

# **Lutheran Church of the Resurrection**

## **Mission Giving Guidelines**

**May, 2010**

### **Purpose:**

The purpose of establishing guidelines for the disbursement of Mission Giving is to ensure consistency and good stewardship in our efforts. As representatives of the congregation, we are accountable for making sure valuable gifts and offerings are used responsibly and in support of our mission to "Open Hearts Through The Message Of Christ Crucified." As these are only guidelines, the Church Council may make exceptions to them. These guidelines are also intended to encourage growth in our giving and as the congregation grows. It is expected that they will require updating. These guidelines are not intended to replace prudent decision making. Therefore, all Mission Gifts will continue to require approval at one of the monthly Church Council meetings.

### **Guidelines for our Mission Giving:**

1. Currently and for the next several years, funding for Mission Giving was pledged by the voting members of the congregation at the January 2007 annual meeting. The pledge was to set aside ten percent of general gifts and offerings toward Mission Giving for 2007 and increase by one percent every year until 15% of general gifts and offerings is reached in 2012. Starting with 2013 and every year thereafter, the voting members of the congregation shall pledge a percentage of the year's General Offerings (general gifts, loose offerings, general envelope offerings, and general Sunday school offerings) for Mission Giving. One hundred percent of designated gifts and offerings shall be used as the giver or givers intended and are not to be considered as a part of the pledge toward Mission Giving. Likewise, if a designated gift or offering is received and it is designated for Mission Giving, it shall not count towards the pledge but shall be added to the funds that result from the pledge on general gifts and offerings. This may result in a higher percentage of Mission Giving than was pledged by the congregation for that year.

2. In the spirit of faithful, scriptural giving, the percentage pledged to Mission Giving shall come from the "first fruits" of LCR's general offerings and not be affected by shortfalls in the LCR yearly budget. Therefore, examples of items in our annual church budget that are excluded from funding through Mission Giving are:

- a. Corporate worship and Bible study: worship services, Bible study groups, Sunday school, confirmation classes, etc.
- b. Congregational evangelism and outreach: media advertising, Crosstalk CD, Inquires Class, personal invitations and witness, etc.
- c. Building and maintenance: everything involved in maintaining an attractive, inviting, clean, safe, and functional church facility.
- d. Faith and life groups: LWML, men's group, mom's group, dad's group, youth group, prayer group, etc.

3. Gift requests shall qualify if they fall within two broad categories: Social Ministry and Evangelism.

- **Social Ministry:**

This is giving to agencies, groups or individuals for the support of the physical body. It addresses Christ's care for all people and their physical needs in this world. As such, support may be given without regard to religious or doctrinal affiliation or beliefs.

- **Evangelism:**

This is giving to agencies, groups, or individuals for the support and advancement of the Gospel. It addresses Christ's desire for all to be saved through the preaching and spread of the Gospel and for everyone's spiritual life in this world and eternity. Since the teaching and proclamation of the Gospel supports and advances the Kingdom of God only when it is done in accord with the Scriptures, we should support only those agencies, groups and individuals whose evangelism relates closely to Lutheran Church Missouri Synod doctrine.

4. The following are examples of common requests that do not fall under the broad categories of Evangelism and Social Ministry. Therefore, they should not be funded from Mission Giving.

- a. Donations to political parties, candidates and referendums.
- b. Donations to for-profit entities.
- c. Donations to athletic teams.
- d. Donations to school programs.
- e. Donations to fraternal organizations.
- f. Advertising.

5. The distribution of the total mission giving between the two broad categories shall be determined by the Church Council at the beginning of each year. The historical distribution, up to and including the year 2010, has been:

- a. Social Ministry: 20%
- b. Evangelism: 80%

6. Within each broad category, the Church Council should consider the distribution to "local" versus "global" agencies, groups or individuals. The historical distribution, up to and including 2010, has been:

- a. Social Ministry:
  - Local: 85%
  - Global: 15%
- b. Evangelism:
  - Local: 20% (Hope Lutheran Church, Bangor)
  - Global: 80%

7. The church council shall act as the oversight committee for Mission Giving and distributions.

8. Every attempt should be made to distribute the funds within the year that they were pledged.

9. Distributions shall be made regularly and reconciled against goals and budgets quarterly.

10. A commitment or gift to an agency, group or individual shall not extend beyond one year. The recipient must reapply for the gift and the Council must vote on renewing the gift each year.

11. Each gift shall be measured against the following:
  - a. Does the request align with our mission to “Open Hearts Through The Message Of Christ Crucified”?
  - b. Does the request fall under Evangelism or Social Ministry?
  - c. If it falls under Evangelism, does it closely agree with LCMS doctrine?
  - d. Is an LCR member sponsoring the request?
  - e. When is the money needed and will the funds be available within the needed time frame?
  - f. Specifically, how will the gift be used?
  - g. How is the need documented?
  - h. Does the amount of the request match the need?
  - i. Should the request be only partially funded and/or involve a shared commitment?
  - j. How will the gift be acknowledged and followed up?

12. Disbursements:

Once gifts have been approved by the Church Council, advance notice should be given to recipients. This should be by personal contact or telephone call and not by letter or email so that there is confirmed notification. Recipients should be informed of the gift amount and the specific work for which it was approved, based on the recipient's request. Recipients should also be informed that we would greatly appreciate a brief, written description of how the gift was used and the outcome of the project in order to share the information with our congregation.

*The above document as been adopted by the Church Council of the congregation at its May, 2010 meeting.*