

Stewardship

Not long ago, our neighborhood faced a “crisis.” The threat was not a sudden crime wave, environmental danger, or the loss of some of our neighborhood’s treasured and uncommon diversity. In small ways, we have already faced each of these challenges. This year’s threat was rising association dues!

Our neighborhood is situated on the outer edge of a small town between several major roadways. Our 99 homes are nestled in a neighborhood that was intentionally designed to encourage community. Our subdivision has a single entrance, a neighborhood bus stop, and a large oval-shaped road around which the houses are built. Inside that large oval – beyond the edges of each one of our property lines – lies nearly 15 acres of “common” park areas that we share. In these areas we have a large community sandbox, a playground, a soccer field, and a swimming pool. Private ownership of any of these might be beyond the reach of many of us. Together however, we are able to enjoy and share these things as a community.

Recently, our commonly held areas – the areas that are supposed to bring us together – began to cause us some stress. Maintenance and upkeep costs were continually rising. Shared space is a wonderful idea, but managing and caring for it is complex and expensive. Some called for closing the pool or no longer maintaining our park. Others said it was those things that drew them to the community.

Anxious homeowners knew the dues would rise. Speculation and conversation

was metastasizing. As a board, we knew we needed to be sensitive to the economic challenges among our friends and neighbors; we also knew that the board



needs to protect and maintain the property we share.

On the day I was composing an email for the community I was keenly aware of that tension. As I was writing, there was a knock at my door. When I opened it, I saw four young kids standing there and several more in my driveway. With a simple innocence and a firm determination, they handed me a surprisingly heavy coffee can.

“What is this?” I asked.

“We heard the neighborhood was in trouble so we had some lemonade stands. This is the money. We counted it like five times; we’re pretty sure it’s \$48.88. Bye.” With that they turned, skipped out

“In giving, a person receives more than they give, and the more is in the proportion to the worth of the thing given.”

G. Macdonald



(Continued on page 4)

“NOTABLE QUOTES”

“In our Christian stewardship we must be very careful lest we let our tithe of little things be a substitute for giving ourselves fully for great Christian causes.”

S. I. Stuber

“Giving God less than my whole life is robbery.”

“When shearing the sheep, never shear from the rear forwards. They do not want the wool pulled over their eyes.”

J. E. Herrman

Giving to God a weekly amount from the top of your income makes giving easier and adds the satisfaction of knowing, as you spend the rest of your income, that you have given God the “first fruits” rather than the “leftovers.”




“He doesn’t have much to say, but you have to admire his work!”

The Good Steward

Giving our time is often harder than giving our money. When Ron Windorpher, one of our church members, suggested that our congregation start a soup kitchen ministry at noon on Sundays, he knew he couldn’t do it alone. Additional hands would be needed to prepare and serve the food on a day when the local Salvation Army kitchen was closed. The need was clear. Hungry folks needed to eat on Sundays, too. Money alone would not feed empty stomachs. Ron knew he needed both hearts and hands to work together.

So he announced his plan from the pulpit, prepared a sign-up sheet for volunteers, and asked for prayers of support and seed money to help his vision grow. Still, it took awhile for the idea to take hold. Questions and concerns were raised and addressed. After all, this was new territory for our small northern Michigan parish. The new ministry would take a lot of menu planning, preparation, and prayer. And time.

Soon enough, though, volunteer teams appeared. And they have stayed faithful to Ron’s call for over fifteen years. Soup kitchen lunches have ranged from soup to nuts to holiday feasts of turkey, dressing, and yams; from peanut butter and honey sandwiches to baked pineapple and glazed ham. Whether the food is simple or sublime, it fills an empty stomach and warms a lonely heart.

We need each other. What’s more important than giving our time, our most precious commodity, to a hungry person? 






talents and possessions, and how you use these is a choice you make that indicates the depth of your faith.

You can share your time by serving in the activities of your church, as a leader or teacher, and by faithful attendance, recreational and social activities.

You can share your talents and abilities by answering the call for workers in any task, from painting the woodwork to calling on people.

Once there was a man who went to his Pastor and said, "Give me the job that nobody else wants to do." What a marvelous investment of his time and ability.

You can acknowledge the priority of God's work by giving it first place in the apportionment of your income.

So then, part of being a good church member is sharing yourself and what you have with God and your fellow human beings ... your time, your talent, and your possessions. 

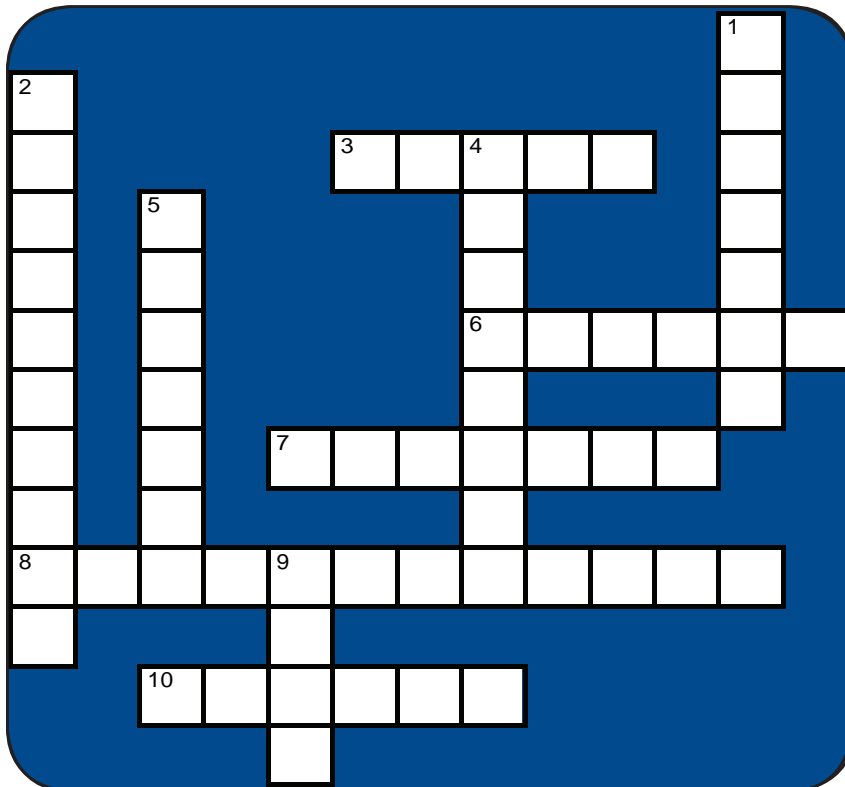
Christian stewards do not dedicate their time, talent and treasure that they may become God's, but because they are God's.

The great commandment given by Jesus was to love. To fulfill this, Christians worship and share.

Let's talk about ... SHARING.

Sharing is both serving and giving. It's part of our "stewardship." We believe that it is the privilege of Christians to dedicate what they have and what they are to God. We commonly speak of time,

Stewardship Word Scramble



Clue

Answer

Across

3. Easier to give than time. eynmo
 6. An act of stewardship. invgig
 7. Not returning tithes and offerings (Malachi 3:8). rorbbye
 8. Good way for people to face challenges. hsettrgsneeo
 10. Supports the church. bmrnee

Down

1. An act of sharing. nvirges
 2. An attribute of a good steward. yneregijos
 4. Anyone in need of our help. rheignob
 5. Both serving and giving. ginsarh
 9. A gift from God, measured in hours. imte

