*Reprint permission is granted for local congregational use.Just copy and paste into your newsletter! Please include the copyright notice. Other uses please inquire: rblezard@lss-elca.org.*

OCTOBER 2017

**Our harvest of blessings**

*I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the growth. So neither the one who plants nor the one who waters is anything, but only God who gives the growth.* **--1 Corinthians 3:6-7**

Doesn’t fall give your spirit a boost when you see the colorful fruits and vegetables in the farm stands and supermarkets? Orange pumpkins, red apples, green squash, yellow corn and purple eggplants are all tasty reminders of God’s abundance.

We bear in mind that although the farmers grow the harvest by carefully preparing the soil and planting in spring, then watering and nourishing all summer, it’s God that produces the life in the seeds that sprout into fruitful plants. Farmers *manage* God’s order of life by providing the ideal conditions for plants to grow abundantly. Yes, the plants would grow and produce fruit and vegetables if left wild, but their yield would not be as plentiful. The attentive, skillful work of farmers in cooperation with God’s design for life ensures a harvest of plenty for all.

Fall harvest provides a wonderful metaphor for how we are stewards of all the blessings that God gives us. We know that God has given us wonderful, amazing gifts, such as family, community, church, health, intelligence, time, and relationships. And we also know that we are responsible for caring for them and working hard to provide the ideal conditions under which they will benefit ourselves, our families and our communities.

For instance:

⚫ Maintaining the gift of our bodies by eating right, exercising and getting plenty of sleep, we increase the likelihood we will live longer, healthier, robust and resilient lives.

⚫ Nourishing our gifts of intelligence and wisdom through education, reading, exploring, curiosity and continually learning, we will be best able to understand and improve the world around us.

⚫ Cultivating our gift of faith through prayer, worship, scripture, generosity, love and service, our lives bear fruits of the spirit -- love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control (Galatians 5:22-23).

⚫ Loving and tending to our spouses, children, parents, siblings and other relatives, we build strong, healthy families and develop caring, purposeful individuals who can make a difference.

Our farmers are stewards of the earth, not only understanding how to make the most of God’s gift of plant life but also working tirelessly to achieve it. They are partners with God to create a bounty of blessings for our dinner table.

We are stewards of our lives, not only understanding how to best use our gifts of time and talent and treasure but also faithfully striving to make the most of all with which we have been entrusted. We are partners with God to create a bounty of blessings for ourselves, our communities and our world.

*--Rob Blezard*

*Copyright © 2017, Rev. Robert Blezard. Reprinted by permission. Pastor Blezard serves as an assistant to the bishop of the Lower Susquehanna Synod and works as content editor for* [*www.stewardshipoflife.org*](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org)*.*