

Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA

Stewardship Vision & Plan

Vision *Passionately and Joyfully Sharing God's Gifts*

Mission Called by the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, we will inspire and equip congregations to nurture all people to passionately and joyfully share all their God-given gifts throughout God's kingdom.

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Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA

Stewardship Strategy

Vision *Passionately and Joyfully Sharing God's Gifts*

Mission Called by the Gospel of Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit, we will inspire and equip congregations to nurture all people to passionately and joyfully share all their God-given gifts throughout God's kingdom.

Guiding Principles

1. Everything belongs to God and is entrusted to us to be used collaboratively for the good of all creation. (Psalm 8:3-4, 6a)
2. Faithful stewardship challenges us, as members of the body of Christ, to be inclusive and nurturing, celebrating the gifts of all for the good of all. (1Cor 12)
3. God provides abundantly so we respond generously. (2Cor 9:8)
4. Through baptism God claims and calls us to lives of stewardship that transform us, our church and the world. (1Cor 4:1)
5. God's love sets us free to give fearlessly. (1 John 3:16-18)
6. Faithful stewardship is an expression of justice. (Micah 6:8)
7. God's grace sets us free from greed. (John 8:31-32)

Goals and Outcomes

1. Attain growth in personal and congregational stewardship, including the giving of time, talents, and financial resources.
2. Study, teach, and model biblically-based stewardship principles and practices.
3. Develop a willingness and openness for everyone to talk regularly about personal stewardship.
4. Network people, congregations, and resources for God's work in the world.
5. Grow new steward leaders in congregations and the synod.
6. Develop and provide education and training resources.
7. Live out a spiritual discipline toward and beyond tithing.
8. Expect all congregational pastors and steward leaders to attend at least one of the synodically sponsored stewardship events each year.
9. Increase the number of special and planned gifts within the congregation and synod.
10. Identify, train, and support a Mission Interpreter in each congregation.
11. Double the number of tithers in each congregation.
12. Establish and support an ongoing Stewardship and Mission Support Table (Team).
13. Increase congregations ELCA Mission Support to 15% or more of congregational total budget by adopting proportionate giving and growing by 1% per year.
14. Sustain synodical Mission Support sharing with the ELCA at 55% or more.
15. Obtain annual Statement of Intent for Mission Support from each congregation.
16. Obtain 100% of parochial reports from congregations each year.

Stewardship Strategies

1. Emphasize stewardship as a mark of discipleship and a spiritual discipline.
2. Practice individual and group prayer as a spiritual foundation for faithful stewardship.
3. Model a life of faithful discipleship through healthy stewardship practices.
4. Actively use scripture to inspire conversations about stewardship.
5. Focus on God's abundance as evidenced through gifts and strengths of individuals, families, and communities.
6. Emphasize first fruits and percentage growth giving.
7. Provide annual education and training opportunities for all ages, cultures, economic groups, races, and stages of faith.
8. Use a cluster or group approach to events and activities.
9. Use networks to connect and nurture relationships among people and congregations.
10. Work with and through rostered and lay leaders to grow a healthy stewardship ministry in congregations.
11. Develop teams to implement this vision and plan based on passions, skills, and availability of individuals.
12. Develop methods of measurement and accountability for congregation and leader participation in stewardship education, training, and events.
13. Utilize the web and electronic media to teach, inform, connect, and invite support for these stewardship efforts.
14. Utilize the synod assembly to increasingly engage people in stewardship awareness, education, and participation.
15. Focus communication and education efforts on stewarding God's mission and work, while using budgets and spending plans as tools to do so.
16. Develop an annual mission support process that builds trust through open, honest, and faithful conversation about mission, ministry, and money.

Stewardship Action Areas

1. Growing Stewards (Education)
2. Living Stewards (Lifestyle)
3. Growing Leaders (Leadership Development)
4. Using God's Gifts (Giftedness)
5. Caring for Creation (Earthkeeping)
6. Managing Money (Finances)
7. Telling about God's work (Mission Interpretation)
8. Responding to God's Gifts (Mission Support and Regular Giving)

Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA
Addendum 1
Stewardship Action Areas

1. Growing Stewards (Education)

a. Guiding Principles

- * Everything belongs to God and is entrusted to us to be used collaboratively for the good of all creation.
- * God provides abundantly so we respond generously.
- * Behavior is shaped by aptitude, motivation, and attitude.

b. Goals

- ◆ Develop a willingness and openness to talk regularly about personal stewardship.
- ◆ Study, teach and model biblically-based stewardship principles and practices.
- ◆ Develop and provide education and training resources.
- ◆ Live out a spiritual discipline toward and beyond tithing.
- ◆ Increase aptitude by offering specific content aimed at different audiences.
- ◆ Provide motivation through exemplary stewardship leadership.
- ◆ Set and sustain a positive attitude towards stewardship.

c. Strategies

- Emphasize stewardship as a mark of discipleship and a spiritual discipline.
- Model a life of faithful discipleship through healthy stewardship practices.
- Provide annual education and training opportunities for all ages, cultures, economic groups, races, and stages of faith.
- Use networks to connect and nurture relationships among people and congregations.
- Use a cluster or group approach to events and activities.
- Work with and through rostered and lay leaders to grow a healthy stewardship ministry in congregations.
- Utilize the web and electronic media to teach, inform, connect and invite support for these stewardship efforts.

d. Action Plan

1. Ask pastors to self-identify needs.
2. Ask congregations to self-identify needs.
3. Facilitate groups and clusters to build relationships and share stories of faith, including informal, less traditional groups, and non-ELCA participation.
4. Provide education and resources for First Call Theological Education.
5. Provide education and resources for lay-leaders.
6. Improve communications and establish networks of growing stewards and congregations.

e. Action Steps

1. Identify specific audience segments and learning needs,
 - a. Pastors and seminarians
 - b. Lay Leaders
 - c. Congregation members
 - d. Seekers and new members
 - e. Young Adult
 - f. Children
2. Create message supporting guiding principles and goals.
3. Develop high level content outline for each audience segment.
4. Identify subject matter experts supporting content outline.
5. Develop detailed content and outline content.
6. Create learning activities aimed at specific audience segments,
 - a. Skits and plays
 - b. Readings
 - c. Monthly or frequent quick lessons
7. Identify and deploy different delivery mechanisms,
 - a. Online education
 - b. Blended education
 - c. Facilitated workshops
 - d. Bible studies and small groups
8. Offer multiple delivery channels for the same content and resources,
 - a. Through the pastor
 - b. Direct to the audience
9. Develop sustaining support structure for motivation,
 - a. Inspirational leadership
 - b. Internet site
 - c. Messaging for rostered and lay leaders

f. Team Members

Jesus Martinez
Tim Perlick
Kathy Young

**Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA
Addendum 1
Stewardship Action Areas**

2. Living Stewards (Lifestyle)

a. Guiding Principles

- * Everything belongs to God and is entrusted to us to be used collaboratively for the good of all creation.
- * Through baptism God claims and calls us to lives of stewardship that transform us, our church, and the world.
- * Behavior is shaped by aptitude, motivation, and attitude.

b. Goals

- ◆ Study, teach and model biblically-based stewardship principles and practices.
- ◆ Develop and provide education and training resources.
- ◆ Increase aptitude by offering specific content aimed at different audiences.
- ◆ Provide motivation through exemplary stewardship leadership.

c. Strategies

- Emphasize stewardship as a mark of discipleship and a spiritual discipline.
- Model a life of faithful discipleship through healthy stewardship practices.
- Use networks to connect and nurture relationships among people and congregations.
- Use a cluster or group approach to events and activities.
- Work with and through rostered and lay leaders to grow a healthy stewardship ministry in congregations.
- Utilize the web and electronic media to teach, inform, connect, and invite support for these stewardship efforts.

d. Action Plan

1. Introduce use of ELCA Board of Pensions (BOP) wellness wheel to congregations.
2. Introduce stewardship resource: *Make It Simple* to congregations.
3. Develop network of “resource” congregations already addressing topic.

e. Action Steps

1. Explore ELCA BOP wellness wheel being used in congregations.
2. Explore stewardship resource: *Make It Simple*.
3. Identify and contact congregations who are already addressing this topic directly.

f. Team Members

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Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA
Addendum 1
Stewardship Action Areas

3. Growing Leaders (Leadership Development)

a. Guiding Principles

- * Faithful stewardship challenges us to be inclusive and nurturing, celebrating the gifts of all for the good of all.
- * Faithful stewardship is an expression of justice.

b. Goals

- ◆ Establish and support an ongoing Stewardship and Mission Support Table (Team).
- ◆ Grow new steward leaders in congregations and the synod.
- ◆ Expect all congregational pastors and steward leaders to attend a synodically sponsored stewardship event each year.
- ◆ Develop and provide education and training resources.

c. Strategies

- Emphasize stewardship as a mark of discipleship and a spiritual discipline.
- Practice individual and group prayer as a spiritual foundation for faithful stewardship.
- Model a life of faithful discipleship through healthy stewardship practices.
- Provide annual education and training opportunities for all ages, cultures, economic groups, races, and stages of faith.
- Use a cluster or group approach to events and activities.
- Use networks to connect and nurture relationships among people and congregations.
- Work with and through rostered and lay leaders to grow a healthy stewardship ministry in congregations.
- Develop teams to implement this vision and plan based on passions, skills, and availability of individuals.
- Develop methods of measurement and accountability for congregation and leader participation in stewardship education, training, and events.

d. Action Plan

1. Identify synod stewardship leaders.
2. Identify congregational stewardship leaders.
3. Develop education and training resources (workshops, self-study, online).
4. Identify and train Guest Leaders for Consecration Sunday.

e. Action Steps

1. Identify at least one steward leader contact in each congregation.
2. Invite steward leaders to the Stewardship and Mission Support Table (Team).
3. Provide personal invitations to rostered leaders and steward leaders to attend synod stewardship events.
4. Develop one self-study and one online training resource per year.
5. Conduct Consecration Sunday Guest Leader training sessions.
6. Develop a quarterly stewardship newsletter for steward leaders.

f. Team Members - Gene Meyers and Tim Perlick

Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA
Addendum 1
Stewardship Action Areas

4. Using God's Gifts (Giftedness)

a. Guiding Principles

- * Faithful stewardship challenges us, as members of the body of Christ, to be inclusive and nurturing, celebrating the gifts of all for the good of all.
- * Through baptism God claims and calls us to lives of stewardship that transform us, our church, and the world.

b. Goals

- ◆ Develop a willingness and openness to talk regularly about personal stewardship.
- ◆ Network people, congregations, and resources for God's work in the world.
- ◆ Attain growth in personal and congregational stewardship, including the giving of time, talents, and financial resources.

c. Strategies

- Practice individual and group prayer as a spiritual foundation for faithful stewardship.
- Emphasize stewardship as a mark of discipleship and a spiritual discipline.
- Model a life of faithful discipleship through healthy stewardship practices.
- Provide annual education and training opportunities for all ages, cultures, economic groups, races, and stages of faith.
- Use networks to connect and nurture relationships among people and congregations.
- Use a cluster or group approach to events and activities.
- Develop teams to implement this vision and plan based on passions, skills, and availability of individuals.

d. Action Plan

1. Conduct training events on effective approaches to Time and Talent.
2. Conduct training events on effective approaches to gifts-based ministry.

e. Action Steps

1. Identify congregations in synod who are currently using effective tools.
2. Explore available approaches to Time and Talent and gifts-based ministry, and provide comparative summary.
3. Offer at least one event per year to share information and provide training.

f. Team Members

Melody Eastman
Steve Homberg

Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA
Addendum 1
Stewardship Action Areas

5. Caring for Creation (Earthkeeping)

a. Guiding Principles

- * Everything belongs to God and is entrusted to us to be used collaboratively for the good of all creation.
- * Through baptism God claims and calls us to lives of stewardship, to live in partnership with all creation that transforms us, our church, and the world.

b. Goals

- ◆ People willing and open to talk about personal stewardship of creation.
- ◆ Create stewardship networks; people and congregations coming together to leverage resources for God's work in the world.
- ◆ All congregations would become Green congregations.

c. Strategies

- Model a life of faithful discipleship through healthy stewardship practices.
- Provide annual education and training opportunities for all ages, cultures, economic groups, races, and stages of faith.
- Use networks to connect and nurture relationships among people and congregations.
- Use a cluster or group approach to events and activities.
- Develop teams to implement this vision and plan based on passions, skills, and availability of individuals.

d. Action Plan

- 1) Conduct annually at least one information/training event on Earthkeeping.
- 2) Establish initial network of Green congregations to support those in process.

e. Action Steps

1. Identify congregations currently doing activities in earthkeeping or caring for creation.
2. Invite congregations to share their experiences and challenges in developing this ministry within a congregation.
3. Identify resources and websites that are helpful to congregations that reflect a sustainable (creation centered) lifestyle.
4. Design an event that would benefit both the practicing and non-practicing congregations.
5. Offer sermon starters and resources for a creation sermon series.

f. Team Members

Dick Schlake
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Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA
Addendum 1
Stewardship Action Areas

6. Managing Money (Finances)

a. Guiding Principles

- * God provides abundantly so we respond generously.
- * God's grace sets us free from greed.
- * God's love sets us free to give fearlessly.

b. Goals

- ◆ Develop a willingness and openness to talk regularly about personal stewardship.
- ◆ Attain growth in personal and congregational stewardship of financial resources.
- ◆ Live out a spiritual discipline toward and beyond tithing.
- ◆ Double the number of tithers in each congregation.
- ◆ Increase the number of special and planned gifts within the congregations and synod.
- ◆ Network people, congregations, and resources for God's work in the world.

c. Strategies

- Model a life of faithful discipleship through healthy stewardship practices.
- Provide annual education and training opportunities for financial management for all ages, cultures, economic groups, races, and stages of faith.
- Use networks to connect and nurture relationships among people and congregations.
- Use a cluster or group approach to events and activities.
- Focus on God's abundance as present through gifts and strengths of individuals, families and communities.
- Emphasize first fruits and percentage growth giving.
- Focus communication and education efforts on stewarding God's mission and work, while using budgets and spending plans as tools to do so.
- Teach the principle of 10-10-80.

d. Action Plan

1. Conduct annual planned giving events.
2. Conduct annual events on the proper creation and use of Congregational Endowment Funds.
3. Conduct annual training events on personal/household financial management.
4. Conduct workshops for congregations on developing a congregational spending plan.

e. Action Steps

1. Define key audiences for resources and training. (i.e., business administrators, treasurers, pastors, finance leaders, etc.)
2. Meet with ELCA Foundation and develop specific activities for congregation endowments and planned giving.

3. Identify approaches to personal/household financial management and describe options to congregations.
4. Evaluate and improve current resources on developing a congregational spending plan.
5. Evaluate current approaches on tithing including Tither's Table and Try-a-Tithe Sunday.
6. Design and conduct events that would benefit both the practicing and non-practicing congregations.

f. Team Members

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Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA
Addendum 1
Stewardship Action Areas

7. Telling about God's Work (Mission Interpretation Ministry)

a. Guiding Principles

- * Everything belongs to God and is entrusted to us to be used collaboratively for the good of all creation.
- * Through baptism God claims and calls us as stewards to lives that transform us, our church, and the world.

b. Goals

- ◆ Weekly share the story of how we, the ELCA, are doing mission in our congregations, our synod, our nation, and our world.
- ◆ Network people, congregations, synod ministry partners, ELCA, and other resources for God's work in the world.
- ◆ Grow new leaders in congregations and the synod.

c. Strategies

- Identify, train, and support a Mission Interpreter in each congregation.
- Provide annual education and training opportunities for all ages, cultures, economic groups, races, and stages of faith.
- Use networks to connect and nurture relationships among people and congregations.
- Use a cluster or group approach to events and activities.
- Utilize the web and electronic media to teach, inform, connect, and invite support for these stewardship efforts.
- Utilize the synod assembly to increasingly engage people in stewardship awareness, education, and participation.
- Focus communication and education efforts on stewarding God's mission and work, while using narrative budgeting and spending plans as tools to do so.

d. Action Plan

1. Form a sub-table (team) to oversee and coordinate Mission Interpretation Ministry.
2. Develop and conduct at least two orientations per year for Mission Interpreters.
3. Develop and conduct at least two support/training events per year for Mission Interpreters.

e. Action Steps

1. Identify individuals to attend Mission Interpreter Coordinator training.
2. Conduct at least two orientations per year.
3. Identify potential people for a Mission Interpreter Table (Team).
4. Provide orientation and training for table (team) participants.
5. Recruit one MI in each conference to coordinate for the conference.
6. Conduct two support/training events per year for Mission Interpreters.
7. Prepare a calendar of monthly focuses.

8. Recruit and train a team to develop temple talks, sermon starters, and webpage resources, etc.
9. Survey synod congregations and ministry partners to learn about local mission and ascertain interest in being in relationship and developing networks.
10. Lift up Mission Interpretation and Interpreters at synod assemblies.
11. Annually review and update brochure.
12. Present the Mission Interpretation ministry annually at synod conferences and Dean's meetings.

f. Team Members

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Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA
Addendum 1
Stewardship Action Areas

8. Respond to God's Gifts (Mission Support and Regular Giving)

a. Guiding Principles

- * Everything belongs to God and is entrusted to us to be used collaboratively for the good of all creation.
- * Through baptism God claims and calls us to lives of stewardship that transform us, our church, and the world.
- * Faithful stewardship is an expression of justice.
- * God provides abundantly so we respond generously.

b. Goals

- ◆ Increase congregations ELCA Mission Support to 15% or more of congregational total budget by adopting proportionate giving and growing by 1% per year.
- ◆ Sustain synodical Mission Support sharing with the ELCA at 55% or more.
- ◆ Obtain annual Statement of Intent for Mission Support from each congregation.
- ◆ Obtain 100% of parochial reports from congregations each year.

c. Strategies

- Model a life of faithful discipleship through healthy stewardship practices.
- Use networks to connect and nurture relationships among people and congregations.
- Use a cluster or group approach to events and activities.
- Focus on God's abundance as present through gifts and strengths of individuals, families, and communities.
- Emphasize first fruits and percentage growth giving.
- Utilize the web and electronic media to teach, inform, connect, and invite support for these stewardship efforts.
- Utilize the synod assembly to increasingly engage people in stewardship awareness, education, and participation.
- Focus communication and education efforts on stewarding God's mission and work, while using budgets and spending plans as tools to do so.
- Develop an annual mission support process that builds trust through open, honest, and faithful conversation about mission, ministry, and money.

d. Action Plan

1. Conduct year-round congregational "Thank you and Discussion Gatherings" and congregation council "Thank you and Discussion Visits."
2. Annually increase percentage of Statement of Intent responses received from congregations.
3. Annually increase percentage of Parochial Report responses from congregations.

e. Action Steps

1. Evaluate history of Statement of Intent practices and make adjustments to improve response.
2. Evaluate history of parochial report submission and make adjustments to improve response rate.
3. Review annual “consultation” process and develop a year-round process to thank, to challenge, and to listen to congregational leaders.
4. Review recommended practices to grow Mission Support and determine those most helpful for implementation in this synod.

f. Team Members

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Metropolitan Chicago Synod, ELCA
Addendum 2
First Steps to implement the
Synod Stewardship Strategy
in your congregation

If you are interested in using the Synod Stewardship Vision and Plan to fill your congregation with passionate and joyful stewards, here is how to get started:

- 1) Invite your stewardship team and church council to meet together. The purpose of this meeting will be to take a look at the “Vision and Plan” as it relates to your current stewardship practices. If you do not have a specific stewardship team or committee, simply have your council review the document.
- 2) The “Vision and Plan” has eight action areas. If you have a large enough group, divide participants into eight groups, each being responsible to take a look at one action area. If you have a smaller group, divide into at least two groups and divide the action areas among the groups.
- 3) Once participants are in their group, have them individually read through the action area(s) for which they are responsible. Then, for each action area, have them answer the following questions:
 1. *What are we currently doing in this area?*
 2. *Based on what we’ve read, what one or two things would we like to begin doing right away?*
 3. *What do we need from the synod to be stronger in this area?*
- 4) Finally, come back together as a large group and share your findings. As you share your findings, make a list of those things you would like to do right away. Prioritize this list to give your stewardship team or council direction. Don’t forget to let the synod know of resources you need.

May God bless your congregation abundantly as our synod works together to fill our communities and congregations with passionate and joyful stewards.