



# *Synod Update: Stewardship Done Tastefully*

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St. Paul Lutheran in Springfield discovered how stewardship can be done “tastefully.” The Harvest Offering Service, followed by a pasty and pizza supper, was based on teaching stewardship and has turned out to be very helpful in lowering the congregation’s debt.

This is one example of how congregations connect with the harvest season as a way to give thanks and share in the abundance God has provided. It connects to where scripture directs us to give our first fruits.

Abundance was the furthest from minds of members at St. Paul three years ago when a political split resulted in a period of poor giving and a congregational debt of around \$30,000. Elwin “Al” Schubbe said the Harvest Offering event came about less out of inspiration and more out of “desperation.”

As council president at the time, Schubbe looked for a way to help reduce the growing debt. Since he has a small interest in a little food factory near Ogilvie that makes pizza and pasties, which is a rolled pastry filled with seasoned ground beef, plus diced potatoes, onions and carrots. He calls it “simple hearty food.”

An idea grew out of how he could use these food items to help feed an opportunity to teach stewardship and grow a thankful response to God’s abundant blessings of the harvest.

The pastor was asked to give an extra service to offer thanks for the harvest in early November. Schubbe donated the pasties and pizza for a meal to follow the service. Anyone who gave an offering to celebrate the harvest for the service was invited to share in a meal costing \$1 per family.



**“The Cooks.” Al and Adeline Schubbe**

Schubbe organized the council to help with what would in effect be an every-member visit. Each council member was assigned to a ministry work group that shared offering envelopes from member to member, while informing of the current ministry situation and inviting each other to the Harvest Offering Service.

“The first time we came pretty close to our average attendance in church,” said Schubbe about the turnout for the Harvest Offering Service two years ago. “The offering was around \$7,000 and I was hoping for a couple thousand.” The council decided to do another harvest offering the next year following the same pattern and raised \$10,000. The third event was recently conducted in November and raised \$11,000.

“We had a very tough time when we got into debt very badly,” recalls Schubbe about borrowing funds. “The original purpose of the harvest offering was for debt retirement. This year we gave members a choice to direct to debt retirement or general fund.”

Schubbe reports how the general fund is not as good as they would have liked, but it does not have trouble maintaining itself as it had for that year and a half. The congregation was experiencing some difficult struggles. He said the church, knowing it was working for a particular goal, made a difference not only in the giving during those three years, but it had an effect on continued giving in following months. Attendance has come up substantially since the problem time, where a couple hundred members are expected each Sunday. Even more important, he said the strife has disappeared, adding, “Our members feel much closer and get along a lot better. The event had a lasting impact on how members felt about giving. Almost every member was touched by another person in the congregation, which was considered as beneficial as the donations.”



**Members of the Stewardship Committee & Council  
are all smiles celebrating the harvest**

Elwin Schubbe first joined St. Paul in 1950, the home-church of his wife Adeline, they eventually moved to work and live in South Dakota and then in Pine City. They moved back to Springfield eight years ago. Al took over as chair of the stewardship committee because nobody else wanted it.

In his temple talks about financial stewardship ministry and giving, Schubbe outlined the goals to retire as much debt as possible, take care of the general fund and have money in the bank at the end of the year. And then he tried to make it simple by

asking members to think about their beautiful church and the reasons why they come regularly and how they value the ministries. He said, “Let’s show what we think of our church.”

In response to stewardship committee members who said they do not like to beg for money, Schubbe said it was not begging, which is when there is no relationship between the desire of the giver and desire of the receiver. “In church you are doing it for a common cause, not for something that has no relation to yourself,” said Schubbe, “People overlook that.”

Schubbe offers an open invitation to other congregations for Adeline and him to come and give temple talks about stewardship and the example set by St. Paul Lutheran. They would be happy to share the valuable lessons they have learned and celebrate with other congregations the harvest service ministry. You can contact Al & Adeline Schubbe at 507.723.6863.

“He who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will supply and multiply your seed for sowing and increase the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way for your great generosity, which will produce thanksgiving to God through us for the rendering of this ministry not only supplies the needs of the saints but also overflows with many thanksgivings to God.”

*2 Corinthians 9:10-12*



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