

The 4th “T” in Stewardship

“Think of us this way: as servants of Christ and stewards of God’s mysteries.”

-2nd Corinthians 4:1

Almighty God, you have knit together your chosen people in one communion, the mystical body of your Son, Jesus Christ our Lord. Grant us grace to follow your blessed saints in virtuous and godly living, that we may also come to those unspeakable joys which you have prepared for those who love you; through Jesus Christ our Saviour and Lord. Amen.

-Prayer of the Day for All Saints Sunday

The eve of All Saints Day (“Hallowed Evening”) is not usually associated with stewardship, but the pandemic has changed that. We are all talking about safeguarding children’s health, keeping families safe, re-inventing Hallowe’en for pandemic protocols. These all are aspects of what Rev. Dr. Ali Tote of the ELCIC Saskatchewan Synod Pandemic Response team has called, “the stewardship of an advantage.” The Prayer of the Day for All Saints makes even more connections to stewardship: communion in the mystical body of Christ, the unspeakable joys of the life to come, unity in one communion, grace to follow in the memory of the Church’s exemplars of virtuous and godly living. So today is a good day to start a four-part series in The Messenger on the “T’s” in stewardship: time, talent, treasure, and... can you guess the 4th T in stewardship? (Hint: 2nd Corinthians 4:1-2. It is going to be fun this month finding there are many more than four! Please let me know your ideas.) And the “T’s” of stewardship are all connected, just like stewardship itself is connected to Hallowe’en and Hallowe’en to All Saints Day.

Let’s think about the first “T”: time. We can’t take time for granted during this pandemic: getting the disease threatens our time on earth, trying to stop the spread of the disease by staying home gives us lots of spare time, and the confusion of information, general anxiety in society, and sudden fears stops us from being able to use our time well. Time is one of the mysteries God has given to us as stewards: we have to manage our time, use our time, save our time. Stewardship of our time is connected to our talents: how much time do we commit for using our talents for God’s glory? Sharing in the life of our faith community? Building up treasure in heaven? If you think of the interconnections of time, talent, and treasure as a cross (“+”), right now during the pandemic time might be the long arm of the cross. With jobs hard to find, money scarce, and the whole world looking for people with internet talents, God still just wants our time, promises to bless our time when we use it to serve Christ, and through the cross and resurrection of Jesus gives us infinite time, the timelessness of eternal life with all the saints forever.

May the Lord free us from the habits that squander our time, the fears that steal our time, and empower us to spend our time more and more as servants of Christ involved in the mysteries of our faith. Amen