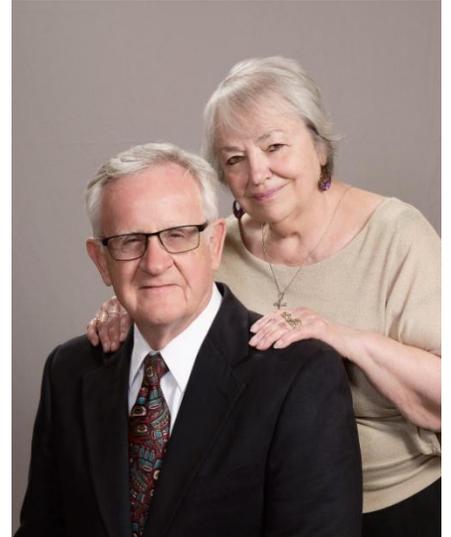


**Lay Stewardship Talk  
Tom and Nancy Streveler  
October 20/21, 2018**

Good morning. My name is Tom Streveler and with me today is my wife Nancy. My wife and I have been members of Prince of Peace Parish for about 12 years now.



I want to take just a few minutes this morning to share with you some thoughts on stewardship especially as they pertain to my struggle in trying to understand and accept the principle of stewardship and the messages of time, talent and treasure.

Regarding the message of talent. I always felt that to use the word talent in the same sentence with my name was truly an oxymoron. I often thought that I had very little to offer. Then one day it dawned on me that I do have a talent and I have had this talent for a long time.

I have it right here - in my wallet - my driver's license.

I have the legal right to drive. I can go places, I can get to where I want to be. It is not as easy as it used to be but I can still get there. At my age the Iowa Department

of Transportation will only let me renew my license for two years at a time, so for now I am legal until July, 2020.

With this license;

- + I can deliver mobile meals,
- + bring communion to shut-ins at Lyons Mayor
- + my wife and I can drop off food that she prepares for the dinners hosted by our parish at the Victory Mission,
- + during Lent we can show up on Tuesdays for the Peace Soup social justice programs and on Fridays we can show up at the Knights of Columbus Fish fires,
- + when our Catholic school is having a breakfast or an auction we can show up,
- + when a lector or a Eucharistic minister is needed at a Funeral Mass we can be there,
- + we can be with our dear friends at Bible Study on Thursday afternoons spending time together studying for finals,
- + we can get to Mass on Sundays and even on week days
- + if a salad or a dessert or help is needed at a funeral luncheon Nancy can be there.

Our list goes on, and I know that yours does too and for many of you your list is much longer than ours.

Our talent is that we can show up.

We can be there.

I realized that for us, showing up is an essential part of our stewardship.

And as long as the good Lord sees fit to keep us mobile we plan on showing up.

Another struggle I had with stewardship was with regard to the message of treasure. I often thought that the word treasure was a bit presumptuous in describing our meager resources but I guess it's all relative. When I think of stewardship I do focus on the treasure message a lot because it is easy to figure out what our share should be. The Biblical principle of tithing is God's call that Nancy and I give back 10% of what God has given us. I have come to the conclusion that 10% is a pretty good deal. God has given us all we have and all he asks is that we share 10% and we get to keep the other 90%. I used to think that the expectation of tithing was asking quite a bit of us. Now I think that the title of stewardship doesn't ask too much but rather it asks too little.

Finally let me try to answer a question that I often ask myself in my struggle to understand stewardship.

Why do it?

Why give our precious time away when it could be spent on the things we would rather do?

Why use our talent in the service of someone who may never appreciate it or even know that we were the ones who did it?

Why give away 10% of our fixed income to people we probably don't even know, or may never know?

I think I found the answer by looking back in time.

As a hobby I like to do genealogical research. As I studied my ancestors and the ancestors of my wife's family what I found was a God fearing group of people who came to this country with very little. They could not speak English, had a basic education and very little money. Their families were young and often with many children. I have spent hours reading the U.S. Census reports from 1880 through 1940 and in these old hand written documents there were a few columns of questions that caught my attention. This is where I found my answer.

+ How many hours did you work last week? In the answer column the numbers were almost always 50 or 60.

+ How many weeks did you work last year? 52.

+ What is your occupation? Farmer, stone mason, housewife, laborer, cheese maker, brewer.

I now see that we stand on the shoulders of giants. These were the people who built our churches, they constructed hospitals to care for the sick and the dying, they

opened orphanages for homeless children and established schools in which many of us were educated.

Our ancestors worked hard, raised their families and lived their faith with a deep appreciation of the gifts that God gave them.

If I would have asked my ancestors *why they did this* I think they would have replied with the simple and obvious answer -

Because we're Catholic, and that's what Catholics do.

Thank you for listening and now let's celebrate our faith.