



In the heart of the Bible's library is a songbook: the book of Psalms
an ancient, lyrical collection of 150 songs
which reflects the gamut of human experience
in relationship with God.

For something like three thousand years.

these songs have shaped the lives of our ancestors,
and continue to do so today.

In a sense, this is the soundtrack, the jukebox, the playlist of Christian history,
and therefore of our lives as followers of Jesus.

These are songs Jesus knew by heart –

so well, in fact, that he quoted two of them on the cross (Psalm 22 and 31)

The songbook begins with wisdom –

reminding us that those who are faithful to God
are like trees planted beside streams of water.

In the songs that follow, we encounter the full range of human emotions –

Joy and sorrow, wonder and doubt,
Gratitude, anger and longing.

The songbook is not organized neatly by subject or occasion –

Psalms of lament in one section, anger in another.

Instead the “messy mix” of psalms reflects the messy mix of our lives –

when we can go from awe to despair, from fear to comfort to hope,
all in the course of a day.

And within individual psalms, there is often movement –

from fear or pain or despair into comfort and praise.



These were the songs used in the worship and faith lives of Israelites
for generations.

Psalm 100 is written for a community entering into worship,
singing to God with “a joyful noise” as the community gathers.

The identity of the community is shaped by their worship of God –

*It is God who made us, they sing, and we are God's
we are God's people and the sheep of God's pasture.*

The foundation of their praise is their knowledge and experience of God's
goodness:

*For the Lord is good; his steadfast love endures forever
and his faithfulness to all generations.*



And how does this Bible songbook conclude?
With not just one, but five psalms dedicated entirely to praise.
The last of these, Psalm 150, is a joyful song of praise,
calling on “everything that breathes” to praise God.
It is an embodiment of that praise, with its “loud clashing cymbals”
exemplifying the “joyful noise” called for in Psalm 100.

Psalm 150 begins with the instruction – *Praise the Lord!*,
which in Hebrew is *Hallelujah!*
The psalm reminds us that our job isn’t limited to singing sweetly and in tune.
The main thing is to be joyful, boisterous, and bold,
unafraid to “clash” here and there with our joyous cymbals,
offering whatever gifts we have to the chorus.
Sweet and in tune? Great!
Brash and clashing? Equally great!
Just bring your joyful, noisy gifts with courage and generosity –
and at the same time, generously lift up the gifts of others,
all for the sake of praising the generous God of love.
A chorus of generosity and praise.



When it comes right down to it, that’s who we are here at All Saints
and who we strive to be: a chorus of generosity and praise.
We bring our gifts, and we celebrate each other’s gifts.
We gather each week for worship which is joyful and uplifting,
yet leaves room for us to know pain and give voice to lament.
Many of us participate in creating and sharing music to enrich our worship.
Many of us give time and care to keeping up our worship week to week –
setting the table, reading the lessons and prayers,
and running the technology for those who will participate by Zoom or Youtube.
We love to share food and fellowship each week,
and even more to gather for a potluck meal.
And we care for one another – praying for each other, giving rides,
visiting in the hospital, welcoming in the fellowship hall.

But our chorus of generosity does not just focus on our worship
and our congregation.
We give so much in time and resources to people in our wider community –
and I truly believe this sense of mission and service in the world
is the reason we thrive as a congregation.
Even as we have addressed expensive repairs to our property,
we have never lost sight of our call to service and compassionate action.

Just this week, we have set up the annual Christmas Angel giving tree,
to buy gifts for 6 or 7 families who do not have resources for gifts this year.
We provide food for Sierra Vista backpacks,
for neighbors at the border through Dignity Mission
for families seeking shelter and support at Family Promise.
Last week Kurt Rager, director of Lutheran Advocacy Ministry-NM
and a member of All Saints, reminded us that part of our ministry
is the work of advocacy,
seeking to bring just laws and policies to support people in need –
And yesterday many of us attended LAM's fall advocacy conference,
to hear about the needs in our state
and the ways we can raise our voices in the coming legislative session.

As a community of faith, we support and hold one another in the hard times.
So when one of us is struggling with faith or near despair,
they can count on the community to carry them in faith and hope;
knowing that another day their strength will support someone else.
As a community of faith, we praise God for every good gift in our lives;
and we remind each other that each of us is created in the image of God:
God the creative Giver, the generous Creator,
the One who loves us and calls us to love one another!



Some of us have taken up the “30-Day Generosity Challenge” during this
season of giving (and if you haven't yet, fear not – it's not too late to start!).
Last week at bible study one person talked about how much she is enjoying
these simple practices of generosity and gratitude –
such as letting someone go before her to get on the train to Santa Fe,
or reaching out to an old friend to say how much they mean to her.
She has discovered the lovely little secret hidden in that challenge:
the more thoughtful and generous we are, day by day,
imperfect as we may be, with fits and starts and “oops I forgot” – no matter!
Little by little, day by day, the more generous we become,
the more we become who we are, the people God created us to be,
generous and thoughtful and free,
loving and just and compassionate.
Practicing generosity and gratitude reminds us who we are, and whose we are.



Today we have the opportunity to make our financial commitments to All
Saints for 2026.

And if you don't have your commitment card today, don't worry –
we'll be glad to receive it any time!

We make these commitments because giving is a practice of faith,
just like singing and praying and serving and sharing a meal.
We make these financial commitments because that is the only way this
community can continue to sing our unique and beautiful song in this place.
Our financial commitments are commitments we make to one another,
one of the ways we live out the value this community has in our lives.
When we give of our time and talent and treasure,
this is the mission we're investing in:
God's work – our hands – our voices – sharing God's love in the world.
We give from what we've been given –
so we can become who we are as the body of Christ.
We lift up our gifts together, in gratitude for what each one offers
– so we can become who we are together.
That's the mission worth investing in, and celebrating,
and singing about for all to hear –
complete with trumpets and lutes and harps and cymbals –
with organ and amps, bells and bass guitar.
A chorus of voices, in unison and in harmony.
A chorus of generosity.
Thanks be to God. Amen.

**Based on material from Salt.org "Chorus of Generosity" Stewardship suite*