

Stewardship Principles

By Pastor Nancy Larson
ELCA Director for Evangelical Mission

I was recently in one of our community's large box stores. While shopping I heard a rather loud and emotional exchange between a small child and parent. Apparently the child had taken something off of a shelf that was not on the shopping list. The parent wanted to return it to the shelf, and all the child could say was MINE! MINE! MINE! As this event progressed, the volume increased and the child's resolve deepened. Mine, all mine, mine, all mine. I didn't hang around long enough to hear how the tug-of-war was resolved, but I did leave thinking that this young child really speaks for many of us. I own a home, my new car, my newest technological toy... MINE, MINE, MINE.

"As baptized members of the body of Christ, we gratefully confess Jesus as our Lord and Savior. We boldly proclaim the gospel as the Word of God. We clearly recognize the gifts that God has given us through grace, and we joyfully accept our role and responsibility as stewards." These words are from the introduction of an ELCA document called *10 Stewardship Principles*. You can find it on the ELCA website. It articulates 10 guiding principles about what it is to be stewards.

We belong to God and share in the amazing blessings of God's grace.



I suspect it is that third sentence of this introduction that provides a very real challenge to us all. It begins with "We clearly recognize the gifts that God has given us..." Do we? I mean really, do we clearly recognize the gifts of God?

As the people of God, we are recipients of the gifts of God—forgiveness of sin, life and salvation. These gifts come wrapped in some surprising packages—simple bread and wine and common everyday fellowship — and yet they are life changing and life giving. Our humanness may push us to think of everything in terms of ownership and control, but God calls us back into the relationship of sacrificial love and gift giving that cannot be earned or purchased or deserved. It is God who says MINE—ALL MINE. We belong to God and share in the amazing blessings of God's grace.

To download this article or for more stewardship and mission support resources, visit www.neiasynod.org/synod_resources/Stewardship-MissionSupport.asp.

New Season of Tri-State Forum

Five day-long lectures are planned for the 2012-2013 Tri-State Forum lecture series on the Wartburg Theological Seminary campus in Dubuque. Each event offers .5 continuing education units. Cost for all five lectures is \$150; individual cost is \$60 per lecture. To learn more or to register, visit www.wartburgseminary.edu and follow the link for Lifelong Learners, email lifelonglearners@wartburgseminary.edu, or call 563-589-0327.

Thursday, Sept. 20, 2012

Evangelical Witness and the New Creation in Christ

Presiding Bishop Mark Hanson, along with the Rev. Dr. James Kenneth Echols, director for Theological Resources and Networks in the Office of the Presiding Bishop, will explore the many opportunities to give a Lutheran evangelical witness in a world of social media, headlines, and short attention spans. They will also explore the theme

"New Creation in Christ" and its implications for individual and communal ethics.

Oct. 18, 2012

Spiritual Resiliency and Aging, presented by Dr. Janet Ramsey

Nov. 15, 2012

Preaching Advent Texts in Year C, presented by Dr. Mark Allen Powell

Jan. 24, 2013

Preaching Lent in Year C, presented by Dr. Karoline Lewis

April 18, 2013

Preaching and Stewardship, presented by Dr. Craig Satterlee