

## Focusing on stewardship

Last fall, St. Paul's launched a Stewardship Education program focused on raising awareness about the importance of stewardship to our faith and community life, as well as sharing ideas for becoming active and contributing stewards in God's Kingdom.

Our goal is to provide accessible, thought-provoking resources that:

- Help us better appreciate what stewardship is and why it matters
- Explore our potential role as stewards in God's world
- Encourage and challenge us to improve our stewardship
- Reframe stewardship as a holistic practice that can be put to work to every aspect of our lives (family, friends, neighbours, community, and work—not just at church)
- Suggest opportunities to fulfil our potential using our God-given gifts and resources (time, human, financial, etc.) to serve God's Kingdom more effectively

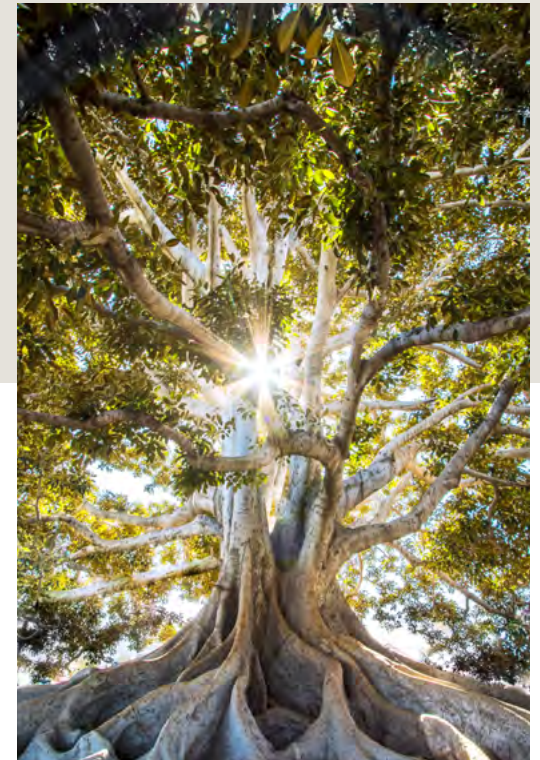


## The Spiritual Gifts

We'll continue to share updates exploring each gift over the coming weeks and months, but here's a quick reference as you consider where your own giftings lie:

- Administration
- Creative/Artistic Expression
- Discernment
- Evangelism
- Faith
- Generosity
- Words of Wisdom/Knowledge
- Healing
- Hospitality
- Intercession
- Leadership
- Mercy/Compassion
- Miracles/Deeds of Power
- Pastoral Care
- Prophecy
- Service
- Teaching/Exhortation
- Tongues/Interpretation
- Writing/Speaking

# STEWARDSHIP AWARENESS UPDATE



## Where have we been?

Through our services and regular outreach, we have sought to share inspiration and ideas for incorporating meaningful, rewarding stewardship behaviour and practices into your daily life. Several stewardship themes have been introduced into Morning Worship and our weekly activities:

- Service and Volunteering
- Being thankful for all of God's gifts and for each other
- Generosity in outreach (Hollyer House project)
- Introduction to the concept of Spiritual Gifts, and exploration of specific gifts: Hospitality, Mercy and Compassion, Administration, Leadership, and Faith

Our intent has been to infuse not just knowledge of stewardship principles, but also to suggest practical ways that this knowledge can be actively combined with your unique skills and interests, and then utilized for the benefit of others as well as for ourselves.



## Where are we going?

Perhaps the most significant, and most challenging, opportunities lie in the further exploration of Spiritual Gifts. So far we have covered just 5 of the close to 20 independent types.

We know that God has not given these gifts to us in equal measure or number. Rather, he has spread them out among us, and it is our challenge – and obligation - to understand our Gifts, nurture them, and then use them for His glory. Challenging in the sense that many of us do not recognize the gifts that we have been given by God and, if we do, then we seem somehow reluctant or hesitant to use these gifts to serve God in new or more meaningful ways.

It is our fervent hope that in highlighting these additional Spiritual Gifts over the next weeks and months that we may kindle a spark of understanding and a desire to open ourselves up to the possibilities associated with exercising those gifts lying dormant within us.

Of course, there is more to Stewardship than just Spiritual Gifts. As well as occasional reinforcement of themes already covered, the program in 2024 and beyond will explore themes such as Outreach, Finances, Skills and Knowledge Development, the use and management of our Facilities and our Environment, and how we use our Time.

Our continuing focus will be oriented to what it means to be a better steward, to suggest ways to engage and encourage action on the many opportunities available to us to actually be better stewards of God's gifts and resources.

## LENT AND SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Spiritual gifts are given to us all, but it can be hard to discover them in ourselves. Lent is an ideal time to consider how you might embrace the gifts God has given you. Here are a few ways to get started:

**Pray for discernment.** Take time each day to ask God a simple question: what are my gifts, and how can I use them? Here's a prayer you might want to use to get you started: *Gracious Father, help me recognize the spiritual gifts you have given me. Give me wisdom to discern when and how to use these gifts for Your glory.*

**What ignites your heart?** Serving God is not drudgery. God invites us to use our gifts because using them helps us flourish. Take note of what you love doing: Serving meals? Teaching others? Working with children? The sense of joy and fulfilment you get when doing these things may be a sign that God has gifted you in these areas.

**Ask friends for guidance.** Fear, distraction, or low self-esteem can blind us to our true gifts. If you're feeling stuck, try reaching out to someone you trust to share genuine, encouraging feedback and ask them what gifts they see in you.

**Do a trial run!** What is something you can try for a short time without (over) committing in the long term? Maybe you could volunteer for a few shifts at the Kanata Food Cupboard, or act as a sidesperson for a few Sundays. Then, take time afterwards to reflect on how it went.