



StewardCAST



The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod • Stewardship Ministry ■ July 2012

Dear friends,

This will be the last StewardCAST I am privileged to write. I have accepted the call to serve as director of placement at Concordia Seminary in St. Louis and will begin my duties there on August 1.

Please contact Robbie Clasen at Robbie.Clasen@lcms.org if you need information about stewardship. It has been an honor to serve The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod in this important ministry. God's richest blessings as you continue to grow in the grace and knowledge of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

~Rev. Wayne J. Knolhoff, Director of Stewardship

Stewardship Pillars in the Congregation

Christian stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God's family, the Church, in managing life and all of life's resources for God's purposes. The foundation of biblical stewardship is the grace of God.

As St. Paul writes, "For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation for all people, training us to renounce ungodliness and worldly passions, and to live self-controlled, upright, and godly lives in the present age, waiting for our blessed hope, the appearing of the glory of our great God and Savior Jesus Christ, who gave himself for us to redeem us from all lawlessness and to purify for himself a people for his own possession who are zealous for good works. Declare these things; exhort and rebuke with all authority. Let no one disregard you" (Titus 2:11-15).

There is no quick fix, fast track or easy answer to biblical stewardship education in the congregation. There are, however, intentional processes which congregations can follow to encourage the formation of stewards. The following "Five Pillars" can serve as a guide for the congregation in its stewardship ministry.

Pillar One: Provide intentional, systematic, year-round, whole-life stewardship education.

Church members grow in their understanding and practice of biblical stewardship as they participate in an ongoing stewardship growth process in the congregation. *Faith Aflame: 360 Degrees* is an adaptive stewardship process designed to change the stewardship culture of the congregation. By establishing Stewardship Learning Communities, leaders and members are challenged through the study of Scripture to evaluate their lives as Christian stewards.

This suggested year-round approach is found at <http://faithaflame.lcms.org>.

Current modules available include:

- Living with God's Word
- Living as God's Child
- Living as God's Family
- Living as a Leader

Pillar Two: Provide an annual stewardship commitment process for mission and ministry.

Annual stewardship programs help congregations encourage stewarding disciples to commit to use all of the resources God entrusts to them for His purposes. A commitment process built on the Word of God helps members grow in their ability to manage time, talents, abilities and finances for God's purposes.

For example, a study of United States churches revealed that they ask for money in three different ways. Churches that take offerings and have no financial stewardship process have members who give an average of 1.5 percent of their income to support their church. Churches that ask members to make a pledge have members who give an average of 2.9 percent of their income to their church. Churches that ask members to give a percentage of their income receive an average of 4.6 percent.

The suggested annual stewardship program with a commitment process is *Consecrated Stewards*. Find out more at www.lcef.org.

Pillar Three: Provide a regular financial-management course for all members.

Research suggests that 70 percent of citizens of the United States are burdened by excessive debt. Church members do not escape this statistic. Congregations can assist all members to better manage the money God entrusts to them by providing

a financial-management course. As one author suggests, “If we are not willing to teach ourselves and our fellow believers how to manage our lives for the Savior, the sinful world is more than willing to teach its brand of self-centered living.”

Thrivent Financial for Lutherans, Ron Chewning, Good \$ense, Financial Peace University, Crown Ministries and others provide financial-management courses that can be evaluated for use in the congregation.

Pillar Four: Provide a *Lifetime Plan for Giving* for all members.

Congregations can help members to plan for a lifetime of giving. The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod Foundation provides help in this area in its *Transfer the Blessings* process. Learn more at www.lcmsfoundation.org.

Pillar Five: Provide “over and above” opportunities for extending ministry.

Capital campaigns are beneficial for two reasons. Because the focus is on stewardship, members grow in their understanding of Christian stewardship through the study of Holy Scripture. In addition, through a successful campaign, needed funds are made available for mission and ministry.

The suggested resource for capital campaigns is the Lutheran Church Extension Fund. Read more about LCEF Capital Funding Services at www.lcef.org.

Resources

Resources to assist congregations in implementing the five pillars listed here can be found at <http://faithaflame.lcms.org> and at www.lcms.org/stewardship.

Check out the *Stewardship Primer* and *Guidelines for Christian Stewards*. The *Stewardship Primer* focuses on the basics of Christian stewardship and is helpful as a discussion piece for steward leaders. *Guidelines for Christian Stewards* is a helpful tool for teaching members what it means to be a faithful Christian steward. Both resources can be found at <http://faithaflame.lcms.org>.

Check out the LCMS Online Store for Additional Stewardship Resources ■ www.lcms.org

Access the LCMS Online Store via www.lcms.org and click on the “Resources” tab. The Online Store icon is in the lower right corner of the “Resources” menu.

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StewardCAST is a monthly stewardship resource provided by Stewardship Ministry of The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod. Rev. Wayne J. Knolhoff is the director of Stewardship Ministry. He can be reached at wayne.knolhoff@lcms.org

DISCLAIMER STATEMENT

Part of the mission of Stewardship Ministry in The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is networking resources for our partners in Christ’s service. All resources on our website with stock numbers beginning with “S” are resources published by Concordia Publishing House (CPH) and have passed doctrinal review. Additional resources are recommended from time to time with the confidence that our professional church workers are trained to discern what is useful and proper for Lutheran churches and schools.
