



THE FAITHFUL STEWARD

What exactly is Christian Stewardship?

At our diocesan Synod, I was asked a number of times for a definition of Christian stewardship. Stewardship is not an abstract concept, but a way of life lived out in:

- ✓ Living and telling the Good News;
- ✓ Sharing God in seeking justice, peace, and the integrity of creation in an interdependent universe;
- ✓ Wisely employing God-given human resources, abilities, and relationships;
- ✓ Sharing the material resources we hold and giving them in service, justice, and compassion;
- ✓ Providing for future generations, sharing in the life, worship, and responsible stewardship of the church and its mission.

Both for the individual and for the community, stewardship is a joyful act for the sake of God's world. It is about using the gifts God has given us to do the work God is calling us to do.

Look for these upcoming Stewardship Events

Spring 2009

A diocesan stewardship education day for clergy and lay people is being planned.

Benefits of Year-Round Stewardship

- **Provides** ongoing opportunities to share the stewardship message with all members of the congregation and invites them to be engaged and involved.
- **Makes** it easy for new members to join in and learn about stewardship at any time.
- **Answers** the question “why give” before answering the question “how much should I give?”
- **Raises** awareness of the many aspects of stewardship: our environment, our time, our talents, and our treasure.

Topics & Tips for Year-Round Stewardship

One way to put year-round stewardship in place in your parish is by creating a calendar that focuses on specific elements of it being featured at key points in the year according to the seasons and the church calendar. **To maintain a year-round focus, you will need a stewardship team in place.**

Stewardship can be presented to all ages and may include the following topics and tips:

Tips for Stewardship of our Time & Talents

- Hold a ministry fair during coffee hour with displays and sign-up sheets for each committee or ministry.
- Encourage people to get involved in their parish family and their community.

Tips for Stewardship of our Environment

- Use environmental themes in sermons.

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- Sponsor projects that will have visible results.
- Hold a yard sale to recycle items and have a “Blessing of the Animals” on St. Francis Day.
- Use stewardship pledge cards and weekly offering envelopes for adults and children printed with stewardship messages.

Tips for Stewardship of our Income

- Include scripturally-based stewardship themes in sermons on a regular basis.
- Use stewardship Bible studies for adults and in Sunday school.

Tips for Stewardship of our Estate

- Invite an expert to speak to your congregation about including charitable giving in their estate plans.
- Mail information about planned giving options to parishioners.

Saying “Thanks!”

One of the most important habits of effective stewardship leaders is giving abundant thanks. The biblical story about the ten lepers who are healed reveals that only one returned and gave thanks. The story indicates that giving thanks, although rare, is important. Not only is the lack of an expression of thanks bad manners, it is bad practice.

I have heard generous givers testify that, compared to all other organizations to which they have contributed money, the church expresses thanks the least. Major gifts have been given and no one, including the priest, has acknowledged the gift.

The people of God are urged to give thanks to God throughout the Bible. In the New Testament, Paul expresses thanks for the people numerous times, such as in *Ephesians 1.16* - “ I do not cease to give thanks for you as I remember you in my prayers.”

Most people expect to be thanked when they do something for someone. The absence of a “thank you” can be misunderstood to mean the effort to contribute was not appreciated or was not wanted.

Reasons to thank:

- ✓ Builds up the body of Christ
- ✓ Brings joy to the giver knowing they are making a difference
- ✓ Helps the giver know that they are part of a community used by God to change lives
- ✓ Names the giver – as a steward of what God has entrusted to them
- ✓ Let’s the giver know how they fit into the fabric of God’s work in the world
- ✓ Assures people that they matter
- ✓ Fosters growth in generosity

Some tips on saying thanks:

- ✓ Write a thank you letter promptly
- ✓ Write from the heart
- ✓ Say thanks in person
- ✓ Say something specific about the gift
- ✓ Just say “thanks”; don’t use it as an opportunity to “sell” or “ask” for another commitment

-Excerpt from Stewardship for the 21st Century

Some thoughts for inclusion
in your weekly parish
bulletin

“Stewardship is not a way of raising money, but rather God’s way of raising people in the likeness of his Son.”

Doug Carter

“Think of us in this way, as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries.”

1 Corinthians 4:1

“The measure of a life is not its duration, but its donation”

Peter Marshall

“Think of giving not as a duty but as a privilege”

New Diocesan Website unveiled at Synod

A new Diocese of Ottawa website was unveiled at Synod 2008. The new website, long awaited by many diocesan committees and Ottawa parishes, provides many new features to promote the various comings and goings of the diocese and its parishes. The website offers many state of the art technical capabilities such as calendaring and a far more professional approach towards public visibility.

“The new site will still take some time to populate the content with its respective committees’ current materials but at least we now have the technical capability to provide this content in real time and effectively manage it going forward”, says Stewardship Chair, Francis Christensen. Jane Scanlon, Diocesan Stewardship Officer, indicated that, “Stewardship teams and committees at the parish level should see some very significant enhancements to the stewardship program content by January 2009”.

The new website is accessible via the following link:

www.ottawa.anglican.ca

The Stewardship section of the diocesan website is a work in progress. (You’ve heard that before??? This time it’s true.) Check it out in January 2009 for new and updated content.

How to reach us:

We in Stewardship Council, and the Diocesan Stewardship Office, are very open to and appreciative of receiving any suggestions from parishes and individuals requiring any form of assistance regarding stewardship programming and parish stewardship development.

We are also interested in hearing from you if you have any stewardship stories or experiences to share concerning your parish. One of the most effective ways of learning is to share your knowledge and experience (good or bad – what worked and what did not work). We are one family and such sharing is very helpful and reassuring to those who are just beginning their stewardship journey. Feel free to contact us at any time.

For Stewardship Consultations, Mentoring and Resources call the Diocesan Stewardship Office

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