

Your Stewardship Toolkit for January 2019!

This month's theme: **Stewardship of Time**

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Good, thoughtful, consistent communication, education and action can help develop a healthy culture of stewardship and generosity in your congregation. This kit is designed to help get you there!

You can use the resources of this kit by themselves to educate and encourage stewardship, but they would be more effective as a monthly emphasis about a different aspect of stewardship. You could plan bible studies, temple talks, a preaching series and other activities.

This month's emphasis is **Stewardship and Gratitude**.

Future emphases are:

January: Stewardship of Time

February: Stewardship of Loving Relationships

March: Stewardship in Lent

Here's what you'll find below:

-Stewardship Snippets: Put a "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!

Stewardship Snippets

Copy and paste into your bulletin!

Source: Rob Blezard

Stewardship Snippet

Jan. 6, 2019(Epiphany of Our Lord, Year C)

Matthew 2:11—On entering the house, the Magi saw the child with Mary his mother; and they knelt down and paid him homage. Then, opening their treasure chests, they offered him gifts of gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

After traveling far to visit Jesus, the Wise Men made an offering of precious gifts. Today we respond to Jesus' love by giving our hearts and minds to him, but also offerings from our own treasure chests.

Stewardship Snippet

Jan. 13, 2019(Baptism of Our Lord Sunday, Year C)

Luke 3:21 —A voice came from heaven, "You are my Son, the Beloved; with you I am well pleased."

Jesus hears God's words of comfort and love, and his life was never the same. At our baptism we also receive God's promises as God declares us sons and daughters. Baptism is the defining moment for our lives.

Stewardship Snippet

Jan. 20, 2019(2nd Sunday after the Epiphany, Year C)

1 Corinthians 2:4 —Now there are varieties of gifts, but the same Spirit; and there are varieties of services, but the same Lord; and there are varieties of activities, but it is the same God who activates all of them in everyone.

Everybody has strengths and talents. Steward/disciples know that we find optimal joy, peace and fulfillment when we are using them for Godly purposes. What are your gifts? How are you using them?

Stewardship Snippet

Jan. 27, 2019(3rd Sunday after the Epiphany, Year C)

Psalms 19:9b, 10—The ordinances of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, even much fine gold; sweeter also than honey.

Stewardship is all about priorities and values. What do we prize above all else? Faithful steward/disciples value the teachings of God that guide us to fulfilled lives.

Newsletter article

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Stewardship of time

O God, teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart. -**Psalm 90:12**

What does it mean to count our days? Certainly, the poet who wrote Psalm 90:12 was thinking of more than arithmetic, which may not necessarily gain us a wise heart. Wisdom comes from perspective, from painful introspection and prayerful deliberation.

We count in order to know not only how many days we have *lived*, but to ponder how many days we might have *left*. Counting, we remember that we are finite creatures whose lives march forward in steady 24-hour steps, carrying us from birth to death. Knowing, then, that our days are numbered, we appreciate each one more fully.

We count our days to gain the wisdom that every day is sacred; every day presents opportunities to live more fully in relationship with God and our neighbors; every day is for love and joy and peace and fulfillment. Yet it's all too easy to let the days slip away.

This month consider a focus on stewardship of your time – how you spend every day God gives you. Here is a “to do” list for making the most of every day:

- **Pray:** Begin each day communicating with the creator of the universe, meditating on Scripture or a wise Christian author. Even 10 minutes. End by praying Psalm 118:24: “This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.”
- **Care:** Convey through word or deed how much you care about someone in your life. Call up an old friend or relative. Invite a co-worker to lunch.
- **Help:** Look for some way to assist someone. Volunteer. Hold a door open for someone entering a store behind you. Stop for a pedestrian who wants to cross the street.
- **Enrich:** Find something that will deepen your knowledge, understanding or appreciation of the world. Read a poem or book. Listen to a sermon podcast or educational news program.
- **Stop.** That's right, do nothing. For at least 10 minutes (use your smart phone timer) sit quietly, breathe deeply and try to clear the busy thoughts from your mind. Open your spirit to God's presence.
- **Be healthy:** Do something to increase your physical health, such as eating a nutritious meal or taking a walk.
- **Pray:** End every day thanking the creator of the universe for another wonderful day. A day you have counted and that you have made count.

Focus on stewardship of time and see how your own life will change. Make it a permanent part of your discipleship.

--*Rob Blezard*

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Links to resources

The “think it” resource

[A brief theology of time](#). “We are temporal creatures with a finite lifespan,” writes Paul Mills in this challenging essay, published by the Jubilee Centre in the United Kingdom. “Western lifestyle is dominated by considerations of time to such a degree that the clock is rivalled only by the printing press as the most influential invention of this millennium.” Mills looks at theological and biblical ideas of time and how they relate to us today.

(<http://www.jubilee-centre.org/a-brief-theology-of-time-by-paul-mills/>)

The “teach it” resource

[A biblical view of time.](#) How do we understand time as North Americans of the 21st Century? Contrast it with how time is described and revealed in Scripture. These study guides from the Center for Baptist Studies can help.

(<http://www.centerforbaptiststudies.org/localchurch/fbcmacontime.doc>)

The “do it” resource

[The truth about time management.](#) "There's a hoax being perpetuated that time management is essentially about technique ... All you need are the right tools: paper planner, online calendar, tools to block addictive websites," writes church leadership consultant Margaret Marcuson, who explores deeper issues that can help leaders get a handle on things.

(<http://margaretmarcuson.com/truth-time-management/>)

The “preach it” resource

[Weekly Lectionary Stewardship Reflection.](#) Sharron Bleazard, Lower Susquehanna Synod assistant to the bishop and pastor, looks at stewardship implications in the week's Revised Common Lectionary lessons. (www.stewardshipoflife.org)

General Stewardship Resource Websites

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

[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)

[Center for Steward Leadership](#) — Luther Seminary's excellent website. (www.luthersem.edu/stewardship/)

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

[Lower Susquehanna Synod Stewardship](#) — Select free or low-cost resources. (www.lss-elca.org/faith-formation/stewardship/)

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