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Common Sense Stewardship

- Pastor Sorenson

As I was considering the topic of stewardship recently, I ran across the following article from a fellow LCMS pastor, Rev. Brian Flamme (Immanuel Lutheran Church, Roswell, NM). He does a faithful and fantastic job of looking at stewardship from a biblical perspective. May this article from Rev. Flamme be a blessing to you as well as you think about what God's Word has to say about stewardship:

"Stewardship can be confusing which is weird because I grew up hearing about stewardship all the time. The church's stewardship committee would organize Bible studies. They would hand out 'spiritual gift inventories' to give folks an idea of how much of their time, talent, and treasure they had available to give to the church. Spoiler alert: I never had much to offer. And yes, I've sat through my fair share of sermon series on stewardship. I'm sure some of the admonition was helpful. I'm sure some of it wasn't, especially the "gift inventories" which carried with them a strong whiff of pentecostalism.

Here's where it all left me. Shortly after I was a freshly minted Marine out of boot camp I remember walking a few miles off post most every Sunday to attend a local Missouri Synod church, though I found little joy in it. The whole year I was stationed at this little post in California the local pastor couldn't stop haranguing the people about how little they gave of themselves for the church. They didn't put enough in the plate. They didn't volunteer enough. They didn't care enough. It was tough for a very junior enlisted man to hear, because I suppose it was all too true. I didn't give much on Sunday morning. I'd go to the ATM and pull out a twenty with a fair amount of guilt knowing that it didn't come close to a genuine tithe. I didn't volunteer. I was too busy finding something to do with my friends. And it jabbed my conscience to hear that I didn't care because when I wasn't inside the church's building, I realized that I didn't much. I made usual excuses. I was poor. I didn't have a moment to spare. I was distracted. But it didn't matter.

Stewardship preaching was the law's gut punch that left me unable to breathe. Time spent studying the Scriptures in the seminary helped to change my perspective. I learned about how the central message of the church wasn't volunteerism and giving, but Christ. Pastors weren't supposed to preach the law for the sake of the law, but for the sake of the Gospel which must predominate every sermon. Though compelling people through guilt and shame might work for NPR's seasonal fund drives, they're really good at it by the way, Christ desires saints who give freely and willingly. That's why there's no inspired giving tables appended to the end of the New Testament. Either a family or individual gives from the thanksgiving that flows from faith or they shouldn't give at all. You can't imagine the weight this took off my shoulders. I dreaded stewardship bible studies. I got queasy thinking about preaching about how people should be doing more and giving more. With a sigh of relief, I realized I could preach Christ without shame and leave the money matters to God.

The only trouble is that Christ and his apostles didn't seem all that hesitant to talk about giving. Jesus preached the famous story about the unrighteous steward who used unrighteous wealth to gain friends for himself just as the 'sons of light' are to use their wealth not to preserve themselves in this doomed existence, but for the sake of the life to come (Luke 16:1-13).

St. Paul is direct in his stewardship preaching. Instead of framing it in terms of how much you should be giving or doing for the church, he talks about what Christians owe their pastors. "Let the elders who rule well be considered worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in preaching and teaching. For the Scripture says, "You shall not muzzle an ox when it treads out the grain," and "The laborer deserves his wages"" (1 Tim. 5:17-18).

And again, "Let the one who is taught the Word share all good things with the one who teaches" (Galatians 6:6).

I think giving for the sake of the man who preaches and teaches instead of giving to a church in general fundamentally changes what stewardship is and how it's understood. The church can be understood abstractly: a spiritual gathering of

like minded individuals. Tithing, in that case, would carry about the same spiritual weight as paying your fee for your Portals of Prayer subscription. But what if you're rejoicing in the gift of hearing and believing the gospel by which you have eternal life? What if you give thanks to God for your pastor and don't want him to leave. What if you want your family to hear the gospel not only one week but for years into the future? This changes everything from how you understand and use money to how you understand and enjoy your church.

Giving to the church is giving to support the preaching of the Gospel. God set up his church in such a way that a preacher is called to live among the saints to administer the saving Word and Sacraments. You need a building set aside for the sacred work. You need sacred vessels to carry the water for baptism and the body and blood of Christ for communion. For this to work, the hearers of the Word need to set aside some of their earthly treasure to support their God sent preacher and shepherd.

It's about this time that folks get uncomfortable in hearing about sharing "all good things" and "double honor." They might bring up St. Paul's tent making job by which he supported himself in Corinth. You're right of course. He did. But it was to the Corinthians' shame that he was forced into such straights. Because he didn't want to put an obstacle in the way of the Gospel, the obstacle of demanding money to survive, he worked on the tents and preached at the same time. At some point there should have been a return from the saints who heard and believed. At some point the Corinthians should have seen the spiritual treasures being heaped up around them by St. Paul's preaching and they should have given gladly to bless the one from whom it came. St. Paul himself says, "The Lord commanded that those who proclaim the gospel should get their living by the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:14).

Contrary to popular belief, pastors and their families don't live on air and the Holy Spirit. If you have been blessed by the Gospel, if you know the riches of Christ because of his labor in preaching and teaching, then to plan on giving a small token of your earthly riches to continue that preaching in your home church.

Is this law? For the hardened sinner who begrudges every penny for the preaching ministry, you bet. What about for the Christian who knows Christ, the forgiveness of sins, and the eternal blessings of God's grace? It's still law, but it doesn't crush or fill the soul with dread. It's the very thing that we are eager to do. Because what is money compared to heaven? What is ten percent of the family budget compared to the eternal riches of Christ's righteousness given to you freely which you receive by faith?

Dear saints, if you know the gospel and believe it, then you will give. You will know the inestimable treasure God has placed into your lap in your local church. Here you have a pastor who shepherds the flock with the saving Word. Here you have a refuge from all the chaos and corruption of the world.

The devil tries to tempt us to give our first fruits far from where we receive Word and Sacrament. Perhaps because of an argument with one of the parishioners or because of a quibble with the pastor you've decided to give your offering to another "ministry" hours away. Don't be deceived. The congregation is filled with sinners, true, but it's God's will that you love them anyway through your generosity in providing for the ministry that saves their souls. The Lord hasn't given you wealth to use as a means of power and control to get your way. He gave it to you so your selfless generosity can be a blessing to your neighbors.

When you give, start at home where you and your family live. Think practically about the preaching ministry and how much it's going to take to support it. Instead of focusing on designated gifts, which is appropriate on occasion, give to the general fund from which the bills are paid and the pastor is blessed with a living wage. After the needs of the ministry are met where you live, then it's good to consider how we can use the extra blessings the Lord has showered on us to bless various good works that are happening nationally and internationally.

Dear saints, we have been richly blessed. Not only has Christ saved us from sin, death, and the power of the devil, he has abundantly given us worldly riches. The devil wants you to hoard it and keep it to yourself. He wants you to be afraid. In Christ there is no fear. You know that as he gives to you today, he'll give to you tomorrow. That's why the widow's mites were so precious in the Lord's sight. She gave fearlessly from faith (Luke 21:1-4).

"The point is this: whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Each one must give as he has decided in his heart, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that having all sufficiency in all things at all times, you may abound in every good work" (2 Corinthians 9:6-7)."

WORSHIP & BIBLE STUDY INFORMATION

Bible Studies:

- **Sundays:** We are studying the minor prophets Sunday mornings after worship. This month we will study the prophets Nahum and Habakkuk.
- **Wednesday Night Bible Study:** On break until after Easter. Look for more information in the weekly bulletins.
- **Book of Concord Study:** Usually second Sunday of the month beginning at 5:00 PM. We will be on break this month, but will meet again on March 12th to continue our study of the Formula of Concord and we will have a pitch-in dinner following the study.

Online Bible Study: Resources, including full Bible studies and devotional videos are available on our church Youtube page (<https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCzA1mStTKU8Sb0ia1OjDrPg>).

Sermons and Devotional Resources:

- Weekly sermons will be posted on our church website (<http://www.stpeterwaymansville.com>) on the sermon page under the "At St. Peter" tab. (Direct link to that page -http://www.stpeterwaymansville.org/?page_id=417)
- You can also find helpful resources for your home devotions on the "Devotional Resources" page under the "Resources" tab (http://www.stpeterwaymansville.org/?page_id=489). Now is a great time to begin, continue, and strengthen a home devotional pattern by yourself and with your family.
- Portals of Prayer and Advent devotionals are available in the Narthex. You can drop by and pick one up or contact Pastor or the church office to have one delivered.

Lord's Supper: If you would like to receive the Lord's Supper during this time, please contact Pastor Sorenson via call, text, or email. His phone number is 812-371-1151 and his email is pastoresorenson@gmail.com. He would be happy to meet you at the church for this purpose or to bring it to your home, making sure at all times to take the necessary safety precautions.

May these resources assist you as you continue to hear the Word of God and cry out to Him in prayer.

IN OUR PRAYERS

Throughout the year, this space will be used to encourage you to keep your brothers and sisters in Christ here at St. Peter in your prayers. As you pray for them, you may even ask them how you can pray for them. Families will be listed in alphabetical order throughout the year. During this month, you are encouraged to pray for:

- | | | |
|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------|
| • Brandon, Logan, & Maggie Hall | • Tim, Judy, Ryan, Ellie, & Olivia | • Connie Johnson |
| • Chris & Sue Anne Heilers | • Hoene | • Damon Lee |
| • Lynn & Bev Hoeltke | • Luella Holle | • Steve & Jeanne Loesch |
| • Brad, Amanda, Zoie, Anslee, Max,
& Lane Hoene | • Camden Jeffries | |

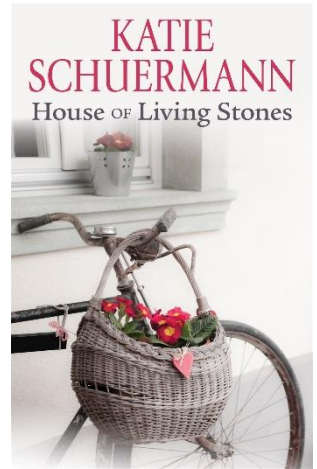
GENERAL INFORMATION

Amazon Smile: St. Peter is now on Amazon Smile! Amazon Smile is a donation platform for different organizations. When you go onto Amazon Smile (smile.amazon.com), you can order items that are on Amazon just like normal and .05% of your purchase will be matched by Amazon and donated to the church! Just make sure to select our church as the donation, and they do the rest! If anyone has any questions, please contact the office at waymansvillestpeter@yahoo.com or at (812)390-5980 (Camden)

New Council Members & Elders: We would like to thank John Dobrinski (chairman), Barb Minor (financial secretary), and Curt Acton (practical services) for agreeing to serve on the church council beginning this upcoming year, as well as Dan Acree and Ben Otte for agreeing to serve as elders. Finally we thank all of our returning council members and elders and our outgoing council members and elders for their faithful service.

Puzzle Sharing: A puzzle share has recently started here at St. Peter. If you would like to borrow a puzzle or donate a puzzle, they can be found or placed in the cabinet in the Conference Room closest to the white board. Enjoy a variety of puzzles and some fellowship with your fellow brothers and sisters in Christ!

Book of the Month: The Book of the Month will be available in the Parish Hall library for you to look through and read. You may take the book home to read as well, but we ask that you please do not hold onto it for too long so other people can enjoy it as well. The February Book of the Month is *House of Living Stones* by Katie Schuermann. Here is an excerpt from the book: "Mrs. Arlene Compton Scheinberg positioned herself advantageously behind the cherrywood desk in the front office of Zion Lutheran Church. The sign out front on the church lawn announced to all the world that the Reverend Michael G. Fletcher was Zion's divinely called shepherd, but every sheep in the flock knew that Mrs. Scheinberg was the self-appointed herd dog; and she did not care for the looks of the two wolves in wrinkled suits sitting expressionless on the chairs along her east wall."



Thrivent Action Teams: If you have any Thrivent policies or products, you are eligible for two action teams a year. An action team includes \$250 seed money and may be used for a fundraiser, an educational event, or a service activity. As a church, we have used action teams for the fish fry, the youth golf scramble, Bible studies, etc. If you are interested in using your action teams for events at church or anywhere else, you can look for more information and help signing up on the Thrivent website or by speaking to Pastor.

Missions: This year we will be supporting a variety of missions. The missions we will support include Clarity, Lakeview Ministries, Orphan Grain Train, Tiffany Smith (missionary for Lutheran Bible Translators serving in Tanzania), and a seminary student. If you would like to submit a name of a seminary student to receive this support, please speak to an elder or to Pastor. May God continue to bless these missions as Christ is proclaimed to the ends of the earth.

Usher & Communion Sign-Up Sheets: The 2023 sign-up sheets are up now on the bulletin board in the Parish Hall. We are always looking for additional people interested in filling these roles. Please feel free to sign up even if you have never before helped in these ways. Someone will be happy to show you the ropes.

Music Group: The music group is meeting again on the second and fourth Thursdays of each month at 6:00 PM. Come on out with any instrument you may have to learn, play along, and have fun! (No experience or expertise necessary.) We are also in need of singers who can sing along while we play.

Altar Flowers: If you would like to sponsor altar flowers, there is a sign-up sheet for 2023 in the hallway between Pastor's office and the church office. The cost to sponsor the flowers is \$20, and the payment can be put in the offering plate or in the mail rack outside the church office door. The flowers are yours for the taking after the worship service. Please contact Sue Anne Heilers at (812) 717-0167 if you have any questions.

Communion Assistance: We are looking for people who may be interested in setting up and/or cleaning up communion. No need to worry about the linens, as those will be taken care of for you. If you are interested in learning more, please speak with Lynette or Pastor. The sign-up sheet for 2023 is also on the bulletin board.

YOUTH GROUP & YOUTH CLASSES

Youth Group: The youth group will meet on Sunday, February 19th, for our youth night. We will have a meal, time to study God's Word, and a fun activity. Feel free to bring a friend! If you would like to be added to the text group to receive youth group notifications, please let Pastor know.

Sunday School: We have a class for little kids (approximately ages 3 through 2nd grade taught by myself), a class for older kids (approximately 3rd grade through high school taught by Kevin Schultz). There is also adult Bible class with Pastor Sorenson. We would like to have a third teacher to fill the gap between the two classes. Please consider this as these children are so eager to learn about the word of God. – Michelle Schultz

Toaster Request: If you have an unused/extra toaster, consider donating it to the church. Sunday School often has snacks that would benefit from a toaster. Thank you!

EVENTS

Game Night: Game Night will be on Friday, February 3rd, beginning at 6:00 PM. All ages are welcome and bring a friend too! Our dinner theme will be your favorite tailgating/football food. Feel free to bring a dish to share, your favorite games, or a deck of cards. Mark your calendars and invite your friends and family to come along as well!

Soup and Euchre: Join us on Sunday, February 5th from 5:00-7:00 PM for our Soup and Euchre party! It will be \$5 for soup and \$5 for euchre. Invite a friend or two and enjoy a night of soup, cards, and fun.

LCMS COMMUNITY NEWS & EVENTS

Trinity Lutheran High School SGO: Tax credit scholarships, better known as “SGO Scholarships”, are awarded by Scholarship Granting Organizations to qualifying families to help them pay for the non-public school of their choice. Donations to fund SGO scholarships feature a 50% state tax credit for the donor. Trinity families benefit from donations made to the Lutheran SGO in our name. Donations can be made in the form of cash, check, credit or debit card, marketable securities(including stocks and bonds), real estate, farming commodities (gifts of livestock or grain), qualified retirement plans, or any item where value can be easily determined. If you would like to learn more about SGOs or would like to make a donation, contact Erin Brooks at 812-524-8547 or ebrooks@trinitycougars.org.

Camp Lakeview Junior Staff: Information regarding the Camp Lakeview Junior Staff program is available in the library for any of our youth who may be interested in this special opportunity. You can also find more information online at lakeview.camp/juniorstaff.

Camp Lakeview Registration: Every year thousands of kids, youth, and families come to Lakeview Ministries. Why? It’s because they know you belong at camp. Coming to camp gives you an all-access pass into life-changing fun. It builds life skills and reduces levels of stress and anxiety. It allows for deeper friendships, and most importantly, it lets you experience Jesus in a way that connects with your everyday life. Online registration for the 2023 summer season at Camp Lakeview and Lakeview Villages is currently open. Programs are available for students and families of ALL AGES. For more information, visit camp’s website at www.lakeview.camp or call the camp office at 812-342-4815. Come and experience the power of camp this summer!

FROM THE OFFICE

Contact Information: As the situation around us continues to change daily, we would like to be able to contact everyone in a quick and timely manner. If you could please contact Camden or Pastor to update your contact information, especially phone number and email, that would help us tremendously and be greatly appreciated. Keep an eye on the church Facebook page for the most up-to-date information. Thank you!

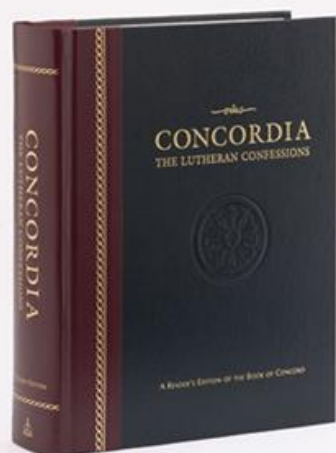
Contribution Statements: Happy New Year everyone! What a year it has been for us, filled with God’s love and joy! First, I would like to wish everyone a happy and safe new year! May it be filled with love and fun! Second, everyone should find their contribution statements in your mailboxes, if you cannot find yours, please let me know as soon as you can! Also, if you believe that there is something wrong with your statement, please contact me and we can go through and see if there is a mistake. I look forward to spending another year as your office manager and as a fellow member!! – Camden

Church Constitution: If you would like to sign the church constitution, please contact Camden.

Pastor Erik Sorenson • (812) 342-4921, office • (812) 371-1151, cell • pastoresorenson@gmail.com

Camden Jeffries • (812) 342-4921, office • (812) 390-5980 cell • waymansvillestpeter@yahoo.com

On the web: www.stpeterwaymansville.com • Facebook: www.facebook.com/StPeterEvangelicalLutheranChurch



Book of Concord Corner

“Our churches teach that this faith is bound to bring forth good fruit (Galatians 5:22-23). It is necessary to do good works commanded by God (Ephesians 2:10), because of God’s will. We should not rely on those works to merit justification before God. The forgiveness of sins and justification is received through faith. The voice of Christ testifies, ‘So you also, when you have done all that you were commanded, say, “We are unworthy servants; we have only done what was our duty”’ (Luke 17:10). The Fathers teach the same thing. Ambrose says, ‘It is ordained of God that he who believes in Christ is saved, freely receiving forgiveness of sins, without works, through faith alone.’” (Augsburg Confession, Article VI. 1-3)

Soup Supper & Euchre Party

St. Peter Evangelical Lutheran Church

11750 W 930 S

Waymansville, Indiana

Sunday, February 5th

Soup Supper begins at 5:00 PM

Euchre Party begins at 6:00 PM

Soup Supper \$5

Euchre Party \$5



Lent and Holy Week Services

Lent is a special 40-day season during which the Church reflects on her sin and on her need for a Savior. It is a time for us to turn our focus away from the things of this world and toward Christ, our dear Lord. As such, it is most appropriate for the Church to gather together more often during this season as we wait with anticipation for the joy of Easter. It is my prayer that all of us here at St. Peter would join together during this special season as we repent of our sin and look for the death and resurrection of Christ.

The Start of Lent

Wednesday, February 22, 7:00 PM – Ash Wednesday

The Midweek Services – The Ten Commandments

Wednesday, March 1 7:00 PM – 1st & 2nd Commandments

Wednesday, March 8, 7:00 PM – 3rd & 4th Commandments

Wednesday, March 15, 7:00 PM – 5th & 6th Commandments

Wednesday, March 22, 7:00 PM – 7th & 8th Commandments

Wednesday, March 29, 7:00 PM – 9th & 10th Commandments

The Start of Holy Week

Sunday, April 2, 9:00 AM – Palm Sunday and Confirmation

The Triduum

Thursday, April 6, 7:00 PM – Maundy Thursday

Friday, April 7, 7:00 PM – Good Friday

Saturday, April 8, 8:00 PM – Easter Vigil

The Resurrection of Our Lord

Sunday, April 9, 6:30 AM – Easter Sunrise

Sunday, April 9, 9:00 AM – Easter Divine Service



St. Peter Lutheran Church Calendar

February 2023

Ushers: Allen Acton & Curt Acton

Acolytes:

February 5 – Trevor Acree

February 12 – Abe Acton

Communion Set-up & Clean-up:

February 19 – Rayleigh Acton

February 22 – Trevor Acree

2/5 & 19 – Kathy Rebber

February 26 – Abe Acton

2/12 & 26 – Judy Strasser

2/22 – Lynnette May

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2 10 AM – Elders meeting	3 6 PM – Game Night	4
5 <i>5th Sunday after the Epiphany</i> 9:00 AM – Divine Service 10:15 AM – Pastor’s Bible Study & Sunday School 11:30 AM – Youth Catechesis 5:00 PM – Soup & Euchre Party	6	7 7 PM – Handbell practice	8	9 6 PM – Music Group 7 PM – Council meeting	10	11
12 <i>6th Sunday after the Epiphany</i> 9:00 AM – Divine Service 10:15 AM – Pastor’s Bible Study & Sunday School 11:30 AM – Youth Catechesis	13	14 9 AM – 2 PM - Pastor @ Circuit meeting 7 PM – Handbell practice	15	16	17	18
19 <i>Transfiguration of Our Lord</i> 9:00 AM – Divine Service 10:15 AM – Pastor’s Bible Study & Sunday School 11:30 AM – Youth Catechesis 5:00 PM – Youth Group	20	21 7 PM – Handbell practice	22 <i>Ash Wednesday</i> 7 PM – Ash Wednesday Divine Service	23 6 PM – Music Group	24	25
26 <i>1st Sunday in Lent</i> 9:00 AM – Divine Service 10:15 AM – Pastor’s Bible Study & Sunday School 11:30 AM – Youth Catechesis	27	28 7 PM – Handbell practice				Upcoming Events: 3/1: Lent Midweek service (7 PM) & Supper (6 PM)