

Here's Your Stewardship 'Toolkit' for September 2018!

This month's theme: Stewardship of Our Work Life

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Good, thoughtful, consistent communication, education and action will 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 that lifted up a different aspect of stewardship. You could plan bible studies, temple talks, a preaching series and other activities.

This month's emphasis is **Stewardship of Our Work Life**.

Future emphases are:

October: Stewardship of Our Money

November: Stewardship and Gratitude

December: Stewardship for Advent & Christmas

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

Sept. 2, 2018 (15th Sunday after Pentecost, Year B)

James 1:17 – Every generous act of giving, with every perfect gift, is from above, coming down from the Father of lights.

Make a list of the blessings in your life. Go ahead! These are gifts to you from God, the source of all. Now review the list and pray for each, "I thank God for" Do this every day and see how you feel.

Stewardship Snippet

Sept. 9, 2018 (16th Sunday after Pentecost, Year B)

James 2:15 – If a brother or sister is naked and lacks daily food, and one of you says to them, "Go in peace; keep warm and eat your fill," and yet you do not supply their bodily needs, what is the good of that?

For many of us who have more than we need, it's very hard to follow Jesus' command to love our neighbor as ourselves. The questions steward/disciples have to ask prayerfully are "How generous am I, really? Is God calling me to be more generous?"

Stewardship Snippet

Sept. 16, 2018 (17th Sunday after Pentecost, Year B)

Mark 8:35 – [Jesus taught,] "For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake, and for the sake of the gospel, will save it. For what will it profit them to gain the whole world and forfeit their life?"

Jesus debunks the prevalent lie that the more we accumulate, the happier and more secure we will be. Steward/disciples learn that when we give ourselves fully to God, we save our lives and find true joy.

Stewardship Snippet

Sept. 23, 2018 (18th Sunday after Pentecost, Year B)

James 4:1, 2 – Those conflicts and disputes among you ... do they not come from your cravings that are at war within you? You want something and do not have it; so you commit murder. And you covet something and cannot obtain it; so you engage in disputes and conflicts.

James puts his finger on the pulse of human misery. We drive ourselves crazy by craving the things we don't have and envying those who have more than we do! Spiritual maturity and practicing steward/discipleship help bring us sanity.

Stewardship Snippet

Sept. 30, 2018 (19th Sunday after Pentecost, Year B)

Psalm 19:14 – Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be acceptable to you, O LORD, my rock and my redeemer.

When we live fully to God, we want not just our outside appearance to meet with God's approval, but even our thoughts and words. This is the prayer of a true steward/disciple.

Newsletter article

Select the one below, or from the [Toolkit Newsletter Article Archive](#)

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Stewardship of our work life

And whatever you do, in word or deed, do everything in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him. --Colossians 3:17

The priesthood of all believers has been characterized as Martin Luther's most underappreciated theological insight. Simply put, Luther observed that God calls all Christians -- not just pastors -- to lives of holiness. Every one of us, not just priests, accomplishes God's holy work, regardless of what we do for work, whether employed or working at home.

It's a simple idea, and one that certainly elevates our "job" to a new status, but it can be hard to live out. Here are some tips:

Think *disciple*: You may know to be a disciple in church, but prayerfully imagine how you can be a follower of Jesus at work, too!

Think *excellence*: There's satisfaction in doing your best. Knowing that your work is holy can provide not only incentive but also a satisfaction boost.

Think *relationship*: They're not just your coworkers, they're also the neighbors whom Christ commands us to serve and to love as ourselves.

Think *service*: Every workplace holds challenges for your employer, coworkers and customers. How can your experience and gifts help?

Think *priest*: You are called to be a holy person 24/7. How does this awareness invite you to change your behavior and attitude toward your work?

We spend so much of our lives in our jobs, we can't park our faith at the door. Instead, we bring the light of Christ to the workplace as holy people of God's reign!

--Rob Blezard

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Links to resources

The “think it” resource

[The Priesthood of All Believers and Other Pious Myths](#): In this brilliant paper, Luther scholar Timothy J. Wengert clarifies what Luther *really* had in mind for the thoughts that over the centuries morphed into the idea of “Priesthood of All Believers.” Painstakingly researched and presented in Wengert’s characteristically jaunty prose, both clear and witty, the essay helps us fully appreciate – and live out -- Luther’s ideas of Christian discipleship in daily life.

(https://scholar.valpo.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1118&context=ils_papers)

The “teach it” resource

[From Worship to the World](#): This article from Living Lutheran magazine describes “priesthood of all believers,” also known as ministry in daily life. Use this article and the accompanying [study guide](#) in workshops, temple talks or Christian education classes.

Article URL: <https://www.livinglutheran.org/2016/05/vocation-worship-world/>

Study guide URL: <https://livinglutheran.blob.core.windows.net/cdn/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/1605vocation.pdf>

The “do it” resource

[Faith Practices – Live Out Our Baptism](#): This collection of ELCA resources will help you be a 24/7 disciple of Jesus, bearing the light of Christ in the workplace – and wherever you go!

(<https://www.elca.org/Our-Work/Congregations-and-Synods/Faith-Practices>)

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)

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 areas. (www.stewardshipoflife.org)

[Center for Steward Leadership](#) – Luther Seminary’s excellent. (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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