

StewardCAST

A monthly e-newsletter of LCMS Stewardship Ministry

lcms.org/stewardship



Welcoming Stewardship



The LCMS Office of National Mission-Stewardship regularly receives telephone calls and emails with requests for resources for stewardship. Because of the long history of resource development in this office, very often the best answer to the query comes in the form of a quick search of electronic resources. Most requests can be answered simply by pointing the person making the request to the proper link on the LCMS Stewardship website.

But every once in a while, a request comes in that doesn't have a good resource to which the seeker can be quickly connected. The genesis of this month's *StewardCAST* newsletter comes from one such request. Not long ago, Mike from Wisconsin called with a request. He desired to reinvent the wheel. This is good stewardship! What Mike was seeking was actually very simple. He was seeking a one-page introductory letter which would not require a great deal of time to read that might be shared with new members of his congregation, giving encouragement and

direction in stewardship. This was a resource that had not yet been developed. This request will be answered right here in the March 2018 *StewardCAST* newsletter. It is designed to be shared with the congregations of the Synod and can be freely customized for use in the local congregation.

Stewardship Letter for New Members

Dear New Member:

We are so overjoyed that the Lord has led you to call our congregation "home." While we were excited to have you visit with us, walk with us in the process of instruction, and now make the public confession of your faith, we are even more excited that the Lord has led you to be part of what St. Paul would refer to in Philippians as the "partnership in the Gospel" (PHIL. 1:5) that we have shared in this place over the years and will continue to share in the years to come.

Along the way you have, no doubt, learned some new terminology. You have heard words like Law and Gospel, Sacraments, liturgy and many other terms that are used in a unique and special way in the Church. We would like this letter to introduce one more term for you: stewardship.

Stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the church, in managing all of life and life's resources for God's purposes.

That sounds all well and good. But as a new member, I am sure that this definition might well be a bit daunting. So, let us unpack this for you so that you may share in the free and joyous blessing that those of us in this congregation have been a part of for a long time!

STEWARDSHIP IS:

What we were created for.

- In Gen. 1:26–28, you will see that God has made us to have dominion over creation.

About God's purposes.

- Also in Gen. 1:26–28 we are created in God's image. That means our stewardship, our management of creation, is to reflect His will and purpose, not ours!

An Activity.

- This means that stewardship is work. It always has been about work. Genesis 2:15 gives us our purpose statement as stewards: "The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep it." As stewards, we are called by God to be constantly working at preserving the creation that God has entrusted to us for His purposes!

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GIVE NOW



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Something we all struggle with.

- This flows from sin. In fact, it goes all the way back to the Garden of Eden. In Genesis 3 we read of how our first parents tried to own that which God had created them to steward. This inherited sin continues to plague us to this day. We still think we own things!

A gift restored to us by Jesus.

- Romans 12:1–2 talks about our stewardship flowing from the mercies of God. Nowhere is there a greater indication of selfless stewardship than we see in what Jesus was willing to do for us at the cross. As Christ gave freely of Himself for us, we are called to give freely of ourselves to others. As we do this, we serve the Lord!

About all of life and life’s resources.

- **You have been given a little box of envelopes.** This is designed for your financial offerings to the Church. This is sometimes seen as distasteful. But it really isn’t. Financial management and financial stewardship are important. If the child of God isn’t careful, the love of money can take over our lives. God calls us to be generous for the sake of the Gospel because of that. There is no formula for this. The Scriptures talk about financial stewardship for those in Christ as being regular and proportional, (1 COR. 16:2) and given joyfully (2 COR. 9:7). This all flows from a cheerful confidence in the Lord’s ability to provide for neighbors through us!
- **But stewardship is so much more than just giving money.** It is about being willing to give completely of ourselves to our neighbor as to the Lord. St. Paul highlights this in Rom. 12:1–2. Our entire lives are called upon by God to be stewardship.
- **Our bodies and our health are included in this.** We can’t be effective in carrying out God’s task for us if we don’t take good care of our health.
- **The entire creation is included in this as well.** It all belongs to Him (PS. 24:1–2). We can’t be faithful in serving the Lord if we don’t take good care of what the Lord has designed to be good and holy. This includes the universe in which we live and move and have our being.

A matter of worship.

- Speaking of Rom. 12:1, Paul urges, “I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.” This is a connection all the way back to Gen. 2:15. There is a connection between the work of the steward and the work of the Old Testament priests in the temple. When we are good stewards of all of life and life’s resources, we are at worship! This comes in giving your gifts to the Lord at the altar, in being willing to give of yourself in service to and care for others in the name of Jesus.

Something we do as an individual and a family.

- We are in this partnership in the Gospel together. Individually we have been blessed by the Lord. As a body, we serve the Lord together in ways that we could never serve alone. As stewards, we have been created and redeemed to work together, as St. Paul says in Rom. 12:4–7, as the body of Christ. There are no faithful Lone Ranger stewards.

Has only one standard.

- Stewardship is not about how much you give. Stewardship is not about how often you serve. In fact, the only standard for stewardship is faithfulness. St. Paul says that in 1 Corinthians 4.

ALL ABOUT THE GOSPEL!

- This is the highlight of all our stewardship. Ultimately the only real gift from God that we have to steward is the Gospel. The Gospel of Jesus Christ, crucified and risen, forgives sins, restores to service and seals us for eternity. The things of creation, money, property, ability, time and service are all managed faithfully so that those around us can know Jesus as Savior. Our stewardship, led by the Word of the Holy Spirit in our lives, points people to Jesus!

The partnership that the Lord is making between our congregation and you is truly a blessing. It will take some time for you to be fully integrated into our vocabulary and our practices. However, know that we look forward to the stewardship of the Gospel, using all our combined lives and resources, that we will share in the years to come!

To God be the Glory!
A Stewardship Leader