

Your Stewardship Toolkit for February 2022!

February's theme: *Love Yourself as Your Neighbor*



Rev. Rob Blezard, Web Editor

The Stewardship of Life Institute

editor@stewardshipoflife.org

Check out my website: thestewardshipguy.com

Good, thoughtful, consistent communication, education and action will help your congregation develop a healthy culture of stewardship and generosity. This kit is designed to help get you there!

You can use the resources of this kit by themselves to educate and encourage stewardship, but they would be more effective as a monthly emphasis that lifted up a different aspect of stewardship. You could plan bible studies, temple talks, a preaching series, and other activities.

Here's what you'll find below:

-Stewardship Snippets: Put a "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!

-General Resource Websites: These are places you can go for inspiration and great stewardship ideas!

Stewardship Snippets

Copy and paste into your bulletin!

Source: Rob Blezard

Stewardship Snippet

Feb. 6, 2022 (5th Sunday after the Epiphany, Year C)

Luke 5:5,6 –Simon answered Jesus, "Master, we have worked all night long but have caught nothing. Yet if you say so, I will let down the nets." When they had done this, they caught so many fish that their nets were beginning to break.

Jesus's instructions make no sense to Simon, but following them leads him to make an enormous catch of fish. Steward/disciples often find that God's guidance leads to greater abundance. When have you seen this in your life?

Stewardship Snippet

Feb. 13, 2022 (6th Sunday after the Epiphany, Year C)

Luke 6:20 –Then Jesus looked up at his disciples and said: "Blessed are you who are poor, for yours is the kingdom of God."

Why are the poor "blessed" and entranced into the kingdom of God? Emphasizing how wealth can be an obstacle to discipleship, Luke's gospel challenges us to rethink our relationship to money. What does this passage say to you?

Stewardship Snippet

Feb. 20, 2022 (7th Sunday after the Epiphany, Year C)

Genesis 45:15 – And Joseph kissed all his brothers and wept upon them; and after that his brothers talked with him.

Meeting his brothers years after they had sold him into slavery, Joseph now greets them with love, forgiveness, assistance and restoration. A great model for loving relationships! What loving relationships need your forgiveness and restoration?

Stewardship Snippet

Feb. 27, 2022 (Transfiguration Sunday, Year C)

2 Corinthians 3:17 –Now the Lord is the Spirit, and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is freedom. *God's path is all about freedom. Steward/disciples find that freedom when we love God with all our being and our neighbor as ourselves! Our faith aligns us with God's abundance and power. Freedom!*

February 2022 Newsletter article (328 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.com.

Love Yourself as Your Neighbor

Jesus said, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind. This is the greatest and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself." –Matthew 22:37-39

Does this happen to you? When I make a mistake or do something dumb, I mentally beat myself up. But when OTHER people mess up, I'm Mr. Understanding and Forgiveness.

Clearly, I've got work to do, but doesn't everyone struggle to balance love of neighbor and love of self? If we are to be good stewards of our lives, we **have** to get this right. That's the genius of the second-

greatest commandment – that we have to love our neighbor AND ourselves if we are to become the people God wants us to become and have the lives God wants us to have.

This “month of love” provides an opportunity to focus on loving ourselves, which is too often the forgotten side of the “love thy neighbor and self” equation.

We live in a culture of criticism, so many of us fall into the trap of downplaying and denigrating ourselves, leaving us restless, discontent, depressed, empty, forever searching.

The secret is learning to love ourselves so we can love everyone and everything else, too. Here are some ideas.

- Pray! Ask God to help and guide you (Psalm 139:23-24).
- Pray! Ask God for friends who will walk with you (Proverbs 17:17).
- Remember that nothing can separate us from God’s unconditional love (Romans 8:38-39).
- Strive to treat yourself with the tenderness and care you want to give others (Luke 6:31).
- Find a counselor who can help you work through past hurts and ingrained ways of thinking.

It may be hard to walk at first, but the prayerful path of greater self-love will enrich your life, open you to new people and experiences, and help you truly to follow Jesus’ second greatest commandment: Love your neighbor as yourself.

--*Rob Blezard*

Copyright © 2022, Rev. Robert Blezard. Pastor Blezard serves as pastor of St. Paul’s Lutheran Church, Aberdeen, MD, and works as content editor for www.stewardshipoflife.org. He blogs at www.thestewardshipguy.com.

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)

[The Episcopal Network for Stewardship](http://www.tens.org/) – Solid resources! (www.tens.org/).

-end-