

Stewardship

sharing the abundance



This collection of resources is meant to stimulate conversation about stewardship as central to who we are as Christians. In his book, *The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Comes of Age*, Douglas John Hall reminds readers that “. . . stewardship describes the whole posture called ‘Christian.’” This group of resources provides a manageable look at the many ways we approach stewardship. It doesn’t begin to address deeper issues of justice and discipleship. We hope you will find it helpful!

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GETTING STARTED

The Clergy Journal (July/August 2003) features an exceptional collection of articles and reflections. Titles include: “The Liturgy of Abundance, the Myth of Scarcity” by Walter Brueggemann; “I’ll Be a Better Steward When...” by Peter Velander; and “The Starting Point of Stewardship” by John Indermark. This issue also includes ministry issues as well as preaching and worship resources. Copies are available from the Resource Center.

Douglas John Hall’s work in [The Biblical Image of the Steward](#) is a classic for recapturing the meaning of steward as symbol. Two more recent books are equally important, [The Steward: A Biblical Symbol Comes of Age](#) and [The Stewardship of Life in the Kingdom of Death](#).

Much of Walter Brueggemann’s work reflects basic issues of biblical stewardship and justice. His writing on abundance and scarcity is profound and challenging. The article, “The Liturgy of Abundance, the Myth of Scarcity” listed above also appeared in *Christian Century*. We recommend his book, [The Covenanted Self: Explorations in Law and Covenant](#).

The ELCA provides help for getting started at the following address: www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship/started.html.

Recent themes

Synod pastors have shared some ways their congregations approach stewardship. Please let us know of additional ideas, approaches, and themes that may be helpful to others.

Our Savior's in Valley City (Pastors Paul Huso and Mark Ostgarden) has found the ELCA's SALT program a helpful way of using outside people trained in stewardship as a resource. In addition, they use the materials from Ventures, a four-part workshop which is part of the SALT resources.

Martin's Lutheran in Casselton (Pastor Paula Mehmel) integrates stewardship into weekly worship. Rather than a stewardship program or focus, Martins connects the weekly texts to giving so that stewardship is woven into every worship experience. Each week, two or three sentences spoken by the pastor invite worshipers to make intentional connections between the preached word and their response as stewards.

Linking stewardship to issues of justice has been a priority for Immanuel Lutheran in Jamestown (Pastor JoAnne Moeller). Becoming members of Churches United for the Homeless has helped raise awareness of and responsibility for people who are mentally ill, without work, homeless.

Elim Lutheran in Fargo (Pastor David Aaker) has worked to make intentional connections between stewardship and social ministry projects. This includes "rehabing" six homes, weekly invitations for missionary support, monthly invitations for refugee support, and major gifts to the Masai Girls' School in Tanzania.

Taking real-life examples from members of the congregation, Augustana Lutheran Church in Grand Forks (Pastor Kathryn Brown) incorporates the theme "Blessed to be a Blessing" as part of their stewardship focus. During a four week period, four blessings are highlighted. These include experiences of congregational members: the gift of life as a couple in the congregation adopts a special needs baby, the role of confirmands in sharing Holy Communion, the way in which one member's flute-playing reminds people of God's gift of the breath of life.

Five years ago, Olivet Lutheran in Fargo (Pastors Jeff Sandgren, Kris Gorden, Tiffany Sundeen, Thor Rykken) invited a representative from the (then) Resident Steward Program to spend a month helping the congregation renew connections between stewardship and discipleship. That experience helped focus a yearly stewardship emphasis that includes devotional material, adult forums, and worship.

Christus Rex Campus Ministry at the University of North Dakota (Kathy Fick and Pastor Tim Megorden) regularly incorporates themes of stewardship into weekly worship.

St. John's in Jamestown (Pastors Dennis Ellingsen and Doug Opp) emphasizes year-round stewardship consciousness. Regular temple talks, a performance of the musical, "To the Castle," and stewardship themes about the use of time, talent, and finances are stressed.

teaching stewardship

Programs and resources for teaching from Augsburg Fortress and the ELCA include events, worship themes, bible studies, and more. Samples are available in the Resource Center.

- ✦ Where Your Heart Is (worship-based response for any size congregation)
- ✦ The Great Permission: An Asset-Based Field Guide for Congregations (based on congregational assets)
- ✦ The ELCA web site at www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship/teaching.html
- ✦ I Have Something That Belongs to You (a twelve-session course for discovering gifts—details from Gettysburg Seminary at www.stewardshipoflife.org)
- ✦ To the Castle: A Musical for Stewards (features eight songs illustrating stewardship as part of life)
- ✦ Our Stewardship: Managing Our Assets (for strategic planning, management, finance, stewardship or property teams)
- ✦ Step by Step (general overview including stewardship practice and theology)
- ✦ Smart Living (visitation response method)
- ✦ Legacy (meal-based response method that works best in smaller congregations)
- ✦ Created and Called: Discovering Our Gifts for Abundant Living (looks specifically at vocation and call inviting members to use their gifts)
- ✦ SALT (a professional service offered by the ELCA to congregations and synods for intentional planning and stewardship education—information available at www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship/resources/salt.html)

- ✦ Ventures: Partners in Stewardship Growth (four-part workshop connected to SALT resources) Stewardship in the Small Membership Rural Congregation (six part study on biblical themes plus three-week financial response method)
- ✦ Stewardship in the Small Membership Urban Congregation (six part study plus three-week financial response method)
- ✦ Giving: Growing Joyful Stewards in Your Congregation (year-long stewardship emphasis)
- ✦ Crossways publishes Biblical Stewardship by Harry Wendt. It consists of three parts: The Biblical Picture, The Global Picture, and Questions to Ponder.
- ✦ Consecration Sunday (six week program for congregations of all sizes)
- ✦ Making Christ Known (free resource available to all congregations highlighting stories of the whole church—missions, new congregations, education and more)
- ✦ Sermon Starters (go to www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship and click on “Sermon Starters”)

approaches / methods

For a basic primer about various approaches to stewardship, [How to Improve Financial Stewardship](#) (currently being revised) outlines six methods used by ELCA congregations. A sample copy is available in the resource center. An online version is posted on the ELCA web site.

- ✦ COMMITMENT AT WORSHIP – (members offer their commitments at a special worship service devoted to stewardship)
- ✦ RELAY – (members pass a package of stewardship information and commitment cards along a route of eight-ten households)
- ✦ FELLOWSHIP MEAL – (entire congregation meets for dinner, fellowship, and a stewardship presentation with everyone making a commitment at the end of the presentation)
- ✦ PIE AND PRAYER – (congregation gathers in groups for dessert, fellowship, and stewardship presentation that is followed by a short service where commitment cards are received)
- ✦ HOME GATHERINGS – (small groups meet in members’ homes to hear about stewardship and make a commitment)
- ✦ HOME VISITS – (teams of two visit five to ten families to talk about stewardship and ask for a commitment)
- ✦ FINANCIAL RESPONSE METHODS – www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship/financial.html

web sites

The following sites provide information, downloadable resources, and ordering information.

- ✦ FOR GETTING STARTED – www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship/started.html
- ✦ LUTHER SEMINARY: Stewardship for the 21st Century – www.LutherSem.edu/stewardship
- ✦ ORDERING RESOURCES – www.augsburgfortress.org – www.stewardshipresources.com
- ✦ FINANCIAL RESPONSE METHODS – www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship/financial.html
- ✦ SALT: A Professional Service from the ELCA – www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship/resources/salt.html
- ✦ TEACHING STEWARDSHIP – www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship/teaching.html
- ✦ YEAR-ROUND COMMUNICATION – www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship/communication.html
- ✦ RAISING FUNDS – www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship/raisingfunds.html
- ✦ INTERPRETING THE MISSION OF THE ELCA – www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship/interpreting.html
- ✦ ECUMENICAL STEWARDSHIP CENTER – www.stewardshipresources.org
- ✦ SERMON STARTERS – www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship and click on “Sermon Starters”
- ✦ STEWARDSHIP OF LIFE INSTITUTE at Lutheran Theological Seminary at Gettysburg – www.stewardshipoflife.org
- ✦ THE ALBAN INSTITUTE – www.alban.org

video resources

This sampling of videos reflects resources specifically about stewardship. Additional resources on hunger, homelessness, and other issues of justice can be found in our online catalog.

- ✦ [Ever Expanding Circles: A Stewardship Video Curriculum](#) – A five-part series to help young people gain a greater understanding of biblical stewardship. (VT2447)
- ✦ [Managing God's Good Gifts](#) – A nine-part series that challenges us to re-examine stewardship in light of discipleship. (VT2034)
- ✦ [Foundations for Christian Stewardship](#) – For congregational discussion of the biblical concepts of stewardship. (VT1813)
- ✦ [Growing Stewards in the Parish](#) – Eight propositions for stimulating discussion. (VT1814)
- ✦ [Stewardship of All of Life](#) – Adult study course on five themes. (VT600)
- ✦ [Reading Scripture and North St. Louis](#) – Conversation about scripture as it speaks to the situation of a poor community. (VT72)
- ✦ [Caesar and God: Ethics and Stewardship](#) – Five-part study exploring personal and social issues of stewardship. (VT752)
- ✦ [Personal But Not Private: Theology and Stewardship](#) – Deals with theological and institutional aspects of stewardship. (VT1024)
- ✦ [Personal Stewardship](#) – From the ELCA emphasis, “What Does It Mean to be Christian?” (VT722)
- ✦ [Tithing as a Way of Life](#) – Short discussion of the biblical concept of tithing. (VT688)
- ✦ The Pelican Project resources for children feature themes of stewardship. Print and video.
- ✦ [Beyond the News: Money](#) – “The major problem facing the church today is not poverty...but affluence.” (VT1714)

Books AND Printed resources

This selection includes a small sampling we've found especially helpful.

- ✦ [The Great Permission: An Asset-Based Field Guide for Congregations](#) by Bob Sitze (B2249)
- CONSECRATION SUNDAY PROGRAM KIT by Herb Miller (PR562)
- ✦ [Step by Step: Fostering Financial Stewardship](#) by Michael Meier (PR772)
- LITURGY: A LIFE TO SHARE (PR652)
- OUR STEWARDSHIP: MANAGING OUR ASSETS by John Golv (PR732)
- ✦ [Nickel and Dime—On \(Not\) Getting By in America](#) (B2790)
- ✦ [How Much is Enough? Hungering for God in an Affluent Society](#) (B2788)
- ✦ [Generous Saints: Congregations Rethinking Ethics and Money](#) (B2523)
- ✦ [Plain Talk About Churches and Money](#) (B2108)
- ✦ [All the Good Gifts: On Doing Biblical Stewardship](#) by Wallace Fisher (B299)
- ✦ [Generous People. . .How to Encourage Vital Stewardship](#) by Eugene Grimm
- ✦ [Giving and Stewardship in an Effective Church](#) by Kennon Callahan (B1226)

