

Gifting Opportunities

Steps to Remembering Your Favorite Ministries in your Estate Plan

Step 1: Have a Current Will

80% of end-of-life gifts to ELCA ministries come in the form of a bequest. That is, gifts through will, beneficiary designations and other like instruments. However, 70% of American sdie without a will. Additionally, if your will is more than three years old, it may be time for a review. Does the document still reflect your current desires or the real needs of the loved ones and ministries to whom you bequeath your assets?

If you have previously included a ministry in your estate plans, would you consider a gift to a ministry that you have supported during your lifetime? For more information about the ministries of the church, you may wish to contact Lutheran Planned Giving Services.

Step 2: Make an Informed Decision

Meet with a Gift Planner from Lutheran Planned Giving Services to determine the ideal planned giving strategy for you and your family. There are some assets that are better to give to family (life insurance, cash, etc.) and others that are good assets for ministry (IRAs, ELCA Board of Pensions account, etc.) There are many planned giving tools that are available to you (gift annuities, charitable remainder trusts, etc.) Which is best for you? Which is appropriate for you and your family? A visit with a Gift Planner, your attorney and other financial advisors can help you discern the proper instrument and strategy for your situation.

Step 3: Naming Ministry

Deciding which ministries to name and how to transfer assets can sometimes be a challenge. Do you want to leave the ministry a lum sum or an income stream? Some people wish to designate their gift to a particular need in their favorite ministry. There are some pitfalls you will want to avoid in giving such a gift. Many congregations have established a

Mission Endowment Fund. If so, you will need to make sure that the language you use in your will properly directs your gift to the Mission Endowment Fund, if that is your desire. Lutheran Planned Giving Services can help you develop the appropriate language for these documents.

Step 4: Report Your Gift

Ministries of the church would like to say "thank you!" Lutheran Planned Giving Services can help you notify the leadership of the ministries you have named in your estate plans. These leaders want to hear your story and the reasons you have named a particular ministry in a planned gift. When they ultimately receive your gift, they will know your story. Stories also encourage others to consider a planned gift for ministry.

Step 5: Recognition

You will also be honored as a member of the Willing Witness Community of the Nebraska Synod ELCA. The Willing Witness Community honors all who have created a planned gift for an ELCA ministry, regardless of size or type of gift.

Remember, you are not just giving a gift. You are planting a seed. Your gift has the power to inspire others to do the same. Becoming a member of the Willing Witness Community is an opportunity to encourage fellow members of the ELCA to create a legacy for ministry. To become a member of the Willing Witness Community, contact Lutheran Planned Giving Services.