

Your Stewardship Toolkit for November 2019!

November's theme: A month of Thanksgiving

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Check out myblog: 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!

The resources of this kit are most effective when used to support a monthly emphasis about a different aspect of stewardship. Exploring the theme, “A month of Thanksgiving,” you could use the newsletter article, snippets and resource links below to plan bible studies, temple talks, a preaching series and other activities.

Here’s what you’ll find:

-Stewardship Snippets: Put a monthly themed “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 to jump start your stewardship ministry!

Stewardship Snippets

Copy and paste into your bulletin!

Source: Rob Blezard.

Stewardship Snippet

November 1, 2019 (Time after Pentecost—All Saints Day, Year C)

Ephesians 1:15-16—I have heard of your faith in the Lord Jesus and your love toward all the saints, and for this reason I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers.

Paul tells the believers in Ephesus how he remembers them with thanksgiving. Similarly, on this All Saints Day we remember our loved ones who have died, and we give thanks for their lives.

Stewardship Snippet

November 3, 2019 (Time after Pentecost—Lectionary 31, Proper 26, Year C)

2 Thessalonians 1:3 – We must always give thanks to God for you, brothers and sisters, as is right, because your faith is growing abundantly, and the love of everyone of you for one another is increasing.

Paul, Silvanus, and Timothy open their letter to believers in Thessalonica with thanks for them as loving and growing partners in God’s mission. Let us pray for one another and give thanks for our worshiping community and our partners in the gospel.

Stewardship Snippet

November 10, 2019 (Time after Pentecost—Lectionary 32, Proper 27, Year C)

2 Thessalonians 2:16-17 – Now may our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and through grace gave us eternal comfort and good hope, comfort your hearts and strengthen them in every good work and word.

What if we, as Paul, were so thankful to God for our siblings in Christ that we would pray regularly for one another, bless one another, and praise God for the gift of community? An attitude of gratitude is contagious! Let’s cultivate that attitude right here, beginning now.

Stewardship Snippet

November 17, 2019 (Time after Pentecost—Lectionary 33, Proper 28, Year C)

Psalms 98:4 –Make a joyful noise to the LORD, all the earth; break forth into joyous song and sing praises.

Sometimes joy and praise are the only possible responses to the abundant love and care of the Creator. As the autumn harvest is gathered in, be sure to celebrate the gift of God’s good and bountiful creation.

Stewardship Snippet

November 24, 2019 (Time after Pentecost—Lectionary 34, Proper 29, Year C)

Psalms 46:10 —“Be still, and know that I am God! I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.”

The last Sunday of the church year, today is an appropriate time to incorporate the spiritual practice of contemplation—being still in God’s presence and simply making every breath a song of praise and gratitude.

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.

NOVEMBER 2019

A month of Thanksgiving

I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly. –John 10:10b

Thankful people are happy people. It's not just a feel-good slogan on a refrigerator magnet or bumper sticker; it's proven science.

"Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships," reports Harvard Medical School's *Healthbeat*. That sounds like the abundant life Jesus describes in the gospels, doesn't it?

So why aren't Christians more thankful and happy? While we all sometimes face hardships that can avert our thankfulness, many of us simply take our blessings for granted. Perhaps we have succumbed to the lie we hear from 24/7 advertising – that we never *have* enough and never *are* enough.

Hopeful news from researchers is that thankfulness can be cultivated. Those who consistently *practice thankfulness* develop gratitude and happiness.

This November, the month of Thanksgiving, make thankfulness a daily spiritual practice. Here are some ideas for "A month of Thanksgiving":

- **Pray thanksgiving.** In your morning and evening prayers, thank God for your life and whatever specific blessings come to mind.
- **Keep a thanks diary.** Every day write down what you are thankful for and why. Challenge yourself to find and pray about 10 things daily.
- **Express thank you.** Go out of your way to express thanks to the people you encounter every day with a kind word or a note.
- **Create a thankfulness calendar.** Every morning write something on your calendar for which you are grateful to God, and think, pray and meditate on it until bedtime.

Practice thankfulness consistently and you might be surprised to find yourself enjoying the abundant life Jesus promises us.

--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

[Giving Thanks Can Make You Happier](https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/giving-thanks-can-make-you-happier) – The title says it all! From Harvard Medical School’s *Healthbeat* publication, an article that reviews some of the research that shows that thankfulness and happiness are related. “Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, relish good experiences, improve their health, deal with adversity, and build strong relationships.”

(<https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/giving-thanks-can-make-you-happier>)

The “teach it” resource

[30 Best Bible Verses on Thankfulness](https://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/thankful-bible-verses/)— Not surprisingly, the Bible has a lot to say about giving thanks and being grateful. Here is a compilation of 30 great verses on gratitude. You could hold a great class just by going through the list and exploring the implications for God’s people.

(<https://www.biblestudytools.com/topical-verses/thankful-bible-verses/>)

The “do it” resource

[25 Simple Ways to Practice Gratitude](https://chopra.com/articles/25-simple-ways-to-practice-gratitude) – Mastering thankfulness is like learning to play a musical instrument: the more you practice gratitude, the better you’ll be at it. Here’s a list of 25 ways to practice gratitude. Why not go through the list sequentially, focusing on one practice every day. When you get to the end of the list, repeat!

(<https://chopra.com/articles/25-simple-ways-to-practice-gratitude>)

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

[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)

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

[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://lss-elca.org/stewardship) – Selected free or low-cost resources. (lss-elca.org/stewardship)

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