

Your Stewardship Toolkit for March 2021!

February's theme: **Lent: Time To Go the Second Mile**

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*If you want the free Toolkit sent directly to your inbox every month, [just drop me an email](#).
Feel free to forward it to colleagues who might find it useful.*

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 this month's theme, "Lent: Time To Go the Second Mile," your congregation might not only share the newsletter article and snippets but also use the resource links below to plan Bible studies, temple talks, a preaching series or other activities.

Here's what you'll find in the Toolkit:

-Snippets: Cut and paste a monthly themed "Stewardship Snippet" in every Sunday bulletin! It's a quote from the week's Revised Common Lectionary lessons, followed by a brief reflection.

-Newsletter Article: Cut and paste an article on stewardship every month in your newsletter.

-Links to Resources: You'll find URLs to resources on the Web to help you explore this month's theme.

-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.

Third Sunday in Lent, March 7, 2021

"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, or male or female slave, or ox, or donkey, or anything that belongs to your neighbor. – Exodus 20:17

In the last five commandments, God commands what **not** to do, expecting us **to do** the opposite in grateful response to divine abundance. Instead of coveting what others have, we are to cultivate a spirit of generosity that helps us love and serve our neighbors—to go the second mile.

Fourth Sunday in Lent, March 14, 2021

"For we are what he has made us, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared

beforehand to be our way of life.” – Ephesians 2:10

We have been created to love God and neighbor and to live a life marked by good works and radical generosity. During the season of Lent we are reminded to devote our time and resources to go the second mile for the sake of the good news.

Fifth Sunday in Lent, March 21, 2021

“Very truly, I tell you, unless a grain of wheat falls into the earth and dies, it remains just a single grain; but if it dies, it bears much fruit.” – John 12:24

In this week’s gospel Jesus speaks about his coming death and outlines what it means to truly follow him. Like Jesus, we are called to go the second mile, to put aside self-interest for the sake of the gospel and serve God and neighbor willingly.

Palm/Passion Sunday, March 28, 2021

“While [Jesus] was at home in Bethany in the house of Simon the leper, as he sat at the table, a woman came with an alabaster jar of very costly ointment of nard, and she broke open the jar and poured the ointment on his head.” – Mark 14:3

Today we enter Holy Week and walk the road with Jesus to the cross. The gospel lesson opens with a story of second-mile generosity. The unnamed woman anoints Jesus with a costly perfume. While others criticize her wastefulness, Jesus praises her lavish gift and pure intent. What have you to bring to Jesus?

March 2021 newsletter article (289 words)

Select the article below, or one of more than four dozen in the [Toolkit Newsletter Article Archive](#). Reprint permission is granted for local congregational use. Just copy and paste into your newsletter! Please include the copyright notice. Other uses please inquire: editor@stewardshipoflife.org.

Lent: Time to go the second mile

“If any of your kin fall into difficulty and become dependent on you, you shall support them.” - Leviticus 25:35a

Thanks to vaccines, we can expect an end to the pandemic this year, but the economic recovery will linger much longer. Our government reports that half the families in our nation lost income in 2020, with many of them forced into desperate poverty.

Billions of dollars in federal assistance and a moratorium on evictions have helped ease the pain, but many are suffering. The pandemic’s economic victims may include you, your family members, and people in your community or congregation.

Lent has begun, but it’s not too late to adopt a discipline that may simultaneously help bring you closer to God, increase your faith and help your neighbor. Pray for guidance on how best to respond to the need. Here are some ideas:

- Pray. Set aside time each day to talk and listen to God.
- If you can afford to make a financial contribution, give sacrificially to a ministry that’s helping people get by. A food pantry, soup kitchen, homeless shelter, clothing closet. Can you make a weekly donation through Lent, and beyond?
- If you cannot afford to make a financial contribution, can you volunteer? Are there special talents – writing, online communications, organizing, fund-raising, etc. – that you might be able to donate?
- In your congregation, start or expand a helping ministry. Alternatively, lead your church to become a ministry that’s already doing a good job.
- Learn about the needs in your congregation and community, and then educate others.
- Advocate on issues of poverty and economic justice.

The pandemic’s bruising effects will take years to heal. As God’s people, we can help by praying, serving and supporting those in need.

-Rob Blezard

Copyright © 2021, Rev. Robert Blezard. Pastor Blezard serves as pastor of St. Paul Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, MD, and works as content editor for www.stewardshipoflife.org. He blogs at www.thestewardshipguy.com.

Links to resources

[The human costs of the pandemic](https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-human-costs-of-the-pandemic-is-it-time-to-prioritize-well-being/) – The Brookings Institution explores the emotional costs of the pandemic and finds that the poor are suffering most. What might happen if well-being were factored into economic models and public policy priorities?

<https://www.brookings.edu/research/the-human-costs-of-the-pandemic-is-it-time-to-prioritize-well-being/>

[Serving a Wounded World: A Christian Call to Reflection and Action During COVID-19 and Beyond](http://press.vatican.va/content/dam/salastampa/it/bollettino/documentazione-linkata/ServingWoundedWorld_.pdf) – The Roman Catholic Church and the World Council of Churches have jointly issued a brilliant 24-page paper calling on God’s people to help in the pandemic. Covid-19 has, the paper says, revealed in stark display humanity’s sins, including racism, oppression, poverty and the gap between rich and poor. A thoughtful essay.

http://press.vatican.va/content/dam/salastampa/it/bollettino/documentazione-linkata/ServingWoundedWorld_.pdf

[Covid-19 has left millions of Americans without enough food](https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2020/08/05/covid-19-has-led-surge-child-hunger-heres-how-we-can-help-column/5580099002/) – This column in *USA Today* explores the pandemic’s impact on families, how charities are struggling to keep up, and how we can help. Good information with lots of links to explore further.

<https://www.usatoday.com/story/opinion/2020/08/05/covid-19-has-led-surge-child-hunger-heres-how-we-can-help-column/5580099002/>

[The hunger virus: How Covid-19 is fueling hunger in a hungry world](https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/research-publications/hunger-virus-how-covid-19-fueling-hunger-hungry-world/) – Oxfam gives us the helicopter view of how the pandemic is affecting families across the globe. Become informed and get active.

<https://www.oxfamamerica.org/explore/research-publications/hunger-virus-how-covid-19-fueling-hunger-hungry-world/>

[Loving Your Neighbor in a Pandemic: A Workbook](https://www.globalministries.org/loving_your_neighbor_in_the_covid_19_pandemic_a_workbook)– Explore and develop a faithful action plan with this bible-based resource from Global Ministries, a partnership of the Disciples of Christ and the United Church of Christ.

https://www.globalministries.org/loving_your_neighbor_in_the_covid_19_pandemic_a_workbook

General Stewardship Resource Websites

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

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

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

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

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