



SOUTHWESTERN PENNSYLVANIA SYNOD

EVANGELICAL LUTHERAN
CHURCH IN AMERICA

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SYNOD GIFT POLICY

Adopted by Synod Council May 19, 2018

Amended March 16, 2024

PURPOSE

To provide a written process to all constituents of our Synod that outlines the types of property acceptable as gifts, and how decisions are made for their use.

This policy answers two core questions:

1. How can I provide a gift to the Synod?
2. How will the Synod use my gift?

GIFT POLICY ELEMENTS

1. Gift Acceptance
 - a. Defines *who* will decide whether gift is *accepted*
 - b. Defines *what* gifts will be *considered*
2. Gift Use
 - a. Defines *who* will decide how gifts are used
 - b. Outlines process and guidelines to determine *how* gifts are used
3. Ways to Make a Gift
 - a. Cash or check
 - b. Asset transfer
 - c. Beneficiary designation
 - d. Deferred gifts
 - e. Bargain sale

RESOURCE

ELCA Foundation: 800-638-3522 elca.org/foundation

Are you considering a special gift or an estate gift to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod?

If so, our Synod has resources available through the services of the ELCA Foundation. These gift planning services are available at no charge to you as a member of our Synod. The Charitable Gift Planner assists with establishing a comprehensive estate plan that provides for your family and the ministries you care about. In addition, the Gift Planner assists with current gifts to our Synod as described in this policy.

Contact the Synod office at 412-367-8222 or visit elca.org/foundation to connect with a Gift Planner.

GIFT ACCEPTANCE

When an asset is *offered* to the Synod through an estate, or from a living individual, family, or other legal entity, the Executive Committee of the Synod Council, in consultation with appropriate Synod staff and committees, taking into consideration any designations and type of asset, will make a recommendation to the Synod Council concerning acceptance of the gift.

Gifts may be offered to the Synod in a variety of ways. The Synod is willing to **consider** the following types of assets:

- a. Cash
- b. Securities
- c. Publicly traded securities
 - i. Stocks
 - ii. Bonds
 - iii. Mutual funds
 - iv. Options/warrants
 - v. Other marketable securities traded on public exchanges
- d. Non-publicly traded securities
 - i. REITs (Real Estate Investment Trust)
 - ii. MLPs (Master Limited Partnership)
 - iii. Closely held business interests
 1. Partnership units
 2. Limited liability companies
 3. S-Corp shares
 4. C-Corp shares
 5. Options/warrants
- e. Life insurance (assignment of ownership) – permanent type with cash value
- f. Real property
 - i. Residential
 - ii. Commercial
- g. Tangible personal property
 - i. Vehicles
 - ii. *et al.*
- h. Other property
 - i. Royalties
 - ii. Copyrights
 - iii. Patents
 - iv. Trademarks
- i. Other gifts may be considered on a case by case basis including, but not limited to, life estates, mineral rights, oil and gas interests.

The Synod reserves the right to reject any gift in its sole discretion. The Synod will not, for example, accept gifts that: (a) would result in the Synod violating its corporate charter; (b) would result in the Synod losing its status as a tax-exempt organization under the Internal Revenue Code; (c) are too difficult or expensive to administer in relation to their value; or (d) are intended for purposes that are inconsistent with the Synod's mission. If the Synod decides to decline the gift, the Secretary of Synod Council will contact the donor, donor's family, or donor's estate in writing.

GIFT USE

Unrestricted gifts from living donors will be directed to the Synod's operating fund or such other fund or ministry as the Synod determines. Gifts considered in this category include, but are not limited to:

- a. Cash, checks, money orders
- b. Transfers of stocks and bonds
- c. Memorial and tribute gifts not under an established tribute appeal or fund
- d. Thrivent Choice Dollars

All undesignated bequests, estate gifts, and gifts received from deceased individuals shall utilize the following guidelines to determine the use:

- a. Gifts under \$50,000:
 - i. A minimum of 50% of received corpus will be directed to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod Mission Endowment Fund,
 - ii. A minimum of 15% of the received corpus will be directed to the Synod Legacy Fund, and,
 - iii. A minimum of 15% of the received corpus will be directed to funding the day-to-day mission of the synod.
 - iv. The remaining received corpus will be directed at the discretion of Synod Council
- b. Gifts \$50,000 and over:
 - i. A minimum of 50% of received corpus will be directed to the Southwestern Pennsylvania Synod Mission Endowment Fund,
 - ii. A minimum of 10% of the received corpus will be directed to the Levi Fund for Synod Staffing
 - iii. minimum of 10% of the received corpus will be directed to the Synod Legacy Fund, and,
 - iv. A minimum of 10% of the received corpus will be directed to funding the day-to-day mission of the synod.
 - v. The remaining received corpus will be directed at the discretion of Synod Council

Gifts with specific designations/restrictions are accepted with the understanding that the funds are to be used for the benefit of the Synod in support of its mission and current ministries. Donors should be aware that programs offered by the Synod may be discontinued, renamed or incorporated into other programs. For that reason, donors should include language in any restricted gift that if the restrictions cease to be effective, or if the purposes of the gift cannot be carried out, that the Synod is authorized to use the gift in a manner consistent with the general intent of the restrictions. If the donor fails to provide alternative language, the Synod may accept the gift subject to the restrictions but reserves the right to use the gift in a manner consistent with the general intent of the restrictions. Donors may not restrict the manner in which a gift, bequest, or endowment fund is invested by the Synod.

- a. Restricted gifts added into named funds will be reviewed periodically by the Synod Council.
- b. If restricted funds are unable to be used due to a lack of program or need, a good faith effort will be made to contact the donor, estate, or family to discuss removing the designation or redirecting the gift to meet a current need or project within the Synod.
- c. After the good faith effort is completed or exhausted, every effort will be made to redirect the gift to a related fund or ministry. If that is not possible the gift may become unrestricted.
- d. Gifts that become unrestricted will then begin the unrestricted gifts process, as outlined in this document, to determine the use.

This Synodical Gift Policy will be posted on the Synod's website and available to any constituents of our Synod or any interested party by request. This policy will be presented/distributed at least annually through appropriate means of distribution.

The Synod Secretary and/or Policies & Procedures Committee will review this Gift Policy at least once every three years for updates and revisions.

Unless a donor specifically requests that a gift be accepted anonymously, the Synod reserves the right to publish the names of any donor.

Ways to Make a Gift

1. Cash, check, or money order
2. Beneficiary designations – primary or secondary/contingent
 - a. Retirement accounts
 - i. IRA
 - ii. 401(k)
 - iii. 403(b)
 - iv. Annuity
 - b. Individual or joint bank/brokerage accounts
 - i. Transfer on death
 - ii. Payable on death
 - c. Life insurance
 - d. Distribution from donor advised fund or named endowment
 - e. Living trust
 - f. Will
 - g. Real estate
 - i. Transfer of deed on death
3. Asset transfer
 - a. Transfer securities from your brokerage account directly to our synod's brokerage account or use the ELCA Foundation to facilitate the transfer.
 - b. Transfer a title or deed to our Synod.
 - c. Assign ownership of life insurance to our Synod, or ELCA Foundation, FBO (for benefit of) our congregation.
4. Deferred gifts
 - a. Charitable gift annuity
 - b. Charitable remainder trust
 - c. Donor advised fund
 - d. Named endowment
 - e. Life estate
5. Bargain sale
 - a. Sell an asset to our Synod below fair market value