

Speaking of Stewardship

Making Christ Known—June/July 2004



Dr. Ed Kruse, ELCA Shared
Stewardship Staff, CSS
Phone: 816.373.5116
Fax: 816.373.5901
E-mail: edkruse2@cs.com

Mr. Tim Ternes, Mission
Interpreter Coordinator, CSS
913-269-0889
tternes@kc.rr.com

Betsy Reese, Newsletter editor
E-mail: BetsyReese@att.net

Mission Interpreter/ Stewardship Team

AM 1: Rev. Ron Roberts
785-734-2531

AM 3: Rev. Larry Cross
785-546-2244

AM 4: Mr. Levi Kickhaefer
785-238-7400

AM 5: Rev. Mark Kreemer
316-524-3401

AM 6: Rev. Elwyn Luber
785-272-5302

AM 7: Mr. Keith Mundy
913-897-0793

Rev. Rod Nygren
816-331-5465

AM 8: Rev. Dan Friberg
417-881-2192

AM 9: Rev. John Davis
573-346-7300

AM 10: Rev. Dan Barwinski
314-739-3222

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Summer: It Sounds Like Stewardship

The Sundays after Pentecost begin this month. Many consider the long "green season" to be just that: long. And some call it ordinary time. But the calendar of the church year is structured in a very intentional way. From Advent through Holy Trinity we experience what God has done for us. Then the rest of the year we focus on increasing faith, our response to God's good gifts and our ministry to others. Doesn't sound very ordinary, does it?

In June, most people are thinking about vacations at the lake, sparklers, hot dogs on the grill, and homemade ice cream, but stewardship teams know it is not too early to be thinking about:

Celebrating the Delicious Freedom of God's Abundance!

Here are some new resources for your planning:

- ◇ **Giving: Growing Joyful Stewards** [new stewardship magazine]. \$4.00 plus shipping.
- ◇ **How to Improve Financial Stewardship : A Guide for Congregations.** \$4.95. [In Spanish: **Como Mejorar la Administracion de Recursos.**]
- ◇ New Consecration Sunday. \$24.95 (kit); \$8.50 (book); \$10.50 (guest leader guide).
- ◇ **We Say Yes!** [stewardship program] \$49.99.
- ◇ **Where Your Heart Is** [stewardship program] \$49.95.
- ◇ **The Whys and Hows of Money Leadership: A Workbook for Pastors and Lay Leaders.** \$15.00.
- ◇ **To the Castle: A Musical Stewards.** \$45.00.

To order, call Augsburg Fortress at 800-328-4648 or go online at www.augsburgfortress.org. For more program ideas, visit www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship/started.html

For God so loved the world that He gave His only-begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him shall not perish but have everlasting life. -John 3:16

You are a Minister ...
SERVE!

You are Called ...
ANSWER!

You are Empowered ...
BE STRONG!

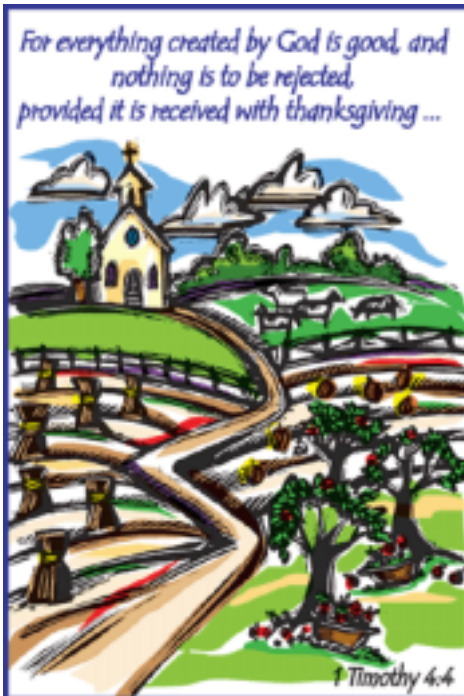
You are Loved ...
BE SECURE!

You are Led ...
BE CONFIDENT!

You are Protected ...
BE COURAGEOUS!

You are a Steward ...
BE FAITHFUL!

You are Gifted ...
USE YOUR GIFT!



Why keep it a secret what you are doing in your congregation? We are looking for your stewardship stories and successful programs for this column. Please share them with Betsy Reese, BetsyReese@att.net.

A Gift For Me?

(Fourth in a Series on Spiritual Gifts)

God has given you two important gifts. The first is the gift of faith in Jesus Christ, His work of redemption, and the forgiveness of sins. The second is the gift of one or more special abilities to be used to glorify God and build up the body of Christ. Many Christians are uncertain about the subject of spiritual gifts. The Lutheran Confessions make almost no mention of them, but there is a growing interest in the subject and the ELCA has a spiritual gifts inventory available on its website (http://www.elca.org/dcm/evangelism/assessments/assess4_spiritgifts.ghtml).

Each month we will explore some of the gifts. They are in no specific order because no gift is more important than another. Last month faith, knowledge, and leadership were featured.

Counseling – This gift uses faith to listen so that others can share and then learn to order their lives. It also provides guidance in developing coping skills that relieve pain, stress, anxiety and discomfort. Then they too can use their God-given gifts more effectively. This gift renews the gifts of others and provides the gifted one with a concrete way of helping others. (John 4:1-42; Acts 14:21-22; Romans 12:6-8; 2 Corinthians 1:3-7; 1 Thessalonians 2:11; 1 Thessalonians 5:14; 1 Timothy 5:1)

Speaking in Tongues – This is one of the “spectacular” gifts, a common example people think of when you talk about spiritual gifts. Speaking in tongues is used to speak humanly unintelligible messages of God in a language that neither the speaker nor the audience has ever learned but that lifts up others to new spiritual awareness. This gift is to be used only when the speaker is in the presence of someone who has the gift of interpretation, so that your message can be understood. (1 Corinthians 12:10, 28-30; 1 Corinthians 14:4-6, 13-19, 26-28; Acts 2:1-13; Acts 10:44-48; Acts 19:1-7; Mark 16:17; Romans 8:26-27)

Interpretation of Tongues - This is the only gift that is a prerequisite for another gift to be exercised. Faith aids in explaining the meaning to others of those messages that are spoken in tongues. This gift clarifies the mystery of godliness and gives all glory to God. When others hear the spiritual message given by God through interpretation, their faith will be strengthened and they will increase their service to the glory of God. (1 Corinthians 12:10, 30; 1 Corinthians 14:13; 1 Corinthians 14:26-28)

Be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise, making the most of the time.

Ephesians 5:15-16