**Your Stewardship Toolkit for December 2024!**

*December’s theme:* **Advent: Preparing for the Light**

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*If you want the free Toolkit sent directly to your inbox every month,* *just drop me an email**.
Feel free to forward it to colleagues who might find it useful.*

Consistent communication, education and action can help your congregation develop a healthy culture of stewardship and generosity. This Toolkit can help get you there!

Here’s what you’ll find in the Toolkit:

[**-Snippets:**](#Snippets) Cut and paste a monthly themed “Stewardship Snippet” in every Sunday bulletin! It’s a verse or two from the week’s Revised Common Lectionary lessons, followed by a brief reflection.

[**-Newsletter Article:**](#Newsletter_Article) Cut and paste a fresh article on stewardship every month in your newsletter.

[**-General Resource Websites**:](#websites) – These are places you can go for great ideas to jump start your stewardship ministry!

**Stewardship Snippets**

*Copy and paste into your bulletin!
Source: Rob Blezard.*

**Dec. 1, 2024** (1St Sunday of Advent, Year C)

**Psalm 25:4–**Make me to know your ways, O LORD; teach me your paths. Lead me in your truth, and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation; for you I wait all day long.
*The First Sunday of Advent’s theme is hope. Christians find our hope in God. We hunger for God and ask for guidance and strength to live fully as steward/disciples.*

**Dec. 8, 2024** (2ndSunday of Advent, Year C)

**Philippians 1:9-11 –**And this is my prayer, that your love may overflow more and more with knowledge and full insight to help you to determine what is best, so that in the day of Christ you may be pure and blameless, having produced the harvest of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ for the glory and praise of God.

*Love is the theme for the Second Sunday in Advent. When we cultivate love in our lives as steward/disciples, it does overflow and guide our lives on the paths of strength and joy.*

**Dec. 15, 2024** (3rd Sunday of Advent, Year C)

**Philippians 4:4 –**Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice.

*Joy is the theme for the third Sunday of Advent. Philippians reminds us to rejoice – find the joy – in God. Always! Though we live in a world that has many troubles, we can always find joy, in God’s love. Joy is a way of life for steward/disciples.*

**Dec. 22, 2024** (4thSunday of Advent, Year C)

**Micah 5:4–**And he shall stand and feed his flock in the strength of the LORD, in the majesty of the name of the LORD his God. And they shall live secure, for now he shall be great to the ends of the earth; and he shall be the one of peace.

*Peace is the theme for the fourth Sunday of Advent. We remember that Jesus is, as Micah says, “the one of peace,” the shepherd who cares for us, his flock. Steward/disciples draw near to Jesus and find peace in him.*

***Stewardship Snippet***

**Dec. 24-25, 2024** (Nativity of Our Lord, Year C)

**Titus 2:11, 12 –**For the grace of God has appeared, bringing salvation to all, training us to renounce impiety and worldly passions, and in the present age to live lives that are self-controlled, upright, and godly.

*It requires some readjustment to live fully as steward/disciples. Through Jesus we find strength. As we more fully turn to Jesus, our eyes clear, our minds brighten, and we find it easier to turn from worldly desires and values to the joy and simplicity of life in Christ.*

**Dec. 29, 2024** (1st Sunday after Christmas, Year C)

**Colossians 3:12, 14 –**As God's chosen ones, holy and beloved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, and patience. Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony.
*Stewardship is about living and loving God thoroughly and our neighbor as ourselves. This remarkable passage gives us a vivid image to get us there. Wake each day and clothe ourselves in Christian character and love.*

**Advent: Preparing for the Light**

**By Rob Blezard**

*By the tender mercy of our God, the dawn from on high will break upon us, to give light to those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace.* **-Luke 1:78,79**

You need only watch the news to know that we are, indeed, a people who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death. Ignorance, hatred, politics, war, famine, greed, crime, apathy – all of these are rampant. We need the light of the dawn from on high to break upon us. We need to be guided in the way of peace.

Our primary stewardship responsibility is to live in such a way that our hearts, minds and spirits are aligned with God’s purposes. How else can we become the people God wants us to be? For centuries, Advent was a time for Christian reflection and soul-searching; of asking God to show us anew what areas of our lives are still in darkness and in need of God’s light.

Read the above passage from Luke 1, which captures the essence of Advent. Read it again, but slowly, as you would savor a fine chocolate with complex sweetness and luxurious texture. Go ahead. What new meanings do you discern? What nuances?

The four weeks of Advent help bring us into the proper spirit to receive "the dawn from on high" that will "give light” to us who sit in darkness. Advent worship is rich in symbolism.

* The paraments are deep blue, the color of the sky before dawn, when it is no longer night but not quite morning.
* With its five candles, the Advent wreath provides a visual representation of the gathering dawn. We light one candle the first week of Advent, two the second week, three the third, and four the fourth. At Christmas we light all five because the dawn of Christ has come.

Each candle and each week of Advent has a theme. Each expresses the gifts of God we have in the miracle of Christmas: Hope, Peace, Joy. Love. Make this Advent a time for prayer, devotion, meditation and focus on the light of Chris, which is coming anew into your heart – and the world! May it dispel all our darkness!

*--Robert Blezard*

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[Click here](https://thestewardshipguy.com/about-me/) for a complete and up-to-date bio for Pastor Blezard.

**General Stewardship Resource Websites**

[**Stewardship of Life Institute**](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org/)– Headquartered at United Lutheran Seminary, this site has a trove of resources in areas of congregational and personal stewardship. ([www.stewardshipoflife.org](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org))

[**ELCA Stewardship Resources**](http://elca.org/stewardship)– Our denomination’s deep well of materials. ([www.elca.org/stewardship](http://www.elca.org/stewardship))

[**Center for Stewardship Leaders**](http://faithlead.luthersem.edu/stewardship/) – Luther Seminary’s excellent website. ([faithlead.luthersem.edu/stewardship/](http://faithlead.luthersem.edu/stewardship/))

[**The ELCA Foundation**](https://www.elca.org/give/elca-foundation) a ministry of our denomination. ([www.elca.org/give/elca-foundation](http://www.elca.org/give/elca-foundation))

[The Episcopal Ministry for Stewardship](https://www.tens.org/) – Lots of good material. (<https://www.tens.org/>)

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