

# StewardCAST

A monthly e-newsletter of LCMS Stewardship Ministry

[lcms.org/stewardship](http://lcms.org/stewardship)



## Stewardship Resolutions

As a new year begins, people often take the time to make resolutions. Resolutions almost always are focused around change. How many times have there been those who have taken the opportunity of the change in the calendar to refocus their lives? Resolutions are made to lose weight, get to the gym more often, to eat more dinners together as a family or even to take more time to be quiet before the Lord in meditation on the Scriptures and prayer. These are all noble efforts.

Yet as noble as these resolutions seem, they bring with them a certain negative thought to them. A person only seems to use resolutions to make changes in a perceived deficiency in their lives. A resolution to lose weight is driven by the stark reality of the numbers on the bathroom scale

or the tightness of the pants. A desire to get to the gym more often is a realization that the farther one gets from their 18th birthday, the more the aches, pains and maladies of age seem to get the upper hand. A family that has members running too many different directions at once will make a resolution to attempt to spend more quality time together around the dinner table because they are feeling the distance of disconnection. Who among us would also not benefit from more quality quiet times with the Lord? We make resolutions when we find things that are lacking in our lives. We do this because we need to make changes in our lives.

“How one manages our bodies, our lives within our families and our lives with the Lord is a matter of stewardship of the Gospel.”

### Resolutions as Stewardship

Resolutions are really a matter of stewardship. How one manages our bodies, our lives within our families and our lives with the Lord is a matter of stewardship of the Gospel. Human beings have been created for this kind of stewardship. However, this stewardship has been complicated and corrupted by the sin that dwells within human flesh. As redeemed, yet sinful stewards, there will always be something lacking in our stewardship this side of eternity. Stewardship then will be an area of life where resolutions will be in order.

During this season of resolutions it might well be an opportunity to make resolutions for the study and practice of the stewardship as individuals and corporately as congregations. As stewardship leaders, one might well want to consider some or all of the proposed resolutions presented here for consideration.

**1. Be it hereby resolved that in 2017 an attempt will be made to study the basic theological understand of biblical stewardship really is.**

A little knowledge is really a dangerous thing. So often a less than faithful stewardship practice flows from a less than faithful understanding of stewardship. When an individual limits stewardship to only things financial or even a truncated concept of the tithe or a congregation limits stewardship to only the budget are part of this issue. Christian stewardship is the activity of God in and through the steward. A Christian steward is created by God, fallen in sin and restored in the redemptive



action of Jesus Christ at the cross and empty tomb. Stewardship is more about who God has made and remade us to be rather than our actions of giving and serving. We give and serve because this is what God has called us to do in service to Him as we care for our neighbor. It is not about budgets and balance sheets, envelopes and pledges. As a congregation, make plans in 2017 to look at the basic primer of Christian stewardship. This would be great in an adult Bible class setting or for congregations that utilize small groups. There are ample resources for a study like this available from [lcms.org\stewardship](http://lcms.org/stewardship).

**2. Be it hereby resolved that in 2017 our congregation will seek to identify the stewardship culture of our congregation.**

Stewardship culture is a very important thing to understand. Culture is really nothing more than the way things get done. Lutherans have been notorious observers of culture. Hasn't it been repeated once or a thousand times, "we have always done it this way"? But there is also a reality about culture, especially regarding stewardship. Stewardship culture will never be neutral. It will either enhance the congregation's understanding of the Gospel or it will work in direct opposition to it. Worse yet, the

congregation's stewardship culture very often reflects the community culture. This we know will often stand in the way of ministry! Therefore, the congregation needs to regularly ask questions that assess their stewardship culture. If the assessment finds that the culture is in a good place, steps

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can be taken to enhance the stewardship culture in that place. If, on the other hand, the assessment identifies areas that are lacking, steps can also take place to change the stewardship culture. Culture is never cast in stone. It can be and often is changed. God's Word can accomplish great things in this area. See resolution one to achieve this change!

**3. Be it hereby resolved that in 2017 the congregation will seek to align their stewardship with their mission.**

As a congregation, mission is really nothing other than what the Lord charges the Church with in **MATT. 28:19-20**. The Church has called this the Great Commission and evangelism, the sharing of the Good News. But this is also a stewardship issue. The making of disciples is the work of the Holy Spirit through the Means of Grace. This flows from what the Lord does at the font, on the altar and from the pulpit. The authority to baptize and teach all that the Lord has commanded is at the heart of all our stewardship.

To align mission and stewardship is to see stewardship flowing from Gospel origins in support of the work of the Gospel. The delivery of the Means of Grace does indeed take means. It takes resources for the Gospel to be shared in the congregation, the community and the cosmos. This alignment is critical because stewardship without mission is pointless and mission without stewardship is impossible!

The mission of the Gospel is an outward one. When stewardship is aligned with mission, it too becomes outward focused.



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To do this means to see the goal of stewardship as being beyond self and congregation. Congregations who have the focus of their stewardship not being the balancing of the budget for themselves but rather on the needs of the neighbor will find a refreshing change that will invigorate stewardship in the congregation.

#### **4. Beit herby resolved that in 2017 the congregations and their steward leaders will take advantage of the many stewardship leadership resources that are available.**

There are a great number of places where steward leaders in the congregation can find support and resources for the formation of stewardship. Each district of our Synod has either a stewardship executive or board that has a list of resources that are available. In addition, the Office of National Mission Stewardship Ministry also has a resource that can be brought to a local circuit called a Philippians Conference. These events allow for a time of study on Biblical stewardship, a meal that is shared with lay leaders and laity

and pastors studying together the need for a healthy partnership in the Gospel that drives the stewardship culture in the congregation. There will also be two events in 2017 co-sponsored by the Office of National Mission and Doxology called More than Giving. These events allow for pastors and laity alike to learn more about stewardship and its faithful practice. Take advantage of these.

Resolutions can indeed be helpful. They can serve as a fine way to hit the reset button on many things. Stewardship resolutions can very well do this for you and your congregation. If you have other resolutions that you might wish to share, please send them to [Nathan.meador@lcms.org](mailto:Nathan.meador@lcms.org).

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