



*Stewardship is the grateful response of a Christian disciple who recognizes and receives God's gifts and shares these gifts in love of God and neighbor.*

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## Serving as a St. Raphael Stewardship Council Member

### What is Stewardship?

A “steward”, in the generic sense, is a person who manages *someone else’s* property or affairs. A steward in an ecclesial (church) context is a recipient and caretaker of *God’s* many gifts. But what specifically is a *Christian steward*?

A Christian is a “follower of Christ”, that is a *disciple* of Christ. Discipleship involves much more than taking on the *name* of Christian or Catholic, though. It begins with an **awareness** of God’s presence in your life and the recognition that Jesus is knocking on your door, inviting you into relationship with Him. Then, it involves your **choice**, a conscious decision to accept that invitation and open the door – a conversion of mind and heart. What follows is the **act of faith**, the reorientation of your thoughts, words, and actions - from self-centered and material motives - to a Christ-centered way of life. A Christian Steward recognizes that God is the origin of life and the source of all they have, gratefully receives and cultivates these gifts, and shares them in justice and love with others.

Personal stewardship, then, is that act of faith, the expression of discipleship, the way you live your life – according to the teaching and example of Christ. Parochial (parish) stewardship is concerned with both the development and support of personal stewardship and its practice in the community of faithful, which is the Church. For as individual members of the one Body of Christ, we each share in and have a responsibility for the *purpose* of the Church – which is to continue the mission of Christ in building up the Kingdom of God.

### What is the Stewardship Council?

The Stewardship Council exists to support our pastor, Fr. Tim, in developing stewardship as a way of life for all parishioners. Its efforts are focused on facilitating encounters with Christ (prayer/worship), encouraging and supporting a conversion of mind and heart (hospitality/fellowship), and providing opportunities for putting faith into action (service/evangelization).

### What are the typical Council member commitments?

- Time Commitment – One meeting a month plus participation in at least one other key task, special project or event
- Prayer Commitment – Reflect and pray about Stewardship
- Educational/Formational Commitment – Learn about the spirituality of Stewardship within the time spent on the Stewardship Council
- Group Process Commitment – Willingness to work in a group process of prayer, consensus building and planning
- Duration Commitment – Two to three years

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**“Once one chooses to become a disciple of Jesus Christ, stewardship is not an option.”** Bishop John J. McRaith  
USCCB Ad Hoc Committee on Stewardship

### **What are some typical Council member activities/responsibilities?**

- Assist Fr. Tim and parish leadership in the overall design, implementation and on-going evaluation of parish Stewardship and awareness (education/formation) efforts.
- Pursue available forms of communication to build awareness of Stewardship and parish activities, such as bulletins, the parish web-site, newsletters, witnesses, ministry fairs, etc.
- Coordinate Stewardship efforts with the parish welcoming program.
- Maintain a catalog of parish ministries and organizations.
- Host periodic Stewardship presentations to parish leadership explaining Stewardship in general, the parish annual renewal process, and the importance of Stewardship in the parish community.
- Assist in seeking and selecting speakers for personal Stewardship witness presentations.
- Recruit volunteers, as needed, to assist the Stewardship Council in carrying out its various activities.
- Develop a comprehensive timetable and related procedures to facilitate the annual parish stewardship commitment renewal process.
  - Review and revise, if necessary, the parish time, talent and treasure commitment forms to be sure they appropriately represent the mission, ministries, activities, and structure of the parish.
  - Prepare letters, envelopes and other materials to be included in the annual renewal communication and invitation from Fr. Tim.
  - Design and implement a timely thank you process to all parishioners who complete and return commitment forms; send reminder letters to all parishioners who do not
  - Work with the appropriate parish ministries to ensure that those who volunteer are contacted and invited to become involved.

### **How do I become a Council member?**

Membership on the Stewardship Council is by invitation/approval of Fr. Tim Gareau. There are also auxiliary Council members who do not make the same time commitments as regular Council members but who volunteer to assist the Council in carrying out its various activities. To express your interest in becoming a member or auxiliary member of the St. Raphael Stewardship Council, please contact:

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