

# Your Stewardship Toolkit for April 2020!

*April's theme: Steward the Earth, our only home*

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*If you want the free Toolkit sent directly to your inkit every month, [just drop me an email](#).*

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 the Earth, our only home,” 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 in the Toolkit:

**-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*

**April 5, 2020** (Passion/Palm Sunday)

**Matthew 27:24** - So when Pilate saw that he could do nothing, but rather that a riot was beginning, he took some water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying "I am innocent of this man's blood; see to it yourselves."

*When the enormity of the world's problems – such as climate crises, war, hunger and refugees -- becomes too much, it is tempting to do like Pilate, to wash our hands and do nothing. May we instead strive to be people of action who follow the example of Jesus, our Lord and Savior.*

### *Stewardship Snippet*

**April 12, 2020** (Resurrection of our Lord)

**Psalm 118:24** - This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.

*Today we give thanks for new life. Even with all the distressing news about the environment, we can all recommit to caring for our Earth in gratitude for God's all-encompassing, loving relationship with every atom and molecule of creation.*

### *Stewardship Snippet*

**April 19, 2020** – (Second Sunday of Easter)

**John 20:21** - Jesus said to them again, "Peace be with you. As the Father has sent me, so I send you."

*Every Sunday we gather to hear the Word and experience the Sacraments and then are sent into the world to be the hands, feet, heart, and mind of Christ. What one action will you take this week to be a steward of our one precious planet? How is that part of spreading Christ's peace to the world?*

### *Stewardship Snippet*

**April 26, 2020** (Third Sunday of Easter)

**John 24:35** - Then they told what had happened on the road, and how he had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

*Sometimes even the most faithful disciples have a tough time seeing Jesus at work in the world. But if we look beyond our own needs and problems we begin to see the Christ all around. May this very real presence inspire us to pay attention and to work for the good of all creation.*

## Newsletter article

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APRIL 2020

### ***Steward the Earth, our only home***

*“The good leave an inheritance to their children’s children.” –Proverbs 13:22a*

Look at the babies in your congregation and your circle of friends and family. You want them to grow up in the same kind of beautiful, safe, abundant world you did, right? But that’s increasingly in doubt.

In the next 50 years, climate change and environmental crises will disrupt patterns of nature and civilization that have developed over millennia. Some scientists even wonder whether the planet will be habitable in 2120.

Australia’s horrific wildfires may be just a sample of things to come, along with worsening hurricanes, more-frequent tornadoes, rising sea levels, rapid desertification, and melting glaciers and icebergs. It’s not that our world did not already have serious problems with such issues as war, refugees, hunger, species extinction, pollution and extreme weather, but climate change is making them all much worse and much more complicated.

Christians trust in the Almighty, while we also recognize that God calls us to love one another and care for the only home God has given us.

“If we truly believe we’ve been given responsibility for every living thing on this planet (including each other) as it says in Genesis 1, then it isn’t only a matter of caring about climate change,” writes evangelical Christian and climate scientist Katherine Hayhoe. “We should be at the front of the line demanding action.”

This month we have much to celebrate in the new life we have through our resurrected Lord. We also celebrate spring, seedtime, and Earth Day on April 22. Let us commit ourselves to renewing and protecting the only home we have, the only home we will leave for our children.

**--Rob Blezard**

Copyright © 2020, Rev. Robert Blezard. Pastor Blezard serves as an assistant to the bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod and works as content editor for [www.stewardshipoflife.org](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org). He blogs at [www.thestewardshipguy.com](http://www.thestewardshipguy.com).

## Links to resources

### The “think it” resource

[\*I'm a climate scientist who believes in God. Hear me out\*](#) – In this succinct and illuminating essay in *The New York Times*, evangelical Christian and climate scientist Katherine Hayhoe explains why God’s people should be on the forefront of environmental action. She also speaks of her own struggles to speak truth to Christians who are hostile to talk of climate change. Dr. Hayhoe co-directs the [Climate Center](#) at Texas Tech University in Lubbock. She also hosts the PBS digital series [Global Weirding](#).

(<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/10/31/opinion/sunday/climate-change-evangelical-christian.html>)

### Two “teach it” resources

[Awakening to God’s Call to Earthkeeping](#) - Here is a real gem! This 50-page resource includes a leader guide and participant materials for use in small groups: adult or older youth Sunday school, Christian Education classes, women’s circles, men’s groups, congregational “Green Team,” or in a retreat setting. (Also can be ordered for \$5 from the ELCA Resource Catalog.)

(<http://www.stewardshipoflife.org/2016/09/gods-call-to-earthkeeping/>)

[Every Creature Singing](#) - Educate your church on how our decisions impact the one and only planet that God gave us to live on — and how we can care for creation! “Every Creature Singing” gives you a detailed 13-session lesson plan, as well as a teacher’s guide. Each lesson has Scripture, readings, discussion questions that focus on your neighborhood, and other resources. From the Mennonite Creation Care Network.

(<https://mennocreationcare.org/every-creature-singing>)

### Two “do it” resources

[Form a ‘Green Team’](#) – Get your congregation involved in the environmental movement to inspire members to take personal and collective steps that will help ensure we will leave a safe, fertile planet for our children’s children. A congregational “Green Team” can help through education, advocacy and action. Lutherans Restoring Creation explains how!

(<https://lutheransrestoringcreation.org/ccck-green-teams/>)

[Let’s talk climate and faith](#) – Understanding that environmental action is controversial in some Christian circles, several church groups got together to create this helpful 21-page guide for initiating helpful conversations around creation care. Very helpful in your personal or congregational ministry.

(<https://thestewardshipguy.files.wordpress.com/2020/02/lets-talk-faith-elca.pdf>)

### Two “preach it” resources

[17 ways to become and ‘eco-preacher’ and help the planet](#) -- As the environmental crisis deepens, many Christian leaders would like to say more about the environment in their preaching, but they don’t know how. In this post, Pastor Leah Schade of Lexington Theological Seminary has some creative ideas for kickstarting your preaching!

(<https://www.patheos.com/blogs/ecopreacher/2017/04/17-ways-ecopreacher-2017/>)

[Weekly Lectionary Stewardship Reflection](#). 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](http://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](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org))

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

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

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

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

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