

Your Stewardship Toolkit for January 2020!

*January's theme: **Steward your best year ever!***

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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 toolkit can help get you there!

The resources of this toolkit are most effective when used to support a monthly emphasis about a different aspect of stewardship. Exploring the theme, “Steward your best year ever,” 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

January 5, 2020 (Second Sunday of Christmas, Year A)

John 1:12 – But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God.

Ready to steward your best life in 2020? This week's gospel lesson reminds us that if we place our lives in the hands of Christ, we will also know God and be part of God's family. Draw near to the Word made flesh this year, and you will find guidance, love, mercy, and grace for every day.

Stewardship Snippet

January 6, 2019 (Epiphany of the Lord, Year A)

Isaiah 60:1 – Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the LORD has risen upon you.

How about taping this verse to your bathroom mirror as a reminder of the very good news of Jesus that is for you and for all people? Start the day right by spending time with Jesus in prayer, study, and presence. Let the light of Christ guide you to greater stewardship of all aspects of your life.

Stewardship Snippet

January 12, 2019 (Baptism of the Lord, Year A)

Matthew 3:16-17 – And when Jesus had been baptized, just as he came up from the water, suddenly the heavens were opened to him and he saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting on him.

And a voice from heaven said, "This is my Son, the Beloved, with whom I am well pleased."

Listen! Can you hear the whispering voice of God saying, "You are my child, my beloved, with whom I am well pleased"? Yes, in baptism you have been named and claimed as God's own child. Steward this gift as you grow in faith and action in 2020.

Stewardship Snippet

January 19, 2019 (Second Sunday after the Epiphany, Year A)

1 Corinthians 1:9 – God is faithful; by him you were called into the fellowship of his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.

Just like those first disciples whom Jesus told to "Come and see," you have been called into the Body of Christ, and God is working in your life even if you don't realize it. Pay attention and steward God's wonderful gifts carefully and fully.

January 26, 2019 (Third Sunday after the Epiphany, Year A)

Matthew 2:13 – And Jesus said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fish for people."

Listen! Can you hear Jesus calling you to deeper discipleship? Don't worry; you will be equipped to steward God's amazing gifts, even as you cast your net of faith and share the good news.

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.

JANUARY 2020

Steward your best year ever!

“Stewardship is not only a matter of faithful giving but of faithful living. In response to the Gospel, we submit our lives to the rule of God, to the lordship of Christ, and to the direction of the Holy Spirit, so that we may be the people God wants us to be and have the lives God wants us to have.” –**Mark Allan Powell**, author of *Giving to God*.

Yikes! It’s January 2, and the bathroom scale shows that, once again, I’ve gained a few pounds in the five-week blitz-feast of Thanksgiving-Christmas-New Year. Clearly, I need to *steward* my health better in 2020.

Though it’s not the most common use of the word, *steward* is also a verb, an action word. We *steward* all that God has entrusted to us, making choices that, as Mark Allan Powell says, help us “be the people God wants us to be and have the lives God wants us to have.”

We steward our lives through our decisions and choices – the food we eat, the people we call friends, how we spend our money, the entertainment we select, the hobbies we enjoy, the many ways we spend our time, and so on.

To steward faithfully, we have to live in prayerful awareness and make conscious, thoughtful decisions that will advance us in Godly directions.

As 2020 begins, prayerfully consider the most important areas of your life, such as your physical, mental and spiritual health, as well as your relationships and time, and ask God to help you steward them in ways that will help you be the person God wants you to be and have the life God wants you to have.

As for me, it will not only help me lose those extra holiday pounds, but also give me my best year *ever*.

--**Rob Blezard**

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Links to resources

The “think it” resource

[Stewardship: A Disciple's Response](#) – This 41-page pastoral letter from the United States Conference of Catholic Bishops provides a comprehensive look at the theology and faith practices involved in stewarding your life as a disciple of Jesus. Organized into six chapters, it challenges us to rethink how we live to align ourselves with God's purposes.

(https://www.archsa.org/images/uploads/USCCB_Stewardship_A_Disciples_Response2.pdf)

The “teach it” resource

[Stewardship: A Disciple's Response](#) – Okay, the resource above is not only an excellent think piece, it also has study questions for reflection and discussion at the end of the chapters. It would make for a wonderful six-week Sunday school class.

(https://www.archsa.org/images/uploads/USCCB_Stewardship_A_Disciples_Response2.pdf)

The “do it” resource

[Stewardship: A Disciple's Response](#) – Well, I've never done this before, but this month it's a trifecta – one resource for three purposes in a toolkit. The Pastoral Letter is also perfect for individual devotion OR for congregational implementation. Included in the publication, in addition to the Letter, is a comprehensive guide for congregational stewardship. Lots of good stuff to work with.

(https://www.archsa.org/images/uploads/USCCB_Stewardship_A_Disciples_Response2.pdf)

The “preach it” resource

[Weekly Lectionary Stewardship Reflection](#). Sharron Bleazard, 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](#)– 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](#)– Our denomination's deep well of materials. (www.elca.org/stewardship)

[Center for Stewardship Leaders](#) – Luther Seminary's excellent website. (faithlead.luthersem.edu/stewardship/)

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

[Lower Susquehanna Synod Stewardship](#) – Selected free or low-cost resources. (lss-elca.org/stewardship)

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