

Your Stewardship Toolkit for June 2019!

*This month's theme: **Develop a heart of generosity***

Rev. Rob Blezard, Assistant to the Bishop
Lower Susquehanna Synod
rblezard@lss-elca.org



Check out my blog: www.thestewardshipguy.com!

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

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 **Develop a heart of generosity**

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

June 2, 2019 (Seventh Sunday of Easter, Year C)

John 17:26—I made your name known to them, and I will make it known, so that the love with which you have loved me may be in them, and I in them.

The foundation of generosity is the abundant love of God in Christ Jesus. It has the power to inspire and inform every aspect of our lives, including decisions about the most faithful use of our time, talent, and resources.

Stewardship Snippet

June 9, 2019 (Day of Pentecost, Year C)

John 14:27 – Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid.

Christians around the world celebrate today the Spirit of God poured out upon all creation. Because of this divine generosity, we can be bold, faithful, and fearless in our stewardship of God's abundance.

Stewardship Snippet

June 16, 2019 (Trinity Sunday, Year C)

Psalms 8:3-4 – When I look at your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have established; what are human beings that you are mindful of them, mortals that you care for them?

Cultivating a sense of wonder about God's amazing creation helps nurture a spirit of generosity. Look at the world around you; signs of God's lavish goodness abound. Now look in the mirror and see the wonder that you are. The Creator entrusts YOU to care for this abundance.

Stewardship Snippet

June 23, 2019 (Time after Pentecost—Lectionary 12, Proper 7, Year C)

Galatians 3:28 –There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.

Viewing the world through the wide lens of a generous heart enables us to see the big picture of what God is up to. Like Paul, we see that in God's economy there is room at the table for everyone.

Stewardship Snippet

June 30, 2019 (Time after Pentecost—Lectionary 13, Proper 8, Year C)

Galatians 5:14 –For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” *A generous heart is built on the firm foundation of God's abundant love, but it doesn't stop there. Once you begin to see through the lens of love, everything looks different. Let love be your language, your dance of dissidence, and the song of your generous heart.*

Newsletter article

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JUNE 2019

Develop a heart of generosity

Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, for he himself said, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

Acts 20:35b

A friend who regularly volunteers to serve meals to the needy illustrates the truth of Jesus' teaching.

"It's so rewarding to help," she says, explaining that the time and hard work is worth it. "I think get more out of it than they do."

It feels good to give, but we are blessed with so much more when we give generously. The act of giving truly blesses us by shaping our personalities and developing our character. That's a truth affirmed by research. (Check out "The Science of Generosity" white paper from the University of California at Berkeley, or "The Science of Generosity Initiative" at Notre Dame University!)

Generous people tend to be the kind of good folk we want as friends and neighbors. We often think of generosity only in terms of financial giving, but generous people go way beyond that, embodying generosity with all they have and all they are. They are not merely generous, they are *generous-hearted*.

Anyone can develop a generous heart, or a *more* generous heart. Begin by deepening your relationship with God, seeking guidance and wisdom in daily prayer. Then simply begin to pour yourself out for the sake of others, giving generously as a spiritual exercise and discipline. Here are five action steps:

Give smiles. Smile at everyone you see. You may be surprised at how it changes your outlook.

Give nice words. Say something nice to everyone – family and friends, coworkers, parishioners, store clerks, folks in an elevator.

Give courtesies. Hold a door open for the person behind you; stop for pedestrians; let someone go ahead of you in line.

Give your time. Serve people *face-to-face*: tutor schoolchildren, serve meals, visit a shut-in, teach ESL, volunteer at a homeless shelter.

Give your resources: Slowly increase your giving to God's ministry. Make tithing a long-term goal.

Jesus said it is more blessed to give than receive. When we give our time, talents and possessions, God blesses us by developing in us a generous heart.

--*Rob Blezard*

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

Links to resources

The “think it” resource

[Diana Butler Bass: Gratitude isn't just an emotion](https://www.faithandleadership.com/diana-butler-bass-gratitude-isnt-just-emotion) - We tend to think of gratitude as a personal feeling that we can cultivate. But it's also communal and social, says theologian Diana Butler Bass. In this Q&A from *Faith & Leadership* Dr. Bass reflects on the spiritual and ethical dimensions of the topic, described in her new book *Grateful*.

(<https://www.faithandleadership.com/diana-butler-bass-gratitude-isnt-just-emotion>)

The “teach it” resource

[Generous God, Generous People](http://www.cofesuffolk.org/uploads/parish-finance/GGGP%20Home%20Group.pdf) – This free 28-page resource provides four Bible study sessions from St Mark's gospel that explore God's generosity as exemplified in Jesus Christ, and how God's people can respond to his love by living generous lives. Nice resource for workshops, temple talks, a stewardship emphasis or Christian education classes. From the Church of England.

(www.cofesuffolk.org/uploads/parish-finance/GGGP%20Home%20Group.pdf)

The “do it” resource

[Increase Generosity with these Six Practices](https://unseminary.com/6-practices-of-churches-with-increasing-generosity/)

Want to increase your congregation's capacity for generosity? Start with these six practices, and start right now. Don't let fear or lack of experience get in the way of helping your community grow and flourish as radical stewards! From UNSeminary.com.

(<https://unseminary.com/6-practices-of-churches-with-increasing-generosity/>)

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](#) – Select free or low-cost resources.