



October 22, 2023



Consecrate means to make holy and dedicate to a higher purpose.

There comes a time when we choose. We choose to support someone or something that we believe in.

People know us by the choices we make. People can see what we value in life by our choices.

But even before we get to choose, we know that God chose us. In our baptisms we were sealed by the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ. Now it's our turn.

Stewardship can be summarized as our responses—our choices—after we know of God's love for us through Christ in the power of the Spirit.

The Stewardship Committee of the Northern Great Lakes Synod invites all congregations to choose a Sunday as a "Consecration Sunday." We suggest that you choose October 22.

We are providing some suggested resources as a kind of template for you to use. Feel free to adapt as best fits your congregation.

We hope that all 79 congregations in the Northern Great Lakes Synod do the following:

1. Engage in the spiritual exercises of *Dwelling in the Word* materials sent to you by the synod office.
2. Discuss this Consecration Sunday as a Stewardship Committee and/or a Church Council.
3. Set aside a Sunday worship as Consecration Sunday—we suggest October 22
4. Consecration Sunday should have the following:
 - a. A **TESTIMONIAL** by at least one lay member from the congregation to speak of the joy of giving and the impact their congregation, synod, or ELCA has made on their life of faith.
 - b. A **SERMON** that lifts up stewardship themes.
 - c. A **LITANY OF CONSECRATION** is provided in this stewardship packet.
 - d. During the time of the offering, prior to Holy Communion, people will bring forth to place on the altar, their **COMMITMENT OF GIVING CARDS** in which they have written what their pledged commitments of money and volunteering of their time will be to their congregation for 2024.
 - e. After worship, gather for a **FELLOWSHIP MEAL** which may include music, ministry displays, and perhaps other testimonials of appreciation.

While we strongly suggest that you utilize the format of Consecration Sunday as presented, we realize that you may want to modify this plan. But the bottom line is to do something! Publicize and promote this. Show each other that God is at work through your congregation, synod, and ELCA churchwide ministries!

Please take time to consider the resources found in this "2023 Stewardship Packet"

1. A Reflection by Pastor Mike Markwell on Matthew 22:15-22
2. The Litany of Consecration
3. A list of some of the best Stewardship Resources

Thanks for the many ways you choose to be stewards of God's amazing gifts!

Pastor Jim Duehring, Assistant to the Bishop on behalf of the Synod Stewardship Committee