

# Your Stewardship Toolkit for January 2021!

January's theme: 'The Year of My Wellbeing'

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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, "The Year of My Wellbeing," 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 URLs to resources on the Web to help you explore this month's theme.

**-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.*

**January 3, 2021** (Second Sunday after Christmas, Year B)

*"But to all who received him, who believed in his name, he gave power to become children of God, who were born, not of blood or of the will of the flesh or of the will of man, but of God."* -**John 1:12-13**

We begin 2021 with the sure and certain knowledge that the Christ has given us power and new birth as children of God. Our world is still filled with uncertainty, suffering, and fear, but none of these things can undo the hope and promise we have in Christ.

**January 6, 2021** (Epiphany of the Lord, Year B)

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

God continues to do new things among us—healing, restoring, and sustaining—and invites our participation in sharing the good news of the Christ. With the wise men and the faithful across time, we

look to Jesus for our hope and eternal wellbeing. Step into the light and make 2021 a year of wellness “Jesus-style.”

**January 10, 2021** (Baptism of the Lord, Year B)

*“[Paul] said to them, ‘Did you receive the Holy Spirit when you became believers?’ They replied, ‘No, we have not even heard that there is a Holy Spirit.’” – Acts 19:2*

As we celebrate the baptism of Jesus and recall our own initiation into God’s family, we can be confident that God works within us, giving us the gift of the Holy Spirit, and equipping us to be faithful disciples who are well in body, mind, and spirit.

**January 17, 2021** (Second Sunday after Epiphany, Year B)

*Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own? --1 Corinthians 6:19*

Like elite athletes in training, we who follow Christ give up certain “freedoms” in this life in order to faithfully respond to God’s gracious gift of salvation. We choose to love God and our neighbors fully, choosing a path of wellness and good stewardship of all God’s abundance.

**January 24, 2021** (Third Sunday after Epiphany, Year B)

*And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” – Mark 1:17*

Are you ready for a new kind of wellness routine in 2021? Jesus calls all of us to follow him and become fishers of people. It’s a new kind of exercise with eternal benefits where we become Christ’s hands, feet, eyes, and heart in this world. Get ready for a real workout Jesus-style!

**January 31, 2021** (Fourth Sunday after Epiphany, Year B)

*“But take care that this liberty of yours does not somehow become a stumbling block to the weak.” – 1 Corinthians 8:9*

Christians enjoy great freedom, but we are also responsible to and for one another. Just as new runners start out gently, so new Christ followers may need our careful and loving guidance as we all train in the faith.

## **January 2021newsletter 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](mailto:editor@stewardshipoflife.org).

## **‘The Year of My Wellbeing’**

*“But they who wait for the Lord shall renew their strength.” –Isaiah 40:31a*

The Covid-19 pandemic has endured far longer than anyone imagined, and it has left us feeling stressed, weary, fearful, frustrated, angry, isolated, and dislocated. Many are simply depleted.

Even in normal times, being a good steward of our personal health takes time, vigilance, commitment and discipline. The pandemic's protracted disruption has made it especially hard to take care of ourselves at the very time we need it most.

Because it will take months for the Coronavirus vaccine to be widely available, and even longer for "normal" to return, it may be wise for God's people to designate 2021 "The Year of My Wellbeing" and focus on our health.

Our spiritual, mental, emotional wellbeing are interconnected. Working on any one of them will improve the rest. Working on all of them will best help you maintain equilibrium as we live into this new future.

Here are some tips for crafting a wellbeing strategy. Some may seem pretty basic, but many of us forget even the most obvious ideas.

- Ask God for help.
- Don't go it alone! Work with friends for mutual support.
- Tend to your spirit through Scripture study, devotionals, worship, and, most importantly, prayer!
- Make quality time with loved ones.
- Do something just for you.
- Stuck? Talk to a counselor.
- Exercise regularly.
- Eat healthfully.
- Practice stress-reduction techniques.

The pandemic will end, rest assured. When it does, we will all be greatly relieved. In the meantime, making 2021 "The Year of My Wellbeing" will help you stay strong.

*-Rob Blezard*

*Copyright © 2021, Rev. Robert Blezard. Pastor Blezard serves as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, MD, 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**

**[Spirituality and stress relief: Make the connection](#)** - Taking the path less traveled by exploring your spirituality can lead to a clearer life purpose, better personal relationships and enhanced stress management skills. Good reading from the Mayo Clinic.

<https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/stress-management/in-depth/stress-relief/art-20044464>

**Healthy eating, healthy weight**—Eating food with the right nutrients and calories for our weight is a key ingredient to healthy living. This resource from the federal Centers for Disease Control gives lots of tips and handy links to authoritative sources of information on related topics.

[https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy\\_eating/index.html](https://www.cdc.gov/healthyweight/healthy_eating/index.html)

**Science reveals the health benefits of meditation**- The regular practice of meditation can not only bring you closer to God and improve your faith and prayer life, it also improves overall wellness and health, scientists affirm. Lower blood pressure, greater emotional intelligence, a longer attention span and less anxiety are only some of the benefits, says healthline.

<https://www.healthline.com/nutrition/12-benefits-of-meditation>

**Use these guides to get to your 'healthiest self'** - What's the state of health for your body? Your relationships? Your feelings? Your surroundings? Other areas? The Wellness Toolkits from the National Institutes of Health can help you find out. Use these for yourself and tell invite your congregants about them.

<https://www.nih.gov/health-information/your-healthiest-self-wellness-toolkits>

**Stretch to stay limber and relaxed**- Stretching is much like flossing. You know it's good for your health, but for whatever reason, you may not always make time for it. Regular stretching becomes especially important as you age. Flexibility naturally declines over time, as muscles lose strength and tone, and ligaments and tendons get tighter. Harvard Medical School offers a simple plan.

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/a-plan-for-easy-stretching>

**No gym required: How to get fit at home**—From the privacy of your own home you can stretch and work your muscles to achieve greater fitness. This article from WebMD has lots of tips and links to other resources.

<https://www.webmd.com/fitness-exercise/features/no-gym-required-how-to-get-fit-at-home#1>

## **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))

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