

Designated Gifts and Memorials Policy

A gift given with the understanding that it will be used for a specific purpose is a designated gift. These gifts generally come to the church through donations to previously established designated accounts. It is then the responsibility of the church to ensure these funds are applied to the purposes for which they were given.

Messiah Lutheran Church must be careful to ensure it is not involved in creating a tax deductible contribution for some purpose that would not otherwise qualify for a tax deduction. For example, the church must make sure that a donation to the Benevolence Fund or Missions Fund is for the purpose of furthering the ministry of the entire church and not a non-deductible gift to an individual through the church.

Likewise, Messiah does not want to be in a situation where the acceptance of a designated gift causes a strain on the operating budget or management resources of the church, or where the designation of a gift is not aligned with Messiah's needs.

For this reason Messiah Lutheran Church has set forth guidelines under which the church can accept designated gifts. The Director of Operations is ultimately responsible for ensuring that the following guidelines are followed:

1. Designated gifts will only be accepted for existing Designated Fund accounts established by the church. Examples include:
 - Capital Campaigns
 - Benevolence
 - Missions
 - Debt Retirement
2. The expenditure of any designated gift in excess of \$10,000 must be approved by the Board of Lay Ministry.
3. Messiah makes every effort to honor a donor's designation. If circumstances change to the point where using a gift for its original purpose is no longer feasible, the donor will be contacted to discuss other potential uses for the gift.
4. Designated gifts cannot be given to forward to specific organizations unless a specific organization is named for a special offering which will be for a specific and limited time period (such as chapel offerings or door offerings). Messiah encourages our members to give directly to organizations they would like to support.
5. Gifts designated for individuals or designated for the benefit of a specific individual are not tax deductible contributions and the church will not accept such gifts.

6. Messiah cannot accept gifts with verbal designations. Designations must be in writing in an accompanying memorandum or note.
7. It is Messiah's policy that designated gifts should be in addition to the member's regular tithes and offerings. If a member designates gifts that are not above and beyond their tithe, it should be noted that the church may have a difficult time covering its budgeted expenditures not only for operating expenses but for all of the ministries supported by contributions and tithes.

MEMORIALS

All memorial gifts are placed in a designated memorial fund. The money will remain there until such time as the church needs them. If there are any restrictions on a memorial gift, the restrictions will be honored to the best of the church's ability if the gift is to be kept.

ESTATE GIFTS

Estate gifts may be designated or undesignated. Messiah makes every effort to use donor gifts for their intended purpose, taking into consideration how that gift aligns with our mission, vision, and values. Messiah encourages all donors considering an estate gift to discuss their wishes and the needs of the church with the Senior Pastor before making a final decision.