

Stewardship Management Philosophy and Policy

Introduction:

First English Lutheran Church conducts its ministries with sound Christian stewardship practices and avoids other means of raising funds for the work of the church. Fund raising processes that seek to leverage interest either in a direct or indirect commercial fashion are not to be used; instead direct giving will be encouraged.

Definitions:

- ***Christian Stewardship***

Christian stewardship is how we live our lives in response to God's love and grace. Christian stewardship is a faith response that begins with recognizing and receiving God's abundant gifts. God gives us the great gift of His Son, Jesus Christ, and the very gift of life itself. God fills our lives with gifts of the spirit through His family, the church. As stewards we are accountable to God, managers in a sense of God's gifts. We learn to be good stewards by giving of ourselves, our time, our talents and our treasures to others and caring for God's creation.

The principles of stewardship are based on scripture. The Bible teaches us that we are to give:

- *Gratefully:* Gratitude is at the heart of giving. John 3:16
- *Faithfully:* We are to trust in God and be confident of his blessings. Malachai 3:10
- *Regularly:* Careful planning and goal setting are key to a healthy lifestyle. 1 Corinthians 16:2
- *Proportionately:* Giving a percentage of our income to the work of the church encourages us to learn to give and grow in our giving. The Biblical norm is a tithe – 10 percent. Genesis 14:20
- *Responsibly:* We are to offer God our first fruits, not our leftovers. "Honor the Lord with your substance and with the first fruits of all your produce." Proverbs 3:9
- *Joyfully:* When giving comes from the heart it fills us with a sense of joyful generosity. 2 Corinthians 9:7.

- ***Special Designated Gifts***

Special designated gifts are not considered a part of special direct giving initiatives (see below). They must be consistent with the mission and vision of First English Lutheran Church. In most instances they are anticipated in part in the annual financial plan. Examples: memorials, flowers or mission support given in someone's memory or honor, mission partners and on-going opportunities, year-end giving opportunities.

- ***Commercial fund raising***

Commercial fund raising is the selling of goods and services with the purpose of securing funds for an organization not connected with the mission of First English Lutheran Church.

- ***Gifts in kind***

Gifts in kind are non-cash gifts.

- ***Special direct giving***

Special direct giving is a request for funds that are in addition to what is contained in the current financial plan.

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Primary Direct Giving

1. Our stewardship appeal is continuous, with annual pledging based on gratitude to God for gifts to us. Pledging results and other Primary Direct Giving expectations are considered in the annual financial planning.
2. A capital appeal for capital and endowment purposes is conducted as needed.

Special Direct Giving

1. Special direct giving appeals (that are not commercial) may be considered and approved for ministries that are consistent with the mission of First English Lutheran Church. They may or may not be a part of the annual financial plan.
2. Annually, there are no more than six special direct giving initiatives in order to maximize success.
3. Direct giving proposals are submitted according to the approval procedure below.
4. Special designated gifts are not considered special direct giving initiatives but must be consistent with the mission and vision of First English Lutheran Church. Examples: memorials, flowers or mission support given in someone's memory or honor, mission partners and on-going opportunities, year-end giving opportunities.

Gifts in Kind

1. Requests for gifts in kind (non-cash gifts) that are supportive of a program or activity of a committee or the ministry of the church are encouraged. Examples: food collection, care packages, LWR, school kits, layette project.
2. Requests are reviewed and scheduled so as to minimize competition and maximize success of the project by stating purpose and specific and clear goals.
3. All requests for gifts in kind are submitted according to the approval procedure below. Requests for incidental supplies used in church programs (such as SS or VBS) are not considered gifts in kind and do not need approval.

Commercial Fund Raising

1. Commercial fund raising is not generally authorized. As defined above, the division line is whether or not it is done for a purpose consistent with our mission. When undertaken it is with respect to a marginal activity or purpose relative to the current congregation operational plan.
2. Voluntary giving by First English Lutheran Church members remains the primary method of financing congregational activities.

Approval Procedure for Special Direct Giving, Gifts in Kind and Commercial Fund Raising:

1. Requests are made by committees or by staff annually in conjunction with a Ministry Team plan and budget request. They then become a part of the annual program of Stewardship.
2. Requests are forwarded to the Stewardship Committee for tracking and for recommendation to the Support Ministry Team. Prior to implementation, all requests must have Ministry Team approval.

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3. In the spirit of desiring successful outcomes, the Stewardship Committee evaluates requests according to the following criteria:
 - stewardship principles
 - consistent with First English Lutheran Church's mission
 - number of requests
 - timeliness of request
4. First consideration is given to previously approved initiatives.
5. If more than one request is received to sponsor a particular type of appeal, first consideration is given to the committee or group with a history of involvement.
6. A master list of appeals for the program year is forwarded to the Support Ministry Team in September with a recommendation to approve.
7. Requests not included in the master list approved for financial plan purposes in September are reviewed individually.
8. Emergency situations: When an emergency arises and needs to be addressed quickly, the Resource Director makes a decision to act (e.g. a need for donations as a result of a flood or other disaster)

Bequests and Other Unplanned Monetary Gifts

1. Our preference is for all gifts to be unrestricted.
2. If we solicit a gift for a specific purpose we assume that it is restricted to that purpose unless we otherwise clarify.
3. When we receive a bequest we direct it to the Trust and consider it "unrestricted" unless the gift comes with specific instructions for its application. In that instance the Trust guidelines apply.
4. When we get a major unsolicited gift (over \$10,000) we ask the donor if there is a special interest, but we indicate that we prefer that the gift be unrestricted. The unrestricted gift will be directed to the Trust.
5. If gifts are designated for an area, they are used first to support budgeted expenses for that area. We do not suggest non-budgeted uses unless there is prior agreement for an off-budget solicitation.

Thrivent Financial Support

Thrivent provides funds to congregations that enable support for items beyond the capability of the congregation. Many times these funds are subject to a local fund raising match. When congregation support of a Thrivent initiative is sought, it is considered to be a special direct giving initiative and subject to approval as above. Alternatively, Thrivent fund raising can operate independently of the congregation's support.

Acknowledging Giving

1. Statements are sent to all members to acknowledge giving to the annual appeal, capital appeal, and special appeals and designated gifts. A thank you letter from the Support Ministry Team or from staff will be sent with every statement.

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2. Verbal acknowledgment of gifts for special appeals or gifts in kind is the responsibility of the sponsoring committee or group. General thanks in newsletters or personal thank you notes are encouraged, with consideration of the following issues:
 - a. Christian stewardship implies the joy of giving without expectations.
 - b. Some givers may want public recognition, others not.
 - c. Dollar amounts should be confidential.
 - d. Timeliness is important.