

WE ARE CALLED TO BE STEWARDS

Stewardship. Do people still hear that word in terms of the church asking for money? How much money will you commit to giving to the church in the next year? How will you volunteer your “time and talents” to do the work of the church?

We know stewardship is much more than a financial campaign or a way to enlist volunteers. It is a reminder that being disciples of Jesus means being stewards, caretakers, of all that we have received from our gracious creator, including our very faith. God has **entrusted** (what an incredible honor) us with God’s creation, entrusted us to care for the whole of creation and its gifts, recognizing God is the owner, the master and we are the servants. The “Parable of Talents” in **Mathew 25: 14-30** tells the story of three servants, each given “talents” to tend to during the master’s absence. The faithful servants took the talents, used them, and produced more . . .

²³ His master said to him, “*Well done, good and trustworthy servant. You have been trustworthy in a few things. I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.*”

One of the gifts God has given us is government, our civic life together. How are we trustworthy with this gift? During this election season, what does it mean for us to be stewards of this gift? The draft [social statement on Faith and Civic Life](#) invites us to think about how we can have a **constructive relationship** with government, a relationship

- That builds up the lives of our neighbors and helps construct a kinder, just society
- In which we participate in God’s work in civic life
- Where we bring our values and understanding of being stewards of God’s good creation
- Advocate on behalf of our neighbors.

A **constructive relationship** between religious persons and political institutions takes place when we “work with civil authorities in areas of mutual endeavor, maintaining **institutional separation** of religious organizations and political institutions.” That is the key – institutional separation.

While we advocate and work with others on behalf of the good of our neighbor, as disciples of Jesus, stewards of God’s gifts, we do not impose our particular religious understanding on others, insisting that the only legitimate government must be “Christian.” That is the message of Christian nationalism, which is not a form of Christianity. It is an ideology that violates the founding principles of our nation by fusing Christian teaching and political authority that distorts the message of the gospel. That is a **destructive relationship**. It is a destructive use of the gifts of both faith and government that we are called to be stewards of.

In the Evangelical Lutheran Worship (ELW) there is a song entitled *The Lord Now Sends Us Forth*. It is a powerful message of our call to be stewards, servants, entrusted with the care of God's people.

*The Lord now sends us forth with hands to serve and give,
to make of all the earth a better place to live.
The angels are not sent into our world of pain
to do what we were meant to do in Jesus' name;
that falls to you and me and all who are made free.
Help us, O Lord, we pray to do your will today.*

We are sent out to be angels in these days. May our message be one of hope and love, participating with others to make all the earth a better place to live.

Questions for Reflection:

1. Think about the gifts you have been given. How are you being a good steward of those gifts? How are you using those gifts on behalf of your neighbor?
2. How can you participate in a constructive relationship with political institutions?
3. How can you dispel the false claims of Christian nationalism? (Direct to ELCA website - See attachment from the ELCA.)

Prayer:

Creator God, you have given us abundant gifts including the gift of government and civic life to care for the common good. Help us to elect trustworthy leaders, participate in wise decisions for our common life and serve our neighbors. Bless the leaders of our land, that we may be at peace among ourselves and a blessing to other nations of the earth; through Jesus Christ our Savior and Lord. Amen