

# ST. PAUL LUTHERAN CHURCH GIFT ACCEPTANCE POLICY

*"Bring the whole tithe into the storehouse, that there may be food in my house. Test me in this," says the LORD Almighty, "and see if I will not throw open the floodgates of heaven and pour out so much blessing that you will not have room enough for it." (Malachi 3:10)*

There are times when people are moved to give generously beyond their regular tithe and offering.<sup>1</sup> Sometimes, in those cases, people want to see their gift applied to a specific purpose. Wise congregations will identify priorities for such gifts in line with the Congregation's mission. The Stewardship Board and the Congregation Council of St. Paul have prepared this Gift Acceptance Policy to ensure that gifts are accepted in a way that supports the priorities established by the elected leadership of the Congregation.

## 1. Designated Gifts

Based on Council-established priorities, the Stewardship Board will recommend no more than three projects or opportunities for designated gift acceptance at any time. When a project is fully funded, designated gifts will be applied to the next project, and so on. Gifts may be designated to Building Fund and St. Martin Fund at any time and are not included in the three project maximum.

If a donor wishes to make a designated gift for something other than the established priorities, such gifts will be accepted with the approval of the Stewardship Board, in consultation with other (affected) Boards and/or programs and, if necessary, the Council.

Designated gifts will be accepted for one-time or goal-specific expenses, not ongoing expenses such as salaries, utilities, etc.

## 2. How Designated Gifts are Spent

Designated gifts will be spent on the purpose for which they were accepted, and it is expected those funds will be spent promptly. Funds which have not been spent for their intended purpose within two years or which have been left over from a completed project or goal will be applied to another Council-approved priority or project, at the discretion of the Stewardship Board.

## 3. Types of Gifts

Apart from monetary gifts, there may be times when donors wish to give other types of gifts.

- a. Tangible goods will be accepted subject to the approval of the Property Board.
- b. Real Estate will be accepted after the approval of the Stewardship Board, the Congregation Council, and St. Paul's Legal Counsel.
- c. Investment instruments (*i.e.*, stocks and bonds) will be liquidated immediately and the funds deposited into one of St. Paul's bank accounts.

See the Frequently Asked Questions for more information.

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<sup>1</sup> Donations received to defray current year expenses (*i.e.*, VBS donations, coffee money) will not be recorded as designated gifts or carried over from year to year, but will be applied as an offset to those expenses in the current year.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

**1.** Why do we need a Gift Acceptance Policy?

In order to maintain trust and transparency, a gift acceptance policy promotes a clear understanding of the way St. Paul accepts non-monetary gifts and how designated gifts will be used and recorded. As a matter of good stewardship, it is also important to ensure gifts are accepted in a way that supports the priorities established by the elected leadership of the Congregation.

**2.** What is the purpose of accepting gifts outside of regular tithes and offerings?

There are times when people are moved to give generously beyond their regular tithe and offering. Sometimes, in those cases, they want to see their gift applied to a specific purpose. Wise congregations will identify priorities for such gifts in line with the Congregation's mission, to allow for support of special congregational needs in cases where congregation members want to be specific or especially generous about their gift.

**3.** Will I be notified before my designated gift is used for another purpose? Will I have a chance to give my approval before my designated gift is used for another purpose?

No. Since designated gifts will be accepted for specific, current priorities, St. Paul expects that in most cases, your gift will be promptly used for the purpose you designate. In some instances, however, your gift may be applied to another priority or goal approved by Council, especially if your intended project is fully funded or if funds are left over at the end of the project. If your gift is more than \$500, we will tell you about the current priorities set by Council at the time of your gift and give you a copy of this Gift Acceptance Policy, which talks about how St. Paul will handle unexpended designated funds.

**4.** What happens to a gift received for a designated purpose that is not on the list of approved priorities at the time the gift is made?

If the amount of the gift is under \$500, the gift will be placed in the general fund. If it is over \$500, the contribution will be deposited and recorded in a special line item pending approval of the gift by the Stewardship Board. If the gift is not accepted for its intended purpose, the donor will have the opportunity to redesignate it for a Council-approved priority project, or the gift will be returned.

**5.** What happens to a balance of designated funds left over after a project is completed?

It will be transferred to another designated priority established by Council, at the discretion of the Stewardship Board.