

Your Stewardship Toolkit for March 2022!

This month's theme: **Ash Wednesday Stewardship**

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Good, thoughtful, consistent communication, education and action can help develop a healthy culture of stewardship and generosity in your congregation. 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 about a different aspect of stewardship. You could plan bible studies, temple talks, a preaching series, and other activities.

This month's emphasis is **Ash Wednesday stewardship**

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 great ideas!

Stewardship Snippets

Copy and paste into your bulletin!

Source: Rob Blezard

Stewardship Snippet

March 6, 2022 (1st Sunday in Lent, Year C)

Luke 4:3 –The devil said to Jesus, "If you are the Son of God, command this stone to become a loaf of bread." Jesus answered him, "It is written, 'One does not live by bread alone.'"

Our consumer culture tells us again and again that our happiness is measured in how many of our wants we can fulfill. Jesus resists temptation by remembering that we live "by every word that comes from the mouth of God" (Matthew 4:4b).

Stewardship Snippet

March 13, 2022 (2nd Sunday in Lent, Year C)

Psalms 27:1 –The LORD is my light and my salvation; whom shall I fear? The LORD is the stronghold of my life; of whom shall I be afraid?

As the news media, ad execs, and politicians know well, fear is the great motivator of people, but a negative one. Trusting in God's power and providence, steward/disciples tap into a better source of motivation.

Stewardship Snippet

March 20, 2022 (3rd Sunday in Lent, Year C)

Isaiah 55:2—Why do you spend your money for that which is not bread, and your labor for that which does not satisfy? Listen carefully to me, and eat what is good, and delight yourselves in rich food. *Stewardship is about making wise choices—choices that promote health, wellbeing, and faithful living. Isaiah asks the right questions and gives good advice.*

Stewardship Snippet

March 27, 2022 (4th Sunday in Lent, Year C)

2 Corinthians 5:17 —So if anyone is in Christ, there is a new creation: everything old has passed away; see, everything has become new! *The way a bubbling spring renews and refreshes a streambed, so the Holy Spirit continually renews our souls. Relax and be continually renewed in Christ.*

Newsletter article

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Ash Wednesday stewardship

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.” -*Evangelical Lutheran Worship*, p. 254

With these ancient words from Genesis 3:19 and the swipe of a dirty thumb across our foreheads, Ash Wednesday propels us into Lent with the proper context to understand our lives as stewards of the riches God entrusts to us.

The essential teaching of Ash Wednesday – that we are just mortals, after all – crushes our ego, dispels our pretensions, and drives us deep into God's mysteries. Why are we here? What are our lives all about? What's *really* important? Pray over these questions and profound insights emerge.

We are dust. Yes, but we are *God's* dust. Our body consists of trillions of atoms, each a speck of “dust” created by of God, billions of years ago. God put us together from the stuff of the universe.

- Therefore, we are quite literally “earthy” beings, made of the same material as air, water, soil and stone. Part of creation, we work to preserve and sustain God's creation for future generations.
- Therefore, we revere and care for our bodies through healthy living.

We are breath. We are not *only* dust. Genesis 2:7 describes us as “dust” into which God has “breathed the Holy breath of life.” Our lives are the breath of God in our dust.

- Therefore, every breath we take is holy, a prayer that whispers God’s praise.
- Therefore, we look to God to align our lives with God’s holy reality that arcs towards peace, love, joy, justice, and truth.

Our time is brief. The “dust” that is us *will* return to the earth. We have a finite number of minutes.

- Therefore, every hour, every second is sacred. There is not a single moment one to waste. We spend our time wisely, carefully, prayerfully.
- Therefore, we do not cling to our possessions, knowing that we will leave it all behind.
- Therefore, we nourish our lives with lasting treasures – relationships, trust, love, joy, service, generosity, and harmony.

This Lent spend time in prayer, with openness and honesty. See how God will transforming you into the person you were created to be. Reflect each day on Ash Wednesday. “Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

--*Rob Blezard*

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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/).

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