

Above all,  
clothe yourself  
with love  
which binds  
everything together  
in perfect harmony.

Colossians 3:14-15



And let the  
Peace of Christ  
rule in your  
hearts.



## St. Augustine's Anglican Church Biblical Stewardship 365 Stewardship of Ourselves

Bulletin 6, March 2021

How and why, we must look after the Physical,  
Mental, Emotional and Spiritual Selves  
that God has given us.



*'Stewardship is about how we use the gifts God has given us to work with God to make the world a better place, to help build the Kingdom of God on Earth'.*

### BETTER STEWARDS. CARE.

by Michael Morwood

*We gather, reflect and share,  
aware that in doing so, we give human  
expression here on earth, to the Divine  
Mystery present and active everywhere  
in this vast universe.*

*We gather, reflect and share,  
seeking to be enlightened by the power  
and presence of this Mystery here,  
now, in us, in human form.*

*We give thanks, for the majesty of the  
universe, for the marvel of the solar  
system, for the extraordinary beauty of  
a planet, that collectively have brought  
us into life, and into human awareness  
of the profound interdependence of all  
things.*

*We accept our responsibility to do all  
we can to protect, to foster, to defend,  
this exquisite and fragile web of  
interconnectedness.*

*May we allow the Mystery, that  
powers and sustains the universe, to  
power and sustain our efforts to care  
for, and to be worthy stewards of this  
wonderful planet on which we depend  
for life, health and well-being.*

*To this we give our Amen.*

We have spent much of the last 18 months looking at caring for God's gift of ourselves, bodies, minds and spirits. In a recent Wednesday Evening gathering, Bernadine Chapman introduced us to work by Joyce Rupp who reminded us that Jesus, during his baptism by John, heard clearly just how much he was cherished. ***'This is my Son the Beloved'*** announced the one he called Abba, Father. Recognising his own belovedness, Jesus went about teaching others that they too are loved by God. ***Are we aware too that we too are beloved and cherished by our Creator?*** Do we find comfort and strength in this reality? Does this help us take better care of ourselves? Does it make us better Stewards? Thankyou Bernadine. (*Jesus, Friend of My Soul. Joyce Rupp. Paraphrased*)



As this theme draws to a close after the next Bulletin. It will be time to look at other aspects of Stewardship. In the fall I feel drawn towards focussing on Stewardship of God's gift of our Parish, one of the many ways God supports us and enables us to do the work to which we are all called: building a better world. However, there are many other aspects of Stewardship too and in a sense, it seems that we are expected to be aware of all of them!



Whilst looking through some of the material that I have used when planning Interest Groups for St' A's, I came across the prayer I've copied here and found it relevant to the wider topic of Stewardship. This prayer comes from a study published by Living the Questions called Painting the Stars ('When I have a terrible need of-shall we say- religion, I go outside and paint the stars.' Vincent

Van Gogh.). We used this material a number of years ago as the focus of

an Interest Group, and we studied it during Encounters time too. It might be time to look at this material again. If you would like to listen to some eminent theologians who hold fascinating opinions concerning science, religion and how our faith is evolving, just let me know. ([val\\_mc@telus.net](mailto:val_mc@telus.net)) Meanwhile enjoy the prayer.



*Back to the present focus, Stewardship of God's Gift of Ourselves,  
in particular, our spiritual selves.*



## So, how DO we look after our spiritual lives?

Here at St. A's and at other churches, our form of spirituality involves following Jesus Christ, and seeing in Jesus the reality and nature of God, and then living in a manner that helps God make the world a better place. Religious spirituality of this kind calls for action on behalf of God, and this is Stewardship.

Many of us use prayer to deepen our relationship with God and there are numerous different ways to pray.

Communal Prayer – The Prayers of the People, Table Grace etc. (See the previous Bulletins)

Personal Prayer - A time to listen for what God might be saying to us. A time to deepen our relationship with God.

### Suggestion Number 4 I have heard this called Ignatian Type Prayer

This is named after St. Ignatius of Loyola, founder of the Jesuit order. When using prayer of this type, an attempt is made to project oneself back into an historical setting. The sensible imagination (hearing, seeing touch, etc.) is then used to become a part of the scene.

People who find this useful often have a strong work ethic and a sense of duty to God and other people. They tend to be careful and accurate and like to find value and meaning in what they do. They strive for a relationship with God. About 50% of church goers are like this!

### Ignatian Type Prayer – A Suggestion. Read Luke 4:14-21

Imagine yourself as a first century Jew living in Nazareth. You are in the Synagogue. Is it hot? Crowded? Noisy? Etc.? Jesus, who you know, enters having been away for a while and you have heard rumours about what he has said and done. Imagine your reaction when Jesus says, he came to heal spiritual blindness. And so on. (Read the passage)



### Use some or all of these stages:

**1** Preparatory Prayer. **2** Think about the setting: see, hear, feel, smell, touch. **3** Reflect on what you experience. **4** Think about what you can learn for your life and your relationship with God. **5** Speak with God or Jesus about your experience. Be open to images and intuitions. **6** Close with prayer.

## What makes me feel close to God by Aaron Parker

*I am close to God all the time in countless ways, but at certain times I am blessed to be aware of it. I would like to say that being "present" and "in-the-moment" is a method I use to experience God but again I must admit that, through grace, I stumble into that place with varying degrees of intentionality, never fully my own. I would say that the experience of the divine presence of has a right-now feeling which comes by whatever means has led my consciousness to God.*

*Usually, it is in thinking. As honest and open as I can muster. It often feels like I begin in the middle of a conversation. Often alone in the car, sometimes while attempting to listen to a podcast or audiobook. I must turn off the audio and begin speaking. In recent years, my thoughts have taken the shape of a refuge; A place where embarrassing questions can be asked and even answered. They feel also like a garden; A place of real growth. I know I am with God in these times because I am blessed with the feeling of being dressed and seated in the Presence. Not ashamed. Not straining to the future or haunted by the past. I can only know this with my heart as my earthly knowledge tells me that the experience is just the work of grey matter. When this thinking has ended, my love has increased in knowledge and depth of insight and I am grateful.*

### Thankyou so much Aaron.

If you would like to take part in this by sharing with others what you do to feel close to God, please let me know. (val\_mc@telus.net or 780 410 1571.)