree inventory is to know where our trees are located, which trees need attention, where trees are needed, and what ecological benefits our trees provide. Management of any resource begins with an inventory of that resource, and forest management is no exception.

First Prez volunteers have been learning technical forestry skills through a variety of assessments and observations, as well as developing their tree identification skills. The data collected will be imported to an online database for use. A tool in the inventory software, called iTree, can calculate the ecological benefits of each tree recorded. The variety of assessment data collected helps to accurately determine the values of those benefits.

The data collected from our volunteers' hard work will be significant in future planning for the Hakuhia 'aina restoration project.



THANK YOU FOR YOUR GENEROSITY!

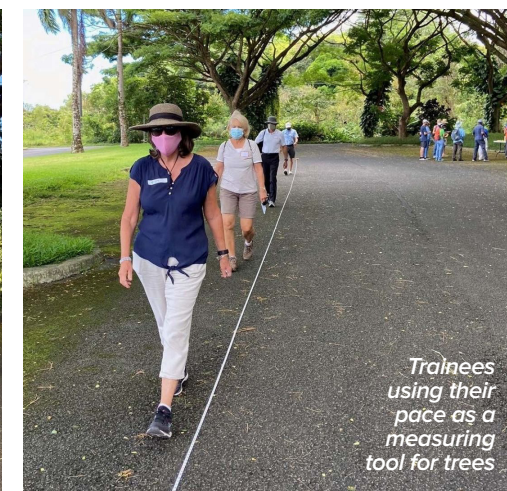
We've had to figure out new ways of doing things—sanitizing, serving communion, checking in people and livestreaming so that everyone can experience church online—it's only through your financial support that any of it is possible.



Pastor Dan thanking Citizen Forester trainees



Trainees using yardsticks as a tool for measuring tree height



Trainees using their pace as a measuring tool for trees