

# Your Stewardship Toolkit for April 2019!

*This month's theme:*

## **Stewardship of God's 'very good' creation**

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Check out my new blog: [www.thestewardshipguy.com](http://www.thestewardshipguy.com)!

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

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 of God's 'very good' creation**

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**

**April 7, 2019** (Fifth Sunday in Lent, Year C)

**Isaiah 43:20**—The wild animals will honor me, the jackals and the ostriches; for I give water in the wilderness, rivers in the desert, to give drink to my chosen people.  
*Throughout the Bible you see that human beings are not the ONLY living things God is concerned about. Every plant, animal and organism contains God's handiwork, and God's love and concern extends throughout creation.*

### **Stewardship Snippet**

**April 14, 2019** (Palm Sunday, Year C)

**Psalm 118:24** – This is the day that the LORD has made; let us rejoice and be glad in it.  
*Can you think of a day that our Lord has NOT made? Neither can I, so the verse gives wonderfully wise advice on how to live every day as steward disciples: With rejoicing and gladness.*

### **Stewardship Snippet**

**April 14, 2019** (Passion/Palm Sunday, Year C)

**Luke 22:19, 20** –Then Jesus took a loaf of bread, and when he had given thanks, he broke it and gave it to them, saying, "This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." And he did the same with the cup after supper, saying, "This cup that is poured out for you is the new covenant in my blood."  
*What has God given us? Everything, holding back nothing. We celebrate this with Eucharist, when we mystically commune with God's very body and blood.*

### **Stewardship Snippet**

**April 21, 2019** (Easter Sunday, Year C)

**Luke 24:9, 11** –And returning from the tomb, [Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women] told all this to the eleven and to all the rest. But these words seemed to them an idle tale, and they did not believe them.  
*The Gospel today can still seem like an "idle tale" for people outside the church. But like the women who found the tomb empty, we can only tell what we know and invite people to see Jesus for themselves.*

### **Stewardship Snippet**

**April 28, 2019** (Second Sunday of Easter, Year C)

**Psalm 150:1** –Praise the LORD!  
*You get the impression from Psalm 150 that praising God is not something you do, but rather something that steward disciples embody every minute of every day, every activity and every thought. How do you praise God? How can you do better?*

## **Newsletter article**

Select the one below, or from 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: [rblezard@lss-elca.org](mailto:rblezard@lss-elca.org).

## ***Stewardship of God's 'very good' creation***

*"God saw everything that he had made, and indeed, it was very good."*-**Genesis 1:31**

Six times while creating the heavens and the earth God pauses and sees that it is "good" (Genesis 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 26). But when all is completed, God marvels and calls it "very good."

Today that "very good" creation is under extreme strain from climate change, plastic waste, toxins in our air and water, species extinction and countless other factors. As God-appointed stewards of creation (Genesis 1:28), we have to admit we're failing.

For these reasons, and because April 22 is Earth Day, this month presents the perfect opportunity to stress "Stewardship of Creation." Here are some ideas:

- Pray. Ask God to show us, lead us and guide us to care for the earth.
- At church, celebrate April 28 as "Earth Sunday" or "Creation Sunday" with special hymns, prayers, classes and scripture.
- Form a congregational "Green Team" to educate, introduce new practices and advocate for better public policies.
- At church and home, establish or step up efforts to recycle all you can and reduce waste.
- Note the plastic in your church and home recycling and waste stream. Discuss the crisis that plastic waste is causing.
- Compost your family's food waste. Discover how composting and recycling can reduce your trash stream.
- Cut down on driving. Walk, bicycle, or use public transportation. Install a bike rack at church.
- Examine your church and home's insulation values. Have a professional tune up the heating and air conditioning systems for efficiency.

What other steps could help you and your congregation prioritize caring for God's creation? It's the only planet we have. As stewards, we must do better to keep it "very good."

***--Rob Blezard***

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## **Links to resources**

**The "think it" resource**

[Laudato si: Pope Francis' encyclical on the environment](#) – This is a thoroughly engaging and intellectually heavy statement from Pope Francis. It bears thoughtful consideration. Here's an excerpt: *The earth cries out to us because of the harm we have inflicted on her by our irresponsible use and abuse of the goods with which God has endowed her. We have come to see ourselves as her lords and masters, entitled to plunder her at will. The violence present in our hearts, wounded by sin, is also reflected in the symptoms of sickness evident in the soil, in the water, in the air and in all forms of life.* ([https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco\\_20150524\\_enciclica-laudato-si.html](https://w2.vatican.va/content/francesco/en/encyclicals/documents/papa-francesco_20150524_enciclica-laudato-si.html))

### Two “teach it” resources

[Awakening to God's Call to Earthkeeping](#) - Here is a real gem! This 50-page resource includes a leader guide and participant materials for use in a faith-based small group context: adult or older youth Sunday school, Christian Education classes, women's circles, men's groups, congregational “Green Team,” or in a retreat setting. (Also can be ordered for \$5 from the ELCA Resource Catalog.)(<http://www.stewardshipoflife.org/2016/09/gods-call-to-earthkeeping/>)

[Every Creature Singing](#) - Educate your church on how our decisions impact the one and only planet that God gave us to live on — and how we can care for creation! “Every Creature Singing” gives you a detailed 13-session lesson plan, as well as a teacher's guide. Each lesson has Scripture, readings, discussion questions that focus on your neighborhood, and other resources. (<https://mennocreationcare.org/every-creature-singing>)

### The “do it” resource

[52 Ways to Care for Creation](#) - Our planet and its resources are under enormous strain, but what ordinary folks do about it? Plenty, says Creation Justice Ministries, which created this handy list of 52 steps that we can take in our everyday lives to help. Your congregation could highlight one per week for a year! Little changes can make a HUGE difference! (<http://www.creationjustice.org/blog/52-ways-to-care-for-creation>)

### 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](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org))

## General Stewardship Resource Websites

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

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

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

[Lower Susquehanna Synod Stewardship](#) — Select free or low-cost resources.

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