

**Gift Acceptance Policy of the Central States Synod of the ELCA  
Adopted by the Synod Council, October 20, 2018**

**General Statement**

The Central States Synod of the ELCA welcomes and encourages donations, bequests, and charitable gifts. The purpose of this policy is to provide a consistent process for managing the acceptance of such gifts. This policy does not apply to mission support giving from congregations and individuals.

**Administration**

The Synod Council will oversee the gift acceptance process of the Central States Synod. At times, a team consisting of the Bishop, a synod council officer or her/his designee and a member of the Synod Mission Endowment Committee will administer the gift acceptance process on behalf of the Synod Council.

**General Gift Acceptance Guidelines**

1. All gift or bequest arrangements other than cash shall be reviewed for acceptance by the Synod Council.
2. All gifts shall be reviewed for acceptance by the Synod Council. Gifts designated for a campaign or project already approved by the Synod Council do not need additional review.
3. The Synod Council reserves the right to decline to accept any gift, if in the judgment of the Synod Council, acceptance of such gift would be detrimental to the mission of the synod or the proper administration of the synod's resources.

**Non-Monetary Gifts**

1. The general policy will be to always sell or otherwise convert quickly to cash any non-monetary gift, including any publicly traded securities (e.g. stocks, bonds, mutual funds.)
2. The Synod Council may rely upon the advice of professional advisors in determining the manner, timing and procedures to be followed in disposing of any non-monetary gifts. If an appraisal of real or other property is required, the donor will be responsible for the expense. (See Appendix A for a detailed checklist of how real estate gifts will be handled.)
3. The Synod Council may choose to retain a non-monetary gift without conversion to cash if such a gift directly supports the mission of the Central States Synod.
4. The Synod Council will notify any donor of a non-monetary gift regarding the Synod Council's intended action with respect to the gift (i.e. rejection, retention, sale, or other disposition).

**Undesignated Gifts**

1. Undesignated Gifts are those received without a designation for usage by the donor.
2. Undesignated gifts provide the Central States Synod with the greatest flexibility in meeting the needs of the synod and its ministries. Where possible and appropriate, donors should be encouraged to make undesignated gifts.

3. It is the general policy of the Synod Council that all undesignated gifts received will be designated to the Central States Synod Mission Endowment Fund.
4. The Synod Council retains the discretionary authority to designate a portion or the entirety of a gift to other areas of need within the synod aside from the Central States Synod Mission Endowment Fund.

#### **Donor Designated Gifts**

1. The Central States Synod may solicit gifts in connection with particular projects or ministries. Such gifts are designated and set aside to be used for the named project or ministry.
2. At times, donors may wish to designate the purpose for which a gift may be used. Although the Central States Synod would like to accept all gifts offered and honor the wishes of the donor, it is not always practical or desirable for the synod to accommodate donor gift designations. (For example, a gift that requires the synod to allocate additional resources to complete the project may not be appropriate.) A synodical representative working with the potential donor should be prepared to provide a list of current needs for the synod and its ministries.
3. The Synod Council may periodically review all unused designated funds for current appropriateness and to make a judgment as to whether it would be beneficial to the Central States Synod to make the funds undesignated or differently designated. In such cases, where the Synod Council deems it appropriate, the Synod Council shall appoint a representative to request such a change by the donor or donor's surviving family.

#### **Process for Recording Gifts and Thanking Donors**

1. It is the responsibility of the Synod Council to ensure that all gifts are properly recorded and that such record are kept current and accessible to facilitate periodic review of funds, assist in communication with donors or donor's surviving family, and serve as a historical record of the ministry within the Central States Synod. The Synod Treasurer will be responsible for ensuring that this tracking is maintained.
2. Every donor of every gift shall be thanked.

## **Appendix A – Criteria for Accepting Outright Gifts or Bequests of Real Estate**

A gift or bequest of real estate will be accepted if the gift or bequests meet these criteria:

1. The donor obtains, at the donor's expense, a qualified appraisal as required by laws.
2. Mortgaged property having the mortgage placed at least five years prior to the gift. Generally, the amount of mortgage balance should not exceed 50% of the agreed-upon property valuation.
3. The property is free of liens (other than a possible first mortgage.)
4. An examination of title, paid for by the synod verifies the donor(s) is (are) the current owner(s) of the property; or preferable, a title insurance binder is obtained, showing the donor(s) as owner(s) of the property and have (have) clear title. Payment of the title insurance may be negotiated with the donor(s).
5. Taxes and assessments on the property are current and fully paid.
6. A qualified, professional on-site check of the property determines the property to be salable for the price of the property appraisal. Payment for the inspection may be negotiated with the donor(s).
7. An environmental assessment will be performed to determine the presence, nature, and extent of any toxic wastes or other environmental hazards. This item shall not be satisfied until the synod council accepts and approves this item in writing. Payment of the assessment is the responsibility of the donor(s).
8. An examination of the property determines that it meets "code" in such areas as wiring, plumbing, heating, etc. to ensure the salability of the property.
9. Bargain sale rules as required by law apply if the synod either purchases the property for an amount less than its appraised fair market value or accepts responsibility for an unpaid mortgage which the donor(s) pass(es) on as part of the property transfer.
10. The donor(s) will be encouraged to consult with their tax and financial advisors to see how the tax laws apply to them. Neither legal nor financial advice can or will be given by the synod council.
11. Property gifts at variance with these policies will be considered on a case-by case basis in consultation with advisors the synod council deems necessary to adequately evaluate the scope of the gift and its implications for the ministry of the Central States Synod.