What Can We Make Possible Together?

Concluding the "Enough" series

Scripture: 2 Corinthians 9:6–15, read alongside 2 Corinthians 8:12–15

Imagine coming home after a difficult day and finding supper waiting at your door.

Someone checked first. They knew what your family could eat. They brought it at a time that worked. And now, for tonight, there is one less thing you have to figure out.

The person who brought it might say, "It's just a meal." But if you're the one receiving it, you know how much can fit inside that container. Someone remembered. Someone understood that the day was hard. Someone did something about it.

Most of us can remember a gift like that. A ride when we couldn't drive. Someone who watched the children. Help with an expense we couldn't cover. A place to stay. Someone who made time to listen without looking at the clock.

What stays with us is what the gift made possible.

As we finish our series *Enough*, that's the question I want us to consider: **What can we make possible together?**

Over these five weeks, we've noticed gifts we sometimes overlook. We've remembered people whose love we carry forward. We've talked about the pressures households face and the need for room to breathe. And last week, we heard that our worth rests in God's love before we accomplish, earn, volunteer, or give anything.

We need to carry that promise into today, especially as we invite people to consider their giving. God's love is already given. Our response begins there.

Generosity That Makes a Difference

Many of us want to be part of something that makes life better for someone else. We want children to grow up knowing they matter. We want people who are struggling to have somewhere to turn. We want our neighbors to experience friendship instead of facing everything alone.

At the same time, we know what it feels like to be asked for one more thing. There's another appeal in the mail, another expense at home, another worthwhile cause. We can care deeply and still wonder, "What is actually possible for me?"

That's why we need to listen carefully to Paul's words.

He is writing to the church in Corinth about a collection for believers in Jerusalem who need material help. These are real people with real needs. The collection gives congregations in different places a way to care for one another.

Before today's reading, Paul says that a willing gift is accepted according to what a person has. He also says that he does not want relief for others to create hardship for the Corinthians. His concern is a fair balance.

Those words matter. We can't take everything Paul says about generosity in chapter nine and leave behind what he says about people's circumstances in chapter eight.

Some people have resources they can share. Some need support. Circumstances can change. The person offering help today may need help later, and the person receiving it remains a full member of the community all along.

Paul is helping them learn how to live as people who belong to one another through Christ. Then he tells them to decide what to give without resentment or compulsion.

There is room here for thought, prayer, and a willing decision. Nobody needs to be cornered into a gift. That doesn't make generosity unimportant. It makes the freedom of the person giving important, too.

Paul uses the picture of planting and harvesting. A farmer releases seed into the ground because something can grow from it. Keeping every seed in the bag would preserve the seed, but it would never produce a crop.

We can recognize something like that in generosity. When we share resources, time, or attention, we open possibilities that would otherwise remain closed.

But this passage needs careful handling. Paul is not promising that giving money will make us wealthy. If we turn generosity into a way to secure a bigger financial return, we've lost sight of the people the collection was meant to help.

Look at the harvest Paul actually describes: people's needs are supplied. Thanksgiving rises to God. People pray for one another. Relationships grow. A gift travels from one community to another, and people who may never meet discover that they belong to the same family.

That is a harvest worth hoping for.

Psalm 67 gives us a similar movement. The prayer asks God to bless the people, then looks outward toward the nations. The blessing reaches beyond the people who first receive it.

That movement begins in God's own generosity. God comes toward us in Jesus Christ, offering forgiveness, belonging, and new life. Through the Spirit, that love works in us, teaching us to notice and respond to our neighbors.

We receive love. We grow in love. And what we have received begins to shape what we do.

What We're Already Making Possible

We've already seen some of that here at Monroe UMC.

This summer, our Encounter Youth Ministry created and installed a storybook trail at Bull's Run Arboretum in Middletown. The youth also created the first stories, poems, and artwork for the installation. Now a family can walk through the arboretum, enjoy the beauty of nature, and encounter something our young people helped make.

The youth practiced teamwork, cooperation, and problem-solving. They experienced serving others as an expression of their faith. That experience grew out of relationships, encouragement, preparation, and people making room for young people to try something meaningful.

At Vacation Bible School, more than forty children participated in *Rainforest Falls*, learning about God as Creator and Redeemer. Think of everything that goes into those evenings. People prepare. Supplies are gathered. Rooms are

ready. Someone remembers a child's name. Someone notices who needs a little encouragement to join in.

And week after week, worship and music give us a place to pray, learn, sing, and be together. Our praise team, chancel choir, and handbells help give voice to faith when words alone may be hard to find.

Gifts to the general operating fund help sustain that ongoing life: the leadership, preparation, supplies, utilities, and spaces that allow ministry to happen.

Our building also provides space for Northern Lights Walk to Emmaus, Kairos Prison Ministry, Scout Troop 42, and family and community gatherings.

A room with the lights on can become a place where someone finds encouragement. A prepared classroom can become a place where a child asks a question. A rehearsal can become a place where friendship grows.

There are expenses behind those opportunities. There are also people whose lives are touched by them.

Looking Ahead: What's Possible in 2027?

As we look toward 2027, we have more questions to explore and new opportunities to consider.

We want to launch **Celebrate Recovery**, creating an opportunity for people to find Christ-centered support as they face hurts, habits, and struggles. We also want to continue our **GriefShare** ministry, helping people dealing with the death of a loved one find hope and healing.

Think about what it could mean for someone to have a place to begin conversations about grief or recovery—to be known by name and encouraged as they take their next step.

We also want to explore a **community garden**. We need to listen and learn. Is it needed? Is it feasible? Who would want to participate? Who are potential partners in this effort to equip people to feed themselves and others while experiencing God in the process of planting and harvesting? What resources and ongoing care would it require?

Those questions are part of taking the possibility seriously.

Many of you remember that **Hornet Haven**, a preschool and daycare that had been a ministry here for about twenty years, closed in 2022 when we could not identify a new director. More preschool placements are needed in Monroe, and we plan to investigate whether a preschool could be relaunched. Again, that will require careful work: understanding family needs, leadership, staffing, costs, and whether we can sustain a good program.

And we want more opportunities to **get to know our neighbors and meet people where they are**.

That begins with curiosity. What do people love about living here? What is difficult? Where do they already gather? What would they like a church to understand?

We have hopes for the coming year. We also have praying, listening, planning, and preparation to do. Through that process, God may lead us toward these possibilities or in directions we cannot yet anticipate, so that we can continue to shine the healing light of Christ.

Our shared resources can help support that work while sustaining the ministries already entrusted to us, allowing us to do more together than we could do on our own.

What Might Our Response Look Like?

So, what might a response look like today? Let me offer a few possibilities. Consider the one that fits your circumstances.

If you have financial capacity, prayerfully consider what you can share. Look at your household's responsibilities and resources. Consider a sustainable rhythm of giving that reflects the place you want generosity to have in your life. For some, that may mean beginning. For others, continuing a faithful pattern. For those with ample resources, it may mean increasing a gift in a meaningful way.

If finances are fragile, or essential needs exceed income, your response may be different. Food, housing, medicine, utilities, safety, and other essential responsibilities matter. Reducing or pausing giving can be a responsible decision.

And if you need support, you can speak with me privately. We can explore what help or referrals may be available. You do not have to solve everything before beginning that conversation.

Some of us may also recognize an opportunity to share a skill, offer a ride, make a visit, or listen to a neighbor. Others need rest and care themselves.

These are choices to discern. Nobody needs to find a substitute contribution to justify being here.

On November 22, those who wish may submit a **2027 Estimate of Giving** during worship using a card, or complete it online at **MonroeUMC.org/Enough**.

An estimate helps our leaders plan responsibly for the coming year. It tells us something about the general operating support households currently expect to provide.

It is confidential and optional. It is an estimate, so it can change. If your circumstances change, you may revise, reduce, or pause it.

Your place in this congregation remains the same.

Making Room for What Matters

As we conclude this series, I hope the word *enough* has opened some room in our lives.

Room to notice what we have received. Room to remember people we love and carry forward what was good. Room to make wise choices, ask for help, and receive it. Room to believe that God's love holds us even when our capacity changes.

And now, room to imagine what that love can make possible among us.

Picture a young person discovering that their ideas can serve the community. A child learning that questions are welcome. Someone taking a first step toward recovery or learning healthy ways to grieve. A neighbor finding people who want to know them. Someone who can no longer get out much still receiving visits because they are missed and loved.

We can't promise every outcome. We can listen, prepare, share, and follow where Christ leads.

Paul ends this passage by giving thanks to God for a gift beyond words. That is where our generosity begins, too: with the love God has given us in Jesus Christ.

As we consider our response, let's reflect on two questions:

God, what are you inviting me to do—or to receive—in this season of my life?

And as your people, what can we make possible together?

Amen.