



Messiah Lutheran Church
Gift Acceptance Policy
Amherst, New Hampshire
December 2020

Mission Statement

Messiah Lutheran Church's Mission is to invite people to experience Jesus, to care for others with Christ's love, to help one another grow in faith and to share our gifts with others.

Invite-Care-Grow-Share

Purpose

The purpose of the Gift Acceptance Policy (GAP) is to provide individuals the opportunity to honor a loved one through designated or undesignated contributions that support the ministries of Messiah Lutheran Church. The following policy stipulates how the GAP should be managed.

Policy

1. All gifts are used in a manner that will enhance Messiah's worship and values, while conforming to the spirit of Messiah's mission.
2. **Management of Fund**
 - a. All gifts are managed by the GAP committee, a committee set up and staffed by the congregants. The GAP Committee is comprised of the Treasurer, the Pastor, and two-three members of the congregation and one council member who is the liaison between the council and the committee. Messiah members will serve on in open - ended term and the Council member will serve until their Council term expires and another Council member will then be selected.
 - b. Decisions by the GAP Committee on use and disbursement of memorial funds are subject to approval by the Church Council. Contra-wise, decisions by the Council on the use and disbursement of memorial funds should be discussed and validated by the GAP Committee, given their familiarity with practice and precedent.

- c. The GAP Committee will establish and maintain a list of current and future memorial-related projects. Each project listed should identify the: 1) donor; 2) cost estimated and contributed to date (if future) or spent (if already implemented); 3) current status and, if “open,” actions required to complete project. The project list is submitted to the Church Council for approval in January whether or not any changes have been made to the list. The project list is published in the Annual Report.

3. Dispensing of Gifts

- a. All donated gifts are deposited in the GAP Fund and maintained as a separate, single, interest-accruing account until its intended use.
- b. The Congregational Treasurer is responsible for administering the GAP Fund; including signing checks, reporting receipts, expenditures, and balance of the GAP Fund to the Church Council as needed and to the Congregation and Audit Committee annually.
- c. Representatives of the GAP Committee will work with donor(s):
 - For non-designated gifts, to present potential projects, help donors think through their options, position church needs, and target one or more project list items for funding.
 - For new projects identified by donor(s) or designated gifts already targeted to project list options, to collaborate with donors to ensure alignment with GAP. New project requests are approved by the GAP Committee in collaboration with the Church Council.
 - When any monetary gifts are donated from family and friends of church members that are unspecified in their use, the church members will be able to recommend use of funds to the GAP committee.
 - Any gift donated that is not monetary will be forwarded immediately to the Church Council for consideration.
- d. If the gift amount falls short of the funding requirements for the project, the GAP Committee collaborates with the donor for additional funding, to recommend alternatives from the project list, to secure additional funding from other sources, to set up a “fund-me” site or other action for soliciting contributions, or to cancel the project.
- e. If all gift donations are not dispersed through the GAP Fund within 24 months of receipt, the GAP Committee, working with the Congregational Treasurer may use the funds for a specific item from the memorial project list, implement a new project, or cover a church related expense as designated or agreed to by the donor or the estate.

4. Communication with the Family and Donors

- a. Though memorials in honor of someone may be made at any time for any reason, initial communication with the family is through the pastor, who may discuss memorials as part of a larger discussion of funeral arrangements.
- b. At an appropriate time after the funeral or memorial service, the pastor may pass the responsibility for communication to a member of the GAP Committee, who contacts the family to ensure the funds are used according to the desires of the family and in the best interest of Messiah Lutheran Church.

- c. A donation form, along with the GAP, is presented, discussed and completed by the appropriate family member.
- d. A card or other communication is sent to the family of the person memorialized or honored by the pastor or his or her designee informing them who made a contribution without the amount donated.
- e. An acknowledgement of a gift by donor in memory of someone is sent to the donor by the pastor with the amount contributed. If the donation exceeds \$250, the acknowledgement must state that "no goods or services for the donation were exchanged."

5. Acknowledging and Recording Gifts

- a. Donated gifts are recorded by the GAP Committee, and the appropriate information passed to the chair of the GAP Committee and the pastor.
- b. All persons who contribute gifts, and the persons or events in whose memory or honor the gift(s) have been given, are recorded in Messiah's GAP Book and the Messiah Lutheran Church's management system by the church secretary.
- c. Acknowledgement of memorials for the previous year will take place on All Saint's Day and/or whenever deemed appropriate..

GAP Policy Review

There is to be a review of the policy by the GAP committee every five years or as needed to make adjustments as necessary.

Received and approved by Messiah Council

December 8, 2020

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Erhardt

Joanne Theil

Teri Drake

Aria Neukam