

## Contemplating Stewardship<sup>1</sup> for NL

Just copy and paste into your bulletin!

Source: EaND Stewardship Team

Put "Contemplating Stewardship" in your Sunday bulletin every week! A brief reflection on stewardship following the Revised Common Lectionary readings will keep the stewardship conversation vibrant. Just cut and paste!

### Contemplating Stewardship: Called by Name

April 1<sup>st</sup>, 2018 (Resurrection of Our Lord, "Resurrection")

*"Jesus said to her, 'Mary.' She turned toward him and cried out in Aramaic, 'Rabboni!' (which means Teacher)." -John 20:16*

Mary Magdalene is confused. She finds the empty tomb and thinks the body has been stolen. She tells the disciples and they are confused because they did not understand that Jesus had to rise from the dead. She sees the resurrected Christ and thinks he is the gardener. Her confusion changes in an instant. When does Mary recognize Jesus? **Jesus turns to her and calls her by name, "Mary"**. He calls her by name and she listens! In that moment, her **fear** turns to **hope**, her **weeping** turns to **joy**, and her **confusion** turns to **confession**. I have seen the Lord! Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

You have been called by name! Take this hope, take this joy, and confess Christ's resurrection through the way you love and serve your neighbor. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed!

### Contemplating Stewardship: Giving in God's Sight

April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018 (Second Sunday of Easter, "Thomas")

*"Jesus said, to him, 'Have you believed because you have seen me? Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have come to believe.' " -John 20:29*

We are not unlike Thomas; we want our sight to guide our faith. We need to see it in order to believe it. This is difficult when considering stewardship-- we want to see where our gifts go; we want a return on investment which is tangible and visible. Yet we are called to give and share our gifts and trust God to bear the fruit. We trust each gift, no matter how small, when shared is blessed and honoring to God. Even if we can't see it with our eyes, God is at work in our giving.

### Contemplating Stewardship: God Sees Potential

April 15<sup>th</sup>, 2018 (Third Sunday of Easter, "Paul's Conversion")

*"Now as he was going along and approaching Damascus, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him." -Acts 9:3*

God uses our gifts to love and serve the world. And the best news is, God sees our gifts in the

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<sup>1</sup>Inspired by the "Stewardship Snippet" written by Rev. Rob Blezard, Assistant to the Bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod. Further resources available at <http://www.lss-elca.org/resources/stewardship/>

midst of our weaknesses and sin. Take Paul-- where some would see a persecutor of the church, God sees instead untapped leadership potential. All he needs is a good about-face. Even in our sinfulness and greed, God is working good to transform and lead us into mission and ministry. How might God be redirecting your talents to serve God's church and the world?

### **Contemplating Stewardship: Bring Life**

April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2018 (Fourth Sunday of Easter, "Paul and Silas")

*"But Paul shouted in a loud voice, 'Do not harm yourself, for we are all here.'"* -Acts 16:28  
[Acts 16:16-34]

God uses Paul and Silas' gifts to build the church. In today's story, God uses their gift of perseverance. Even though they are locked in chains, they have faith God is using this situation for good. In the midst of uncertainty and hardship, they bring life and salvation to their jailer. They are able to preach and teach that there is more than one way a person needs to be free. What surprising ways might God be using your gifts to *be* the difference in hard, impossible situations?

### **Contemplating Stewardship: Idols**

April 29<sup>th</sup>, 2018 (Fifth Sunday of Easter, "Paul's Sermon as Athens")

*"While Paul was waiting for them in Athens, he was deeply distressed to see that the city was full of idols."* -Acts 17:16 [Acts 17:16-21]

If the Apostle Paul were to walk into your sanctuary today, would he see a place where Christ was worshipped? Or would he see, like Athens, a "city full of idols"? Our churches are not exempt from the temptation of the rest of our society to treat money as an idol. Do we trust in the abundance of God when we draw up our church budgets? Or do we portray the anxiety and uneasiness of not having enough? If our decisions are dictated by the second, we may have made money into an idol and turned our attention to that which cannot satisfy. God will provide all that we need. May we trust this is so.