

## **GIFT POLICY**

Grace Lutheran Church  
918 Garfield Avenue  
Albert Lea, MN 56007  
507-373-6496 / www.gracealbertlea.org  
TAX ID#: 41-0773788

### **I. PURPOSE**

Donors are encouraged to bless this congregation's present and future with gifts free of restrictions. This policy governs the acceptance of gifts by Grace Lutheran Church and provides guidance to prospective donors and their advisors when making gifts to this congregation where all are invited to support our mission and ministry. The provisions of this policy apply to all gifts to Grace Lutheran over and above regular giving, offering, or pledges, or specific campaign or initiative contributions. Gifts will be accepted when they support the mission, purpose, and procedures of Grace Lutheran Church. All gifts will be considered based on the type of asset, gift transfer costs, donor restrictions, potential liabilities, mission, current needs, and other applicable factors. Grace Lutheran shall accept only such gifts as are legal and consistent with the Grace Lutheran Church Gift Policy, and applicable Bylaws and Constitution. While Grace Lutheran does not provide tax advice, every effort will be made to assist donors in complying with the intents and purposes of the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) for allowing charitable tax benefits.

### **II. GUIDELINES**

The Finance Committee is charged with the responsibility of reviewing gifts offered to the congregation and shall make decisions and/or form recommendations regarding gift acceptance and use according to this *Gift Policy Section V*. Gift acceptance and use decisions and recommendations will be forwarded to the Church Council for acknowledgement and/or approval in a timely fashion. Gift decisions made by the Finance Committee and/or the Church Council shall be reported to the congregation at the annual meeting (unless donor requests gift be anonymous) and, when required by the congregation constitution, presented to the congregation for final approval.

- A. Grace Lutheran will accept unrestricted gifts and donor restricted gifts for specified programs and purposes, provided that such gifts are consistent with the stated mission, vision, policies and priorities of this congregation. Grace Lutheran will not accept gifts that would result in losing its status as a US Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; are deemed by the Finance Committee and/or Church Council too difficult or too expensive to administer; or be a liability, in relation to the gift value; would result in unacceptable consequences; or are for purposes outside the mission of this congregation.
- B. Grace Lutheran Church, as a general rule, will convert all gifts to cash.

- C. Records of gift acceptance or decline and of gift use shall be audited within this body's standard audit procedures.
- D. The Donor shall complete a ***Gift Worksheet*** (see Exhibit A) with an appropriate leader of the congregation to record the gift acceptance and use decisions. Treasurer will keep document on file.
- E. Grace Lutheran shall offer appreciation for every donor's generosity, regardless of the decision to accept or decline the gift. Often that appreciation will begin with a verbal conversation with the donor or donor's estate but will be formalized through written notice by a current Lead Pastor or their designee.
- F. Recognition of the donor should not be a condition of the gift. The decision to provide acknowledgement and recognition for the gift will be the decision of the Church Council taking into consideration the desire of the donor and keeping with the standards and culture for the practice of appropriate gratitude for this congregation.
- G. If there are questions or concerns regarding any gift including the offer, acceptance, or use thereof, whether defined in this policy or not, the donor and/or the Finance Committee and/or Church Council are always encouraged to consult with the ELCA Foundation's Regional Gift Planner and Foundation staff or other related professional.

### III. TYPES OF GIFTS CONSIDERED

The following examples are intended to facilitate donation and acceptance of gifts offered, albeit not intended to represent an exclusive list of potential gifts nor review criteria.

- A. **Potential Gifts.** A variety of gifts can be shared with this congregation and donors are encouraged to inform the Finance Committee and/or this congregation's ELCA Foundation Regional Gift Planner of such gift plans whenever possible. Some gifts will be accepted outright, and other gifts will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis according to the constitution of this congregation. The Church Council may seek advice from attorneys, accountants, and other professionals in evaluating potential gifts. General categories of gifts include, but are not limited to:
  - a. **Cash.** Gifts of cash will be accepted and are welcomed.
  - b. **Beneficiary Designations.** Gifts of assets that transfer through beneficiary designation will be accepted. Types of beneficiary designation assets include, but are not limited to:
    - i. Bank and credit union accounts
    - ii. Bank accounts and investments of qualified or non-qualified status, including, but not limited to, annuities, mutual funds, and securities
    - iii. Charitable Gift Annuities
    - iv. Charitable Remainder Trusts

- v. Charitable Lead Trusts
- vi. Distribution Agreements
- vii. Donor Advised Funds
- viii. Endowments
- ix. Life insurance policies

*NOTE: Sample beneficiary designation language... "Grace Lutheran Church, a nonprofit organization located at 918 Garfield Avenue, Federal Tax ID #41-0773788, for general use and purpose."*

- c. **Marketable Securities.** Gifts of marketable securities will be accepted when transferred electronically to a congregation-owned brokerage account; or delivered physically with the transferor's endorsement or signed stock power (with appropriate signature guarantees) attached; or transferred through the ELCA Foundation. All marketable securities will be sold promptly upon receipt unless otherwise directed. In some cases, marketable securities may be restricted by applicable securities laws, the terms of the proposed gift, or other stipulations. Types of publicly and non-publicly traded marketable securities include, but are not limited to:

- i. Bonds
- ii. Master Limited Partnerships (MLP)
- iii. Mutual Funds
- iv. Real Estate Investment Trusts (REIT)
- v. Stocks

*NOTE: Sample language when securities are transferred through the ELCA Foundation... "For Benefit Of: Grace Lutheran Church, a nonprofit organization located at 918 Garfield Avenue, Federal Tax ID #41-0773788."*

- d. **Life Insurance.** Gifts of life insurance will be accepted when this congregation is named as the sole owner of the insurance policy and an agreement is reached regarding the responsibility for payment of current and future premiums due. If the premium payments are not paid, the congregation, as policy owner, reserves the right to surrender the policy in exchange for the cash value to avoid loan balance accruals.

*NOTE: Sample life insurance transfer of ownership language... "I transfer sole ownership of life insurance contract (contract #) to: Grace Lutheran Church, a nonprofit organization located at 918 Garfield Avenue, Federal Tax ID #41-0773788."*

- e. **Bequests.** Gifts in the form of a bequest will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Types of bequests include, but are not limited to:

- i. Charitable Lead Trusts (CLT) or Charitable Remainder Trusts (CRT)
- ii. Irrevocable Life Insurance Trusts (ILIT)
- iii. Living or Revocable Trusts
- iv. Testamentary Trusts or 'trust under will'
- v. Wills

*NOTE: Sample bequest language... "I hereby give, devise and bequeath ten percent (10 %) of my total estate, to Grace Lutheran Church, a nonprofit organization located at 918 Garfield Avenue, Federal Tax ID #41-0773788, for general use and purpose."*

- f. **Real Estate.** Gifts of real estate will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The donor shall be required to present an appraisal to Grace Lutheran no more than 60 days prior to the real estate transfer (Ref. IRS Publication 561, under "Qualified Appraisal"). Prior to acceptance of any gift of real estate, this congregation may require an initial environmental review. In the event that the environmental review warrants additional investigation, this congregation may retain a qualified firm to conduct a comprehensive environmental audit. The donor shall be responsible for the costs of the appraisal and/or any environmental studies required as a result of the environmental review and/or audit. Types of real estate include, but are not limited to:
- i. Agricultural
  - ii. Commercial
  - iii. Residential
  - iv. Undeveloped real estate
- g. **Remainder Interests in Property.** Gifts of a remainder interest in a personal residence, farm/ranch, or vacation property (excluding time share interests) will be considered on a case-by-case basis and shall be subject to the real estate provisions in this *Gift Policy Section III.f*. The donor or other occupants may continue to occupy the real property for the duration of their stated life or lives. Upon termination of the life interest, Grace Lutheran may use the property or reduce it to cash. Where this congregation receives a gift of a remainder interest, expenses for maintenance, real estate taxes, and any property indebtedness are to be paid by the donor or life tenant(s). Types of remainder interests include, but are not limited to:
- i. Beneficiary Deeds
  - ii. Enhanced Life Estate Deeds (aka Lady Bird deeds)
  - iii. Life Estate Deeds
  - iv. Transfer on Death Deeds
- NOTE: Availability and types of remainder interests in property are defined by current state law.*
- h. **Closely held business interests.** Gifts of closely held business interests will be considered on a case-by-case basis and shall be subject to the real estate provisions in this *Gift Policy Section III.f*. Types of closely held business interests include, but are not limited to:
- i. Limited Liability type organizations (LLC, LLP, etc.)
  - ii. Partnerships
  - iii. S-Corporations or shares
  - iv. C-Corporations or shares

v. Business options/warrants

i. **Oil, Gas, and Mineral Interests and Royalties.** Gifts of oil, gas, or mineral interests and/or royalties will be considered on a case-by-case basis and shall be subject to the real estate provisions in this *Gift Policy Section III.f.*  
*NOTE: A working interest shall not be accepted.*

j. **Agricultural Commodities.** Gifts of commodities from cash basis farmers (excluding crop share landlords), including gifts of grain (e.g. soybeans, corn, wheat, et al.), will be considered on a case-by-case basis and shall be subject to the real estate provisions in this *Gift Policy Section III.f.*, provided the gift is from unsold crop inventory with no sale commitment made prior to the gift. The donor must give up “dominion and control” of the commodity and cannot sell the grain and order the proceeds to be sent to Grace Lutheran. This congregation assumes risk after the transfer to include storage, transportation, and marketing costs as well as price risk. The transaction must be well documented to show Grace Lutheran as the owner (i.e., commodity is delivered and a warehouse receipt is executed to the congregation, or a notarized letter of transfer for crops stored on the farm).

k. **Intellectual Property.** Gifts of intellectual property will be considered on a case-by-case basis. The donor and this congregation are encouraged to consult with an estate attorney/legal counsel before offering and/or accepting this gift. Types of intellectual property include, but are not limited to:

- i. Copyrights
- ii. Patents
- iii. Trademarks

l. **Tangible Personal Property.** Gifts of tangible personal property will be considered on a case-by-case basis.

m. **In-Kind Donations.** Gifts of in-kind goods or services given by a business or business owner, or a donor willing to pay for such goods or services on behalf of Grace Lutheran, will be considered on a case-by-case basis. In-Kind donations will be acknowledged in writing by this congregation, but as per Internal Revenue Service (IRS) Guidelines, will not be valued by, nor provided a receipt for charitable contribution by this congregation.

**B. Gift Review Criteria**

- Does the gift further the mission or help fulfill the purpose of this congregation?
- Is the gift easy to convert to cash, readily marketable, or are there restrictions on the use, display, or sale of the gift?
- Are there covenants, conditions, restrictions, reservations, easements, encumbrance, or other limitations associated with the gift?

- Are there any carrying costs (e.g. insurance, property or other taxes, mortgages, or notes), or maintenance expenses that outweigh the benefit of the gift?
- Does the environmental review or audit reflect that the property warrants additional investigation or otherwise requires remediation?
- Does the property have liabilities or other considerations that make receipt of the gift inappropriate?
- Any other criteria determined to be applicable by the Finance Committee and/or Church Council.

#### IV. GIFT VALUATION

**Gift Valuation.** Gifts of real estate and personal property, acquiring an independent assessment or appraisal shall be the responsibility of the donor or donor's estate. This may be facilitated by the Finance Committee and/or Church Council to determine the comprehensive evaluation and impact of the gift. Appraisal of all non-cash gifts must take place within 60 days (Ref. IRS Publication 561 under "Qualified Appraisal").

NOTE: The ELCA Foundation can be a resource to help determine the necessary appraisal information.

#### V. USE OF UNRESTRICTED GIFTS

An unrestricted gift is given without any stipulation for its use and is accepted to support the mission and ministry of Grace Lutheran.

- Unrestricted gifts with value equal to or greater than twenty five-thousand dollars (\$25,000) shall have the acceptance and use decisions recommended by the policy below. Unrestricted gifts with value less than twenty five-thousand dollars (\$25,000) shall be used in the general fund.

**Step 1: Endowment.** This congregation shall promptly offer a contribution of Forty-Five percent (45%) of the total gift to the Endowment. Forty-Five percent (45%) will go to the general fund. The Remaining ten-percent (10%) total gift will be placed in the Mission Giving Fund for distribution by the Mission Team.

#### VI. USE OF RESTRICTED GIFTS AND GUIDELINES

A restricted gift is given with specific stipulations for its use and is accepted to support the mission and ministry of this congregation through the donors defined restrictions. Gifts with specific donor defined restrictions will be considered on a case-by-case basis with the understanding that the funds are to be used as requested by the donor.

*NOTE: Donors may not direct the way a gift is invested or utilized by this congregation. In accordance with the Internal Revenue Service, donors cannot claim tax favor or retain control over gifts to charity.*

- A. Donors should be aware that programs offered by this congregation may be discontinued, renamed, modified, or incorporated into other programs, therefore a donor who makes a restricted gift, whether in the form of a current gift or through an estate plan, is strongly encouraged to complete the ***Restriction and Release Form*** (see Exhibit B). The Gift Policy Committee shall make the *Restriction and Release Form* readily available in the office of this congregation.
- B. Restricted gifts established prior to the approval of this policy or received without the accompaniment of a *Restriction and Release Form* shall be reviewed by The Gift Policy Committee, the Church Council, and potentially this congregation to determine if the gift shall be accepted. This congregation may also consult legal counsel and this state's Attorney General to determine the requirements to lift a donor restriction if necessary.
- C. Donor Restricted Gifts to the Grace Endowment within the Grace Foundation: (if a donor wishes to establish a named endowment, the gift should/shall meet the following requirements:
  - a. Must be valued at Twenty-Five Thousand dollars (\$25,000.00) or greater.
  - b. May be named by the original donor.
  - c. 50% Of distribution recommended go to general fund.
  - d. Can accept contributions from other donors.
  - e. Become an asset of this congregation.

**Step 1:** The congregation shall apply the full proceeds of the gift to the restriction defined by the donor.

**Step 2:** In the rare event the gift is unable to be used as intended by the donor due to a lack of funding, need, or program; and after a review period of at least twelve (12) months; and in alignment with the restriction release requirements of this congregation and this state, the gift may become unrestricted and the balance of the gift (including any accumulated interest) may be utilized as an unrestricted gift as described in the ***Gift Policy Section V.***

**VII. MEMORIAL AND HONORARY GIFTS**

Memorial and honorary gifts include gifts given in memory or honor of loved ones, friends, or others and may be unrestricted or restricted.

Option: **Memorial – Budget.** Undesignated memorial and honorary gifts given to this congregation shall be used to support the annual operating budget of Grace Lutheran.

Option: **Memorial – Gift Policy.** Memorial and honorary gifts are subject to the same guidelines for gift acceptance, appreciation, valuation, and use as defined in the *Gift Policy Sections III, IV, V and VI.*

**VIII. GIFT POLICY REVIEW**

This policy shall be reviewed every three (3) years by the The Gift Policy Committee and voted upon at the Church Council at the January meeting. The initial review will commence in the year two thousand and twenty (2025).

**IX. RESOURCES**

The **ELCA Foundation**, through Regional Gift Planners and support staff, offer gift planning services at no charge to this congregation and their donors. Visit **[www.elcafoundation.org](http://www.elcafoundation.org)** or call **800-638-3522** to connect with the ELCA Foundation Regional Gift Planner that supports this congregation.

**Donors are also encouraged to consult with their personal tax advisor, estate attorney and/or financial advisor for specific tax, legal, and investment information. Grace Lutheran Church does not provide any tax, legal, or investment advice.**

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|----------------|--|--------------|--|--------------|
| Date Approved: |  | Approved by: |  |              |
| Date Reviewed: |  | Reviewed by: |  | Approved by: |