

Good morning! On behalf of my wife, Erika, and our son, Jackson, I am Jeff Lampe. Our family was humbled and honored to be asked to speak briefly at today's Mass about the topic of "Stewardship," and what it means to each us. But before we do that, I'd like to begin by telling you a little bit more about our family and our journey to Iowa and what brought us to this wonderful community at Resurrection Parish. Erika and I are both originally from California, and after dating for three years, we were married at Our Lady of the Sierra parish in Yosemite in September of 1999. A few years later, in September of 2008, we were blessed with our first and only child, Jackson, who was born in Torrance, California. As with most young families, we had our ups and downs, but we knew that God was with us each step of the way.

One of the first major challenges we faced as a young couple was when Jackson was only 3 years old. The company I was working for announced that they would be closing our Southern California office, and that I had to make the choice of whether I wanted to take a severance package or stay with the company in a new role at their headquarters in Denver, Colorado. It was a difficult decision, since all of our family was in California, and Erika had recently lost both of her parents, so the thought of moving a 1,000 miles away from her remaining family was a difficult one. So, we took our decision to God and prayed intently that He would guide us to make the right decision, after which, it became very clear that the Holy Spirit was guiding us to make the move to Colorado.

Very quickly we realized for a number of reasons, that was clearly the best move for us as a family and that God had been looking out for us each step of the way. It was in our parish in Colorado that Erika and I also first realized the importance of "Stewardship" as we felt compelled to show to God how appreciative we were for his care and many blessings along the way. Before I elaborate on that, it probably makes sense to quickly define what exactly the term "Stewardship" means. For our family, we look at it through the lens of one of the Scripture stories in Matthew 25, where Jesus explains to His faithful followers on His right that "when I was hungry, you gave me food, and when I was thirsty, you gave me drink." In other words, if we were going to truly live our Faith, we need to put tangible actions into practice where we used our time, talent and treasure to serve God's community and those less fortunate.

At first, we thought, what do we really have to give, though? We were busy trying to be the best parents possible, and it seemed that time and treasure were in short supply, but we made the commitment at least to try to do something. Erika from a former job was good at planning and managing events, so she

decided to volunteer at Jackson's school coordinating all of the lunches for the "Teacher in Service Days," as well as the Bishop's lunch during Catholic Schools Week each year. For me, I had experience as a Lector and Extraordinary Minister of Holy Communion, so I went the route of giving my time to support those ministries and helping in whatever way I could at Mass. And when Jackson was old enough, he felt called to be an Altar Server, and it was a thrill for me to be able to minister at the same Liturgies when he was an Altar Server.

Fast forward eight years, and we were once again faced with another job relocation. My company in Colorado was forced to downsize, and my position was eliminated. After much prayer again, it seemed God was calling us to the great state of Iowa, even though we had no friends or family living here. After His providence was clearly guiding us the previous time, we had much less worry and concern this time around and knew that he had our best interests in mind, which he certainly did.

We had no idea until we relocated that Dubuque had so many Catholic parishes from which to choose (we had ONLY one Catholic Church in Parker, Colorado). And from the time we first stepped through the doors at Resurrection, we knew this was the place for us. We cannot thank Father Phil and Deacons Mike, John, Jerry and Jim, as well as all of you, our fellow parishoners, for going out of your way to make us feel welcome. Once again, we felt a call to Stewardship in some small way. I asked Deacon Mike if he had some recommendations for now our family could give back our time, talent and treasure to this great parish, and he had a couple suggestions. First, was the Foundation Program, working with our middle-schoolers in faith formation. At first, I was a little nervous because I had not done anything with youth ministry since I was in high school, but it has been a tremendous blessing. In the short year and half that I have been part of the volunteers with Foundation, I can honestly say I have received back about so much more from the kids and working with the adult leaders than I have been able to contribute. I truly look forward to it every Wednesday night. For the second ministry, I will let Jackson explain that.

***Thanks, Dad...good morning, I am Jackson Lampe, and I am currently an 8<sup>th</sup> grade student at Mazzechelli Middle School. As my Dad mentioned, when we joined Resurrection, Deacon Mike asked if we could help with the mobile food pantry, which was a great way for me and the rest of my fellow friends and family to come together every 3 months and help out people while bonding more as a community. It is something that we were able to do as a whole family, parish or whomever you want to bring to help where on a Thursday evening we will help pack boxes of food for those who are less***

***fortunate. It is a great experience while also doing good for our community. I also am the senior patrol leader in my Boy Scout Troop, and service is a big element of what we do on a regular basis. I found the mobile food pantry to be such a great experience that last month I had members of our Troop take part in helping to assemble the boxes of food. Everyone enjoyed it, and we look forward to helping out again. No matter what we are doing, or which part of my community I am with, I am always a steward in even the smallest of ways, and no matter what you do, you can always make a difference.***

So in closing, I know sometimes when it comes to Stewardship that the first thought that comes to mind might be, "I don't have a whole lot to offer, so will it really make a difference?" We certainly thought that at first, but were reminded of the story in Scripture about the feeding of the 5,000. The Apostles only were able to find a boy with five barley loaves and two fish, and their response to our Lord was, "what good are these when we need to help so many." Well, we all know how the story ends, and it is truly amazing to see what happens when we take what little time, talent and treasure we have and put it in God's hands. Simply put, amazing things happen. I ask for the Holy Spirit to continue to guide each and every one of us, as we decide how to best respond to God's call to serve Him and our community each day and every day. And as we head into the Thanksgiving and Christmas seasons, may God continue to abundantly bless you and your families. Thank you.