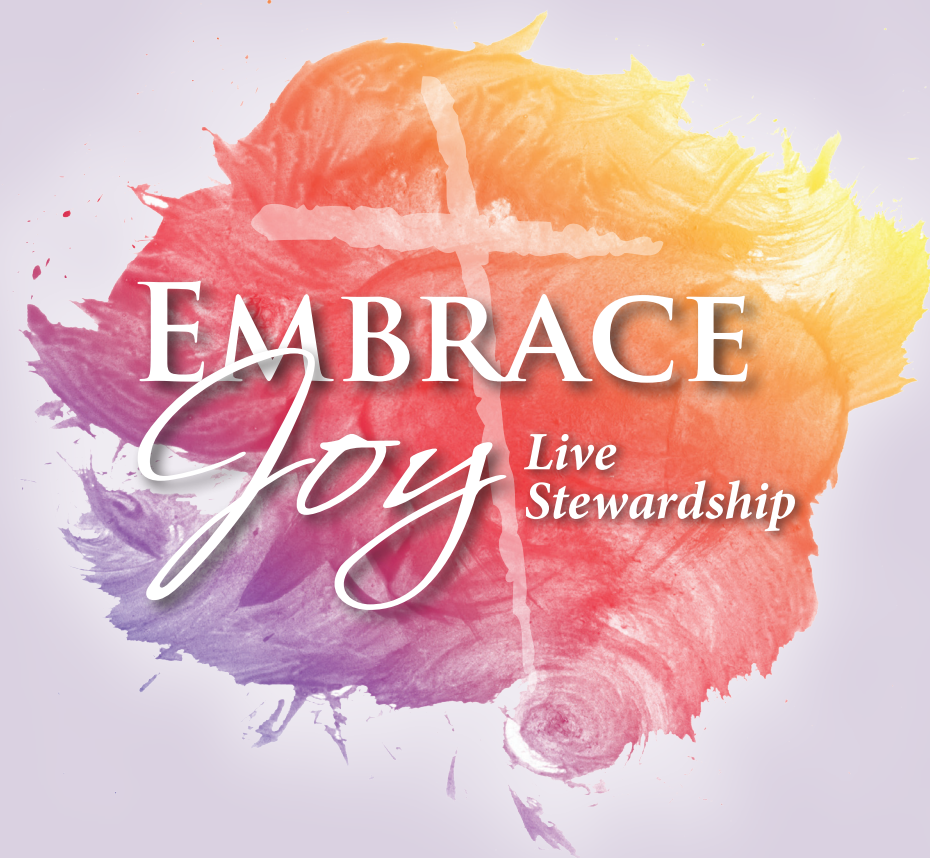


*“What is this way of life, this putting God first in all things, this proportionate giving of everything unto the Lord, this conviction that all is gift, we but trustees not owners, this refusal to take more than we need?”*

*Yesterday I met a flock of them, these stewards, gathered to thank God for His providential love and tell again and again of the joy and peace of giving. It wasn't the words that touched me, rather the quiet assurance that things were ordered; time, talent and treasure aligned rightly with transcendence, all coming from love, lived in love, and directed toward love.*

*What touched me was the rightness of this way of life, this joyful giving, this sacrificial attitude, **this sublime joy.**”*

*— Very Reverend Robert F. Morneau,  
Auxiliary Bishop Emeritus, Diocese of Green Bay, WI*



*“Christian joy, like hope, is founded on the faithfulness of God, in the certainty that He always keeps His promises.”*

*— Pope Francis, in his Angelus Message, December 15, 2013*

*This is the day the Lord has made;  
let us rejoice in it and be glad. — Psalm 118:24*

We are all very familiar with this psalm verse, one of the many times in scripture when we are called not to simply be content, or happy, or pleased, but to **rejoice**. Catholics who truly embrace discipleship by living as faithful stewards of God's great gifts are ecstatic, exultant and downright joyful!

How does a parish become a joyful community of believers? What does a parish need to embrace stewardship as a way of life? Here are the nine most important "ingredients" of a successful stewardship parish\*:

## 1. *Belief*

Administration and lay leadership must have absolute trust and confidence in stewardship as a way of life. Belief in the results and rewards of stewardship must be constant and unwavering.

## 2. *Prayer*

We can never pray enough - especially in regard to stewardship. The guidance of the Holy Spirit will help make our decisions easier. Stewardship is, first and last, a spiritual activity and prayer is the lifeblood of the spirit.

## 3. *Spirituality*

Living as faithful stewards, we fulfill our baptismal promise to be active disciples of Jesus Christ. Following His example of sharing our gifts to build the Father's kingdom on earth brings peace, purpose and joy to our lives.

## 4. *Planning*

A stewardship way of life is intentional. A clear vision, a comprehensive plan and the commitment to stay the course are critical to renewing stewardship in any parish community.

## 5. *Communication*

Continuing education about stewardship - its origins in scripture, its practical application in the 21st century, its meaning and importance to the parish and its mission - is essential.

## 6. *Hospitality*

Good stewards say nothing so often as "Welcome." Everyone has something to contribute. Everyone is needed. Everyone plays a unique role in parish life.

## 7. *Inclusion*

Include everyone in the invitation to participate. Recognize that every parishioner can make a distinctive contribution to the whole. We each have a unique call to discipleship. Stewardship celebrates that fact.

## 8. *Gratitude*

Faithful stewards recognize God as the source of everything we have and are, accept accountability for God's gifts, express gratitude for them and return a sacrificial portion to the Lord in return.

## 9. *Vision*

Look to the future with JOY. Cherish your parish's vision of the vibrant center of ministry it is today, and hold fast to the dreams for the future. Remember the Lord's teaching about the mustard seed. Plant the seed, and imagine what it, and you, might become. With stewardship, and the faith that supports it, all things are possible.

*\*Adapted from Living Life as God Intended, St. Francis of Assisi Parish, Diocese of Wichita*

