

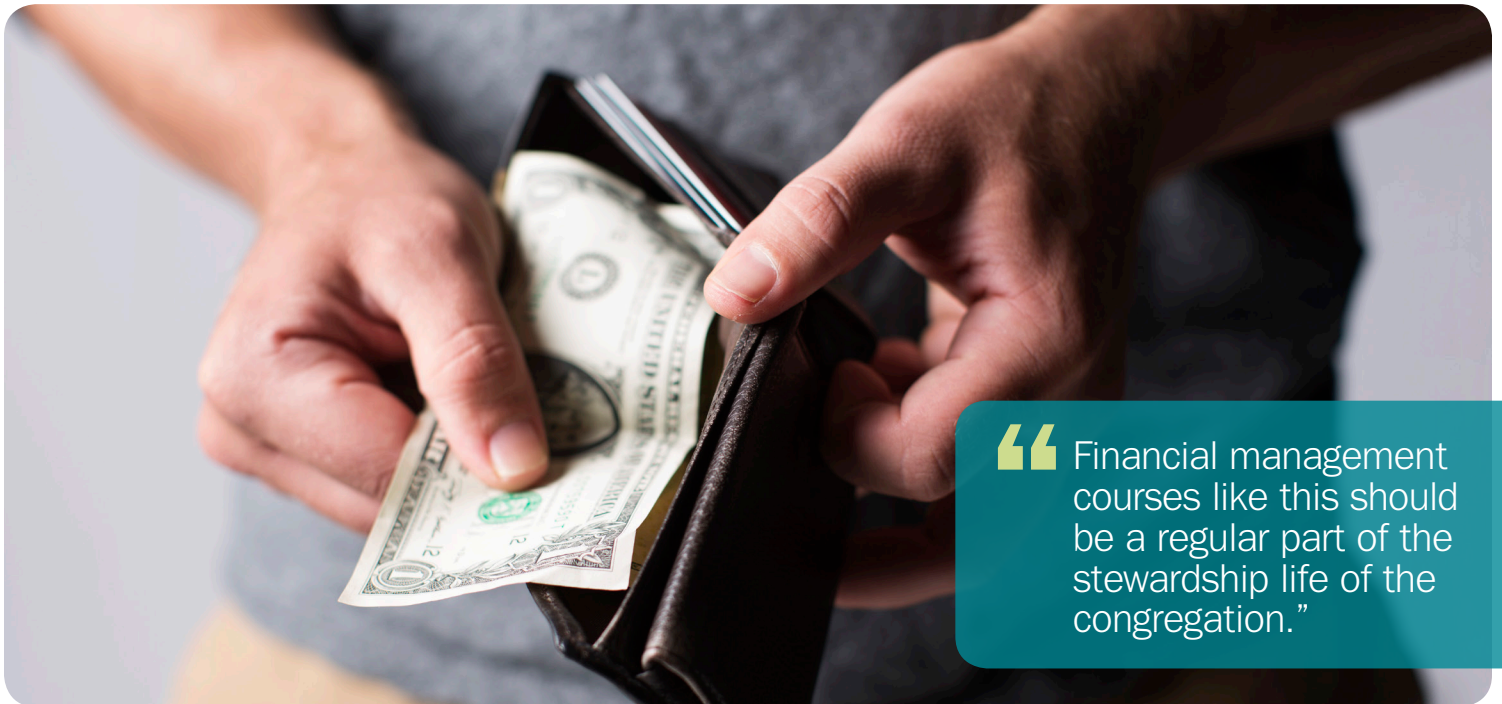
StewardCAST

A monthly e-newsletter of LCMS Stewardship Ministry

lcms.org/stewardship



Surprised by Stewardship?



“Financial management courses like this should be a regular part of the stewardship life of the congregation.”

LOVE HIM OR DESPISE HIM, Dave Ramsey has developed a following in this country because of his folksy, common sense approach to money management. *Financial Peace University* has become a tool that has enabled thousands of families to experience deliverance from the prison of debt. While one may not like his style or even his application of the faith, one cannot argue with the results that have enabled so many to “live like no one else so that they can give like no one else.”

Financial management courses like this should be a regular part of the stewardship life of the congregation. FPU isn't the only

option. There are other resources that can be used in this area. lcms.org/stewardship has a review and revision of FPU that can be used very faithfully in the congregations of the LCMS. The reality of the need for this has not changed. Resources like these are helpful tools that can lead the broken steward to confession, absolution and a new life of faithful stewardship. This is a good thing.

Ramsey's schtick includes his incredulity about people who are not prepared for things in their financial life that happen every year. He often laments the fact that people get “surprised by Christmas.” December 25th comes every year. With

the arrival of that date on the calendar, there are traditions that often put strains on the family financial situation. Ramsey consistently reiterates the need for families to prepare for the expense of Christmas throughout the year. There is no reason for families to be surprised by the expense of gifts and travel and entertaining. Not allowing themselves to be “surprised by Christmas” allows the family to be proactive in their financial stewardship and freedom.

Along the same lines, how many congregations and individual stewards are “surprised by stewardship”? While stewardship does not have only one designated date on the calendar,

without the proper preparation, it is very easy, individually and corporately, to have the call to be a faithful steward sneak up and catch the entity or individual off guard.

Fall Restart

How is a congregation “surprised by stewardship”? Well that often happens in the early fall. The summer has passed. With that passing summer, as if often the case, ministry in the congregation has been allowed to lie fallow. Because of vacations and other leisure activities, regular congregational activities like Sunday school and Bible classes go on hiatus. With these disciple-making endeavors on hold, so many of the other leadership activities go on hold as well. Then Labor Day arrives, and everything resumes with a vengeance. Sunday schools need to be staffed, adult Bible classes need to be planned, schools resume their regular activity and so many other things go from dormant to full speed in a matter of a couple weeks.

Stewardship planning is one of those things that often get lost in the weeds of getting restarted for the fall. Many congregations, if they have any intentional stewardship formation at all, still use the fall of the year as a time to do a stewardship emphasis. This is a remnant of the agricultural history of many congregations. But the reality exists that many congregations still act as if they are agrarian when in fact they have few, if any,

farmers. So when Labor Day rolls around, the Stewardship Committee and/or the pastor gets jolted with the reality that it is time to plan something for stewardship. The stress of starting from a dead stop is what causes the surprise. With either a perceived lack of resources for stewardship formation or a perceived overwhelming selection of programs, the steward leaders can look at one another with surprise and ask, “What do we do now?”



“Stewardship planning is one of those things that often get lost in the weeds of getting restarted for the fall.”

Avoidance and Ignorance

It is also possible for a congregation to be surprised by stewardship because they avoid the topic all together. So many congregations and pastors want to avoid this sensitive topic. People might be offended if we talk about the godly use of money and finances for the sake of the Kingdom. In order to stay out of the crosshairs of the people they serve, these leaders hide from the topic. The surprise of stewardship is what catches them unaware. When the resources to support the ministry are not present, panic ensues. Once again, starting from a dead stop and under financial pressure, steward leaders are surprised by stewardship and end up asking the same question, “What do we do now?”

There is no need for the congregation or the individual to be surprised by stewardship. This is something for which every child of God has been created and redeemed. To be surprised by stewardship is akin to being surprised by our identity as a child of God! No one who is in the Lord’s house, in the Lord’s Word and at the Lord’s Table would in any way be surprised by being called a steward. It is only when this identity is ignored that there is a surprise. This should not be. The faithful teaching and preaching of the whole counsel of God, including stewardship, will not allow for this surprise.



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.

- President of the Synod:
Rev. Dr. Matthew C. Harrison
- Executive Director,
Office of National Mission:
Rev. Robert Zagore
- Author:
Rev. Dr. Nathan Meador
*Pastor, St. John Lutheran Church,
Plymouth, Wis.*
- Coordinator:
Robbie Clasen
- Designer:
Lisa Moeller

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



© 2018 LCMS



Congregational Solutions

What is the congregation to do? First,
 embrace what the Scripture teaches about
 stewardship. Every baptized child of God
 is a Christian steward. Age, gender, health,
 wealth, ability and any other limitations do
 not preclude any child of God from their
 identity of being a steward. Even when
 someone feels they have fewer resources
 than the widow with the mite did in the
 Gospel, that does not preclude them from
 stewardship. That is because everything
 in all creation, including the individual
 steward, belongs to the Lord. The steward
 manages all that belongs to the Lord. This
 is done, not in a manner that pleases the
 steward, but one that reflects the will of
 the owner. This is done not just one day or
 one season of the year. EVERY day is a day
 for the child of God to be faithful in their
 stewardship of all that belongs to the Lord.

Second, the congregation needs to be
 intentional about teaching and leading
 stewardship. Like the individual steward, the
 need to form stewards is a yearlong task. It
 cannot be relegated to a few weeks every fall.
 Stewardship can and should be highlighted
 in Bible study and Sunday school when the
 texts under review call for it. Calling the
 congregation to faithful stewardship can
 be done weekly from the pulpit from every
 lesson in the Lectionary. Meetings of boards
 and committees should be more than just
 financial facts and figures. These gatherings
 should be tempered in the idea that the
 congregation is called to be faithful in this

too. The time for preparation in stewardship
 is not just fall or spring. It is any day that is
 called “today!”

If the congregation is surprised by
 stewardship, today is the day to change
 that. Start planning for the fall. But at the
 same time, start planning for the week
 after the emphasis too. It might seem like
 overkill at the beginning, but it will give
 way to a new stewardship culture that sees
 every day as a day to be a steward of all
 that the Lord entrusts.

Stewardship Resources

Resources abound for this! The single
 best place is the LCMS website (lcms.org/stewardship)! The leader or individual
 steward may be looking for a specific
 resource or a broad spectrum of resources.
 Stewardship A-Z is the resource! It is all
 there for the low, low price of FREE!

Also, look at doxology.us. LCMS Stewardship
 has partnered with this ministry to put on
 a conference called “More Than Giving.”
 There are dates in September and November
 that will allow steward leaders, both lay and
 clergy, to come and have a conversation that
 leads to a plan for stewardship.

There is no reason for a congregation or
 individual steward to be “surprised by
 stewardship.” Steward leaders need to
 confidently and gently lead those they serve
 to see this daily opportunity to serve the
 Lord as the blessing it is!