

A Liturgy for Stewardship Sunday
November 1, 2015
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Call to Worship

The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it, the world, and all who live in it. Let us worship the Lord of all creation.

— based on Psalm 24:1 (NIV)

Call to Confession

1 Corinthians 4:2 tells us that a steward is required to be trustworthy, yet we often fail. Caring for creation is a demanding task, and we waste precious resources with little thought. We do not place the proper value on relationships. We do not value our own bodies as a treasure from the Lord. We place little worth on the feelings of others. Let us search our souls and confess our sins to the Lord.

Prayer of Confession (*unison*)

As we acknowledge our failings, Lord, we ask your forgiveness:

- for our selfish acts
- for not sharing the Gospel
- for hoarding the treasures that you have so freely provided
- for judging others as unworthy of their share
- for taking your generosity for granted.

For all of these, and for our acts of defiance, we ask for your mercy, O Lord. Amen.

Assurance of Pardon

The peace of Christ is our assurance that God forgives us for our failures. The Holy Spirit strengthens us for our call, and prepares us for our service to God and to the Body of Christ. Receive the joy and freedom that comes with forgiveness.

Children's Message: Stewardship of the Gospel

Matthew 5:13-15 (ESV) says "You are the salt of the earth, but if salt has lost its taste, how shall its saltiness be restored? It is no longer good for anything except to be thrown out and trampled under people's feet. You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand, and it gives light to all in the house."

We have a really great gift to give the world. We have the GOOD NEWS!

There are a lot of people in this world that do not know who Jesus is. They don't know that Jesus is God's son. That means they are "in the dark."

Have you ever been in a really dark place when you didn't see any light coming in? Maybe your lights went out in a storm? Or maybe you visited a cave? Or maybe you went to a basement? Or maybe you went hunting or fishing at night?

How did it feel? (*Scary, frightening, lonely*)

Now, what if you had a flashlight? Even a small flashlight can light up a whole room. A tiny night light lets us see a lot of things in a dark room at night, doesn't it? Even if only ONE person in a dark room turns on a flashlight, EVERYONE in the room can see.

Well, that is like us having the Good News when someone else doesn't. If they have never known God, they are in the dark. And, those of us who have the Good News are supposed to share it with them. Just like a person with a flashlight shares their light by turning it on, we share the Good News by talking to people about Jesus.

So, one of the gifts God has given you is the gift of the Gospel—the Good News of Jesus. Since you have this wonderful gift you need to share it so your friends can have it too. That way they will not be in the dark about who Jesus is.

Prayer for Illumination

The truth we are waiting to hear is the greatest treasure we can receive. Help us Lord, to listen to the word with eager ears, open minds, and hearts ready to receive instructions. In the name of Jesus, Amen.

Scripture Possibilities for the Sermon

- Various passages from 1 Samuel 1 & 2

Samuel's mother Hannah petitions the Lord for a son. When God provides her the long awaited son, Hannah responds to this wonderful gift that she received by giving her son to the Lord, in service to the temple. Hannah's gratitude is an example of how we should respond to the gifts we have received from the Lord. Each gift is to be dedicated to the Lord and used for the uplifting of the Body of Christ.

- 1 Peter 4:10

Our gifts are different. One is not superior to another. They each make us uniquely qualified for service in the Body of Christ. At almost any church potluck you can see many different gifts in full view. Some cook, some clean, some greet new guests, some sit with the often overlooked elderly, some wrangle kids—keeping them entertained and out of the sanctuary, some notice maintenance issues in the fellowship hall and plan for repairs, some discuss the next fellowship event. For those who wash dishes nearly every potluck, it may seem like no one else is really doing much, but the guys who are sitting at the table for an

hour drinking coffee and the lady talking to the visitor may have the most important jobs of the afternoon. It may look “unproductive” to the overly busy person, but it may be a lifeline to those receiving attention. Each gift is vital, even if it is scrubbing toilets or maintaining the lawn. Every gift is a vital.

Invitation to the Offering

Without the guidance of the Holy Spirit humankind is prone to selfishness. It is easy to spend unwisely on our own desires. The result is often guilt and regret. But when we give freely of our resources, our hearts are open to the sheer joy of being a part of God’s plan for humanity. It is God’s desire for all to have enough.

As you gratefully return your tithe to the Lord today, also consider other ways you can contribute to God’s kingdom.

OR

Prior to worship ask for volunteers to read the short phrases as the offering plate is passed. When it reaches the reader, they should first pass the plate to the next person. Then, stand up just long enough to say their line. And be seated again.

Leaders: Without the guidance of the Holy Spirit humankind is prone to selfishness. It is easy to spend unwisely on our own desires. The result is often guilt and regret. But when we give freely of our resources, our hearts are open to the sheer joy of being a part of God’s plan for humanity. It is God’s desire for all to have enough.

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Speaker 1) Help us to share our time and energy.

Speaker 2) Help us to share our heritage and our family experiences.

Speaker 3) Help us to show our love and our concern for each other.

Speaker 4) Help us to care for creation and protect our natural resources.

Speaker 5) Help us to use our skills and abilities in service to the Church and to one another.

Leader: Our blessings are multiplied when we share them and use them properly. Our lives are enriched when our gifts are recognized and utilized.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Lord, giver of all great gifts, bless this offering to the glory of your kingdom. And bless your people, who give out of the love you have set in their hearts. Amen.

Benediction

Seek first the kingdom of God and God's righteousness,
and all good things will be given to you.

And as we have received gifts in abundance,
we are sent into the world:

to our homes; to workplaces; to our schools; and social circles
to share from the abundance we have received.

We are now prepared to go and serve the Lord and make a difference in our community.
Go in peace.