Asked to give a definition of stewardship from a layperson’s point of view, this is what came out of my mouth. “A way of life that follows the tenets and precepts of Christian Orthodox teachings, giving back to God, each to his/her ability, humbly and quietly, a part of that which He has given.” We could give a list of that which God has given us, but we would just end up with – EVERYTHING.

We all understand the importance of supporting our sanctuaries, altars, priests and bishops through our time, talent, and treasure. When we consider, however, how we can each give back to God in the best way possible, we must consider how we can help others.

I cannot help but believe that each of us is a steward of all that God has given us. Let me give you just one example, from my own life, of a steward that I met. It is an example that everyone can relate to at some level in his/her own personal life.

As a high school teacher of Biology, from time to time a student might thank me at graduation or beyond for helping them in choice of careers or just because. Sarah was such a student who wrote a letter thanking me for helping her choose her career.

At birth, two of my grandchildren had to be air lifted from our rural hospital to a major facility in Duluth. Both had serious conditions of the lungs. This is about the second one, Gabriella. My wife and I walked into the care unit to watch that tiny beautiful little girl in the incubator, to pray for her health, and to weep. When we had finished and were walking out, I looked to my right and saw Sarah in her intern uniform studying some papers and in deep conversation with another Doctor. I marveled at seeing her, but did not go to greet her. She had much more important things to do. You see, in Sarah’s letter to me she had told me how much of an influence I was on her decision as an 18-year-old graduate to become a Doctor. I like to think she had a great deal to do with the speedy recovery of Gabriella., and I like to think that I even helped in that recovery because I helped Sarah as a young woman.

By treating Sarah as well as I was able, I believe I was a steward to her. By helping my Gabriella, and many others by now I am sure, she proved to me that she is a true steward. I firmly believe that by treating others with love and forgiveness – and the occasional random acts of kindness to strangers, our stewardship is multiplied many fold.

Do you live “the way of life?” If so – I believe you are a steward.