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Stewardship Toolkit

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Everyone has their favorite stewardship tools. What is in your stewardship tool-kit? Here are some of my suggestions for someone getting started in stewardship ministry in the congregation.

- **The Bible** – Need I say more? Keep ‘God’s Word’ close at hand when considering stewardship ministry in any context. Mark your favorite stewardship passages. The Bible’s stories and parables are full of the wisdom that enlivens all stewards. You may also find help in a book like, *“Full Disclosure: Everything The Bible Says About Financial Giving”*, by Herb Miller (ISBN 0-88177-411-1)
 - **Stewardship Resources: A Guide for Congregations** – This ELCA Stewardship Catalogue highlights many of the stewardship resources available for congregations. I’d also keep this URL in my ‘favorites’ file: <http://www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship/>
 - **Stewardship Basics** – The following two books provide a framework from which to build your stewardship ministry. *“Our Stewardship: Managing Our Assets”* by John Golv (ISBN 0-8066-4406-0). Another useful title is, *“Step by Step: Fostering financial stewardship in your congregation”* by Michael Meier (AF#6-0001-6370-3).
 - **Very Readable** – Two new books that will give you a fresh and evocative insight into stewardship ministry. *“Ask, Thank, Tell”* by Charles Lane (ISBN 0-8066-5263-2) may be the only book you need in stewardship. *“Giving to*
- God: The Bible’s Good News about Living a Generous Life”* by Mark Allan Powell is a delightful read. Powell explores Christian giving as ‘duty’ and ‘delight’ the Bible’s ‘Good News!’
- **The Giving Magazine** – This annual stewardship magazine provides articles, book reviews and a different annual response program in each of its editions. Every ELCA congregation receives this magazine. Additional copies may be purchased at www.stewardshipresources.org.
 - **Annual financial Response Programs** – The most widely used financial response program, other than ‘do it yourself’, in Region 1 is *‘New Consecration Sunday’* by Herb Miller. Charles Lane has just authored a new program titled, *‘Walk with Jesus’* which is available from the ELCA (6-0002-0913-4). As follow-on to Consecration Sunday, Eugene Grimm has authored a program titled, *‘Celebrate Generosity’*. Information on these programs is available on the Region 1 web page.
 - **Steward Key Leader** – is an affordable and excellent service of the ELCA for congregations who are entering a building project, a debt-reduction campaign, or their annual stewardship campaign. You can reach SKL at skl@elca.org, or 800-638-3522 ext.2606.
 - **Money Leadership** – Michael Meier adapted *‘The Whys and Hows of Money Leadership: A Workbook for Pastors and Lay Leaders’*, written by Mark Vincent for use with congregation leaders and members. While not currently used extensively in ELCA congregations, *‘Good Sense: Small Group Edition’*, developed by Dick Towner at Willow

Creek is a very usable tool to help people of faith budget and manage their personal finances.

- **Time and Talents** – Congregations considering a ministry of ‘spiritual gifts’ might also use, *‘The Great Permission: An Asset-Based Field Guide for Congregations’*. This asset based approach to connecting people’s passion in useful ministry enhancing ways is better suited to today’s culture than a traditional ‘time and talent’ card.
- **Tell the Story** – Interpreting how God’s mission is accomplished through the prayer, energy and giving of the people of faith is an aspect of stewardship ministry often forgotten. Use *‘Making Christ Known’* a publication of the ELCA and stories from your own ministry to find lively ways to ‘thank’ and ‘encourage’ stewards in their giving to God for the sake of the world.
- **The WWW List** – In today’s world you have to have several web sites in your favorite’s folder to surf when you have a stewardship question. Here are several suggestions:

<http://www.elca.org/dcm/stewardship/>
<http://elcaregion1.org/stewardship.html>
<http://www.stewardshipoflife.org/index.htm>
<http://www.luthersem.edu/stewardship/>
<http://www.sharesavespend.com/index.php>
- **Your Stewardship Team** – A person ‘on the other end of the line’ is always available. Connect with your stewardship team (see contact information below) for further conversation on stewardship ministry and leadership in your ministry setting.



Updated Region 1 Web Site

An update to the Region 1 web site is just around the corner. This includes the ‘stewardship page’. We want your comments on how to make this site more useful in your ministry.

<http://elcaregion1.org>

COMMENTARY

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The Seattle Times, the paper we get at home arrived this morning and I was elated to see an eight page insert titled, **“BE MONEY SMART: Helping students and families understand how to invest, save, and manage money. Together, we are creating a successful financial future for our children.”**

That ‘the world’ is interested in money and the ‘money conversation’ is not surprising. After all, the insert was sponsored by the Allstate Foundation – think insurance -, Junior Achievement, and The Seattle Times. A brief read impressed me with the useful information and tools provided in the insert. Many parents would benefit from the wisdom of the articles including one titled, *“Don’t Borrow What You Can’t Repay.”*

Here is my conundrum: Pamela Kleiner, author of “How Much Is Enough”, says that ‘money is only a container in which we create what is of value and significance to us.’ Money itself does not deliver happiness or success or health. However, the way we choose to use (read ‘steward’) money may well have consequences of deep purpose for our life.

Given this, why are we church leaders so reluctant, perhaps even opposed, to raising issues of spiritual import in relation to our culture which is awash in money? Why are we reluctant to preach, teach, encourage and talk about money life at every opportunity? Share your thoughts with others!

YOUR STEWARDSHIP TEAM

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