

Good morning/afternoon. My name is Kerm Fendler. I've been asked to share my thoughts on stewardship.

My wife, Ellen, and I have been parishioners at St. Elizabeth since 1974 (some 38 years ago). We both grew up in St. Louis, but, following college, time in the Navy, and marriage, we settled right here in Waldo. Of course, a lot has happened since 1974, but, for us, it seems like just yesterday.

We have four children, and they all attended St. Elizabeth's School. As one of my wife's friends said the other day, if you want a whole new social life, enroll your child in a Catholic school. With very few family members in town, we quickly became immersed in the St. Elizabeth School culture---sports, PTA, scouts, fundraisers, etc. And we made lots of good friends.

Fast forward to today. Our children are grown and married. We have been blessed with 8 grandchildren. In 2003, we moved out south from our house in Waldo on West 74th Street. We're much closer to a neighboring parish now (I won't mention the name for fear I may be heckled!), but we remain members of this parish. People ask us why we stay here. There are three words that come to mind:

1. **Familiarity** – We're comfortable here...the Church, the people, the setting.

2. **Heritage** – In a sense, St. Elizabeth’s is a part of our inheritance. We inherited this parish (and all that is good about it) from those that preceded us. We have so many fond memories of people we have come to know and love here at St. Elizabeth’s. Those memories are precious gifts to us, and ones that we truly cherish.
3. **Stewardship** – Growing up in St. Louis, the word “tithing” was ingrained in us by our parents. If we wanted to belong to a parish, it was our obligation to donate 10% of our gross income. That was our view when we joined St. Elizabeth’s in 1974. Over the years, however, we have come to understand our responsibility to St. Elizabeth’s in a much different light. We are extremely grateful for what God, through this parish community, has done to help our family, strengthen our faith, and provide us a guiding light for our journey through life. We believe the best way for us to express our gratitude to God is to share our God-given gifts with St. Elizabeth’s. It is not an obligation to us. It is a privilege. Sort of like membership in a country club. It just so happens that St. Elizabeth’s is part of Christ’s “club”.

Today’s first reading is about Samuel learning to recognize and respond to God’s call. Last Wednesday at morning Mass, Fr. Bruce explained in his homily that young Samuel’s job at the temple was to keep the light burning. We feel that, by sharing our time, talent and treasure, we are, in both a literal and a figurative sense, keeping the light burning at St. Elizabeth’s. I invite you to join us in that worthwhile endeavor, both now, and, God-willing, for many more years to come.

Thank you!