

“Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers.” Romans 12:9-13.

Dear Christian friends:

November traditionally has been a month in which Christian stewardship is stressed. Stewardship is a faith-based concept. It relates to the relationship between one who is master over and one who is permitted to be a care-giver. Stewardship is what we do with our whole life. It involves all the intricate and numerous relationships that move through our total life and time. It involves all that we have and all that we are.

Faith-based stewardship historically has been witnessed in concrete actions. The first hospitals, first schools, first orphanages, first care homes, first soup kitchens most often were started by people of faith actively living that communal understanding of faith. Those acts were charitable acts. In Canada, the government historically recognized the social good that these faith-based organizations contributed to society. Therefore places like Shepherd King Lutheran can issue a Charitable-tax receipt for donations it receives.

The current government of Canada is proposing to strip away that charitable-tax status from all faith organizations in the up-coming Federal Budget. Faith-based organizations – IE Churches, mosques, temples, synagogues - would no longer be able to issue those charitable donation receipts for a person's income tax. The potential impact will be profound. It will test one's commitment to faith. The social good that faith groups have done will be reduced greatly; passing that work onto government or creating mayhem in our communities.

Christian stewardship is the daily living of the covenant we have received from God in baptism. A true understanding of our baptism leads us to see life and our living anew. Living our baptism authentically can only strengthen and reconcile our stewardship. Holistic stewardship also is the fulfillment of the law of love. God is in the center in the whole event.

Christian men and women in Canada still can be a potent force for social good. We can renew and employ all the spiritual gifts that God's Holy Spirit bestows upon us so that all creation can reap the blessings of God. Our communities can continue to be made better through our actively living the presence of Christ in them.

This month we celebrate All Saints. This festival remembers the baptized who have lived the fullness of their baptism and have received the crown of righteousness. They were stewards on earth and now rest from their labors. We are the saints in training. God's Holy Spirit dwells with us, encouraging us to be the stewards of the creation God destines us for.

Renew the marks of faith, through the daily living event of baptism. Be brought close to God again, by the gift of his grace that saves us through faith.

In Christ forever,
Pastor Kevin.