

Contemplating Stewardship¹ for RCL

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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: A Question of Generosity

July 1st, 2018 (Proper 8: Sixth Sunday after Pentecost, Year B)

"It is a question of a fair balance, between your present abundance and their need." – 2 Corinthians 8:13-14

Abundance is often a subjective term and the challenge with that is we can easily write it off as being "not about me." But notice that Paul does not let the Corinthians (or us) off that easily. Paul reframes the conversation about abundance, focusing on generosity with what one presently has, as opposed to what one has in comparison to someone else, what one wishes they had, or even what was had in the past. Generosity springs, not from first making sure we have enough, but from where we are presently.

Contemplating Stewardship: A Question of Enough

July 8th, 2018 (Proper 9: Seventh Sunday after Pentecost, Year B)

"My grace is sufficient for you, for power is made perfect in weakness." – 2 Corinthians 12:9

Perhaps part of our lives as faithful stewards is growing into our possibilities as well as our limitations. Paul knows that he could boast about many of his accomplishments and accolades, but he refrains from doing so because he also recognizes the many ways in which he is forced to rely on others and on God. We have big aspirations for who we want to be and yet, we are limited in many ways. But in all things, there is God and there is grace. It is in God's grace that our limitations are enough to accomplish great possibilities.

Contemplating Stewardship: A Question of Trust

July 15th, 2018 (Proper 10: Eighth Sunday after Pentecost, Year B)

"The Lord will give what is good, and our land will yield its increase." – Psalm 85:12

The psalmist states two important truths for us to keep in mind as faithful stewards: God is good and God has created things to carry out specific purposes. Each one relies upon and strengthens the other. If God is good, we can trust that we will be provided for and as we are provided for, we trust that God is good. God created the world out of goodness and for goodness. In this case, the earth will do what the earth was created to do – bring forth life and abundance, testifying to the goodness of God. Likewise, our very lives are testimonies to this good and trustworthy God.

¹Inspired 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/>

Contemplating Stewardship: A Question of Self-Care

July 22nd, 2018 (Proper 11: Ninth Sunday after Pentecost, Year B)

"Come away to a deserted place all by yourselves and rest a while." – Mark 6:31

Much of our conversations around stewardship center around time, talents, and money, specifically focusing on how to use them faithfully and wisely. Mark reminds us, however, that one way we can be good stewards is to practice self-care. An engine without oil or fuel is unable to perform its task. So too, we are unable to carry out the tasks of ministry if we are physically, psychologically, or emotionally tapped out. Part of being a good steward is not only recognizing the needs of others, but also our own need for self-care.

Contemplating Stewardship: A Question of Abundance

July 29th, 2018 (Proper 12: Tenth Sunday after Pentecost, Year B)

"So they gathered them up, and from the fragments of five barley loaves, they filled twelve baskets." – John 6:13

You can imagine the amazement those gathered must have felt when the five loaves and two fish fed the entire crowd. It doesn't make sense. How could such little food feed so many? And how could there possibly be so much left over? Perhaps, the feeding of the 5,000 is a challenge for us to rethink what we consider to be enough. Perhaps, it's an invitation to dig into more imaginative and creative solutions to the perceived problems of scarcity. For we do not worship a God who promises to just eke by. We worship a God of abundance and abundant life.