

**Evangelical Lutheran Church in America**  
God's work. Our hands.

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Dear friend in Christ,

We often talk about being called to be stewards of God's love. By definition a steward is a manager, but is that really the highest aspiration that God has for us? Have you thought about the difference between a manager and a leader? A manager is a person that is about following the rules, taking care of the status quo and keeping the existing processes going. A leader on the other hand is a person that has a vision for a reality that is different than the here and now. A leader works with others to inspire them to see other possibilities. A leader changes things and makes a difference in the world. Whether we lead in our families, neighborhoods, jobs or congregation, isn't that what God is calling us to be about for the sake of the gospel?

Here is a different approach to thinking about stewardship: God created every one of us on purpose and to make a difference in the world. Great leaders like Jesus or Martin Luther King, or pastors you may have known, aren't the only ones who lead lives that matter. We all have a unique role to play as leaders in making the kingdom of God emerge "on earth as it is in heaven." Our unique role is based on how God made us, the skills, talents, experiences and passions that make up who we are. Our calling in life is to be disciples of Jesus and this calling is about all of who we are, and all of what we do. Our ability to make a difference is a function of all our gifts and possessions, including how we make, spend, save and give away money.

God wants us to be able to look at our lives and to know that we matter, we have a purpose and our decisions and choices make a difference as we proclaim God's love.

We are a church that is energized by lively engagement in our faith and life. Thank you for **leading** in God's work with a generous heart!

In Christ's service,

Steve Oelschlager  
Stewardship Program Coordinator  
Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

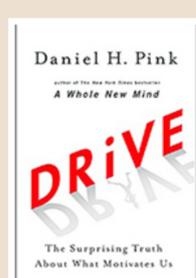
P.S. Help us grow our network! Be sure to encourage others who would benefit to subscribe to stewardNet by visiting [www.ELCA.org/growingstewards](http://www.ELCA.org/growingstewards).

### Why stewardship?

Lessons on what motivates us

When you think about opportunities to grow stewardship, is it worthwhile to consider the topic of motivation? If so, Daniel Pink's ideas about what motivates people might be of interest. In his book ["Drive: The Surprising Truth About What Motivates Us."](#) Pink suggests that older frameworks that emphasize external factors like carrots and sticks are not nearly as effective as "intrinsic" motivators. According to Pink, at the heart of being internally motivated are three factors: a sense of purpose, a feeling of autonomy and something he calls mastery, which means a pathway for learning and improvement.

In this [video](#), Pink talks about some of these ideas and lifts up the suggestion that why we do things – as opposed to what we do or how we do it – helps people to connect practice with purpose. If stewardship is about living the vision, our purpose is about behaving as apostolic leaders, being contributors and making a difference. "People are yearning for a sense of why."



ELCA Pastor Paul Erickson writes in this Lutheran [article](#) that congregations need purpose, too. At the heart of congregational renewal is a sense that not only does God have a plan, but each congregation has "a clear and vibrant understanding that God has a specific calling for them." Congregations who were able to ask, "Why is God calling us to be here in this time and place?" found that their focus shifted from worrying about their survival as an institution to seeking an active engagement in God's mission in the world.

### Why leadership?

What is it and why does it matter?

Author and Pastor Jim Wallis says that Jesus came into the world not only to transform our lives, tell us about God's love for us and show us the way to salvation, but also to transform the world. Jesus was part of God's plan to make the world a better place for all people. And the way that God intends for this to happen is to involve all of us as grassroots leaders!



Creation was not a one and done deal that happened in the beginning of time. Instead God is still creating and recreating, and we are God's partners in that work. In the parable of the talents, the stewards that multiply their endowments are the ones who are praised. It is through this strategy of multiplication that our own lives are blessed as the world is blessed, too.

What do we even mean by leadership? In the book ["The Truth about Leadership"](#) by James Kouzes and Barry Posner, the authors share their extensive survey results on leadership, collected around the world for more than 30 years. When people think of leaders, the top four characteristics identified by at least 60 percent or more of those surveyed are honesty (85 percent); forward looking (70 percent), inspiration (69 percent) and competency (64 percent). All other characteristics drop significantly after these four. In general, leadership is about being a person of integrity but also a person that can get things done. It is about seeing a different future and motivating others to work toward that future. Isn't this what Jesus modeled? Isn't this what Jesus invited his disciples to consider and all of us, too? Check out these [quotes](#) on leadership for more thoughts on the topic.

### Authority, leadership and adaptive change

Marty Linsky on why we need to lead

Marty Linsky is a Harvard professor who specializes in leadership. In this [video](#), Linsky talks about the confusing difference between being a person in a position of authority and the opportunity to behave as a leader. It's confusing because we think that being in a position of authority automatically makes a person a leader and inversely, a leader must be in a certain position to lead. We think this even as we recognize all the situations where our authorities don't meet our expectations for leadership.



Linsky explains the problem this way. Authority is often about providing a sense of direction, protection and order, or an atmosphere that everything is okay. This is what constituents expect and reward, but the challenge for authorities is that behaving as a leader may require violating those expectations for the purpose of creating necessary change. That in turn can be risky and dangerous, so authorities frequently err on the side of maintaining order at the expense of leading.

Whether we have a position of authority or not, as God's stewards, don't we need to be partnering with God by behaving as leaders instead of being managers of the status quo?

### Why Christians must be readers

Being disciples, learning and leading

"Is it no wonder, then, that God would give us his revelation in the form of a book? Christians should be, above all others, readers because we are called to be, above all others, leaders. We are called to be disciples and disciple makers, guiding others while being guided ourselves towards knowing God deeply and intimately. And if a disciple is, after all, a student, how in the world can we suppose that we should be exempt from reading the ideas and thoughts that have created the world in which we now live and fulfill our calling?" [Read more](#).



### Creating leaders

Leadership development as culture

When Jesus began his kingdom movement here on earth, he started by calling his disciples. Jesus was multiplying leaders as he said to them, "Follow me and I will make you fishers of men." His leading concern was not teaching them how to give fish away or how to better manage fish, but instead how to grow the movement through multiplication.



Pastor, author and leadership trainer John Maxwell calls this the law of explosive growth. "Leaders who develop followers impact this generation. Leaders who develop leaders impact the next generation." Maxwell says that just as we don't want our children ultimately to be dependent on us as parents, so leaders equip and encourage those around them to thrive and accomplish on their own. [Watch](#) Maxwell explore this theme in this video. See these slide decks to learn more about how [Google](#) and [Netflix](#) work at having a culture where everyone can behave as a leader.

### Multiplying leaders as youth

2015 ELCA Youth Gathering and beyond

What is our program for training the next generation of leaders in this church for the sake of the world? It is interesting to think about an organization like Boy Scouts, and how leadership is taught by equipping boys to take on ever greater challenges. How do we have more intentionality around extending the foundations of our faith to the challenge of living as stewards, leaders and change makers? One way is by having our kids participate in events like the ELCA Youth Gathering to be held this summer in Detroit. Organizers of the event are working hard to create a transformational experience that emphasizes our calling to lives of service. For more information, watch this [video](#) or visit the [website](#). Another idea is to promote the experience of [Lutheran Campus Ministry](#) with those headed off to college. View a sample of campus ministry through this [video](#) from LCM of St Louis.



### Leading stewardship in your congregation

Resources to help you make a difference

With a new year underway, what is your plan to lead and motivate stewards in your congregation? How will you get people thinking about using their blessings of time, talent and finances to make a difference through your congregation? The role of community is crucial in helping people to be inspired, and your leadership is essential to make your congregation a force for training and transformation. Here are two articles from the resource [Money Leadership for Thriving Congregations](#) that discuss [pastoral](#) and [lay](#) leadership as it relates to your congregation's stewardship ministry.



Also check out the [Year Round Planning Calendar for Growing Stewards](#) for creative ways to [practice faith inspired generosity in focus throughout](#) the year, not just during the annual campaign. [20 Practices for Growing Stewards in your Congregation](#) is another resource that lists practices to consider for effective stewardship.

### Sayings, quotes, thoughts

Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi

"One cannot lead a life that is truly excellent without feeling that one belongs to something greater and more permanent than oneself."

### Biblical foundations

2 Timothy 2:2

"And the things you have heard me say in the presence of many witnesses entrust to reliable people who will also be qualified to teach others."

## Upcoming events for stewardship leaders (watch the [calendar file](#) for details)

April 27-29, 2015

Leawood, Kan.

North American Conference on Christian Philanthropy

At "Stewardship Fusion," attendees will receive a plethora of theological and practical applications on faithful stewardship and, generous giving through plenary sessions, workshops, networking and worship.

Church of the Resurrection is the largest United Methodist Church in the United States. The Rev. Adam Hamilton, senior pastor, and the Rev. Clayton Smith, executive pastor of generosity and stewardship, will be plenary speakers. The conference will offer 18 different workshops on topics including Pastors and Personal Finance, Establishing an Endowment in Your Congregation, Self-Care for Development Pastors, Communicating Stewardship Effectively and much more.

Registration will open January 2015. Both onsite and live streaming registration options will be available. On-site participants will be able to earn CEUs, and ESC Individual and Congregational partners receive registration discounts. More information [here](#).

December 2015

Ft. Lauderdale, Fla.

Ecumenical Stewardship Center Leadership Seminar

Annual gathering of denominational and congregational stewardship leaders to discuss strategic perspectives on current stewardship topics.

[Full calendar](#) | Subscribe to [Our Calendar File](#)

Get connected! Find ELCA stewardship resources online



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