**Your Stewardship Toolkit for February 2023!**

*January’s theme:* **Ash Wednesday’s wake-up call**

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Check out my website: [thestewardshipguy.com](https://www.thestewardshipguy.com)

Good, thoughtful, consistent communication, education and action will help your congregation develop a healthy culture of stewardship and generosity. This kit is designed to help get you there!

You can use the resources of this kit by themselves to educate and encourage stewardship, but they would be more effective as a monthly emphasis that lifted up a different aspect of stewardship. You could plan bible studies, temple talks, a preaching series, and other activities.

Here’s what you’ll find below:

**-Stewardship Snippets:** Put a “Stewardship Snippet” every week in your Sunday bulletin! It’s a quote from the week’s Revised Common Lectionary lessons, followed by a brief reflection. Just cut and paste!

**-Newsletter Article:** Publish something in your newsletter every month on stewardship and faith or post it on your website. Keep your people thinking about stewardship. Just cut and paste!

**-General Resource Websites:** – These are places you can go for inspiration and great ideas!

**Stewardship Snippets**

*Copy and paste into your bulletin!
Source: Rob Blezard*

**February 5, 2023** (5th Sunday after the Epiphany, Year A)

**Matthew 5:13 and 14**– Jesus says, “You are the salt of the earth,” and “You are the light of the world.”
*Without salt, we would become unhealthy and die. Without light, we would not be able to live. Jesus says WE are the world’s salt and light. Through us, the world receives things that are essential.*

**February 12, 2023** (6th Sunday after the Epiphany, Year A)

**Deuteronomy 30:17** –I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Choose life so that you and your descendants may live, loving the LORD your God, obeying him, and holding fast to him; for that means life to you and length of days.
*We are saved by our faith through God’s grace. Because of this we are free to live fully, loving God with everything we have and loving neighbor as ourselves. We choose life and God’s blessings when we put Jesus at the center of our lives.*

**February 19, 2023** (Transfiguration Sunday, Year A)

**Matthew 17:6-7 –** When the disciples heard this, they fell to the ground and were overcome by fear. But Jesus came and touched them, saying, "Get up and do not be afraid."
*Fear can keep us from living fully in God’s grace. In his response to his terrified disciples, Jesus gives us great insight. He tells them to “get up.” When fear keeps us from living, sometimes we just need to “get up” and get going.*

**February 26, 2023** (1st Sunday in Lent, Year A)

“But the free gift is not like the trespass. For if the many died through the one man's trespass, much more surely have the grace of God and the free gift in the grace of the one man, Jesus Christ, abounded for the many.“ **-Romans 5:15***Paul twice refers to God’s mercy through Jesus as a “free gift,” and in the full Romans passage for today he uses the phrase “free gift” five times! We best use and care for God’s “free gift” by living with joy, gratitude and love, and modeling mercy and grace in our own lives.*

**February 2023 Newsletter article** (343 words)

*Select the one below, or from the* [*Toolkit Newsletter Article Archive*](https://thestewardshipguy.com/newsletter-articles/)*.*

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***Ash Wednesday’s wake-up call***

“Remember that you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

With these words from Genesis 3:19 and the swipe of a dirty thumb across our foreheads, Ash Wednesday propels us into Lent with the proper context to understand our lives as stewards of all that God entrusts to us.

Ash Wednesday, which falls on Feb. 22, teaches us that we are mortals, after all. It crushes our ego, dispels our pretentions and drives us deep into God’s mysteries: Why are we here? What are our lives all about? What’s *really* important? Pray over these questions and profound insights emerge.

**We are dust.** Yes, but we are *God’s* dust. Our body consists of trillions of atoms, each a speck of “dust” created by of God billions of years ago. God put us together from the stuff of the universe.

* Therefore, we are quite literally “earthy” beings, made of the same material as air, water, soil and stone. As part of creation, we work to preserve, protect and sustain creation.
* Therefore, we have reverence for our bodies, expressed through healthy living.

**We are breath.** We are “dust” into which God has “breathed the Holy breath of life” (Genesis 2:7).

* Therefore, every breath we take is holy, reminding us of God’s life force in us.
* Therefore, we look to God to align our lives with God’s holy realities of peace, love, joy, justice and truth.

**Our time is brief.** Our “dust” will return to the earth someday. We are mortal.

* Therefore, every hour, every second is sacred. We spend our time wisely, carefully, prayerfully.
* Therefore, we do not cling to possessions, knowing that we hold onto them only for a little while.
* Therefore, we fill our lives with treasures of lasting value – friendships, trust, love, joy, service, generosity and harmony.

This Lent, spend time in prayer, with openness and honesty. See how God will turn your heart and mind, transforming you into the person you were created to be. Reflect each day on Ash Wednesday. “Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return.”

*--Rob Blezard*

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[*Click here*](https://thestewardshipguy.com/about-me/) *for a complete and up-to-date bio for Pastor Blezard.*

**General Stewardship Resource Websites**

[**Stewardship of Life Institute**](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org/)– Headquartered at United Lutheran Seminary, this site has a trove of resources in areas of congregational and personal stewardship. ([www.stewardshipoflife.org](http://www.stewardshipoflife.org))

[**ELCA Stewardship Resources**](http://elca.org/stewardship)– Our denomination’s deep well of materials. ([www.elca.org/stewardship](http://www.elca.org/stewardship))

[**The Episcopal Network for Stewardship**](https://www.tens.org/) – Solid resources! ([www.tens.org/](http://www.tens.org/)).

[**Center for Stewardship Leaders**](http://faithlead.luthersem.edu/stewardship/) – Luther Seminary’s excellent website. ([faithlead.luthersem.edu/stewardship/](http://faithlead.luthersem.edu/stewardship/))

[**The ELCA Foundation**](https://www.elca.org/give/elca-foundation) a ministry of our denomination. ([www.elca.org/give/elca-foundation](http://www.elca.org/give/elca-foundation))

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