

You don't have to be a kid to appreciate Mr. Rogers' calm optimism in times like these. *"When I was a boy,"* he once said in an interview, *"and I would see scary things in the news, my mother would say to me, 'Look for the helpers. You will always find people who are helping.'"*

It's been heartwarming to see the endless ways people have been helping others – neighbors, medical experts, store owners, congregants – many from their own home. Despite the vulnerable boat we all find ourselves in, people are still generous. People are still helping. People still want to help.

Which is why this is the perfect time to consider how your ministry site is approaching stewardship. How are you and your ministry site accepting mission support? Is your approach to assume that people will send in their offerings, or have you overtly asked? Does your community know the financial needs of the church, and more importantly, how the support is allocated? What ministries are most affected during this pandemic, and how can your community support them? How are you helping each other, your community, your most vulnerable?

In times of crisis, people want to help. Making it easiest to do so from the comfort of home is a new normal, and this is the perfect time to embrace it.

#### **Online giving:**

The ELCA has partnered with two online platforms: [Tith.ly](#) and [Vanco](#). Both have online tutorials and introductions available. These of course are only two of the any available platforms. Others include: [GivingFuel](#); [PushPay](#); [Faithlife Giving](#), [USAePay](#) and [Generis](#), for example.

#### **Thanks in giving:**

A rule that was always enforced in my home growing up was that if I wanted to keep a gift given to me, I had to first write and send a thank-you card to the giver. Now that we're home, why not use this time to at least e-mail, if not write to, faithful stewards in your community?

#### **Make it easy:**

Gone are the days where people take the initiative to send a cancelled check to church to set up recurring donations. Donors are most likely to not only give if it's easy, but if they are *explicitly* asked. Making it as easy as possible to give is key to a seamless, and often more generous, transaction. Include links and reminders to give where ever you can: on your website, on your Facebook/Instagram/Twitter page, in your newsletter, in the signature of your e-mails, your bulletin, in your online presence. Look at all your publicity/website/publications as if you were a first-time guest and ask yourself: is financially supporting this ministry intuitive and easy? Are the needs of the ministry clearly stated? How will I know where my gift is going/being used?

#### **No need to reinvent the wheel:**

Speaking of helpers, many Christian websites have offered their services free-of-charge in light of COVID-19. Looking for graphics? Check out [Sunday Social](#) or [Creation Swap](#). Looking for tutorials? Check out the ELCA's recently published [StewardCast](#). Looking for Lutheran articles on the topic? Check out [the faith+leader](#) website.

#### **Ask for help:**

We're all in this together. If you'd like someone to reflectively listen, or need help think up ideas for your unique context, please don't hesitate to reach out to us. Help us help you!