

Your Stewardship Toolkit for November 2020!

November's theme: Let Your Thankfulness Show

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

Editor's Note: *Dear Friends. You may note a new address and vocational description for me beginning with this month's toolkit. I am leaving my work as an assistant to the bishop and have been called as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, MD, beginning Nov. 1. My email new address reflects my part-time work as web editor for the Stewardship of Life Institute, a position I have held for 17 years. I will continue producing the Stewardship Toolkits, and I pray they may be a blessing to your stewardship ministry. –Rob*

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, "Let Your Thankfulness Show," 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:

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.

November 1, 2020 (All Saints Sunday)

“I will bless the LORD at all times; his praise shall continually be in my mouth.” – Psalm 34:1

Today we begin our culture’s month of thanksgiving by giving thanks for the lives of the saints now at rest. This week spend time thanking God for those who have helped form your faith and encouraged your discipleship walk.

November 8, 2020 (23rd Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 27, Year A)

“But let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an ever-flowing stream.” – Amos 5:24

Through the prophet Amos, God condemns hollow displays of religiosity. What God desires is action – justice and righteousness – ever-flowing from the hearts of those who love the Lord. Act on your thankfulness this week by working for justice in your community.

November 15, 2020 (24th Sunday after Pentecost, Proper 28, Year A)

“Therefore encourage one another and build up each other, as indeed you are doing.” – 1 Thessalonians 5:11

“Do or do not. There is no try,” said *Star Wars* character Yoda. Notice there is no “try” in Paul’s instructions either. We can act on our thankfulness to God by encouraging others and building one another up in Christ’s name. Who needs your encouragement this week? How will you act on that need?

November 22, 2020 (Reign of Christ, Proper 29, Year A)

“And the king will answer them, ‘Truly I tell you, just as you did it to one of the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me.’” – Matthew 25:40

When our thankfulness translates into action and service to “the least of these,” we may never fully realize the ripple effects. How might you show gratitude to God in tangible ways that lift up your neighbor in need?

November 29, 2020 (1st Sunday of Advent, Year A)

“And what I say to you I say to all: Keep awake.” – Mark 13:37

Advent calls us to pay attention and to look for signs of Christ in the world. As we enter a new season of the church year, we continue to give thanks and show gratitude. Pay attention. Look around.

Opportunities to be a blessing to others abound!

November 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: editor@stewardshipoflife.org.

Let Your Thankfulness Show

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances!--1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Sages, mystics and prophets through the ages have taught us that cultivating an attitude of thankfulness will not only help us grow as disciples, but thankfulness will also deepen our connection neighbors and give us happier, more fulfilling lives.

And how do you cultivate thankfulness? First and always, through prayer. Consider how many of the Psalms offer thanks, or how often the Apostle Paul gives thanks for the people and blessings of his ministry. Pray always – and always with thanksgiving. Keep a “blessings list” and pray through it daily.

Giving thanks to God can nourish thankfulness in your own heart, and you can also help encourage thankfulness in your community by developing a habit of thanking others – verbally, by text or email, or with cards and notes.

Since our national holiday of Thanksgiving takes place in November, this month offers the perfect opportunity to start.

Throughout November, look for every opportunity to thank someone for any reason, big or small. It could be a stranger who holds a door open for you, a clerk who rings up your sale, or a neighbor who does you a favor. Keep track of the number of times you can say “thank you.” You may be surprised. For fun, compete with others to see who can say “thank you” the most times in November.

In the process of saying “thank you” you will not only develop a habit that will deepen your soul, you will also change your relationship with neighbors, your community and our world. And that will be a real cause for thanksgiving.

-Rob Blezard

Copyright © 2020, Rev. Robert Blezard. Pastor Blezard serves as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, MD, and works as content editor for www.stewardshipoflife.org. He blogs at www.thestewardshipguy.com

Links to resources

Two “think it” resources

[What Gets in the Way of Gratitude?](#) – Research shows that gratitude is essential for happiness, but modern times have regressed gratitude into a mere feeling instead of retaining its historic value, a virtue that leads to action. Writer Robert Emmons explores the blocks to gratitude — and how to remove them!

(www.dailygood.org/story/1858/what-gets-in-the-way-of-gratitude-robert-emmons/)

[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>)

Two “teach it” resources

[Conversation Starter on Gratitude and Generosity](#) — This resource from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in Canada will help you explore your experience of gratitude and generosity, and become more comfortable sharing this aspect of our faith. Use this in your congregation, your Bible study group, or even for your own family’s personal stewardship development.

(<http://elcic.ca/Stewardship/documents/ELCICGenerosityworksheet.pdf>)

[30 Best Bible Verses on Thankfulness](#)— 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/>)

Two “do it” resources

[Cultivate Gratitude in the Church](#) — Scientists and church folk alike know that living a life of gratitude reaps benefits spiritually, mentally and physically. “Thankfulness releases us from anger and from materialism,” says Doris Whitaker, University of Mississippi Medical Center chaplain. “It helps us acknowledge that there’s something greater than us.” Here, with links to lots of other resources, are some ways to cultivate generosity.

(www.umcom.org/learn/3-ways-to-encourage-gratitude-in-the-church)

[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](#) — 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)

The “preach it” resource

[Weekly Lectionary Stewardship Reflection](#). Sharron Blezard, Lutheran pastor, spiritual director, writer and child of God, looks at stewardship implications in the week’s Revised Common Lectionary lessons.

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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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