

THE GIFT

**A CHRISTIAN PUBLICATION BY ST. JOHN
LUTHERAN**

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GOOD STEWARDS, GOOD TENANTS

Where I grew up in California, it was common for people to buy vacation homes in the mountains near Lake Tahoe, Yosemite Valley, or even along the coast line somewhere. The thing was, most of the time, the people buying the property could not really afford the property. They could scratch together a down payment and get a mortgage, but they couldn't afford to make the monthly payments, in most cases. However, since this was a second home, or a vacation home, or perhaps intended as a retirement home, it would sit empty most of the time. Most people solved these two problems by hiring a property manager and renting out their vacation home during

the time that they were not using it. The problem was that not all tenants were created equal. Some tenants were wonderful, took good care of the facilities, and paid their fees on time. Other tenants were not so pleasant to work with, either they didn't take good care of the facilities, they didn't pay the rent on time, or they came up with some new and spectacular way of causing trouble. Every vacation home landlord I have ever known has a story to tell about a nightmare tenant, such as the one that threw a HUGE party and didn't clean up afterwards, the one who sued the landlord because there was snow on the driveway, or the one who burnt the house to the ground. Everyone had dealt with a nightmare tenant.

I have always thought that this was an excellent description of

what stewardship really is. Stewardship gets a really bad rap because, for at least a generation, most folks who talked about stewardship have talked about it in terms of giving. And giving is a part of stewardship, but only a PART of the deal. Stewardship is about much more than how much you leave in the offering plate every week. Stewardship is properly about every aspect of life, from the way you interact with others, to the legacy you leave behind, to how you use what you have been entrusted with.

The scripture tells us that everything – EVERYTHING – from the clothes on your back, to the house you live in, to your very soul, belongs not to you, but to God. We are taught that while God has created everything and retains ownership of everything God has created, that God has entrusted us with God's

creation. God has made us the stewards, or the caretakers of God's creation. God has made us the caretakers of everything God has made: our bodies, our resources, the Earth and everything in it. And it is a rather nice creation, if I do say so myself.

But I am forced to wonder, and worry, that perhaps we are not God's ideal tenants. I am forced to wonder if we are using the things that God has created in the ways that God would want us to use them. I am forced to wonder if perhaps we are God's nightmare tenants. And of course the answer is different for each and every one of us... but consider **your** answer in light of a few statistics:

- 1) The average American spends more

time watching TV per DAY than they do in "religious activities" per WEEK. 2) The average Lutheran supports the ministries of Christ's church with less than 2% of their income.

3) The United Nations Development Program estimates that the basic health and nutrition needs of the world's poorest people could be met for an additional \$13 billion a year. Animal lovers in the United States and Europe spend more than that on pet food each year.

Of course no one is average. Some people no doubt ARE good tenants, some people spend a significant time pursuing a relationship with the risen Christ, or at least as much time as

they spend watching reruns of "LA-Law." Some folks pay a full tithe, and more, and some spend a significant portion of their time and resources working to end poverty, hunger, pollution and any of the other evils rampant in our world. But on average it seems hard to argue that we are good tenants.

But we can change. One of the central tenets of Lutheran theology is the regular dying to self and rising again to life with Christ, the regular opportunity for rebirth, free of sin and ready to be the ideal tenant. We may not be good tenants, but we can be.

Yours in Christ,

Pastor Andersen

KEEP IN MIND

- 1) There is a sign-up sheet in the narthex for individuals to provide refreshments the second Sunday of each month.
- 2) Pastor Andersen's book club continues on Thursday nights at 7:70 PM. There are approximately 5 chapters left to discuss in [Why Men Hate Going To Church!](#)
- 3) Visit the church website to see the latest updates - www.stjohnmassbach.org.
- 4) Please provide your newsletter editors with any updates on those individuals and/or families listed as prayer concerns, if it is so desired.
- 5) Simply Giving accounts can still be arranged for those wishing to have offerings directly taken from a bank account. If you're interested, see Jeff Randecker.
- 6) Help beautify our sanctuary with flowers! A sign-up sheet is located in the narthex.

EXCELLENCE AT THE EXPO – APRIL 5, 2008

Income:

Saturday (cash and checks)	2,030.45
Chamber Coupons for Rolls and Coffee (66 @ 1.25)	82.50
Table Rental (32 @ \$15)	480.00
Cash Donations	59.00
Total Income	\$2,651.95

Expenses:

Use of School Kitchen	70.00
School Cook	50.00
Health Permit	20.00
Sullivan's Foods	292.53
Extra Supplies (Aldi, Sam's, Pop, Water, Etc.)	91.76
Start Up Cash Saturday	300.00
Total Expenses	\$824.29

Net Profit: \$1,827.66

Served:

120 Cinnamon Rolls	48 Decorated Cookies
150 BBQ Sandwiches	60 Hot Dogs
180 Brats	24# Potato Salad
2 Gallon Fruit Salad	3 Gallon Pasta Salad
240 oz. Cottage Cheese	50 Bags of Potato Chips
29 Pies	24 Slices of Cheesecake
1 ½ Gallon Milk	223 Cans of Pop
68 Bottles of Water	2 ½# of Coffee

*** Thanks to all the “willing hands” that made the expo a wonderful outreach for St. John Lutheran of Massbach. Charlotte Blackburn, Chairperson

TIME AND TALENT IN ACTION

	Lector	Acolyte	Greeters
May 4 th	Laura Albrecht	Paige Paisley	Daylon and Shirley Scheele
May 11 th	Daylon Scheele	Paige Paisley	George and Marilee Hejna
May 18 th	Sandy Andersen	Matthew Carroll	Pam Staver and Joan Beyer
May 25 th	Allen Scheele	Matthew Carroll	Calvin and Jan Klopff

May Ushers: Ken and June Eden, Sam and Carl Albrecht

May Treasurer's Assistant: Jan Klopf

BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

COMING SOON... FREE MONEY - or at least an economic stimulus rebate check from your Uncle Sam! Along with this check comes the opportunity to make a difference in your world and to experience tithing first hand. The ELCA Synod bishops and the St. John Evangelical Lutheran Church Council are encouraging you to tithe 10% of your soon to arrive economic stimulus check. The money collected will **not** go into the general fund, it will **not** be used to pay the church light bill, and it will **not** be sent on to the synod or ELCA church wide office. Instead, 100% of the tithes received **will** be used for ministry outside of the congregation and **in our local community.**

This is an opportunity to experience tithing, or giving the first 10% of your income to God. As very few Lutherans pay a full and complete tithe (the average figure is somewhere below 2%, embarrassingly enough), this is an opportunity to try out a spiritual discipline that some are nervous about attempting with their regular income.

So, whatever else you plan to do with your economic stimulus rebate check, I hope you will consider paying a full tithe on the money, first as a way to practice the spiritual discipline of first fruits giving, and secondly as a means to use this unexpected windfall to benefit those most in need in our community. You have been blessed, choose to be a blessing.

Pastor Andersen

HEAR OUR PRAYER

The Family of Jerry Boelk, The Family of Bailey McMannus, The Family of Raymond Eden, The Family of Ruth Chumbler, Nicole Haight, Joe Dvorak Sr., Allen Randecker, Mary Lou Krohmer Shaw, Meredith Townsend, Jack Reel, Kevin Meiners, Warren Parker, Dennis Ulicny, Jeanette Yeager, Dan Koester, and the men and women serving in the world's armed forces

Jeanette Yeager has sold her home here in the Stockton area and now lives with her son, Dennis. She is doing well and would love a phone call, card, or visit:

Jeanette Yeager
1656 E Town Hall Rd.
Freeport, IL 61032
(815) 238-2940

MINISTRY IN MOTION

Pastor Andersen is in the process of finalizing plans for interested members of St. John to serve dinner at the Dubuque Rescue Mission. If you are interested, please indicate so on the sign-up sheet located in the narthex.

DO I HEAR \$ 20 ... DO I HEAR \$ 25?

The Lester Albrecht farm sale will take place on Saturday, May 10th. Our church has been asked to do the lunch stand. Consider donating BBQ, pies, or money toward the purchase of several supplies needed. Questions? Contact Charlotte Blackburn at 947-2031.

TRIATHLON TIME

This year, St. John was asked to cater the post race picnic for approximately 1,400 athletes that participate in the Galena Triathlon. Previously, we have only served the food. The cater bid that was accepted also included serving the lunch. The Triathlon will take place one week after the Albrecht farm sale, therefore, we will not be volunteering this year. This was always a fun event that many members participated in, so we will certainly see what develops for next year!

Charlotte Blackburn, Chairperson

CHURCH MICE?

Rumor has it that we have some little critters living in the church! To help “control the population,” the council asks that the kitchen remains clean and that the lids are placed tightly on the garbage cans at all times. Thanks!

MEET YOUR NEW COUNCIL OFFICERS!

President: Rene Albrecht
Vice President: Eldon Carroll
Secretary: Jen Johnson
Treasurer: Jeff Randecker
Financial Secretary: Vicki Wurster

BLESSED TO BE A BLESSING

Rev. Paul Stumme-Diers, Bishop of the Greater Milwaukee Synod ELCA, asked some folks, “*If you get an Economic Stimulus Rebate from the IRS, how do you plan to use it?*” Here are some answers:

- ❖ “I plan to pay some of my bills. I think that will stimulate the economy.”
- ❖ “I’ll probably get some dental work done.”
- ❖ “My wife and children and I are going to have a conversation about how we can give it to people living in poverty. They will help the economy.”
- ❖ “We’re going to tithe, of course, and the rest of the money we’ll spend on something that will stimulate the economy.”
- ❖ “I haven’t decided yet, but I really need some energy-efficient windows on my home.”

OUR PAST, OUR PRESENT, OUR FUTURE

Are you a “history buff?” Do you like current events? Any interest in the future of St. John? If so, see Pastor Andersen about an exciting ministry opportunity! A volunteer or volunteers are needed to help with preserving our church’s past, in addition to “keeping track” of current events via photographs, journaling, etc. If this may interest you, or if you know of someone whose talents may apply, please let Pastor Andersen know!

BEACH PARTY – SURFIN’ THROUGH THE SCRIPTURES

The First United Methodist Church in Elizabeth is again hosting an all-church community vacation bible school for those of Preschool age through 6th grade. This year’s theme is “Beach Party – Surfin’ Through The Scriptures.” VBS will take place Sunday, June 22 – Thursday June 26th from 5:30 – 8:00 PM. Supper is also included at a weekly price of \$5 per child or \$15 per family. Contact Jen Johnson at 947-6014 for more details.

❖ “I’ll decide how to use it when I get it, but I’m open to suggestions.”