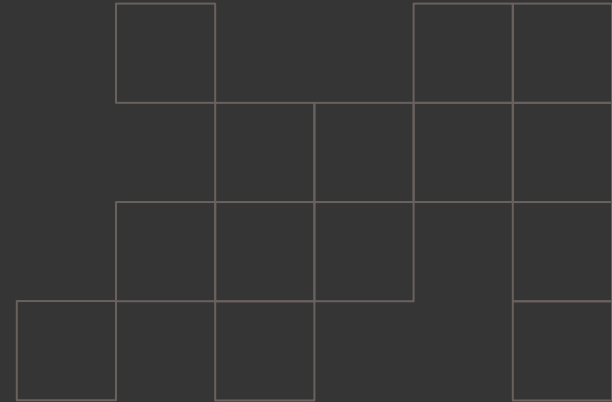


Rev. Lexy Steinle

Stewardship Day

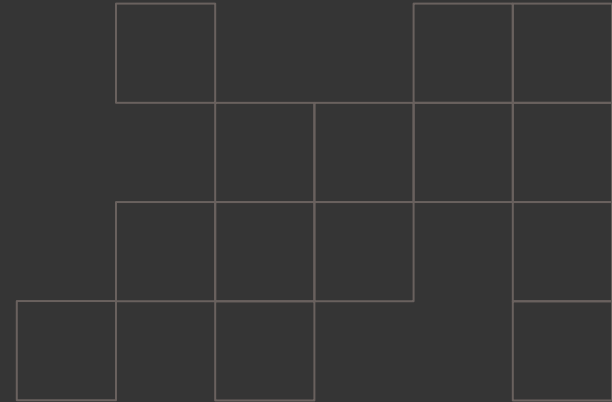
Navigating the Summer Slump, May 7th, 2026




Rev. Lexy Steinle
Stewardship Summer Slump,
May 7th, 2026

Devotion


The Parable of the Talents: Matthew 25:14-30



Reflection Questions As You Listen:

- 1) What caught your attention?
 - 2) What surprised, challenged, or made you uncomfortable?
 - 3) Would YOU use this text to talk about Stewardship in your congregation? Why or why not?
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¹⁴ “For it is as if a man, going on a journey, summoned his slaves and entrusted his property to them; ¹⁵ to one he gave five talents, to another two, to another one, to each according to his ability. Then he went away. At once ¹⁶ the one who had received the five talents went off and traded with them and made five more talents. ¹⁷ In the same way, the one who had the two talents made two more talents. ¹⁸ But the one who had received the one talent went off and dug a hole in the ground and hid his master’s money.




¹⁹ After a long time the master of those slaves came and settled accounts with them. ²⁰ Then the one who had received the five talents came forward, bringing five more talents, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me five talents; see, I have made five more talents.’ ²¹ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’

²² And the one with the two talents also came forward, saying, ‘Master, you handed over to me two talents; see, I have made two more talents.’ ²³ His master said to him, ‘Well done, good and trustworthy slave; you have been trustworthy in a few things; I will put you in charge of many things; enter into the joy of your master.’

²⁴ Then the one who had received the one talent also came forward, saying, ‘Master, I knew that you were a harsh man, reaping where you did not sow and gathering where you did not scatter, ²⁵ so I was afraid, and I went and hid your talent in the ground. Here you have what is yours.’

²⁶ But his master replied, ‘You wicked and lazy slave! You knew, did you, that I reap where I did not sow and gather where I did not scatter? ²⁷ Then you ought to have invested my money with the bankers, and on my return I would have received what was my own with interest. ²⁸ So take the talent from him, and give it to the one with the ten talents. ²⁹ For to all those who have, more will be given, and they will have an abundance, but from those who have nothing, even what they have will be taken away. ³⁰ As for this worthless slave, throw him into the outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.’

Reflect by Yourself:

- 1) What caught your attention?
 - 2) What surprised, challenged, or made you uncomfortable?
 - 3) Would YOU use this text to talk about Stewardship in your congregation? Why or why not?
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Matthew 25:19-23 The Message

14-18 “It’s also like a man going off on an extended trip. He called his servants together and delegated responsibilities. To one he gave five thousand dollars, to another two thousand, to a third one thousand, depending on their abilities. Then he left. Right off, the first servant went to work and doubled his master’s investment. The second did the same. But the man with the single thousand dug a hole and carefully buried his master’s money.

19-21 “After a long absence, the master of those three servants came back and settled up with them. The one given five thousand dollars showed him how he had doubled his investment. His master commended him: ‘Good work! You did your job well. From now on be my partner.’


22-23 “The servant with the two thousand showed how he also had doubled his master’s investment. His master commended him: ‘Good work! You did your job well. From now on be my partner.’

24-25 **“The servant given one thousand said, ‘Master, I know you have high standards and hate careless ways, that you demand the best and make no allowances for error. I was afraid I might disappoint you, so I found a good hiding place and secured your money. Here it is, safe and sound down to the last cent.’**

26-27 **“The master was furious. ‘That’s a terrible way to live! It’s criminal to live cautiously like that! If you knew I was after the best, why did you do less than the least? The least you could have done would have been to invest the sum with the bankers, where at least I would have gotten a little interest.**

28-30 **“Take the thousand and give it to the one who risked the most. And get rid of this “play-it-safe” who won’t go out on a limb. Throw him out into utter darkness.’**

Reflect with the Group:

- 1) What caught your attention?
 - 2) What surprised, challenged, or made you uncomfortable?
 - 3) Would YOU use this text to talk about Stewardship in your congregation? Why or why not?
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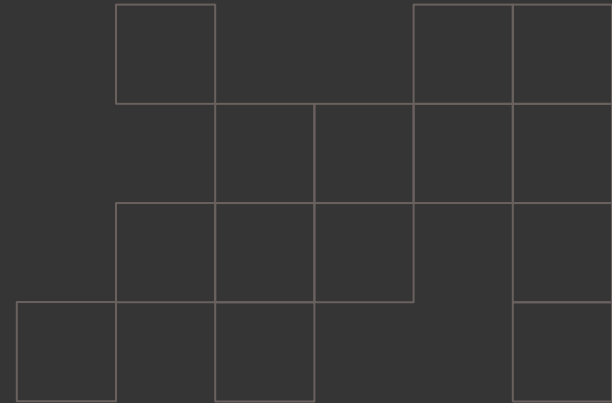
Here is how I hear it through a lens of stewardship...

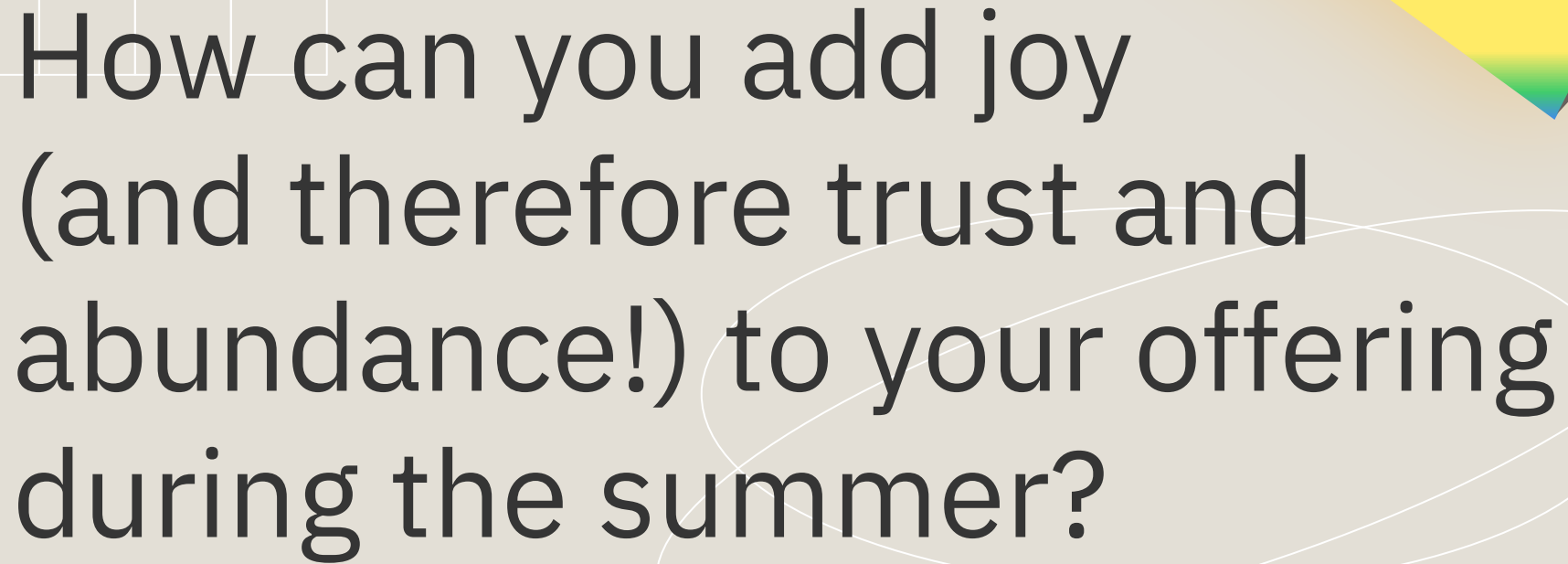
- How we talk about stewardship matters.
- How we talk about God matters.
- How we talk about God when we talk about stewardship really matters.
- If we use shame, shame-filled giving is the response, and that only works a few weeks before people stop responding.
- If we use joy, we get joy-filled giving, which is significantly more consistent because it builds on itself into a practice, not just a one time ask.

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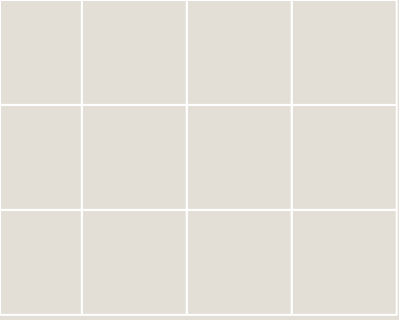
Give your summer giving a little kick...

Practical ideas to try out this summer!





How can you add joy
(and therefore trust and
abundance!) to your offering
during the summer?



This is what I mean
when I say that the
offering can be the
most joy-filled part of
the service!

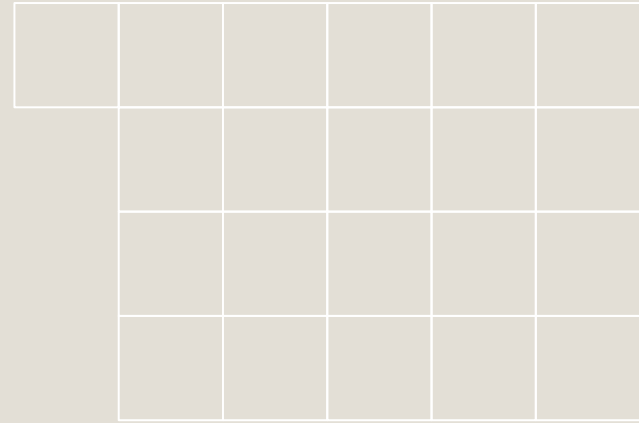


How to get the ball rolling...

The easiest one...

A noisy/special offering
specific for the summer.

What is a fun, attainable, and
meaningful goal your congregation
could meet this summer?



Giving begets more giving... and money follows mission!

Having a special offering that goes through the summer does not take away from your regular giving.

Statistically, people tend to give more to a specific ask than to a general one.

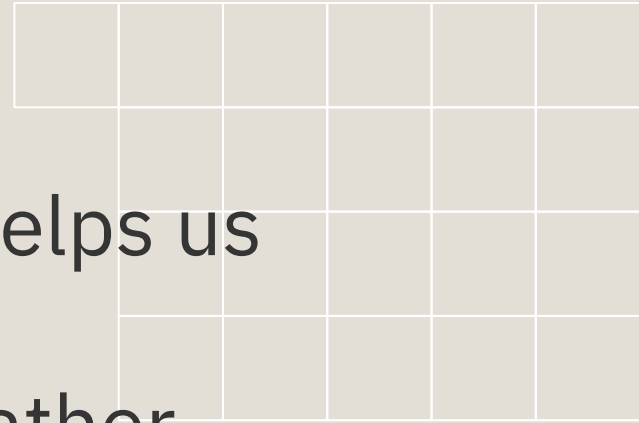
On top of that, in my experience, benevolence is one of the key signs of a healthy church.

Think of your congregation- how would you make this collection set apart from the regular plate passing?

Change the conversation about giving...

What happens when our church helps us reflect on and explore our own intersection of faith and money, rather than just asking us for it?

Host a bible study through the summer that digs deeper into money and faith!



A few options to go off from...

- Faith+Lead Stewardship puts out articles weekly that would be an easy start to conversations
- There is a course on Faith+Lead (that my congregation was a part of testing out!) called “Beyond the Tithe: Faith and Money Practices” that is a 10 module course on how money and our faith intersect
- Do a Money Autobiography or take the Klontz Money Personalities Quiz and discuss the results (*contact me if you want these resources!*)

Or... Try putting together a Narrative Budget!

Narrative Budgets are a wonderful way to celebrate and lift up all of the amazing things congregants' offering help support in the church! Put together a team (or use an already functioning Stewardship Board!) and build it over the summer!

It's a great way to wrap up the program year and give members time to explore the budget and ask how it lines up with your church's mission, one the opposite side of the year from many of our annual budget meetings!

(psst! This is a specialty of mine and I would LOVE to help!)

Stewardship in unexpected places...

The more we talk about stewardship outside of “the annual ask” or “we need money NOW!”, the more comfortable people get hearing about it!

Are there ways that we can inject stewardship into sermons or worship throughout the summer?

How do you talk about stewardship during worship?

Talking about stewardship during the offering

- Slides/bulletin blurbs highlighted about the impacts of giving to the mission of the church
- Verbal thanks for all of the different forms of giving, highlighting people who you have witnessed and specifically naming how they have shown stewardship outside the plate
- It doesn't have to be long, just intentional and consistent! Build a vocabulary of stewardship!

Can you sprinkle in some stewardship into your sermon without outright asking for people to give more money??

Especially if you have people worshipping online from the lake in the summer, continue to talk about stewardship so it stays on their radar.

- They are still part of your congregation, so what does stewardship look like from the boat? camper? mini-van?

Let's try it out! **BREAKOUT!!!**

**Take one of these texts for this summer-
how would you tie it into an aspect of stewardship?**

Pair up and choose one to dig into over the next 10 minutes.

June 7: Matthew 9:9-13, 18-26

June 14: Matthew 9:35—10:8 [9-23]

June 21: Matthew 10:24-39

June 28: Matthew 10:40-42

July 5: Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

July 12: Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

July 19: Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

July 26: Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

August 2: Matthew 14:13-21

August 9: Matthew 14:22-33

August 16: Matthew 15: (10-20), 21-28

August 23: Matthew 16:13-20

August 30: Matthew 16:21-28

The absolute most helpful move...

Make sure giving is accessible for those who aren't there in person.

So often, the go to for those who leave in the summer is shame. Shame from others who keep coming throughout and see the empty pews, and shame from those who are gone and still want to support their church.

We believe and teach that rest is important, and while we want people to come to church, we also want them to know that they can be gone and care for themselves in their own ways too.

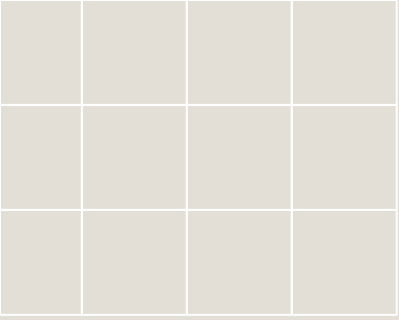
How can we name the “elephant in the room” and set them up for success as we move into the summer months?

A few ideas that might work well for you...

- Mailing envelopes with the church's address already printed on them for people to send in their offering from wherever they go! Bonus points if you can afford stamps to add on! You could even have a “build your distance giving envelopes” activity on the last Sunday before summer
- If you are able to, send a QR code for online giving. It could even be on a business card that they could put in their wallets, so when they're worshipping online, they have easy access to it
- Intentionally add summer needs into online and in person worship. What are specific expenses that come up in the summer? Are there costs associated with your online worship? Share these in slides added into the online worship, in emails to the congregations, and your weekly bulletin.
- Create a specific offering message for those online if you are able to edit the video, or specifically thank those who are worshipping online for their giving as well. Not only is it a reminder to those online to give, but it is a reminder for those in the pews that their friends are still with them online.

Changing how we talk about stewardship doesn't happen overnight, but *it can change* with practice, consistency, and intention. Take advantage of the sun and joy of summer and integrate it into your church's giving practices!

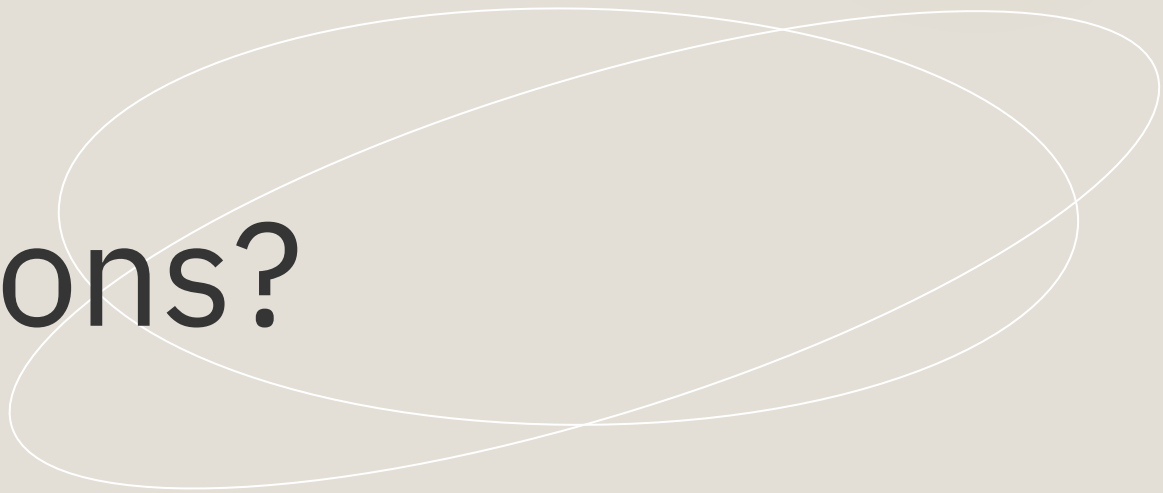




Let's discuss any doubts or concerns.

If something comes up later, contact me
at lexy.steinle@gmail.com

Any questions?
Ask away!



Don't Hesitate

By Mary Oliver

If you suddenly and unexpectedly feel joy, don't hesitate. Give in to it. There are plenty of lives and whole towns destroyed or about to be. We are not wise, and not very often kind. And much can never be redeemed. Still, life has some possibility left. Perhaps this is its way of fighting back, that sometimes something happens better than all the riches or power in the world. It could be anything, but very likely you notice it in the instant when love begins. Anyway, that's often the case. Anyway, whatever it is, don't be afraid of its plenty. Joy is not made to be a crumb.



Thank you