



The core of the Stories to Tell & Gifts to Share stewardship program is the CD-ROM. It offers dozens of easy-to-use, flexible, and editable files for you to print, adapt, copy,

rewrite, or use "as is". It will help you reach all age groups, program members and segments of your congregation. Here is what you'll find!

* **Planning guide:** This resource includes information for planning, introducing, and implementing Stories to Tell & Gifts to Share in your congregation.

* **Communication Tools:** Sample Letters, Bulletin Inserts, Newsletter Articles, and LOGO art will help you communicate the stewardship message clearly.

* **Bible Studies:** Four-sessions written by Mark Allen Powell. Three sets uniquely tailored for children, youth, and adults provide biblical grounding for Stories to Tell & Gifts to Share.

* **Worship Resources:** Sermon Outlines, a Litany, and Prayer Petition will help you make strong stewardship connections.

Visit www.elca.org/stewardship to learn more about this program and other stewardship resources.

Oregon Synod Partner Ministries Supported

- ELCA- churchwide
- Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary
- Luther Seminary
- Pacific Lutheran University
- Campus Ministry - 8 sites
- Lutheran Community Services Northwest
- Ecumenical Ministries of Oregon
- Consultation to Clergy
- Lutheran Education Network Support (LENS)

Oregon Synod Ministries

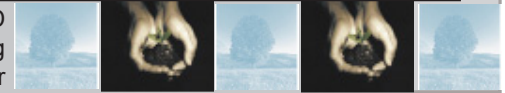
- Synod Mission Initiatives
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We Are Gifted

is a stewardship publication of the Oregon Synod.

WE ARE GIFTED...

OREGON SYNOD
Quarterly Stewardship Mailing
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What is the Lutheran Legacy?

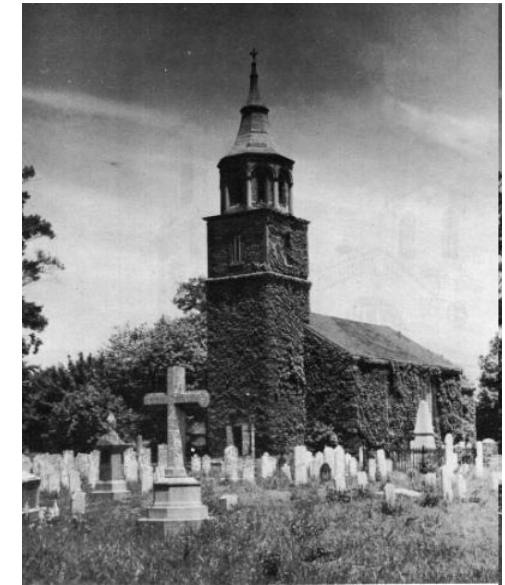
Submitted by Pastor Ron Nitz, Stewardship Committee Member

Our History and Heritage

In October it is hard not to think of our history and heritage as part of the Lutheran Church.

Sundays in October focus our attention on critical issues of faith, culminating in our celebration of Reformation Sunday. If you didn't learn it in Confirmation instruction or while becoming a member of a Lutheran church, you most certainly will absorb much of the history of the Lutheran movement after a few years of Reformation Sunday sermons and related materials.

But is that all there is to the Lutheran Legacy? Are we only about a critical event that happened 500 years ago? That would make us more "museum caretakers" and historians than Christians who are alive with the faith for which Dr. Martin Luther risked his life and ultimately



changed the world. What will the world know of the Lutheran Church in 50 or even 25 years?

Many in this country seem to believe that the legacy of the Lutheran Church is likely to turn out to be a bunch of big old empty church buildings, some being used by dwindling numbers of elderly people, huddling together to support one

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another to keep alive the church they grew up in. We need to ask ourselves “What will our legacy be?” Will we turn out to be just one more church building taking up space in a crowded world, using up valuable energy and financial resources? Or will we be an exciting center for renewal of the church and the world, where “change for the better” in the world begins with the people of God? Some churches are content to review their history, and consider their legacy to be whatever events of note happened there since they began. But like the antique cut-glass bottle stopper Aunt Matilda left as her legacy to you, it is only of value as a legacy if you have a bottle that it fits, and for which you really need a stopper. In fact, no matter what trinkets Aunt Matilda might leave you, isn’t her best legacy your fond memories of her and whatever you might have done together?



What are we willing to put on the line for the sake of spreading the faith we hold so dear?

Dr. Martin Luther drew people into what became the Lutheran movement, not because he had really good television or newspaper ads, or because he was handsome, but because he was willing to put his life on the line for what he believed in. He had passion. We all want to leave a legacy for others. We have followed others who had gone before us;

they left a legacy for us. Now it is our turn to make sure that those who come after us will have a trail to follow as well.

What (eternal) life lessons are we leaving the world as our legacy?

Who knows about it? Whose life is better today because we have shared our faith with them? When people look at your congregation, do they say, “Now there is a group of people who really know what being a faithful Christian in the world is all about! I’d like to be a part of that group!” It is the life experiences and life lessons that people share with us that are the best and most lasting legacy anyone could give.

Any gift that helps set the church’s mission free to do the kind of things in our world as Jesus did in his, is a great legacy.

Will your legacy be a financial gift? A financial commitment, either now or in one’s will gives a strong witness to what one believes in; what one’s life stands for.

What will your legacy be? The idea that we are saved *by God’s grace alone, received through faith in Jesus alone, as taught in Scripture alone*, is the underpinning of all that Luther did - translating Scripture, writing hymns and instruction books, revising worship to make it more people friendly, and so on. What will your legacy be? As Scripture says, “By their fruits you shall know them!”