

Stewardship Minute Talking Points– Louise Talotta

October 6, 2019 – ‘God Owns Everything’

“Follow Me”, Jesus said to his disciples...and to us - who are also his disciples. That’s our theme for this year’s Intended Giving Campaign because it reminds us that God is the source of us...of everything. The very first verse in the Bible tells us “... in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth”.

He calls us to steward all of our lives – it’s all on loan. Two weeks ago, Tom Mitchell from our Stewardship Ministry, defined what stewardship is. He even gave us a quiz! We quickly realized we are all stewards as managers of our time, talent and treasures.

I’m here today – don’t worry, I won’t give a quiz- representing our stewardship team of Pastor Julie, Tom, Deb Steinberg, Chris and John Pearson to continue the stewardship conversation and ask...What do we really own? How much can we really control?

We know as Christians it all belongs to God. We know from Tom that as stewards, we are managers of what has been given to us. There is no transfer of ownership. God creates and owns everything. God is faithful.

For me, when I was young and starting to work, I thought that if I worked hard, made a difference and made my bosses happy that I would stay in a job until whenever I decided I wanted to do something different. I felt I ‘owned’ my job in a sense – that if I gave it my all, the paychecks would keep on coming.

I was 20, newly married and my now ex-husband and I had just bought our first house. I had finished 2 years of college and was determined to stay part-time at UCONN while I worked to pay our mortgage. Working nights at John Dempsey Hospital Medical Library was a great solution. I could study at night in-between the late-shift Doctors needing help finding reference materials. Perfect.

For those of you who date back to when I do, Ella Grasso was Governor then. It was Christmas Eve 1974. I went to work after decorating our first tree. My boss Michael handed me my paycheck as usual. We talked casually as I opened it but no paycheck was there. I pulled out a pale pink slip of paper to find I was 1 of 500 people cut from the state work force. Randomly. The first state lay-off. My check would be mailed to my home and it was effective immediately. Michael was shocked - I was numb. I sat down in a chair deep within the rows of books to feel safe and hide – to grasp that I lost my job - which could mean we might lose our house – I’d have to stop going to school – and how would it affect our marriage? One change which I had no control over crashed like dominos. The only thing I knew how to do was pray. Michael found me and dragged me upstairs to the Directors office demanding an explanation. He didn’t know either. As

I sat in the Director's office while he frantically started calling people on the phone to understand this 'layoff business', it dawned on me then that everything is temporary. I had no control at all. I could only make decisions based on my current circumstances as things came up. It was about how I used what I *still* had. I explained my circumstances to the Director and pleaded that I could not go home on Christmas Eve without a job when we were living paycheck to paycheck.

Maybe it was because of the Christmas season, but I think it was God, who moved him to help me. By the time I left an hour later I had a new job in Medical Records that paid more. The HR Director was thrilled because he could fill that opening before his remaining jobs were put on hold the following Monday. I happily took that job and went home to really celebrate Christmas. I worked at the hospital for 13 more years.

I hadn't owned my library job, the situation or anything. When we are reminded it is all on loan, we are open to new beginnings for how we can use our time, talent and treasures.

Next week you will receive your Intended Giving Cards at home. Your gifts can be mailed into the office or brought with you on Sunday October 27th to give during our services.

I hope that as you reflect on your own faith-full stories, that you may be able to be generous to give back and touch the lives of others. When we align our lives and share our time, talents and treasures, we follow him.

Thank you.