

StewardCAST

A monthly e-newsletter of LCMS Stewardship Ministry

lcms.org/stewardship



Stewards of Human Resources



And how are they to preach unless they are sent?" ROM. 10:15

So often, stewardship discussions are limited to the *financial* resources needed for ministry. It is true that the faithful proclamation of the Gospel in every congregation, district and the Synod does require financial resources. In the 21st century, financial resources are how the Church answers St. Paul's rhetorical question in Rom. 10:15, "**And how are they to preach unless they are sent?**" Individuals, congregations and other groups within the Church are called to be stewards of their resources for the sake of the Gospel. It is in this stewardship that the Lord is glorified, and the neighbor is served.

Beneath the surface

But to limit the discussion of stewardship to things financial is to recognize just the tip of the stewardship iceberg. As the RMS Titanic learned the hard way, the portion of the iceberg below the waterline can do great damage simply because it isn't seen. As congregations go through the budget process each year, a common tendency is to overemphasize the financial strain of the ministry, to the neglect of those who are actually carrying that ministry out.

There are many stories within the Synod where, intentionally or unintentionally, the stewardship of the ministry of the Gospel has been exercised to the detriment of its ministers. In an effort to be good financial stewards, congregations are often less than gracious in their stewardship of their human capital. Budgets are often slashed without any consideration of how those cuts may inflict wounds and leave scars on those who bear the brunt of the cut.

There are many occasions where financial cuts are completely unavoidable. In many congregations, because of the dynamics of population and location, doing ministry the way is has always been done becomes a difficult, if not impossible, task. But even in situations like these, the effect on the workers always needs to be considered as a part of any decision.

A crucial question

A recent meeting at one congregation highlighted this. As they were contemplating their work together as a church, it was clear that doing things the way they had been was becoming more difficult. The greater financial burden was likely going to have to impact workers. Part-time employees were facing elimination and a far greater burden of work would fall to the pastor. It would be easy, likely the easiest option, to simply make these cuts. However, when the possibility of

StewardCAST is published monthly by:
LCMS Stewardship Ministry
1333 S. Kirkwood Road
St. Louis, MO 63122
888-THE LCMS (843-5267)
infocenter@lcms.org
lcms.org/stewardship

StewardCAST may be reprinted with acknowledgment given to The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod.

STAFF

- Rev. Heath Curtis
*Coordinator (contracted),
LCMS Stewardship Ministry*
- Rev. Dr. Nathan Meador
*Assistant Coordinator (contracted),
LCMS Stewardship Ministry, and
Pastor, St. John Lutheran Church,
Plymouth, Wis.*
- Robbie Clasen
*Administrative Assistant,
LCMS Stewardship Ministry*

CONTRIBUTOR

- Lisa Moeller
Designer

How to Subscribe

To subscribe to *StewardCAST*, register online at lcms.org/enews. Select *StewardCAST* from among the “Stewardship and Giving” newsletters.

Support LCMS Global Mission Fund

Your gift to the Global Mission Fund impacts people around the world and in our own backyard through acts of Christian compassion, wherever the need is greatest at the time the gift is made. Gifts are used exclusively to support Synod’s *Witness, Mercy, Life Together* work at home and abroad.

GIVE NOW

© 2019 LCMS

partnering with another local congregation facing similar concerns became available, a wonderful question was asked:

“How can we keep this potential arrangement from becoming too much for our pastor?”

The person who asked this didn’t realize that it was a stewardship question. It is often unasked, and a question that so many congregations need to ask and answer. As more is asked of fewer people in the employ of congregations, how can these congregations become better stewards of their human resources?

Two ways to care

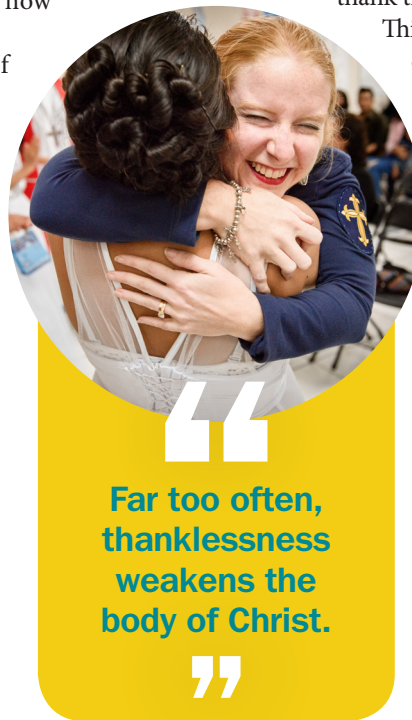
Firstly, congregations can make sure that financial stewardship issues are addressed on a regular basis. Are members of the congregation being reminded that they were created and redeemed to be stewards of the Gospel using the means which the Lord has entrusted to them? Are individual stewards being asked to make regular commitments to worship, prayer and generosity? If these questions are not being asked, then it will be difficult to be good stewards of the human capital of the congregation. Salaries and benefits will be cut, or workloads expanded.

Secondly, congregations can care for their human capital in a more personal way. Study after study indicates that church workers are often beset by loneliness. Do the members of the congregation steward their personal relationship with their pastor? Do they regularly seek him out to pray with him and for him? This means more than just a dinner invitation. When the pastor is encountered in public, would it be too hard to seek him out, greet him warmly, and pray for him? Human happiness is more than financial

security, and a congregation can bring about great joy when it faithfully stewards its interpersonal relationships with its pastor.

This concern for human capital also extends beyond the pastor. So many of our congregations have the same group of lay leaders today that they had two decades ago. There is something noble about the saint who teaches Sunday school for 30 years. But are those years of service being stewarded well? Do other members seek these servants out, thank them and pray for them?

This kind of stewardship doesn’t cost a dime and is worth its weight in gold!



Far too often, thanklessness weakens the body of Christ.

Repent and give thanks

Far too often, thanklessness weakens the body of Christ. Second-guessing and complaining are often the stewardship that takes place rather than support and prayer. Is it any wonder that so many would rather not use the gifts and talents given them by the Lord because of this? Clandestine complaints in coffee shops and beauty parlors have given way to blog

posts and social media assassination of those who are simply attempting to serve the Lord in either lay or clergy roles.

How does stewardship of human capital become more faithful? It starts in the same place as financial stewardship: repentance. Repent of individual, congregational and Synodical poor financial stewardship forcing cuts upon ministry. Repent of behind-the-scenes and social media attacks. Actively seek out those who serve and support them with prayers and encouragement. As this happens, even in difficult situations, this human capital, at the leading of the Holy Spirit, can produce great things!