

# Your Stewardship Toolkit for March 2020!

*March's theme: Steward your soul for a fuller life*

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*If you want the free Toolkit sent directly to your inbox every month. [Just drop me an email.](#)*

Good, thoughtful, consistent communication, education and action can help your congregation develop a healthy culture of stewardship and generosity. This Toolkit can help get you there!

The resources of this Toolkit are most effective when used to support a monthly emphasis about a different aspect of stewardship. Exploring the theme, “Steward your soul for a fuller life,” you could use the newsletter article, snippets and resource links below to plan bible studies, temple talks, a preaching series and other activities.

Here’s what you’ll find:

**-Stewardship Snippets:** Put a monthly themed “Stewardship Snippet” every week in your Sunday bulletin! It’s a quote from the week’s Revised Common Lectionary lessons, followed by a brief reflection. Just cut and paste!

**-Newsletter Article:** Publish something in your newsletter every month on stewardship and faith, or post it on your website. Keep your people thinking about stewardship. Just cut and paste!

**-Links to Resources:** You’ll find links to resources on the Web:

- **The “think it” resource** – Something thoughtful and insightful to get your mind turning and your soul fired up. Share it with your leadership, or use it for a temple talk.
- **The “teach it” resource** – Your folks ought to prayerfully and faithfully wrestle with some of stewardship’s biblical, theological and discipleship issues.
- **The “do it” resource** – Talk, as they say, is cheap, so put your stewardship efforts into action.
- **The “preach it” resource** – Check out the weekly Lectionary Reflection written by Lower Susquehanna Synod pastor and synod staff person Sharron Blezard.

**-General Resource Websites:** – These are places you can go for great ideas to jump start your stewardship ministry!

## Stewardship Snippets

*Copy and paste into your bulletin!*

*Source: Rob Blezard.*

### *Stewardship Snippet*

**March 1, 2020** (First Sunday in Lent)

**Luke 14:11** - Jesus said to him, "Away with you, Satan! For it is written, 'Worship the Lord your God, and serve him only.'"

*Even after 40 days of fasting in the wilderness, Jesus is able to resist Satan's wiles by keeping a laser-sharp focus on what truly matters. Likewise, by stewarding our souls with intention, we connect deeply with God in ways that strengthen and equip us to follow Jesus.*

### *Stewardship Snippet*

**March 8, 2020** (Second Sunday in Lent)

**Psalm 121:1,2** - I lift up my eyes to the hills—from where will my help come? My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth.

*How does one steward the soul? Psalm 121 reminds us where our help comes from—the LORD. Today's story of Abraham teaches us how to respond in faith, and the story of Nicodemus about asking questions and growing in faith.*

### *Stewardship Snippet*

**March 15, 2020** – (Third Sunday in Lent)

**John 4:15** - The woman said to Jesus, "Sir, give me this water, so that I may never be thirsty or have to keep coming here to draw water."

*Jesus tells the Samaritan woman, "The water that I will give will become in them a spring of water gushing up to eternal life" (John 4:14b). Watering your soul with Christ's living water is good stewardship indeed!*

### *Stewardship Snippet*

**March 22, 2020** (Fourth Sunday in Lent)

**John 9:38** - He said, "Lord, I believe." And he worshiped him.

Stewarding your soul may mean responding as the blind man in this week's gospel lesson. Simply open your eyes to the experience of Jesus and his amazing love and mercy.

### *Stewardship Snippet*

**March 29, 2020** (Fifth Sunday in Lent)

**Romans 8:6** - *To set the mind on the flesh is death, but to set the mind on the Spirit is life and peace.*

Sometimes stewarding the soul is as simple as "setting your mind the Spirit," leaning into our faith and taking steps toward life and peace.

## Newsletter article

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FEBRUARY 2020

## Steward your soul for a fuller life

*Jesus teaches, "What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?" –Mark 8:36, 37 (NIV)*

Instead of the superficial "How's it going?" a wise colleague asks friends, "How is your soul?"

The question requires effort. To answer it I must plunge deep inside – below the constantly churning waters of everyday joys, hopes, ambitions, desires, anxieties and disappointments. These are so strong, especially our desires and ambitions, that if we are not careful they can absorb all our time and energy.

Jesus repeatedly warns us not to let our desires and our worries overwhelm us, keeping us from paying attention to the soul. Our soul is where we connect with God, the source of our greatest strength and truest identity. Without attention, our soul can wither like a plant without water. As with all the treasures God has given us, we must be stewards of our souls.

The mystics of old and modern prophets (such as Richard Rohr, Marjorie Thompson, and Howard Thurman) teach us to employ prayer, holy silence, and other spiritual disciplines to tend our souls and keep worldly worries and desires from drowning us.

This month, begin a daily practice of caring for your soul. You might begin with five minutes of spoken prayer followed by five minutes of silence. Or reflect deeply on a Scripture passage. Or try prayerful yoga. (Your pastor might be able to give you some resources or ideas.)

With a little practice and attention, you can become stronger, more centered, and more spiritually resilient.

How is your soul?

*--Rob Blezard*

*Copyright © 2020, Rev. Robert Blezard. Pastor Blezard serves as an assistant to the bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod and works as content editor for [www.stewardshipoflife.org](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org). He blogs at [www.thestewardshipguy.com](http://www.thestewardshipguy.com).*

## Links to resources

### The “think it” resource

[\*Care for the Soul\*](#) – Thomas Moore energized the faith world with his bestselling *Care for the Soul: Guide for Cultivating Depth and Sacredness in Everyday Life* (HarperCollins, 1992). In this article in *Psychology Today*, Moore explains how and why we should pay attention to our soul. (It may inspire you to get hold of the book, which is an *excellent* resource!)

(<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/articles/199305/care-the-soul>)

### The “teach it” resource

[\*Eight life-giving ways to care for your soul\*](#) – Your small group, Sunday school class, Christian ed forum or other gathering can learn together some prayerful techniques that will help care for your soul. This article from Crosswalk.com has some simple ideas that people can begin practicing right away.

(<https://www.crosswalk.com/faith/spiritual-life/life-giving-ways-to-care-for-your-soul.html>)

### The “do it” resource

[\*Spirituality & Practice website\*](#) – Since 2006 Frederic and Mary Ann Brussat have curated this amazing website that is deeply spiritual and widely resourceful, drawing soul-refreshing materials from around the world and across the faith spectrum. So much to see! Where to begin? Look for “Start here” at the bottom of the home page.

(<https://www.spiritualityandpractice.com/>)

### The “preach it” resource

[\*Weekly Lectionary Stewardship Reflection\*](#). Sharron Bleazard, Lower Susquehanna Synod assistant to the bishop and pastor, looks at stewardship implications in the week’s Revised Common Lectionary lessons. ([www.stewardshipoflife.org](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org))

[\*Sermons about soul\*](#) – No matter your denominational leanings, Sermon Central has a “soul sermon” for you. Peruse their archive of sermons for ideas and inspiration.

(<https://www.sermoncentral.com/sermons/sermons-about-soul/>)

## General Stewardship Resource Websites

[\*Stewardship of Life Institute\*](#) – Headquartered at United Lutheran Seminary, this site has a trove of resources in areas of congregational and personal stewardship. ([www.stewardshipoflife.org](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org))

[\*ELCA Stewardship Resources\*](#) – Our denomination’s deep well of materials. ([www.elca.org/stewardship](http://www.elca.org/stewardship))

[\*Center for Stewardship Leaders\*](#) – Luther Seminary’s excellent website. ([faithlead.luthersem.edu/stewardship/](http://faithlead.luthersem.edu/stewardship/))

[\*The ELCA Foundation\*](#) a ministry of our denomination. ([www.elca.org/give/elca-foundation](http://www.elca.org/give/elca-foundation))

[\*Lower Susquehanna Synod Stewardship\*](#) – Selected free or low-cost resources. ([lss-elca.org/stewardship](http://lss-elca.org/stewardship))

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