

Your Stewardship Toolkit for October 2020!

October's theme: Share Your Harvest, If You Are Able

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

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 this month's theme, "Share Your Harvest, If You Are Able," your congregation might not only share the newsletter article and snippets but also use the resource links below to plan Bible studies, temple talks, a preaching series or other activities.

Here's what you'll find in the Toolkit:

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

-Newsletter Article: Cut and paste an article on stewardship every month in your newsletter.

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

- **The "think it" resource** – Get your mind turning and your soul fired up.
- **The "learn it" resource** – Help your folks to wrestle with some of stewardship's implications.
- **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 the Rev. Sharron Blezard, ELCA pastor, spiritual director and writer for the Stewardship of Life Institute.

-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.

October 4, 2020 (18th Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 22, Year A)

"Therefore I tell you, the kingdom of God will be taken away from you and given to a people that produces the fruits of the kingdom." – **Matthew 21:43**

Ouch! Jesus' words, directed at the Pharisees who constantly test him, point to the importance of bearing fruit. God promises an abundant harvest with more than enough to share, but we must do our part to cultivate, nurture, and bring to fullness all the bountiful gifts of God, both in our own lives and in the Body of Christ.

October 11, 2020 (19th Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 23, Year A)

Do not worry about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God. – Philippians 4:6

“Will there be enough?” Many are asking this question in the midst of growing economic uncertainty and fear. Christians know that this is the wrong question. With God there is always enough and a little bit more—enough to share. If this question crosses your mind, remember Paul’s words to the Philippian church. Don’t worry; give thanks and pray. God will provide a way.

October 18, 2020 (20th Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 24, Year A)

“I will give you the treasures of darkness and riches hidden in secret places, so that you may know that it is I, the LORD, the God of Israel, who call you by your name.” – Isaiah 45:3

We share God’s abundance through our hands and work, but it is still the abundance of God, who loves us and desires good for all creation. How might your hands sharing God’s abundance help point others to Jesus?

October 25, 2020 (21st Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 25, Year A)

“So deeply do we care for you that we are determined to share with you not only the gospel of God but also our own selves, because you have become very dear to us.” - 1 Thessalonians 2:8

Paul, Silas, and Timothy write these words that embody Jesus’ response to the Pharisees in this week’s gospel. How can we reflect the great commandment as stewards of God’s abundance? What gifts might you bring to share?

October 25, 2020 (Reformation Sunday)

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. – Psalm 46:1

When we are used to an abundant harvest, it can be shocking to experience scarcity. It is wise to remember that God is the source of all things. We all have something to share from God’s abundance—perhaps a smile or kind word is the blessing someone needs. If you are not in a position to give resources, then by all means give love and compassion.

October 2020 Newsletter article

Select the article below, or one of more than four dozen in 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.

Share your harvest, if you are able

John the Baptist went into all the region around the Jordan, proclaiming a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins.... And the crowds asked him, "What then should we do?" In reply he said to them, "Whoever has two coats must share with anyone who has none; and whoever has food must do likewise." – Luke 3:4, 10-11

God's people have traditionally given thanks and celebrated God's abundance at harvest time, when farmers close out their growing season. In 2020, North Americans once again rejoice that our land has produced plenty of food. And many Americans, blessed with stable jobs and rebounding investments, can give thanks for a harvest of financial and personal blessings as well.

But millions of us and our neighbors are struggling. Covid-19 has caused massive joblessness, pushing countless families into poverty. Hunger and homelessness are skyrocketing. Federal, state and local safety-net programs are breaking, and food banks, shelters and other charities are overwhelmed.

The rising need presents an opportunity for God's people who are blessed with more than enough to help siblings in need. This year, consider celebrating your harvest of blessings not only by giving thanks but also by donating generously – of your time, talent, money or goods – to a local food bank, homeless shelter, soup kitchen or charity. Our congregations could lead this effort with a campaign, "Harvest of Giving."

Our hurting, struggling neighbors need to know not only that Covid-related misfortune is not their fault, but also that God and God's people are standing with them, supporting them with love and help. The best way is for those who are blessed with an abundant harvest to share it with those whose harvests are lean.

-Rob Blezard

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

Links to resources

The “think it” resource

[Serving a Wounded World: A Christian Call to Reflection and Action During COVID-19 and Beyond](http://press.vatican.va/content/dam/salastampa/it/bollettino/documentazione-linkata/ServingWoundedWorld_.pdf) –

The Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches have jointly issued a brilliant 24-page paper calling on God’s people to help in the pandemic. Covid-19 has, the paper says, revealed in stark display humanity’s sins, including racism, oppression, poverty and the gap between rich and poor. A thoughtful essay.

http://press.vatican.va/content/dam/salastampa/it/bollettino/documentazione-linkata/ServingWoundedWorld_.pdf

Two “learn it” resources

[Covid-19 has left millions of Americans without enough food](https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2020/08/05/covid-19-has-led-surge-child-hunger-heres-how-we-can-help-column/5580099002/) – This column in *USA Today* explores the pandemic’s impact on families, how charities are struggling to keep up, and how we can help. Good information with lots of links to explore further.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2020/08/05/covid-19-has-led-surge-child-hunger-heres-how-we-can-help-column/5580099002/>

[The hunger virus: How Covid-19 is fueling hunger in a hungry world](https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/research-publications/hunger-virus-how-covid-19-fueling-hunger-hungry-world/) – Oxfam gives us the helicopter view of how the pandemic is affecting families across the globe. Become informed and get active.

<https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/research-publications/hunger-virus-how-covid-19-fueling-hunger-hungry-world/>

Two “do it” resources

[Loving Your Neighbor in a Pandemic: A Workbook](https://www.globalministries.org/loving_your_neighbor_in_the_covid_19_pandemic_a_workbook) – Explore and develop a faithful action plan with this bible-based resource from Global Ministries, a partnership of the Disciples of Christ and the United Church of Christ.

https://www.globalministries.org/loving_your_neighbor_in_the_covid_19_pandemic_a_workbook

[7 Ways to Love Your Neighbor as Yourself](https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/7-ways-to-love-your-neighbor-as-yourself.html) – The “second greatest” command to love our neighbor is familiar to most Christians, but do we really know what it actually means? And, could it be, that we actually love some of our neighbors differently than we love ourselves? This essay from Crosswalk.com explores.

<https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/7-ways-to-love-your-neighbor-as-yourself.html>

The “preach it” resource

[Weekly Lectionary Stewardship Reflection](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org). Sharron Blezard, Lutheran pastor, spiritual director, writer and child of God, 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://www.elca.org/stewardship) – Our denomination’s deep well of materials. (www.elca.org/stewardship)

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