

Whole-Life Stewardship and Stewardship Summary

A stewardship definition commonly used throughout The Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod is this: “Christian stewardship is the free and joyous activity of the child of God and God’s family, the church, in managing all of life and life’s resources for God’s purposes.”

God’s stewards:

- By virtue of creation, and their re-creation in Holy Baptism, belong to the Lord [Gen. 1:1; Is. 43:1-31; Rom. 6:1-11; 2 Cor. 5:14-17; Eph. 2:8-10].

God makes us His stewards and we remind each other that we are His new creation each day. The Lord is the Source of all stewardship and includes all areas of life.

- Have been entrusted with life and life’s resources and given the privilege of responsibly and joyfully managing them for Him [Gen. 2:15; Ps. 24:1; Ps. 89:11; 1 Chron. 29:1-20; 2 Cor. 8:1-7; Luke 12:41-48; 1 Tim. 6:17-19].

We encourage proper management of all life’s resources for God’s purposes. We promote Biblical stewardship approaches that encourage cheerful, firstfruit, proportionate living and giving in all of life. We receive and use God’s gifts with thanksgiving.

- Rejoice in and live out of what the Lord has declared them to be through the cross—saints. Stewards also recognize that they are sinners who fight sin and its consequences daily [Eph. 4:22-24; Col. 3:5-17; Rom. 7:21-25; 1 John 3:1-2; 1 Peter 2:9-10].

We recognize that the potential for great good or evil lies in how stewardship is communicated, and in properly distinguishing between Law and Gospel. We will not appeal to our selfish interests, but encourage people to give based on faith active in love.

- Realize that their lives of stewardship are personal responses to God, lived out within the community of faith to benefit the whole world [Rom. 12:4-5; 1 Cor. 12:12-13; 1 Peter 4:10; 2 Cor. 8:13-14; Gal. 6:7-10].

We emphasize the privilege and accountability of having specific gifts to honor the Lord and bless others—as members of the body of Christ in kingdom work with others. God showers blessings on those who manage His gifts wisely and well for the common good [Luke 6:38].

- Recognize that God’s stewards are *in* the world, but not *of* the world [Rom. 12:2; John 17:15-18; John 20:21-23; Gen. 12:1-3; John 16:33].

The Gospel transforms stewards’ attitudes about the world, the decisions they make and their activities, and is not limited only to “church-related” projects and activities.

- Know that their stewardship flows out of God’s act of love for them in Christ, which empowers them, in turn, to love others in acts of Christ-like love [1 John 4:11, 19; 1 John 3:16-18; John 13:34-35; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Gal. 5:6b].

We will use only those approaches, strategies and methods that reflect the Gospel and build up the stewards’ faith active in love. We will emphasize God’s love in Christ as the basis and motivation for Christian stewardship.

- Recognize that their stewardship involves a Gospel-powered style of life that is demonstrated in servanthood in all arenas of life [Phil. 2:5-8; Matt. 20:26b-28; Matt. 25:31-46; John 13:3-5, 15-17].

Service done for the benefit of the community and world also is Christian stewardship. Stewards adopt the attitude of a servant in relationships with others and serve them with personal acts of compassion and service, as well as with financial gifts.

- Live intentionally in the light of the Lord’s eternal purpose while being firmly committed to His rule in the here and now [Matt. 6:19-21; 1 Tim. 6:17-19; Phil. 3:12-14, 20; 2 Peter 3:11-12a; Rev. 14:13].

What stewards decide to do or leave undone has eternal consequences. They pursue good planning for the present and future, and rejoice in knowing that what they do has lasting benefits. Christian stewards extend God’s kingdom here and now, as well as the future.