

Your Stewardship Toolkit for March 2019!

This month's theme: **Holistic stewardship for Lent**

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Check out my new blog: www.thestewardshipguy.com!



Good, thoughtful, consistent communication, education and action can help develop a healthy culture of stewardship and generosity in your congregation. This kit is designed to help get you there!

You can use the resources of this kit by themselves to educate and encourage stewardship, but they would be more effective as a monthly emphasis about a different aspect of stewardship. You could plan bible studies, temple talks, a preaching series and other activities.

This month's emphasis is **Holistic stewardship for Lent**

Here's what you'll find below:

-Stewardship Snippets: Put a "Stewardship Snippet" every week in your Sunday bulletin! It's a quote from the week's Revised Common Lectionary lessons, followed by a brief reflection. Just cut and paste!

-Newsletter Article: Publish something in your newsletter every month on stewardship and faith, or post it on your website. Keep your people thinking about stewardship. Just cut and paste!

-Links to Resources: You'll find links to resources on the Web:

-The "think it" resource – Something thoughtful and insightful to get your mind turning and your soul fired up. Share it with your leadership, or use it for a temple talk.

-The "teach it" resource – Your folks ought to prayerfully and faithfully wrestle with some of stewardship's biblical, theological and discipleship issues.

-The "do it" resource – Talk, as they say, is cheap, so put your stewardship efforts into action.

-The "preach it" resource – Check out the weekly Lectionary Reflection written by Lower Susquehanna Synod pastor and synod staff person Sharron Blezard.

-General Resource Websites: – These are places you can go for great ideas!

Stewardship Snippets

Copy and paste into your bulletin!

Source: Rob Blezard

Stewardship Snippet

March 3, 2019 (Transfiguration Sunday, Year C)

2 Corinthians 3:17 – Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom.

God's path is all about freedom. Steward/disciples find that freedom when we love God with all our being and our neighbor as ourselves! Our faith aligns us with God's abundance and power. Freedom!

Stewardship Snippet

March 10, 2019 (1st Sunday in Lent, Year C)

Luke 4:3 – The devil said to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'"

Our consumer culture tells us again and again that our happiness is measured in how many of our wants we can fulfill. Jesus resists temptation by remembering that we live "by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4b).

Stewardship Snippet

March 17, 2019 (2nd Sunday in Lent, Year C)

Psalm 27:1 – The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

As the news media, advertising executives and politicians know well, fear is the great motivator of people, it is a negative one. Trusting in God's power and providence, steward/disciples tap into a better source of motivation.

Stewardship Snippet

March 24, 2019 (3rd Sunday in Lent, Year C)

Isaiah 55:2 – Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food.

Stewardship is about making wise choices in life – choices that promote health, wellbeing and faithful living. Isaiah asks the key questions and provides wise advice.

Stewardship Snippet

March 31, 2019 (3rd Sunday in Lent, Year C)

2 Corinthians 5:17 – So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new!

The way a bubbling spring renews and refreshes a stream bed, so the Holy Spirit continually renews our souls. Relax and be continually renewed in Christ.

Newsletter article

Select the one below, or from the [Toolkit Newsletter Article Archive](#). Reprint permission is granted for local congregational use. Just copy and paste into your newsletter! Please include the copyright notice. Other uses please inquire: rblezard@lss-elca.org.

Holistic stewardship for Lent

For centuries Lutherans have observed Lent with passionate devotion and prayerful attention to spiritual disciplines. These faith practices strengthen our souls and open our hearts to the resurrected Christ at Easter.

This year, try developing a sense of holistic stewardship for your life. Stewardship, of course, looks at how we use not just our financial abundance but all the blessings that God has given us – our health, our family and friends, our faith, our time, our intelligence, and so on.

Just as holistic medicine takes a “big picture” view of physical health as a dynamic interconnection of our body’s systems, holistic stewardship helps us see and appreciate all our gifts in relationship to one another.

For instance, how does your stewardship of time interact with your stewardship of your relationships or health? How might more-thoughtful stewardship of your time improve your relationships or your health? How might better stewardship of time, relationships and health improve your financial abundance?

When you examine your stewardship of these and all your gifts in dynamic interconnection with one another, you can find more meaning and purpose as a disciple of Jesus.

To get there, for the days of Lent focus on just five major categories of the blessings God has given you easily remembered by the shorthand word FAITH.

Family and friends – nurturing relationships.

Abundance -- finance and material possessions.

Intelligence – your mind and special talents.

Time -- living fully 24/7.

Health – physical and emotional wellness.

Spend 15 minutes every day to prayerfully ponder and meditate on these FAITH blessings. A prayer journal or notebook may help you process and connect.

- Take stock of your blessings in each category, thanking God for them.
- Reflect on how they interrelate to give you joy and purpose and meaning.
- Ask God to help you use these gifts more wisely and fully for God’s purposes.
- Imagine God blessing and enriching your life as you learn to steward these gifts in a way that they will support and enhance one another.

This Lent, let holistic stewardship help you envision your gifts and life more fully in God’s reality, the reality called the Reign of God. It’s the Reign that Jesus preached and proclaimed, and that he brought to fulfillment with the victory over death that we celebrate at Easter.

--Rob Blezard

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Pastor Blezard serves as an assistant to the bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod and works as content editor for www.stewardshipoflife.org. He blogs at www.thestewardshipguy.com.

Links to resources

The “think it” resource

[Whole-Life Stewardship: The Call to Greatness](https://tifwe.org/resource/whole-life-stewardship-the-call-to-greatness/) – Though focused on issues of our occupation and marketplace decisions, this essay from the Institute for Faith, Work and Economics raises good points on how our faith is expressed in how we steward our lives. What ideas resonate with you?

(<https://tifwe.org/resource/whole-life-stewardship-the-call-to-greatness/>)

The “teach it” resource

[Bible Lessons on Holistic Stewardship](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/10_Stewardship_Bible_Studies_Church_of_Scotland.pdf) -- What does the Bible say about stewardship? Not just stewardship of our money, but also our stuff, our time, our very lives? This free pdf booklet from the Church of Scotland helps you and your congregation explore these issues. These 10 lessons that can be done individually or as a series will provide a firm foundation for raising steward disciples.

(http://www.stewardshipoflife.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/10_Stewardship_Bible_Studies_Church_of_Scotland.pdf)

The “do it” resource

[Living Fully: The Wholeness Wheel](https://www.porticobenefits.org/CallToLiveWell/FaithBasedWellBeing/TheWholenessWheel) – Here’s a self-study tool that can help you visualize holistic stewardship and discover paths to enrich your life. The Wholeness Wheel looks at six important aspects of life and explores the interconnections among them. From Portico Benefits Services, a ministry of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

(<https://www.porticobenefits.org/CallToLiveWell/FaithBasedWellBeing/TheWholenessWheel>)

The “preach it” resource

[Weekly Lectionary Stewardship Reflection](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org). Sharron Blezard, Lower Susquehanna Synod assistant to the bishop and pastor, looks at stewardship implications in the week’s Revised Common Lectionary lessons.

(www.stewardshipoflife.org)

General Stewardship Resource Websites

[ELCA Stewardship Resources](http://elca.org/stewardship)– Our denomination’s deep well of materials. (elca.org/stewardship)

[Stewardship of Life Institute](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org)– Headquartered at United Lutheran Seminary, this site has a trove of resources in areas of congregational and personal stewardship. (www.stewardshipoflife.org)

[Center for Steward Leadership](http://www.luthersem.edu/stewardship/) – Luther Seminary’s excellent website. (www.luthersem.edu/stewardship/)

[The ELCA Foundation](http://www.elca.org/give/elca-foundation) a ministry of our denomination. (www.elca.org/give/elca-foundation)

[Lower Susquehanna Synod Stewardship](http://www.lss-elca.org/faith-formation/stewardship/) – Select free or low-cost resources. (www.lss-elca.org/faith-formation/stewardship/)

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