

# 2022 Stewardship Symposium

Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary, Lenoir Rhyne University  
4201 North Main Street, Columbia, SC 29203  
Stavros Auditorium

Friday, January 28, 2022, 10:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

## **The Gift of Stewardship as the Mission of the Church**

**The Rev. Dr. Dan Bell, Presenter**

- 9:00 Registration
- 10:00 Welcome and Introductions – Deacon Jim Johnson, Event Planner  
Welcome and Remarks – The Rev. Dr. Mary Hinkle Shore, Rector and Dean, LTSS  
Opening Prayer – Amanda Spangler, LTSS Student
- 10:15 **Session 1: The Story of Stuff (including the Stuff We are Made of) or Why We Have What We Have**  
*Stewardship is a struggle. Notwithstanding our prodigal God, American Christians do not give away very much. Why is this? Exploring this enigma prompts consideration of the story that the practice of stewardship tells about stuff and about God, why we have what we have and the relation between stewardship and being. This first session concludes with the idea that stewardship is what God has given us because God wants more and better for us than we could ever ask or imagine.*
- 11:15 Break
- 11:30 **Panel Discussion #1: What are the obstacles to robust stewardship in the church? On a personal, congregational, and institutional level.**
- 12:00 Lunch in Reinartz Hall
- 1:00 **Session 2: Stewardship and/as the Mission of the Church**  
*The struggle that is stewardship is linked to a mission problem. The tiny god of much contemporary stewardship is not able to provide a mission big enough to hold the attention of the average young person. Our mission problem is exacerbated by our edifice complex, our too frequent confusion of church with a building and associated programming and staff. We humans want to be part of something meaningful, larger than ourselves. Stewardship is nothing less than God's gift of a big enough mission to satisfy our restless hearts. God gives the gift of stewardship as an opportunity / invitation to be drawn out of the darkness of ourselves and into the ecstatic joy of communion/ community. Which means that stewardship is not about giving to the church but about the church giving itself away to, for and with the world. What does leading the church in giving itself away entail? How do we share the gift of the mission that is stewardship? We will consider issues of leadership, character (personal and corporate - congregational) and, finally, the cost of culture change and the need for courage.*
- 2:00 Break
- 2:15 **Panel Discussion #2: What would leading the church in a culture-change such that stewardship programs are not even necessary entail?**
- 2:45 **Summary - Rev. Dr. Dan Bell**

Recommended book:

Christian Smith and Michael O. Emerson, with Patricia Snell, *Passing the Plate: Why American Christians Don't Give Away More Money* (Oxford, 2008).

*The Stewardship Symposium is an event offered by the Lutheran Theological Southern Seminary of Lenoir-Rhyne University and the LTSS/Region 9 Council for Stewardship Education. This event is funded by the LTSS/Region 9 Council for Stewardship Education, a matching grant from the Lilly Foundation, Thrivent Financial, and registration fees.*