*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.*

JUNE 2018

***Stewardship of our physical health***

*The Apostle Paul writes, “Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit within you, which you have from God, and that you are not your own?”***2 Corinthians 6:19**

To be a steward/disciple is to be aware of all the gifts god has entrusted to you, and then to care for them and use them wisely for God’s purposes. This month we focus on our bodies. God has given each of us a physical body that, like an automobile, is a complex vehicle carries us along our road of life. To live the fullest life possible, like our cars, we need to take good care of our bodies.

Evidence suggests that we in the United States have significant room for improvement. The World Health Organization ranks the United States 31stfor life expectancy on a ranking of 188 nations. And we are higher in our rates of cancer, obesity, diabetes, heart disease and other chronic medical conditions than many other developed nations.

Of course, everybody gets sick sometimes, and many of us suffer from health problems that have nothing to do with how well we are taking care of ourselves. Genetics play an important role in our health, as do environment and other factors.

With so many variables over which we have *no control*, it’s important that we do our best with the variables we *can* control.

For June, dedicate yourselves to being a better steward of your body. Even if you are in generally good health now, you can always improve. Here are some ideas:

* **Get a physical.** Once your doctor has checked your cholesterol, blood sugar, blood pressure, body-mass index and other important markers of health, she can help set priorities and make a plan.
* **Move it!** Studies show that even small amounts of exercise improve health and wellbeing. Ask your doctor how much exercise is safe for you to start – or how fast you can ramp up.
* **Go on a diet.**The dreaded “D” word. Fact is, our eating habits comprise our diet; the only question is whether it’s leading us to better or worse health. Learn about the nutritional value of the foods you now eat, and explore choices that are more healthful. Ask your doctor for recommendations.
* **Stop smoking.**It’s the number one preventable health risk. Smoking is linked to cancers, high blood pressure, heart disease and other problems.
* **Sleep.** Doctors say getting eight hours of shuteye does wonders for body and mind.
* **Pray and meditate.** Spiritual disciplines lower your stress, which improves physical health, too.

God gave us wonderful bodies to carry us through our life’s journey of discipleship. The better we care for it, the more fruitful our journey will be.

*--Rob Blezard*

*Copyright © 2018, 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)*.*